Feverish Fragments and Dis-eased Desire: The Archive as Fiction

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Preface: The Archive's Metastasis

The next morning, almost as soon as the Central Registry had opened and when everyone else was at their desk, Senhor José half-opened the communicating door and said pst-pst to attract the attention of the nearest clerk. The man turned and saw a flushed face and blinking eyes. What do you want, he asked, in a low voice so as not to disturb anyone, but with a note of ironic recrimination in his words, as if the scandal of absence only confirmed the worst suspicions of one already scandalized by Senhor José's lateness, I'm ill, said Senhor José, I can't come to work. […] What's wrong with you, he asked, I've got a cold, said Senhor José, A cold has never been a reason not to come to work, I've got a fever, How do you know you've got a fever, I used a thermometer, What are you, a few degrees above normal, Nor sir, my temperature's well over 100.

José Saramago *All the Names*

On the first morning, I woke up in the hotel to the sound of my son whimpering in the crib, disoriented no doubt by the unfamiliar half-darkness of the closet in which his crib was wedged, pushed there by his parents' desperate hope for another minute of sleep. The previous night we spent flying from Minneapolis to New Haven, the nursing baby in tow, so that I could spend three days (three days) researching the comprehensive commonplace book manuscript holdings, looking for I don't know what, at the Beinecke Rare Books library at Yale. And the night before that I spent on the bathroom floor retching into the toilet, mostly obliterated by the stomach flu the baby had passed on to me (but not, and never, to his father), and, whenever it occurred to me (which was not often), despairing over the imminent, inescapable trip to the archive.

On that first morning in New Haven, I woke up at the Omni Hotel, still feverish, sick-empty and haggard, to nurse and change a still feverish, still gray-faced baby, to shower and dress and pack my books, my notes, my bag, my computer bag, and my pump for the day's research. It was cold and quiet in New Haven, but it was spring break and the cold wasn't nearly as cutthroat as in Minneapolis. I walked across New Haven Green, across Elm Street, through Cross Campus, and to the Gordon Bunshaft-designed

honeycomb-catacomb Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library in the Hewitt Quadrangle. There, I met a gray-faced security guard who searched my bags and radioed for female back-up to handle the unexpected and unavoidable materiality of my breast pump and my nonstandard requirement to use it in the bathroom stalls of the cloister scriptorium-styled sunken courtyard reading room of the Beinecke archive. While we waited, he looked at me, wiping his suddenly sweaty forehead with the back of his polyester sleeve, and blanched. Forcing out a strangled "excuse me," he turned, vomited into the garbage can, and weakly fell into his seat. I realized then, or before then, that I had already been infected: to echo the words of Carolyn Steedman, who, in *Dust*, parrots the historian's expostulates, "Archive fever, indeed! *I* can tell you *all about* archive fever" (10).

Introduction: The Archive's Allure

My dissertation proceeds from archivist Louise Craven's suggestion in *What are Archives?* that "modern English and European literature," such as José Saramago's *All the Names*, with which the preface begins and with which my third chapter ends, informs "our understanding of the central place which archives have held historically and continue to hold in our culture today" (13). While Craven, Head of Cataloguing at the National Archives of England and Wales and the UK, articulates the impetus that drives much contemporary archival discourse, she and her international colleagues also claim that the dawn of the twenty-first century signifies a watershed moment for archival discourse. Previously, archival theory and discourse did not "normally have much to do with philosophical notions of any kind," but the archive's position at the turn of the twenty-first century, a position characterized by the archive's dependence on overlapping historical and fictional paradigms, a growing recognition of the archive's ordered and chaotic organization, and an emphatic realization of the archive's influence on the documental facts of lives and deaths, requires "a new perspective" for its comprehension.[1] Archivists, academics, and "users of archives" are no longer content,

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[1] I use the "documental" here and elsewhere in reference to "documentalism," a term from the nascent information scientist of the late-nineteenth century, Paul Otlet, that has long characterized the archive. Documentalism both emphasizes the importance of documents to the making and transferal of meaning and information and expands the "document" descriptor beyond paper-bound missives to objects, artifacts, even animals—anything that has been made the object of information as process, knowledge, or thing. Documentalism thereby also explains and expands the archive's traditional association with paper. Charles-Victor Langlois and Charles Seignobos, on the first page of *Introduction to the Study of History*, which historian Carolyn Steedman describes as the primer of scientific history (or rather the bible, given Steedman's religious rhetoric), claim that "[t]he historian works with documents," that "there is no substitute for documents: no documents, no history" (17). Additionally, in Samuel Muller, Johan Feith, and Robert Fruin's watershed 1898 *Manual for the Arrangement and Description*

writes Craven, to look backwards and reductively associate the archive with narrow notions of history or bureaucracy. Instead, they adopt a "wider perspective" and look to philosophical, literary, and other discourses heretofore only peripherally related to the archive to understand its various meanings and broader import. Consequently, "the time is right," Craven argues, "for […] a new set of answers to the question 'What are archives?'" (xvii).

Craven identifies 2006 as the moment the archive and its various readers called for a wider and ostensibly more theoretical, more philosophical, and more literary comprehension of archival contents, structures, and modes of accessibility, but her question follows a recently established tradition of treating the archive philosophically as a source and agent of spreading dis-ease. In fact, the archive gained its most famous designation as a site of dis-ease (or infamous, as the discussion in chapter two often suggests), in the 1995 English translation of Jacques Derrida's *Archive Fever*. The critical inauguration has resulted in what I term, playing on the archive's and archive fever's figurative senses, critical metastasis. Thanks in large part to its metastatic expansion in contemporary archival discourse, the archive today, the object of so much debate due to its abstract relationship to authentic historical materiality and the correspondingly abstract sense of authority conferred by such a relationship, demands the wider perspective for which Craven argues.

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of Archives, which archivist Terry Cook describes as having had "a major influence" on the formulation of modern archival principles, the archive's "foundation" depends on its definition as 'the whole of the written documents, drawings and printed matter, officially received or produced by an administrative body or one of its officials" (qtd in Cook "What is Past is Prologue" 21). Documentalism also, however, explains the archive's association with processes of informing and with the objects and things that, as every archive reader knows, appear in the archive amidst its more traditional materials.

One need not look far for examples of the contemporary archive's proliferation: in archival and academic culture, Maria Bustillos's reflections on the sick addition of David Foster Wallace's personal library of self-help books to his archive at the Ransom Center at the University of Texas at Austin, the attention called by Alex Abramovich to the problem of the informal archive constituting David Markson's donation of his personal library to, and the dispersal of his heavily annotated books in, the New York City's Strand Bookstore, and Tracy Brain's argument for the indeterminate quality of Sylvia Plath's canon, predicated on and demanding vigilant attention to the politically charged, constantly revised archive on which it relies,[2] suggest just a few ways that archives operate as infectious spaces in academic communities and manifest among readers symptoms of dis-ease. In popular culture, these symptoms manifest as well: in, for example, the ongoing and wide-reaching debate, described by pundit Paul Kedrosky in "Curation is the New Search is the New Curation" about technology's facilitation of a contemporary shift from personal to algorithmic to social means of collecting, archiving, searching, and finding, and perhaps even more recognizably in the boom in amateur genealogy, typified (and critically denigrated[3]) by shows such as *Who Do You Think You Are?*, which recently completed its second season.

In fact, contemporary archival dis-ease, while often associated in archival discourse with specialized readers such as historians or critics, infects the public at large. In 2010, the far reach of such dis-ease prompted the International Council on Archives to

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[2] Brain insists that "[t]o read Plath with any real engagement—and pleasure—is to become part of an ongoing dialogue about the principles of the archive's formation, reception, and continuing evolution" (35).

[3] Historian Tristram Hunt, in a critique of British history's programming on television, calls "the broader genealogy movement" an "amateur hobby" "unfortunately […] transposed to history in its entirety."

provide a Universal Declaration recognizing archives as providers of "authentic evidence" and as offering a space and service of "vital necessity" for "protecting citizens' rights, for establishing individual and collective memory, for understanding the past, and for documenting the present to guide future actions" (ica.org). In a testament to the archive's metastatic spread, the ICA consequently declares that archives and their management must be "the collective responsibility of *all*—citizens, public administrators and decision-makers, owners or holders of public or private archives, and archivists and other information specialists" (my emphasis).

By offering just a few readily recognizable samples of archival metastasis and by speaking therefore to the correspondent manifestations of the archive's promotion of feverish desire—for origins and for authenticity, but also for paper-bound or otherwise "authentic" connections and apparently tangible memory in an increasingly hyperlinked and networked digital world—these examples signal contemporary archive fever's range. When archivists such as Craven ask "what are archives?"; when historians such as Thomas Osborne ask after the "place for the concept of the archive in the gamut of today's […] reflections on memory, history and the status of the past" (51); and when librarians and archivists such as Joan M. Schwartz and Terry Cook ask why the "power of the archive" continues even today to be "denied, overlooked, or unchallenged […] on both sides of the reference room desk," they articulate a contemporary restlessness that echoes the necessity of posing Craven's constitutional question.

My dissertation does not, however, provide an answer to the question of what are archives; it instead asks why the postmodern, perhaps posthuman archive in contemporary archival discourse must now, at this moment, be defined. While

contemporary archival discourse has only recently explicitly identified the archive as feverish, archival fiction, fiction wherein the "archive functions as a semiotic frame that structures [a] text's content and meaning," has long indicated that the archive's dis-ease can be attributed to the burn of a kind of fever (Codebò 13).[4] Although such dis-ease has provoked uneasy fascination in philosophical narratives from Franz Kafka to Jorge Luis Borges to Italo Calvino to Umberto Eco, I am more interested in this project in reading contemporary archival discourse through a strain of archival fiction I call redemptive romance. The generic phrase, which self-consciously follows Carolyn Steedman's more deprecatory use of "Archival Romance,"[5] describes as common the desire-driven efforts of critical theorists, casual archive readers, and fictional characters alike to redeem from the archive the "highly significant fragment."[6] Redemptive romances consequently help make explicit the common stance held by archive readers, and in so doing, they help to define that stance as productive of a fever or as itself feverish. Accordingly, rather than simply follow the trend in contemporary archival discourse to label and explain the

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[4] While Suzanne Keen and Marco Codebò have already named and explored offshoots of this genre ("archival romances" for Keen; "archival fiction" for Codebò), Keen, in *Romances of the Archive in Contemporary British Fiction*, published the same year as *Dust*, focuses on narratives that straightforwardly feature archival researchers and defines archival romances as a distinctively British genre deployed by popular novelists (A.S. Byatt, P.D. James, etc.) to express the loss of Empire. Codebò, in *Narrating from the Archive: Novels, Records, and Bureaucrats in the Modern Age*, focuses on fiction that forefronts records and the work of recording in the service of archiving: neither engages with contemporary archival discourse and neither consequently suggests that fiction can offer insight into the archive's current manifestation as dis-eased

[5] In the context of *Dust*, Steedman's defines "Archival Romance" as a the story of "what it is historians […] want from the Archive," and what they want, according to Steedman, is predicated on an imagined "particular and modern form of loneliness" that results from "the general fever [of wanting] to know and to have the past" (72, 75).

[6] Benjamin uses this term in *The Origin of German Tragic Drama* to describe decayed ruin. A claim I am prepared to make but not defend regards the archival fragment as evincing support for Benjamin's argument wherein representation itself—"highly significant"—functions as truth.

archive as the site and source of dis-ease and rather than suggest that the attempt itself alleviates the archive's sickliness or suffering, I work in this project to investigate contemporary archival discourse's designation of the archive as feverish through works of fiction that have already made this diagnosis and sometimes a century and a half earlier. I consequently look to fiction to explain contemporary archival discourse's current emphasis on the archive's liminal, because historical but also because productively passionate, status. From that position, I provide a more concentrated diagnosis of archive fever's etiology through which I ultimately argue for archive fever's productive possibilities.

While I recognize the apparent hindrance of using fiction as a tool for diagnosis, particularly as a tool for diagnosing the archive, a concept and space dependent for its meanings (however dis-eased) on literalism, historicism, and documentation, I consider myself to be following in the Freudian tradition that indicates that assorted symptoms and disparate sufferings depend on the creation and repetition of variously veracious narratives for their manifestation, diagnoses, potential treatments, and possible abatement. Accordingly, I argue that fiction expands the therapeutic relationship to include participatory readers who, when working in the archive, often must become synthesizing and interpreting writers. Fiction consequently offers to the diagnosis of the complex manifestations of archival dis-ease an incisive and paradoxically precise tool. In this, I extend to fiction Craven's argument for a new archival perspective, implicitly claiming thereby that fiction should be brought to the forefront of contemporary archival discourse to be utilized by its most dominant participants, that is, by the participants in

the historical, legal, and library science fields that more traditionally consider the archive their purview.

I consider this project particularly necessary for two reasons, first because contemporary archives, despite and perhaps because of their critical production of fevers, are increasingly invested with a political, and specifically pan-democratic significance, (whereby, as the ICA declares, the archive becomes the responsibility and therefore the representative of "all"), and second, and related to the first, the imminence of archival digitization (whether driven by algorithmic, social, or more individual and idiosyncratic functions) means that contemporary archives, and their critical apparatus, face unprecedented instability, and thus offer unprecedented opportunity for exploration in regards to their future form, content, and status. Eric Ketelaar, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and later, Saramago in my third chapter, explicitly speak to the archive's political significance: Ketelaar, former National Archivist of the Netherlands and former president of the ICA, in an essay entitled "Archives of the People, by the People, for the People," reports that the Stasi archive in Germany and the archives resulting from South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission serve as the only evidence necessary to support the archive's constitutive status in democratic communities; Hawthorne, however, anticipates Ketelaar in *The Scarlet Letter* by illustrating the "good citizen" the archive problematically helps to produce, while Saramago, in *All the Names*, echoes both Hawthorne and Ketelaar by dramatizing the archive's extension of political agency through the narrator's emphasis on archival accuracy, on the fact that "names and dates" in the archive "give legal existence to the reality of existence" (135). Craven, of course,

who assumes archival instability, implicitly gestures to the archive's explicit political significance, too.

While she does not indicate that philosophy, literature, and other discourses prove instrumental to the specifically political meaning constructed by archives, Craven's call to adopt wider and different perspectives when answering archival questions cannot help but be informed by the high-profile political archival collections, such as the archives mentioned by Ketelaar and the National Police archive in Guatemala, that have dominated major strains of archival discourse for the last twenty years. My project speaks to these dis-eased archives currently under various forms of reconstruction, and it does so while attending, at least on the periphery, to those other dis-eased archives of the future—the digital archives that are now and for the foreseeable future, according to the Strategic Plan of the National Archives and Records Administration, 2006-2016, on the tip(s) of every archivist's tongue (and fingers). Of course, because digital archives are also political archives, they inform this project, despite their position at its outermost edge, by illustrating the political enjambment in contemporary archive discourse not only between the personal and the political, but also between the archive's connoted tradition and materiality and digitalism's heterodoxy and immateriality.

I use the term enjambment here purposefully to foreshadow the fiction on which my project relies. In brief, after this introduction, I turn back one hundred and sixty-two years to *The Scarlet Letter*, an archival ur-text that ascribes to the archive a far-ranging if nonetheless dis-eased significance and that therefore contributes a crucial literary foundation to the strains of redemptive romance that characterize contemporary archival discourse. After positioning *The Scarlet Letter* as an elemental archival narrative that

anticipates so much current critical theory, I proceed in chapter two to identify in contemporary archival discourse the archive's feverish diagnosis and to consequently explain my theoretical substrate. In this chapter, I identify three archival postulates, the postulate of archival plenitude, the postulate of archival fragmentation, and the postulate, that I also call an archival mandate, to save. I follow this chapter with a discussion in chapter three of the ways that contemporary archival discourse, in its perhaps unconscious or at least unrecognized co-option of the strains of literature's redemptive romance, translates the experiences of less professional and professionalized archive readers, particularly Nicholson Baker, Ulrike Poppe, and Vera Wollenberger. Unlike critics in contemporary archival discourse, Baker, Poppe and Wollenberger articulate in much more straightforwardly impassioned terms the archive's promise of plenitude in spite of (and in fact because of) its foundation in saved fragments, and in so doing, refer back to the literature that informs the discourse. I consequently conclude this chapter with a close reading of Saramago's recent allegorical, and therefore universally—which might also be to say archivistically-oriented—*All the Names*. In chapter four, I return to the nineteenth century to identify Henry James's *The Aspern Papers* as a similarly crucial text for contemporary archival discourse. *The Aspern Papers*, built along the same "archival grain" as *The Scarlet Letter*, dramatizes the archive's solicitation of archive readers' desires and identifies that solicitation as the source of dis-ease.[7] By illustrating the correlate economic and corporeal affinities between plenitude and fragmentation that inform the postulates assumed in contemporary archival discourse, *The Scarlet Letter* and *The Aspern Papers*, with which I book-end my analysis of contemporary archival

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[7] I use the phrase "archival grain" in reference to Ann Laura Stoler's influential text, *Along the Archival Grain*.

discourse, offer anticipatory interpretations of that discourse's archival mandates and suggest a canonical, which is to say pervasive and unavoidable, literary precedent to the discourse's preoccupation with fevers and redemption. *The Scarlet Letter* and *The Aspern Papers* consequently constitute case studies of suffering readers who read an archive's saved fragments and invest the archive with problematic—feverish and otherwise—meanings that impact the readers' personal and, in the case of *The Scarlet Letter*, national identities.[8]

Although I follow Craven's lead to the intersection of archives and literature, I do not find there an answer to her titular question: what are archives? My project is not ultimately aimed at description. Instead, I first use *The Scarlet Letter* as an entrée into an identification of the archive's simultaneously overdetermined—perhaps even overwrought—*and* underdetermined contemporary position (or, to put it another way and make use of Craven's terms, the archive's "central," if also sometimes subterranean, place in our contemporary culture[9]), and I then argue that, notwithstanding their heretofore only tangential relationship to archival theory, literature such as *The Scarlet Letter* and *The Aspern Papers*, subsequent to their designation as archival redemptive romances, provide both models of and warnings against the ways that today's archive

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[8] Anne Gilliland, in her afterword to a special issued of *Archival Science* writes that "[a] near-void in contemporary archival discourse would suggests that somewhere along the way, as archives became 'modern,' they lost their connection to the spiritual and that their focus on the bureaucratic record and on reasoning and evidence, together with the rationalization of archival practices, also downplayed the emotional. There is today, however, a small but growing area of both disciplinary and professional interest in the affect of archive" (340). My project may be taken as a magnification of and a contribution to this interest.

[9] Many archives literally occupy a subterranean, which is to say literally foundational, position. For example, the University of Minnesota's Andersen Library's Minnesota Library Access Center, like many other archives, is located underground.

readers encounter the archive in both the abstract sense of "the Archive" and in every archive's more quotidian realities. In this sense, they offer productive readings of the archive, and not by ignoring but by exploiting the archive's status as the sickly seat of dis-ease. I therefore claim that fiction, and specifically the works I cite here, supply the "new perspective" on archives explicitly or implicitly sought, according to Craven, by archivists, academics, and other users of archives and archival documents. These fictions offer both a useful primer for comprehending archives and the fevers of various kinds that archives produce and constitute a larger argument for making fiction, and the literature departments in which fiction is studied, central to the ever-broadening reach of archival study.[10]

To more specifically explain my structure and content, my dissertation depends on an expository introductory chapter, two analytical middle chapters, an illustrative fourth chapter, and a speculative coda in which I identify and analyze archival dis-ease.

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[10] Craven's identification of the important crossroads between archives and literature speaks specifically to the figurative integration into literature of the archive, the archivist, and the archive's documents, but she cannot help but gesture to the uneasy associations among fiction, fiction's narrative conventions, and the positivistic historical discourse more traditionally associated with archives. I am aware of the impossibility of embarking upon any project that considers fiction and the archive without referring to the impact on historical discourse of the linguistic or narrative (or metahistorical) turn of the mid-eighties (despite Steedman's observation that the turn made (and continues to make) very little difference to the historian's "dogged and daily performance of positivism" (154)). However, and similar to Craven's own text, I am in this dissertation only tangentially interested in using the archive as any sort of bridge between fiction and history and their distinct discourse conventions. My central interest is in uncovering archive fever's illustrations in early contributions to the American literary canon and in therefore establishing those contributions as illustrative and anticipatory for contemporary archival theory. By suggesting the reciprocity between literature and archival theory, I seek to not only open another area of inquiry for archival discourse and another means by which archives can be explored and understood, but also to contribute to the making that area relevant to contemporary archive readers.

In my first chapter, I position *The Scarlet Letter* as an originary text for contemporary archival discourse. In Hawthorne's romance, the fever promoted by archival desire explains a highly invested reader's work to make an archival fragment answer to an implicit "everything," but the text also suggests that the work of reading the archive's saved fragments results not just in intimate personal narratives but in self-consciously national and specifically democratic narratives as well. I mean this quite literally: the narrator of *The Scarlet Letter* describes his effort to contextualize the archive's fragmentary letter from out of the archive as a contribution to the founding community that he, through that archive, represents; by characterizing that community in accordance with its initial efforts to contextualize the scarlet letter, the narrator suggests that the archive demands participatory reading strategies, reading strategies that necessitate the contextual work of interpretation and writing and that not only find precedence in the Puritan typological tradition and conversion-narrative tradition, but that also anticipate the kind of—administrative, bureaucratic—participation in civil society by which *The Scarlet Letter* defines the democratic "good" American citizen. The co-option of this citizenship as explicitly and necessarily male only underscores the implicit violence (a violence assumed by Hawthorne's narrator and inherent in recent American political narratives concerning archives) of the archive's contribution to representative democracy. *The Scarlet Letter* proves particularly important to contemporary archival discourse, especially in the archive's continuous accrual of more emphatically symbolic democratic meanings; I therefore conclude this chapter by investigating the text's anticipatory contribution to the treatment of the archive in American politics.

In my second and third chapters, I focus more explicitly on that contemporary archival discourse and outline what I argue are the postulates that determine, or, given my reliance on the language of dis-ease, the germs that manifest, this dis-ease, and I analyze the critical texts that inform my work. In archival discourse, dis-ease is most often cited as the consequence, enforced by archives, of attending to the infinitely debated concepts of authenticity,[11] history,[12] authority,[13] and memory.[14] I argue, however, that even before these concepts, the archive's generation of dis-ease must be read through the interrelated postulates by which the archive gains meaning, specifically, the archive's assumption of plenitude, its ironic foundation in and dependence on fragments, and its corollary mandate to save. I explicitly describe and define these postulates in the second part of the second chapter, but I prepare for my description by first offering a close reading of the theories of the archive espoused by Steedman, Jacques Derrida, and Michel Foucault. Among the legion of contributors to archival discourse, these theorists function as my archival triumvirate, my plenary speakers, so to speak, and their contributions to archive theory, which I illustrate as genealogical, prove crucial to my project and my project's articulation of archival postulates for reasons both practical and abstract.

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[11] The legacy of the scientification of history is most famously attributed to Leopold von Ranke. For an account of the concept of archival authenticity more specifically pertinent to archivists, see, "Understanding 'Authenticity' in Records and Information Management: Analyzing Practitioner Constructs" by Eun G. Park.

[12] See Francis X. Blouin, Jr's, "History and Memory: The Problem of the Archive."

[13] See the "Memory" section of archivists Richard Cox and David A. Wallace's *Archives and the Public Good*; also, Blouin's *Processing the Past: Contesting Authority in History and the Archives*.

[14] According to Helen Freshwater, a specialist in theater studies, "[t]he archive is the literal embodiment of the metaphors that surround memory, as memory is (in)formed by culturally distinct methods of storage, inscription, and access" (741); this is exactly the metaphoricity with which Derrida plays and against which Steedman writes—archive fever constitutes a feverish search—through something that appears to be like memory—for beginnings, for evidence of The Beginning.

In straightforward practical terms, Steedman in *Dust* evinces my project's strongest focalizing influence. Culling tools from Foucault's archive, *Dust* intervenes in contemporary archival discourse to ameliorate through social historical criticism the damage wrought by Derrida's *Archive Fever*. In Steedman's analysis, social historiography provides a panacea for the manifestation of the archival disease, what she does not but might as well term "abstraction," that, thanks to *Archive Fever*, affects not just contemporary archival theory but all readers of archives, as well.[15] *Dust* thereby helpfully narrows the enormous scope of archival discourse to dis-ease, to its critical manifestation in archival discourse via *Archive Fever*, and to a Foucauldian informed and thus functional antidote in "archive fever," or what Steedman renames through fiction Archive Fever Proper.

Additionally, however, Steedman attends to the problem of archival plenitude, the assumption that the archive holds everything. According to Steedman, Derrida's too-wide influence defines a too-abstract, too-inclusive archive, "capacious enough" to include all manner of information systems, human memory, psychoanalysis (via an apparently infinite Unconscious), "Power itself," and, finally, "Everything" (6). Steedman therefore uses *Dust* to subtract from the archive everything but its pieces and parts. In so doing, she argues that archives and the fevers they may or may not induce can be productively meaningful only when the archive's fragmentary contents are oriented towards and understood through the archive's everyday critical, social, and

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[15] The etymology of "abstraction" seems especially relevant here, first, given its assumption of a "[l]ack of awareness of or concentration on what is happening around one; absence of mind; a state of mental preoccupation," and second, given its relevant to fine art in its communication of a "freedom from or absence of representational qualities; a style of method characterized by this freedom" (*OED*).

historical functions. Consequently, in *Dust*, Steedman solidifies the archive's dangerous, diseased, Derridean abstraction by providing a critique of archival plenitude, although unnamed as such, through the fragments, parts, and pieces that in the archive have been, and often inadvertently, saved. While many other archival theorists and general readers indirectly identify the archive's implicit claim to plenitude—to the containment of everything historically relevant—as problematic and potentially enervating, Steedman yokes Derrida to Foucault and so more explicitly calls attention to and critiques the sickly designation of the archive as an infinitely expansive container.

From Steedman, Derrida, Foucault and the plenitude postulate, I proceed in the third chapter to what might be considered the archive's everyday readers and to their descriptions of archival plenitude, of the relationship to plenitude mediated by the archival mandate to save, and of the fragments that serve as the object of such saving. Saving, although a pointedly fluid term, refers in fact to the archival work of conserving, preserving, and reserving, salvaging, collecting, curing, curating converting, redeeming, and freeing and thereby signifies the archive's reason for being. Ultimately, saving signals a mediated relationship between invested terms,[16] and in its formulation as an archival mandate, it dictates the participation of archival fragments in economies of plenitude and redemption. Although they gain plenary signification ironically, by way of *a posteriori* incomplete fragments, archives depend on the mandate to save for the investment in those fragments of potential, future-facing, and fundamentally archival meanings.

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[16] It is to this investment that Paul de Man refers when in *Aesthetic Ideology* he defines recuperation as "an economic concept that allows for a mediated passage or crossing between negative or positive valorization" (115).

The mandate to save accordingly constitutes an archival *sine qua non* and helps to relate *the* archive, an abstract concept in which "saving" accrues esoteric meanings, and everyday archives, those more-or-less quotidian resources in which "saving" refers to the materials acquired, classified, and subsequently kept. Additionally, however, the archive's mandate to save helps to provide more substantive unification of the critics and readers with whom my second and third chapters engage. It is not hard to legitimately argue that these critics and readers are themselves disparate fragments only temporarily situated together as meaningful in and to this archival project (few, after all, can be characterized according to a straightforward or articulated interest in archives), particularly given the endemic metaphoric expansion by which the archive so often gains its meanings, but each of them, by virtue of working in and with fragments, are explicitly or implicitly invested in the work of saving as redemptive.

This is especially true of the archive readers I discuss in the third chapter: the narratives of Nicholson Baker, author of the archive manifesto, *Double Fold*, Ulrike Poppe, potential reader of the reconstructed fragments of the Stasi archive, and Vera Wollenberger, actual reader of the Stasi's reconstructed fragments, illustrate the mediation between plenitude and fragmentation effected by the archive's mandate to save. Baker, for example, argues that archives must "save it *all*," every piece, every part; Poppe argues, against her own opposing claims, that the archive's saved and reconstructed fragments will explain "*everything* that happened"; and Wollenberger, contra Poppe, argues that the revelation and redemption of an archival "everything" results not in plenitude but in further fragmentation. Taken together, their passionate and impassioned narratives illustrate that the relationships between archival postulates

invariably produce symptoms. Read in conjunction with Melanie Klein, D.W. Winnicott, Freud, Camelia Elias, Walter Benjamin, and Paul de Man, these symptoms can be diagnosed as metastatic incidents of archival dis-ease.

Klein, Winnicott, Freud, Elias, Benjamin, and de Man's explicit attention to how plenitude is facilitated or demanded by pieces and parts offers, I argue, a crucial theoretical support for comprehending the broad significance of archival materiality and its association in contemporary archival discourse with redemption. While such significance certainly pertains to history-making,[17] it also pertains, and perhaps less obviously, to the continual interpersonal construction of personal and national, or individual and community, identities, and to the correspondent construction and use of figurative language, as well. Freud most clearly makes this point by arguing for the productivity of the fragmentary form that, characterized by referential indeterminacy, properly belongs to, in that it defines the contents of, the archive.[18] For example, in "Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria" and "From The History of an Infantile Neurosis," Freud's reflexive use of the fragment's unfinished, incomplete, but nonetheless denotative form in his speculative work on narrative's therapeutic (and therefore expository and explanatory) utility as a tool of diagnosis, as a possible prophylactic, and as a potential means of treatment cannot help but emphatically connect

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[17] This project henceforth assumes that this point, which has been better and more thoroughly investigated elsewhere, goes without saying.

[18] This claim contains a double meaning: Freud's fragments, "Bruchstück einer Hysterie-Analyse" and "Aus der Geschichte einer infantilen Neurose," properly belong to the Sigmund Freud Collection at the Library of Congress. However, Freud's fragments, in their referential indeterminacy, also offer examples of archival fragments. While that "referential indeterminacy" cannot help but reference Quine's hypothesis of the same name, I am not interested here in pursuing Quine's line that referential indeterminacy radically evacuates meaning from behaviorialist acquired language.

fragments and fevers, or neuroses more generally, to identity formations and constructions. Fragments, for Freud, as for the archive, (and as for their readers) not only raise archaeological questions about authentication, origination, contextualization, history, and memory, but also about desire, the desire for completion, the desire for redemption, the desire for destruction, and the language, narration, interpretation, and translation evoked by such desire.[19] The work of Klein, Winnicott, Elias, Benjamin, and de Man, in addition to that of Freud, further explores and theorizes these issues, ultimately ascribing to fragments both the potential productivity of dis-ease and the possibility that dis-ease constitutes, in the manner of homeopathic inoculation, its own narrative-based antidote. These theorists therefore offer ways to read fragments that are especially relevant for understanding the archive's manifestations as sick.

In the last part of the third chapter, I apply the foregoing discussion to a close reading of José Saramago's allegorization of archive fever's contemporary outbreak in *All the Names*. In so doing, I continue to be guided by Craven; in fact, she identifies Saramago's book, despite its 1997 publication date, as, "perhaps the first [narrative] to recognize the power of the archivist" (13). Craven refers to the archivist's professional obligation to legalize existence, an obligation both dramatized in Saramago's fiction and explained in Cornelia Vismann's *Files: Law and Media Technology*, but *All the Names*, in its provision of an allegory about the reflexive relationship, facilitated by the incompletion inherent to the archive's fragmentary contents, between the archive and its readers and writers, also offers a genre-defining illustration of the romance facilitated by

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[19] This is not surprising, of course: the connection between psychoanalysis and archives constitutes Derrida's subject in *Archive Fever*. Sven Spieker puts the connection more succinctly when he argues in *The Big Archive* that, "psychoanalysis represents one of the key responses to the modern storage crisis" (35).

the archive. Built on and fueled by the reader's desire, and defined and attended by various vicissitudes, this romance not only works to continually transform both archival fragments and thus the archive, but it also transforms the reader, as well. Consequently, Saramago's book unites my project's attention to the archive's postulates and illustrates these postulates as productive of both a desire-filled "dis-ease," in an abstract sense, and a "disease" that is a physically enervating but also potentially revitalizing manifestation.

In the fourth chapter of my dissertation, I follow the model established by my reading of *The Scarlet Letter* and *All the Names* and illustrate archive fever's revelation in a canonical archival romance of James. Here, however, and adopting Foucault's language, I add another fragment, region, and level to my project. In addition to arguing that *The Scarlet Letter*, *All the Names*, and *The Aspern Papers* contribute to an understanding of the contemporary archive's dis-ease by acting as progenitors of that dis-ease before it was identified as such, I also argue, explicitly through *The Aspern Papers*, that these works' depictions of archive fever depend on the conception of femininity as an archivistic threat. Indeed, while Hawthorne's, Saramago's, and James's works depend on the aforementioned archival postulates to dramatize narratives in which highly invested male archive readers seek to situate both *themselves* in the archive, as in *All the Names* and *The Aspern Papers*, and seek to situate the *communities* of which they want to claim a part, as in *The Scarlet Letter*, the narratives also depend on the archive's containment of a provocative and thereby dangerous woman. James's narrator makes this most explicit by describing in *The Aspern Papers* a paradigmatic corporeal economy that implicitly feminizes the archive as a provocateur of and threat to history's masculine forbear. The archive is sick because according to the narrator, the archive is feminine—

and not only, as in *The Aspern Papers*, because the female archon possesses papers, but because of the archival fragments themselves. In a repetitious echo of *The Scarlet Letter* and in anticipation of *All the Names*, Aspern's archive exists as a corpus-in-pieces, an archival *corps morcelé* through which the reader stages his own identification with and therefore possession of archival fragments as his own.

Lacan's description of the *corps morcelé*, the infant's pre-mirror-stage experience of its own body in pieces and parts, is explicitly co-opted in contemporary archival discourse in Jacqueline Rose's description of the peculiar status of Plath's archival fragments. Lacan associates this stage, or more accurately, phase, with the originary and feminine maternal imago, and Rose plays on this association by making Plath an emblematic fragmentary woman silenced by Ted Hughes's (and other highly invested archons') historically censorial influence: according to Rose's implicit argument, a biographical Plath can only ever be saved from out of her archival fragments as irredeemably lost. *The Aspern Papers*, by explicitly situating the archive as a dream space or "position" in which an archive reader's desire re-produces a feminized *corps morcelé* that enables or forces the reader's negotiation of an identity always lost to its fragmentary source and therefore always substitutive, anticipates both Lacan (and Klein) and Rose and their influences on contemporary archival discourse and the feverish archive theorized therein.

As Lacan and Klein imply and Hawthorne, Saramago, James, and Rose demonstrate, the participatory language of reading and writing constitutes archival dis-ease and its amelioration. In *The Scarlet Letter*, the narrator's text, built from the archive's erotic feminine fragments that must be repressed, nonetheless attests to his

participation in the American government as a good citizen. In *All the Names*, the protagonist redeems himself, if not the ostensible object of his archival search, through creating a scrapbook that reflects his desire for an unknown woman's fragmentary file. In *The Aspern Papers*, the archive reader communicates his fraught experience with an explicitly feminized archive through a reflective narrative that ultimately constitutes his contribution to the archive he seeks to possess. In my discussion of these three texts, I focus on the personal experiences gained by highly invested readers in their engagement with the fragmentarily feminine archive and on the political ramifications of such an engagement. I suggest that archive readers, by contextualizing fragmentary bodies (and bodies of work) within particularly defined marketplaces and political arenas, illustrate the economic and sexual significations, on the one hand, and the political significations, on the other, that have defined the archive in contemporary discourse as both cause and effect of dis-ease.

I recognize that this project abounds in irony: the irony of archival plenitude, given the archive's accumulative function but also given the necessary paucity of action and event that marks archival traces; the irony that fragments enable such plenitude; the irony of using the concept of saving to inform the contemporary designation of archive fever and dis-ease. But I welcome these instances as correspondent to and a consequence of the sustained irreconcilability (or, the ironic relationship) between the abstract archive and the everyday, practical archives visited by historians, legal professionals, and other interested archive readers. Similar to Craven and Steedman, I do not identify this irony, irreconcilability, or, in historian Thomas Osborne's terms, "agonism," as an end, as the last (albeit infinitely prolonged) inscrutable word on archives and archival discourse; I

recognize it instead as a nod to an extant reflexivity and a standing invitation for employing less conventional instruments to understand both the metastatic abstract archive's pervasive presence in and archives' simultaneous and subsequently quotidian influence on "our culture today." In the final section of my dissertation, I therefore push my analysis a step further and apply my foregoing argument about fiction's manifestation of the germs of current archival distress in an unlikely fictional pairing that suggests (an)archival directions for future archival discourse. In this final speculative coda, I subsequently consider archives through a comparative reading of Eunice Lipton's *Alias Olympia* and David Markson's *Wittgenstein's Mistress*. Both texts focus on women made dangerous by their proximity to the archive, and both emphatically link femininity, fragmentation, and desire to a definition of saving that invests fever with a destructive connotation that is nonetheless potentially ameliorative. While Lipton recounts her desire to save both herself and Victorine Meurent from the oblivion of French bureaucracy and Markson depicts a woman narrator as sole inhabitant of a post-saving and therefore post-archival dystopic world—a world saved from the archive—both texts illustrate archive fever as a productive condition that, despite Steedman's overarching, albeit implicit, argument, enables the necessarily malleable definition of the abstract and everyday archives in a continuous, progressive tense.

Chapter 1: The Archive's Symptom: A Burning A

Hawthorne's narrative has been variously investigated as a romance, or what Sacvan Bercovitch calls an atypical contribution to the genre of "tragic love," (*The Office of* The Scarlet Letter 4), as "a novel of adultery" (Bensick 137), as a feminist novel (Baym), as an "allegory of art" (Porte 99), as an allegory of alphabetization (Crain), as a historical tale (Colacurcio 461), as a "satiric" play on the Puritan jeremiad (Egan 26), and as a "civic myth" (Thomas). However, *The Scarlet Letter* also provides an ur-text for any project concerned with archives and their treatment in contemporary archival discourse.[20] Its function as such depends in part on its focus on a fragment saved in an abandoned archive and in part on the consequent expansiveness the narrative gains by such a focus. Situating his story from out of an archive abandoned in Salem's Custom House and using one of that archive's saved fragments as the impetus for investing his narrative with meaning, the narrator illustrates the archive's solicitation of and response to readers' personal, professional, and political desires. Indeed, the narrator of *The Scarlet Letter* makes the archive and its letter A the vehicle by which he recuperates and redeems his personal, professional, and political status. As such, *The Scarlet Letter* lays important foundation for comprehending the strain of redemptive romance that currently characterizes contemporary archival discourse. Although I do not here pretend to offer

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[20] Paula Rabinowitz makes the same point but to a different end in a footnote to "Pulp Theory: On Literary History." There, *The Scarlet Letter* is "[p]erhaps the ur-text of 'discovered' documents offering a source for American revisionist historiography" (99n32). In fact, Rabinowitz grounds her argument in the slippery status of footnotes as both providers of evidence and narrative, both "the equivalent of intellectuals' gossip columns" and "vessels for the detritus of knowledge." Accordingly, when I argue that *The Scarlet Letter* has much to tell its readers about the archive and the archive's own personal, political impact on its readers, I follow Rabinowitz's claim, substituting "the archive" as that place where "literary invention and historical reinvention commence" (99).

The Scarlet Letter a radically new reading, that is not my purpose; instead, I hope to show that *The Scarlet Letter*, by virtue of its archival genesis, its reliance on saved fragments, its exploitation of the woman to which one highly significant fragment synecdochically refers, and its correspondent redemption of the archive reader who defines the archive in accordance with his desires, provides a particularly relevant although routinely overlooked contribution to archival discourse.

The Scarlet Letter begins with Hawthorne's autobiographically-bent narrator's serendipitous discovery of an apparently dead letter in an abandoned archive.[21] Upon his possession of the scarlet "rag" and his subsequent reading of it, the narrator apprehends the letter's latent telesmatic, auratic qualities and claims that his apprehension makes necessary his chronicle of the letter's contextual history (31). The chronicle—self-consciously historical and fictional, editorial and creative—works to situate the scarlet letter (and *The Scarlet Letter*) according to what Samuel J.M.M. Alberti describes as an "object biography," and it consequently focuses on the letter's contribution to the biography of Hester Prynne, the history of the American Puritan community in which Prynne claimed a part, and the connection he perceives between Prynne, her community, and himself (561). While the history of Prynne and her community constitutes the focus of the story proper, the narrator frames that history with his perception of his connection to it in "The Custom House," the introductory "sketch" with which his narrative begins (2). There, the narrator illustrates that the archive facilitates, or to use the narrator's word, "exort[s]" this connection by prompting his possession, comprehension, and interpretation of the fragmentary A (33). While the archive thereby provokes the

[21] My use of "discovery" in relationship to *The Scarlet Letter* in particular (and archival discourse in general) should be taken as an always provisional term.

narrator's repetition of the founders' previous efforts to read, interpret, and fix that same A nearly two hundred years before the narrator, the narrator implies in "The Custom House" that his own repetition, which enables his recuperation of both his political identity as a good citizen and his literary identity as a solvent author possessed of "literary fame" (26), functions as an apotheosis for the nascent American community at the center of his narrative (33). By situating his story from out of the archive in "The Custom House" and by suggesting that an archival fragment prompted a narrative that features himself at least as much as that community on which he purports to focus, the narrator helps to define archive fever as an infection, produced by his encounter with the archive's *a posteriori* incomplete fragments, that manifests in his inability to dissociate himself from them.

I limit my focus in this chapter on "The Custom House." Although past and present critics have treated Hawthorne's introductory sketch as both separate from and less or more equal to the text's story proper,[22] the centrality of an abandoned or otherwise accidental archive to "The Custom House" makes Hawthorne's introduction to *The Scarlet Letter* an anticipatory contribution to contemporary archival discourse. The narrator specifically refers to an "archiv[e]" to describe the contents of a storehouse in the custom house's unfinished hall, but that room, which appears to shelter little more than

[22] A long critical tradition has seen "The Custom House" as not just literally but ideologically anterior to *The Scarlet Letter*. Donald E. Pease perhaps best describes the difficulty of "The Custom House" as endemic to Hawthorne's own difficulty in parsing the intersection of the personal and the political: "Not quite knowing how to take the Custom-House preface was not limited to its interpreters. The difficulty in ascertaining an appropriate stance to adopt in relation to the circumstances surrounding Hawthorne's firing also characterized the narrator of the preface, as well as his text. […] The unpredictability with which the preface changed its tonal register […] suggested that the text was composed out of competing dimensions of the narrator's psyche" (54).

"rubbish […] lumbering on the floor," also deserves the designator because it contains the "materials of local history." Plundered and abandoned by the King's agents, who had "carried off to Halifax" the "documents" that recorded any local history prior to the Revolution, the resultant "worthless scratchings of the pen"—scraps stored not in files but in "barrels, piled one upon another"—constitute the pieces of emphatically American, because post-Revolutionary, histories. The narrator discovers the scraps and interprets the import of at least one of them only when prompted, "one idle and rainy day" by "the saddened, weary, half-reluctant interest which we bestow on the corpse of dead activity." "Poking" and "burrowing" his way among the "musty papers," he makes that apparently fortuitous but ultimately preordained (according to his narrative) "discovery" of a decaying letter A wrapped around paper adventitiously saved in this archive of discards (27-9).

While in this way the narrator emphasizes the serendipity of his position as the custom house's archive reader, suggesting that he is only an accidental undertaker of historical bodies, such serendipity is belied by his construction in "The Custom House" of an archival fantasy. In his introduction to the story proper, the narrator highlights not, or not only, his accidental discovery of a fragmentary letter, but his *particular* aptitude for possessing, reading, and interpreting the letter. He gains this capability by virtue of his former professional status as the "Surveyor of Revenue," a position that makes him a "specialized kind of reader" (who specializes, in Patricia Crain's argument, in reading "places and objects"), but he also gains it by claiming a genealogical lineage that makes the custom-house archival fragments his personal legacy (183). Accordingly, while the narrator's assertion of his readerly distinction depends on his concomitant assertion of

Surveyor Pue as an "official ancestor," and thus his use of Pue's already extant archival history of the scarlet letter as an inherited pre-text, the narrator also asserts that in his work of narration he acts as "the representative" of a "grave, bearded, sable-cloaked and steeple crowned progenitor" whose "bitter prosecut[ory]" spirit was passed on to succeeding generations (7-8, 33).

Unlike other readers then, the narrator is in his own estimation particularly disposed—professionally and personally—to reading archival scraps. When he looks into the archive, he sees himself in its corpora. The custom-house archive subsequently communicates with the narrator, according to his own description of Pue's "ghost" and his forefather's "shadow" (33, 8), through Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok's transgenerational phantoms. In Abraham and Torok's analysis, transgenerational haunting depends not on the dead themselves but on their "secrets" and therefore on the dead's ironically present gaps and absences (171). When the narrator positions his narrative as the necessary product of his discovery of an abandoned archive, he accordingly also situates the materiality of his narrative as not only contingent on an archival fantasy but as a compensation for the past's gaps wherein the secrets that connect ghosts to their contemporary haunting await revelation.

Much of the archival secret Hawthorne's narrator seeks to divulge is that a continuum joins America's earliest governing community, and specifically Hester Prynne, to himself and to the "period of hardly accomplished revolution, and still seething turmoil" that he inhabits (44). While this continuum derives from a fantasy, a fantasy in which specialized readers project their own desires and thereby read themselves into the archive, the fantasy itself is fueled by (or "makes visible," to take a

cue from the etymology of "fantasy") a fever (*OED*). The narrator specifically attributes the fever to the fragmentary A, particularly when he writes of the physical consequences of his corporeal contact with it: although the letter produces a "pleasurable" "affect," it also causes "a sensation […] of a burning heat" that induces in the narrator a shudder (32). The contact indicates the A's role as a symptomatic carrier that transfers to the narrator an infection of restlessness ("restless" serves as one potential and Sanskritic etymological root of "fever") resulting in the narrator's "attention," "examination," "measurement," "contemplation," "possession," and "interpretation" (31-33).[23] Of course, while the narrator's obsession depends on the A's feverish function, it also depends on the A's status from out of the archive as authoritative, given the archival fragments' explicit connection to "local history," yet as also indeterminate and fragmentary. Archival objects, because their contents refer to a past that is past, are constitutively fragmentary and indeterminate; they demand a reader's participation in making their explicit connections—to local histories, for example—apparent.[24] The narrator does not, of course, describe the A's effect (and affect) in terms of the archive's sometimes-feverish and obsessive consequences for a historian or otherwise specialized reader; he instead ascribes effect and affect to the A's cryptic but therefore mystic meaningfulness.

The utility of "The Custom House" to contemporary archival discourse inheres not just in the centrality of an abandoned archive to its story and not just in the

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[23] The restlessness is not just figurative (as in the restless work of fixing meaning); it is also physical: it caused the narrator to "pac[e] to and fro across [the] room," to "travers[e], with a hundred-fold repetition, the long extent from the front-door of the Custom House to the side entrance, and back again" (34).
[24] I unpack this argument in chapters two and three.

connection the introduction draws between the archive's relationship to an authentic, specific past and its fragments' production of a physical feverishness. Its utility also inheres in the A and specifically in the implicit argument in "The Custom House" that archival fragments such as the letter A produce among their readers fevers that must be treated via incomplete cryptograms awaiting decipherment and completion. The narrator accordingly stresses that the A that produces the oft-critically-commented-upon burning sensation also functions, in its status as a "mystic symbol" "most worthy of interpretation," as a kind of talisman (31). From "telesm," which among its meanings includes "to complete, fulfil [sic], perform (rites,) officiate (in the mysteries)," a talisman is first "a statue set up, or an object buried under a pillar or the like to preserve the community, house, etc. from danger" and then "a stone, ring or other object engraven with figures or characters, to which are attributed the occult powers of the planetary influences and celestial configurations under which it was made" (*OED*). The narrator's investment of the fragmentary A with mystic symbolism and corollary talismanic properties, particularly the talismanic property that gestures to the "end" assumed by "telos," emphasizes the auratic qualities gained by the letter from its archival association. In fact, the narrator's demonstration of the archival letter's performative (and preservative) facility suggests that part of archive fever manifests in attributing to archival fragments just these capabilities.

Much of the letter's fiery power in "The Custom House" and in Hawthorne's text as a whole is contingent on and revolves around its assumption of auratic significations, but much of the letter's power also depends on its function as a means or an agent of integration and thus as a force of assimilation. While the fragmentary nature of archival

contents always requires readers' contributory completion, the archival A, an *a priori* fragment by virtue of its particular place in and connection to the alphabet, more explicitly requires the integration and assimilation that follows from readers' completion.[25] Indeed, the A's alphabetic import explains why, in addition to providing the narrator an archival fragment that demands his participation in the making of its meanings, the A promotes, in *The Scarlet Letter* and as Crain argues in *The Story of A: The Alphabetization of America from* The New England Primer *to* The Scarlet Letter, an allegory of alphabetization. Crain contends that *The Scarlet Letter* is informed by Hawthorne's view of the alphabet as an "artifact" through which culture gains its shapes. The contention speaks to the alphabet's function in the Western world of cultural knowledge, and particularly but certainly not only textual knowledge, as a crucial (and implicitly "handmade" or *artifactual*) method for organization in encyclopedias, indexes, libraries, and archives. Although Joan M. Schwartz and Terry Cook write that the alphabet as a method for organization is not limited, "as an agent to those disposing of power," and that its malleability ensures that it "enhance[s] the creativity and utility of record-keeping systems of the marginal as much as the mainstream" (15), the alphabet's composition and its application in and to the archive suggests that it imposes a particular and circumscribed order (a particular means of integration and assimilation) on that which it describes.[26]

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[25] According to Lauren Berlant in *The Anatomy of National Fantasy*, Hawthorne's text depends on an "alphabet for a collective consciousness" that spells out the meanings of the "National Symbolic," the "common language of a common space (20-1).
[26] The A feels particularly constrictive in *The Scarlet Letter*, which emphasizes the alphabet's sequential composition by making the A its repetitive starting point.

The A's explicit reference to the archive via its auratic and alphabetic power makes it therefore both a reductive and an expansive fragment that, with the aid of a specialized participatory reader, communicates systemic social meanings by which readers integrate and are themselves integrated (particularly readers such as the narrator, who self-consciously work to forge fragments' connectivity). While Millicent Bell strives to make this point by invoking the A's alphabetic import in "The Obliquity of Signs" (nearly twenty years before Crain), she needs Bercovitch in *The Office of* The Scarlet Letter to expand her argument to the letter's more explicit social or artifactual function (9). Bercovitch defines the A accordingly as "first and last a cultural artifact, a symbol that expresses the needs of the society *within and for which it was produced*" (xiv; my emphasis). The A in Bercovitch's reading accrues meaning not only through the alphabet and not only through the alphabet's proximity to decipherment, but through the alphabet's socializing role in America's cultural, which is also to say political, landscape. Bell and Bercovitch attend to the A's import as a social symbol, but in *The Story of A* the A reaches its critical apotheosis: Crain widens the A's social function as argued by Bercovitch to claim that *The Scarlet Letter* privileges "the work of alphabetizing" because the A's alphabetic function "reflects" how people "move through and are shaped by" the world (175).

While Bell, Bercovitch and Crain focus on the alphabet rather than the archive, Crain's argument bridges Bell and Bercovitch to describe the A via its role in the alphabet in implicitly archival terms. Similar to the archive, the A in Crain's argument depends for its meanings on a reflexive repetition and on a simultaneous function as a tool for integration and assimilation (or what Crain identifies as a "metonymic or

synecdochic" or otherwise indexical capability). Further, Crain underscores that such repetition and functionality cannot but redound, and politically, on the society in which the A is situated as incomplete but as nonetheless (and perhaps consequently) meaningful.[27] Read through these critics' alphabetic focus, the archive in which Hawthorne's narrator finds the A in "The Custom House" partakes in the alphabet's power not only because the archive mandates the narrator's integration of the letter into a system of knowledge formation as powerful (which is to say as integrative and reflective) as the alphabet itself, but because the archive more generally, and particularly in its Western iteration, draws much of its epistemological power from that alphabet.

Accordingly, the archive and its requisite reconstruction of the past, which in turn constitutes the institutionalization of history, reveals the common utility of the archive and the alphabet as modes and systems for understanding events.[28] Such conformity suggests that the ostensibly historical narrative provided by the narrator in *The Scarlet Letter* will consolidate and contribute to a more structurally sound (which is to say

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[27] Bercovitch in *The Office of* The Scarlet Letter takes this particular political angle as his explicit theme. Bercovitch's concept of politics, informed by Hawthorne's view of the "ironic development from theocracy to democracy" and marked especially by the passage of time between the Revolution and the Civil War, is described in the following way (38):

> I have in mind the sustained liberal commitment of those who spoke for the Republic: the shared values, symbols, and beliefs that at once fueled and circumscribed the debates between Thomas Jefferson and John Adams, Thomas Paine and Timothy Dwight, Andrew Jackson and John Quincy Adams, Ralph Waldo Emerson and Daniel Webster, Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas. Those debates can be said to mark the organic development from 'classical' to 'marketplace' liberalism. And in turn that quintessentially ideological development can be said to have guided the nation, through a civil war of unprecedented violence and destruction, from the era of liberal expansion to that of liberal incorporation. (xvi)

[28] The archive's contribution to the institutionalization of history echoes Bell, Bercovitch, and Crain's arguments for *The Scarlet Letter*'s contribution, via its fragmentary A, to the institutionalization of literacy.

completed) American archive via the alphabetic completion he must append to the alphabetic A.[29] Rather than just one archival scrap among others, then, the A appropriately constitutes the *alpha* archival fragment that, in calling forth absent connections, gestures to the order that the custom house archive, for example, *ought to* but does not, without the narrator's translational effort, yet have (182).

The A in "The Custom House," which externalizes archival fragmentation and its connection to an alphabetic denotation of succession and continuity thus cannot but emphasize the archive's constitutional fragmentation and the corollary referential indeterminacy by which it invokes its readers' integrations and assimilations. Denotation, in fact, in the etymological sense of "marking out," indicates the very *requirement* for integration or assimilation that informs the archival A's ability in the narrator's introductory sketch to bring into pointed proximity America's earliest founders, the American Revolution, and the revolution's repetition in the narrator's own time (*OED*). The narrator therefore exploits the A's discontinuous-continuous sense to situate the auratic, talismanic, alphabetic letter as a piece of a fragmented history already begun and calling out—demanding—to be finished. In "The Custom House," the A, and particularly the archival A, *must* be read and *must* be written. The narrator's implicit argument makes the archival A his history's authorization, and in so doing, makes his

[29] The completion supplied by text of *The Scarlet Letter* can be considered in material terms: the archive in "The Custom House," is explicitly described as unfinished: it comprises a "large room, in which the brick-work and naked rafters have never been covered with paneling and plaster […] the airy hall […] remains unfinished to this day" (27). The A's fragmentariness mimics this incompletion: by completing (through continuation) the one, the narrator necessarily completes (through continuation) the other.

self-conscious participatory act of reading the historic alphabet central to the themes he introduces through *The Scarlet Letter*'s "Custom House."[30]

A typographic and symptomatic carrier of the archive's transferable infection, the A functions for the narrator as an imprimatur[31] under which he can, and indeed must, assume the archontic duties of appropriation, possession, appraisal,[32] and *interpretation*[33] to realize the letter's "end." Accordingly, the A authorizes the narrator's dual role in "The Custom House" both as an "editor, or very little more," and as a creator who "allowed [himself] nearly or altogether as much license as if the facts had been entirely of [his] own invention" (2, 33). It also, and as a consequence, permits the narrator's incorporation of Prynne's story into his own—by providing the A with his own contextual completion, the narrator continues her story and that of the community in

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[30] Such centrality explains why Crain's overarching argument, following Bell, suggests that the A's primacy ensures *The Scarlet Letter* illustrates the institutionalization of literacy in America and indicates that *The Scarlet Letter* participates in the tradition of making literacy the means by which to claim American citizenship, which has been more obviously illustrated in the slave narrative tradition (*The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, and illustrated in the work of Phillis Wheatley).

[31] While an imprimatur indicates that a book's printing has been approved and also and importantly suggests therefore a rule of censorship, its root in "imprimere," or "impress," including "to press (a thing *upon* another) so as to leave a mark," gestures not just to the talisman's engravings but to the literal mode of incorporation Hawthorne's narrator performs when he completes Prynne's story and thereby authorizes it as his own (*OED*). My emphasis here is on Hawthorne's narrator's incorporative mode, but Crain, too, in *The Story of A* points out that "Hawthorne stamps his name on the A, claiming with magisterial confidence the story of its origins as his own" (184). The "political effects" accrued by such imprimatur or stamp hearken back to Stoler's point in *Along the Archival Grain* that the administrative "products of the state" (the contents of the archive, in other words), augment more traditional historical narratives (232-3).

[32] Which Cox describes as "part of a larger process of building public memory and a process of connecting to other societal events related to the past" (40-1),

[33] What archivist Tom Nesmith claims, counter to the traditional (which is to say not-post-modern) discourse of archivists, is "always at the heart of the management and use of documents" (25).

which she claims a part. In fact, it is his narrative's coextension with Prynne via the A that indicates that archive fever's manifestation in "The Custom House" already functions as metastasis. The coextension is displayed not only by his position vis-à-vis the archive, nor by his professional and genealogical claims, nor even by his authorized work to provide the scarlet letter with an interpretive "end"; the coextension that signals metastasis is explicit in the narrator's implicit assertion that his restless work to possess, read, and interpret the scarlet letter repeats as a mutation the work ascribed in the story proper to the founders and subjects of the original American colony (47).

According to the narrator's archival reconstructive reading, in the founders' initial attempts to interpret the scarlet letter, they instantiated the modes of comprehension and interpretation necessary to reading meanings in ambiguous, because fragmentary and unfixed but also referential, letters. While the founders initially encountered the letter through the context of community—when Prynne debuted her new role in Salem on the scaffold—, they were soon forced to encounter the letter through the context of Prynne's individuality, as well. The shift prompted the founders to detach the A from adultery and attach it to both "a badge of shame," and to "a softer pillow" and "a token [of] many good deeds." For the Puritan founders, the A would thus stand not only for the sexual liaison between Prynne and Dimmesdale ("adultery," as most critics have noted, does not appear in the story proper), but for "Able," for "angel" for "Arthur" and, for my purposes, for the custom-house "archive" (69,167-8, 213).[34] The narrator, prompted in

[34] The question of what the A "stands for" functions as a major trope in *The Scarlet Letter*'s critical canon, from Henry James to Crain. Both Bercovitch and Crain argue for *The Scarlet Letter*'s continuing cultural relevance in terms of its insistence on and enactment of reading symbols, reading for what things "stand for," which is to say, *interpreting* things, even if such interpretation reveals that a thing stands "for nothing

"The Custom House" by the abandoned archive and its fever-producing fragment, suggests that his engagement with these interpretive strategies merely echoes the work of the Puritan founders and the more recent historicizing work of Surveyor Pue (who provided "a reasonably complete explanation of the whole affair" generations before Hawthorne's narrator occupied his same post) (47, 32). That the letter was retained in the custom house as an unfixable and auratic fragment appropriate for an archive and thus for repetition not only authorizes the narrator's echo, as I have argued above, but suggests that the link it provides between the narrator's own identity, the Puritan community, and Prynne depends not on the letter per se, according to the narrator, but on those interpretive strategies and otherwise participatory reading practices mandated by the letter and reinforced by the archive in its future-facing position.

The narrator suggests that the archive simply affords him the opportunity to repeat the work of the Puritan community to interpret the fragmentary A; however, by his repetition, he shifts the Puritan founders' focus from ideology to administration and bureaucratization. In fact, from the narrator's perspective, the administration and bureaucratization the Puritans practiced in response to the A's fragmentariness constitute the very coherence of American identity.[35] By associating the Puritans' work to manage the A and its multiple meanings with civic participation, the narrator thereby anticipates Max Weber's later identification of the importance of administration and

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more serious than itself," in James's influential words. James's *Hawthorne* denigrated *The Scarlet Letter*'s weaknesses (particularly obvious in the A's designation as mystic symbol) while corroborating its important to the American canon it produces ("it was the finest piece of imaginative writing yet put forth in the country") (108).

[35] Prynne, bearing her A, enables the community's coalescence: "'Do you see that woman with the embroidered badge?' [Salem's private inhabitants] would say to strangers. 'It is our Hester,—the town's own Hester, who is so kind to the poor, so helpful to the sick, so comfortable to the afflicted!'" (168-9).

bureaucratization to the meaning of and as the means to efficiently governing communities, particularly America's democratic ones. In fact, in "The Custom House," Hawthorne's narrator identifies the Puritans as the genesis of Weber's thesis and suggests that their reading practices make them founding contributors to the ideal of American *citizenship*, which the narrator specifies as "*good* citizenship" (55; my emphasis). The narrator of course benefits from his own suggestion: his retrospective identification, which enables him to proffer his own text as an authoritative contemporary and continuous contextualization, hints at his dependence on the Puritan community's cohesive identity as a nascent government of good citizens for an identity of his own.[36] From his eminently bureaucratic position and the reading practices it mandates, the narrator subsequently posits an evolution from Puritan civic society and citizenry towards later versions of American democracy.[37]

Because the narrator must impute the administration and bureaucratization associated with his own custom-house archive as endemic to the Puritan community to claim such an evolution, he must also posit the Puritans' break with the interpretive tradition of typology.[38] While typology relates to archival discourse through a common

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[36] Ultimately, the narrator also argues that contextualization takes the primary place of archival fragments themselves: "The original papers, together with the scarlet letter itself," he writes, "are still in my possession, and shall be freely exhibited to whomsoever, *induced by the great interest of the narrative*, may desire a sight of them" (33; my emphasis).

[37] The narrator explicitly describes his administrative role through his work to write: "The Custom House marker imprinted [his name], with a stencil and black pain, on pepper-bags, and basket of annatto, and cigar-boxes, and bales of all kinds of dutiable merchandise, in testimony that these commodities had paid the impost, and gone regularly through the office" (27).

[38] I am indebted in this section to Rabinowitz, who suggested that my argument attend more closely to Puritan typology and conversion narratives. My discussion of typology has been informed principally from Perry Miller, Ursula Brumm, and Bercovitch (who

foundation in repetitive and participatory reading (both typology and archival discourse demand that the reader contribute, and rigorously, to meaning-making and to the management of meaning), the differences between the modes of interpretation demanded by the archive and by typology are stark. In Puritan practice, typology depends on prophecy, on the Old Testament (fore)telling the "same story" as that told by the New Testament. According to Nicholas Noyes's description in *New England's Duty*, typology assumes that "*Prophecy* is History *antedated*; and History is *Postdated Prophecy*; the same thing is told in both" (43; Noyes's emphasis). Subsequently, although typology depends on a similar repetitious interpretation and on a similar integrative and assimilative force as that demanded by the archival A, there is no place in typology for the incomplete fragment. Typology circumscribes interpretation by assuming the fixedness of meaning; it neither allows—much less requires—the freedom assumed by the narrator when he claims, for example, artistic license in his own interpretation of the scarlet letter.[39]

Additionally, and as Bercovitch has persuasively argued in articles such as "The Typology of the American Mission" and "Typology in Puritan New England," the Puritans typologically read themselves as poised at "the final stage of history" ("American Mission" 136). They therefore interpreted the signs in the world around them as neither fragmentary nor as providing information about the past, but as indicators

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built his *oeuvre* on explaining, often against Miller, typology's link to American liberal identity).

[39] Bercovitch, in "Typology in Puritan New England: The Williams-Cotton Controversy Reassessed," uses Miller's claim that traditional typology represented a conservatism repugnant to later (as in third-generation American) Puritans as a platform from which to persuasively argue that typology indeed functioned as the foregoing Puritan paradigm in the late seventeenth-century and beyond.

of the scriptural destiny they were on the verge of inheriting and thus as extensions of a past story about a future the realization of which would end time. When the narrator reads the A for what it can tell him about the Puritan past and what it can tell him about his own political future, he depends on typology to both invest his reading of the A with Puritannical familiarity and to ensure that that familiarity functions as a difference from more traditional, which is to say more rigorously or strictly typological Protestant interpretive modes. The narrator therefore depicts the Puritans as enacting the typological tradition in their initial reading of Prynne's A, but in the bulk of the story proper he describes the Puritans' encounters with the A, as mentioned above, in accordance with a far more fluid, far more fragmentary signifier.[40] The archival A's utility for the narrator in "The Custom House" lies therefore not only in its connection to modes of participatory reading that partake in administration and bureaucratization, but in its illustration of the Puritan forebears' response to a sign that *did not* or *would not* correspond to an Old Testament type.

The A *should have* corresponded for the Puritans, and *exactly*—with no remainder, no remnant—to an explicit biblical referent; more particularly, the A *should have* corresponded, and finally, to adultery and to the "flames of the eternal pit." The narrator insists, however, that once it descends from the scaffold, the A corresponds to those flames *and* to "able" *and* to "angel" *and* to "Arthur." Released from the scaffold—itself explicitly tied to the Old World guillotine—the A fragments and forces the Puritans to read and interpret away from the Old Testament and towards a far more secular history

[40] "Individuals in private life […] had quite forgiven Hester Prynne for her frailty; nay, more, they had begun to look upon the scarlet letter as the token, not that one sin, for which she had borne so long and dreary a penance, but of her many good deeds since" (168).

(the history of Prynne's amoral and moral deeds, for example). Consequently, the narrator's reproduction of the reading of the A releases it from Puritanical typology into an interpretative mode indicative not of Old Testament redemption but of the redemption implicitly associated by the narrator in "The Custom House" with both the archive and, through the archive, government. In the introductory sketch, the narrator thereby positions the whole of *The Scarlet Letter* as an antitype that corresponds to the A, not in and of itself, but in the variety of significations it accrues in its Puritan context. The explicit irony here is at least partially undone in the coherence between antitype and type: the A in "The Custom House" foregrounds the participatory reading and interpretive practices of the Puritans to suggest an inherent progression from Puritan typology to the narrator's own symbolic, democratic work.

Thus the narrator depends on the Puritan tradition of typology, but he only ironically treats the hierarchy of Christian theocracy or the typological Puritan tradition of "regard[ing] reality textually" as a book "which might be compared to scripture" (Bell 13). Instead, in "The Custom House" he makes the archive—its association with an authentic, authoritative, and comprehensive past, its containment of "mystic" saved fragments, and its dependence on specialized readers for administrative, bureaucratic contextualization—*stand in for* Puritan scripture and *stand for* the Puritan evolution away from scriptural reading. Although he begins "The Custom House" as an already-institutionalized reader mediating his institutional conscription through his role as a hobbyist collector who feels the same "pleasure" in perusing old documents as in "pick[ing] up Indian arrow-heads" (29), when prompted by the custom house's archive, the scarlet letter's "burning heat," and its talismanic properties, the narrator feels a fever

that promulgates the writing by which he identifies his duty as Salem's Surveyor as tantamount to that of not only an accidental archivist and an administrative historian, but to that of a good citizen cut from Prynne's Puritan cloth. The narrator takes the opportunity of his archival discovery to provide a narrative reconstruction that displays the same a-typological practices of the Puritans to assert the aforementioned connection he perceives between those founders and himself as not just their personal and professional descendant, but their administrative, bureaucratic, and ultimately democratic descendent as well.

The Puritan community described by the narrator explicitly consists not of citizens of course but of *subjects*, as evidenced by the beadle's cry when escorting Prynne to the scaffold to "[m]ake way, good people, make way in the King's name." The narrator nonetheless confers upon them the potential for "good citizenship"[41] when he situates their a-typological interpretive reading as evidence of an otherwise anachronistic engagement in civic politics (55).[42] This reading does not originate with the letter A, however (which acts as its reinforcement), but with the scaffold. According to the narrator, the scaffold in the Puritan marketplace, a gentler descendent of the guillotine, promotes good citizenship because it, similar to the pillory, disallows "the culprit to hide his face for shame" (53). By disallowing a shamed face to be hidden, the scaffold

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[41] The context follows below:

> In fact, this scaffold constituted a portion of a penal machine, which now, for two or three generations past, has been merely historical and traditionary among us, but it was held, in the old time, to be as effectual an agent, in the promotion of good citizenship, as ever was the guillotine among the terrorists of France. (55)

[42] Thomas in "Citizen Hester: *The Scarlet Letter* as Civic Myth" makes the anachronistic invocation of "citizenship" the starting point for his argument about the nature of Prynne's subjecthood.

thereby forcibly opens the countenance—and the sins potentially written thereon—to be read. This scene of reading constitutes precisely the activity engaged in by Prynne's community when at the beginning of the story proper she takes her ignominious place: the narrator's description of "the heavy weight of a thousand unrelenting eyes, all fastened upon her, and concentrated at her bosom" refers to the community's efforts to read Prynne as standing behind and thus standing *for* the scarlet letter. That is to say, the Puritans read the forcibly open countenance of Prynne's face as contextualized, and ironically, given its fragmentation, by the A (57).[43]

While the narrator situates his dual role in relation to his text as characterized by his editorial and creative work, he stages this scaffold scene to claim his dual role as both citizen and subject, both administrator, and thus perpetrator, and victim. Accordingly, he envisions the scene as an institutionalized primal scene witnessed not only by the Puritan community of "primitive statesmen" but by Prynne, in an inverted form, as well.[44] His adoption of the perspective of the Puritan statesmen rather easily follows the narrator's self-proclaimed role and implicit political ambition in "The Custom House," but his adoption of Prynne's perspective requires slightly more explanation. It is not simply that

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[43] The association is made the easier given that Prynne attempts to hide the letter, though of course she cannot, by "press[ing] her infant to her bosom with so convulsive a force that the poor babe uttered [a] cry of pain" (60). I would also like here to underscore here what I hope is obvious in the claim above: the face forcibly opened to being read activates the etymology of "face" that suggests it is itself a part, "*part* of a thing which is presented" and makes of it a fragment (*OED*; my emphasis). The *Oxford English Dictionary* indicates that this use descends from biblical expressions, suggesting a possible distorted typological link between the Old Testament and the fragment.

[44] Prynne on the scaffold could in fact function as this nascent civic community's symbolic primal scene, given that such scenes are not recognized as such and given that the narrator associates Prynne in this moment with the Papist's view of the virgin Mary, "Divine Maternity," and Dimmesdale with both "all the learning of the age" and a childlikeness (56, 66-7). This discussion is fit for another chapter in another project, however.

the A enables the narrator to identify with Prynne's victimization (although it does); the A additionally enables the narrator to identify with Prynne's indictment, with the sexual or erotic root of that indictment, and with the radical interpretive license she claims as that indictment's consequence. The identification is made explicit and explicitly sexual in what can be considered the primal custom-house scene wherein the narrator takes up the A and places it on his own chest. In that moment, he occupies Prynne's position to feel through the letter the undeniably penetrative heat of that "red-hot iron" and consequential sexualized "shudder" (32). His erotic identification with Prynne endows him with the interpretive power he confers upon her feminine sexuality, but his subsequent narrative, which works much like the response of the primitive statesmen to contain the letter by repressing its inherent eroticism *within* its fluid, anti-erotic meanings, indicates his recognition of Prynne's dangerousness.[45]

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[45] This power is evident when the narrator describes the speculative mode allowed her by the A:

> The world's law was no law for her mind […] she assumed a freedom of speculation […]. Indeed, the same dark question often rose into her mind, with reference to the whole race of womanhood. Was existence worth accepting, even to the happiest among them? […] She discerns, it may be, such a hopeless task before her. As a first step, the whole system of society is to be torn down, and built up anew. Then, the very nature of the opposite sex, or its long hereditary habit, which has become like nature, is to be essentially modified, before woman can be allowed to assume what seems a fair and suitable position" (170-2).

It is this type of passage that leads Jennifer Fleischner to argue that Hawthorne "locates female eroticism at the origin of meaning" (515-6) and that founds Berlant's analysis of the common ground of intimacy between "erotic and political desire" (163). The danger inherent to his location can be measured by Hawthorne's biography: he simultaneously, and famously, relies on women (Sophia Hawthorne, Margaret Fuller, his various female characters) to inspire or otherwise push his writing, but he at the same time feels too indebted to them and demonstrates (in his political career, for one), a desire to claim a more authoritative, solvent manliness.

Hawthorne's narrator's elevation (via repetition in his own time and through his own words) of the repression exercised by the primitive statesmen, a repression always at least partially undone, of course, by the A's refusal to be fixed, consists in far more than an authorial flourish. The narrator reveals in "The Custom House" that although his possession of the A penetrates him with Prynne's power, he has real need of making the whole of his text stand as evidence of his unsullied service to his government and attest to the good citizenship he redefines through specialized types of reading and writing. In fact, while the material production of the narrator's story proper depends first on his discovery of the custom-house archive and its fever-provoking fragment, it also and as importantly depends on his extra-textual dismissal from his position as Salem's Surveyor.[46] The dismissal, which suggests that the narrator is not the agnostic political victim he claims to be in "The Custom House," positions his text as a medium by and in which the narrator *must* redefine good citizenship away from the passive definition he sees exercised in his professional duties at the custom house (where ineffectual "white heads" ought to be subjected to "the guillotine," or ought to at least "giv[e] place to younger men, more orthodox in politics") and towards the active, participatory interpretive techniques exercised at the demand of the archive's fragmentary A and

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[46] For a comprehensive history of Hawthorne's hiring and firing, see Stephen Nissenbaum's authoritative "The Firing of Nathaniel Hawthorne." Hawthorne's firing certainly reinvigorated his authorship, if only by making him want to expose and vilify his fellow co-workers. In an oft-cited letter to Longfellow, Hawthorne writes, "'I must confess it stirs up a little of the devil in me to find myself hunted by these political bloodhounds […] I may perhaps select a victim and let fall one little drop of venom on his heart, that shall make him writhe before the grin of the multitude for a considerable time to come." Hawthorne here refers to the retribution offered by his pen. "If they will not be grateful for its works of beauty and beneficence, then let them dread it as a pervasive and penetrating mischief, that can reach them at their firesides and in the bedchambers, follow them to far countries, and make their very graves refuse to hide them" (qtd. in Nissenbaum 62).

integrated into narrative by his own specialized reading.[47] These techniques, descended from Prynne but tempered through her civic community's repression, enable the narrator to recuperate, by his demonstration, good citizenship through his literary, which the narrator suggests is to say a-political, name.[48]

While the recuperation, particularly as it depends on a repetition of the A's unfixed meanings, suggests a corroboration of Bercovitch's argument about *The Scarlet Letter*'s midwife attendance to the birth of the mythic vision of American liberality, the narrator's version of the development of democracy is clearly not especially egalitarian in its representation. Much of this can be attributed the narrator's defensive stance in response to the (similar) dangers he sees posed by both Prynne and by the government for which he works. Prynne poses a danger for the narrator because her radical interpretive capabilities, which follow from her eroticism, make her capable of defining a democracy in which reigns an equal representation that must threaten the narrator's manhood, contingent as that manhood is both on his own specialized interpretive abilities and his own claim on democratic representation. The government for which the narrator works, however, is similarly emasculating: although his custom-house position affords the narrator a living at a cost of three-and-a-half hours' daily work, he complains in "The Custom House," like an anticipatory (and voluble) Bartleby, of its deadening effect. He

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[47] The narrator describes his political agnosticism in the following revealingly self-interested terms: "It appears to me—who have been a calm and curious observer, as well in victory as defeat—that this fierce and bitter spirit of malice and revenge has never distinguished the many triumphs of my own party as it now did that of the Whigs" (42).
[48] The "a-politics" of literature is the narrator's implicit claim, not mine. More generally, in my argument that Hawthorne uses *The Scarlet Letter* as a political defense and simultaneous claim to participation in his civic community, I follow Jonathan Arac who writes that through his art, Hawthorne "defend[ed] himself against political embroilments" (248).

cannot write—his "imagination was a tarnished mirror"—and he concludes that the government is responsible (34). He subsequently warns his audience about the man who "leans on the mighty arm of the Republic":

> [that man's] own proper strength deserts him […]. He loses he capability of self-support […] whoever touches [Uncle Sam's gold] should look well to himself, or he may find the bargain to go hard against him, involving, if not his soul, yet many of its better attributes; its sturdy force, its courage and constancy, its truth, its self-reliance, and *all that gives the emphasis to manly character*. (39-40; my emphasis)

While the custom-house position supplies him with a livelihood, such livelihood results in an enervation that stalls that hand by which the narrator would prefer to make his fortune and aforementioned "literary fame." The government's deployment of emasculating power ensures that it poses an explicitly feminine threat, and the narrator consequently characterizes it as an "unhappy," "truculen[t]," "vixenly," "she-eagle" (3). Eroticized as such, the government that thwarts Hawthorne's narrator's desired career in letters cannot but refer to the similar threat posed by Prynne (3). While Prynne's threat can be repressed, the government's threat must be mastered. Unsurprisingly, both repression and mastery are served by the A. An illicit fragment in the sense of the erotic charge it retains from Prynne and its existence as an abandoned "corpse" in an unfinished part of the custom house, the letter provides the means by which the narrator, exercising the Puritan legacy of patriarchal repression, claims a citizenship based not on filial duty alone but on a reenactment of the repression through which he reclaims—by writing—his literary liveli- and therefore manhood.

Ultimately, the second- and third-hand history that contain Prynne, although already written and extant in the archive, must thereby be suppressed so that through the fragmentary A the narrator can promote a historical version of his own. The narrator's version, which repeats the repression of Prynne's eroticism while it simultaneously co-opts its interpretive power, re-consigns Prynne to the archive. "Consign," from Latin's *consignare*, means "to furnish, mark, or attest with a seal"; "to commit or dedicate"; "to inflict confinement on," and indicates the archive's occasional function as a trap. While the archive promotes and requires participatory reading practices that evoke an ideological representation often associated, and especially more recently, as suggested in this chapter's conclusion below, with explicitly democratic narratives, it also promotes the power of repression. The evidence of the power gained by the narrator as a consequence of Prynne's re-consignment is corroborated (or rather celebrated) in the para-textual presence of the author's note to the second edition. There he identifies himself with *The Scarlet Letter*'s author, testifies to the truth-value of "The Custom House," and verifies the first edition's runaway success (3). Consequently, while the A enables the narrator to explicitly identify with Prynne and her status as an outcast victim in a community that recognizes her via her eroticism as both surplus and deficit, his re-possession and re-inscription of the archive's saved fragments enables him to claim for himself both the eroticism that vaults her interpretative capabilities into radical speculation, and the active or *manly* citizenship, available through his archival work, that he then only symbolically and therefore ambivalently extends to her.

Although the narrator accordingly claims a victimhood similar to that of Prynne via his association with the custom house and its aggressive and unsympathetic

government that "sooner or later, —and oftener soon than late, —is apt to fling off her nestlings, with a scratch of her claw, a dab of her beak, or a rankling wound from her barbed arrows," he partakes in the same aggression when he claims his role as the custom house's historian and administrator and later, as one of the government's good citizens (3).[49] "The Custom House," which therefore *seems* to situate the narrator's efforts to save the letter A from disintegration into meaninglessness, and through the letter Prynne, *actually* situates the narrator's efforts to save himself. The narrator makes this very point when he reports that the story proper itself was *demanded* by the ghost of Surveyor Pue (in whose "half a dozen sheets of foolscap" is already contained the oral-interview-based biography of Prynne)—not because Prynne needed or deserved redemption but because redeeming her through and as a fragment would benefit the narrator: "'Do this,' said Mr Surveyor Pue […] 'do this, and the profit shall be all your own!'" (34). Despite redeeming in a secular context the Puritanical notion of "saved" under the flag and insignia of a democratic America and therefore claiming to effect Prynne's redemption in

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[49] The full passage relating to the custom house's synecdochic relationship to America follows below:

> Over the entrance hovers an enormous specimen of the American eagle, with outspread wings, a shield before her breast, and, if I recollect aright, a bunch of intermingled thunderbolts and barbed arrows in each claw. With the customary infirmity of temper that characterizes this unhappy fowl, she appears, by the fierceness of her beak and eye, and the general truculency of her attitude, to threaten mischief to the inoffensive community; and especially to warn all citizens, careful of their safety, against intruding on the premises which she overshadows with her wings. Nevertheless, vixenly as she looks, many people are seeking, at this very moment to shelter themselves under the wing of the federal eagle; imagining, I presume, that her bosom has all the softness and snugness of an eiderdown pillow. But she has no great tenderness, even in the her best of moods, and, sooner or later, —oftener soon than late, —is apt to fling off her nestlings, with a scratch of her claw, a dab of her beak, or a rankling wound from her barbed arrows. (3)

his own translation and transcription, the narrator buries Prynne in the archive by which he saves himself.[50]

Its focus on redemption ensures that the connection the narrator draws between Puritan typology and American democracy via the archive's facilitation of his claim to good citizenship also reflexively partakes in the long tradition of conversion narratives that have since the Puritans defined America's literary conventions.[51] When the narrator illustrates through "The Custom House" the ways in which he enacts his own redemption (professionally and therefore financially, but also and consequently, personally) through the text that constitutes *The Scarlet Letter*, he expands his radical revision of Puritan typology to a similarly radical revision of Puritan conversion narratives. As mentioned above, the narrator needs the text to save himself; he therefore needs it to enact his own conversion and to provide evidence that he has been saved. This is why he makes the impetus for the end he appends to the fragmentary, archival A his professional death: in "The Custom House," the narrator was the "object" of the new government's "blood thirstiness" and was consequently the "first" to be decapitated (41). His "autobiographical" "sketch," and the "volume" in which it finds inclusion, consists therefore in his ironic resuscitation from "beyond the grave" (45).

Conversion narratives, according to Edmund S. Morgan's *Visible Saints*, which Patricia Caldwell describes in her study of conversion narratives as foundational for Puritan ideology, developed among Puritans before their journey to New England as a

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[50] This burial constitutes the story proper's famous last lines.
[51] According to Robert F. Sayre, while autobiographies descend from St. Augustine, in America, their major predecessor consists of religious conversion narratives, in which, "authors looked back from a single organizing perspective and told a fairly coherent story of a sizeable portion of their lives" (243).

means by which individuals could recognize and therefore claim, or at least feel secure in, their "prospects for salvation."[52] Consequently, conversion narratives arose out of an individual believer's need, a need inherent to Calvinism, to identify whether or not the individual believer possessed "saving faith." The saved, according to Calvinism, are defined as such by predestination, and strict Calvinism offered as indications of predestination only the weak signs of "justification," or "the imputation of Christ's righteousness to man" (evident in faith and not in works), and of justification's resulting "sanctification," or "the gradual improvement of man's behavior in obedience to God" (Morgan 66-7). Dissatisfied by these opaque guides, Puritan followers demanded from Protestant, and particularly Puritan, ministers a surer way of recognizing who possessed within themselves the saving faith.

Ministers such as William Perkins responded to the need by developing ten different stages of the "operation of faith." Among these stages are included four preparatory stages wherein an individual first attended "on the ministry of the word" and at the same time experienced some obvious calamity, which worked to "subdue the stubbornness" of an individual's nature. Next, the individual comes to recognize God's ordination of good and evil, which results in a recognition of his or her own sins. Such recognition prompts the necessarily crucial "humiliation," wherein an individual realizes his or her hopelessness and "despair[s] of his salvation." While these four stages can be experienced and attested to by anyone, the stages that follow are reserved for those potential vessels of God's grace: to wit, the converted recognize the opportunity offered

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[52] Bercovitch's discussion of typology also focuses on the Puritan's emphasis on the importance to the Puritan community of recognizing the individual and within the individual the possibility for salvation.

by the Gospel, feel a profound faith (or what Perkins referred to as the "'desire to believe'"), and experience a simultaneous doubt and despair that challenges the profoundness of that faith and that therefore prompts a plea for pardon. Finally, the converted individual feels a "persuasion of mercy" followed by a sad recognition of sin as inevitable and eternal and, through that recognition, receives grace through *continuing to strive* "to maintain obedience" (68-9).[53]

Daniel Shea corroborates the formula outlined by Morgan and adds the observation (in tandem with Miller), that unlike traditional Puritans, the New England Puritans systematized, or to adopt my previous language, *administered* conversion narratives by requiring them from their church members, therefore integrating these narratives into the fabric of church and community life. Unsurprisingly, given the need that conversion narratives fill, these narratives adhere, and strictly, to a general formula: while they do not necessarily correspond stage for stage with the particular process identified by Morgan through Perkins, the narratives cannot actually be considered autobiographical either (despite their contribution to that genre), because, writes Shea, "their subject matter is restricted […] their vocabulary is uniform and impersonal," and "their authors' designated purpose was to convince the elders that the presence of grace was evident in their experience."[54] Essentially, Shea argues, the conversion narrative

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[53] I emphasize "continuing to strive" because a major hallmark of conversion—and not just conversion *narratives*—is an individual's continually expressed anxiety and lack of confidence in God's conferral upon him or her of saving grace. The saved individual believes that he is not, or at least very well may not be, saved.

[54] The need that conversion narratives fill among the New England Puritans speaks to more than just an individual's need to recognize within him or herself the possibility of salvation; in New England, survival—literal and spiritual—depended on participation in the church community. Accordingly, conversion narratives offered a systematic way by which individuals could affirm and confirm their participation in that community.

offered testimony to a community that an individual's "experience has conformed, with allowable variations, to a certain pattern of feeling and behavior" (91).[55]

The conversion narratives offered New England Puritans in particular the necessarily observed opportunity to affirm their righteousness, in a rather typological manner, and to attest to the soundness of their individual commitments to their community.[56] For these Puritans, however, the object of conforming becomes not just God's grace as practiced through God's church and as recognized by God's community, but God's grace *as* God's *American* church and community. Bercovitch makes this point when he argues that the journey to America functioned for the New England Puritans to "displac[e] conversion as the crucial event" (118). This, in Bercovitch's estimation, signals the beginning of the use of the particular rhetoric that has played such a constitutive part in the making of American identity. *The Scarlet Letter* certainly testifies to the displacement: in "The Custom House," the narrator emphatically situates American political identity (that is, the identity forged by good American citizens in relationship to the larger community in which they are (variously) represented), as the Puritans' (and as his own) "crucial event."

To enable his own testament of the "saving grace," a testament that so clearly serves the narrator's secular and political end, however, the narrator takes great liberality with the conversion narrative form: "The Custom House" includes the first four stages of conversion, or to be more specific, the first four stages of the narrator's own conversion

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[55] What should also be unsurprising here is how conversion narratives conform to the Puritan typological interpretive mode: both, as forms reading (typology) and writing (conversion narratives), coalesce Puritan identity into a type.

[56] This is particularly the case for first-generation New England Puritans; they viewed the New World as the Old Testament Canaan, and they accordingly expressed more assurance in the expressions of their possession of saving grace (Bercovitch).

to a good American citizen, but the wide distance between Hawthorne's narrator and his Puritan forebears can be marked by the lack of anxiety the narrator expresses as a consequence of his admittance to that community. Unlike the uncertainty voiced especially by Dimmesdale at his final death-scaffold scene, and unlike the oblique words with which the story proper ends, the narrator in no way appears unsure of his salvation.[57] As mentioned above, the author's note to the second edition, wherein "The Custom House" narrator identifies himself as a particularly autobiographical version of Hawthorne, expresses the certainty that his narrative stands as an authentic document of his worth:

> Much to the author's surprise […] he finds that his sketch of official life, introductory to the text of *The Scarlet Letter*, has created an unprecedented excitement in the respectable community immediately around him. […] As the public disapprobation would weight very heavily on him, were he conscious of deserving it, the author begs leave to say that he has carefully read over the introductory pages, with a purpose to alter or expunge whatever might be found amiss, and to make the best reparation in his power for the atrocities of which he has been adjudged guilty. But it appears to him, *that the only remarkable features of the sketch are its frank and genuine good-humor, and general accuracy with which he has conveyed his sincere impressions*. […] The author is constrained,

[57] At Dimmesdale's death, Prynne pleads, "'*Surely, surely*, we have ransomed one another, with all this woe!'" Dimmesdale replies, "'Hush, Hester, hush! […] The law we broke!—the sin here so awfully revealed!—let these alone be in they thoughts! *I fear*! *I fear*! It *may be* that, when we forgot our God,—when we violated our reverence each for the other's soul,—it was thenceforth vain to hope that we could meet hereafter, in an everlasting and pure reunion'" (269; my emphasis).

> therefore, to republish his introductory sketch without the change of a word. (v-vi; my emphasis)

Of course, in evincing his confidence in the narrative of his own conversion through the A to a redeemed citizen, a politically a-political literary man, Hawthorne's narrator both cuts off the conversion narrative at its most representational, which may be to say at its most ideologically democratic, and underscores the conversion narrative's relationship to Prynne. Prynne, after all, and more than any other character in *The Scarlet Letter*, experiences (via the A's mediating eroticism) a conversion in regards to her apprehension and acceptance of the work and import of representation. While she experiences several of Perkins' requisite steps, most explicitly humiliation, as a consequence of reading and being read by the A's fragmentary, incomplete, unfixed meaning, the salvation of which she despairs has less to do with the representation of her Puritan soul than it does with the representation of her female body. When the A effects Prynne's realization that "the whole system of society is to be torn down, and built up anew," she refers to the necessity of a more expansive conversion that enables women to assume an equal relation to and equal representation with men. The narrator points out that these views indicate that the A has not "done its office" (172), but at the story proper's end, when the A's office is complete and Prynne has been converted, her views remain essentially unchanged. It is rather that the A, according to the narrator, has enacted a responsiveness among and accommodation within the community to which Prynne decides to belong.[58] Accordingly Prynne's conversion hews much closer to a

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[58] According to Bercovitch, the scarlet letter has "done its office" when Hester returns to the New World as "representative of the need for the law and the limits of free will" (14). I disagree with this interpretation (although I agree with much in Bercovitch's argument),

citizen's experience in a secular government in which equal representation is possible (if only ever ideally), than to a predestined soul's experience of Calvinist heaven.

This does not mean that the Puritan community at the end of Prynne's life has become her representative. In fact, throughout the story of her life, Prynne partakes of the A's fragmentariness and remains by virtue of it always herself a fragment: "[s]tanding alone in the world—alone, as to any dependence on society […]—alone, and hopeless of retrieving her position, even had she not scorned to consider it desirable—she cast away the fragments of a broken chain" (172). Although she picks up those fragments when at the end of the story proper she reenters her old Salem home and takes up again as a member of Salem's community, she does not forge herself, nor is she forged by an external force, to it. Prynne, even in the story of her death—buried conspicuously away from Dimmesdale, "as if the dust of the two sleepers had no right to mingle"—remains apart (276). Prynne's conversion into an *almost* ideal citizen of her chosen community, almost representative and almost represented, acts as the narrator's (female) prompt for

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and see instead that Prynne has not markedly changed her views (only changed the instrument by which those views might be enacted), and has instead found in the community of her choice the group that will respond to them. Compare the quotation I use above with Prynne's later words:

> people brought [Prynne] all their sorrows and perplexities, and besought her counsel […] Women, more especially […] came to Hester's cottage […] Hester comforted and counseled them as best she might. She assured them, too, of her firm belief, that, at some brighter period, when the world should have grown ripe for it, in Heaven's own time, a new truth would be revealed, in order to establish the whole relation between man and woman on a surer ground of mutual happiness. Earlier in life, Hester had vainly imagined that she herself might be the destined prophetess, but had long since recognized the impossibility that any mission of divine and mysterious truth should be confided to a woman stained with sin […]. (275-6)

Prynne's "belief" remains the same and remains firm; it has become lawful only in her recognition that the upheaval will not happen in her time, by her hand, or by the A upon her breast.

his own eminently more successful conversion. His dependence on Prynne's repression and re-consignment ensures, however, that the politics he makes the object of such conversion bear the cant of exploitation. Co-opting Prynne's conversion for himself, imputing his secular conversion onto Prynne, the narrator stands himself in Prynne's stead, feminizing his own character to partake of her power, but only to make his victimization and his subsequent and curtailed conversion more credible.

While Nina Baym argues that his depiction of Prynne makes Hawthorne a "feminist writer," and while Brook Thomas argues that the extension of good citizenship to Prynne constitutes the radicality of *The Scarlet Letter*'s democratic paradigm (a radicality that according to Thomas aids Hawthorne's self-conscious construction of the very civic myth that allows for a political continuity between Puritan theocracy and the democratic state), the narrative's patriarchal treatment of its feminine subject ensures that the version of citizenship illustrated by the narrator as dependent on the archive is itself fundamentally limited (107). Such limitations certainly feed the broad critique of Hawthorne's conservative politics, but such limitations also serve the purpose of "The Custom House" to establish and reinforce as continuous the theocratic persecutory community of America's earliest founders and the democratic—but also *persecutory*—community of the narrator's own time.[59] Accordingly, Hawthorne's narrator's insistence on a continuity between the Puritan and his own government confers upon the former the germs of good citizenship and confers upon the latter the fruition of the Puritans' often

[59] Hawthorne's personal politics, expressed through his infamous turn of phrase in a letter to his editor regarding the "damned mob of scribbling women" that made him want to give up fiction writing altogether, and through his widely denigrated pro-state-rights (and thus pro-slavery, or at least anti-abolitionist) views on the Civil War, have been the subject of much criticism, including, example, Arac's,

tyrannical practices. Indeed, Hawthorne's narrator's depiction of the government for which he works reveals a fundamental ambivalence about the very citizenship and correspondent political power the A enables him to gain.[60] In this sense, the narrator's use of repetition serves another political purpose: to strip from his contemporary "revolution" its transformative potential. Such repetition is reinforced, after all, not only by the archive but by the content the archive ostensibly informs.

For example, in the first chapter that follows the introductory sketch, the narrator characterizes the enterprise in which his story's characters are engaged as imminently circular. According to the narrator, "whatever Utopia of human virtue and happiness they might originally project," the "founders of a new colony" in their attempt to build a new society "have invariably recognized it among their earliest practical necessities to allot a portion of the virgin soil as a cemetery, and another portion as the site of a prison" (47). While the founders' efforts to realize John Winthrop's vision of a city upon a hill help define the utopic pursuit that constitutes the American dream of starting anew,[61] the graveyard and jailhouse considered necessities by the founders indicate their obligatory and corporeal return to the imminent abstractions of death and crime and a concomitant obedience to the traditions and institutions that had evidently defiled the land from which they ostensibly escaped.[62]

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[60] Berlant describes this as the "tonal ambivalence" everywhere apparent in Hawthorne's text.

[61] Critics such as Michael Colacurcio have persuasively argued that Winthrop's Journal, particularly the excerpts relating to Anne Hutchinson, served as a primary source for *The Scarlet Letter*.

[62] The illustration dovetails with Hawthorne's ambivalence about slavery and the Civil War. Large-scale reparation is impossible, Hawthorne believes, without the providential hand of a Christian god who alone can wipe away human beings' infallible propensity for evil. Such belief enabled Hawthorne's pro-state position, a position reviled by his former

Similarly, the symbolic repetition of the Old World in the New ensures that the connection between the narrator and Prynne is not nearly or not at all progressive but is instead *inescapable*. The narrator underscores this point by describing the prison door in Prynne's time in terms of an antithetical threshold: "The rust on the ponderous iron-work of [the jail's] oaken door looked more antique than anything else in the New World" (47). Rather than indicate the newness implicated by a threshold's transformational properties, the door reinforces the back-and-forth continuity supplied by its hinge. The narrator's reference to the "wild rosebush" that frames the door emphasizes the point. Although seemingly a symbol of rebirth against the rust's decay, the rosebush verifies the New World's own mythic history, marked by the "footsteps of the sainted Anne Hutchinson," and links this more recent past to the present in which Hawthorne's narrator writes via the irony[63] he invests in the term "sainted" (48).[64] The door to the prison house opens back, as well, on the door of the custom house and the door of the custom house archive, and therefore functions as door in the narrator's present that opens and closes both backwards onto the past and forwards into the future. Subsequently, the threshold offered by the prison doorsill in *The Scarlet Letter* refers not to a material or moral metamorphosis or revolution, but to a circularity further characterized as inevitably inescapable by those prisoners who will cross the sill as already "condemned criminal[s]" coming "forth to [their] doom" (48).

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fellow transcendentalists and his modern critics alike.

[63] As evidence for Hawthorne's irony, see Colacurcio's "Mrs. Hutchinson." *Tales and Sketches*.

[64] Evan Carton ascribes to the door a similar sort of irony, specifically in that it signals the "overdetermination and indeterminacy that informs *The Scarlet Letter* and accounts for much of its power" (126).

Appropriately, particularly given his claimed fusion with Prynne, the narrator casts himself as one such prisoner: indeed, the circularity illustrated by "doom" resounds most emphatically through the narrator's voice in the "The Custom House": "My doom was on me," the narrator explains about his repeated return, his inability to stay away from, Salem. "It was not the first time, nor the second that I had gone away,—as it seemed, permanently,—but yet returned, like the bad half-penny" (10). Defined here again as repetition but in a different context, doom, in its etymological sense of a statute, ordinance, condemnation, or "sentence of punishment," characterizes not only the narrator's imminent return to Salem but anticipates (in narrative what it follows in actionable events) the Puritan founders' reversion—not revolution—to administration and bureaucracy consequent to their inability to enact the escape that would make their venture original (*OED*).[65]

Doom[66] also, of course, defines the narrator's bad half-penny status through the archival A: unable to offer himself up to free exchange in an abstractly conceived

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[65] Which itself anticipates Prynne's own twice-failed escape.

[66] Doom's reference to inescapability suggests the similarity between imprisonment and the archive. Although the archive's status as a prison of power finds precedent in Claude Leví-Strauss's implicit and anticipatory suggestion that power consolidates knowledge, contemporary archival discourse, which rarely follows Leví-Strauss, investigates the archive's association to power through a theoretical tradition that begins most conspicuously with Foucault and that has been explored in its more practical manifestations in recent years by archivists Ketelaar, Tom Nesmith, Randall C. Jimerson, and others. Jimerson, for example, notes that, "from locked doors to researchers' lockers, from closed stacks to reading room surveillance cameras, archives often resemble prisons. The records are imprisoned (for their own security, of course), but so are the researchers, who must consult records in closely guarded chambers under vigilant surveillance" (26).

Indeed, in some respects, only a slim margin separates Foucault's institutionalizing archive from the prison he describes through his discussion of Jeremy Bentham's panopticon. The resemblance is made the more apparent when looking to state archives in repressive or totalitarian states. The Stasi archive, for instance, was

American marketplace, (rather literally, given that his experience at the custom house both teaches the narrator "how utterly devoid of significance […] is all that he achieves" and retracts the value of his previous creative life (26, 37)), the narrator assumes the economic irrelevance that he attributes to Salem, "now burdened with decayed wooden warehouses [with] few or no symptoms of commercial life" (2).[67] It is only through his possession of the archival A and his corollary possession and conversion of Prynne that the narrator recoups a profit, and a profit that links erotic and economic power to enable the character's claim of (masculine) citizenship. By his use of the A the narrator garners for himself a far more nationally recognized "profit" that evokes the earnings Prynne reaped from the A's ironic advertisement of her "wonderful skill of needlework" (31). The provisional status of this profit suggests that the A integrates or assimilates Hawthorne's narrator to the very government post from which he claims to seek release.[68]

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explicitly conceived of as a means of enforcement, and during SED rule, it enacted a panoptical textual system through which to effect the apparently omnipotent control of its populace.

[67] That Hawthorne's narrator depends on Hawthorne's own experiences is without dispute in the critical canon. Hawthorne, like the narrator of *The Scarlet Letter*, received the post of Surveyor of the Revenue from the Democratic Party's President Polk, and this saved his family from destitution (a destitution that required his subscription to the Democrat Party in the first place). Hawthorne and his narrator explicitly claim ambivalence in the realm of politics (implicitly attributing the receipt of the post to his role as a literary man), but much of "The Custom House" is devoted to chafing mightily against its bad half-penny value. In other words, the narrator, like Hawthorne, bemoans his financial need and the "wretched numbness" that his duty to Uncle Sam wrought on his artistic sensibilities. The discovery of Prynne's A in his capacity as surveyor nonetheless provided him with the means through which he might recuperate his own value. Once his firing by the incoming Whig government becomes certain and irrevocable, a move that suggests the narrator's position at the custom house had quite a bit more to do with his political life rather than with his ostensibly politically disinterested status as a writer of literature, the narrator finds himself reinvigorated and stimulated to create the book that makes his name among his community not as an idler but as an author.

[68] Because Hawthorne and his narrator so clearly overlap, I want to note here that

Consequently, the A acts for the narrator as it did for Prynne: itself an un-revolutionary repetitive doom, it mediates the narrator's "doom," commuting his sentence from political victim and allowing him to claim what he deems his more proper role as a "citizen of somewhere else" (45).

While the narrator claims authoritative historical objectivity of the un-progressive evolution of liberal democracy via the archive, the claim calls attention not to the equal opportunity to participate in the making of meanings but to the inevitable and repetitive construction of those dominant narratives that come to count as "History." Subsequently, while *The Scarlet Letter*'s narrator depicts the archival scarlet letter, an *a priori* and not just *a posteriori* fragment, as a mediator between Puritan theological society and the narrator's civic society, his own narrative self-consciously limits the reach of participation by demonstrating that archives, thanks in large part to the constitutional nature of archival fragments, require variously inflected narratives that necessarily compete for dominance. The dominant narrative constructed by the narrator in "The Custom House" therefore reveals the limits not only of archival narratives in and of themselves but of the political and specifically democratic narratives that have been in contemporary archival discourse increasingly associated with the archive. Schwartz and Cook make a similar, more recent point about the archive's still largely un-interrogated ability to "wield power over the shape and direction of historical scholarship, collective memory and *national identity*, *over how we know ourselves as individuals, groups, and*

Hawthorne fought mightily to retain his custom-house post and that he later depended on Franklin Pierce and on the Democrat Party to award him in 1854—that is, after the success of *The Scarlet Letter*—with the position of consul in Liverpool (a position for which he lobbied).

societies" when they point out that archivists, even accidental archivists such as *The Scarlet Letter*'s narrator, "wield power over those very records central to memory and identity formation through active management of records" (2; my emphasis). By illustrating how readers unequally contribute to the construction of political meanings from out of those fragmentary remnants to which, in the archive, they are most drawn, "The Custom House" highlights the role played by reader's personal, political, and professional desires in the institutionalization of history.

A case study reading of *The Scarlet Letter* subsequently illustrates the novel's continued relevance to both contemporary political and contemporary archival discourse. In fact, because contemporary political discourse has recently situated the archive at its center, *The Scarlet Letter* functions not as an outlying example of the various vicissitudes provoked by archival encounters but as a model of the redemptive romantic strains that have become dominant in political discussions about archives and the role they play in the societies that keep them. While this should not be surprising, *The Scarlet Letter* itself illustrates the confluence of redemption, romance, and politics, the narrative claims the function through its explicit situation of an archive as the underwritten authority to a historical reconstruction about the American roots of representation and democracy. Accordingly, *The Scarlet Letter* offers another view of the archive—as capable of prompting readers' (sometimes erotic) desires, of promoting their (profoundly problematic) conversion narratives, of patronizing ambivalent representations of democracy—that broadly informs contemporary politics.

Given the increasing designation of the archive as not simply a political site and space but as a specifically and symbolically democratic one, *The Scarlet Letter* thereby

offers a means by which to question the archive's relevance as a "constituent element of [a] nation" (Vismann 117). The archive's democratic designation stems from its constitutional contribution to a political process that is unrecognizable, in both its traditional and modern iterations, without the records and documents that preserve, transmit, and enact values and commands and without the archive's corollary capacity for holding those materials.[69] Accordingly, the archive functions in the political process to retain an institutional and administrative memory. While the archive is therefore "there […] to be useful," according to Osborne, that usefulness, as indicated by Hawthorne's narrator, is necessarily and radically indeterminate: what memory is retained in the archive and for what purpose cannot be foretold with certainty first because the purpose of archival materials depends in large part on a readership always in flux, and second, and related to the first, because the purported usefulness of those materials may not ultimately be realized.

Osborne makes this point by citing the KGB, which "did not surely expect their files to be someday available to any general public,"[70] but he might have also looked to the Stasi archive in the former German Democratic Republic. Although assembled as an expression of state power, the "usefulness" of the Stasi archive is that it now serves to illuminate an ironic fantasy version of the past saved complete "as it was" (56). The archive's fundamental indeterminacy explains, at least in part, why Osborne uses Sylvia Plath, a rather straightforward illustration of archival controversies, as I argue in chapter four, to insist that the archive, although it quite clearly contributes to a political process,

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[69] Although Vismann focuses on files in her work of the same name, she cannot but argue for the archive's constitutive position in the political process.
[70] Because the KGB naively assumed an infinite expansion of its power, its archive provides an even more valuable record of its activities.

cannot itself exist without a "*politics*" (55; Osborne's emphasis):

> The case of the Plath archive only dramatizes in an extreme way what is at stake with the modern idea of the archive as such: that archives have beginnings but not origins, that they are both controlled by gatekeepers and worked upon, are never innocent but yet still oriented towards a space of public contestation, towards a never-ceasing politics; oriented—one is tempted to say dialogically—towards some or other kind of recipient, the future. (56)

Osborne must refer to "the idea" of the archive not only because archives exist in such disparate forms (in barrels piled one upon another, for example),[71] but also because he desires to yoke archival indeterminacy and the archive's future-facing orientation in a definition of the modern archive in its various forms that relies on the term "liberal." While Osborne notes that the word is far too loaded to be used in straightforward reference to the modern archive's "transition from secrecy to publicity" and its

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[71] According to Anne Gilleland, in her afterword to a special issue of *Archival Science*,

> *Archives* in their modern construction refer to the place, content and programs associated with the ongoing preservation, management, and use of accumulations of non-current but still useful bureaucratic records. They employ professionally trained and ethically value-neutral archivists and operate according to a set of paradigmatic principles as well as an increasing number of standards and best practice guidelines.

Provocatively, from this rather elevated description, Gilliland immediately retreats, pointing out that

> this model is one that is increasingly being challenged […] not only from interdisciplinary studies areas and postmodern and postcolonial scholarship […] but also from professional and research attempts to determine how contemporary developments such as electronic recordkeeping, digital curation, indigenous memory practices, grassroots-developed community archiving, and social network sites might fit within the conceptual and procedural framework of what are considered to be 'true' archives. (335)

consequent status as a "public possession" (even though such a status may be located in an indefinable future time), he would likely provoke slightly less controversy by using the term "democratic." Ketelaar had in fact already argued for the archive's democratic symbolism in 1997, and indeed, the archive that Osborne describes in 1999 as characterized by an "idea," as contingent on representative rather than plebiscitary management, and as concerned with "ordinariness," with the revelation of an everything that, as Steedman argues, really constitutes nothing—or, in other words, really constitutes the mundaneness of existence—is theoretically (if profoundly problematically) democratic.

In more recent years, the International Council on Archives has affirmed Ketelaar's and Osborne's explicit and implicit arguments for the archive's democratic status, maintaining in its missions statement that "[b]y guaranteeing citizens' rights of access to official information and to knowledge of their history, archives are fundamental to identity, democracy, accountability and good governance." The ICA's integration of the archive's democratic status in its mission statement echoes the motto of the United States National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) that declares that "democracy starts here." Indeed, in addition to and by virtue of providing a repository for institutional memory, modern archives prove "crucial to the infrastructure of the modern nation-state" because they provide, according to historian Peter Fritzsche, "the means by which the provenance of identity is established" (187). Consequently, on an archive's shelves sit, if only in theory, both the fragmentary objects and documents that testify to the shared experiences that define a community as such and the fragmentary objects and documents that secure the identities of a community's participatory

individuals. While this is obviously the case in *The Scarlet Letter*, it is also the case, as Osborne argues, for closed or secret archives. By virtue of the representative everything they both do and do not contain, and by virtue of the promise made by their very existence that their representations will one day be read, archives, even the KGB and Stasi archives, function to corroborate the claim of Marietta Minotos, the Director of the General State Archives of Greece, that "all archives *to some extent* promote democracy" (my emphasis).[72]

It is not necessary, of course, to mine the ICA or NARA websites or to read critical historical exegeses to procure knowledge concerning the archive's democratic status. One can simply read *The Scarlet Letter* and listen for its echo in the political rhetoric dispensed by the American government. American officials have corroborated the archive's claim not just to participation in political issues of access and representation but to participation in a specifically democratic politics. In a repetition of the symbolic shift of the role of the archive after the French Revolution, the contemporary archive no longer functions, at least for American officials, as an auxiliary (which is to say *mere*) component of government administration; instead, the archive functions as a crucial symbol of democracy. The former Attorney General John Ashcroft emphatically articulated the shift in 2003 when he called for the restoration of Iraq's Museum and

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[72] This, curiously, is almost especially true of state archives in totalitarian, dictatorial or repressive regimes. According to a 1997 report prepared by Antonio Gonzalez Quintana for UNESCO, entitled *Archives of the Security Services of Former Repressive Regimes*, "In such regimes there is a lack of any legal means of reflecting a plurality of ideas and behaviour. It is only the archives, particularly those of the police and intelligence services which controlled the population, which can reflect the social confrontations inherent in these regimes. In contrast to the public image which such regimes have tried to present, their real nature can be discovered in the files and indices of the security services."

National Archives after their destruction during "Operation Iraqi Freedom." According to Ashcroft's prepared remarks to Interpol experts aiding in the recovery of the contents of Iraq's collections:

> [T]he operation under way to recover lost cultural, religious and historical artifacts is about more than taking back fragments of time and place. It is about more than restoring the past. In a land where a generation of Iraqis did not know truth or beauty, their art and culture can give them some of both. In the place where Hammurabi set down the first written code of law—but where Rule of Law has been woefully absent—the Iraqi people can see justice served as treasures are returned. For those who have witnessed it, justice done can reinvigorate hope; it can reinforce the opportunity for a free and open society. It is our goal to return parts of the Iraqi people's past. In doing so we hope to return pieces of the Iraqi people's future. The looting of Iraq's heritage is a violation of law. It is an affront to the dignity of the Iraqi people. It is an assault on the values of civilization—an assault on the values we all share.

While Ashcroft's rhetoric focuses and rather pointedly on retributive justice as a foundation for an implicitly democratic civilization, his deviation from his prepared remarks, reported by Martin Gottlieb for *The New York Times*, indicates the connection he envisions between archives and democratic governments: ultimately, according to Ashcroft, the United States will help rebuild Iraq's collections because doing so will contribute not only to "building a new government," but also to "forging a new democracy." Although the historians and organizations cited above explicitly link (yet

far less controversially) the archive to democracy, Ashcroft's rhetoric, particularly in its function as a revision to Donald Rumsfeld's cavalier (and widely vilified)[73] response to the Iraq lootings as "stuff happens," and in its contribution to the more vociferous rhetoric surrounding the Iraq war, cannot help but refer to a dis-ease that troubles claims to the archive's active role in promoting democracy similar to that illustrated in *The Scarlet Letter*. Obviously, Ashcroft's sum is too simplistic: in the connections he makes between the just restoration of a true and beautiful past, the consequent opportunity to construct a free and open society, and the possibility that rebuilding archives contributes to rebuilding new, democratic governments, he conveniently overlooks that the modern archive's limited promotion of democracy (a promotion necessarily qualified by, as Minotos indicates, "to some extent"), depends on a rather dictatorial administration. Ruled by archons who elect the fragments that will represent, and necessarily incompletely, the whole of the past, the archive, even in its modern administration, often offers its readers a vigorously undemocratic experience. While *The Scarlet Letter*'s narrator illustrates as much, the narratives of Eunice Lipton and Jeff Sahadeo (and of Senhor José and of the narrator of *The Aspern Papers*), discussed in the chapters that follow, attest to the same; each describes archival representation as contingent on the

[73] Jane Waldbaum, president of the Archaeological Institute of America, reported to *Salon* that her agency met with officials in the State Department in March of 2003 "to discuss protecting Iraq's antiquities," more than a month before the looting began on April 10th. Waldman "was outraged first by the unchecked looting and then by Rumsfeld's response. 'Donald Rumsfeld in his speech basically shrugged and said, 'Boys will be boys. What's a little looting?' she said. 'Freedom is messy, but freedom doesn't mean you have the freedom to commit crimes. This loss is almost immeasurable'" (Witt).

archival obstructionism endemic to archival work, even that archival work undertaken in what Anne Gilliland calls "true" or "real" archives (339).[74]

Perhaps, however, Ashcroft's ignorance is pointed: indeed, while Ashcroft may not attend to the problematically selective ways in which the archive's "gatekeepers" administer the archive, or the often opaque methods through which the archive's contents are "worked over"—both particularly salient issues given the role Ashcroft imagines the US will play in reconstructing Iraq's archives—Ashcroft's rhetoric does *not* fail to recognize that in the archive the schoolhouse adage, "knowledge is power," is reversed according to Lévi-Straussian logic. In fact, in the archive and particularly in the more traditionally identifiable archive such as those located in museums and in libraries, power consolidates knowledge. Archives accordingly contain among their fragments the residuum of what Claude Lévi-Strauss associates with the hierarchies of authority that predicated the emergence of writing: "inventories, catalogues, censuses, laws and instructions" communicate, as much as anything in their content, the unequal distribution of power between the writers, otherwise known as the record keepers, and what they deem their possessions as contained in documents (Charbonnier 30). The archive's (particularly the aforementioned traditional archive's) recapitulation and administrative maintenance of this unequal distribution of power indicates why recent years have featured so many contributions to contemporary archival discourse focused on those subjects often denied admission to traditional archives. Works by Steedman, Gayatri

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[74] Their points might be particularly noteworthy. Lipton experiences the same problems in both France and the United States and because Sahadeo describes experiences in an Uzbek archive which bears the motto, "without the past there is no future," but which suffers from relative disuse because, according to Sahadeo, the post-Soviet regime "sought to limit examination of archival documents, to avoid in particular the exposure of links between the former Communist Party and the current government" (45).

Spivak, Stoler, Antoinette Burton, Carolyn Hamilton, Verne Harris, Nupur Chaudhuri, Sherry J. Katz, Mary Elizabeth Perry, and others have focused on working classes, on colonial subjects, and on women, for example, while works by Jacques Derrida, Steedman, Lipton, Rebecca Comay, Burton (in *Dwelling in the Archive*) and Susan Howe have focused on redefining archives through far less traditional or institutional lenses.[75]

Consequently, while Ashcroft merely invokes (as does Ketelaar and as does Hawthorne) the archive's modern liberal function, which is to say the modern liberal archive's assumption of less limited access, what Osborne calls its "transition from secrecy to publicity," and the consequent availability of its representations to interpretation, what Osborne calls its status as a "public possession," Ashcroft exploits democracy's ideological assumption of the equal representation of citizens and their correspondent participation in the public (and political and economic) sphere to posit the archive as a tool not for a generalized democracy but for the particularly brand of invasive democracy practiced by the United States during the Iraq war. In doing so, he therefore invokes the democratic ideals expressed in the *E Pluribus Unum* on America's Great Seal. While the Great Seal offers an emblem of the values of civilization "we all share," the reparative work signaled by Ashcroft's rhetoric cannot but also refer to the other more aggressive representations on the Great Seal, as well. The lone eagle clutching in its—female, according to Hawthorne's narrator—talons the symbols of war and peace, for example, suggests that the unifying motto of American democracy depends on a synthesis of many incomplete pieces and parts itself contingent on the application of one, in this case "democratic," narrative. Further, as the Iraq war has

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[75] Cf. 110, note 151.

demonstrated, a dominant narrative, even a democratic one, once aggressively imposed, will be enforced, if deemed expedient, by violence (or as Hawthorne demonstrates, by the violence of the masculine repression provoked by American femininity).

When therefore applied to archives, as insisted upon in Ashcroft's speech, American democracy's *E Pluribus Unum* takes on a more brutal cadence that cannot but shade in its assimilative conservative outline. While such brutality can be taken to inform Hawthorne's personal politics, it is more explicitly and contemporarily borne out by the reports that the United States' role in the slow reparation of Iraq's National Archives and Museum depends on the aggressively ambivalent and perhaps even participatory part played by the United States in Iraq's documental devastation. In his 2003 report, "Iraq Manuscript Collections, Archives, and Libraries Situation Report," for example, Nabil Al-Tikriti states that there were enough United States troops in the two precincts where most of Iraq's cultural effects were located to provide adequate defense but that troops responded to pleas for protection with "we are soldiers not policemen" and "our orders do not extend to protecting this facility." This ambivalent response has fueled the suspicion articulated by Stephen Smith, "that the American failure to protect Iraqi heritage sites was more than mere negligence, but was a deliberate oversight—perhaps a kind of cultural 'shock and awe'—designed to devastate a sense of shared culture among Iraqis, leaving a blank page for the *imprints* of the US occupying force and the reconstruction to follow" (my emphasis).[76]

Smith and others, Matthew Battles, a librarian at Harvard's Widenor Library, in particular, point out that the United States was duty bound by the international

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[76] Cf. 38, note 31.

agreements formulated and ratified by the Hague Conventions of 1907, 1954, and the Geneva Convention of 1949 to protect sites of cultural heritage: these agreements "mandate that responsibility for the protection of cultural and religious properties in wartime falls to the victors." Most egregious and potentially damning among these reports, however, might be that of Saad Eskander,[77] Director of Baghdad's National Library who claims that American forces not only stood by but participated in plundering archival material: "The Americans […] wanted to find a link between Saddam and al-Qaida or prove the existence of weapons of mass destruction or find evidence of genocide," so they participated in archival theft.[78] Among the material taken by foreign troops in April 2003 were "memos, training guides, reports, transcripts of conversations, audio- and videotapes" (Jeffries). Again, power is knowledge.

These examples corroborate the claim, I hope already implicit in my reading of *The Scarlet Letter*, that inasmuch as the archive, and in this case the Iraq archive, preserves the often destructive forces of desire, the archive also preserves the destructive forces of violence: as Freud explains and Derrida expounds, the forces share a common origin-less origin in desire's violence. In fact, the link Ashcroft forges between American-style democracy, as expressed through the vehicle of the Iraq war and the Iraq archives, illustrates in rather emphatic terms the archive fever that in Derrida's

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[77] Perhaps unsurprisingly, Eskander, recognized as Archivist of the Year by New York's Scone Foundation in 2007, has more recently acted as a consultant to the Stasi archives of the former GDR, "the Political Archives of the German Foreign Office, the Federal Archives, German Historical Mueseum, the Museum of the History of National Socialism, the Museum of Contemporary History of the FRG, and the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe" (Spurr 25).

[78] In the situation of the Iraqi Archives, this has played itself out in the 2006-2007 blog postings of Eskander. While the internet's archive has ensured the blog's record, Eskander's efforts to function as Director and his work to recover documents taken by the United States Military are overshadowed by the claims of bureaucrats such as Ashcroft.

phraseology refers also to *archives du mal*, or the archives of evil consequent to historical disasters (*les désastres qui marquent cette fin de millénaire*). *Archives du mal*, by denoting the evil of political events cannot but also characterize as connotatively evil the archive's death drive (and thus the evil that reflects back on the archival preservation drive) about which I have much to say in the next chapter. "There is not one archive fever," Derrida argues, "one limit or one suffering of memory among others: enlisting the infinite, archive fever verges on radical evil" (20). The particular status of the Iraq archives and the role played by the U.S. in their simultaneous destruction, preservation, and reconstruction therefore helps to provide a stark illustration of the international and political stakes of an archival "radical evil" by positing radical evil as endemic to the archive itself. Located in its not only *a priori* but also *a posteriori* fragmented contents, violence in the archive inheres as germane to the archival record that cannot but be preserved, in some form, in the meanings produced by the archive's most dominant readers and interpreters (hence my own rhetorical emphasis in this project on terms such as "forge," "mandate," "require," and "demand").[79]

The examples from Iraq also suggest that war and similar violent acts—even and especially those undertaken in democracy's name—which set in motion authorial, ideological, and organizational shifts, make the violence inherent to the pieces and parts of archives emphatically material because the pieces and parts bear the traces of destruction via reconstruction, often literally, and illuminate the ways that reconstruction

[79] "All archives come into being in and a history as a result of specific political, cultural, and socioeconomic pressures—pressures which leave traces and which render archives themselves artifacts of history (Burton 6).

is policed.[80] This, illustrated in Hawthorne's narrator's indication that his narrative provides the scarlet letter a more authentic and authoritative context than it could ever otherwise have, is also illustrated in Stoler's specific investigation of the colonial "archiving-as-process" (20) and, more recently, in a 2010 report in *The New York Times* regarding the return to Iraq of "hundreds of looted antiquities" that had somehow "ended up in the United States." According to journalist Steven Lee Myers,

> The latest trove reflects not only a history dating from the world's oldest civilizations but also a more recent and tortured history of war, looting, and international smuggling that began under Saddam Hussein, accelerated after the American occupation and continues at archaeological sites to this day.

Eric Savoy echoes Myers in "Aspern's Archive," not on the scale of international war but on the scale of the utility of the calculated aesthetic stagings of similar kinds of archival violence. Describing *Anti-Mass*, Cornelia Parker's art installation of the burned detritus of a Southern Baptist Church destroyed by arsonists, Savoy suggests that an "archival act," which constitutes an attempt of "conservation, preservation, and the rescue of debris from the vicissitudes of time and history […] conserves violence itself" as "politically necessary, aesthetically eloquent" (62). While Savoy makes an example of Parker because she stages an "archival act of witness to a national trauma," he makes a larger if implicit argument about the importance of staging the violence that inheres, and often invisibly or unnoted (obscured as it is by preservation), in the archive. Such staging

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[80] Fritzsche argues that war strengthens a community's desire for an archive: "the onerous requirements for fighting war in the modern era necessitated upholstering a common past, while the sheer violence of war worked to jeopardize that unity, with both motion and countermotion adding to the paperwork of history" (187).

performs the archive, itself already a space where readers are required to perform (by) archival fragments, and in doing so reveals the archive's particularly malleable political properties. Although Savoy's point explicitly refers to the archival trauma dramatized by James in *The Aspern Papers*, the subject of my final chapter, his argument about performing archival violence for the purposes of investigation also indicates the particular relevance of *The Scarlet Letter* to my project. I hope that my discussion here, which proceeds in practice from Craven but in spirit from Savoy, argues for the profound and politically relevant intersection between the literature under discussion in this project and its contributions to understanding archive fever as a sometimes virulent, sometimes homeopathic personal and political affect.

Hawthorne's narrator in *The Scarlet Letter* anticipates Ashcroft's implicit assumption that the legitimacy and authenticity of democracies depend on those narratives that are produced out of but also integrated back into the archive via its constitutive fragments. By underscoring the value of literary narrative to advancing the archive's political symbolism, the narrator of *The Scarlet Letter* opens the archive to far more expansive interpretive possibilities. Rather than trap the archive as "the archive" in an aesthetic rendering, however, *The Scarlet Letter* corroborates Savoy's point that the aestheticization of archival violence enables the archive's investigation. This is particularly true given that political symbolism itself depends, as demonstrated by Ashcroft, on fiction. Appropriately then, the story told by *The Scarlet Letter* about America's assimilative and repressive politics, a story prompted by and authorized through a saved fragment, functions as an early entry into and primary piece of the larger literary canon of archival works. The text's narration of a community's earliest efforts to

build a particularly American community and its enactment through that narration of the participatory making of meaning on which depends the continued life of that community helps to define the archive's political parameters through its narrative possibilities.

My discussion of the archive's inherent violence belies any naïve claim to the archive's unqualified promotion of democracy. Archival records are both, as Adrian Cunningham argued in 2001, the same year that former President George W. Bush issued an Executive Order limiting access to presidential records, "enablers of democratic empowerment" and "instruments of oppression and domination" (173).[81] Except perhaps through a consequent and impossible corollary record of the violence visited upon archival fragments—a Derridean *archive du mal* of a rather more literal form—the archive neither straightforwardly enacts nor uncompromisingly promotes democracy. It cannot offer in and of itself a disinterested historical representation of *res publica*, of "the people," as the Iraq archive discussed here makes clear, or even of a person, as indicated by the Stasi archive discussed in the third chapter of this project. The archive can in fact only signal its promotion of democracy, although even then only "to some extent," by making its stored remnants available to desiring readers' necessarily limited assimilations of and in representative narratives. That is to say, the archive, particularly in its modern form, gains its democratic designation by the participation of variously invested readers in the performance of its meanings, despite (or perhaps because of) the fact that the meanings made are driven by various vicissitudes and are often assimilated into dominant or master or otherwise historical, dis-eased narratives. The archive therefore participates

[81] The first Executive Order issued by President Barack Obama, on January 21, 2009 revoked Bush's Executive Order 13233.

in a kind of democratization only to the extent that *self*-administrating individuals—good citizens, in Hawthorne's narrator's parlance, as opposed to Ashcroft's implicitly *administered* individuals, or subjects— read archival fragments not only as "official documents" but also as opportunities for their disparately transparent interpretations and consequent interpolations.

Chapter 2: The Archive's Dis-ease: Theoretical Germs

While the archive's inherently political participation in this kind of democratization implicitly subtends and therefore informs contemporary archival discourse, the explicit subject of my next two chapters, the kind of democratization that gains its meaning by way of participatory readers lays claim to a long history. In fact, the popular Medieval and Renaissance practice of keeping commonplace books fosters the same circumscribed but nonetheless participatory practices as does the archive. While the keepers of commonplace books—readers and writers who developed both systemic and subjective knowledge by organizing fragments—offer a paradigmatic pattern for archival readers, commonplace books, an "archival" genre of "collecting and ordering" provide, as my preface illustrates, a precursor to the archive (Eichorn 1). Accordingly, commonplace books, such as those housed at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, precede the archive as a critical space because readers' work to pull apart and piece or re-piece together the texts that contribute to commonplace books anticipates their participatory engagement with and assimilation into the archive and its fragmentary contents, and because commonplace books, despite "commonplace's" current reference to the trite and unremarkable, assumes the Latin force of *locus* in its reference to common memory and knowledge. The commonplace-book genre subsequently underscores the archive's democratic symbolism as dependent not or not only on the particularity or the broader context of the archive itself but on the archive's enjoinment of and injunction to readers to participate in the personal and political project of meaning-making.

Readers participate in the archive's meaning-making through what *The Scarlet Letter*'s narrator describes as their "attention," "examination," "measurement,"

"contemplation," "possession," and "interpretation" of the archive's fragmentary contents. While such actions were made available to readers by the French Revolution, which re-oriented the archive towards a more explicitly public space, the reorientation itself was predicated on the fragmentary nature of archival contents. Indeed, archival files gain their status as highly significant fragments only by way of the archive's conferment onto its files of a flexible fixity (via the archive's application of provisional context), and the archive's subsequent dependence on readers for staying meaning. Subsequently, when archival files were made available to readers, the availability impacted not only the archive and its contents, it impacted readers, as well. In *Files*, Cornelia Vismann makes much the same point, implicitly arguing that readers' early engagement with the archive fostered their development into political and politically sovereign individuals. Readers, in fact, and according to Vismann, transformed themselves from subjects, or individuals under the dominion of a sovereign governing power, to citizens, or individuals engaged in a reflexive relationship with a governing power, by applying the "techniques" of reading archival files, such as those made available after the French Revolution, to a "file-based self-administration" (117).

The techniques, first developed in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century in record-keeping nations, describe the transferal of administrative duties of the by-then vast administration of the state from jurists to secretaries to individuals. They describe, accordingly, the transferal of administrative duties from a closed hierarchy to the dynamism implicated by a meaning-making individual. The transferal, facilitated by the adoption of a common linguistic style and by the expansive spread of literacy, and prompted by a shift from an elite system of statist administration to a self-administration

of *accounting* (by which an individual makes conscious to herself her spent time), results in further archival openings.[82] Yet it does so in a complicated and confined way, by also resulting in the individual's production of and as an archive. While such self-administration, dependent on archival practices, accordingly invests the self with an archontic or author function that cannot help but pave the way towards citizenship, that is, towards an individual's authored, or at least contributive and reflexive, relationship to a governing, over-administrating body, self-administration reveals the boundaries (in the ironic boundary-less-ness) of its investment. By recording and writing about (which constitutes an interpretation of) their own lives, by implicitly contributing to the formation of their own archives, individuals not only recapitulate many nations' archival foundations, they write themselves into those foundations, as well.

Hawthorne's narrator's expression of citizenship and its limitations, which he characterizes as tense but as nonetheless obliquely facilitating (in a negative sense) his private literary life, depends on these techniques of self-administration—most evident both in the narrator's role as "Custom House marker" and in the form of "The Custom House" itself—that separate him from and join him more inextricably to the government to which he bears such a complicated relationship. While Prynne and the community in which she ultimately claims a part gesture to self-administration through their interpretive efforts, Hawthorne's narrator makes the inscribed interpretation of the archival alphabetic fragment his claim to a personal, professional, and political identity. In so doing, the narrator not only indicates the archive's role in facilitating such self-administration, he also suggests the relevance of such self-administration to the constitution of individual

[82] Ultimately, "the bookkeeping practices common to business offices" were "transformed into diaries, autobiographies, and other such accounts" (112).

and national identity. While Vismann takes a cue from Hawthorne's narrator and traces these sorts of self-administrative techniques back to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, I argue that these techniques echo the push and pull between administration and self-administration (that is, between the being-read and being-interpreted), and the participatory reading and ultimately interpretive strategies germane to the even earlier tradition of commonplace books. Commonplace books can hardly be argued to expressly promote the citizenship or the assimilative democracy explicitly and implicitly associated by Vismann with self-administration, but they certainly provided (and in their more contemporary iterations provide) a medium through which writers practice the institutionalized transition from passive readers to active readers and writers that contributes to the archive's circumscribed political symbolism. In fact, the participatory reading practices promoted by commonplace books anticipate the relationship between the self-administered citizens and the archives upon which depends so much political and theoretical significance, and therefore inform the particular strain of archival redemptive romance that is the focus of this project.

The name "commonplace-book," according to Ann Moss, a primary historian of commonplace books, does not appear until the 16th century, despite the fact that the tradition of collecting and arranging excerpted *auctoritas* for purposes of education and persuasion has roots in Late Antiquity, as famously illustrated by Seneca in his letters to Lucilius:

> We should imitate bees and we should keep in separate compartments whatever we have collected from our diverse reading, for things, conserved separately keep better. Then, diligently applying all the

> resources of our native talent, we should mingle all the various nectars we have tasted, and turn them into a single sweet substance, in such a way that, even if it is apparent where it originated, it appears quite different from what it was in its original state.[83]

Although Seneca does not here indicate it, the individual's imitation of the bee, particularly as realized through commonplace books, depends on the exercise of one's educated memory. Commonplace books function as mnemonic devices or "storehouses" by which an individual remembers through collecting and assembling and then reading and assimilating in book form what it is he or she has been taught, or has simply read. More specifically, commonplace books function as systematized reading journals, later reader "notebooks,"[84] wherein readers excerpt fragments from texts and arrange them according to a system, often alphabetic, of particular headings (moralistic, for example). Through their assembly and the subsequent availability to rereading, reinterpretation, and revision, commonplace books provide the reader or student with "an organized system for storing his data, duly keyed for retrieval" (111).

As textual repositories of fragments, pieces, and parts, commonplace books offer an obvious textual analogue to the archive that functions as the subject of this project. Further, while commonplace books, similar to archives, depend on individuals for

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[83] Seneca alludes here to previous works, but he launches endless variations. Of note is naturally Montaigne, Renaissance writer in and of fragments so influential to the German Romanticists:

> The bees plunder the flowers here and there, but afterward they make of them honey, which is all theirs; it is no longer thyme or marjoram. Even so with pieces borrowed from others; he will transform and blend them to make a work that is all his own, to wit, his judgment. His education, work and study aim only at forming this.

[84] Typified by the ones kept by both Hawthorne and James.

making and making relevant the meanings of their fragments, they also, and also similarly to archives, most obviously fulfill for individuals an institutional and institutionalizing role (this point is made particularly evident by the commonplace books' alphabetic and/or thematic organization). They indicate an individual's assimilation of fragmentary texts and offer an early example, particularly from the Middle Ages (in the form of *florilegia*) to the mid- to late- seventeenth century, of a straightforward institutionalization not only designed to aid in "building character" (Miller 23) but to promote literacy reflective of "a fairly generally accepted, if by no means universal, programme of initiation into the language [Latin] and though patterns of literate culture" (Moss 26). Commonplace books therefore illustrate "a ubiquitous learning tool" (114) that therefore provides a reflection of "collective identity" (Miller 23).

In their apparently simple emphasis on the collective at the expense of the assimilating and therefore assimilated individual, commonplace books provoke those same difficulties implicitly provoked by the archival-based techniques of self-administration: namely, the same techniques that empower the subject (through his or her education, for example) define empowerment in accordance with the subject's consolidation and embodiment as a microcosm of an institution's (a state, for example) administrative agenda. Such a provocation, which recapitulates institutions to reaffirm their positions as cultural foundation, causes Moss to pose her own question to commonplace books:

> With respect to the intellectual disciplines […] one of the more pertinent questions we might ask is precisely whether the systematic division of academic subjects into general heads […] was a force for conformity and

> potentially an instrument of control. This question is also relevant to the general moral heads and the way they were organized in the commonplace-books of young students and non-specialists, where the operative language is patently moral and rhetorical, but the concealed message is political and social. (136)

By constituting "a paradigm for reading analysis," commonplace books reinforce the canon from which they are drawn: when that canon defines theocracy, for example, the fragments from commonplace books exhibit their profound effect on shaping education in accordance with the institutional perspectives from which education inevitably draws.

It is not in their institutional capacity that commonplace books most meaningfully precede archives, however, it is in their ability to function as both mediums and places through and in which various readers' highly significant fragments are saved. By keeping the fragments transcribed by a reader's hand, commonplace books indicate readers' aforementioned archontic and authorial negotiations of their own institutional interpolation. In fact, despite their overt repetition of institutional education and memory, commonplace books nonetheless foster, through their dependence on readers' fragmentations, the self-administrative techniques associated with the citizen and individual. This is made obvious by Robert Allott's commonplace book, *England's Parnassus: Or, the Choysest Flowers of our Modern Poets, with their Poeticall Comparisons. Descriptions of Bewties, Personages, Castles, Pallaces, Montaines, Grones, Seas, Springs, Rivers, etc*. Published in 1600, it includes under the heading "Memorie" a fragment of Sir John Davies's "Sensitive Memory" from *On the Immortality of the Soul*. Allott's preservation of this fragment refers not or not only to

the educational value of his source, however, but to its referential illumination of Allott's own commonplace work:

> This Lidger booke lies in the braine behind,
>
> Like *Ianus* eye which in his poll was set:
>
> The lay mans table, Storehouse of the minde,
>
> Which doth remember much, and much forget. (209)

In addition to enabling readers to both explain and retain memory through fragmentary references, commonplace books also enable their readers to author romances in which the reader herself, through the very fragments she saves, plays a redemptive role. Miss Barton's commonplace book manuscript suggests the literality of this claim. Barton's manuscript, which includes notes from 1758 to 1766, contains both traditional commonplace-book content (transcribed hymns, for example), and columns that contain her household diary (the neighbors she has seen or the gossip she has heard that day); yet the manuscript also contains a compendium of cures for common ailments or conditions. In addition to what modern readers will likely recognize as folkloric remedies: "For heat in ye back Boil ye leaves of Willow-trees in water till they be as thick as a Pultise," (see figure one).

Fig. 1. Commonplace Book MS, Miss Barton, 1758-1766.

Barton includes directions that suggest her own role as authoritative and that orient her commonplace book towards an audience of women: “To promote ye menses put a teaspoonful of tincture of Black hellebore into a grass of warm water, and take it twice a day such which seldom fail of its desired effect.”

Barton, therefore, and through the commonplace book's fragmentary, though forcibly assimilative medium, defines herself as an author, and an author with a readership potentially particularly invested in strategies for, for example, bringing on menses. Her commonplace book indicates that although the medium contributes to making an individual reader a part of a collective, its construction nonetheless demands a preservative technique administered by an individual and by an individual's Heidegerrian hand.[85] In this sense, commonplace books offer readers the opportunity to become assimilative writers, and ostensibly thinkers, not only through memorizing fragments of an institutionally pre-approved canon but through the very transcription that inserts the space assumed by fragmentary shapes in between that canon and its memorization.

Writers of commonplace books, like some readers of archives, engage therefore with fragments in ways that allow them to incorporate themselves into the fragments they assimilate. In fact, the archive's contemporary theorists often focus their implicit and explicit critical efforts on this very engagement. Steedman, for example, indicates that commonplace books act as precursors to self-administration and as inherent to the pedagogy of the archive when, in her contribution to *Research Methods for English Studies*, she advocates that readers become writers in the archive through recording, but especially through manually transcribing: "I like the amount of thinking I get done,"

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[85] In *Parmenides*, Heidegger writes that "[t]he hand is, together with the word, the essential distinction of man […] man does not 'have' hands, but the hand holds the essence of man, because the word as the essential realm of the hand is the ground of the essence of man" (80-1). Heidegger's hand depends on its antithetical relationship to the typewriter here, but Steedman seems also to depend on this same human (and thus contextually contingent) hand and its essence as well when, in "Archival Methods," a chapter written for initiates of graduate level English studies, she claims to "always recommend transcription, knowing full well that I really do not ever read properly the photocopies I take away" (26).

Steedman writes, "when letting someone else's words move through my head and hand and onto my own bit of paper […] that is how I commune with the dead. It is advice that goes against all I have to say about saving time and money in the archive, but there you are" (26). Although Steedman writes explicitly out of the archive, she echoes a similar suggestion made by Moss. Noting that commonplace books are culled from the canon, Moss nonetheless emphasizes that commonplace books function for an individual as a space of and a medium for private accumulation and that they thereby constitute a testament to the authenticity of an individual's ongoing development. Indeed, to create and maintain a commonplace book, Moss writes, "was a private occupation and a private enthusiasm. Even in printed prescriptions for commonplace-books, the idiosyncrasies of particular individuals are […] revealed" (137).

Subsequently, despite their apparently straightforward contribution to perpetuating the collective at the expense of the individual, commonplace books, like archives, blur the line between the collective and the individual and between the public and private sphere to suggest that participatory reading practices, reading practices that demand not just the eye but the hand (the hand that examines, measures, possesses) foster a *de facto* political individual who, through reading and writing fragments, necessarily negotiates her own relationship to knowledge, to memory, and to the administration that gives and limits access to both. This is especially evident as commonplace books lose their function as a tool for particular kinds of sanctioned literacy and become instead, particularly in their later, seventeenth-century (and beyond) incarnations, individualized reading journals designed to serve as "transcript[s]," according to Elizabeth Elliotson's commonplace book from 1729, "of several things pickt out of the several Authors she has

read, for her own observation and benefit." Commonplace books, like Allot's, Barton's, and Elliotson's, fragment texts in necessarily limiting ways in order to facilitate their redemption, which is also assimilation, through subsequent and repetitive readings. Through the transcriptional process of excerpting, and the assimilative work of reading and rereading written fragments, writers cannot but define their own administration, increasingly, through their own hands. While commonplace books thus act as textual precursors to the memory work later done and done more efficiently by archives, they also indicate that the archive's broad political and symbolic significance depends on readers who, although apparently neutral, contribute to the formation of knowledge and memory in idiosyncratic, subjective, and sometimes strange ways.

In many ways, contemporary archival discourse's explicit exploration of strange contributions to the archive therefore echoes the precedent established by commonplace books. Contemporary archival discourse has become a vital participant in critical conversations about knowledge, memory, and History; however, the term "vital" proves ironic because in recent years the archive has been explicitly identified, and thanks in large part to the English translation of Derrida's *Archive Fever*, as not just a repository of the *strange* but as a propagator of dis-ease. In fact, if contemporary readers and critics are interested in nothing else from Derrida's *Archive Fever*, they are invariably interested in its introductory riff on the etymology of "archive": according to Derrida, "the meaning of *archive*, its only meaning, comes to it from the Greek *arkheion*: initially a house, a domicile, an address, the residence of the superior magistrates, the *archons*, those who

commanded" (2; Derrida's emphasis).[86] However, the etymology of "fever," while only a proximate translation of Derrida's *mal*, has been co-opted by the English-speaking contingent of contemporary archival discourse and is no less provocative. Dependent on roots in pathology (and thus on both the study of emotions and the study of disease), fever's etymology, while perhaps linked to Latin's "fovere," "to keep warm," also indicates the persistently obscure etymology for the Latin "febris." As mentioned above, the root bears a possible relation to the Sanskrit "bhur-" root for "restless" and acquires in the 1580s a meaning secondary to the "morbid condition" it initially defines. A "fever," from the sixteenth century on, also describes a localized instance of "intense nervous excitement, agitation, heat." When modified by archive, "fever" describes not just a Derridean-inflected and therefore rather opaque phenomenon or concept, it also describes the archive's substantial, proliferative contemporary critical apparatus as a consequence of historical restlessness and as itself a symptom and thus evidence of the archive's inherent, potentially terminal, if Derrida's emphasis archival death drive is to be taken at face value, dis-ease. In fact, although the archive's critical apparatus's contemporary coalescence (and its recognition of "the archive" as a propertied, not to mention desiring, thing) is marked by Stoler's coinage of the phrase "archival turn," which unified the excitement surrounding the archive's transition in the 1990s to a subject of rather just a means to contemporary historical, legal, literary, and cultural examinations,[87] Stoler's

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[86] See Steedman, Helen Freshwater, Osborne, Nesmith, Jo Tollebeek, Irving Velody, Hamilton, Burton, Michael Lynch, Benjamin Hutchens, and Wolfgang Ernst for a few examples.

[87] Although Craven suggests that even a "year or two" before 2008, "the number and nature of transdisciplinary conferences" about the archive, "simply would not have happened" (1), Stoler's coinage indicates that archival restlessness was diagnosed much earlier as symptomatic. Consider, too, Cãlin Dan and Josef Kiraly's point that "The

phrase was, Steedman argues in *Dust*, already inspired by and therefore a consequence of a fever—*Archive Fever*, to be precise.[88]

While Derrida's *Archive Fever* thereby constitutes one of the major theoretical touchstones of my work, it cannot be meaningfully considered, I argue, at least here, independent of Steedman's reading. Accordingly, the exegesis of the relationship between psychoanalysis and the archive in *Archive Fever* and Steedman's rejoinder about the practical and logistical issues of the archive and archival searches in *Dust* constitute this project's theoretical (if not necessarily temporal) substratum.[89] Their vast differences momentarily aside, both texts supply a critical vocabulary with which to describe the archive's move from an overlooked apparatus lending quiescent support for research and information production to a critical, dynamic concept *and* space in which births, lives, deaths, histories, human rights, and, of course, forms of power are continuously though not transparently (and therefore uneasily) negotiated. Both texts, also—consequently, even—define in explicit and implicit ways, through the archival postulates to which they

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history of the 1990s starts and ends under the sign of the archive" (113). Of course, as I hope my previous chapter has made obvious, the association of the archive with a fever can be traced at least as far back as *The Scarlet Letter*

[88] Although Stoler is often cited as the first to recognize (by naming) the trend to make archives the subject of investigation, she, like Craven, descends from the critical reception of *Archive Fever*. Although it is a convention of academic discourse to claim invention in the place of repetition, it is particularly ironic, given the archive's reinforcement of repetition, that so many commentators, starting with Hawthorne's narrator, claim that every moment is a moment ripe (like, implicitly, never before), for archival introspection.

[89] In a note to "Fashionable Nonsense or Professional Rebirth: Postmodernism and the Practice of Archives," Canadian archivist Terry Cook attributes to *Archive Fever* the impact of an "aftershock" that prompted "historians, geographers, philosophers, sociologists, anthropologists, psychologists, and cultural theorists" to "subjec[t] the *archival* world to a detailed critique such as it has never before experienced (8). In this, Cook echoes Derrida's own point in *Archive Fever* about the "*après-coups*," the "aftershocks" of communication and archivization technology that "would have made the landscape of the psychoanalytic archive unrecognizable" (16).

gesture, the archive's fevers and the qualities that define febrility as archival. While *Archive Fever* and *Dust* contribute to an analysis of archive fever as a symptom of disease in theoretical and historical discourses (and as such, a potentially productive form of suffering), the texts also in and of themselves illustrate archive fever as metastasized dis-ease—as an agitated response—to "the Archive"[90] at the center of archival discourse.

Subsequently, *Archive Fever* and *Dust* provide my dissertation with its critical foundation in part because they articulate two influential apposite perspectives in contemporary archival discourse that stage the question of archival dis-ease (a question posed by Craven as still relevant nearly ten years later); I am, however, in this introductory section particularly interested in outlining the relationship between the two texts as described by Steedman in *Dust*. Steedman's pointed critique offers a compelling point of entry into every archive (and most especially into Derrida's), because unlike Derrida (and others) she adumbrates and depends upon the archival postulates of plenitude and fragmentation at the same time that she attacks as illusory the archival mandate to save. In the first chapter of *Dust*, Steedman indicates that she is also provoked, like Stoler, by *Archive Fever*. The antidote provided by Steedman depends, and rather surprisingly, given *Dust*'s implicit argument for pursuing in the archive the methodology of social history, on her prescription of the same feverish restlessness promoted by and in fact consisting in archival desire that she attributes to Derrida. Thus, although Steedman desires to recuperate the archive and its production of archive fever from the gaping theoretical abstraction into which she believes Derrida makes it

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[90] Steedman both does and does not capitalize the "archive" in *Dust*. Part cheekily, part seriously, she does so to underscore Derrida's archival abstractions, to acknowledge the archive's legitimacy as an abstraction, and to mark her own abstract treatment.

disappear, her reliance on Foucault to more specifically name "archive fever" and to define and critique it as both a broad (as in meta-) symptom and as a more narrowly construed disease indicates that *Dust* suffers from the sickness it seeks to cure.

Despite this, Steedman, in the rather idiosyncratic collection of essays that make up *Dust*, indicates that she seeks to contribute to archive fever's amelioration by identifying the distance between herself and Derrida as marked by the latter's attempt to make a psychoanalytically informed deconstruction of a historical work tantamount to a theoretically-situated exploration of "'the question of the archive'" (2). Although his application potentially supplies the right theory ("[p]sychoanalysis ought to revolutionise archival questions"), Derrida applies it to the wrong archive ("the main part of […] 'Archive Fever' is not about archives at all, but is rather a sustained contemplation of a work of history") (8, 3). Consequently, and notwithstanding its rich and varied commentary, *Archive Fever*, Steedman writes, does not actually apply theory to "the archive" or to archives in general; instead of providing a proper diagnosis for archive fever, and one that would read as relevant to historians, archivists, and other archive readers, Steedman argues that the book provides a convenient shelf in Derrida's own archive, upon which he can file the "arguments that [he] has been making for thirty years, about the Western obsession with finding beginnings, starting places, and origins" (5).[91]

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[91] Steedman is not alone in this response. See, for example, librarian Bradley C. Watson's review in *The Library Quarterly*: "In its heart, Derrida's *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* is itself an archive of Derrida's own 'Archive Fever,' the trace of his own fever-producing disease. Of which, besides his fever, the main symptom is an overriding need to imprint his every thought concerning the archive project from assumed masks of pre-, synch-, and post-Freudian stances, for the edification and amusement of whatever posterity the future of this text might hold. Derrida has been about this task for over thirty years now, in one guise or another" (347). However, it should be fairly obvious from my rhetoric that this critique illustrates Steedman's point. If "archive fever"

Archive Fever, in its overt privileging of repetition and repetition's infinite deferral, unsurprisingly provides the damning evidence necessary to carry Steedman's point: in *Archive Fever*, Derrida elevates (or depresses) his desires and his obsessions through psychoanalysis to the levels of compulsion and sickness. According to Derrida, the archive (and thus implicitly any and every archive), serves as a particularly apt occasion for his theoretical interest,[92] or neurotic obsession, if Steedman's hint is to be taken at its implication, because the archive performs and is performed by repetition. More particularly, the repetition constituting every archival mode and consequently structuring every archive's meanings must be defined, Derrida argues, through Freudian psychoanalysis. According to Derrida's reading, Freudian psychoanalysis illustrates that the repetition that constitutes, that makes and remakes the archive depends not only on preservation but also and more malevolently on destruction.[93]

Identifying this as an "internal contradiction" and as pathologically promoted by the archive's simultaneous reliance on (and production of) the "destruction drive" and on the "conservation drive," and renaming the latter the "archive drive," Derrida already

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actually names readers' desires, than *Archive Fever* may be engaged in fever therapy—inducing fever to treat a fever.

[92] *Archive Fever* was originally delivered as a lecture in London at the Freud archives.

[93] We can consider Derrida's point here to both repeat himself and to repeat Pamela Banting repeating *Grammatology*. In 1986, Banting writes:

> The archival vault, the cave, the mirrored stage, then, becomes the theater of a generalized writing, of grammatology. In this theater, on this stage, the absent author continually advances and retreats from behind a treasure chest of masks. Daughter, mother, grandmother. Teacher, colleague, adviser. Friend, confidante, intimate, enemy. Wife, lover. World traveler and confined domestic. Simulations and dissimulations. In the archive, the secret vault of the diaries is unsealed to reveal the stripping away of masks, further masks, and the processes of mask construction. All of which, of course, are rehearsals for the death mask. In the archival vault, writing violently asserts its kinship with death. (120)

diagnoses repetition as both debilitated and productive, debilitatingly productive, perhaps, and as therefore illustrative of "archive fever." The titular disease functions in this manner not only to provide a description of a concept but also to indicate a method (19). Consequently, archive fever does not just modify the discourse promoted by archives—the interpretations, or histories, on which archives depend and the subsequent critique of those interpretations—it modifies the archive as itself congenitally infected and as promoting, by its very existence, infected methods of investigation:

> [t]he archive, as printing, writing, prosthesis, or hypomnesic technique in general is not only the place for stocking and for conserving an archivable content *of the past* which would exist in any case, such as, without the archive, one still believes it was or will have been. No, the technical structure of the *archiving* archive also determines the structure of the *archivable* content even in its very coming into existence and in its relationship to the future. The archivization produces as much as it records the event. (17; Derrida's emphasis)

More specifically, *Archive Fever* illustrates the archive's dependence on the feverish searches it incites by positing Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi's *Freud's Moses: Judaism Terminable and Interminable* and specifically the impossible monologue with which it ends as part of Derrida's own archive and, as such, a tool that can potentially reveal psychoanalysis as both a Jewish science and an *ur* theory of the archive.[94] To put it another, still complicated way, Derrida sees himself implicated in psychoanalysis,

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[94] These two possibilities may, Derrida cannot help but (and reflexively) argue(s), given that his argument tracks so closely to that of Yerushalmi, be the same thing. A deeper consideration of this possibility would attend more fully to Derrida's repeated references to the circumcision that cleaves old skin and new.

which he sees as Freud's archive and in which is repressed Freud's (and therefore Derrida's own) Jewishness. *Archive Fever* stages a return of this repressed not to make *this* argument, however (it has already been made by Yerushalmi), but to demonstrate that the archive's investigative method (like that of psychoanalysis) structures, via its insistence on a destructive preservation, the very origins it seeks.[95] In fact, in every case, archive fever in Derrida's analysis determines manifesting symptoms, the source of disease and—what is perhaps the more surprising—the impossibility of a cure. Constituted by the strength and persistence of contradictory drives, the archive and its corollary fever is interminable, *is* psychoanalysis. Consequently, in *Archive Fever* Derrida argues (through an extended etymological treatment of the "archive" and a correspondent rhetorical structure that, as Steedman notes, filters and forestalls by way of an exergue, preamble, and foreword) that the search for origins, dependent as such searches are on repetition's "forgetfulness," can only ever be (considered) enervated and

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[95] "Dear Professor Freud," Yerushalmi writes,

> I have done my best with the *Moses* book, and I know it is not adequate, at most a prolegomenon, perhaps a 'historical novel,' at worst—a series of wrong tracks. Lest you think me falsely modest, let me add immediately that where I have failed or missed I am far from accepting the entire blame. Once, in discussing the difficulty of psychoanalyzing Goethe, you observed, 'This is because Goethe was not only as a poet, a great self-revealer, but also, in spite of the abundance of autobiographical records, a careful concealer.' As a concealer you have, of course, outstripped your hero, and as for the records, some of your more zealous epigoni have stationed themselves, like Gnostic archons, to bar the way to the hidden knowledge. None of this has made it easy for the serious student of your work" […]. You have noticed, I trust, that I have not tried to pry any of your secrets out of mere curiosity. If I have at times attempted to recover fragments of your life, especially those that relate to your Jewish identity and some of which I believe you suppressed, it has been only for the sake of a better understanding of the conscious intention of your work, thinking that you yourself would want it that way. (81)

sick (19). Of course, in this, Derrida also clearly depends on an implicit repetition of the link he has already forged between "fever" and *pharmakon*.[96]

Its echoing and emphatically non-documentary arrangement causes Steedman to posit the structure of *Archive Fever* and its illustration of archive fever as a mere repetition of attempts, so plentiful in "the 1990s battle [which retrospectively defines the proper advent of archival discourse] between the ancients and the post-moderns" to mark out or deny access "to some kind of truth" (2-3). Accordingly, Steedman simplifies *Archive Fever*'s sick preoccupation with repetition by defining it as evidence of Derridean determinism, as the "trouble [of] getting started and finished" (7). Her simplification allows her to take Derrida's diagnosis of "archive fever" to task for depending so much on an abstracted concept of the archive (abstract enough to qualify as psychoanalysis) that it divests the archive (and every archive) of its insistent materiality and consequent immediacy and enables its paradoxical consolidation in "some kind of truth." General abstraction, although one of her major concerns, is not, however, the source of Steedman's critique; instead she censures in *Archive Fever* the abstractions that push out practical, concrete, and necessary investigation (of, for example, the contribution to the archive constituted by the archive reader's hands) and put in its place a static (or repetitive) and quiescent body.[97]

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[96] Consequently, Derrida's contribution to archival discourse can be described, as it is by Marlene Manoff, as "probably the most ambitious attempt by a contemporary scholar to understand the drive to collect, organize, and conserve the human record. Derrida provides a way of thinking about the work of librarians and archivists quite unlike anything we have previously seen in the professional literature" (11).

[97] The body in question here is Derrida's, in so much as on *oeuvre* can constitute a body. Derrida's text is not only "not about archives at all," but based on "work of history" that is itself a "speculative account" on Freud's *Moses and Monotheism*, a text "which is famously based on no historical evidence whatsoever" (3). Here, Steedman suggests,

In Steedman's view, *Archive Fever*, rather than putting the archive on the couch and in a transferential relationship with a metonymic analyst, and rather than situating the communicative mode of repetition (the only communicative mode in psychoanalysis) as the productive source of disease, authorizes a tableau that cannot but (and ironically) repress (although Steedman does not use this word) the dynamic and potentially symptomatic contributions of both the analyst and the patient to the therapeutic dyad. To put this in more obviously archival terms, Steedman criticizes *Archive Fever* for disregarding that archival repetition depends first of all on an interpretive, historicizing reader and on her (or, more to the point, *his*, as implied by Steedman's critique) interactions with specific, and specifically fragmentary (which is also to say material), archival contents.[98] Derrida's transformation of the archive in *Archive Fever* into an abstract, intangible (and, ultimately, for Steedman, laughably ironic) point of departure for merely "meditating" on "starting places, on beginnings" (6) not only reveals a romantic fixation on beginnings, even (or, especially) lost beginnings, that ensures that *Archive Fever* prescriptively defines the archive as a distant, ultimately inaccessible presence and sublimates through its rhetorical mode the fact that "nothing starts in the Archive, nothing, ever at all" (45), but suggests Derrida's own anxiety upon obliquely recognizing that the archive shares a border with Freud's "dark continent."[99]

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through her comment that "the signs and traces that Freud dealt in […] constitute a kind of archive that Derrida seemed to believe most historians would not be interested in," that her irritation is in fact with Derrida's consolidation of the archive to his own body of work.

[98] A point that *The Scarlet Letter* makes explicit.

[99] In this sense, Steedman finds that although *Archive Fever* depends on the ambiguity of fever, an ambiguity reinforced in modern Western medicine which has not decided whether a fever signals distress, weakness, and disease or whether if triggers and thereby signals the body's attempt to heal (hence, the still current belief that a fever "burns off"

The persuasiveness of Steedman's argument depends on her recognition of the sea change promoted by Derrida's investigation of the archive. Her argument accordingly calls for forceful attention to the conspicuous absences in *Archive Fever*'s meditative, romantic treatment, which gains its designation as such by attending to the (male, or otherwise hegemonic) critic's desire at the expense of the archive's contents and other archive readers, particularly the absent investigation of an archive and an appropriately complex and sustained analysis attentive to the archive's foundation (or simply even *an* archive's foundation) in repetition. Only this kind of non-rhetorical, non-meditative work with repetition, Steedman argues, could attend to the archive's production of infinite differences, could inform an analysis of "the Archive," and could provide a corollary meaningful diagnosis of "archive fever."[100] Its lack prompts Steedman's summary lamentation in *Dust*: why must Derrida mourn the archive's production of revisionist histories, she asks, *and yet* persist in assuming (an assumption illustrated by the futile, repetitive persistence of his own investigation) that archives provide, somewhere, even if lost and inaccessible, "proof of the past"? (8). If, indeed, "somewhere" were meaningful to Derrida's treatment of the archive, he ought to have *also* looked to the quotidian record offices, libraries, and repositories—the places called archives—that historians and more or less professionalized information-seekers and readers must actually visit, read, and (re)produce.

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the source of dis-ease), its dependence ensures this ambiguity remains static and unanalyzed.

[100] Derrida might be supposed to have supplied the inroads to this kind of investigation in *Of Grammatology*, but it, too, refuses to treat the archive in a non-metaphorical sense.

To that end, and in addition to critiquing *Archive Fever*'s abstractions, *Dust* works to square *Archive Fever*'s treatment of the archive's "portentous[ness]" with the "the *ordinariness*, the unremarkable nature of archives" (9; Steedman's emphasis). This attention—to the tiny, to the miniscule, to the motes, to the otherwise overlooked—constitutes Steedman's own influential contribution to contemporary archival discourse. Mindful of the necessity of marking the difference of her repetition of Derrida's themes, Steedman structures her text as a joke—slipping Derrida a Freudian tongue, as it were (thereby redefining the historian's desire as feminist)—the punch line to which reveals the archive's "nothing" is not merely nothing but dust in "the space left by what has gone" (10-11). Of course, *Dust* does not just rehearse a joke or further a play on Freudian-inflected desire. Instead, it promises to provide "a parody (but not *quite* parody)" and an opportunity to laugh (which is "no criticism of Derrida," since "part of the point is to miss his") (11), in order first to question the assumption that "archives" and "history" are commensurate, second to call attention to the commonplace archives overlooked in *Archive Fever* always necessary for and to revisionist historical modes (which is to say "History"), and third and finally to insist on absence (which is not "nothing" in the abstract and which exists despite being filled by and with the work of repetition) in the "space left by what has gone"—dust in an empty room—as a precursor to any and all historical discourse.[101]

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[101] Steedman's joke may be considered a prompt to the (feminist) laughter that itself contributes to what Anca Parvulescu's names the "limited and fragile archive of laughter" in *Laughter: Notes on a Passion* (21). Indeed, the fragments gathered to laugh at Derrida's fever are women and include, most notably, Steedman in chapter one, Fanny Burney and Hester Thrale in chapter two, Charlotte Howe and Mary Saxby in chapter three, the muse Clio in chapter four, George Eliot in chapter five, Elizabeth Gaskell in chapter six, and Clio, again, in chapter seven. Most the historians, aside from Steedman,

Notwithstanding the impression[102] left by *Dust*, however, and particularly in her first, aptly titled chapter, "In the Archon's House," Steedman makes the object of her critique not simply Derrida and not simply his *Archive Fever* but the assumption that archives and archival contents correlate to historical discourse through any way other than "magical realism" (150). According to Steedman, archive fever is not only repetition, not only abstraction, not only symptomatic of the Unconscious or the superego: archive fever is also merely one of any number of symptoms that follow from completing a "rite of passage" that produces narratives, counter-narratives, and other various "discomforts" (9).

Steedman's response to *Archive Fever* provides an important theoretical foundation for my project not only because she focuses Derrida's points on archival dust, but because she does so through a feminist argument that demonstrates the necessity of yoking the study, analysis, and critique of archives to literature, and to fiction in particular.[103] According to Steedman, fiction functions, and more accurately or more obviously or perhaps more faithfully than history, as a "political story told in terms of *something else*" (106: Steedman's emphasis). It therefore makes différance its mode, and therein is its power. Additionally (also, consequently), fiction in Steedman's formulation depends on archival access, even if that access is only imagined or assumed, for its production, circulation, reception, interpretation and reproduction. Although she

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and the critics, aside from Susan Stewart, are male.

[102] Steedman underscores Derrida's various plays on "impression," first of all in his subtitle, and implicitly chastises Derrida for eliminating historians—their practices and their critical concerns—from his archival fancy.

[103] By relying so heavily on Yerushalmi's concluding monologue to Freud, what Yerushalmi himself refers to as possibly a "historical novel," however, Derrida provides the same foundation.

compares fiction with history to illustrate the relationships of these discourses to the archive, Steedman does not do so merely to repeat Hayden White's metahistorical motto regarding history's basis in circumscribed (which is to say, tropological and therefore determined, despite his counter suggestion) narrative. Rather, Steedman compares fiction to history to point out that despite their common ground *in* the archive they point a common foil *at* the archive.

Proceeding thus, she provides a model for applying fiction and literary convention to archives and to archival discourse, situating them as critical correctives to the various abstractions (medicine, perhaps, or, since the medical profession has yet to settle the potentially therapeutic quality of pyrexia, the higher-burning fevers that constitute fever therapy),[104] particularly the search for origins problematically equated, in Steedman's analysis, with an abstracted "History" and with the abstracted "Archive" of archive fever. Ultimately, by arguing that fiction such as the magical realism genre offers both a diagnostic instrument and paradigm for understanding the archival imperative to "mak[e] the dead walk and talk," Steedman redefines archive fever away from its designation as either a consequence of the sick search for authorizing geneses (Derridean deconstruction) and an ailing empiricism (traditional historical discourse) and instead towards the restlessness of dreams, a restlessness reflected in the dynamic because multivalent narratives that archives are constantly made to produce by the reading wretches who suffer to write so feverishly from out of them (150).[105]

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[104] Consider, for example, the persistence of "fever therapy," and its possible connection to spontaneous cancer regression in Hobohm's "Fever Therapy Revisited."

[105] The traditional discourse is rooted in the positivistic work of Leopold von Ranke, especially apparent in his effort to represent history "*wie es eigentlich gewesen ist*," or, as it really was, and Auguste Comte. Both Ranke and Comte helped make mandatory the

This, too, constitutes Steedman's contribution to contemporary archival discourse. More specifically, genre play and historical fiction help Steedman to shape her points regarding fiction's utility for both archives and for contemporary archival discourse. Parody, for instance, activates the power of critique, enabling Steedman to position her own method as an antidote in caricature for *Archive Fever* whereby "archive fever" is renamed "Archive Fever Proper" and defined as the prolonged inhalation of dust considered by early nineteenth-century medicine to cause disease, perhaps Anthrax, among the working class (and others).[106] Historical fiction, for its part, provides Steedman another important methodological tool. Through George Eliot's *Middlemarch*, which she reads as providing an alternative aetiology for archive fever than that advanced by *Archive Fever*, Steedman suggests that fiction in general and historical fiction in particular constitute alternative, more descriptive, and far more complex versions of "the archive's," and thus its fevers', geneses.[107]

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extensive documentation that marks much philosophical and all historical discourses and therefore contributed to laying the administrative and bureaucratic foundation for discourse in general.

[106] Tracing the appearance of "dust" in archival discourse constitutes its own archive: In addition to Steedman and Foucault, as I indicate below, see Alice Yaeger Kaplan, "Working in the Archives," Rick Gekoski, "Why Archives are Like Monkfish," Nicholson Baker's *Double Fold*, discussed below, and Saramago's *All the Names*, also more specifically discussed below. Interestingly, Steedman's half-joke is anything but in epidemiology: see Maggi et al. "Airborne fungal spores in dust present in archives: proposal for a detection method, new for archival materials" and Apetrei et al. "Possible cause of allergy for the librarians: books manipulation and ventilation as sources of fungus spores spreading."

[107] In this, Steedman echoes Gonzalez Echevarría's *Myth and Archive: A Theory of Latin American Narrative*. There, Echevarría argues that Latin American literature features a master-narrative that can be described by its "anxiety about origins" and that manifests in a narrator-protagonist who, in "searching for a new, original narrative," contains "all previous ones" and becomes therefore an "Archive" (3-4).

Fiction proves so valuable for contemporary archival discourse because the political stories that fiction such as *Middlemarch* are made to tell reveal that historical spaces and context, of which the archive is one, are the constructed products of nostalgia. In fact, according to Steedman, nostalgia gained its status as concept and commodity through late eighteenth and early nineteenth century historical fiction,[108] in which the word named and thereby instantiated the disjunction between the "assumption that immediate lived experience is more 'real'" (and thereby authentic) and the belief that "mediated experience known through language and the temporality of narrative can offer pattern and insight (Stewart 23).[109] This is Raymond Williams's point, too,[110] when in "The Problem of Perspective," he writes that nostalgia, located in childhood, which is to say in personal origin, operates like a backwards escalator to force questions of "historical fact and perspective" which are also questions of "literary fact and

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[108] Jean Starobinski, in "The Idea of Nostalgia," locates the concept's advent in the late seventeenth century when it was coined by Johannes Hofer to explain as a medical phenomenon the strange sicknesses of Swiss soldiers stationed abroad.

[109] It is no accident here that the language used by Stewart to describe nostalgia reproduces the diseased language of Derrida in *Archive Fever*. Derrida weighs in on nostalgia himself when he describes the archive's spectral quality through Freud's analysis of and meditation on spectrality. Ultimately, Derrida describes "archive fever" in the following way: "[i]t is to burn with a passion. It is never to rest, interminably, from searching for the archive right where it slips away. It is to run after the archive, even if there's too much of it, right where something in it anarchives itself. It is to have a compulsive, repetitive, and nostalgic desire for the archive, an irrepressible desire to return to the origin, a homesickness, a nostalgia for the return to the most archaic place of absolute commencement" (91). The un-accidental quality of language here suggests that Steedman conveniently and problematically overlooks the many ways that Derrida anticipates Steedman's critique by integrating it into his discussion. Note, for example, that the above excerpt follows Derrida's presentation of Freud's reading of Wilhelm Jensen's novel, *Gradiva*. For more here, see Mary Jacobson "Is There a Woman in This Text?"

[110] Williams undoubtedly serves as one of Steedman's major inspirations (see also Steedman's *Strange Dislocations: Childhood and the Idea of Interiority 1780-1930* and "Raymond Williams and History").

perspective" (12).[111] The nostalgia promoted through fiction, what Steedman refers to as the "longing temporalised in the desire for a *particular* past," depends for its alleviation or satiation[112] on the abstract and impossible archive, the Archive, "the archive," or what Steedman elsewhere in *Dust* calls the "Timeless Universal Archive" (91, 102; Steedman's emphasis). This impossible archive is also the archive that figures as diseased in contemporary archival discourse. In short, the narrative language of fiction, which alone possesses the ability to reconstruct as authentic a past that evacuates the present of its immediate authenticity, exemplifies and thereby constructs the very archive on which it depends. Consequently, fiction indicates that the archive that it produces (and that produces it, in turn) is itself a material manifestation and therefore a corroboration of Susan Stewart's point that nostalgia constitutes a "social disease." In an of course unsurprising turn, this social disease's most prevalent and persuasive symptom, everywhere it is expressed, is archive fever (23).

Fiction's illustration, commodification, and propagation of the coterminous relationship between the past and nostalgia, the past and nostalgia's "social disease," the past and nostalgia's "desire for desire," thereby constitutes the archive that theorists such as Derrida visit.[113] Thus, fiction, by telling a political story in terms of something else, indicates (in a way that other narrative genres do not) that the archive, built by fiction's nostalgia, the named product of a disjunction—of a gap—contains in fact *nothing*. There is in fact *nothing* in the archive—not facts, not fictions, not stories, not narratives, not

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[111] In these definitions, both Williams and Steedman (and Stewart) follow Kant.
[112] Stewart traces the etymology of longing to "'the fanciful cravings incident to women during pregnancy'" (x).
[113] For example, the archive constituted by Yerushalmi's fictional monologue to Freud, or the archive discovered in "The Custom House."

histories, not memories, and certainly not the past—nothing but fragments and pieces and parts, and all usually, at least according to Steedman, covered in dust. Indeed, Steedman in *Dust* uses the fiction of *Middlemarch* to make this point, too. Eliot's novel, consisting of "fragments from an Unvisited Archive," stands in the archive's stead, depicting a more complete and more politically revelatory picture of the past and of archival dis-ease because it reveals that the reliance on the archive for the "writing and reading of [history]" depends on an "unsettling knowledge that nothing need have been said or written in the way it has been…nothing at all" (108).

Nothing constitutes the (paradoxical) substance of Steedman's argument and nothing thereby constitutes the substance of her important perspective for contemporary archival discourse.[114] She (and I) belabor(s) her point because she, for one thing, wants to use *Dust* (and use, of course, "dust"), to differentiate between the archive as an abstract concept and archives as places visited by historians (in particular, but other readers, as well). Steedman recognizes, however, that it is not a matter of simply dispensing with the abstract archive: in fact, "the archive's" import as a meaningful concept in contemporary archival discourse depends in large part, as mentioned above, on its proximity and reference to the Timeless Universal Archive. Consequently, in *Dust* Steedman wants to argue for the archive's indispensability as *both* an abstract concept and a quotidian reality, as productive of *both* the narratives that constitute fiction and the narratives that constitute history: archives, in *Dust*, are consequently *both* dust-filled,

[114] This can be seen as a pretty obvious play on "dust." Actually, at least one of Steedman's critics expresses surprise that she uses dust in conceptually similar, though less complex, ways as Joseph A. Amato without reference (Tollebeek 239).

finite, arbitrary, ordinary, and uncomfortable spaces that produce suffering of the most trivial kind *and* "place[s] of dreams" (150).[115]

This point is registered rhetorically in what she indicates is the utter obviousness of Derrida's argument: *of course* repetition constitutes the archival mode; *of course* the archive destroys—and radically—that which it preserves; *of course* visiting archives provokes symptoms, such as those evinced by the social disease of nostalgia (itself a longing for an impossible authenticity, for "the past"). But Steedman does not see Derrida's archive fever as benign: she sees it as malignant metastasis. Derrida represents the critical tendency to facilitate the archive's further abstraction, literally, in the case of *Archive Fever*, since by defining the archive through repetition and the search for the Unconscious, Derrida underscores the archive's "withdrawn, drawn away, removed, separate" qualities (*OED*); his archive and its fever eclipses and obscures the literal nothing—the dust—that the archive and everyday archives both do in fact contain.

My extended reading of *Dust* highlights Steedman's argument for concretizing the abstract archive in *Archive Fever*[116] and her corollary suggestion that fiction's conventions provide such concretization not only because these serve as examples of the

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[115] Further, fiction, because it routinely tells political stories in terms of other things, reproduces in a far more graspable way the archive's repudiation of History and "history's enterprise" (94). The enterprise, which consists of "writ[ing] narrative out of things that happen" and "relating the relationship between those happenings," cannot be found in the archives on which it depends. In fact, archives not only contain something other than "things that happen" and relationships, they also contain something other than History (94). Of course, archives also contain something other than fiction, but unlike History, fiction can illustrate archival indeterminacy (the indeterminacy that enables archives to act as the engine generating the historical enterprise) and can reveal the necessary partnership between active readers and writers in the construction of meanings, archival and otherwise.

[116] Despite its continued provocation to historians, librarians, and archivists….

method of argument (if not necessarily the aim) I adopt in the pages that follow,[117] but also because my personal preoccupation with *Dust* propels my project.[118] This does not mean that I do not see in *Dust* some rather complicated problems, a few of which must be mentioned here. The not-quite-ness of Steedman's parody, for example, indicates the consciously liminal position her argument takes. Liminality can be considered a quality of strength, an ability to straddle two or more, more limiting, categories, but *Dust*'s liminality—its straddled stance over literary discourse, historical discourse, and psychoanalytic discourse, and the bridge it strives to provide over history, fiction, and critique—risks recapitulating (and in fact does recapitulate) the abstraction it finds so troublesome. Notwithstanding *Dust*'s pointed parodic focus and its critique of Derridean deconstruction (6), the essays on its pages benefit, particularly in her discussion of fiction (and perhaps by design), as much from Freudian psychoanalysis and Derridean deconstruction as the analyses it mocks.[119]

Furthermore, although it lodges its argument against approaching the archive *like* anything (even like "the archive"), and especially like the limitless *mise en abyme* of the Unconscious, *Dust* welcomes approaching the archive and also every archive *like* an empty space—save its dust—of silence. The simile is important not only because of Steedman's critical stance but because the archive fever that she claims she can tell us

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[117] The confused aim of Steedman's idiosyncratic collection cannot be denied. Although she suggests that *Dust* counters *Archive Fever*, the substance of her argument against Derrida is neither straightforward nor all of a piece.

[118] Plainly put, I like Steedman, very much, and despite the unintentionally (I believe) obfuscating and ultimately quite contradictory argument she puts forth in *Dust*.

[119] While this is, to some extent, Steedman's point, she does not fully account for the many ways her big and small points rely completely on Derridean deconstruction and Derridean-inspired abstraction. If *Archive Fever* romanticizes origins, *Dust* can be said to romanticize "stuff," in caricature though it may be.

"all about," is produced in the workaday archives where silence is constantly threatened by hacking coughs, according to Steedman's experiences, or the sound of gag reflexes and a desperate grab for the wastebasket, or the sound of a humming motor and the suck-suck sound of a breast pump, according to my own experience. Taking these points into account, however, *Dust* might also be taken as an illustration of liminality's structural subtlety. Liminality constitutes a byword of postmodernism, but in Steedman's text the term might be taken to hearken back to its architectural etymology: its reflexive use builds onto the archive, via other textual structures, a threshold by which a figure may enter the archive's cloister scriptorium and encounter it as also a conceptual space produced through narrative. Subsequently, while I initially introduced my project through Craven, I, now follow not just Hawthorne but Steedman to enter the archive as a concept and a place made meaningful through literary discourse and particularly through the unvisited archival fragments in fiction that inform contemporary archival discourse's postmodern and political strains.

Despite what the attention lavished on them in this introductory section suggests, Derrida and Steedman are only two prominent critics who took part in a "new politics of the archive" prompted by the archival turn towards contemporary archival discourse in the 1990s. In some quite pointed respects, their work has gained such influence because it repeats the "'question of the archive'"—what and where it is and is not and what it does and does not—asked thirty years earlier (to the certain disappointment of "sad fetishists and social historians," not to mention Craven) by Foucault (Steedman 2). The definition of the archive supplied by Foucault in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, through which the archive accrues a wider functionality than can possibly be suggested by either

its documents or institutional status, constitutes the vector of archival discourse (a vector straightforwardly influenced by Foucault's traced trajectory through Renaissance to nineteenth-century epistemes) that, as Derrida and Steedman's publications and their reverberations implicitly attest, still significantly impacts archival discussions today.[120]

Foucault's contribution to contemporary archival discourse depends on a broadly construed and not fully (or particularly clearly) articulated concept of the archive that enables an archaeological investigation of "discursive formations."[121] Accordingly, Foucault describes the archive as an abstract epistemological concept: it is a "*historical a priori*," but also "a complex volume, in which heterogeneous regions are differentiated or deployed, in accordance with specific rules and practices that cannot be superposed."[122] Significantly, and significantly similar to Steedman, Foucault's archive's meaning follows from what it is not: it is not, for example and despite its status as a "volume,"[123] "the sum of all texts"; it is not "the institutions, which […] make it possible to record and preserve"; it is not what "safeguards the event of the statement, and preserves, for future memories, its status as an escapee"; it is not that "which collects the dust of statements

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[120] Among the other aforementioned texts with which this section engages, see, for example, Rachel Hardiman's "En mal d'archive: Postmodernist Theory and Recordkeeping."

[121] Of course, as should be evident by my route through Hawthorne, Steedman and Derrida, describing and theorizing archives poses problems in most corners of archival discourse.

[122] In this way, the archival abstraction instantiated by late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century novels and their preoccupation with nostalgia gains, via Foucault, a functional (though no less abstract) status.

[123] Steedman uses Stewart to push Foucault's "volume" towards "narrative."

that have become inert once more"; it is not that "which unifies everything that has been said in the great confused murmur of discourse" (128-9).[124]

Most important for Foucault, as for Steedman, the archive is not commensurable with language or history (to cite in the latter only the most recognizable archive-based discipline); it instead operates as a system, structuring language and making it meaningful, and correspondently supplying the tools and rules that enable history to emerge as a discipline, to become that capital-H History (a discipline therefore subject, as ultimately are all disciplines, thanks in part to the archive's functionality, to constant, though limited, change).[125] Although this archive looms everywhere in Steedman's work, Foucault emphasizes not the archive's nothing (despite his reliance on negative definitions); rather, he emphasizes the functionality that ensures the archive exceeds the contents and structures that traditionally define it. In Foucault's rendering, the archive is a "situation" through and by which "statements become events." It constitutes the "law of what can be said" and "*the system of enunciability*": "[f]ar from being only that which ensures that we exist in the midst of preserved discourse," it "is that which differentiates discourses in their multiple existence and specifies them in their own duration" (Foucault's emphasis). Ultimately, for Foucault, the archive functions as the master of becoming—or, as the laws of becoming set forth by the master or sovereign—it "cannot," therefore, "be described in its totality" (129).

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[124] Although it is, according to Steedman (despite her suggestion that her corrective to archive fever depends on an antidote she learns from Foucault), precisely the archive's collection of dust that proves most significant to historians and other seekers and writers of history.

[125] This should be taken as Steedman's sense of "History": "one of the great narrative modes that are our legacy from the nineteenth century," and, "a way of plotting and telling a life (of giving shape and meaning to inchoate items of existence)" (75-6).

The concentrated impact of Foucault's definition on contemporary archival discourse, and particularly on Steedman and Derrida, depends on his assumption that the archive serves not as a portal to empirical knowledge but as the (subject-less) law by which specific types and formations of knowledge as such and therefore subjects emerge.[126] This is an extension of the archive attributed by Kafka to the obfuscating legal system in *The Trial* and the archive described by Borges first in "The Total Library" and then in "The Library of Babel" as Babel-ian (and obviously, of the same encyclopedic "taxonomy" that inspired *The Order of Things*). For both Kafka and Borges, the archive constitutes a tangible threat to its reading subjects through its emphatically infinite material perpetuation of an ironically systemic absurdity; for Foucault, the archive functions to enable the possibility of such systemization itself. Following Kafka and Borges then (or laying the foundation by which Kafka and Borges gain entrée into postmodernity), Foucault positions the archive as an antithetical origin. Indeed, positioning discourses and thus the archive at a "historical *a priori*" enables Foucault to circumvent the archive's always-problematic assumption of origins (and corollary authenticity) by disabling the very progression (which ironically assumes regression) that "origins" suggests. While many readers, such as the aforementioned historian Osborne,[127] have noted that Foucault's archive, particularly before the advent of a recognizable archival discourse that construed the archive as an object of theoretical exploration, is perhaps too conceptual, "situat[ing] the ideality of the archive in what is

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[126] In this sense, Foucault precasts Steedman's analysis of nostalgia as a reflexive production and progenitor of the archive.
[127] And others—Linda Ferreira-Buckley's article, "Rescuing the Archives from Foucault," for example, stands as one particularly aptly titled example.

perhaps too abstract a space,"[128] others, Steedman in particular, are inspired rather than piqued by the historical grammar provided by Foucault's definition of the archive (53).[129] This is likely because Foucault's abstraction, despite its abstractness, does not *locate* "the archive" and does not therefore locate it in the un-inhabitable, incommunicative Unconscious (an/other, distant place); Foucault thus does not diffuse archival immediacy through a metaphoric and/or symbolic barrier.

Similarly important to Steedman and to the contemporary archival discourse in which she plays a defining role, is the value that in Foucault's archive can be ascertained through its negativity (it is not a leap to consider Williams's, Steedman's, and Stewart's nostalgia as an extension of such value). At and as a historical *a priori* limit, the archive

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[128] In "The Ordinariness of the Archive," Osborne describes Foucault's definitive archive as possessing "a completely virtual existence and none of the connotations of […] happy literalism" (53). Although Osborne does not elaborate, I suspect he sees a problematic tautology between Foucault's virtual archive and the literal origins Foucault's version of the archive replaces (but not necessarily defines or repeats). By substituting the former for the latter, Foucault emphasizes origin-less-ness and indicates the necessity of seeing origin itself as a mere space of specifically ordered fragments. This does not necessarily solve the persistent problem of the investment of archival fragments with originary aura, however.

[129] This is perhaps all the more interesting since Steedman is explicitly unconvinced by the "linguistic turn" among historians (those, such as the aforementioned White, who define metahistory as partially contingent on the similarities between historical discourse and narrative. Against metahistorians, (itself somewhat surprising, given her general critical stance), Steedman argues that narrative is an effect of living—of experiencing time—it does not, she argues, explain the "historian's massive authority as a writer." According to Steedman, the historian's authority instead "derives from two factors: the way archives *are*, and the conventional rhetoric of history-writing, which always asserts (through footnotes, through the casual reference to PT S2/1/1…) that you *know because you have been there*. There is story put about that the authority comes from the documents themselves, and the historian's obeisance to the limits they impose on any account that employs them. But really, it comes from *having been there* (the train to the distant city, the call number, the bundle opened, the dust…) so that then, and only then, can you present yourself as moved and dictated to by those sources, telling the story the way it has to be told" (145; Steedman's emphasis). Accordingly, Steedman might be considered not a metahistorian but a "deep structuralist" in the Foucauldian vein.

makes historical language (and other narratives) possible by aligning disparate pieces and parts—pieces and parts that are invariably *there* but that are *not* themselves systems, or, in Steedman's iteration, stories—in a system that structures the discursive comprehension of human experience. While Foucault's archive is an un-described, incomplete, synchronic non-space of pure potential (even when, bound to the concept of the archive, such potentiality is negative), its negatives deactivate claims to a mythological *omphalos* and suggest instead a field full of dips and valleys, sedimentary layers upon which concepts such as "origins" and "History" can be searched, challenged, and understood. It is in this sense then, that Foucualt's archive is also Steedman's. The former, however, which gains its epistemic structure from language and grammar (even if it constitutes neither), additionally functions as the site of a dig; as such, it indicates the necessity and utility of archaeology's tools, tools both metaphorically and methodologically utilized by Freud in psychoanalysis (in, for example, his aforementioned reference to John Rowlands Stanley's dark continent), and Walter Benjamin in his reflections on language, for the acquisition of knowledge.[130] Crucial to Foucault's archive, according to Foucault, is its function as an uneven, terraced field of partially buried objects; the field, which designates the objects' perceptible shapes and the methods by which those shapes can be searched and observed, must be investigated, even if it can only be searched in "fragments, regions, and levels" (130).[131]

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[130] Foucault's dig finds its material analog in Steedman's view of the archive's "rag rug" quality (112-141).

[131] In *Archive Fever*, Derrida bypasses a named critique of Foucault when pointing to the tension in Freud between the archive and archaeology: "The archaeologist has succeeded in making the archive no longer serve any function. It *comes to efface itself*, it becomes transparent or unessential so as to let the *origin* present itself in person. Live, without meditation and without delay. Without even the memory of a translation, once the

Foucault, Derrida, and Steedman suggest, particularly through their disharmony, the various postulates that today characterize the archive as feverish in contemporary archival discourse. While each therefore gestures, in his or her own way, to the economic and corporeal affinities between plenitude and fragmentation, they more obviously speak to the issues of abstraction that plague every discussion, including this one, of "the archive." Foucault abstracts the archive into functionality; Derrida abstracts the archive into the Unconscious (and thus into psychoanalysis); Steedman, who attempts to concretize abstraction through fiction into everyday archives, can ultimately and inadvertently do no more than illustrate that the archive's abstraction informs the everyday archives regularly visited by historians and other interested readers. While this very abstraction explicitly informs the archive's plenitude postulate, its mandate to save, and its constitutional fragmentation, I want here to emphasize the aforementioned implication of dis-ease in the reflexive relationship between abstraction and concretion.

Whereas the abstract archive possesses a capaciousness, thanks to the aforementioned literary legacy the most conspicuous contributors of which include Kafka, Borges, Calvino, and Eco, that enables it to be stretched to fit any form, even formlessness, this is not true, as Steedman argues, of everyday archives. The contents of the rare book archive at the Beinecke, for example, depend on walls designed by Bunshaft and built by the George A. Fuller Construction Company. However, and despite Steedman's argument to the contrary, the Beinecke promises, through its

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intense work of translation has succeeded" (92). Despite Foucault's archaeological methodology, his analysis can be read as compatible with the tension that Derrida describes between the interminable and terminable, particularly as Derrida claims in his postscript that Freud "wants to be an archivist who is more of an archaeologist than the archaeologist" (97).

publicity arm, an infinitely capacious (because metaphysical) space, one whose holdings expand indefinitely behind and before it to include the "secrets"[132] yet awaiting discovery. Accordingly, the Beinecke helps make clear the persistently irresolute and irreconcilable relationship between concrete archives—the Beinecke that can be visited, the Beinecke in which both archive workers and archive readers become feverish and sick—and the abstract archive—the Beinecke that attests to the timelessness of universal memory or history wherein such transgenerational secrets are kept. The Beinecke therefore suggests, and in opposition to Steedman's explicit argument that abstract and concrete archives align (although in relative harmony with her implicit argument that writing provides certain analogies to the archive), the impossibility of separating archives from "the archive" and vice versa: the restless relationship between the archive and archives subtends like a dis-eased constitution every archive through every discussion about archives. Consequently, the relationship, an incurable germ in contemporary archival discourse, manifests in the postulates that inform various archival symptoms, archive fever most of all.

Henceforth, when I refer to "the archive" below, I assume by that reference the reflexive connectivity between the abstract archive and archives that informs archives such as the Beinecke. This is to say that while I discuss archival postulates as forged in and by "the archive," I recognize that the postulates also supply an example of the manifestation of "the archive," which is to say abstraction, sometimes problematic, in archives. The postulate I call the plenitude postulate stands as prime example. While plenitude describes a particular economy applicable perhaps only to the abstract archive,

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[132] A byword for truth that gains authenticity (and authority) because it has not yet been divulged.

the further abstraction of plenitude into "everything" informs everyday archives, too. In this, as in so much else in this project, Foucault's archive figures as highly influential. Although Foucault's application of archaeological tools in his discussion of the archive (and elsewhere) privileges archival *fragmentation*,[133] his cardinal characterization of the archive as the impossible culmination of a "never completed, never wholly achieved uncovering"—with the implication (via the enjoinder to "dig") that "never" means in fact "not yet"—defines what I consider the fundamental archival postulate that states that the archive, both in its abstract sense (the secret-filled, silent Beinecke) and in its practical, everyday form (the accessible, readable, though not practically, wholly readable, Beinecke), holds "everything."[134]

Ironically, given his emphasis on negation, Foucault therefore invests his own archive with the common assumption that the archive and indeed all archives operate according to plenitude,[135] to a fundamental principal dictating that all the important parts

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[133] In fact, the very archaeological methodology adopted by Foucault in conjunction with his archive aids the archive's infinite expansion. His methodology "questions the already-said" (131) and depends on a sustained, though discontinuous, investigation of the archive's systemic function in discourse- and subject-formation. Its instrumentality to "the never completed, never wholly achieved uncovering of the archive" reinforces the archive's infinitude, its lack of fixity, its abstraction beyond delimitation. Ultimately, it advocates for a shift in methodology away from those subjects who read and create archival meaning, who temporarily fix and delimit "the archive," and who therefore hash out and maintain the permeable boundaries between the abstract and everyday.

[134] Steedman speaks against this assumption when in *Dust* she writes that "[t]he Archive is not potentially made up of *everything*, as is human memory; and it is not the fathomless and timeless place in which nothing goes away that is the unconscious. The Archive is made from selected and consciously chosen documentation from the past and also from the mad fragmentations that no one intended to preserve and that just ended up there" (68). As the subsequent discussion should make clear, she is fighting a losing battle (and occasionally against herself).

[135] That the assumption is common depends on its literary legacy, not only in Hawthorne's focus on the interminably repeatable and repetitive A, but on the Kafka's and Borges's preoccupations with archival (which is to say documental) infinitude.

and pieces of a particular past are (and therefore will be) contained therein.[136] Pierre Nora offers his corroborative view of archival plenitude when he argues that "the obsession with the archive that marks our age" is characterized by "attempting at once the complete conservation of the present as well as the total preservation of the past" (13). The plenitude postulate operates rather more peculiarly than Foucault or Nora seem to imply, however.[137] For example, while "plenitude" denotes fullness and completion and suggests an at least temporary stasis enabling the historian's use of archival objects (or, for Foucault, archeological methods) to "conjure a social system" (for example), that accurately or faithfully or powerfully or otherwise meaningfully describes the past for the present (Steedman 18), archival plenitude replaces surfeit with superfluity. To contain that which can contribute to an accumulative history, to contain that which contributes to a historical record extending both backwards and forwards, to contain as-yet-undiscovered secrets, the archive's contents must constantly overreach completion.[138]

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[136] And not only the past: writing about archival expectations and the discontinuity between "archival methodology" and "community informatics," Ruth Grossman writes that the archive must "privilege the experience of the past, […] inform the conjecture of the future, and […] *secure the thumbprint of the present"* (4, Grossman's emphasis).

[137] Foucault, however, does indicate its complexity in a related context: in "What Is An Author," he writes, "[w]hen undertaking the publication of Nietzsche's works, for example, where should one stop? Surely everything must be published, but what is 'everything'? Everything that Nietzsche himself published, certainly. And what about the rough drafts for his works? Obviously. The plans for his aphorisms? Yes. The deleted passages and the notes at the bottom of the page? Yes. What if, within a workbook filled with aphorisms, one finds a reference, the notation of a meeting or of an address, or a laundry list: is it a work, or not? Why not? And so on, ad infinitum. A theory of the work does not exist, and the empirical task of those who naively undertake the editing of works often suffers in the absence of such a theory" (379). Here Foucault advocates for absenting the author and erecting referential works to stand over the absence.

[138] The past accumulates, according to Walter Benjamin, at least in the view of the "angel of history": "Where a chain of events appears before *us*, *he* sees one single catastrophe,

Such provisional, which is to say, always superfluous plenitude explains why Alice Yaeger Kaplan claims that "for the archive to be" at all, "there should be too much of it" (103), why Derrida points out that the question of boundary, of "the outside," is "the question of the archive" (8),[139] and why Steedman attributes her version of archive fever to the archive's (false, or at least misleading, according to Steedman) interminability.[140]

Although they do not investigate it as a postulate, Yaeger Kaplan, Derrida, and Steedman each indicate the complexity of and the problem with archival plenitude when they refer to the archive's superfluity in terms of its overwhelming textual materiality: Yaeger Kaplan suggests that the archive consists of "too many papers to sift through," Derrida argues that the archive consists of a "typographical […] concept," Steedman claims, against Derrida, that the archive actually consists of the enormity and necessity of "PT S2/1/1." Historian Helen Freshwater perhaps best evokes[141] the archive's immersive textuality when she describes its evocation of "mountainous piles of paper

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which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage" ("On the Concept of History" 4: 392; Benjamin's emphasis).

[139] David Greetham responds to Derrida's point that "there are undoubtedly no othe[r] [questions of the archive],' by asking, "if there are no others, why is it that Derrida does not take up his own challenge" and answer to this—*the*—one question (2).

[140] "You know," Steedman writes, "that you *will not finish*," and that inability produces an "anxiety," an anxiety "about PT S2/1/1, which only arrived from the stacks that afternoon, which is enormous, and which you will never get through tomorrow" (18).

[141] Of the critics, that is. Hawthorne, Kafka, Borges, and Eco explicitly add to this imagery, and Saramago has much to add, as well: in the archive, "you have to make a lot of twists and turns, you have to skirt round mountains of bundles, columns of files, piles of cards, thickets of ancient remains, you have to walk down dark gulleys, between walls of grubby paper which, up above, actually touch, yards and yards of string will have to be unraveled, left behind, like a sinuous, subtle trail traced I the dust, there is no other way of knowing where you have to go next, there is no other way of finding your way back" (141).

bundled together;[142] corridors of cataloged files; dusty, disintegrating letters; musty records; obscure lists" (733).[143] These theorists' collective focus on the archive's superfluous text calls forth the archive's traditional association with documents, and thanks to their engagements with poststructuralist and deconstructionist enterprises, also gestures to the aforementioned problem with plenitude: plenitude in the archive, signaled by textual superfluity, indicates the archive's constitutive foundation not only in super-abundance but in paucity.[144] Obviously, as Steedman emphasizes, archival contents constitute only the bare legibility of the events to which they synecdochically refer. However, this coexistence, between plenty and lack, enables the archive's multivalence, or, to be perhaps more precise, its ambivalence.[145] Consequently, although the plenitude postulate authorizes a critical assumption that the archive contains or will contain everything, the archive gains everything by way of a superfluity (over)compensating for essential and originary absences.

While so many (and especially literary) critics depend on the relationship in text between superfluity and paucity, presence and absence, relatively few critically consider this relationship through the lens of the archive.[146] Steedman, for example, translates the

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[142] In this Freshwater echoes Steedman's reference to the archive's "mountainous" "bundles," and both likely echo Kafka's *The Trial* (68).
[143] The archive's dependence on text proceeds in several directions: the archive consists of texts and it produces texts, and the writer who writes about archives reproduces the archive through text, through, for example, a footnote.
[144] Cf. 4, note 1.
[145] Cook, a lucid archival theorist, argues in "Archival Science and Postmodernism: New Formulations for Old Concepts" that postmodernism's emphasis on the "speculation about the nature of historical and other texts" has had a direct impact on archives and archival studies.
[146] Renée Green offers a notable exception. According to Green, the archive can be characterized by the cleft between "everything/nothing." Green names archive fever "negation in abundance," and refers to the reader's "mind-numbing" "canceling-out

archive's essential and originary absences into the nothing of the archive's quotidian pieces and parts, the nothing of the archive's emphatically dead and utterly finite letters (which are not spirits, not ghosts, not revenants). Her translation does not account, however, for absence as a *determinant* of archival superfluity, not only the superfluity imposed within the archive itself (for example, the Beinecke's always-superfluous secrets), but the superfluity imposed by the archive reader's recognition that something *is* missing in the archive, that something perhaps *should be* but *is not* there.[147] Steedman argues that absence in the archive should be expected as a constituent, but it does not follow that archival absences are thereby quiescent: to tamp down the productive power of archival absence as a reader-generated chimera, as (and what amounts to a very similar thing) a Derridean flourish, or as an opportunity for concretizing nothing via dust, overlooks that absence inheres, *as something missing*, to archival objects both structurally, because archival objects are fragmentary, and conceptually, because archival objects contribute to and depend on that nostalgia produced in and promoted by nineteenth-century narrations and their iterations.

The archive accordingly accrues the superfluity that constitutes its plenitude by way of the structural and conceptual absences invested in it. The accrual receives its most introspective look from Steedman, but in her preoccupation with Derrida's endlessly repeated attempts to "recove[r] moments of inception" (5) she focuses on "inception," "memory," and "origins" (8) at the expense of "recovery." In fact, in the

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effect" that follows from the recognition of "absences, lacunae, holes which occur in the midst of densities of information" (49).

[147] This is why the historian Steedman, in "What a Rag Rug Means," can "ma[ke] the mistake of carpeting [a nineteenth-centruy domestic space] with a rug that, in fact, could not be made in an economy in which such a tiny number of things circulated again and again, among so many people" (136).

archive, the paradox of plenitude describes (or prescribes) the process of recovery, in the sense of Middle French *recouvré*, or "making good a loss," as a necessary constituent (*OED*). Although Steedman seems to enact this kind of recovery when she references as symptomatic the archive's "*lot*," in her emphasized words—

> each washboard and doormat purchased; saucepans, soup tureens, mirrors, newspapers, ounces of cinnamon and dozens of lemon; each ha'penny handed to a poor child, the minute agreement about how long it shall take a servant to get to keep the greatcoat you provide him with at the hiring; clothes pegs, fat hog meat, the exact expenditure on spirits in a year, the price of papering a room, as you turn, in the spring of 1802, from tenant farmer with limewashed walls, into gentleman with gentleman's residence. Everything. (18)[148]

—she does not recognize it as such and fails to realize that in its very promotion of archive fever, plenitude also effects, enacts, and demands rehabilitation.[149]

Ultimately, the plenitude postulate hints at a fever that contains the germ of its own recovery by making archival superfluity, always evident as text (since PT S2/1/1 can only ever leave the archive as text) a consequence of and constitutive to absence, gaps,

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[148] "You think: I could get to hate these people; and then: I can never do these people justice; and finally: I shall never *get it done*" (18; Steedman's emphasis).

[149] The initial symptom, according to Steedman, is an anxiety provoked by the repetition of "the hundreds who have slept ['in the bed of a cheap hotel' in the town of an archive] before you, leaving their dust and debris in the fibres of the blankets, greasing the surface of the heavy, slippery counterpane" (2). But this is "a screen anxiety"; the real symptom is "actually the archive, and its myriads of the dead, who all day long, have pressed their concerns upon you" (17).

nothing.[150] The archive's too many papers, generative typography, interminable anonymous boxes, mountainous piles, and, over all, dust therefore compensate for the impossibility of archival fullness,[151] or, to put it another way, superfluity cleaves archival deprivation, making deprivation meaningful (as in full of meaning) but only by promoting its recovery (recovery as meaningful deprivation, in the sense of *Dust*, but recovery as also superfluity).[152] The negativity that characterizes Foucault's functional archive certainly whispers this, but Yaeger Kaplan offers a more emphatic articulation: in addition to the archive's "too much" and "too many," "there must also be," in the archive, "pieces missing" to fuel the reader's (or the "storyteller's") passion and "discovery" (103).[153]

Of course, and as Steedman also indicates, the plenitude postulate's description of a superfluity dependent on absence makes it susceptible to contraction (or expansion) into that more simplistic and more abstract "everything," and, in fact, "everything" poses in

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[150] Actually, Foucault gestures to this possibility in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, when, at the book's end, he states that his "discourse […] is continually making differentiations, it is a *diagnosis* (205-6; my emphasis).

[151] Giorgio Agamben's *Remnants of Auschwitz: the Witness and the Archive* speaks emphatically to the archive's impossible fullness. According to Agamben, the archive contains nothing because it lacks, for one thing, the trauma that cannot be spoken in testimony.

[152] This gestures to another kind of archive fever: hoarding.

[153] According to Yaeger Kaplan, "[t]he convenient distinction made in literary studies between dusty research and speculative theory does not stand up to my tale. Purely imaginary visions like mine are the motive force behind most empirical kinds of work" (104). While David Greethman makes this claim even more generally, "[i]n fact," he writes "we are generally dismayed by the gaps that fragments [in the archive] expose and try to fill them," it merely repeats the claim already made an illustrated by the narrator of *The Scarlet Letter* (16).

the archive and in contemporary archival discourse the "real" problem.[154] An archival everything's *mise en abyme* recapitulates archival abstraction, situating it at the archive's periphery and therefore, paradoxically, its center.[155] "Everything's" "substantive element," after all, "has no definable meaning." Its "force," according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, is "merely collective," and it thereby contains at its center a vacancy that enables its boundaries (no matter how permeable) to supersede and ultimately dictate meaning. Therefore, the "everything" imputed to the archive both inside and outside contemporary archival discourse, as suggested by the narrator of *The Scarlet Letter*, discussed above, who claims the archive contains all of American history, and by the examples of Nicholson Baker, Ulrike Poppe, and Vera Wollenberger, discussed below, depletes the specificity (which is also to say the materiality and the historicity) of the archive and of archival contents in favor of establishing and fixing the archive's outer limits.[156] Neither an indefinite nor a deictic pronoun, requiring neither context nor clarification nor any other external participation in the formulation of its meaning, "everything" consequently limits by delimiting meanings.[157] This is perhaps most obviously on display in what might be termed the resurrective strain of archival

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[154] The quotes surrounding "real" could be more rigorously attended to via an investigation of the relationships in Lacan between the Real as everything/plenitude and reality as everything/plenitude. It is not my aim to develop this connection here, but it certainly hovers.

[155] Greetham puts this another way when he argues that a critique of a Derridean-informed archive must "attemp[t] to render an account of the documentary or historical 'everything' by which a culture can be memorialized" (14).

[156] In this sense, "everything" gains its denotations via a microcosmic or etymologic plenitude postulate.

[157] Its reference to no-one-thing makes it a Platonic abstraction and therefore confers upon its point of reference a silent authority and the passivity such an authority often enforces. In some ways, this is to say that "everything" embodies the contemporary archive's archon. In some other ways, the negative silence here should speak, and ironically, to Steedman's more salutary silence in *Dust*.

discourse. There, "everything's" hermeneutic circle[158] ensures that the extension of critiques of the archive's power (to determine what counts as legal and/or historical) to people and events conventionally or circumstantially located outside of "everything" releases voices suppressed by and in the archive, but in so doing reinforces the archive's force as collective but also as ultimately abstract.[159]

Of course, by virtue of the plenitude postulate's easy invocation of everything, most readers, while recognizing that no archive actually contains everything (no archive, that is, save for the Timeless Universal Archive), cannot help but desire from the archive the everything that its implicit plenitude seems to promise. Steedman critiques this desire by forcefully arguing, through the naturalistic image of Maurice Mandelbaum's River Everything, that, "[t]here is the great, brown, slow-moving strandless river of Everything," but then "there is its tiny flotsam that has ended up in the record office you are at work in" (18).[160] The latter contains in fact not Everything, but instead just *some things*, "the selected and consciously chosen documentation from the past" (68;

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[158] Represented in works by Spivak, Stoler, Burton, and Hamilton, to cite just a few examples, "everything's" hermeneutic circle refers to the boundaries that dictate the limits by which "everything" can be defined. While these types of projects often critique the archive's assumption of everything through a redemption of texts and voices that the archive has absented and made silent (specifically, post-colonial subjects, African Americans, women, the working class), the redemption reinforces archival abstraction by extending its everything. Rather than constitute a critique that dissembles the archive's law-constructing function, à la Foucault, these critiques, necessary though they certainly are, extend that law-constructing function further.

[159] There is surely more to be said here. For example, the redemptive strain of archival theory is also redemptive in the sense that, by its very existence, it claims hermeneutic authority away from the archon, with whom and/or which it is traditionally lodged. Archival authority is reinforced, however, when "everything," as an object of critique, is merely made to expand its boundaries.

[160] Is it possible that Steedman here also echoes Lytton Strachey, who, according to Leon Edel, in the former's preface to *Eminent Victorians*, described the historian's job as "rowing out over the great lake of his material" and occasionally lowering "a little bucket" (qtd. in Edel 13)?

Steedman's emphasis). Steedman, however, and to use her metaphor against her, cannot turn this current. Despite her work and in some ways because of it, the plenitude postulate lends every archive a totalizing force via the "everything" into which it is contracted and upon which Steedman herself relies. Indeed, while archive fever is felt and expressed through the archive reader's desire, that desire is promoted by the archive itself.

Accordingly, "everything" characterizes not just institutional archival discourse but most popular discourse concerned with archives and archiving, as well. Today's contemporary technological lexicon offers a prime and in some ways quotidian example: in it, the verb "archiving"[161] assumes a virtual, totalizing action that silently informs the digital archives at the vanguard of archival discourse.[162] Notwithstanding its reference to a modern, wholly unremarkable and generally unremarked practical process, the use of the infinitive, "to archive," to signal the continuous and limitless storage of seldom-used files on distant computers and servers reinforces and expands the archive into not only a functional historical *a priori*, structuring the system it defines, but also a conceptual *a priori*, a potentially infinite storehouse released from the limitations of both "store" and "house" into the apparent boundlessness of technological space (*OED*).[163]

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[161] According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, "archiving" gained its technological force, by which I mean its reference to computer technology, in 1934.
[162] Steven Puglia, preservation and imaging specialist, in his keynote address to the twenty-first Annual Preservation Conference of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), "we no longer have a choice […] conventional methods of analog reformatting are becoming unavailable or obsolete […]and we will have to use digitization for preservation reformatting for all types of records." Five years earlier, writes Marlene Manoff, in 2002, Alan Liu claimed that the term "archive" functions as a metaphor for what about digitization we cannot yet understand.
[163] A point made by Derrida in the exergue of *Archive Fever*.

In this manner, digital archives, sustained by the digital medium's invisible archiving technology, underscore and extend "everything's" archival impact. First, digital archives reinforce and refine what might otherwise register as temporal dissonance into fluidity by collapsing, constantly, the present into a past for a future accessibility.[164] Digital archives thereby gesture to a literalization of limitless contributions— since the present never ends—to future histories.[165] Second, by signaling such fluidity, digital archives also indicate that an unlimited future-facing potentiality need not be defined or beholden to extant, representational pieces and parts (the flotsam, in Steedman's words, on River Everything). Digital archives, which accordingly partake in the Foucauldian associations exploited by Derrida, broaden those associations even further: there is no reflexive relationship between the abstract archive and everyday archives in the digital medium because the abstract and concrete (River and flotsam, Everything and some things) are one and the same.[166] Ultimately, the digital medium makes heretofore-silent

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[164] I am reminded of the computer service I use to write this dissertation. One of Dropbox's most useful features, I find, is its infinite archive: it automatically saves every version of a document as past and therefore as an object for future accession.

[165] "Literalization" plays on digitization and liberalization, acknowledging, of course, that the relationship between "literal" and "digital" is fraught (not least of all by the former's reference to letters and the latter's reference to numbers).

[166] In the future, according to Puglia's 2007 address, cf. 122, note 162, "[t]raditional" archives will all likely possess a digital component. And that digital component, even when separate from the notion of archives, assumes "everything." This is particularly obvious in databases designed to serve consumers. In fact, according to Kieran Healy, in "Digital Technologies and Cultural Goods," digital technologies, which contribute to the "techno-libertarian vision of the Internet" and suggest, via John Perry Barlow, that "information wants to be free," have shifted consumer's expectations from desiring "free" information to desiring "complete" information. Healy writes that "[d]atabases that provide limited choice may well be unpopular when consumers expect to find everything online" (490). Although Healy specifically attends to consumer goods, his point applies to the expectations extended to all kinds of digital databases. Consider, for instance, wikis (*Wikipedia*, for one); founded on the expectation that universal participation prompts plenitude (the home page offers 39 international language options),

abstraction speak, and in fact, a digital "everything" results in babble belied as such by the promise of universal access and infinite retrieval.

Of course, digital archives, like other archives, do not as of yet offer a realization or a prosthetic embodiment of the Timeless Universal Archive. Plagued instead by an increasingly remarked upon vulnerability, their apparently unlimited potentiality endows them the ability to render Everything only in the realm of technological utopia.[167] In this sense, their potential contribution to the great river of lived existence ensures that digital archives simply recast the relationship between plenitude, superfluity, and paucity, restaging and refracting the recovery of some things from everything. Subsequently, digital archives occupy the very center of the ongoing and wide debate (among archivists in particular, but archive readers, too) about the logistical, practical, everyday impossibility of saving, storing, updating, networking, and providing adequate access to *not* everything, but even just *some* things.[168]

For some, Osborne in particular, this ongoing and wide debate is characterized by its "perpetual agonism" (55). Offering another name for archive fever, and one that emphasizes the reader's suffering-through-desire, perpetual agonism indicates agonism's referential roots in "a combat," "the prize of a contest," and the "animal survivalist

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they gain cultural relevance by promising information about everything. (Of course, every teacher knows how incomplete *Wikipedia*'s "everything" actually is.)

[167] In "Scarcity or Abundance? Preserving the Past in a Digital Era," historian Roy Rosenzweig notes that while, "[p]rint books and records decline slowly and unevenly—faded ink or a broken-off corner of a page […] digital records fail completely—a single damaged bit can render an entire document unreadable" (741). See also Hedstrom, Scott, Dellavalle et al., and Ekman.

[168] In some iterations of archival discourse, particularly those offered by Wolfgang Ernst and David Greetham, the imminent digitization of archives sheds light on the archive's storage capacity via the analogue provided by ROM (read only memory) and RAM (random access memory).

behavior" characterized by the similarities between the stimuli for "fleeing" and "approach."[169] It also refers, however, to the agonistic and ultimately aporetic archival mandate, the first impossible action listed immediately above, to save and to save *everything*. Much like the archival expansion enabling the archive to include or to presume everything and by which the archival mandate to save gains its lawful insistence, the mandate to save applies to potentially all the pieces and parts that characterize a given epoch. This contention is not simply a theoretical given. In the examples of archives and archival readers that follow, I illustrate that perpetual agonism characterizes an archive fever contingent on the archival injunction to, in the words of one of Nicholson Baker's reviewers, "save it all." Expressed through the voices of Baker, Ulrike Poppe, and Vera Wollenberger, each of whom are located outside the standard purview of archival theory, the agonism contingent on the archival mandate to save illustrates the relationship between everything and fragmentation and, in so doing, illustrates archive fever's metastatic reach.

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[169] According to the *Academic Edition of the Britannica Encyclopedia*, "agonism" is classified as a "display" behaviour, and it "usually occur[s] near the borders of a territory."

Chapter 3*:* Archival Agonism, or, the Feverish Desire to Save it All

Published in 2001, the same year as *Dust*, *Double Fold* offers from a popular point of view a spirited illustration of the plenitude postulate's devolution into everything, the reflexive relationship between archival abstraction and archival immediacy, and, most particularly, the corollary mandate to save. Couched in investigative journalism rather than academic prose, *Double Fold* garnered a great deal of attention upon its publication, especially among archivists[170] both for underscoring the importance of archives as physical (and therefore finite) spaces and for simultaneously demanding they function as repositories for saving "everything," or what Baker refers to as national culture and, thereby, all of "history" (20).[171] In fact, due in part to its highly critical investigation of digital preservation practices and in part to its reliance on, à la Steedman, a somewhat conceptual exploration of archival dust, *Double Fold* also supplies, like the digital archives it eviscerates, a particularly apt example of archival agonism. Whereas digital archives merely *imply* the necessity—by suggesting the possibility—of saving "everything" (despite everything's function as an especially complicated archival object), *Double Fold* makes quite explicit, by making it the object of its argument, that "everything" *must* be saved.

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[170] See James O'Toole's review, "Do Not Fold, Spindle, or Mutilate: *Double Fold* and the Assault on Libraries" and Karen L. Pavelka's review, "Double Trouble or More: A Response to *Double Fold*." Additionally, the Society of American Archivists deemed it necessary to provide a response to Baker's accusations. See Cox below.

[171] Or, Baker, writes, "the single most important hoard of human knowledge in the country" (36).

Baker's argument, which at least one reviewer calls an impassioned "jeremiad,"[172] identifies digital preservation as a double-agent enemy in the frontlines of an imagined war against archival materials that are "crumbling," and inevitably, "to dust."[173] Librarians and archivists, in Baker's words, legitimate their comprehensive digital preservation of archival materials by vociferously arguing that these materials are otherwise disintegrating. This erroneous claim, which, Baker argues, has no basis in reality, justifies the use of the conservative technology (microfilm, in particular), that "destroys" the physical, tangible object it purports to "preserve" (26).[174] Consequently, while contemporary archives are defined by the effort to save pieces of the past as history, current efforts to "save" archives and their materials are actually contingent on an ultimately destructive effort to save—and *merely*, it goes without saying—space. The work to save space makes ironic the work to save archives and archival materials because it results in the disassembly and destruction of the very archival contents that function as the objects of preservation.

Double Fold, by noting the paradox in the "notion" of "destroying to preserve," calls attention to the modern iterations of the archival mandate to save by identifying the mandate in its technological inflections as the seat of archival dis-ease that, according to

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[172] Robert Darnton, in his review of *Double Fold* for *The New York Review of Books* calls Baker's text a "jeremiad," despite the fact that "instead of ranting against the whore of Babylon, Baker aims his indignation at Marian the librarian." Like Steedman, Baker also utilizes other styles lifted from literary discourse; his proximity to caricature (in the sense that he, as narrator, caricatures the investigative journalist), for example, is explained in his preface by the "dormant prosecutorial urge" awoken in him by his research.

[173] The coinage and legitimacy of the phrase "crumbling to dust" occupies the chapter "Honest Disagreement," pages 254-259.

[174] "[T]he microfilming of old newspapers […] has, right from the beginning, been intimately linked with their destruction." writes Baker. "The disbinding of every volume in order to speed production and avoid gutter shadow […] has long been the preferred method of newspaper microphotography in the United States" (25).

Baker, may well lead to the disappearance of crucial pieces of the past, which Baker assumes to be synonymous with history. *Double Fold* therefore pleads for a revision of the mandate to save that specifically invokes the plenitude postulate's manifestation of "everything." Similar to Steedman, Baker identifies the danger of abstracting archives,[175] but he concretizes archival abstraction not through an argument for the nothing of everything—flotsam—but through an argument for literalization of everything's abstraction: archives, Baker argues, must provide a repository for everything, not just Steedman's "some things," and not just the immaterial potential everything of digitization, (which Baker identifies as anathema to the archive's primary importance)—but an emphatically material everything, a materiality that enables readers to, for example, encounter the "size of newspapers," which "is indispensable to our experience of their content" (24).[176]

Although just as in more theoretically situated avenues of archival discourse, "everything" poses *the* problem in Baker's repetition of the plenitude postulate; for Baker, the archival problem of "everything" lies not in its impossibility in any realm other than (potentially) the digital but in the logistical lack of space. Baker accordingly supports the outer boundary established by the archive's everything, arguing that archives *must be* responsible for holding and saving not some things and not flotsam, but everything—the River—and that the fact that they do not constitutes a national historical

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[175] A danger characterized as dis-eased: "the *infirmities* [of digital preservation strategies] are worrying" (41; my emphasis).

[176] In rhetorical response to an actual conversation with Hy Gordon, the general manager of the archives at the University of Maryland, a conversation in which Gordon responds to Baker's distress "that so many libraries were getting rid of their bound newspapers," with "'Don't be distressed […] there are lots of things more important in life,'" Baker asks, "Are there really? More important than the fact that this country has strip-mined a hundred and twenty years of its history? I'm not so sure" (20).

emergency. *Double Fold* therefore calls attention to the plenitude postulate's manifestation as everything and to the corollary mandate to save, but the solution he offers is that impossible extension of saving fictionalized as absurd by Borges in the "feverish library" of Babel: Baker, at the end of his argument in *Double Fold*, nonetheless calls for the construction of publicly financed repositories, which, as such, would be specially fitted to everything's multiplicities (256).

Double Fold therefore contributes an easily consumed, fast-paced, and entertaining take on the plenitude postulate's manifestation in everything (and one that subsequently lends to the archive's agonism, or archive fever, a more accessible voice), but Baker offers a non-solution by insisting on an even wider application of the archive's corollary mandate to save. Although he provides, according to Richard J. Cox on behalf of the Society of American Archivists, an important service for contemporary discussions of archives by making "archives, historical manuscripts, rare books, and newspaper collections […] the subject of journalists, book reviewers, and radio and talk show hosts around the country," the "fundamental weakness" of Baker's *cri de coeur* is "his belief, more implicit than explicit, that *everything* can and must be *saved*" (Cox's emphasis first; mine second).[177] Without addressing it as such, Cox, the lead educator in the University of Pittsburgh School of Information Science's Archives, Preservation, and Records Management specialization, locates *Double Fold*'s weakness in Baker's oversimplification of the plenitude postulate as "everything" and in Baker's ultimately

[177]And, "in its *original* state" (also Cox's emphasis). In Baker's words, "Why not both? Why can't we have the benefits of the new and extravagantly expensive digital copy *and* keep the convenience and beauty and historical testimony of the original books resting on the shelves, where they've always been, thanks to the sweat equity of our prescient predecessors?" (67).

naïve belief that the plenitude postulate poses for the archive simply a straightforward and unproblematic law to "save it *all*" (Cox's emphasis). Subsequently, Cox also and forcefully argues for the limits of "everything": "archivists," Cox offers as insider information, "know that saving everything is impossible."

Despite Cox's implied claim, the fever consequent to the impossibility of saving everything cannot be confined to the archive profession: in fact, the entirety of the foregoing discussion serves to illustrate that the archive's everything and corollary injunction to save contributes to the archive fevers and agonism suffered not by archivists (although it surely affects them as well) but by theoretical and popular readers of archives and archival contents.[178] In this, Baker is most articulate: his desire to save it *all* expresses, with a far more popular nuance, the Derridean proclivity to conflate archives (which is to say, *an* archive) with *the* archive and to fuse *the* archive with Foucault's indescribable totality and potentiality (named by Baker "history"). Additionally of course, Baker's inflammatory illustration of the aporia on which the archive's agonism depends (what Foucault disassembles, Derrida assumes, Steedman critiques and Osborne names), also highlights, endowing it with the passion it only subversively possesses in more critical treatment, the force of the mandate to save.[179] Cox indicates the

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[178] In fact, Cox completes the above-cited sentence with the following, "yet this point of Baker's may be what has the most resonance with the public."

[179] "I asked myself," writes Derrida, "what is the moment *proper* to the archive, if there is a such a thing, the instant of archivization strictly speaking, which is not, and I will come back to this, so-called live or spontaneous memory (mneme or anamnesis), but rather a certain hypomnesic and prosthetic experience of the technical substrate. Was it not at this very instant that, having written something or other on the screen, the letters remaining as if suspended and floating yet at the surface of a liquid element, I pushed a certain key to 'save' a text undamaged, in a hard and lasting way, to protect marks from being erased, so as to ensure in this way salvation and *indemnity*, to store, to accumulate, and, in what is at once the same thing and something else, to make the sentence available

administrative aspects of saving, the fact that "[archivists] cannot save everything not just because there is too much (there is) but because only a portion possesses value sufficient for justifying the costs for maintaining the materials," but Baker makes the act of saving an expression of absurd desire and invests the very act (and thus the archive itself) with extra-administrative magic and moral qualities.[180] Subsequently, the Timeless Universal Archive has yet to find a more faithful and articulate spokesperson.[181]

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in this way for printing and for reprinting, for reproduction?" (25-6). It is impossible for me not to read this as a reflexive exploration of Foucault's archive (preceding the quoted excerpt, Derrida suggests that the "little portable Macintosh on which I have begun to write" signifies "the first *substrate* to support all of these words") as it contributes to the formulation of the law (my emphasis).

[180] According to Baker, saved materials are—by virtue of being saved—like "Mickey's broom-awakening spells in *Fantasia*" (17); they exhibit " a horizon-usurping presence" (24). Conversely, un-saved papers are "spurned" (19), digitization constitutes an "attack" (68), microfilming, a "shame" (79), and collections with material gaps must be treated as "mutilated" (21). Ultimately, for Baker, reading a saved paper safely housed in an archive is "not the only way to understand the lost past life of a city," but the only way that "will enclose you so completely within time-stratum's universe of miscellaneous possibility" (39)

[181] Other theorists ruminate on saving (Derrida, for example, in an aside in *Archive Fever*'s preamble), and thereby situate it as premonitory and contributory to archive fever, but Baker makes saving itself both the object of his own archive fever and that fever's antidote. While his concentrated focus on the archival mandate to save antagonizes every precept of Steedman's *Dust*, Baker also suggests *Dust*'s utility: both Steedman's and Baker's arguments depend on archives as valuable containers for dust, but inasmuch as Steedman argues that archives cannot, do not, and will not save everything, that they will really only ever save dust, Baker declares that archives must be made capacious enough to save all of national history, even if and when that history crumbles to dust. Of course Steedman and Baker are merely representative (albeit unusual in the intensity of their arguments) samples: critics such as Greetham also point out that "without a full cultural program of archival reconstitutions, perhaps into the new medium of digitisation, much of the documentary evidence testifying to the Nineteenth Century will become not merely garbage but dust" (6). Greetham speaks more directly to Baker's points, suggesting that "Baker's charting of the very moment of bibliographical repression thus aptly embodies Derrida's psychoanalytic formula: 'that one can 'recall and archive the very thing one represses, archive it while repressing it (because repression is an archivization), that is to say, to archive *otherwise,* to repress the archive while archiving the repression; *otherwise,* of course, and that is the whole problem, than according to the current, conscious, patent modes of archivization' (64)" (7).

As a novelist and non-fiction essayist, Baker cannot be described as a general reader, and yet he certainly joins together the traits of the historians,[182] legal professionals, and the investigative journalists, whose discourses often make the archive their purview, with the occasional tunnel vision[183] of the impassioned seeker.[184] *Double Fold* consequently articulates the relationship between the archive's implicit promise of plenitude and its corollary mandate to save, positing it as central to investigations of the archive, through the voice of the (Baker-styled) people. Particularly important to my project, however, is the repetition—in other politically fraught discussions about archives and in the words of other highly invested archival readers—of both Baker's intense desire for the archive's everything and his preoccupation with the mysticism of those acts of saving by which everything is assured. In fact, Baker's repetition suggests a Puritan influence whereby the archive becomes the conversion experience that readers need (even if they don't seek it) and therefore extends *The Scarlet Letter*'s influence to current

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[182] When he uncovers the ways that libraries and archives shirk their responsibility to serve as protectorates for national storehouses, Baker hearkens back to Foucault in a homespun version of the latter's archaeology: "one of the important functions, and pleasures, of writing history," writes Baker, "is that of cultural tillage, or soil renewal: you trowel around in unfashionable holding places for things that have lain untouched for decades to see what particularities they may yield to a new eye" (244-5). I want to note, however, that Baker is illustrating in long-form the aporia defined in digital archives—the assumption that digital archives save everything when in fact they do nothing of the sort and are more vulnerable than their physical counterparts.

[183] Baker wants to find evidence of destruction in libraries and archives, and that is exactly what he finds. His book provides material evidence that one finds in the archive exactly that for which one is looking. Although I have not yet had cause to mention it, this is a permutation in another, though obviously related discourse, of the same point made by Poe, by Freud, by Foucault, by Lacan, by Derrida, by Steedman, and by a host of others: the search itself conditions the terms of and the discovery.

[184] In *Understanding Nicholson Baker*, Arthur Saltzman describes Baker as "extraordinarily" attentive "to ordinary objects and processes"; in fact, his preoccupation or obsession with archives and his ardent insistence on the archive's everything may be an extension of his peculiar "patience and meticulousness" (1).

archival debate. While the Library of Congress (and other academic archives) stokes Baker's ire, other, more explicitly political state archives provoke similar and similarly impassioned responses from their potential (and often only potential) readers.[185]

Ulrike Poppe, a potential reader of the archive of the former East German secret police, stands as an important example: another sufferer of the perpetual agonism of archive fever, she too, desires from the archive infinite redemption and invests the archive with the correspondent far-ranging power to save. Poppe's voice extends Baker's argument even further, or even lower, as the case may be, to the archive's foundation in fragments. While, like Baker, she identifies the plenitude postulate's "everything" as a characteristic of state archives, and therefore endows state archives with the responsibility to save it all, Poppe's narrative more obviously emphasizes the primacy of archival fragments to her "everything." Part of this follows from the specific materiality of the archive Poppe desires to read: indeed, the archive Poppe invests with everything and with a correspondent power and responsibility to save consists of the literal shreds and dust of the files of the former East German secret police. The archive assembled by the Stasi, the enforcement arm of the former SED,[186] consists of the results of the text-

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[185] Although it is not my intention here to plumb Baker's *oeuvre* for evidence of the personal interest in saving that drives his professional attention, I would be remiss if I did not take the opportunity to point to *Human Smoke: The Beginnings of World War II, The End of Civilization*. Published in 2008, *Human Smoke* consists of passages, fragments in fact, that provide an archive for an argument for pacifism. Baker's title, while a clear reference to the Holocaust, Nazi crematoriums, and the Jews killed and eliminated in World War II, also suggests the radical nature of the loss consequent to fire, which he applies to books, libraries, and archives in "Burning Up" and "Slash and Burn" in *Double Fold*. The similarly disastrous consequences for a culture that, ironically, deploys fire as a preservation strategy makes Baker's medium in *Human Smoke*—fragments—particularly meaningful.

[186] Steven Pfaff, in "The Limits of Coercive Surveillance," points out the Stasi always acted as an arm of the controlling political party (rather than, as he implies, a rogue

obsessed agency's nearly unprecedented surveillance work.[187] Because the Stasi exerted their power over their populace, many of whom often served, and often unwillingly, as "unofficial collaborators" (or *Inoffizielle Mitarbeiteren)*, through records and files, their fall from power in 1989 was preceded by an attempt to disappear evidentiary text, to make the archive's constitutive paucity cover over and hide the suddenly entirely obviously superfluous text. To that end, they shredded paper first by machines (called *Reisswolfs*, or paper wolves), and then, since the machines were unable to meet the immensity of the need, they tore the files with their hands.[188]

The resulting detritus now takes two forms: the mechanical and manual shreds, 600 million barely-legible, doubled-sided scraps, called *vorvernichtete Akten*, or pre-destroyed files, which were bagged and saved for a future, more complete, and less conspicuous destruction; and the documental dust, which, produced by the *Kollermaschines* (fig. 1) that mixed files with water to make a pulpy sludge, resulted in paper-mâché boulders and small dunes of dust (fig. 2).[189]

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enforcer of its own or some other agenda). Indeed, the Stasi's motto was "the Shield and Sword of the Party."

[187] According to Pfaff, Stasi surveillance developed with the aim to effect social control creating "a panoptic system of discipline and regulation that would replace Stalinist terror with self-policing, autonomous socialist citizens." Much of this depended on Erich Honecker's emphasis on a post-Stalinist ideology that applied "political pressure" not through "violence, terror, and mass mobilization" but through "indoctrination, surveillance, selective imprisonment, and expulsion" (388).

[188] "In its final days," writes Fritz Stern, "the Stasi consisted of 97,000 full-time employees—with perhaps as many as 140,000 unofficial collaborators, most of whom had acknowledged their commitment in writing" (114). This figure varies by as much as 150,000, however, (depending on how "part-time" is defined). Nevertheless, to put this in perspective, the Berlin Institute's information on demographic development sets the GDR's total population in 1988 at 16.7 million; this means that about 1 in 7 East German citizens were or operated in collusion with Stasi agents.

[189] "Koller," translates to a "fit" or a "rage," in English. Its root in "koll" also indicates German's "kollidieren" and "Kollision" for "collide" and "collision."

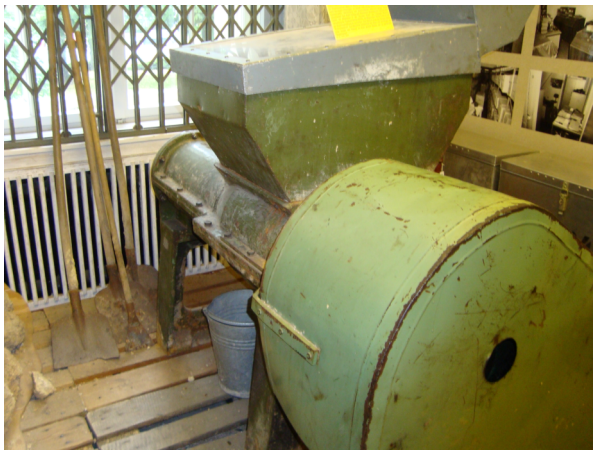

Fig. 1. Kollermaschine, Museum in der Runden Ecke, Leipzig, Germany

Fig. 2. Kollermaschine "files," Museum in der Runden Ecke, Leipzig, Germany

While the shreds attest to archival superfluity and the persistence of textuality and especially the textuality that, even when unreadable, functions as constitutive of archives, the dust attests to that and to something else. I visited the Stasi archive in the summer of 2009 in the service of this project, and, while there, I sifted through a bag of pulverized files, a bag of dust.[190] Although the material can never be reconstructed, at least not as recognizable files, its present preservation in the archive indicates the obscurity of the Stasi system of documentation and provides a material testament to the lasting effect of

[190] By "sifted through, I mean I grasped a few handfuls and watched it fall through my fingers. I cannot deny that the sterility—but also the solemnity—of my surroundings made me feel as though I were doing something sacrilegious; I felt as if I were handling the dust of a corpse or performing a kind of autopsy.

Stasi surveillance on East German identity. Not all the dust, of course, finds preservation in the archive. In fact, according to the archivist there to answer my questions, the documental dust occasionally received another, ignominious life; rather than constituting straightforward Steedmanian or "mere" dust to be grafted, inadvertently or insistently, onto future narratives, some dust found a second, more potentially abject life in toilet paper.[191]

The reduction of Stasi files to dust and dust's ironic redemptive reconstitution in toilet paper offers an allegory (and also a symbolic caricature) of the contextual vulnerability of archival contents that cannot but underscore the contents' persistent fragmentariness.[192] In fact, despite being torn into scraps, obliterated into dust, or reconstituted as toilet paper, the Stasi documents endure, as fragments, and far beyond the (political, architectural) space in which they were originally deposited (the scraps and the dust, for example, could not ultimately be destroyed; they were and are preserved in another or in other archive(s)).[193] Fragments in the archive are of a special type: as briefly discussed in chapter one, their archival context provides only a provisional, prosthetic context of completion and thereby emphasizes archival fragments' incomplete, synecdochic, substitutive, and referential form. Although they require completion for meanings, such completion, and thus such meanings, are necessarily indeterminate. Archival fragments thereby not only invite but necessitate the participation of others,

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[191] In this sense, however, it is quite possible to assert that the dust refers even more emphatically to Steedman's argument for archival mundaneness. On another note, it was surprising to me, although it no doubt indicates the lasting reach of the Stasi's surveillance arm, that the archivist, when she saw me taking notes, asked me to not use her name.

[192] A caricature that would likely sit well with Steedman's methodology.

[193] The 16,000 mail sacks filled a surveillance- and fire-proof room in the basement of the archives.

even if only implicitly (as in the case of the closed archive) to perform meanings.[194] Readers such as the narrator of *The Scarlet Letter* and Baker and Poppe therefore must perform in the archive: in fact, the archival fragments' injunction explains, perhaps, their explicitly dramatic, particularly in the case of Hawthorne's narrator and Baker, reproductions.[195]

Perhaps surprisingly, the documental toilet paper underscores this kind of participation. While the endurance of imminently disposable toilet paper can certainly be debated, and while any such endurance indicates an extension of the SED's political reach through a consumerist promotion of state-sponsored hygiene,[196] documental toilet paper nonetheless also illustrates, and crudely, the dependence of archival fragments on the participation of its citizens for meanings, even when such meanings must be interpreted, as it must in the waning days of Stasi power, as meaningless, as trash, as sewage.[197] By transforming files into pulp that is then reconstructed into bathroom

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[194] Osborne offers a reminder that "the existence of an archive always presumes the existence of a public," even when that public cannot necessarily be considered "*general*" (54; Osborne's emphasis). I believe that the public must be modified as a reading public, which is to say, archive depend on the readability of their contents, even when reading those contents is prohibited or impossible.

[195] Diana Taylor, in *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* introduces her discussion about the repertoire in performance studies by opposing the repertoire to the archive's supposed stability, but she concludes the same discussion by explaining that both the repertoire and the archive depend on mediation for meaning.

[196] This reach suggests the Stasi's stake in ensuring that the files no longer constitute evidence, as they do in the archive, but instead constitute waste. Not incidentally, "hygiene" comes up in another context in relation to the Stasi files. In her piece for *The Guardian*, "Germans piece together millions of lives spied on by Stasi," Helen Pidd quotes Roland Jahn, who on March 18, 2011 became the new federal commissioner of the Stasi files, as indicating that "the work of the archives is essential to maintain the 'political hygiene' of Germany" (Pidd confirmed Jahn's use of "hygiene" in a personal email).

[197] I hope it is clear that by "meaningless" here, I mean the Stasi's stake in evacuating

tissue, the Stasi indicate their reliance on—for maintaining or disguising their textual power—a processing public.[198]

While documental toilet paper attests to the primacy of archival fragments and the fragments' dependence on the performative participation of readers,[199] it also recasts, in its detour through the sewer, the perpetually correspondent relationship between archives and rubbish heaps.[200] Sue Breakell takes this relationship for granted when in a short essay designed, somewhat like this project, to explain current interest in archives, she introduces her argument through an excerpt of Illya Kabakov's *The Man Who Never Threw Anything Away*. Jani Scandura offers, however, a more careful analysis. In *Down in the Dumps*, Scandura uses the complex status of Fresh Kills, an archive of September 11th victims, a scene of criminal investigation, a morgue, and a dump, as an example of "the close interdependence archives have always had with dumps and dumps with archives." According to Scandura, archives function—like dumps, and like the Stasi

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text of meaning.

[198] It is possible and perhaps even likely that the Stasi archivist was merely repeating a rumor when she told me about the toilet paper. This need not take away from my analysis here, however, because, in so doing, she provides evidence for Greetham's point that often the public's memory constitutes a truer archive than the archive built by verifiable and verified documents ("[t]here is no textual surprise in charting the continual moral, aesthetic, or political recalibration of the contents of an archive as they are released into public *text* by the imposition of social and cultural constraints" (4)).

[199] The return of the repressed, in Freudian parlance.

[200] In their discussion published as "Tangentially: The Archive and the Bathroom," artist Lucy Gunning describes to art historian Jo Melvin and archivist Victoria Worsley her exhibit at the Philbrook Museum in Tulsa, Oklahoma, a museum that has been converted from an Italianate villa. Gunning writes, "When taking photographs of hidden spaces, I came across a bathroom. This was one of the few spaces within the museum that was left intact from when the family had lived there and it had been a home. It had beautiful Spanish tiles on the walls, but was used as a store for AV equipment. There was also an advertising board for the Philbrook Museum on a shelf, and behind it was a mirror."

archive's reiteration in the sewer—as mechanisms, waystations though they must be, for alleviating the present from the pressure of fragmentary excess (3).[201]

Although (an)archival toilet paper highlights every archive's proximity to both dumps and to sewers, the Stasi archive in its current fragmentary phase of reconstruction provides, according to its potential readers such as Poppe, proximity to liberation.[202] This kind of liberation depends not only on participation but on the participatory act of reading. In fact, by redefining participation through reading, and by situating such reading as a contingency of freedom from Stasi rule, twenty-one years after the SED's fall, the potential readers of the Stasi fragments make reading into a liberating, democratic performance. In so doing, they repeat an archival rite of passage established in 1794 with the French Revolution's transformation of an oppressed populace into emancipated citizens via their readings[203] of public archives (Osborne 55)[204] and made canonical in American literature in *The Scarlet Letter*. Accordingly, for Poppe and many others, the possibility that so many Stasi fragments may have already been consigned via

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[201] Scandura's emphasis on melancholia suggests a continuation of the Freudian language I use above: her archive indicates a cathexis that demands anti-cathexis.
[202] In his ambivalent-to-negative review of Steedman's *Dust*, Tollebeek points out that the "Catacombs, the morgue, and the sewers were places that could easily be associated with the underworld, with death, and thus also with history" (240).
[203] The ambiguous legacy of this type of openness in regards to the French archives constitutes Lipton's source of anxiety in *Alias Olympia*.
[204] Appropriate to my discussion here is art scholar Linda Nochlin's argument in *The Body in Pieces*. According to Nochlin, the French Revolution ushered in the modern period in part by transforming the fragment to a positive rather than a negative trope. Such negativity is reaffirmed, however, by late-nineteenth century narratives such as "Bartleby, the Scrivener." In the post-script to Melville's work, the narrator suggests that Bartleby's former position as a "subordinate clerk in the Dead Letter Office at Washington, from which he had been suddenly removed by a change in the administration" (in a clear echo of *The Scarlet Letter*'s narrator's similar discharge from an initially-but-not-ultimately dead-letter office), where he received and processed objects made fragmentary by their undeliverable status (a ring, a bank-note, a pardon).

an ignoble use value to the sewer does little to dampen the belief, an echo of that belief expressed by Baker, that archival reconstruction will nonetheless reveal that in the archive's vast fragments "everything" has in fact been saved. This peculiarly circumscribed notion of everything, peculiar in the sense that potential readers are already aware of the archive's radical limitations but nonetheless believe that the act of reading fragments confers, by necessity, a necessary and liberatory plenitude, also resonates with the French National Archives: the same decree that opened the National Archives to the French populace on July 25, 1794 and allowed readers to read in them "everything" and everybody, "ordered" at the same time "the destruction of the old records which documented the inequality and repression terminated by the Revolution of 1789" (Ketelaar 16).

Reporting on the widely shared expectation in former East Germany that in limited fragments inheres everything, Andrew Curry in "Piecing Together the Dark Legacy of East Germany's Secret Police"[205] ascribes it and Germany's Office of the Federal Commissioner's time-consuming and very expensive (thirty million dollars) efforts to render readable the torn and shredded records to "catharsis."[206] Yoking revelation to its consequent drama, catharsis aptly suggests the irony of Germany's current need (given its inversion in this particular repetition of *Nachtraglichkeit*) for an archive-facilitated evacuation and purification. Additionally, however, the reconstruction

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[205] Note that Curry's title, "piecing together," echoes Steedman's "rag rugs" in *Dust* to suggest, and opposed to "everything," a provisional, ad-hoc, make-do method that cannot and will not result in plenitude (or that will do so only with the active participation of imagination).

[206] The etymology of catharsis, naturally, includes reference to the "evacuation of bowels," a phrase that incidentally takes on new meaning when applied to the basement archive housing the Stasi shreds.

effort is fueled by a desire to explain "the strangeness that pervaded preunification Germany" and a desire to ensure that this strangeness, also known as an uncanny past that has not yet solidified through discourse and been made familiar as history, does not repeat itself.[207] To that end, the Fraunhofer Institute, the largest research organization in Europe, works to reconstruct a readable language from the archive's bare legibility, allowing Poppe, for example, who is described in Curry's piece as "one of the most surveilled women in East Germany" and one of the first East Germans to request her files after reunification, to read the unauthorized fragments of her life.[208] Accordingly Poppe uniquely articulates for Curry the persistent paradox that defines the archive, a paradox that reverberates between the archive's everything and its nothing, its everything and its incomplete fragments: sitting among the sixty binders of Stasi archival records that she already possesses, Poppe declares "most of it […] junk" and thereby consigns the extant files to the archive's always attendant figurative dump. In the very same gesture, however, Poppe relocates the archive's "everything" in the fragments still under reconstruction. Once they are finally made readable[209] through what Baker would surely consider the shameful and decidedly un-Micky-esque magic of digitization, the fragments that were saved, the fragments in the process of being redeemed to be read, will, Poppe claims, "'explain *everything* that happened'" (my emphasis).

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[207] In this sense, archival reconstruction "saves" the former East Germany's commitment to democracy.

[208] The Institute's pilot project concludes in 2012; it has not translated nearly as many bags as it had anticipated due to unforeseen difficulties. One major, though potentially surprising, glitch that reveals the very tangible drawbacks of technology (its emphatic non-redemption) was its initial inability to recognize a paper-hole punch as a purposeful absence rather than another missing piece.

[209] "Reconstruction," in this sense, gestures towards its literary, via Poe, and psychoanalytic, via Freud, meanings. Accordingly, it reveals "everything" that was there all along but that could not have been or was not initially perceived or apprehended.

The important global stature[210] of the historic East German archive reveals that the desire for "everything," a desire informed by the archival plenitude postulate, which cannot but emphasize a compensatory superfluity, and the correspondent faith in the archival mandate to save infects a wide swath of both actual and potential archival readers. The Stasi archive also, and particularly in its emphasis on reconstruction, refocuses archival discourse onto the fragments in, on, and of which archives are founded. A Derridean *archive du mal* in more ways than one, however, the Stasi archive's fragments, made more meaningful by the very fact that they have been both inadvertently saved (by Stasi officials) and pointedly re-saved (by early German protesters), pointedly emphasizes *not* the necessarily incomplete nature of the everything revealed by their future revelations (a revelation that, it must be noted, invests saving with a near religious redemptiveness). Rather, through the participatory act of reading, the "everything" named by Poppe seems to expand, through the magic of reconstruction, not just to her own life but to the secretive Stasi agency, to the other subjects translated by the Stasi into the "objects"[211] of its surveillance, and to all of East Germany's socialist past.[212] Indeed, while Poppe's expansion makes the assimilation of archival fragments coterminous with Germany's unification under a democratic government, it repeats the

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[210] Although the Fraunhofer Institute's work is in its pilot stage, it holds out a promise for widespread applicability. Nickolay "insists" that the "E-Puzzler promises to become an important police crime-solving tool." According to "In-Depth Software: Shreds of Evidence," a report on the so-called e-puzzler in the *Engineering and Technology* journal, the E-Puzzler has already been used to "decipher barely legible lists of Nazi concentration camp victims" and "to restore broken figurines from China's Terracotta Army, and to put back together hundreds of thousands of banknotes shredded by a mother to block her estranged daughter inheriting them" (43).

[211] Surveilled individuals were referred to as "Objekts."

[212] While the German government determines whether or not and to what extent the project will continue, human "puzzlers" continue to work to manually reassemble files (which suggests another kind of "digital" mode).

same redemptive archival move enacted in Hawthorne's romance. According to Poppe, as according to Hawthorne's narrator, archival fragments, that is, fragments that have been saved, hold the promise of political redemption.

Taken together, Baker and Poppe's agonistic narratives emphasize the archive's fragmentary contents to show that in saved fragments inheres the very "everything" that readers in and of the archive often, and thanks to the archive's fragmentary constitution, seek.[213] Furthermore, Baker and Poppe's narratives also suggest that archival fragments provide a mirror through which nations, societies and individuals can paradoxically see themselves as more whole, in the sense of more complete. In so doing, their narratives suggest that the archive and its fragmentary contents also offer a medium for the continued negotiation of identity.[214] This is part of the reason that the archive plays such a critical role in the real, practical, and important work of identifying and defining those who do and do not "count," at least in regards to referential histories formulated in the archive's name. Because this archival ground has already been provocatively critiqued

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[213] Their experiences are certainly feverish, especially in the sense of restless. To view the archive as possessing the complete historical record (even if that complete historical record has not yet been written or read) has serious practical implications, but it has serious political implications, which Poppe communicates, as well. For example, and putting momentarily aside the impossibility, discussed above, of first defining and then accumulating everything, if archives are to hold everything, we surely must throw our collective weight behind Baker's suggestion for publicly financed repositories in which everyone (as in, every single person) has a material and financial stake. If archives are to explain everything, we must not only finance, build, and contribute to those repositories, but, as important, we must insist, as Poppe has, on total, universal archival access. Jointly, while Baker and Poppe define the archive (according to its everything) as a public and thereby wholly accessible place, their archives gesture towards documental utopias (literal no-places currently only potentially realizable in utopic technological space).

[214] Here is an inversion of the relationship described by Lacan between the mirror and the disorganized, fragmentary infant body.

by Stoler, Burton, Kaplan, Hamilton, and a host of others, particularly as it informs and is informed by post-coloniality, I want to pursue here instead the theoretical tack towards the construction of identity and the facilitative role played by archival fragments that Poppe suggests when she defines her personal relationship with the reconstructed Stasi fragments and describes that relationship, though dependent on "junk," as also and as necessarily revelatory.

Poppe, and her contemporary, Vera Wollenberger, offer insight into the way that archival fragments, particularly in their rather synecdochic relationship to an archival everything (despite that everything's artificiality), contribute to the negotiation of identity. Unlike readers of open archives, Poppe and Wollenberger *require* the clarity potentially provided by archival fragments because the former Stasi archive instituted (and institutionalized) widespread identity confusion as a tool by which to extend SED control.[215] A bureaucratic effort designed not simply to store external memory but to identify and fix the identities of dissidents (and thereby establish and police political clarity), the Stasi archive enforced mass confusion among East Germans about the identities of citizens and government officials.[216] Because such confusion was the strategic consequence of the disproportionately large number of citizens who were encouraged or forced to volunteer as the aforementioned *Inoffizielle Mitarbeiteren*, it therefore depended for its outbreak on thousands of individual schizophrenic splits. In an unofficial or official capacity, East Germans split their identities into public, personal,

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[215] See the postscript of Ernst's "Archival Action: The Archive as ROM and its Political Instrumentalization under National Socialism."

[216] East Germans' responses to Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck's *Das Leben Der Anderen*, the 2006 film about a Stasi agent's conflicted response to spying on a playwright, consistently critique the film's implicit claim that Stasi agents were uniformly conspicuous and easy to identify.

and secret-police personas; they fragmented their own personhoods and consequently reproduced, through their embodiments, the very (and therefore *a priori* fragmentary) archive to which they contributed. Metastasis, indeed.

The archive-enforced schizophrenic ruptures in the identities of East German citizens illustrate in ways not unlike *The Scarlet Letter* that archival fragments, and particularly the archival fragments of state or national archives, can construct political identity. Unsurprisingly, as Wollenberger testifies, the possibility for this impact has only intensified upon the reconstruction of the fragments. Wollenberger, who has spoken in highly public forums after reading her own reconstructed fragments, articulates the ways the Stasi archive and its fragmentary contents continue, particularly after to the fall of the SED, to unsettle identity. In *The New York Times Magazine* in 1992, Wollenberger, a former East German dissident and prisoner due to her founding part in the human rights group, Church From Below, expressed the "awful agony" revealed when she read her files. Her reading forced her to recognize the most valuable informant of the more than sixty agents and informants attending to her case as her husband and the father of her two sons.

Consequently, although she gained access to an archival everything, for Wollenberger, "everything" laid bare not only the superfluity that characterizes archival plenitude but, more to the point, the lack for which such superfluity compensates. That is to say, Wollenberger benefited from archival excess, receiving the extraneous pieces of her identity, however mundane, that had been shaped, stolen, skewed, secreted, and secured in the Stasi archive, but the excess, once read, circumvented the clarity of surfeit that Poppe seems to expect from everything and instead opened onto a lack. Indeed, the

Stasi archive lacked corroboration of the marriage with which Wollenberger identified, and therefore forced, through her performative reading of its fragmentary files, Wollenberger's recognition of this lack as reflected in herself. Ultimately, Wollenberger's fragmentary "everything" prompted new confusion not only about Wollenberger's identity as an East German citizen and dissident but also about her identity as a wife and mother.[217] As she exclaims above, such identity confusion, by offering another narrative attesting to the archive's perpetual agonism, suggests that the relationship between fragmentation and plenitude is far more complicated that can be communicated through Baker's and Poppe's desires.

Because Wollenberger's case is hardly unique (indeed, it depends on the same archival betrayal and subsequent fragmentation visited upon and enacted by Hawthorne's narrator, Hester, Dimmesdale, Pearl, and Chillingsworth), it functions as similarly representative of the role played by archival fragments in facilitating, even or especially by way of confusion, the construction of identity on the parts of its readers.[218] In fact, and as verified by most of the works of the historians and critics listed above, the archive's fragmentary contents are not only both referential and indeterminate, they possess what Vismann describes as "ontological characteristics"; they therefore provide especially powerful because apparently dynamic and flexible means from which can be constructed the identity of a society (as implied by Baker) but also that of an individual (as communicated by Poppe and Wollenberger) (10). Juhani Ihanus, a psychoanalyst and

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[217] Wollenberger's husband, described in Stephan Kinzer's piece as having "drop[ped] out of sight," acknowledged, "I know now that what I did was reprehensible […] I wanted to play with fate"

[218] Ketelaar claims as much in "Archives of the People, By the People, and For the People," when he writes that "there are thousands, hundreds of thousands of people for whom their Stasi file turns out to be a Pandora's box" (17).

professor of behavioral science, has extended the potential ontological status of the archive's fragmentary files to the practice of psychoanalysis. Although he, too, takes his cue from Derrida, Ihanus investigates archival fragments as contributing to identity through the work he calls "developmental archival theory." Calling on and culling from contemporary archival discourse for insights into the analytic situation, "Archives and Psychoanalysis: Memories and Histories Towards Futures" offers a clinical application of archival discourse to the psychoanalytic method. Ihanus's argument that archival discourse enables the comprehension of identity formation, particularly the comprehension of the (re)formation of post-trauma identity, suggests the utility of investigating the other ways, ways other than Derrida's, that is, that psychoanalysis theorizes the archive through an individual suffering reader.

Given the primacy of the archive's fragmentary contents and their investment with both the superfluous and negative meanings that enable and disable the construction of identity, object-relations theory, particularly the part objects theorized by Melanie Klein and the transitional objects theorized by D.W. Winnicott, supplies a pertinent though little discussed psychoanalytic lens through which to read the archive's manifestation of perpetual agonism.[219] Additionally, however, object-relations theory also foreshadows the argument for the archive's maternal feminine space that I develop in my discussion of *All the Names* and *The Aspern Papers* that follows. Klein, for example, although occasionally taken to task for an unsystematic approach, a lack of

[219] While I do not specifically focus on trauma or utilize trauma theory, Klein's version of object-relations theory is particularly pliant, some would say overly so, to reading the formation of identity through trauma.

structural development,[220] and a too-closely held commitment to the Freudian death drive to explain the infant's earliest expressions of anxiety,[221] provides a theory of maternal-facilitated development that, read through Winnicott, lends an analogy to the reader's use of archival fragments to develop the personal identities that contribute to the identities of historical collectives.[222] Klein's part objects and their relationships to the infant's unconscious experiences also suggest, however, the enormity of the abstract-unto-transcendent work of history, memory, and identity that readers like Baker, Poppe, and Wollenberger often desire archives to do (while they, at times, seem to nonetheless hate archives for doing it).[223]

The common ground that connects Klein's version of object-relations theory to the archive depends first on contemporary archival discourse's assumption that the archive operates as an interpersonal space and second on the archive's fragmentary contents and Klein's emphasis on the importance of objects and part objects for the construction of identity. For Klein, the infant begins to construct its identity by splitting those objects that challenge its illusion of unity with the mother and by projecting and introjecting the consequent object parts. The development, which enables the infant to synthesize its relationships to objects and therefore construct a more complex system (the ego) for mediating between inner and outer realities, depends on the infant's attempts to

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[220] See John D. Sutherland in "The British Object Relations Theorists: Balint, Winnicott, Fairbairn, Guntrip."

[221] It is not always clear in Klein's theories (nor is it in Freud's own works) whether or not she finds infancy itself to be coterminous with psychosis.

[222] While Klein may be taken to task among readers, critics, and analysts interested in a complete explication of her psychoanalytic approach, her work on positions has become, as Michael Robbins notes, "a widely accepted theory of psychosis" (177).

[223] A note on hatred: Baker, in particular expresses outrage at the missing swaths of history that zealous digitization imposes on the archive. This zealousness, too (and its constitutive gaps), however, constitutes history.

sustain its illusion of maternal unity that is constantly under attack, particularly through the process of weaning.[224] For example, because the maternal breast (Klein's archetypal object), contains the ability to both nurture (when it appears and feeds and comforts) and to persecute (when it disappears and seems to be therefore withheld), the infant cannot maintain its illusion of unity with the breast. To sustain the illusion of unity, which is also the illusion of omnipotence, the infant must instead split the breast into part objects, introjecting the good and projecting the bad in order to welcome and identify with the breast that feeds and comforts it and simultaneously protect itself from (by attacking, for instance) the breast that withdraws from and thereby persecutes it. The split initially enables the infant to both love and retaliate against the same object, and then, through an accumulation of introjected part-objects and a consequential maturation, to accept the disillusionment that results from the realization that objects are not part of the infant and not therefore subject to the infant's power. Through this acceptance, the infant assumes a progressively more ambivalent relationship to part objects, eventually acknowledging part objects as pieces of dynamic whole autonomous objects that allow for, and in fact demand, the continuous mediation of the infant's own desires and anxieties.[225]

What this brief explanation of Klein's objects and part objects has specifically to do with archives and their fragmentary contents is better revealed through D.W. Winnicott's extension of Klein's part objects into transitional objects. For Winnicott, transitional objects, such as the frayed corner of a fuzzy blanket, mediate the illusion of

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[224] It does this not necessarily because of the ego's inexorable formation but first because the infant is beset, it apprehends, by persecutory forces. Objects are split so that their bad, persecutory forces can be projected away and expunged (sometimes this depends on initial introjection) while the good can be introjected and preserved.

[225] In this way, the introjection and projection of part objects enables the construction of the superego so necessary to the infant's ego development.

unity with the mother by aiding in the necessary process of disillusionment (95). A transitional object usually stands, according to Winnicott, in a symbolic relationship with the maternal breast; however, the infant perceives the blanket not as a symbol but as an extension of herself.[226] The blanket therefore enables the infant to practice negotiating its inner and outer realities at a non-perceived remove from the maternal breast.[227] Transitional objects like the soft corner of a beloved but ripped to shreds blanket—or the ragged A—authorize and enable this type of mediating experience in the "intermediate space" created by the mother for her infant to provide the infant the opportunity to pass from "(magical) omnipotent control to control by manipulation" (93).

The archive provides, and in fact its fragmentary objects require, just this sort of mediation and manipulation. Like the area shaped by the mother for the infant, the archive offers its readers "an intermediate *area* of experiencing, to which internal reality and external life both contribute" (90; Winnicott's emphasis). Steedman corroborates the archive reader's contributory internal reality, naming it a "need" and a "desire" (and as such, coterminous with archive fever (5)): indeed, in Steedman's formulation, the "stuff" of the archive "emerges" when "someone *needs* to find it, or just simply *needs* it, for new and current purposes" (68; my emphasis). Steedman's identification of this "general fever" of "wanting the past,"[228] echoes in the archive the reader's desire for the past that

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[226] Winnicott notes that symbolism is a difficult object of analysis because it emphasizes a conferred value rather than a value in "actuality" and because it suggests a comprehension of inner and outer objects rather than the comprehension of inner objects *becoming* outer objects. Therefore, while a transitional object's value depends on its symbolism, its importance for its possessor depends as much on what it is not (for the fact that it is not that for which it functions as a symbol), as for its symbolism (92)

[227] "The transitional object is never," Winnicott explains, "under magical control like the internal object, nor is it outside control as the real mother is" (94).

[228] "Which," the quotation continues, "can be attributed to certain turns of thought by

can be read as not only a desire for historical discourse but a desire for the formative experience given, according to Winnicott, by the good enough mother to her infant to enable its creative illusion (75).[229] Sociologist Harriet Bradley supports this assertion by ascribing to the archive, and in some ways against Osborne's claims for the archive's ordinariness, "pleasures, seductions, and illusions" (109). Although Winnicott has nothing to say about the archive itself, he defines his object of study in "Transitional Objects and the Transitional Phenomena" as the development from the not-me object (roughly correspondent, at least in regards to its instrumentality, to Klein's part object) to "true object-relationship." His corollary emphasis that his theory speaks to "illusion, that which is allowed to the infant, and which in adult life is inherent in art and religion,"[230] ensures that Winnicott's work is not limited to first objects[231] and instead applies in a much broader sense to possession itself and to possession's negotiation of the "intermediate area between the subjective and that which is objectively perceived" (90).[232]

"It is clear," Winnicott writes in the introductory section of his analysis, "that something is important here" (89), and in fact, the importance of transitional objects to the construction of identity extends to play, to "artistic creativity and appreciation," to

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which individual narratives of growth and development (particularly narratives of childhood) have become components of what we understand a modern self to be."

[229] An experience that goes some ways towards explaining the persistence of nostalgia outside of those situations that would best seem to produce it.

[230] Although illusion is recognized as madness when it manifests in an adult who coerces others into sharing (which is the same as submitting) to the illusion.

[231] First objects generally stand, even if only indirectly, for the maternal breast.

[232] An interesting argument here might follow Winnicott's focus on "possession" to possession's etymological association, via classical warfare to "obsession." See Lennard J. Davis's *Obsession: A History*, "Origins of Obsession." It is also worth noting here that several contributions to contemporary archival discourse, Keen's as the most noteworthy, proceed from A.S. Byatt's "archival romance," *Possession*.

"religious feeling," to "dreaming," to "fetishism, lying and stealing, the origin and loss of affectionate feeling, drug addiction, the talisman of obsessional rituals, etc." To that "etc" I add the archive.[233] Because, as Winnicott argues in an extension of Kleinian "position," "reality-acceptance is never completed" (91), and because in the archive, reality is continuously re-produced as history through fragments that appeal, for various reasons, to readers' desires, the archive provides an intermediate area of experiencing anew part objects as transitional objects.[234] In fact, archive readers (genealogists, for a particularly apt example, or casual or professional historians, or any other readers who desire what the archive may or may not contain) also use fragments as Klein's part objects and Winnicott's transitional objects: engaged in the work of world-making and reality-accepting (the kind of work that characterizes history, but also other discourses dependent on the archive, such as law), readers use archival pieces and parts to negotiate between their own inner reality (desire) and the outer reality (also desire) that structures and informs the archive; in so doing, readers contribute to the productive development of identities—both their own, in as much as archival fragments meet (or do not) a need and fulfill (or fail to fulfill) a desire, and that of the indeterminately referential objects of their negotiation.

Of course, object-relations theory also points to the illusion that characterizes Winnicott's process of "reality acceptance" (and that adumbrates the archive described by Foucault). While the reader of archival fragments uses the archive's transitional

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[233] Although, as this project (and much of contemporary archival discourse) undoubtedly now suggests, the archive is always at risk of fetishism.

[234] Winnicott writes that transitional objects do not disappear; they are "not so much forgotten as relegated to limbo," and they "los[e] meaning […] because the transitional phenomena have become diffused […] over the whole cultural field" (91).

objects to make a world, this world depends on an illusive unity (with the past, with memory, with the archive, with history) that echoes the illusive unity that constitutes the subject. The archive's intermediate area can be therefore considered to provoke a recapitulation to that earlier, developmentally requisite transitional stage dominated by "highly significant fragment[s]" wherefrom identities can be constructed. That the archive offers to or solicits from its readers this recapitulation indicates the archive's construction of "potential space" that, in Winnicott's formulation, originally cleaved mother and infant. Carving out a space "between primary creativity and objective perception," the archive therefore functions for its readers as an "intermediate area of experience […] in direct continuity with the play area of a small child who is 'lost' in play" (95-6).[235]

The contribution to contemporary archival discourse represented by Klein and Winnicott rests on their ability to join Freud and Foucault's interest in archaeological fragments with the agonistic narratives of Baker, Poppe, and Wollenberger. Klein and Winnicott help to suggest that archival fragments function in the archive's space (a space that despite its most obvious magisterial, which is to say patriarchal, construction cannot help but to also evoke the maternal), akin to part and transitional objects and are therefore (both healthfully and/or neurotically) mediated by readers in their efforts, intentional or otherwise, to establish interpersonal relationships with saved objects. Their point, while clearly relevant to the aforementioned archive readers, perhaps takes its most obvious cue from the relationship between Hester and Pearl. In fact, *The Scarlet Letter*'s suitability to

[235] Thank you to Rabinowitz for reminding me of Benjamin's point in "Unpacking my Library" that there "is a childlike element, which, in a collector, mingles with the element of old age […]. Among children, collecting is only one process of renewal" (2:487).

the archival genre of redemptive romance depends not just on the presence of the partial A, but on the A's function as a transitional object that mediates the relationship between Hester and Pearl. Although most readings corroborate the narrator's claim that Pearl "developed all her sympathies" when she kisses her dying father on the scaffold, her development depends on her assimilation of the A as a symbol—as a meaningful signifier on her father's chest—and not only a piece or a part of her mother. Klein and Winnicott, implicitly theorizing this tableau, consequently indicate that archive fever can be attributed to the continued development of the ego in tandem with the maternal prior (and an originary everything) and the superegoic historical present.

Klein and Winnicott also, however, contribute to contemporary archival discourse in another way. In fact, their versions of object-relations theories suggest, as do the narratives of longing explicitly expressed by Baker and Poppe, and implicitly expressed by Wollenberger and Hawthorne how readers circumvent the blatant impossibility of the archive's containment of a literal everything by investing archival plenitude symbolically.[236] Object-relations theory, thanks to its emphasis on the infant's necessary mastery of the correspondence between interior and exterior meanings and worlds, supplies a theory of objects that is also, at least conceptually, a theory of language.[237]

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[236] Steedman, following Stewart, identifies longing as an important symptom of archive fever. Etymologically evocative of "longing" and, thereby, "restlessness" (*OED*), desire suggests its own implication in the production of fevers.

[237] The archive's provision of a theory of language, but a theory of figurative language that may, with some more lengthy and rigorous theorizing on my part, be considered a genealogical relation of Kristeva's feminine *ecriture*, suggests that despite the archive's patriarchal orientation, the manifestation of archive fever constitutes an eruption of desire that makes the archive particularly available to feminists and to feminism. Such is perhaps why the woman in the archive is so often repressed.

When Baker, Poppe, and Wollenberger treat archival fragments as part and transitional objects, they adumbrate the archive's reliance on and creation of figurative language.

Such reliance is unsurprising in the context of Hawthorne's narrator's claim to authority and Steedman's corroboration that the historian's "massive authority as a writer" depends on "the way archives *are*" (145; Steedman's emphasis). Steedman describes here the historian's role as narrator and storyteller, and although she does not describe the way archives *are* in the following terms, she gestures to the figural language that archival fragments, as made clear by Hawthorne's narrator, necessitate. Indeed, and as mentioned above, archival fragments are, unlike other types of fragments (Friedrich Schlegel's, for example),[238] incomplete: the archive (and not just the Stasi archive) always confers upon its objects both referentiality and indeterminacy, even upon those objects that appear complete and that possess, like the discrete books they often are, a front and back cover (the complete commonplace book manuscripts I accessed in the Beinecke, for example). Accordingly, in the transitional, potential, intermediate, and maternal space of the archive, every object comes apart to impel the supplementation, contextualization, interpretation, and narrative reconstruction that can only be provided by a participatory reader.

The strong verbs "demand" and "impel" proceeding from the archive are particularly appropriate because the archive's part objects are overcharged, like Klein's maternal breast, with what psychoanalysis describes as held energy, cathexes (Strachey),

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[238] In his "Athenäum Fragmente" collection can be found Schlegel's oft-cited aphorism, "*Ein Fragment muss gleich einem kleinen Kunstwerke von der ungebende Welt ganz abgesondert und in sich selbst vollendet sein wie ein Igel*." A fragment, like a work of art, must be quite separated from its surroundings and complete in itself—like a hedgehog.

or investments (Riviere).[239] Archival part-objects therefore do not just facilitate a negotiation between a reader's inner and external realities, they demand the release, dispersal, or delegation of an energy investment (and overinvestment) through interpretation, narration, or other forms of integration and completion. Hawthorne's narrator attests to this when he describes the corporeal impact the archival A had on his body, but Camelia Elias offers critical corroboration, though through a different explanation, in *The Fragment: Towards A History and Poetics of a Performative Genre*.[240] Elias argues that fragments, hardly quiescent or passive objects,[241] possess a coercive force: "If the fragment begins in a paradox, with the fragment coercing writers into the direction of formulating a poetics they are not even aware of formulating, the fragment indirectly consents to authorship" (26).[242] Calling forth the reader-driven

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[239] This is why the archive and its objects are so easily fetishized. For an interesting discussion of cathexis and it translation from *Besetzen*, see Ornston's "The Invention of 'Cathexis' and Strachey's Strategy."

[240] Dr. Pepper: Elias has a blog, http://cameliaelias.blogspot.com/, and I think you in particular will quite enjoy it (if you don't already).

[241] It is possible to read quiescence's reference to grammar ("of a letter, diacritics, etc., esp. a consonant: not sounded, silent") as illustrating the subversive action of archival fragments.

[242] "The fragments," writes Elias,

> coerce the critics as readers into accepting their content, and subsequently, the critics as writers coerce the fragments into displaying incompleteness as a formal trait. Whereas the philologists's concern is with establishing to what extant a found text, which the philologist names as fragments, can be restored to a presupposed whole from which the fragment has been coerced into detachment, the philosopher's concern is directed towards accounting for the form of the fragment in itself, without however, naming the fragment according to its own constitution. The philosopher's aim is somewhat similar to the philologist's, inasmuch as they share a concern with restoring the form of the fragment to a larger and abstract picture, which for the philosopher, however, explains the difference between categories such as completeness and incompleteness. The fiction writer tends to either incorporate or let the form of the fragment inform his writing without much regard for what defines the fragment. […] The

reconstruction they require, archival fragments therefore coerce readers into formulating the necessarily figurative language that can complete them.[243]

As illustrated by the various readers writers whom I've so far discussed, principally Hawthorne's narrator, Derrida, Steedman, Baker, Poppe, and Wollenberger, readers *must* formulate a story; in fact, this coercion by the archive's consensual and fragmentary contents of the formulation of a language (that forms the basis for illusion, disillusion, and the "theoretical understanding of illusion" (Winnicott 95)), is also a part of the construction of identity facilitated by the archive's intermediate area and potential space. Although he does not address or speak from out of the archive per se, Christopher Bollas in "The Aesthetic Moment and the Search for Transformation" co-opts this coercive force by making it productive of the figurative language that constitutes the archive reader's story in terms of the aesthetic. Much as Klein and Winnicott provide a bridge from Steedman, Derrida, and Foucault to Baker, Poppe, and Wollengberger, Bollas bridges object-relations theory and language by theorizing the former in terms of aesthetics. The bridge is helpful here not only because of the formative role of figurative

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> literary critic, on the other hand, displays a more sensitive concern with what exactly defines the form of the fragment, insofar as it exists, than the other three. Whereas the first two positions share an interest in the creation process whereby the form of the fragment discloses something about textual origins, the latter two are guided by imagination which represents the question of origin as textual beginnings." (34)

[243] This description adds a new force to positivistic historians' tendency to refer to archival contents as feminine. In fact, the very necessity of figurative language suggests a Lacanian negativity (also evident in Klein) recognized, rather surprisingly, by Leopold von Rank, the father of scientific history. Rank, who inaugurated historical discourse's dependence on the primary documents of the archive, also emphasized historical discourse's reliance on those "readers who take part in the work" and "participatory readers" (qtd. in Grafton 51). His emphasis on readers indicates the implicit gap between archival fragment and historian, a gap that might also be described as the gap of the symbol and therefore the bridging of which demands the reader's participation.

language in constellating the archive's fragmentary contents and connecting their meanings to necessarily exterior, through perhaps only illusively so, referents, but because the bridge explains how the object-relations theory that I suggest is promoted by the archive's role in contemporary archival discourse determines the language through which the archive and its fragmentary contents can and must be re-produced.[244] According to Bollas (and in a clear echo of Winnicott), aesthetic experience and figurative language by extension depend on that aforementioned early formal relationship between an infant and its mother. "The aesthetic," for Bollas, evokes for the subject an "existential memory" by providing a "generative illusion of fitting to an object" (40). The memory hearkens back to a time in infancy, "prior to representational cognition," in which communication for the subject "took place solely through the illusion of deep rapport of subject and object":

> Being-with, as dialogue, is the communicating of the infant with the mother, where the mother's task is to provide the infant with an experience of continuity of being. […] The mother's idiom of care and the infant's experience of this handling is the first human aesthetic. It is the most profound occasion where the content of the self is formed and transformed by the environment. The uncanny pleasure of being held by a poem, a composition, a painting, or, *for that matter, any object* rests on those moments […] when the infant's internal world is partly given form by the mother. (41; my emphasis)

[244] In this sense, Bollas draws a line between the archive and the developing child, what Rabinowitz describes as the child "in formation."

In Bollas's formulation, the non-cognitive, non-representative language shared between mother and infant structures the idiomatic form (and therefore provides the aesthetic) through and by which the infant "hold[s]" and "transform[s]" internal and external realities. Accordingly, the mother acts in the infant's life as herself a, and perhaps *the* "transformational object," one that establishes the pattern for the transformative aesthetic moments in and of the future.[245]

That the archive takes part in the aesthetic at all is evident from the figurative language it requires for its communication of continuity:[246] the historian may be a storyteller by profession, but from out of the archive she and every reader, historian or not, *must* be so.[247] In fact, the archive's superfluous saved fragments, its pieces and parts, its flotsam, its traces (to use Paul Ricoeur's term), its shreds, its dust, and its PT S2/1/1, for example, can only ever be removed from the archive through its necessary integration in narrative. Archival narrative is therefore figural because it is substitutive, because it

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[245] This is literalized in the relationship between Hester and Pearl: Hester's function as *a* transformational object cannot help but refer back to the *A* affixed to her chest. Subsequently, Pearl, as an infant, recognizes the A as her mother before recognizing her mother (that is, Pearl recognizes her mother as a partial object). Hester retains this partial but also transformational property for Hawthorne's narrator, as well; his story illustrates as an aesthetic experience his assimilation of the A as Hester to save himself. In this Hawthorne's narrator occupies not only the position of Hester, vis-à-vis the Puritan community of which she claims an alienated part, but the position of Pearl, too.

[246] For Bollas, the existential experience of the infant being held (literally and therefore figuratively) by its mother enables the "second human aesthetic: the finding of the word to speak the self" (43). A footnote that clarifies Bollas's concept of aesthetic experience as "the *moment* as an occasion when time becomes a space for the subject" cannot help but call forth the archive. Additionally, although he limits "such moments" to "occur[ing] within the reading of a text, or a poem, or during the experience of hearing an entire reading of a text or a symphony," wherein "we are held, in reverie, to be released eventually back into time proper," such a description calls to mind the abstraction that Steedman implicitly attributes to the reader in an archive.

[247] Osborne argues, as does Steedman, that the function served by the archive-reading historian is a contemporary analogue of the storyteller described by Benjamin.

offers, even when it offers literal description, the fullness of reference or context that archival fragments always lack. Bollas consequently provides a useful way to conceive of the archive's space and its fragmentary contents as impelling and in fact coercing readers into recapitulating an earlier stage or position wherein was established a pattern, based on a linguistic, communicative experience of maternal "holding," for identity development, object relationships, and aesthetic experiences. For Bollas, the archival aesthetic situates the archive, a place in which "time becomes a space," in which time is held as space, as a "future transformative […] moment," set on the pattern of the mother's transformational objecthood. It therefore implicitly attributes archive fever to the (maternal) "hold" the archive has on its readers and critics (48). While this may appear to overstate the role played by archives, it yet helps to explain the dynamics of contemporary archival discourse and the archival desires that so many archive readers, particularly the archive readers I've cited above, articulate. While the archive's contents are, by virtue of their archival context, incomplete, they constitute an invitation to and a demand for a symbolic, metaphoric, figurative unity that, however illusive, enables continual transformation.[248]

Thoughtful archive readers, such as Helen Freshwater, attend to the figurative language demanded by archival fragments in kind by suggesting that one "can only begin to complete an assessment of the archive, which responds appropriately to its textual nature, by developing a psychoanalytic sensitivity to metaphor and figural language as

[248] Freshwater, in "The Allure of the Archive," speaks to this power when she suggests that archival fragments are the "literal embodiment of the metaphors that surround memory."

they appear both in the texts of the archive and in archival research" (742).[249] While this kind of sensitivity is expressed in object-relations theory by Klein, Winnicott, and Bollas, it is also expressed elsewhere and particularly in the work of Walter Benjamin. A thinker of and in fragments, as most especially on display in the fragmentary style of *The Arcades Project*, Benjamin, and particularly as he is read through Paul de Man,[250] is the last theorist with whom this chapter engages, in part because in "The Task of the Translator," Benjamin extends Klein's, Winnicott's, and Bollas's work on illusions of unity and the function of part, transitional, and transformative objects in sustaining or dissembling or otherwise transforming those illusions to a theory of fragmentary language particularly pertinent to the archive and to its manifestations of fever. More important, however, by extending the previous theorists' work on objects, Benjamin paves the way for a more comprehensive theory for the archive's saved fragments. Such a theory, problematically missing from contemporary archival discourse, is necessary given the extra-objectal significations that archival fragments, through readers and writers, necessarily accrue.

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[249] This, unsurprisingly, is precisely the sort of sensitivity displayed by Derrida in *Archive Fever*, but, much more surprisingly, we need Steedman reading Derrida in parody (which is, as Judith Butler reminds us, performance) in order to recognize it.

[250] Note de Man's point that "metaphors, tropes, and figural language in general have been a perennial problem and, at times, a recognized source of embarrassment for philosophical discourse and, by extension, for all discursive uses of language including historiography and literary analysis" (34). Although de Man has much to say about translation, particularly about its impossibility in, "Conclusion: Walter Benjamin's 'The Task of the Translator," which I excerpt below, he also claims in "The Epistemology" that "[i]t is no mere play on words that 'translate' is translated in German as *ubersetzen*, which itself translates the Greek *meta phorein* or metaphor. Metaphor gives itself the totality which it then claims to define, but it is in fact the tautology of its own position. The discourse of simple ideas is figural discourse or translation and, as such, creates the fallacious illusion of definition" (38).

Much of the fittedness of "The Task of the Translator" to the archive depends on Benjamin's indication of the metaphoric form and meaning that archival fragments and translations share. This is not just a case of analogy, however.[251] In fact, an archival fragment constitutes the most-cited trope of "The Task of the Translator": the archaeological (which is to say, and thanks to Foucault, archival) shattered vessel[252] was a container once used for holding, at least it functioned as such in "The Storyteller," according to the handprints retained on the pot.[253] Additionally, however, archival fragments also demand for their meaning the derivative carrying-over attributed by Benjamin via de Man to both translation and history.[254] While de Man in "'Conclusions'" likely does not have the archive in mind, he takes pains, as does Benjamin in "The Task of the Translator" (1:255), to "situate" his inter-, intralingual, and

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[251] In my use of de Man that follows, I basically ignore his claim that metonymy differs significantly from metaphor (32). I see and understand the importance of his argument that "translation" is a metonymic process, and therefore a process of "followings" (my term), but I see no reason to position metaphor as metonymy's opposite or to corroborate de Man's claim of the unity of metaphor against the fragmentariness of metonymy and synecdoche (I grant, of course, that the latter two terms signal their fragmentariness much more straightforwardly). To this same point, later in his explication, de Man writes of "the nonadequation of symbol to a shattered symbolized, the nonsymbolic character of this adequation, is a version of the others, and indicates the unreliability of rhetoric as a system of tropes which would be productive of meaning. Meaning is always displaced with regard to the meaning it ideally intended—that meaning is never reached" (33). If de Man were in fact looking for a less rhetorically problematic term, he may have been wiser to use "analogy," which depends etymologically on resemblance, on "proportion," and on parallelism. (Incidentally, cf 146: In "The Epistemology," is not de Man deconstructing metaphoric tautology [therefore revealing that its unity is forced and not without remainder] in the very same way he deconstructs the tautology of translation here? For "tautology" in "The Epistemology," may we read "*mise en abyme* structure" in "'Conclusions'" (26)?)

[252] Another of Benjamin's highly significant fragments (*Allegory and Trauerspiel* 178).

[253] "[T]races of the storyteller cling to a story," Benjamin writes, the way the handprints of the potter cling to a clay vessel" (3: 149).

[254] See Carol Jacobs for a discussion of the already-broken, never-wholeness of Benjamin's broken vessel.

intersemiotic translation and explication of Benjamin's essay "within a historical or *pseudohistorical* framework" (12; my emphasis) because the translator "fails" in his participatory enterprise in the same way that the archive reader, or what de Man specifies as the historian, also and more obviously fails.[255] When juxtaposed, the foundation of both professions on failure becomes explicit: neither translator nor historian "can do what the original did"; founded in derivation, "these activities […] do not resemble that from which they derive" (20, 23-4). What is more, their failures can be attributed, according to de Man, to the fragmentariness of the mediums with which they work. Working in or from out of the archive, historians' only access to the "pure events" from which their discourse derives is through fragments. Further, because they cannot recapture through repetition those "pure events," historians' contributions to historical discourse is always and necessarily fragmentary. In this, history's substitutive origin in the archive provides translation with its reflection. de Man continues:

> What we have here is an initial fragmentation; any work is totally fragmented in
>
> *reine Sprache*, with which it has nothing in common, and every translation is a fragment, is breaking the fragment—so the vessel keeps breaking,

[255] In tracking the translation of *besetzen* as cathexis, I ran across James Strachey's letter to Ernest Jones. In it (and by it), Strachey describes as an aim the failure of translation as a mode by which participatory readers are provoked to provide more, perhaps better translations (this extends de Man's argument to Derrida in *Des Tours de Babel*). Consequently, Strachey suggests another common cause between readers of fragmentary contents and translators: "There was a conversation the other night with some of the Americans here on the subject. They produced a great variety of strange renderings and apparently had even less notion of the exact meaning of the word than I have myself. But they seemed to think that if they could be told the 'right' translation the meaning would automatically be conveyed to them. If the 'right' translation can be fixed upon as a word with no ostensible meaning at all, people may be induced to try and discover what the meaning really is" (Ornston 394).

> constantly—and never reconstitutes it; there was no vessel in the first place, or we have no knowledge of the vessel, or no awareness, no access to it, so for all intents and purposes there has never been one. (33)

While "The Task of the Translator" admits to an easy resemblance between an original text and its translation on one side, and a pure event, an archival fragment, and history on the other side, and while that resemblance is made the easier by Benjamin's insistence that an original text and its translation both refer, or both *should* refer (if only tangentially), to a "greater language" a "pure language," a Bollas-styled maternal idiom always lost to language users, de Man in his critique highlights not resemblance but common fragmentariness. In the manner that a translator strives for a perfect union between an original and what can only ever be a derivation, and in the manner that that union suggests an original and therefore always inaccessible union between language(s), the gleaner and reader of archival fragments contributes to a derivation, in form and in content, that can refer but only excursively to a theoretical and therefore always inaccessible original, which in this case, is that past made up of those pure events that can only be referred to by the future as history. While the historian's and every archive reader's efforts thereby result in failure, in that they cannot re-member or re-create the past irredeemably lost, it is the failure of Klein and Winnicott's omnipotent infant, the illusion Bollas ascribes to the infant's experience of unity; that is to say, it is the requisite failure of disillusionment that can also be referred to, as it has been above, as the "recovery" without which meaning cannot be produced.[256]

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[256] In *Des Tours de Babel*, Derrida responds to de Man's reading of "The Task of the Translator" (although not by name) to redeem the productivity of translational failure. The necessity of translation's failure might have been also divined by Freud: according to

Consequently, while "The Task of the Translator" boasts many able and insightful translators, I privilege de Man's reading because he emphasizes, not the least by repetition, that fragmentariness and failure characterizes Benjamin's essay. De Man suggests that the translator's dependence on an already fragmented original repeats the archive reader or historian's dependence on the already fragmented archive (itself substitutive of an already fragmented, inaccessible language and past that, as de Man points out above, never was). An archive reader, impelled by her own desire and by archival fragments to a mode of completion, to recovery, contributes thereby to the revelation of initial fragmentation: while she may learn from the archive "everything," she can only formulate everything in the figural language that continues to fragment the archive's already lost "vessel."[257]

Despite my own repetitive rhetoric in the preceding paragraphs, de Man sequesters neither Benjamin, nor his translator, nor archive readers to a language game. He instead extends the archive to Benjamin, which paves the way for its doubled-back extension, towing a theory of language with it, into the transitional territory marked by Klein, Winnicott, and Bollas. The important point to be made is that saved fragments, specifically the saved fragments that characterize archival contents as invested, require the simultaneous construction of the ego and the superego, and the language that brokers their common relationship. This is not surprising: archival fragments' referential indeterminacy provokes a reflexive negotiation and translation that cannot but repeat the

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Ornston, "Jones could never understand Freud's 'cavalier attitude in this manner of translations' […] Freud favored many different translations" (396).

[257] To refer back to Poppe and put de Man's theoretical explanation to the practical test: the ePuzzler assumes a 10% inaccessibility rate; of 600,000,000 double sided scraps, 60,000,000 double-sided scraps, at least, will have "never been."

negotiation and translation of identity. While "saved" indicates the positive progression inextricably linked to Christianity (in for example Christianity's conversion narratives), it takes on in the archive, via Benjamin (and Klein and Winnicott and Lacan), the cadence of disillusionment and loss. And here, we are brought back to archival plenitude: built on saved fragments, the archive and the history and language that its readers make it produce refer to loss, to gaps, to spaces, to lacunae, to constitutive nothings that signify in the face of the archive's various plenary promises. Benjamin shades in this loss with the melancholy that saturates his own personal history and critical writings; through Benjamin, we view, and rather devastatingly, Winnicott's trauma-surviving child, "lost" in play, the writer lost in translation, and the reader lost in the archive.

Of the various archive readers I've so far discussed, few are more lost in the archive than Senhor José, the terminally lonely, archive-obsessed, fragment-assembling protagonist of José Saramago's *All the Names*.[258] Saramago's novel constitutes a canonical contribution to contemporary archival discourse and its corollary fevers not only through the archive and documental obsession it takes as its subject and theme, but through the book's insistence on the archive as an object of, and archival fragments as a means to an allegorical exploration of loneliness and loss.[259] In *All the Names*, the archive promises plenitude and provides a space in which a reader is held in a maternal embrace, but it also dramatizes this space as dangerous and desolate and illustrates its

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[258] Steedman briefly treats Saramago's work in "Archival Methods," a chapter she contributed to *Research Methods for English Studies*.

[259] Steedman suggests that, "The archive allowed the imagining of a particular and modern form of loneliness, which was perhaps analogous to the simultaneous conception of the Historian's relationship to the past 'as one of irretrievable dispossession'" (Stephan Bann qtd in Steedman 72).

reader's use of archival objects to declare his separation from, which ironically constitutes his anxious absorption of, that space. Accordingly, rather than simply modernizing the literary archival archetypes built by Kafka and Borges, in which dead letters not only signal meaning's absurdity but the consequent existential loneliness attendant to life's fossilization into a file, the archive in *All the Names* provides a regressive space in which the apparently dead letters of archival fragments gain an afterlife in which they function as transitional, transformative objects. The protagonist consequently uses archival fragments to negotiate his inner and external realities in the service of re-establishing his own claim to omnipotence by upholding the illusive unity between life and death. In this way, Saramago's work manifests a strain of archive fever that unifies, if only via an illusive romantic redemption, the pieces of the archive this project makes its objects.

As its title obliquely suggests, an ironic narrator situates Saramago's novel as an archival allegory. At the allegory's center sits the vast, imposing, pervasive and assimilative Central Registry of Births, Marriages, and Deaths, "both the world and the center of the world," where Senhor José works (15).[260] While the Registry, an archival emblem, ought to function, as does every archive, to collapse time into memory's timelessness, the Registry indicates archival time's problematic: in the Registry, "time cannot be described as immemorial simply because the Registry contains a record of everything and everyone" (60). To accommodate everything and everyone, the Registry features a Baker-styled construction that enables its storehouse to realize the plenitude postulate through its containment of "all the names." The Registry's implicit response to

[260] In this, it evokes the first words of Borges's "The Library of Babel": "The universe (which others call the library)."

Baker's request to save it *all*—the living and the infinitely expanding dead—is a rather uncreative construction that reflects, among other things, the absolute fantastical quality of Baker's proposition: "monumental and superhuman" shelves "extend far into the interior of the building, farther than the eye can see [until] at a certain point darkness takes over." Despite their monstrousness, the shelves are not nearly expansive enough. "As a consequence of the unstoppable rise in the number of deceased," the Registry's back wall, "from time to time," must "be demolished and rebuilt some yards farther on" (3).

In its structural expansion unto death, the Registry offers a material illustration of archival metastasis to illustrate by repetition Derrida's claim that the question of boundary, of "the outside" is "the question of the archive" and to provide at the same time an anticipatory rebuttal to Steedman's insistence in *Dust* on the archive's fixedness in space. In addition to its impersonal structural spread, the Registry's material expansiveness also infects Senhor José. In fact, the Registry, even before its proliferation became necessary, has always been contiguous with Senhor José's home, extending into (and therefore extending the authority invested in its inscrutable bureaucratic hierarchy into) what must otherwise be considered Senhor José's personal space by means of a shared wall. Described by the narrator as a "simple, rustic dwellin[g]," Senhor José's home dates back to "a beginning" when all the Registry employees' homes were attached to the archive, "like small defenceless [sic] chapels clinging to the robust body of the cathedral" (8-9). The archive's institutionalism is thereby made an allegorical object that assimilates Senhor José, making him a residual worshipper and, what might amount to the same thing, one of its fragmentary files.

Senhor José's assimilation into the Central Registry suggests his fictional embodiment of Poppe and Wollenberger. Like the Stasi archive, the Central Registry infiltrates the privacy of subjecthood to claim it (or a fragment of it, in the case of the Stasi archive) as a fragment of and for its own. However, and unlike Poppe or Wollenberger, Senhor José's particular subjecthood makes him especially susceptible to such assimilation: whereas Poppe and Wollenberger were themselves fragmented by their incorporation into the Stasi files, Senhor José suggests that, in some sense, such fragmentariness is inherent. He cannot claim nor name a single relationship, and no familial, platonic, sexual, asexual, meaningful or insignificant connection comforts, cajoles, arouses, or annoys Senhor José. Not even his co-workers can be considered as nominally filling this lack; in his twenty-five unremarkable and un-promoted years of service as a petty clerk, Senhor José has been and continues to be treated with both "disdain, irony, irritation or condescension" and with the indifference endemic to the professional hierarchy of an utterly comprehensive if nonetheless penetrable governmental institution (8). Despite such interpersonal paucity, however, Senhor José is no modern (or Baroque, given my description of *All the Names* as operating in an allegorical mode), Bartleby. In fact, while *All the Names* depicts a protagonist as obtrusively inconsequential at his place of employment and depends on dead letters as stripped of meaning in the Central Registry as the undelivered missives in Bartleby's former Dead Letter Office, Senhor José is emphatically unlike Bartleby and finds provisional fulfillment for the relationships he lacks in the application of his workaday duties to his only leisure activity, an "obsessi[ve]" interest in the compilation of celebrity scrapbooks.

Personal collections generally differ from archives by their adherence to a necessarily circumscribed fetish rather than a mandate to save everything, but *All the Names* argues that collections and archives, particularly Senhor José's collection and the Central Registry, cohere and intersect in important ways.[261] Senhor José's "extensive" scrapbook collection, for example, "over which he had been labouring for many a long year," by offering a medium through which he collects, assembles, organizes, preserves, and saves, thereby reproduces on a smaller scale the Central Registry itself. Consequently, Senhor José's collection constitutes a defensive response to the archive's long reach, and his repetition in his private life of his professional duties enables him to exert a substitutive power that makes up for the power he lacks not only as a mere clerk in an institutionalized and suffocatingly bureaucratic organization, but also as a mere name in the Central Registry (10). His collection therefore serves to recuperate Senhor José from out of the Registry's "everything and everyone" by situating him as the small-time Registrar of his own collection and as thereby responsible for establishing a new everything and, via other (others') names, a new everyone. Inverting the archival mandate to save, Senhor José's collection of saved scraps saves Senhor José from the non-productive nihilism of the Central Registry. The narrator corroborates this redemptive aspect of Senhor José's collection when claiming that it allows Senhor José to "kno[w] everything, that was the word he used, Everything" about the subjects that function as his objects of interest (15). Ultimately, Senhor José's collection constitutes

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[261] See again Benjamin's "Unpacking My Library," which expresses the collector's arousal, passion, love, ardent desire for the objects in his collection, and which describes the "collector's most profound enchantment" as "the locking of individual items within a magic circle in which they are frozen as the final thrill, the thrill of acquisition, passes over them" (2.2: 486-7, 490).

an archival medium through which he regains an illusive sense of autonomy and omnipotence, inverting his integration as another of the archive's names by acting not as a José but as a connection-establishing Registrar (11).[262]

Accordingly, his collection, although it constitutes Senhor José's attempt to disassociate himself from the Central Registry, in which "everything was, is and will continue to be forever linked to everything," cannot help but reproduce it (130).[263] His collection thereby ensures that Senhor José (like Poppe and like Wollenberger) depends on the very archive into which he has been assimilated to supply the connections (or to enable the connectivity) he otherwise lacks.[264] In this sense, while his collection constitutes a kind of archive fever cure, it also manifests the fever's symptoms. As such, it provides a provocative insight into collection as a means of ironic defense, which the narrator of Saramago's work underscores when he indicates that Senhor José's use of a collection and collecting as a homeopathic cure represents a universal phenomenon. In fact, the narrator reminds his readers that everyone wants to be the Registrar, everyone

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[262] "Apart from his first name, José, Senhor José also has surnames, very ordinary ones, nothing extravagant, one from his father's side, another from his mother's as is normal, names legitimately transmitted, as we could confirm in the Register of Births in the Central Registry if the matter justified our interest and if the result of that inquiry repaid the labour of merely confirming what we already know" (7).

[263] [the] links between causes and effects […] is essentially what underpins the system of forces which, from the beginning of time, has ruled in the Central Registry, where everything was, is and will continue to be forever linked to everything, what is still alive to what is already dead, what is dying to what is being born, all beings to all other beings, all things to all other things, even when the only thing they seem to have in common, both beings and things, is what at first sight appears to separate them […]" (130).

[264] To invert this proposition, Poppe and Wollenberger, like Senhor José, read, or hope to read, or hate to read, the connections (and the dissolution of connections) only available to them through the archive. In this sense, the Stasi archive offers an emblematic archive because its exterior and interior correspond to illustrate the fragmentation that founds every archive.

wants "to impose some order," even if only temporarily, "on the world." There are therefore:

> people like Senhor José everywhere, who fill their time, or what they believe to be their spare time, by collecting stamps, coins, medals, vases, postcards, matchboxes, books, clocks, sport shirts, autographs, stones, clay figurines, empty beverage cans, little angels, cacti, opera programmes, lighters, pens, owls, music boxes, bottles, bonsai trees, paintings, mugs, pipes, glass obelisks, ceramic ducks, old toys, carnival masks, and they probably do so out of something that we might call metaphysical angst. (11)[265]

The excerpt demonstrates, via its heterogeneous inclusion of the potentially valuable (coins, medals) and the worthless (empty beverage cans), the ancient (stones and clay figurines) and the modern (clocks and lighters), the natural (stones, cacti) and the artificial (little angels, carnival masks), how a collection works as an echolalic defense mechanism by which to limit the boundlessness of metaphysicality, or, what in *All the Names* is the same thing, the boundlessness signified by the unceasing accumulation of an ever-expanding archive. Although the excerpt also implies that the objects themselves matter little compared to their provision of a defensive response, their relative littleness

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[265] Archival chaos subsequently reflects the universal chaos that archives and collections are meant to hide. To finish an excerpt of *All the Names* cited above, "There are people like Senhor José everywhere who fill their time, or what they believe to be their spare time, by collecting […] perhaps because they cannot bear the idea of chaos being the one ruler of the universe, which is why, using their limited powers and with no divine help, they attempt to impose some order on the world, and for a short while they manage it, but only as long as they are there to defend their collection, because when the day comes when it must be dispersed, and that day always comes, either with their death or when the collector grows weary, everything goes back to its beginning, everything returns to chaos" (11).

underscores the collection's diminutive reproduction of the archive (and its more manageable reproduction of the archive's everything) and suggests, perhaps surprisingly without the context provided by object-relations theory, why it is possible in *All the Names* to see in collectors the regressive profiles of world-making infants.[266] Steedman gestures to a somewhat similar point when she references Stewart's comprehension of "the relationship of pleasure in the miniature to childhood" and quotes Stewart's claim that "'the miniature, linked to nostalgic versions of childhood and history, presents a diminutive, thereby manipulatable, version of experience, a version which is domesticated and protected from contamination'" (qtd in Steedman 124). Steedman's gesture through Stewart to the small objects that link childhood and history argues for an analogical thread joining the miniature, the part object, and the archival fragment.[267] Littleness—or partial-ness, or fragmentariness—provides an opportunity for domestication, control, and protection. The narrator's description, a collection of collections as it were, accordingly indicates that in *All the Names* collections are one, ironic, way to yoke together the small, the partial, or the fragmentary in an oblique response to (and therefore a reproduction of) a metaphysical, or archival everything.

Consequently, in his collection of celebrity scraps, Senhor José plays the Registrar so as to also play the superegoic master. While, in so doing, Senhor José acts out the child who in Freud's description attempts to master his Mother's absence through the domesticated and comparatively safer *fort/da* game, he also, of course, occupies the

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[266] Cf. 151, note 235.

[267] Susan Hiller, in "Working Through Objects," also makes this argument: collecting seems to be "the kind of sheer accumulating process that all children enjoy, you know, a collection of dolls or little cars or comic books or anything like that […]. It is a very pleasurable thing" (43).

position of object-relations theory's omnipotent infant, simultaneously (and through pieces and parts) loving and hating the mother who both illusions (assimilates) and disillusions (dissimilates) him.[268] His collection thereby indicates its provision of an intermediate area through which he can enact a fantasy of fulfillment through the fragments that mirror his own incompletion.[269] However, his collection also reveals that such fulfillment is, in its repetition, a fantasy and is consequently illusive. Indeed, the archival quest that structures *All the Names* begins when Senhor José is disillusioned by his collection's completeness: suddenly identifying the missing gaps—constitutive of fragments and for which "Everything" can only obliquely account—Senhor José experiences an "illumination" that "something fundamental was missing from his collection," that it lacked "the origin, the root, the source" and the "truth" (12). His response to his disillusionment repeats the response of every child: rather than abandon an illusion in favor or reality, Senhor José retreats into fantasy to find there the means to uphold it at any cost. Accordingly, although provoked by the Central Registry to master fragments in his own collection, Senhor José's recognition of their fragmentariness leads him back to the Central Registry and the discovery of its Beinecke-esque "ultimate secret."

[268]Senhor José's relationship to the Central Registry is described as, "like an unborn child attached by the umbilical cord to its mother's womb." The narrator follows up this point by nothing that "relationship between people here are complicated" (148).

[269] Senhor José expresses his own sense of incompleteness when, in imagining the Registrar's remonstrance as a result of Senhor José's improprieties, Senhor José responds, "The boss is right […] the interests of the Central Registry should come before all else, if I led a proper, normal life, I certainly would not, at my age, have started collecting actors, ballerinas, bishops and football players, it's stupid,, useless, ridiculous, a fine legacy I'll leave when I die, just as well I haven't got anyone to leave it to really, it probably all stems from living alone, now if I had a wife. When he reached this point, his thoughts stopped" (63).

By locating the "ultimate secret" in the Central Registry to which he claims particular access, Senhor José casts forth (*fort*) his fantasy—for completion, for connection, for meaningful but not assimilative contextualization—in order to reel it back (*da*), as a self-generated illusion of unity—the "ultimate secret"—again. Senhor José discovers the means to realize his fantasy when, during one such illicit trip into the Central Registry in search of that something fundamental missing from his collection, he mistakenly grasps the fragmentary file of an "unknown woman" (26):

> thirty-six years ago another clerk wrote the words you can read here, the name of the baby girl, the names of her parents and god-parents, the date and hour of her birth, the street and the number of the apartment where she first saw the light of day and first felt pain, the same beginning as everyone else, the differences, great and small, come later, some of those who are born become entries in encyclopedias, in history books, in biographies, in catalogues, in manuals, in collections of newspaper clippings, the others, roughly speaking, are like a cloud that passes without leaving behind it any trace of its passing, and if rain fell from that cloud it did not even wet the earth. Like me, thought Senhor José. He had a cupboard full of men and women about whom the newspapers wrote almost every day, on the table was the birth certificate of an unknown person, and it was as if he had placed them both in the pans of a scale, a hundred this side, on the other, and was more surprised to discover that all of them together weighed no more than this one. (25).

As this long excerpt makes clear, in the unknown woman's card, itself an archival fragment, Senhor José sees, as though looking in an inverted Lacanian mirror, his own fragmentariness. She is, "like me." Although both are assimilated into the archive, neither has been saved by it, nor has either gained the apparent permanence extended by inclusion in the fixed interpretations of encyclopedias, history books, biographies, catalogues, manuals, or newspapers—mediums in which referentiality is made contextually determinant. Accordingly, Senhor José, prompted by her file to create for and of her a scrapbook, proceeds from her fragment to the paper trail of her life outside the Central Registry. In so doing, he illustrates his use of her file as a part object by which he does *not* enact his own transformation—he does not, significantly, go in search of the woman herself—but by which he finds the means to continue to express his own substitutive omnipotence and to fulfill his fantasy for the ultimate secret.

In this assimilative, narcissistic, regressive, and ultimately Hawthornian move, Senhor José displays the archival anxiety that Steedman associates with Derrida's fever. Senhor José again acts the child at play who uses part objects to both negotiate and determine the relationships between inner experiences and outer realities under the shadow of both the archive's intermediate and potential space and the superegoic Registrar.[270] Accordingly, although Senhor José works as an archivist who must attach himself to "Ariadne's thread," an obvious reference not only to myth via Borges's various labyrinths, but to an archival umbilical cord, when searching among the chaotic "archive of the dead," his discovery of the unknown woman's highly significant fragments and his consequent work to assemble her paper trail situates him as a

[270] In the very beginning of his quest, Senhor José, seems, in his mind at least, to become a "tearful child" (33).

repressive historian, extending the collection's constitutional fetish to the archive's dead letters and seeking to invigorate those dead letters with the potential new life of his own restless desire (139). In this sense, Senhor José's work in the archive with the unknown woman's file not only enables his negotiation of objects in the archive's maternal space, but also allows for the discharge of the libidinal energy that has been associated with (male) readers of the archive since Leopold von Ranke described his experiences in the archive as a "magnificent fling" that left him "completely exhausted" (qtd. in Freshwater 734).

Impelled by archive fever's restless desire, Senhor José pieces together the documental detritus of the unknown woman's life by posing as a Central Registry sleuth, interviewing the unknown woman's acquaintances, co-workers, and family members, breaking into her former school, and repeatedly consulting, after hours and against the rules, the Central Registry's card indexes and files. That such behavior constitutes feverishness is underscored by the literal symptoms that accompany and augur the fatal climax of Senhor José's quest. In addition to his chronic vertigo, problematic for a petty clerk often charged with using an "extremely long ladder" and, who for his own safety must therefore "tie himself to the rungs with a strong belt," Senhor José also suffers from literal fevers, particularly when he contracts the flu after breaking into the unknown woman's former school, and he experiences regular bouts of insomnia. His feverish search, in the sense of literal and figural sickness then, climaxes where it begins. When Senhor José attempts to once again consult the unknown woman's card in the Central Registry, he realizes that it, along with her death certificate, has been filed—which is to

say lost—in the "catacombs of the archive of the dead" (5). In the time since Senhor José began his search, he discovers that the unknown woman has committed suicide.

That the fragmentary file's *absence* alerts Senhor José to the unknown woman's death, "Senhor José knows that the absence of a card from the card-index system inevitably means the death of the person whose name is on the card," (136) suggests a corroboration of Steedman's point that gaps, lacks, or "nothing" are constitutive in the archive and are the only things (which is to say everything) in the archive that give way to desiring readers. Similarly, when Senhor José apprehends the unknown woman's missing card and comprehends her death, he does not finish his search and complete his scrapbook; instead, he searches the Central Registry again, in particular its archive of the dead, for the affirmative fragment that will testify to her absence and fill the space left by her missing card in the archive of the living.[271] That Senhor José's quest does not end with the realization of the unknown woman's death suggests not only the consequential tenacity of his identification with her fragmentariness but also his introjection of her fragmentariness as a constitutive part of his own identity.

Indeed, the unknown woman in *All the Names* has no identity. She exists for Senhor José as not only a symbolically substitutive mother (substituting for both Senhor José's absent mother and for the absence instituted by the Central Registry itself), but a symbolically substitutive lover. When, for example, at his quest's end, which he describes as determined by the "final step" that he "had to take," Senhor José illicitly visits her vacant apartment, he articulates the depth of his desire:

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[271] In this sense, Senhor José, after discovering an archival absence that refers to absence, seeks the text that will confirm the absence as absence.

> What if I were to stay here tonight, what if I were to sleep in her bed, no one would ever know. Tell Senhor José that nothing could be easier, he just has to go up in the lift again, go into the apartment, take off his shoes, maybe another wrong number will ring, if they do, then you'll have the pleasure of hearing again the grave, veiled voice of the mathematics teacher, I'm not at home, she'll say, and if, during the night lying her bed, some pleasant dream excites your old body, as you know, the remedy is at hand, but you'll have to be careful not to mess up the sheets. (233)

Although "these are sarcasms and vulgarities that Senhor José does not deserve," and although "his daring idea, rather more romantic than daring, goes just as it came, and he is no longer inside the building, but outside, what helped him to leave, apparently, was the painful memory of his old, darned socks and his bony, white shins with their sparse hairs," they make Steedman's point that the archive's fragmentary contents are separate from and sometimes inconsequential to the stories they produce. Thanks to the archive's referential indeterminacy, its fragmentariness and correspondent gaps, history (or Senhor José's scrapbook, which amounts to much the same), is always, according first to Hawthorne and then to Steedman, desire expressed in terms of "someone else's story." Consequently, while the unknown woman's paper trail contextualizes the unknown woman's fragmentary file and supplies it with an illusive kind of completion, it also and actually tells the story, facilitated by Senhor José's play as Registrar and reader of a small-scale archive of his own, of the anxiety produced by Senhor José's documental desire.

Through his story, Senhor José gains access to the ultimate secret. Although obviously an allusion to archival plenitude and the authenticity and deep meaning plenitude assumes, the ultimate secret in *All the Names* consists of an illusion facilitated by the archival mandate to save, specifically the illusion of unity between life and death.[272] Senhor José's introjection of the unknown woman as both mother and lover enables his maintenance of this illusion but because it does so at all and through her death, Senhor José's introjection must be considered not the developmentally requisite introjection described by Klein and Winnicott in their discussion of part and transitional objects, but a sick introjection, an introjection that saves the unknown woman in fragmentary life and therefore disallows her documental death. This kind of introjection finds theorization as incorporation in Abraham and Torok's *The Wolf Man's Magic Word: A Cryptonymy*. There, they work "to save the analysis of the Wolf Man," Freud's infamously difficult case study, "From the History of an Infantile Neurosis" (16), by arguing that the consequence of a sick, feverish, failed introjection, called "incorporation," is the creation of a crypt.

Incorporation results from an object loss that occurs before the self's desires towards that object have been "freed." Unable to negotiate between the conflicting forces of love and loss, the self refuses to accept the lost object as lost, "refuses to accept" writes Torok, the "import of the loss that, if recognized as such would effectively transform us" (127). The loss is then prohibited once the subsequent incorporation takes the lost object and the corollary desires still attached to it into the ego "in order to compensate for the lost pleasure and the failed introjection" (113). Whereas introjection

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[272] Note that the etymology of plenitude in "fullness" refers specifically to "the completion of a timespan, specifically by the coming of the Messiah" (*OED*).

calls for a "major readjustment," incorporation is a shortcut that "simulates" but does not require "profound psychic transformation." Although like melancholia because it, too, forces the ego's split through "identification [...] with the abandoned object," incorporation differs from melancholia because the ego-split forced by incorporation opens an accommodation for the object and then closes and seals the entrance to that accommodation to hide the presence of the incorporated object and the pleasure it still produces in a virtually inaccessible crypt.

The crypt does not keep secret and inaccessible the dead, however; it keeps secret and inaccessible the dead *as still living*. To put this in more properly archival parlance, it keeps the dead present. Accordingly, in *All the Names*, while the realization of the unknown woman's death should prompt Senhor José to mourn her loss as his substitutive mother and lover, and while it does prompt his visit to the Central Registry's institutional and crypt-ic mirror, the General Cemetery,[273] in an effort to grieve, it also provokes his incorporation of her as still living and his corollary complicit erection, in himself, and with the help of the Central Registry's Registrar, of an Abraham and Torok styled crypt in the Central Registry.

The unknown woman's death therefore enables Senhor José to maintain the illusion of unity he seeks, and this unity gains institutional reinforcement by a sympathetic Registrar. Although the Central Registry's construction depends on its separation of the archive of the living from the archive of the dead, as a consequence of the Registrar's secret knowledge of Senhor José's extracurricular activities, the Registrar reverses one of the "fundamental aspects of Central Registry tradition" (175). According

[273] Where a pastoral "shepherd" indiscriminately switches the numbers on the headstones that would otherwise indicate over whom they stand.

to the Registrar, "I would never have come to understand the double absurdity of separating the dead from the living, but for certain other recent events and the thoughts which those events aroused in me" (176). "From an archivistic point of view," the Central Registry's continued separation of the dead from the living disregards both the fact that the dead can only be found among the living and the fact that when the dead are banished from the living, it is impossible to find them when they are needed, which, according to the Registrar, they always are. The Registar's solution, to "reunite the dead and the living in a single archive which we will call the historic archive," promises to eradicate "definitive death," the "fruit of the will to forget" and to install "the will to remember" in the Central Registry's perpetual present (177).

Of course, the Registrar refers to the institutionalization of incorporation of the Central Registry's dead fragments into its living ones in the service of its new identity as historic. Ultimately, and with the help of a complicit Registrar, Senhor José authorizes the unknown woman's resurrection, emphatically realizing another consequence of the archival mandate to save. At the end of *All the Names*, Senhor José "make[s] up a new card for this woman, the same as the old one, with all the correct information," but without a date for her death and "put[s] it in the archive of the living, as if she hadn't died" (238). The unknown woman can only actually be saved in and by the Central Registry through the newly-consecrated-as-patriarchal Senhor José. Accordingly, the novel ends as Senhor José continues his own quest for completion through her residual fragmentariness: he must find the unknown woman's lost death certificate in the archive of the dead and destroy it.

What *All the Names* offers to this project is the insistence on the archive's cryptic space, on the recognition that the archive's fragmentary contents, however potentially transitional and transformative, cannot be comprehensively ordered nor easily or safely navigated. According to *All the Names*, archival fragments can, however, and must, given their reference to plenitude, be introjected by their readers. When, however, archival space or the fragments therein are associated with the feminine—which they often are when archival fragments constitute a focal point of desire—incorporation takes introjection's place. Senhor José's ascendance to Registrar depends, in fact, on his incorporation, and the incorporation itself ensures that the archival mother-lover continues to exist (persist) but only as a secret within Senhor José's authoritative paradigm. More generally, *All the Names* provides *The Scarlet Letter* with a retrospective archival allegorical aspect by bringing to the forefront of archival fiction's redemptive romances the archive reader's desire (a desire structured by the archive and so close to need as to often be indistinguishable from it) to find themselves in, or to connect themselves to, or save themselves by the archive and its promise of plenitude, via its fragmentary contents. Not all readers actively consume and cannibalize the fragmentary files of the dead (a premise, however, that surely informs Steedman's historically grounded argument in "'Something She Called a Fever': Michelet, Derrida and Dust"), as do Hawthorne's narrator, Senhor José, and the Registrar, but in their cannibalization, Senhor José and the Registrar reflect the reader's dependence for a kind of subsistence (attenuated though it may be) on the fragments archives hold. Rather than nourishment, however, the consumption synonymous with archival incorporation denotes disease.

This is the canonical contribution offered by *All the Names* to a wider, more complex, and more thorough etiology of the archive fever instantiated in the "burning heat" and correspondent "shudder" of *The Scarlet Letter*. As illustrated by Senhor José, an every*man* archivist and archive reader whose desires determine the course of his own history, naturally via the history of a woman, and his relationship to the archive that possesses an umbilical cord in spite of its clearly paternalistic position as "the world and the center of the world" and therefore also as a cemetery and a crypt, archive fever is informed by the desire and restlessness attendant to the illusive unity not only between life and death promoted in the archive but between plenitude and fragmentation, between the mandate to "save it all" and the certain knowledge that "nothing" is there. Archival fever thereby manifests as symptoms of desire and restlessness and, as often, according to my prologue and to *Dust*, physical suffering, but in so doing it signals the work of recovery, the recovery attendant to the reader's failure to redeem from archival fragments anything but the figural language of everything.

Chapter 4: Archival Possession, or Archival Woman

Unlike Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, Henry James's *The Aspern Papers* is like Saramago's *All the Names* often referred to as a touchstone in contemporary archival discourse,[274] particularly in the archival discourse that identifies the archive as symptomatic or as otherwise characterized by dis-ease.[275] The book's status as such depends on its illustration of the failed quest of an unnamed, first-person "publishing scoundrel" so ardently obsessed with the possibility of possessing the papers, "mementoes," and "sacred relics" of the long-dead, canonical American "romantic" poet Jeffrey Aspern that he travels to Venice to somehow "'make love'" to the niece of the aged aunt whom Aspern once loved and who is therefore in possession of his treasures (118, 12, 43). However, *The Aspern Papers*'s status also depends on the book's extratextual reach. While the text offers a prescient contribution to contemporary archival discourse in general, Eric Savoy argues in "Aspern's Archive" that it constitutes a prefigurative contribution to Henry James's archive in particular. As an example of James's "recurring attempts to archive the destruction of the archive," *The Aspern Papers* anticipates by twenty years and in fiction the fire James ultimately set to his own biographic materials. The description of James's fire, usually cited through master

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[274] I use the New York Edition of *The Aspern Papers*, specifically for its addition of James's preface and for its revision of the tale's last lines, from "When I look at it my chagrin at the loss of the letters becomes almost intolerable" (124) in 1888, to "When I look at it I can scarcely bear the loss—I mean of the precious papers (143) in 1908. The revision, which adds specificity, invests the conclusion of "loss" with the force of Freudian negation and therefore encourages an interpretation of loss through ironic ambiguity.

[275] To cite just a few examples from contemporary archival discourse, Janet Malcolm's *In the Freud Archives* (25), Sara S. Hodson's "In Secret Kept, in Silence Revealed: Privacy in the Papers of Authors and Celebrities" (203), and Ella Danielson's "The Ethics of Access (59).

biographer Leon Edel because of his dramatic rendition in *Henry James: The Master, 1901-1916* indicates that "'[James] gathered his private papers—forty years of letters from his contemporaries, manuscripts, scenarios, old notebooks—and piled them on a rubbish fire in his garden […] He was ruthless. A great Anglo-American literary archive perished that day'" (436-7). James himself rather dramatically explains his reasoning in his letter to Mrs J.T. Fields, on January 2, 1910; in the course of describing why he no longer possesses any of Sara Jewett's letters he writes, "I find,"

> our admirable friend's occasional communications have submitted to the law that I have made tolerably absolute these last years as I myself grow older and think more of my latter end: the law of not leaving personal and private documents at the mercy of any accidents, or even of my executors! I kept almost all letters for years—till my receptacles would no longer hold them; then I made a gigantic bonfire and have been easier in mind since—save as to a certain residuum which *had* to survive. (James, *Selected Letters* 384)[276]

Although Savoy argues that James's self-set fire enacts in his own life the archival and estate fires he repeatedly sets in fiction such as *The Aspern Papers* and *The Spoils of Poynton*, he does not point out that *The Aspern Papers* also forecasts James's fire's failure. Baker in *Double Fold* and the SED officials of the Stasi archive implicitly argue that fire is the only foolproof path to archival destruction, but *The Aspern Papers* suggests (as does James above) that not even a fire will always destroy *all* fragments. In fact, although in *The Aspern Papers*, Juliana Bordereau is sacrificed in her effort to save

[276] James's here gives a description of precisely what constitutes the "highly significant fragment"—what *had* to survive—that archival readers seek.

Aspern's papers from publishing scoundrels such as the narrator, who would "'rake up the past'" and expose its "'lies,'" the narrator nonetheless manages to save for himself a fragment from the fire set by Juliana Bordereau's niece, and set off-page by James, after her aunt's death. The fragment, a rare miniature portrait of Aspern "hangs above [the narrator's] writing table" to authorize with its aura the narrator's contribution, the text of the tale of *The Aspern Papers*, to the Aspern archive that continues to exist despite Juliana Bordereau's best efforts (90).

The fire set by James proves similarly inadequate. Despite James's fiery offense, a publishing scoundrel managed to gain unprecedented access to that "certain residuum which *had* to survive" of James's archive and to consequently manipulate its sources for his own profit. Michael Anesko, in "Monopolizing the Master," names that culprit, and rather surprisingly, as the heretofore apparently innocuous master biographer, Edel himself. According to Anesko, Edel is the greedy reader of James's archive who used James's archive's fragmentary documents to profit from and further Edel's own interpretive agenda. Edel, who approached the James family in 1932 while still a graduate student at the Sorbonne, presented to Henry James, III, the first son of William James and executor of Henry James's estate, his French (*Henry James, les années dramatiques*) and English (*The Prefaces of Henry James*) research essays. From this auspicious first meeting—Henry James, III, or Harry, very much admired the two works—Edel received permission to publish an edition of Henry James's plays. Over the years and, "by establishing himself as the [James] family's ally in its attempt to protect Uncle Henry from the assaults of […] publishing scoundrels," Edel managed to

"construc[t] the ideal persona for perpetuating his archival priorities, and he never hesitated to remind James's literary executors of his fealty" (227).

Anesko's argument, in its echo of Pierre Walker's more tentative and diplomatic conclusion that Edel did in fact possess the same archive-exploiting "dark side" as that of the *The Aspern Papers'* publishing scoundrel, suggests the archive's tendency to contribute, and most especially and ironically in its destruction, to the production of all manner of counter-narratives (279).[277] The tendency in turn appropriately illustrates the reflexivity described by Derrida as informing the relationship between the archive's preservation drive and its death drive, its eros and thanatos: when the archive preserves, it also kills, when it kills, it also saves. While Derrida's hypothesis is formulated with the help (or some might suggest through the medium) of Freud, he might have done as well by turning to James. Not only does *The Aspern Papers* illustrate the archive fever theorized by Derrida, it also, and like *Archive Fever*, prompts its own boundary-less repetition, turning the "outside" into a "question." The repetition is particularly realized through Edel, whose work in James's archive produced not James's story (or not only

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[277] Walker quotes one of Edel's letters to Reynolds, the literary agent in control of James's estate in America (although the exact definition of "in control" is difficult to determine, thanks to the various generations of James's executors and the 1941 depositing of James's archive at (and thus the archive's extension of publication rights to) Harvard University, to illustrate his point. Edel, in one of many letters he wrote over the course of the twenty six years he took to complete his publication of James's letters, opposed and contested publications of James's letters that would anticipate and therefore devalue his own and urged Reynolds to better police the publication of the letters (and thereby also protect Edel's academic integrity):

> If I say 'no,' I become a dog in the manger […]. If you say 'no,' you do so on the ground of copyright, you protect the heirs, your fees, and my work. The impression now given by would-be pirates who want to get their hands on this eminently publishable material to produce catchpenny books, is that I am simply sitting on James material and using the libraries and my long-scale project as an excuse to keep it from them. (Letter to Paul R. Reynolds. 15 June 1968. qtd. in Walker)

James's story) but according to Millicent Bell, "a fiction of [Edel's] own," and who left by his own legacy not only the remnants of a publishing scoundrel but also the remnants of his later reformation.

Indeed, in an ironic, or poetic, to be perhaps more accurate, turn of the screw, Edel did not just repeat the archival plunder of *The Aspern Papers'* publishing scoundrel feared by James and James's estate, he also repeated the same Jamesian critical suspicion of archives and those readers, with whom he was once so intimate, whose active participation invests in archives and withdraws from archives exactly what those readers desire or need (3).[278] Edel in fact found himself occupying in the latter half of the twentieth century the same archontic role in relation to the specter of the preservation and destruction of his own documents as that inhabited by James and by *The Aspern Papers*' Juliana Bordereau. Specifically, in a narrative twist befitting James's biographer, Edel who benefited so much from the unrestricted archival access granted him by the James estate, disparages in *The Age of the Archive* the modern age's desire to commodify documents and fragments that, according to Edel, more properly belong to the "wastebasket" (8).[279] Edel goes further in "On the Use of Private Papers," echoing James's condemnation of future archive looters by imagining archive fever as a kind of

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[278] Edel articulates the archive's plenitude postulate when he notes that "the public, we know, is encouraged to believe that Hyde Park contains—or the Kennedy Library will house—everything related to this man […] spectators are made to fee that there is nothing an archive […] cannot yield. Nevertheless there still are certain important gaps—a very abundance designed deliberately to conceal" (3-4). Because of this, Edel notes, "even a total archive does not contain everything" ("On the Use," 47-8).

[279] *The Age of the Archive*, while it articulates several aspects of more contemporary archival discourse, including "that the modern archive-process has gone hand in hand with the democratic process and with the growth of national establishments" (3), calls attention to the archival age to define the role of biographers as, ironically, a role that must work against archival "hoard[ing]" (1).

"paper madness" that affects in particular "future inexperienced and often unlettered [or elsewhere, "incompetent" (60)] graduate students for whom […] archives are accumulated" (43, 46). Although the advice speaks contrarily to his own professional success, the culmination of which belies more humble, graduate-student-based beginnings, the archive-exploiting Edel, also possessed of his own paper-maddened "dark side," ultimately encourages writers to exercise the time-honored recourse of fire so familiar to both James and Juliana Bordereau. "We can always burn," Edel writes, "that's our privilege and this may be the wise thing to do" (47).[280]

In relationship to the archive, Edel subsequently occupies a profoundly ambiguous but also antagonistic position emblematic of the historians and other archive readers whose professional interests cannot but in the archive partake in and be influenced by their personal investments and who consequently display an acute form of archive fever. As both a publishing scoundrel whose desire enables him to ransack the James family's private papers for his own gain, and as an authoritative archon (an authority dependent on the archon's superintendence and consequent intimate knowledge of the archive) who desires to protect the archive's hoard from "memorabilia hunters," "autograph collectors," "poetasters, gossipmongers, and graduate students" (publishing scoundrels, all), but who also apparently desires to protect society from the archive, Edel displays a metastasis of archive fever that emphasizes, and quite as effectively as the narrator of *The Aspern Papers*, the fever's destructive affects and effects. While Edel's

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[280] Edel suggests that burning can be literal, as with James and Miss Bordereau, or figurative. When he realized that his writer colleagues had already committed their current and future documents to repositories, Edel "found [himself] wondering whether [he] should continue to write to them—whether the telephone mightn't be simpler" ("On the Use," 46).

fever therefore finds its fullest expression in the modern iteration provided by contemporary archival discourse, it also defines the archive fever represented in James's 1888 text as formative. Indeed, Edel's own reproductions, both explicitly and implicitly archival (he not only claims master status as James's biographer, but his own work, including both "The Age of the Archive" and "On the Use of Private Papers" find inclusion in the Edel archive at McGill University), attests to the archive fever in *The Aspern Papers* as a seminal representation. Similar to although published over a hundred years before *All the Names*, *The Aspern Papers* offers an example, much like *The Scarlet Letter*, of archival affect that extends quite beyond its pages.[281]

Saramago's work places at its center the Central Registry to describe through allegory a failed archival quest (although failed not in the sense of de Man's Benjaminian failure) and apparently shares little with the ostensible goal of publication in *The Aspern Papers*. However, its depiction of the manner by which apparently impersonal and archival fragments can become not only historical but personal for a desirous reader and function for him, specifically in their femininity, as facilitative interpersonal objects that enable death's denial certainly suggests the archival exploitation that *The Aspern Papers* makes its theme.[282] As such, *All the Names* provides an echo and therefore a prosthetic extension of Nathaniel Hawthorne's illustration in *The Scarlet Letter*, but also of Henry James's illustration in *The Aspern Papers* of the manner by which a desiring reader's overzealous solicitation of personal papers makes the archive a personal space in which expressions of desire facilitate the construction and preservation of individual identity,

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[281] Given that Edel's archive was finally deposited on the fourth floor of the McLennan Library at Montreal's McGill University in 1999, the fever suggested by *The Aspern Papers* extends quite beyond the nineteenth century, as well.
[282] Even if that exploitation is, as Elias argue, coerced or consented to.

sometimes at a very high cost. The narrator of *The Aspern Papers*, for example, claims to desire Aspern's fragments simply because he longs to "ope[n] lights into [Aspern's] life," but the fragments are certainly not materially saved.[283] In their final, extratextual decimation, they constitute—as an absence—the substantive story of the narrator's experience, which he ultimately offers his audience, claiming the role of author, in a reflective memoir (6).[284]

In addition to offering a complicated and internally antagonistic model of the archival mandate to save that resonates in contemporary archival discourse, and one specifically related to economy and economic rapacity, *The Aspern Papers* also defines the archive and its fragments in gendered and explicitly sexual terms. Despite Aspern's male gender, *The Aspern Papers* prefigures the association emphatically made in the *All the Names* between the archive's literally dark mystery and its figurative femininity. Consequently, Senhor José's exploitation of the documentary remains of the unknown woman to forge his own identity as a masterful, if substitutive, archon reflects not only *The Scarlet Letter*'s narrator's exploitation of Hester Prynne, but also *The Aspern Papers*' narrator's exploitation of the documentary remains of Aspern and his ultimate assimilative possession of the only fragment that survived Miss Tina's fire—the

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[283] It is important to note here that *The Scarlet Letter* prefigures this notion of preservative-destruction, which, as I hope I've made clear, is endemic to the archive and to archival discourse. When Hawthorne's narrator substitutes his text for the scarlet letter and the original documents that surrounded it, cf. 37, note 34, he effectively limits their access to such an extent that he destroys them. *The Aspern Papers* and *All the Names* extend and intensify this manifestation of archive fever by making the physical destruction of archival fragments central to their stories.

[284] My focus on novels as illustrative of archival repetition, (re)production, and (re)creation echoes Mikhail Bakhtin's analysis of the novel as an open-ended genre that, by virtue of its future-facing orientation (an orientation it shares with the archive), makes it always incomplete and therefore evocative of *everything*.

miniature portrait of Aspern. While in *All the Names*, the "unknown woman" remains unknown, and the archive's femininity is alluded to only through allegorically feminine archival fragments and through Senhor José's literal connection to the archive of the dead by way of an umbilical-cord-like thread, the archive in *The Aspern Papers* explicitly defines the archive as a space dangerous to readers in its femininity and its ambiguous maternity, a designation it gains through the body of Juliana Bordereau. Ultimately, by establishing the primacy of her body to the Aspern archive and by defining that body as a body-in-pieces, *The Aspern Papers* signals a metastasis of the archive fever presented in *The Scarlet Letter* and further integrates into the American canon a definition of the archive that reverberates not only in Edel's works and words and beyond, but consequently in contemporary archival discourse, as well. Its definition suggests that the archival turn, which situates the archive as less a passive resource and a neutral repository than a site of desire and a political space determined by issues of access and representation, was illustrated at least one hundred and fifty years before its assignation by contemporary archival discourse in the late twentieth century.

By designating the archive as a productive space of desire and describing in physical terms the function played by archival fragments for readers, *The Scarlet Letter*, *All the Names* and *The Aspern Papers* situate the archive and the archival mandate to save in specifically spatial terms. This is made obvious both in *The Scarlet Letter*'s focus on an archive that looks more like an abandoned waste heap of disorganized rubbish than a repository of histories, and in *All the Names*'s focus on an institutionalized, but still utterly chaotic archive as the Central Registry. Whereas the unfinished aspect of the initially abandoned archive in *The Scarlet Letter* lends itself to the narrator's completion

of specifically American histories, the disorganized, labyrinthine archive in *All the Names* reproduces in mythic mode the labyrinth built by Daedalus for King Minos to ensure that the text's archival mandate "to save" gains the mythic connotations of Theseus's desire to save the youth of Athens by sacrificing himself to the minotaur and Ariadne's desire to save Theseus.[285] Both *The Scarlet Letter* and *All the Names* rely on archival spaces to suggest archival expansiveness, or the far-reach of archival plenitude. In *The Scarlet Letter*, the space of the archive reflects the similarly expansive role the narrator envisions for himself; in *All the Names*, while Senhor José's narrator-reinforced inconsequentiality make ironic the noble and altruistic connotations of myth, his final, Registrar-approved, ontological and metaphysical act to mingle the dead with the living indicates that his own creation of an archival myth wherein is explained the archive's infinite extension of redemption constitutes a reversal or inversion of any such irony. The focus of *The Aspern Papers*, although neither explicitly focused on American history nor situated as myth, is not less ironically expansive. Instead, *The Aspern Papers* develops Hawthorne's narrator's dependence on Prynne's eroticized body and echoes Saramago's exploitation of the unknown woman to situate its archive as a space vis-à-vis Juliana Bordereau's own evocatively feminized, fragmentary, and maternal body.

Inasmuch as Salem (and by extension, America) in *The Scarlet Letter* and anywhere/everywhere in *All the Names* provide a crucial backdrop for the texts' archival romances, the residence of Aspern's and Juliana's corpora in Venice provides an

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[285] In Padriac Collum's translation of *The Golden Fleece and the Heroes Who Lived before Achilles*, "to save" is repeatedly invoked: Ariadne says to Theseus, "I have come to *save* you"; Theseus wonders "how this girl could think that she could *save* him and *save* the youths and maidens of Athens"; Ariadne says, "One only may escape, and I want you to be that one. I saw you when you wrestled with Deucalion, our great wrestler, and since then I have longed to *save* you" (III: 2-10; my emphasis).

important context for the archive's spatial determination in *The Aspern Papers*. For James, indeed, Venice, Italy, occupies a symbolic space. In his 1884 collection *Portraits of Places*, James fixes Venice as the first portrait of his twenty-portrait series and defines the city as, if not an explicitly archival city, an at least repeatedly archived city: "Venice has been painted and described many thousands of times, and of all the cities of the world it is the easiest to visit without going there. Open the first book and you will find a rhapsody about it; step into the first picture-dealer's and you will find three or four high-coloured 'views' of it" (1). Perhaps because Venice serves as the object of so many reproductions, the city itself is also "a vast museum." To experience it, to really come to care for it, one must read about Venice, James writes, even when visiting it: accordingly, while "Reading Ruskin is good […] reading the old records is, perhaps, better" (5).

Archived, reproduced, and necessitating the knowledge—the reading—of records for its full appreciation, Venice constitutes a particularly appropriate geographic place for an archival tale about the potentially redeemable past. Additionally, however, Venice offers, specifically through its epitomic St. Mark's, according to James and "as the painters say," a "treasury of bits" (13). The city's valuable pieces echo Benjamin's highly significant fragments, which I have associated in my previous chapters with the archive's fragmentary constitution and the fragments' coercive impact on its readers, and further emphasize the particular congruity of Venice as James's choice for a story the title of which refers to similarly treasured bits. Indeed, according to James in his preface to the New York Edition, the choice of Venice constitutes an especially meaningful one. In his explanation of the original source of the tale of *The Aspern Papers*, James's reveals that in fact "the comparatively recent Florence" functioned as the original setting:

> I saw it somehow at the very first blush as romantic—for the use, of course I mean, I should certainly had to make of it—that Jane Clairmont, the half-sister of Mary Godwin, Shelley's second wife and for a while the intimate friend of Byron and the mother of his daughter Allegra, should have been living on in Florence, where she had long lived, up to our own day […]. [A] gentleman, an American of long ago, an ardent Shelleyite, a singularly marked figure and himself in the highest degree a subject for a free sketch […] was named to me as having made interest with Miss Clairmont to be accepted as a lodger on the calculation that she would have Shelley documents for which, in the possibly not remote event of her death, he would thus enjoy priority of chance to treat with her representatives. (vii-viii)

While James's portrait of Venice reveals his choice of setting as influenced by the city's existence as an object of repeated archivization and as itself archival, Aspern's genesis in an ardent Shelleyite enlarges the archival connotation, indicating its backwards reach to the late-eighteenth century and its forward reach to contemporary archival discourse, even beyond Edel's ironic embodiment of a publishing scoundrel. Shelley's "Ozymandias," for example, cannot but confer upon the archive an emphatically impotent illustration: the "'two vast and trunkless legs of stone'" and the "'shattered visage'" half buried in the "'lone and level sands'" of an antique desert attest to a former power now made laughably ironic by its material fragmentation and correspondent degradation. Its "'pedestal,'" inscribed with the words, "'Look on my works, ye mighty, and despair,'" suggests that fragments claim Benjaminian aura only in the sense of their

long survival in a traveler's tale as a larger-than-life testament to a "'colossal wreck.'"[286] Harmonizing with this vision of the archive, of the archive as meaningful through its fragments' contextual dissemination, is James's Byronic source, particularly the Venetian invocation of that poet's "Venice, An Ode," wherein the poem's speaker mourns the former glory still evident in Venice's current decay.[287] The poem's famed preoccupation with the collapse of the past, filtered through the verse of its own redemption, certainly suggests a more stately resonance with the romantic redemptive plot and themes of *The Aspern Papers* than provided by "Ozymandias," and accordingly, "Venice, An Ode" has proven particularly meaningful to contemporary archive theorists.

According to Jo Tollebeek, for example, Byron's ode depicts Venice in romantic Steedmanian terms. Rather than offer a Jamesian *treasury* of bits, Venice in Byron's interpretation takes a cue from Shelley and exists, according to Tollebeek, as *mere* bits, as the mere dust of a more glorious past: "Oh! Agony—that centuries should reap / No mellower harvest! Thirteen hundred years / Of wealth and glory turn'd to dust and tears; / And every monument the stranger meets, / Church, palace, pillar as a mourner greets" (1. 14-18). Byron's lines situate Venice as a romantic ruin, but they also insist on dust's

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[286] James's himself would refer to "Ozymandias" in connection to the New York Edition, writing to Edmund Gosse in August 1915: "The Edition is from that point of view really a monument (like Ozymandias) which has never had the least intelligent critical justice done it—any sort of critical attention at all paid it—the artistic problem involved in my scheme was a deep exquisite one, moreover was, as I hold, very effectively solved" (qtd.. in Horne 19). His reference has inspired critics like Stuart Culver to speculate on the irony of James's own response in "Ozymandias and the Mastery of Ruins: The Design of the New York Edition."

[287] Also, Canto four of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*: "In Venice, Tasso's echoes are no more, / And silent rows the songless gondolier; / Her palaces are crumbling to the shore, / And music meets not always now the ear: / Those days are gone—but beauty still here. / States fall, arts fade—but Nature doth not die, / Nor yet forget how Venice once was dear, / The pleasant place of all festivity, / The revel of the earth, the masque of Italy!" (4.III).

humble, testamentary presence. Tollebeek recognizes this tension between the real and the romantic and as particularly applicable to the contemporary discourse surrounding the archive.[288] When Tollebeek rehearses Byron's lines in a review aptly titled, "'Turn'd to Dust and Tears:' Revisiting the Archive," he both confirms the ode's continued relevance to archival discourse and obliquely echoes and reinforces the importance that James implicitly ascribes to the Venetian setting of an oft-cited work of fiction in that discourse.

While Venice consequently provides a significant backdrop for a story about archives, particularly a story that defines archives as filled with nothing but fragments and dust, the narrator in *The Aspern Papers* ascribes to Venice neither the romantic qualities of decay nor the quotidian qualities of dustiness; instead, the narrator ascribes to Venice the qualities of liveliness that, despite its vigor, ultimately serves reproduction. "The place," the narrator writes, "has the character of an immense collective apartment," "a splendid common domicile, familiar domestic and resonant." Yet, "[s]omehow," this vitality cannot but be at the same time artificial. Thus, according to the narrator, the intimacy of Venice's collective apartment is undercut because the city "also resembles a theatre with its actors clicking over bridges" (140). The dual backdrop Venice provides for the narrator, as both a common home and a playhouse, both an animated domestic space and a fabricated substitute, situates as a repetitive role the part the narrator plays when he acts the ardent Shelleyite to Juliana Bordereau's Jane Clairmont.

Venice, a city comprised of and characterized by fragmentation, conducive to and productive of the Freudian—or archival—repetition (both the repetition constituting daily life and the repetition constituting the theatrical life) that preserves and destroys, helps

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[288] See Derrida's discussion of cinders

therefore to not only emphasize the archive's spatial dimensions, something often lost in illustrations or descriptions of the archive (even as the archive's etymological root in house is often, and thanks to Derrida's influence, noted), but also to contextualize the narrator's tale about his own repetitive efforts. Consequently, it should not be surprising that the narrator views Venice as both like life and like a repetitious representation of life, and that he, although no doubt stimulated by a genuine and deep desire to save the archival fragments of Aspern's corpus for an ambiguous and undefined "truth," nonetheless requires "ingratiating diplomatic arts," "[h]ypocrisy," "duplicity," and the artificiality necessary to dispense engraved calling cards with a "*nom de guerre*," to redeem from Juliana Bordereau the "'literary remains'" she possesses (12).

Although the remains in *The Aspern Papers* function somewhere between the fragments that once constituted a prior whole in "Ozymandias" and the quotidian fragments that nonetheless result from the romantic decay in "Venice, An Ode," they produce among their readers, specified in the novel as the narrator, Juliana, and perhaps Miss Tina, a fever. It is, in fact, the narrator's feverish search for the "truth" that prompts his search and that leads him to employ trickery to gain archival access; his sense of the importance of his project justifies his use, as it does Senhor José's in *All the Names*, of subterfuge as a necessary and in fact nominal consequence of the search for the "'riddle of the universe'" so often invoked in proximity to the archive (James *The Aspern Papers* 5, 6).[289] Unlike the quests of either Hawthorne's narrator or Senhor José, however, which

[289] Karen Buckley, in "'The Truth is in the Red Files': An Overview of Archives in Popular Culture," explains that "four strong common themes" are apparent in the representation of archives in popular culture: protection of the record is equated to protection of the truth; archives are closed spaces and the archival experience is an

depend on quasi-serendipitous possession of what is deemed a particularly significant archival fragment in a structurally recognizable archive, the archive that functions as the object of the narrator's quest in *The Aspern Papers*, while it is the Aspern archive, is lodged in and situated as the Venice-dwelling, auratic, fragmentary body of Juliana Bordereau. Much of James's contribution to archival discourse, particularly its model of saving, its gendered depiction of the archive, and its emphasis on archival bodies, can be attributed to his depiction of the struggle between the archive-seeking narrator, "an historian, in a small way," and the archon and auratic archive embodied by Juliana Bordereau (89).

Filtered through the narrator's voice, the struggle initially appears to reflect the tropologically fraught relationship between an archive reader and a withholding archon that characterizes so many contributions to contemporary archival discourse. In *Alias Olympia*, for example (which I briefly mention above), Lipton depicts her efforts to redeem Victorine Meurent from history through the notoriously bureaucratically-stifling French archives and describes her encounters with various archons as determined by a desperate, desirous reader nearly always at loss in a documental world filled with what she does not know but knows she needs and by an institutional gatekeeper, often cold, secretive, and potentially selective in the dispensation of information.[290] Jeff Sahadeo offers a slightly different description of the fraught relationship in "'Without the Past There is Not Future': Archives, History, and Authority in Uzbekistan." Explaining the difficulty of gaining access from archons, former Soviet archons in particular, Sahadeo

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interior one for characters; records are lost and buried in archives; and the information sought in the records invariably centres around the search for the self or truth" (95).

[290] For my on my use of the term "documental," cf. 4, note 1.

describes the archive reader's position as more powerful but no less contingent on a withholding archon. In Soviet archives the destitution of archons leads them to gladly accept the gifts of "chocolate [or] magazines" offered by comparatively rich scholars (Western graduate students included), potentially in exchange for further archival access.[291] Although their descriptions differ, both Lipton and Sahadeo affirm the depiction in *The Aspern Papers* as relevant by attesting to the imbalance of power that defines the archive reader's necessarily tense and personal relationship with the archon who controls access to the archival fragments the reader both wants and needs.

The narrator accordingly situates his position as not only weak but as under attack by describing the imbalanced relationship in antagonistic terms in the beginning pages of *The Aspern Papers*. When, for example, the narrator describes his plight to Miss Prest, his earliest companion, he notes that the second letter sent to Juliana by his partner, John Cumnor, had been responded to "very sharply, in six lines, by the niece: 'Miss Bordereau requested her to say that she could n't imagine what he meant by troubling them. They had none of Mr. Aspern's 'literary remains,' and if they *had* had would n't have dreamed of showing them to any one on any account whatever'" (12). The narrator emphasizes to Miss Prest what he deems the letter's lies, pointing out the ironic likelihood that not even a virtual stranger to Aspern, literary celebrity that he is, would have used an address as formal as "Mister." In so doing, the narrator illustrates as plainly recognizable the power differential between Juliana, whom the narrator depicts as a prohibitive archon (such is

[291] Part of Sahadeo's point concerns the inherent difficulty faced by archivists to serve their reading public (thanks to various institutional issues) and the strategies adopted by readers to ensure that their own needs, which are really professional desires, are met.

the reason she enjoins Miss Tina in her lying response to Cumnor), and himself, a "minister" at the Aspern "temple," who merely longs for the "truth."

Because, again, the archon refers first to the *arkheion*, "a house, a domicile, an address, the residence of the superior magistrates, the *archons*, those who commanded," the archon not only refers to the archive's most apparent lawmaker, but to the archive, as well (2). Accordingly, while Juliana acts most obviously in *The Aspern Papers* as a prohibitive archon, the narrator also emphasizes her embodiment of the archive he seeks to access. Part of her archive embodiment indeed depends on her role as archon, but part of her archive embodiment depends on her status as the original and intended recipient of Aspern's fragments. By speaking from an "authentic" past in which she played a significant role, Juliana is especially able to authoritatively attest to the fragments' "unique existence in a particular place"; by providing those fragments with the context of her relationship, Juliana claims a constitutive part of and in them. She correspondently channels Aspern's absence, an absence underscored by the presence of his fragments, through the presence betokened by her possession (Benjamin 4: 253-4).[292] Her possession of Aspern's fragments exceeds the meaning of "has," in that Juliana has the whole of the Aspern archive, however, and bleeds into "owns," "holds," "enjoys," "occupies," "inhabits," "affects," "infects," "dominates," "controls," "maintains," "is preoccupied or inspired by," and "gains sexual possession of" (*OED*). Given that the

[292] In this sense, and taking a cue from Abraham and Torok, Juliana becomes the embodied transerotic phantom whose very presence signals absence. This is even more obvious given Juliana's consignment by the narrator—not to the archive, like Prynne—but to a more explicit death. As Savoy argues, "It is not that Juliana brings Aspern into presence rather, she reveals that she has joined him in death" (65).

basis of her custody can be traced to libidinous desire, her possession therefore invests with eroticism the archive that, by her possession, she embodies.[293]

While Juliana's embodiment of the archive depends on her literal and figural possession, it also depends on her status as an intimate reader and as such, both repeats and forecasts the archival embodiment undertaken, intentionally or not, by every reader of the archive. Indeed, the personal or professional desires that prompt archive readers to access archival fragments make them particularly likely to relate to the archive's fragments as part-objects and to find in them the means by which to enable the construction or refinement of their own identities. Such archival embodiment, while evident through the language of object-relations theory, also finds representation through the practical work of archive readers (such as amateur or professional genealogists who establish their own identities through establishing, with the aid of the archive, the identities of their relations). Further, and on a much larger scale, the readerly embodiment of the archive reflects the project of historical discourse, which seeks to record *wie es eigentlich gewesen ist* (albeit with the reflexive awareness of the impossibility of such a project) through readers who make the archive's fragments into part-objects by which to explain the identities of particular moments in the life of communities. Consequently, the very identification of archive fever assumes that readers, like Hawthorne's narrator, like Senhor José, reproduce through their own bodies and in a diseased form the archives they seek to explore (which in turn uncovers the archive's inherent dis-ease). When the narrator depicts Juliana in her role as the primary reader of the Aspern archive as an embodiment of the archive he seeks to read, he

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[293] To refer to it again, can it be surprising that one of the few blockbuster archival romances is titled *Possession*?

therefore establishes her as far more accessible than her archontic role otherwise implies. He establishes her, in fact, as a precursor to himself.

The embodiment works reflexively: the archive reader who embodies the archive becomes an archival body. Edel, for example, and like Juliana, offers an emphatic illustration. His reading of James's archive, despite resulting in "a fiction of his own," results not only in his embodiment of James's archive, as master biographer, but also and as a consequence, in his inclusion in James's archives as a piece and therefore in his erection of an archive of his own (see Senhor José). Likewise, as a consequence of her embodiment of both archon and archive, Juliana also functions in the narrator's view as a "terrible relic" and as therefore one of the Aspern archive's auratic fragments (23). Juliana's possession of Aspern's "relics," etymologically linked to the sanctified fragments of "physical remains" and also, via its detour through "relict," "a surviving portion," indicates that she possesses but also herself constitutes Aspern's surviving portion (*OED*). Her close communion with the fragments of which she both possesses and claims a part finds its illustration in Miss Tina's explanation to the narrator concerning the reason Juliana did not burn her papers before her death, particularly when it was imminent: she "'lived on them!'" (23, 132).

While her status as an archival fragment in the narrator's portrayal informs Juliana's availability for incorporation and mediation, a point to which I will return below, it also invests Juliana with an obvious aura that the narrator, through his use of both "terrible" and "relic," only implicitly attaches to her. Although aura claims a particular relationship to the archive, in part via the talisman Hawthorne associates with it in *The Scarlet Letter*, Benjamin provides the term's most famous explanation in "The

Work of Art in the Age of Technological Reproducibility." There, aura describes the distance made close, the authentic, unique, and therefore unreachable quality in a work of art that consequently invests it with an inestimable value. Benjamin's dialectical essay focuses on film's complicated auratic quality to explain the role that aura (or, given his emphasis on film, the role aura's disappearance) plays in eliciting reactionary and progressive responses among the viewing or reading public, but in "The Work of Art," Benjamin also implicitly defines the archive, according to its very topology—its designated space as an archive—as an authentic container for auratic objects and thus a facilitator for auratic experiences. Subsequently, the archive, while it belongs to the past, belongs, too, to the future and compares favorably if paradoxically, to technology: "chemical analyses of the patina of a bronze can help to establish its authenticity," writes Benjamin, "just as the proof that a given manuscript of the Middle Ages came from an archive of the fifteenth century helps to establish its authenticity" (4:253).[294]

According to Benjamin's explanation of aura, Juliana's function as an embodiment of Aspern's archive reflexively verifies her own authentic status as a terrible relic from the past. She thereby possesses an aura that the narrator affirms as manifested in her age (the narrator suggests that when he realized she still lived, "it was if [he] had been told that Mrs. Siddons was, or Queen Caroline, or the famous Lady Hamilton, for it seemed […] that she belonged to a generation as extinct"), her correspondent survival ("Every one of Aspern's contemporaries had, according to our belief, passed away […]. Most dead of all did poor Miss Bordereau appear, and yet she alone had survived"), and her isolation (she voluntarily sequesters herself in an "old palace" in "extreme

[294] This perhaps suggests the archive's particular availability to constant technological innovation.

dilapidation") (6, 8, 5). Distinguished by the exceptions of age, of death, of society, Juliana claims in the narrator's estimation the authenticity and auratic quality associated by Benjamin with the proximate distance more conventionally associated with a work of art (4: 254) (which both Venice, as an at least part-time playhouse and possessed only of the dust of its past, and the narrator himself, as a self-aware (if not penitential) scheming editor, emphatically lack).

While Juliana's exceptional survival indicates her auratic status, her aura materially accrues from the documental evidence of her former association with Aspern.[295] Miss Tina confirms the enormity of Juliana's possession, meanwhile investing archival plenitude with an auratic status, when she admits to the narrator that "Oh she has everything!" and, later, that burning the fragments "'took a long time—there were so many'" (78, 143). Although Juliana claims possession of so many of Aspern's remains, the most important of the fragments, according to the narrative effort expended on it, is (and appropriately, given Benjamin's subject) the miniature portrait of Aspern. The portrait, the only one of Aspern's fragments described in *The Aspern Papers* (a rhetorical confirmation that such portraits are, according to the narrator, and like Juliana herself, "'distressingly rare'"), anticipates contemporary and popular archival discourse's assumption of the ambiguous and mostly irrelevant distinction between archives, museums, and libraries (64).[296] More important, however, the portrait features not only

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[295] Although I do not intend to provide a close comparison of Juliana and Hester Prynne, one that would undoubtedly play on the fragmentary A, I believe that the inclusion would benefit an argument—only implicit here—about the *development* of the archival genre of redemptive romance.

[296] The conflation of the museums, archives, and libraries depends on the broad concept of "information" advocated by Otlet at the turn of the twentieth century. See also Susan

Aspern's "human countenance," what Benjamin considers particularly auratic, but also the connotative eroticism of possession evident in Juliana's exhibition of it.

Representing the overdetermined archival fragment that functions as a trope in so many contributions to archival discourse (the fragmentary A, the Philppsohn Bible inscribed by Freud's father for Freud functions as such for Yerushalmi; Yerushalmi's monologue, which left on Derrida a "strong impression" (21), functions as such for Derrida; Derrida's archival obsession with beginnings functions as such for Steedman; the unknown woman's fragmentary file functions as such for Senhor José in *All the Names*), the portrait functions as an erotically charged representation not of Aspern per se, although the portrait depicts his countenance, but of Juliana's function as Aspern's substitute. To more fully explain, Juliana's exhibition of Aspern's portrait affirms Aspern's absence, affirms his continued existence only in remains, and transfers the portrait from "Aspern's portrait" to Juliana's "glorious possession" (64). Consequently, when Juliana displays this rare miniature painted by her father to the narrator, temporarily placing it in his "fingers," she offers him not just a representation of Aspern but a representation of the intimacy betokened by her possession of Aspern's remains (94).[297]

Pearce's works, Manoff's "Theories of the Archive from Across the Disciplines" and Schwartz and Cook's "Archives, Records, and Power: The Making of Modern Memory," for critical explanations. Comay's *Lost in the Archive* offers a fascinating and totally heterogeneous illustration of the current conflation of museums, archives, and libraries, as does Hamilton et al's *Refiguring the Archive*. In the popular sphere, Ancestry.com, the world's largest and most lucrative online genealogy database, includes explanatory materials on its website explaining the irrelevance of the separation of museums, archives, and libraries. More to the point of the argument in these pages, James quite clearly suggests the overlap between museums and archives when in *Portraits of Places* he refers to Venice as a both a vast museum and an archival city best understood through its old records.

[297] The continued eroticism of this intimacy is made particularly obvious in the miniature portrait's status as a fetish. In the exhibition scene, the Juliana retrieves the portrait from

Such intimacy inserts Juliana between the narrator's desire and its object and therefore obstructs the narrator's efforts to access Aspern. Because the portrait itself represents the narrator's most ardent desire, however, the narrator subverts Juliana's insertion by fantasizing that in his grasp the portrait bypasses Juliana and gives him instead a conduit of communication with Aspern. In *The Aspern Papers*, the portrait offers a complex picture of an auratic archival fragment and the importance it assumes for an archive reader. Juliana corroborates this by exhibiting the portrait but only to underscore the monopoly of her possession. For Juliana, the portrait's value lies not just in its synecdochic relationship to past events and not just in its synecdchic relationship to the archive and the archive's other fragments; the portrait also functions as the means of exchange.[298]

The portrait's potential exchange value signals the archive's particular and idiosyncratic economy. Allan Sekula describes this economy, although in less economic terms, in "The Body and the Archive," an analysis that explains the reliance on optical realism to determine, identify, and classify the criminal body as dependent on the "truth-apparatus" of the archive. Sekula notes that the synecdochic function shared by all archival fragments ensures that each archival fragment offers not just the means and

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the narrator with great effort:

> She made a movement, drawing herself together as if, in a spasm of dread at having lost her prize, she had been impelled to the immense effort of rising to snatch it from me. I instantly placed it in her hand again, saying as I did so: 'I should like to have it myself, but with your ideas it would be quite beyond my mark.' She turned the small oval plate over in her lap, with its face down, and I heard her catch her breath as after a strain or an escape" (95-6).

The eroticism is only underscored, with quite a Freudian pen, by the fact that Juliana's father painted the picture that continues to give her such satisfaction.

[298] This echoes the narrator's perspective on the scarlet letter in Hawthorne's text.

opportunity for exchange, but a representation of exchange per se. Accordingly and in theory, every fragment in the archive equally refers to the past events of which it constitutes a material part. Archives do not and cannot exist, after all, to rigorously reinforce a narrative other than that archival fragments provide synecdoches to and for past events. Subsequently, the archive offers instead a structure for and of substitution in which one fragment should be able to supply a kind of knowledge about a particular past as much as any other fragment.[299] According to this representative indexical system, the exchange value of archival fragments thereby assumes an archival economy of theoretical equivalence. Most archive readers, however, and particularly the readers with whom I engage in this project, bristle at such a suggestion.[300]

For many readers, archival fragments cannot be equivalent to one another, because, for one thing, they are petrified in an archive-sanctioned fetishistic relationship to the past and do not and cannot circulate in any conventionally understood "free" way. For Lipton, for example, one archival fragment can only be exchanged for another in terms of meaninglessness: nothing can, and usually is, exchanged for nothing. In *Alias Olympia*, Lipton accordingly continues to revisit her frustration at finding "nothing" amidst the archive's everything: "I go to the museums. First to the Musée des Arts Décoratifs. Nothing. Then to the Musée d'Orsay. Very comfortable, but the same old

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[299] Sekula's focus on the body ensures a correspondent focus on images (over documents, for example); as evidenced by note 14, however, and by Sekula's unstated premises, the distinction of images is not restrictive.

[300] This constitutes the bulk of Steedman's argument: there is no archival everything—nothing in the archive is equal to either the past or to the other things in the archive. Steedman may also agree with Sekula's Foucauldian point: when she writes that the social historian's "craft is to conjure a social system from a nutmeg grater," it is clear that she might as easily have said a "washboard," "doormat," "saucepan," "mirror," "newspaper" (17-8).

books on Manet, and of course, pictures of *Olympia*. Everywhere I go there are reproductions of *Olympia*" (56). Although Lipton here appears to offer a straightforward anticipation of Steedman, she also describes the related work of the scholar and archive reader to return, again and again to the same place where "nothing" was already found but where "everything," quite against the possibility that nothing is always equivalent to nothing, might always still be discovered: "I decide to go back to Tabarant, and see if I missed anything. And I had" (101).

Although Sekula follows Foucault in recognizing the archive as a system and a structure, few archive readers profess faith in Sekula's suggestion of archival equivalence because most archive readers are like Lipton: they bring with them into the archive desires, expectations about the kinds of information they want to find, about the value of some fragments over others.[301] The archive reader looks therefore for the synecdochic fragment that will not only refer to the particular past she seeks to read but that will refer to the desire for knowledge she already imagines, at least as a shadow, and wants to (literally) grasp. This is one of the reasons why archives and their contents can function as both overdetermined and, at the very same time, valueless, why archives contain both everything and nothing. The unusual economy of the archive explains why the narrator of *The Aspern Papers*, another such archive reader, is particularly antagonized by Juliana's suggestion that Aspern's portrait belongs in a more conventional exchange economy. While Juliana exploits its reference to her relationship with Aspern and to the other fragments in her possession, she also threatens, by asking the narrator to offer his frank and monetary appraisal, to withdraw the portrait from what he believes is its auratic

[301] This is another way of suggesting that readers identify in the archive which fragments are "highly significant."

status in the archive by making it a possible object for exchange (and thereby for substitution): "'I want to sell[,]'" Juliana tells the narrator, "'What would an amateur give me for that?' […] it occurred to me to ask you about […] the most I shall be able to get'" (93).[302]

The narrator's shock, while professed in response to Juliana'a rapacity, is actually shock at the suggestion that the portrait could be removed not from the archive per se but from its cult status and fetish objecthood and into an economy of capital exchange. He clearly believes that Juliana cannot but feel the same way and that she therefore exhibits the portrait to communicate to the narrator an intimation of not the portrait's value but *her* own value: "I could n't believe that she really desired to sell it […] What she wished was to dangle it before my eyes and put a prohibitive price on it" (94). This is the narrator's wish anyway, for it pains him that Juliana continues to exploit her sense of his interest in her connection to Aspern for money. "'Don't Juliana'" the narrator wants to exclaim when asked by Juliana how much he would be willing to give her for six months more in the rooms she rents to him, "'for *his* sake, don't!'" (91).

About eighty years later, Edel echoes the narrator's despair. Like the narrator, Edel is also preoccupied with economic rapacity in the archive, but unlike the narrator, he associates that rapacity with the archive itself. Indeed, in Edel's archival drama, the archive in no way claims participation in a sanctified or auratic economy; it assumes instead a capitalistic, which is to say vacuous, force. After having already established

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[302] The narrator confides to his audience, "She was perhaps amazed at my assurance, but I was surprised at hers; at her having the energy, in her state of health and at her time of life, to wish to sport with me to that tune simply for her private entertainment—the humour to test me and practise on me and befool me. This at least was the interpretation that I put upon her production of the relic" (94).

himself as a "master of the biographical form, productive and important," Edel casts himself not only in the role of the publishing scoundrel, however, but in the role of Juliana, too. He accordingly debases, and rather cunningly, given that in so doing he consolidates his own value through a monopolized relevance, the archive's auratic or cult value by suggesting that archives in "the modern age" commodify authorial fragments and exist only to fuel the economy in which opportunistic publishing scoundrels line their pockets ("On the Use" 51). Additionally, however, Edel writes that archives themselves also operate as always-potential hoards: libraries,

> have induced a new and artificial harboring of documents, a nightmare preservation of much material that used to go into waste baskets. Archive-making becomes distinctly self-conscious; and it has its inhibiting side as well […] To allow a great clutter to accumulate because a few rare things may reside in the compost heap, seems to me not a sufficient argument for hoarding. (46-7).

Although Edel ought to know, given the dependence of his sixty-year career on James's personal letters and notebooks, and although his claim for the archive's economic orientation certainly makes a point—the narrator of *The Aspern Papers*, like many archive readers, *is* looking for "more material" to publish and *does* suspect Juliana of harboring a hoard (65)—archival fragments can hardly be considered either Edel's indiscriminate storehouses of scraps, available as a means by which readers can make their fortunes, nor can they be considered static and utterly irretrievable like a hoard. Archives are instead, and as archivist Cox notes, the valued results of carefully developed "selection schemes and strategies," and further, while all archival fragments, even

fragments of repressive or repressed archives, *are* there to be used—"use," Theodore Schellenberg claims in 1965, "is the end of all archival effort" (qtd.. in Greene)—Cox notes that "many (most)" archival fragments will not be used for decades or more"; use for these fragments may be simply theoretical, always located in an indefinite future.

Each of these theorists attribute different economies to the archive, Edel insinuates the archive's capitulation to capitalism and empty commercialism, archivist Schellenberg insists on the archive's use-value, and archivist Cox argues that oftentimes the use-value of archival fragments is infinitely deferred, but each theorist indicates that the heretofore discussed archival mandate to save assumes an economic function. While archive readers often invest archival fragments with auratic value and a corollary distance from an exchange or capital economy, the archival mandate to save, read through both Benjamin's concept of aura and Marx's explanation of capital accumulation as associated with investment and continued circulation, suggests that archival objects, despite their auratic characteristics, are commodities that possess exchange-value, even if they are never exchanged, never used.[303] The saving that occurs in an archive, despite Cox's suggestion that it results in a problematic kind of hoard, in fact signifies investment in fragmentary objects' futurity: in the archive, saved fragments constitute a hoard, but they do so not in Marx's sense; instead, archival fragments serve as a hedge against and an investment for and therefore in the future.[304] The portrait in *The Aspern Papers*

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[303] This may be attributable to the repetitious nature of the archive itself. While fragments possess an aura by virtue of a relationship to which they cannot help but confer, they represent in a repetitive mode.

[304] In this sense, the hoard of the archive appears much closer to the compulsive hoarding that individuals, such as Senhor Josè, perhaps, enact. Ironically, despite Edel's anxiety over the archive's co-option by capitalism, he refers to the archive's hoard—specifically efforts to pay for and collect the papers of still-living authors—in its anti-capitalist sense.

represents one such economic contribution to the archival mandate to save, particularly in the narrator's Edel-anticipatory repugnance at the always-present possibility of archival greed. Indeed, despite the narrator's professed shock at Juliana's ploy to assign to the portrait a monetary value, he indicates through the portrait that Juliana's archive functions not as it *ought*, as a place where fragments have been saved for future exchange, particularly the kind of future exchange from which he might benefit, but instead as a place where fragments, as indicated by Juliana's feigned interest in its appraisal, have been hoarded.

In "The Work of Art," Benjamin picks up James's threads and weaves another, more corporeal pattern of the relationship between portraiture, the archive, and value. While Benjamin focuses on the loss of aura consequent to modern economy's reliance on the technical and mechanical productions and reproductions of art, he also suggests that the archive retains the portrait's bygone auratic social function and therefore value. According to Benjamin, portraits and archives are united by their participation in the "cult of remembrance": the portrait's depiction of the "human countenance" displayed aura's authenticity and authority and therefore assumed an emblematic status of occult value, particularly in the days immediately preceding the popularization of photography. Even after the popularization of photography, however, the archive continues to serve as an indicator of aura: attesting, and preserving by attesting to (like an ironic manifestation

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Compulsive hoarding differs from Marxian or capitalistic hoarding: whereas the latter, in which an individual or group withholds items from circulation, privatizing money in particular and petrifying its use-value, poses a contradiction for capitalism, the former depends on a contemporary definition of hoarding inflected by the DSM-IV and indicates a hoarder's accumulation and over-investment of items that most others would deem useless, or trash.

of technology), the "here and now" of an auratic work (4: 257-8). The archive then not only offers a space in which objects such as portraits retain their links to aura's occult value, it also offers a space in which the cult of remembrance continues to claim traction. Indeed, portraits in archives and archives of portraits, such as the portrait in the Aspern archive and the archive to which the portrait refers, not only attest to a mutually enforced authenticity, they also indicate the presence and therefore relevance of a cult of remembrance via a visual representation of the countenanced corpora the archive has saved.

The portrait of Aspern and the character of Juliana anticipates the archive's dependence on the human countenance, or, more specifically, on the human body and on body parts, for its auratic meaning. While aura's invocation of distance suggests only the most superficial connection to corporeality, Benjamin's analysis defines aura's transmission as dependent on breath. According to an editorial footnote in "The Work of Art," aura's connection to the Greek word for "breath" indicates, Benjamin writes, the "unique apparition of a distance, however near it may be" (4: 255). Breath consequently promises nearness, the exhalations that, since they can only be heard and felt in proximity, signal the life of a body and the potential for intimacy such life presumes. However, the presumption of intimacy, Benjamin writes, is only a presumption: the breath that signals closeness also reinforces the insurmountable distance that separates bodies from one another. Breath therefore functions not only to refer to the potential intimacy of the corporeal body but also to refer to the obstacle, obstruction, and barrier that the corporeal body constitutes. By indicating the impossibility of accessing the

etymological "within" accorded to intimacy, breath denotes intimacy's proximity (in its potentiality) to the "without" of illusion.[305]

While aura consequently animates a breathing body in the archive, the archive's relationship to bodies and body parts reaches back behind Benjamin and James. Anne Golomb Hoffman explores representations of the body in both literature and psychoanalysis and explains in "Archival Bodies" that the body has functioned as an archive since at least the eighteenth century, when Johann Caspar Lavater in *The Whole Works of Lavater on Physiognomy* advocated for reading the body's interior morality through its outward, physical, shape. According to Lavater's "science," the moral code according to which an individual conducted his life could be discerned through the study of the bits and pieces of the body's interiority: from "the nature, state, size, situation of the bones and cartilages, the muscles, the intestines, the glands, the veins and vessels, and nerves and ligaments," to the "quality of the blood, the consistency, the warmth and coldness of the constitution, the grossness or delicacy of the organs," and finally to all the body's "visible parts" (13). Reading the (often dead) body's informational fragments yielded for Lavater and his followers insights into character, into its moral code, as it were, that could not otherwise be accessed and could not therefore be formulated.

Hoffman's argument for the archival body has another, longer legacy, however. In addition to the tradition of situating the body as an archive, the Romantic age sustained a tradition of founding the archive *on* the body. Philip Kuberski writes in his meditations on memory's relationship to the sublime that "museums, archives, and crypts" in the

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[305] I am reminded here of the use of cigarettes, in works from Oscar Wilde to Irving Rapper (I'm thinking here of *Now, Voyager*) to film noir, to illustrate externalized breath for just this purpose.

Romantic age were modeled on early Christian churches, which often buried a relic under the altarstone—"a metacarpal or femur"—of the martyr after whom the church was named. Subsequently, museums, archives, and crypts "conserve[d], examine[d], and sometimes display[ed] the organs of great artists" (115). The tradition obviously did not die out with the Romantic age today body: parts feature in museums and archives not otherwise associated with human anatomy museums or archives adjacent to the work of teaching hospitals: the Maine Historical Society, for example, retains a lock of George Washington's hair, and Galilieo's finger is a major draw at the Museo di Storia del la Scienza in Florence, Italy. Archives depend on these parts of dead bodies to reinforce the archive's auratic value, and archivists, when referring to the kind of incessant and unavoidable accumulation represented in *All the Names* in the "unstoppable rise of the number of the deceased," implicitly point to their dependence on corpses for the accumulation of archival materials (3). To put it rather crudely: archival corpora accumulate by way of corpses; remains proliferate, producing more remains.[306]

The archive's containment of the body parts of noted dead personages not only affirms the archive's designation of a space in which the cult of remembrance continues to thrive, it also affirms the cult of remembrance as devoted to resurrecting those parts through the "magical, then religious" cult value of their aura. In this way, body parts in the archive live on as Elias's coercive, consensual fragments even after, or especially after, the whole to which they were once attached is dead and gone. This re-membrance-through-death means that inasmuch as archives depend on dead bodies for their contents, they also depend on more logistical and more animated bodies, no less auratic in the

[306] Cf. Scandura's discussion of Fresh Kills.

sense that they *breathe*: Osborne, for example, points out that archives are uniformly directed to (even when they are closed off from) the bodies of reading citizens; Steedman argues, through Michelet's famous phrase, the "dust of the dead," that archive readers must mediate and therefore reanimate, through their own breath, bodies in various stages of disintegration; and Lynch, in "Archives in Formation," a contribution to the lauded special issue of *History of the Human Sciences* devoted to the archive, defines the "classical archive" as a place influenced by bodies. Archives, in Lynch's formulation, consist of a discrete collection of documents giving original evidence about an historical event or figure, but its "collection of records" begins with the "various writers, executors, relatives of key figures, and figures themselves [who] have (or once had) considerable say about the preservation, disclosure, publication of constituent records" (73).

The Aspern Papers makes this dependence of the archive on dead bodies, body parts, and living bodies and figures thematic. While the Aspern archive depends on the (partial) human countenance on display in Juliana's miniature portrait, the portrait itself commemorates Aspern's absent dead body in the service of the cult of remembrance. In the dead body's evacuated place stands not only Aspern's aesthetic, as made material through the portrait, but Juliana, a substitutive medium and here-and-now corporeal presence who lives in death and only in the narrator's writing of his memoir. Consequently, while the portrait in *The Aspern Papers* situates the figure, or the body part, of the human countenance in a fundamental position in the archive, it is the figure and body parts of Juliana, and her relationship to both Aspern, via Aspern's fragments, and the narrator, that more emphatically illustrates aura's allusion to corporeality and substantiates the corollary presence of bodies in archives.

Auratic archival bodies—fragmentary, simultaneously dead and alive, simultaneously promising intimacy and reinforcing distance—also help to explain the libidinous desire so often assigned to the archive as provocative of archival fever among its readers.[307] This desire manifests in many ways, but principally in the expression of intimacy communicated by readers of archives who access the auratic archival authority they seek by breathing in, for better or more often for ill, documental dust, and who seek to touch, to handle, to pick up, to leaf through, or to otherwise engage in those actions that disturb documents and enable readers to incorporate such dust in the first place. For readers like James's narrator (and Steedman's historian and Saramago's archival clerk and Hawthorne's narrator) these actions indicate the intimacy of incorporation, despite a correspondent recognition that such intimacy, given its material object in dust, is always after-the-fact and substitutive.[308] As Stephen Enniss writes, "[t]he one person we most want to find in the archive is, after all, the one person we an be sure we will not find, but look we must for some transubstantiation of pen and paper that may yet fill that unfillable space" (115).[309] *The Aspern Papers'* narrator, in particular, uncovers the struggle that

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[307] The German root of "libido" in "lust" indicates the longing that describes the critical discussions of archive fever that depend upon nostalgia.

[308] Compare, for example, Steedman's suggestion that Michelet in his work in the Archives Nationales in Paris breathed in the dust of the dead (26) with Saramago's illustration of Senhor José in the archive of records in the attic of the unknown woman's former elementary school:

> Each movement he made, opening a box, untying a bundle, raised a cloud of dust, so much so that in order not to be asphyxiated, he had to tie his handkerchief over his nose and mouth, a preventive measure that the clerks were advised to follow each time they went into the archive of the dead in the Central Registry. In a matter of moments his hands were black and the handkerchief had lost any remaining trace of whiteness, Senhor José had become a coal miner hoping to find in the depths of the mine the pure carbon of diamond. (91-1)

[309] Given the trajectory of this section, it will come as no surprise that Enniss also turns to

such incorporation necessitates by pointing out that the difficulty faced by so many archival readers who long to handle archival documents and breathe in archival dust is the aforementioned difficulty of access. The narrator wants Aspern's body, or at least the body parts indicated by Aspern's remains, and yet he cannot gain access to them without gaining access to Juliana. The archive's eros and thanatos depends therefore not only the on the bodies and body parts that signal archival libido, they also manifest in the reader's attempt to gain access to the archive, and often through that archon whom they must romance, according to Lipton and Sahadeo, no matter how much they might also disdain it.

The description offered by the narrator of *The Aspern Papers* in his narrated navigation of an archival eros and thanatos offers an instructive model of the strain of reflective archive readers on which this project focuses, in part because it has so much to say about the ways that archive readers deal with archival desire. Although few explore this desire in relationship to *The Aspern Papers* through an archival or documental lens, critics regularly point to the narrative, describing as does William Veeder the consequences of Juliana's role as the inverted object of the narrator's desire, to argue that *The Aspern Papers* is "one of James's most mordant explorations of the nature of desire." Veeder's calculated use of the term "mordant" applies to the narrator's repeatedly forecasted fire ("[t]he worst of it was that she looked terribly like an old woman who at a pinch would, even like Sardanapalus, burn her treasure" (69)), but "mordant," which also refers to a buckle, to something "which clasps or hold something fast," and to various other sorts of binders, makes mordant a signifier for both fire's destruction and for a kind

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Ted Hughes, the executor of Plath's literary papers, to discuss the issue of the value of manuscripts.

of preservation, the very qualities associated not only with the archive at the metaphorical of center of the Aspern archive, but with the archive fever that manifests in the narrator, particularly in the narrator's repeated invocation of Juliana's death (and destruction) as the necessary means by which he might better clasp (and preserve) Aspern.

In fact, the narrator's romantic disdain for Juliana causes him to petrify her into a relic to crystallize her desire, expressed in the narrator's imagination by her bestowal of nightly kisses on the fragments,[310] and make it available for his own assimilation. His subsequent narrative, which offers just that assimilation, thereby features a Juliana who exists in corporeal and auratic pieces and parts: principally in her hand, which the narrator longs to hold since it is the "hand Jeffrey Aspern had pressed" (30), and which Miss Bordereau denies to him; her withered lips, which the narrator imagines are pressed against Aspern's fragments "every night" (35); and, most significantly, her eyes, which Aspern once looked into as the source of "immortal lines" (88), and which, like her hands, are denied the narrator and obstructed by a "horrible green shade" (23). Her disintegration into pieces and parts not only attests to the archive's classic foundation in evocative parts, but also echoes the narrator's work to make Juliana an *accessible* substitution for the irredeemably lost Aspern. Consequently, as such a substitution for Aspern's fragments, Juliana inverts the narrator's desire so that by "mak[ing] love" to Miss Tina, and, through her, Juliana's fragmentary form, the narrator makes love, too, to Aspern.

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[310] When he early contemplates the possibility of Juliana's death as imminent, he writes, "I had perfectly considered the possibility of her destroying her documents on the day she should feel her end at hand. I believed that she would cling to them till then, and I was as convinced of her reading Aspern's letters over every night or at least pressing them to her withered lips" (35).

Her depiction in the narrator's narrative in pieces and parts affirms the narrator's positioning of her as a substitutive fragment of desire and makes Juliana the figureless figure (ironic though that may be) of the Lacanian *corps morcelé*. A particularly apt illustration of the archive, the "*imago du corps morcelé*," or the "image of the body in bits and pieces" is described by Jacques Lacan as the fragmented body in his explanations of the mirror stage. Dominated by the mother, the fragmented, disorganized, discordant, body precedes the mirror stage's work to "typif[y] an essential libidinal relationship with the body-image" (14). In "Some Reflections on the Ego," Lacan explains that the *corps morcelé* is characterized by "a background of organic disturbance and discord," of which "all the indications are that we should seek the origins of the image of the 'body in bits and pieces'" (15). Juliana, as a Lacanian *corps morcelé*, therefore represents not just a corporeal or material boundary, but a gendered, temporal, developmental, near boundary-less boundary, as well. The narrator's representation of her as such thus indicates his reflexive regression, a regression assumed in *All the Names* and illustrated by Senhor José's journey via an archival umbilical cord back into the vast darkness of the archive of the dead, back to a time of flux, a time of timelessness, in order to stage an experience through which his self can be re-born through a libidinous relationship to his own image as a substitutive other. Consequently, the narrator creates through Juliana's fragmented body and through the *corps morcelé* she offers, a version of the archive's fragmentary everything (which is also necessarily nothing), through and against which he can consolidate his identity by way of restaging the mirror stage.

Of course, given the narrator's position in Juliana's Venetian archive, the mirror stage is occasioned not by a mirror but by that overdetermined archival fragment of

Aspern's portrait. When he looks into the portrait, the narrator does not see, or does not *only* see, himself, he sees the fragmentary objects of his desire momentarily unified in the human countenance of Jeffrey Aspern. The narrator's use of the portrait as a developmental mirror offers another reason why he, who deems all of Aspern's fragments precious, primarily focuses on this portrait in his recounting of the tale, and why he poses to Miss Tina the following urgent question, even before he reveals to her his identity as an editor and a historian: "'Tell me this, please—has she got a portrait of him? They're distressingly rare'" (64). When first and only temporarily extended the portrait, the narrator achieves a momentary vision of his unified desire through which he can forge a libidinous relationship to himself. The portrait does not, however, immediately effect the coalescence of the narrator's identity. Quite the opposite, in fact; when temporarily offered the portrait by Juliana (an appropriate bestowal, considering Juliana's function as a Lacanian *corps morcelé*, and the *corps morcelé*'s possible function as progenitor of or precursor to the mother's creation, according to Winnicott, of an "intermediate space"), the narrator immediately describes the effect of possession by describing it in terms of his own body's fragmentation, particularly through his hands.

Upon initially grasping the portrait, he exclaims, "I possessed myself of it with fingers of which I could only hope they did n't betray the intensity of their clutch"; "'Now who is he? I can't put my finger on it'"; "I did n't restore the charming thing […] I instinctively clung to it" (94-5). Later, when he receives the portrait as a gift after Juliana's death and after Miss Tina had burned the rest of Aspern's fragments and keeps it as and in his possession, the narrator describes a similarly fragmented body, though this time emphasizing his eyes and in hands:

> I but privately consulted Jeffrey Aspern's delightful eyes with my own—they were so young and brilliant and yet so wise and so deep: I asked him what on earth was the matter with Miss Tina. He seemed to smile at me with mild mockery, he might have been amused at my case. I had got into a pickle for him—as if he needed it! He was unsatisfactory for the only moment since I had known him. Nevertheless, now that I held the little picture in my hand I felt it would be a precious possession. (130-1)

In looking into the portrait at this moment, the moment after Miss Tina bestows it upon him, the narrator receives the sight of the eyes and the touch of the hand that he desired from but was denied by Juliana. His possession, which allows him to claim the intimacy of that "esoteric knowledge" upon which his otherwise wholly illusive presumption to "know" Aspern is based, also enables him to recognize himself not only in relation to Aspern but as Aspern, and therefore as correspondently fragmented. In this way, the portrait functions, and not just in this moment but at the end of his reflective tale and beyond, as a mirror for the narrator. At that conclusion, the narrator reports that he wrote to Miss Tina and sent her money with word that he sold the portrait, but he reveals to his audience that he did not retract the portrait from its archival value nor introduce it into an economy as available for exchange. The portrait hangs instead above the narrator's writing-table. It therefore constitutes that certain archival residuum that, according to James, *had* to be saved. Looking at it as into a mirror while he works at the reflective tale or memoir that constitutes *The Aspern Papers*, the narrator establishes his

(slight) distance from Juliana and confirms and reconfirms his identity as an editor, historian, writer, and as formulated through the object of his narcissistic desire.[311]

Juliana's representation of an archival *corps morcelé* in the narrator's narrative subsequently provides both a primal stage against which the narrator struggles for disengagement, and also, and in so doing, provides a substitutive obstruction the narrator must destroy before claiming his desire as his own. In both representations, Juliana's womanhood assumes a femininity that for the narrator proves seriously problematic. He expresses his anxiety in the beginning chapters of his tale, when he explains that he is a man "who had not the tradition of personal conquest," but that he counted his entrée into the Misses Bordereau's mansion as a lodger a "triumph" (22). His admission positions his otherwise absent masculinity as invigorated by Juliana's apparent feminization of the Aspern archive and her role as a particularly repressive female archon. In fact, the archive in *The Aspern Papers* is consistently associated with the frighteningly feminine, particularly with the potentially frightening and feminine *corps morcelé* that itself offers a telling psychoanalytic developmental analogue to the archive's plenitude postulate. In the narrator's story, Juliana thus represents this frightening femininity, and her presence constantly threatens to usurp the narrator and possess his masculinity as she has possessed Aspern's. As critics in the Veeder vein have noted,[312] the narrator implicitly

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[311] William Veeder also describes the portrait's final position as indicative of its mirroring function although he does not discuss this in terms of a Lacanian *corps morcelé*.

[312] See Leland Person Jr. "James's Homo-Aesthetics: Deploying Desire in the Tales of Writers and Artists"; Jeanne Campbell Reesman, "'The Deepest Depths of the Artificial: Attacking Women and Reality in 'The Aspern Papers'"; Jeremy Tambling, "Henry James's American Byron"; and Veeder, "The Aspern Portrait," for representative examples.

recognizes this in his narrative when, to accommodate the desire for Aspern that must manifest first as a desire for Juliana, he inverts sexuality and gender norms, describing Juliana according to her femininity as a passionate but ultimately impotent harpy and a repulsive figure, Aspern according to his powerlessness and victimhood, and ultimately assigning to himself the triumphant role of the conquering, rescuing hero.

Accordingly, the narrator's Juliana possesses a powerful "Maenad"-like desire that threatens to besmirch Aspern's character (the result of which must necessarily besmirch the narrator's own).[313] This aspect of her womanhood is linked, in the narrator's reading, to sexual strength and therefore presents a danger to Aspern, a danger affirmed by the narrator when he describes Aspern, who is "not a woman's poet," as a damsel in distress in need of (the narrator's) aid and protection:

> His early death had been the only dark spot, as it were, on his fame, unless the papers in Miss Bordereau's hands should perversely bring out others. There had been an impression about 1825 that he had 'treated her badly,' just as there had been an impression that he had 'served,' as the London populace says, several other ladies in the same masterful way. […]. I judged [Aspern] perhaps more indulgently […] it appeared to me that no man could have walked straighter in the given circumstances. These had been almost always difficult and dangerous. Half the woman of his time, to speak liberally, had flung themselves at his head, and while the fury raged—the more that it was very catching—accidents, some of them grave, had not failed to occur" (7).

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[313] Maenad's etymological root in ancient Greek's *mauváç*, "to rage," and "mania," suggests why Juliana both exhibits and solicits archive fever.

The narrator's earliest description of Juliana as having been masterfully served, as having perhaps experienced a grave accident as a result, and as constituting for Aspern's editors "the most difficult episode to handle" (even without their awareness of the archive she possesses and constitutes) attests to the narrator's defense against his perception of Juliana's out of control sexuality. His repetition of this point indicates his work to discharge the association between sexual power (the power of promoting desire, of offering ambiguous intimacy) in general and the sort of power that belongs to and is certainly exhibited by the archon and the archive in turn, and that is at the same time elicited by archival fragments. The narrator thus insists on an association between Juliana's sexuality and a weakness not otherwise associated with an archon or archive: she "had had in her youth a perverse and reckless […]. By what passions had she been ravaged, by what adventures and sufferings she had been blanched, what store of memories had she laid away for the monotonous future?" Calling on Aspern's fragments to corroborate his implicit claim, the narrator indicates that Aspern's poetry depicts a Juliana who "had not always adhered to the steep footway of renunciation. There hovered about her name a perfume of impenitent passion, an intimation that she had not been exactly the respectable young person in general" (48-9). Miss Tina gives a final emphasis to the impenitence of Juliana's passion when she tells the narrator that Miss Tina found Aspern's fragments "'in her bed […]. Between the mattresses" (128)

The narrator's depiction of Juliana's desire in terms of dangerous, perhaps because frustrated, sexuality not only enables him to expel the potential power she claims in her role as a female archon, a feminine embodiment of the archive (with a particular and particularly sexual access to Aspern's fragments), and a substitutive (and therefore

feminized) fragment, it also provides a handy antithesis by which he can portray his own ostensibly purer desire, which the narrator describes as the aforementioned desire for "the truth which alone at such a distance of time [the narrator and his partner, Cumnor] could be interested in establishing" (6). Just as the debased femininity of Juliana depends on her Maenad-like womanhood, the purity of the narrator's desire depends on his manhood, on the fact that, as a man, his desire (and Cumnor's, too) must be therefore dispassionate, professional, based in "truth." As *The Aspern Papers* and its many critics make clear, however, the narrator's work to establish his difference from Juliana exposes his efforts as a defense against his oblique perception of their too-similar position. Consequently, while accusing Juliana of having made Aspern's fragments into a fetish and parodying what he imagines is her idea of sexual satisfaction through his claim that she kisses the fragments each night, the narrator makes a substitutive fetish of Juliana to achieve his own similarly parodic satisfaction. Against his belief that she, night after night, pressed Aspern's fragments to her lips, the narrator imagines his own empowered resurrection: "I had invoked him and he had come; he hovered before me half the time; it was as if his bright ghost had returned to earth to assure me he regarded the affair as his own no less than as mine and that we should see it fraternally and fondly to a conclusion" (35; 42).[314]

Further, because Juliana possesses Aspern's fragments in her most intimate, particularly feminine archival spaces—in her memory of their former relationship and between her mattresses—neither the narrator's parody nor his enforced fragmentation

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[314] The narrator goes on to imagine a dialogue, "It was as if [Aspern] had said: 'Poor dear, be easy with her; she has some natural prejudices; only give her time. Strange as it may appear to you she was very attractive in 1820. Meanwhile, aren't we in Venice together and what better place is there for the meeting of old friends? See how it glows with the advancing summer; how the sky and the sea and the rosy air and the marble of the palaces all shimmer and melt together'" (43).

(both of which offer evidence of her own fetishistic status for the narrator) enable him to discharge her claim to possession of Aspern or the possession of Aspern made possible through his auratic archival fragments. Faced with a powerful, closed feminine archon and archive that nonetheless enable the expression of his desire, the narrator both inverts traditional gender roles to authorize his own work to save Aspern's fragments and recasts his role as a disinterested protector and therefore more able archon of Aspern's legacy by repeating the relationship between Juliana and Aspern not just in the relationship he creates between himself and Juliana but between himself and Miss Tina. Through these twice-removed efforts, the narrator reinforces his association of the archive with a dangerous womanhood. This womanhood is made the more emphatically dangerous, however, through its possible maternalism.

According to Lacan's formulation, the *corps morcelé* is facilitated by the mother, and Juliana's potential motherhood is not particularly far-fetched when considered in light of the ambiguous relationship between Juliana and Miss Tina, the grave incident that makes Juliana a "difficult episode," and Miss Tina's suggestion that Juliana's suspicious nature can be traced to "'something—ages ago, before I was born—in her life'" (80).[315] However, it is not necessary (for my argument or for the narrator's story) that Juliana actually embody the mother; it is quite enough that the narrator insinuates through his language that she does. While in narratives such as *All the Names*, and in

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[315] The contextual conversation follows: "'I don't know—she's very suspicious.'

'But she has n't been made so by indiscreet curiousity, by persecution?'

'No, no; it is n't that,' said Miss Tina, turning on me a troubled face. 'I don't know how to say it: it's on account of something—ages ago, before I was born—in her life.'

'Something? What sort of thing?—and I asked it as if I could have no idea.

'Oh she has never told me.' And I was sure my friend spoke the truth'" (80).

other examples from contemporary archival discourse, especially as informed by object-relations theory, the archive's feminine characteristic is functional and enabling and therefore provides, and as suggested by Winnicott and Bollas, a facilitative space and occupational holding that fosters through similar acts of holding the assimilation that proves crucial to an individual's identity development, even if that development is diseased or depends on the elimination of death, the narrator in *The Aspern Papers* undermines this facilitative archive. The narrator of James's text suggests the feminine archive's darker and far more frustrating propensities (illustrating something like Foucault's archive's darkly facilitative function) by aligning Juliana as a feminine archive that withholds its space and refuses to hold, that incorporates objects for herself instead of facilitating assimilation, and that, in short, functions as the archaic phallic mother.

Situating Juliana as the phallic mother enables the narrator of *The Aspern Papers* to ironically revise Juliana's position as a *corps morcelé* away from Lacan's Imaginary plenitude and towards instead Symbolic lack. The revision's irony depends on the *corps morcelé*'s *and* the phallic mother's assumption of everything. However, while the *corps morcelé* assumes a necessary experience of plenitude before the advent and (dissociative) development of the subject, the phallic mother assumes the subject's identification. Accordingly, while Juliana provides the narrator with the former, he identifies her with the latter. In so doing, the narrator ultimately revises the archive that Juliana represents away from a space in which eros and thanatos reign, as Derrida would perhaps have it, and describes it as also a place in which objects and relationships retain a crucial and ultimately undeniable significance, as Steedman vociferously argues. In the narrator's

reflections on his experiences in Venice with the Bordereaus, he accordingly suggests that Juliana's expression of the frighteningly feminine, of the archon and the archive, indicates that she both possesses and contains the phallus that functions as the fetishized object of the narrator's desire. His suggestion constitutes a defense against the lack in Juliana that he also obliquely perceives, particularly when he refers, throughout his story, to his fear that she has already burned the fragments in her possession. His suggestion also corresponds to the narrator's own prior expression of castration anxiety, evident in his admission that he was not used to "conquest" but that he considered his entrée into the Bordereau mansion an example of conquering triumph, and suggests why the narrator so highly values Aspern's fragments, associating them with the "truth," and why the portrait, explicitly associated with Juliana's sexual satisfaction (cf. 201, note 297), continues to supply the narrator with the power of substitutive identification after Juliana's death.

By functioning for the narrator as a phallic mother, Juliana possesses the fantastical phallus signaling her sexual and social power. Such power is communicated as threatening to the narrator's own conception of his sexuality (in much the same way that he imagines that Juliana's desire threatens the intimacy that is the object of the narrator's own desire), and subsequently explains the narrator's over-valuing of Aspern's fragments, the portrait in particular, as a fetish object and as a result of his own anxiety.[316] Klein's description of the phallic mother makes the narrator's violence

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[316] The phallic mother can also be perceived as a presence in Hawthorne's narrator's archive. While Prynne does not function as explicitly as a source of dangerous eroticism, her very repression by the narrator, his absorption of her interpretive powers, and his (ironic) domestication of those powers within a more patriarchal, institutional context, suggests that Prynne, too, possesses the phallus—in this case, the A—that for the narrator

against Juliana (he imagines her death but he also helps to cause it when, while she is sick and, in the narrator's mind, in bed, he plunders her furniture in search of the fragments) a more obvious extension of his resumption of the paranoid-schizoid position and correspondent identification of her as a bad part-object that threatens his experience with the good part-objects that she also contains.

Ultimately, the narrator's description of his defense against the feminine archive, emphatically embodied through the character of Juliana, suggests the defense mechanisms employed by archive readers when faced by fantasy of the archive's assumption, however mistaken and uncritical, of a primary and original everything that must be at the very same time nothing. More crucial than his work to tamp down, control, or otherwise defend himself against the conflicted desires bestirred by the archive in Juliana's possession, however, is the story provided by the narrator that communicates his success. The language of the narrative, what I have referred to in relation to *The Aspern Papers* as both a reflective tale and a memoir, constitutes the archive reader's assimilation of archival materials, embodiment of the archive itself, and consequently, powerful response to, even as it acts as a manifestation of, archive fever.

In fact, and perhaps surprisingly, *The Aspern Papers* highlights, in its depiction of the relationship between Juliana and the narrator, the narrator's desires and the narrator's subsequent work to protect himself from while satisfying himself in these

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functions as Lacan's *objet petit a*. For the narrator, the A's fragmentariness situates it as an absence that necessitates the interpretation by which he can recuperate what he himself lacks. Although I do not push this analysis further, my argument would benefit from a closer attention to the incorporation—described by the narrator when he describes placing the A on his chest—of an everything that is simultaneously nothing. This certainly redounds in the America that his narrative works to define.

desires, not just the idiosyncratic work of one particular archive reader to manage the intensely personal experience invoked by the archive's auratic objects. *The Aspern Papers*, specifically through the reflective tale or memoir that constitutes the text, also highlights the defensive role that writing, and consequently language, plays in response to archival encounters and suggests, following *The Scarlet Letter*, that writing, composition, and historicizing reflection and revision constitute a means by which to synthesize and thereby incorporate, assimilate, and control the heterogeneous and variously auratic materiality—the bits and pieces—that the archive reader confronts in the archive. In this rather Lacanian formulation, the narrator's efforts certainly anticipate the strain in contemporary archival discourse established by the writers with whom my second and third chapter engage. These writers follow the narrator of *The Aspern Papers* and use the language of criticism or history to contextualize far less traditional reflections on the various effects that archives have had on them. Since each writer refers to his or her own unique and usually anti-institutional experience in the archive's otherwise institutional space, it is too simplistic to suggest that they assign to the archive the designation of a feminine space, particularly the kind of feminine space that Freud associates in another context with dark geography, finding in that space the sorts of objects that facilitate identity development so as to respond to that assignation with the paternalistic discourse of criticism or history. However, the writers' works taken together with the work of the narrators of *The Scarlet Letter* and *The Aspern Papers*, as well as of Senhor José in *All the Names*, suggest that reflective writing, writing in which the reader asserts him or herself as an object, offers a means by which to examine the connection between the intensely personal and necessarily political issues enforced by archival undertakings.

Such writing, which constitutes the genre of redemptive romance, wherein a reader redeems himself through redeeming the archived object of his desire, attests to the reader's status as archival object by displaying a "massive authority" contingent on the reader's "having been there." While the latter phrase suggests a repetition of the archival importance of the abstract corporeality on which I rely above when I play on the similarities between corpse, corpus, and corpora, "having been there," means in Steedman's deictic sense, having ridden "the train to the distant city," having found "the call number," having identified "the bundle," and having wiped away and/or breathed in the bundle's "dust." Only by engaging with the archive in this physical way, Steedman indicates, can the historian or other archive reader recompense for her prior absence, for having *not* been there, there in the past the archive symbolically and synecdochically represents, and for having *not* been part of an intended audience before the past's fragments were explicitly situated as archival. Only by embarking on a literal, physical archival quest then, "can you present yourself" as correspondently "*moved* and dictated to by those sources" (145; my emphasis).[317]

Being *moved* here translates, as indicated by "dictated to," to being moved to write (and "translates" proves again to provide a particularly apt term, given its etymological root in the *carrying-over* that also belongs to metaphor). Accordingly, the most authoritative archival accounts emerge not only from the person who was there, there in the past—Juliana, for example—but from that archive reader who goes to the trouble of having been there, there in the archive's substitutive space and who therefore

[317] In this sense, every archive reader pursues the *objet petit a*.

becomes interpreter and medium.[318] Rather provocatively, the reader who is moved to write and who insinuates himself into the archive, incorporating and assimilating its pieces and parts, claims, not nearly as often as the former, the archival authority that comes to count as history. James banks on this in *The Aspern Papers*, not by a subtextual vilification of the publishing scoundrel but by only giving the publishing scoundrel the narrative's (ostensibly the narrator's own) penultimate word. The last word is left, and of course, to James himself, an author whose exploitation of archival authority is nowhere more evident that in the New York Edition preface he attaches to *The Aspern Papers* and in the extratextual archival effect his New York Edition prefaces reflexively enforce.

James's commitment to authorial control and the exercise of mastery through revision has long been the subject of critical commentary, particularly since for James, revision and thus repetition functions as the foundation of his artistry. Indeed, James's technique is displayed not only through the monumental re-vision of his corpus represented by the New York Edition, but through the more mundane commitment to revision displayed through the constant reworking of stories from magazine serials to bound books to various editions. His commitment to his representation of himself as both perspicacious keeper and interpreter, as both person who had been there and reader who continually goes to the trouble of having been there, reflects the fear of archive fever (also articulated by Edel) that fueled James's self-set fire. For James, the future interpretation of his papers, letters (fragments in their own right, as Shoshana Felman

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[318] Osborne makes a somewhat similar point when he draws a distinction to archival "keepers and interpreters," correlating, albeit broadly, the former to primary and the latter to secondary sources. According to Osborne, this bifurcation argues for a necessary "ethics and politics" of the line that marks the bifurcation. *The Aspern Papers* makes the same case.

makes clear in her analysis of *The Turn of the Screw*), and various other pieces of work clearly constituted, as suggested by his letter to Fields, a source of concern and a prompt for his bonfire. In fact, four years after penning the letter to Fields and as James felt his health failing near his death in 1916, he wrote in a letter to Henry James, III, his brother's first son and, as mentioned above, the co-executor of his estate (with Alice James, William James's wife), of his desire that the younger James help to thwart the "invading chronicler" and "to frustrate as utterly as possible the post-mortem exploiter" (qtd. in Anesko, "Monopolizing the Master" 207).

His clear concern about the meanings that would or even could be read into his literary remains explains why James agreed to invest so much time and effort, particularly when neither translated back to profit, to develop the New York Edition.[319] The New York Edition provides James's own vision of his corpus but it also provides evidence of James's commitment to revision and to using revision to direct the discoveries, receptions, and interpretations that future archive readers will find, encounter, and read into his various works. The preface to *The Aspern Papers* stands as an important example. The preface's very presence makes something of a meta-move by turning "The Aspern Papers," the narrator's reflective tale or memoir, into *The Aspern Papers*, suggesting that "The Aspern Papers" are somehow incomplete and fragmentary without the narration, contextualization, and interpretation provided by a participatory

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[319] In a letter to his agent, James writes that the information regarding the low profits from the New York Edition "have knocked me rather flat—a greater disappointment that I have been prepared for; and after my long and devoted labour a great, I confess, and a bitter grief. I hadn't built *high* hopes—had done everything to keep them down; but feel as if comparatively I have been living in a fool's paradise" (qtd. in Anesko, "Friction with the Market" 377).

(and clearly authoritative) reader.[320] James describes his preface, in his preface, in similarly archival terms as a "revisiting, re-appropriating impulse" (vi) through which James explains the historical source of his tale.

It was "just as if history, 'literary history' we in this connexion call it, had in an out-of-the-way corner of the great garden of life thrown off a curious flower that I was to feel worth gathering as soon as I saw it" (v).[321] The explanation, clearly innocuous on its own terms, serves to direct the tale's future interpretation, orienting it towards James's creative rendering of a historical detail and consequently if rather subtly barring future speculation of the potentially more personal sources—his own concern for the publishing scoundrels that might come calling, for example—that also inform James's works. In this sense, the New York Edition also serves as James's work to save himself as the James he wants archived for futurity.[322] In "The Art of Fiction," James makes the claim that since experience is "never limited and […] never complete," literary value does not accumulate by way of an author who "'write[s] from […] experience only,'" but by way of an author who is "one of the people on whom nothing is lost!'" The latter line, now in *Bartlett's Inspirational Quotes*, among other anthologies, as a pithy instruction to budding writers, indicates James's preoccupation with authorial mastery, but it also reveals James's personal and professional or aesthetic investment in establishing himself

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[320] The NYE preface therefore recapitulates the narrator's relationship to the portrait: the narrator provides his tale of "The Aspern Papers" through the mirror-medium of Aspern's portrait, implicitly affirming his authoritative stance as the archive reader who had been there.

[321] Can it be a coincidence that a garden both constitutes *The Aspern Papers'* narrator's alibi ("'I must work the garden—I must work the garden […] I'm afraid you'll think me horribly intrusive, but you know I *must* have the garden—upon my honor I must!'" (15, 17)) and serves as the location in which James burnt his own archive?

[322] Both Horne and Culver make this point.

as an archive through embodying the archival concept of saving. According to James, an author who has mastered the art of fiction is one who saves everything, including himself, in the readings he continuously reinforces in his revised works.

Although at the end of *The Aspern Papers*' narrative, the narrator claims only a figure, a fragmentary bust whose fragmentary status is nonetheless belied, as Derrida has taught, by the frame in which it is enclosed. As such, it consents to and coerces the narrator's participation in the making of the portrait meaningful. This invokes what Felman has elsewhere called the Jamesian "reading effect," in which James's fiction, as rather hilariously described by Julie Rivkin in "Henry James, c'est moi: Jamesian Afterlives," "invites acts of identification" by which readers become characters and characters readers. The archive depends on this reading effect but in a slightly different way: coercing readers' identification with and incorporation or assimilation of auratic fragments, archives incorporate and assimilate readers in turn. The New York Edition suggests that James himself not only recognized this effect as a feature of his fiction but sought its (impossible) rejection from his own archive: in a letter to William James regarding Italian history, Henry James gestures to his own commitment to razing the past in favor of a self-built future, writing, "I conceived at Naples a tenfold deeper loathing than ever of the hideous heritage of the past—and felt for a moment as if I should lie to devote my life to laying rail-roads and erecting blocks of stores on the most classic and romantic sites" (*The Collected Letters of Henry James* vol. 2, 241).

James strove to protect his archive by inscribing into his revisions the versions he wanted his readers to access. However, even while he literally and figuratively burned the rest, he did not successfully thwart the publishing scoundrels, invading exploiters, and

post-mortem explorers from finding evidence among his archive to fuel contemporary critical speculations on and interpretations of James's personal life, particularly his possible homosexuality, and its influence on his books and professional career.[323] As the narrator of *The Aspern Papers* suggests, one fragment alone can generate an archive. James accordingly stands as a cautionary tale to all authors who attempt to thwart archive fever through documental pyrexia. In fact, the contemporary resurgence of James's criticism indicates that "gigantic bonfires" ought not to make one "easier in mind": archives, even closed archives, are directed to an audience, even if located in an undefined future. Archives *will* be read not only because they are constituted by Elias's coercive and consensual fragments, but also because archives are, as Osborne (via Derrida) argues, "like a raw material, which is not the same as saying […] originary material or […] unworked-upon material; rather [the archive] is what has been made *available,* what has been thus presented to us, a kind of gift, which is to say also—for future constituencies, future publics—a kind of debt" (57, Osborne's emphasis).

Though not often linked to James, Sylvia Plath and her archives, parceled out between Smith College, Indiana University at Bloomington, and various profoundly personally invested readers, provides a more contemporary counterpart to James and offers therefore a no less emblematic instance of archive fever.[324] If James, through the reflexive subject of *The Aspern Papers* and its emphasis on the saved fragment that

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[323] Colm Toibin's *The Master* stands as the emblematic example, although works by Lyndall Gordon, David Lodge, and Alan Hollinghurst also offer evidence of the resurgence in James's work that has followed from the gradual and sporadic opening and/or probing of his archive.

[324] Sarah Churchwell writes that Plath's suicide, "soon after composing a series of poems that evoke suicide […] raised the stakes of the literary venture for many of her readers" (99).

disallows death (not only Aspern's but Juliana's, too), that recreates the archive even after its destruction, and that warns against the publishing scoundrel against whom it also demonstrates its powerlessness, Plath's archive provides a repetitious contemporary example of the Aspern archive. Indeed, according to contemporary archival theorists and historians such as Osborne, Plath's saved fragments invoke the "moral and ethical difficulties" that "get in the way" of what Osborne calls the theoretically "smooth passage between performative intentions and the ultimate constituency of the archive."

While James's and Plath's archives depend both on designated archival spaces and on the more diffuse and diasporic archive represented by their various and variously extant letters, Plath, unlike James, appears to have saved it all. Rather than leaving tidily revised and edited works, the precedents to which had already been subjected to flames and the remnants of which were reinforced with explicit instructions to thwart future publishing scoundrels, Plath left behind various versions of her already multivalent poetry, often backdrafted, or written on the backside of previous works (Brain 20). In fact, Plath provides an important if apparently digressive conclusion to the otherwise James-centric section of this project not only because the vicissitudes of Plath's own archive, a consequence of her suicide and thus intestate death, make it an emphatic illustration of the ways that archives reveal history's dependence on readers' needs and desires (Jacqueline Rose puts it this way: archives, or "the Plath legacy," reveal "what is most intimate, familiar, sexual about our relationship to knowledge itself" (69)), but also because Plath's archive, according to Osborne, who otherwise argues for the titular "ordinariness of the archive," indicates that although Plath sits markedly outside the "domain of history and historiography," the continuing debates about her archival access

points, possibilities of use, and matters of representation reveal in certain terms that, as referred to above, "it would be a mistake ever to think that there could be an archive without a *politics* of the archive" (55). Indeed, the politics, over who is represented, how, and why, expressed in Plath's archive offer a relevant reflection of the politics that inform and result from the archives of Hawthorne's narrator, Senhor José, Aspern and James, and the politics that inform contemporary archives and the discourse produced through and about them.[325]

Archival politics describe first and foremost issues of access and representation, both issues thematized by *The Aspern Papers*. Rose explicates the problems of access and representation that have "haunted" the Plath archive in her chapter "The Archive" in *The Haunting of Sylvia Plath*. The chapter provides a comprehensive record of the competing claims on Plath's corpora that is relevant enough to contemporary archival discourse that Irving Velody uses the chapter as a platform from which to launch his short survey, "The Archive and the Human Sciences: Notes Toward a Theory of the Archive." In particular, Rose represents in *The Haunting* the struggle for control of the Plath legacy emblematized by, on the one side, archive readers and, on the other side, the *archontic* readers of Ted Hughes, portrayed in Rose's analysis as an unsympathetic and defensively paternalistic archon-editor who nonetheless claims an important and unavoidable place as intimate reader of Plath's works; Olwyn Hughes, Ted Hughes's sister, who was appointed by him to control Plath's estate's literary permissions, and who took such an active role in some of those projects that she was granted what Anne

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[325] Anita Helle provides a brief overview of Plath criticism based on this claim in "Lessons from the Archive: Sylvia Plath and the Politics of Memory." In it, she emphasizes that Plath's archives are fully fragmentary textual bodies.

Stevenson in her author's note to her unsympathetic biography of Plath (antithetical to Rose's work, which Janet Malcolm has made clear), "dual authorship"; and Aurelia Plath, Sylvia Plath's mother whose editorial role in *Letters Home* has been criticized as too informed by her personal response to the mother portrayed in *The Bell Jar*.[326]

Rather than further rehash the details better described in Rose's work, I will instead focus here instead on the way in which the Plath archive's stimulation of an intensely personal archive fever among its readers, although no doubt due to the confessional nature of her own work, illustrates in bas relief how archival knowledge is conferred, in Rose's words, "in direct proportion to the intensity with which the various participants lay claim to it" (105). Accordingly, and using the readers of the Plath archive as her exemplars, Rose suggests that the archive, even when not so explicitly tied to genealogy, can take on the cadence of a "family saga," and that the archive's readers can be drawn into the saga by their own connections, which is to say by their own desires, and by what they recognize of themselves in the archive's contents. Rose also names these contents the *corps morcelé*, and what she, and so much of contemporary Plath criticism has striven to make clear, is that Plath, like Prynne, like the unknown

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[326] Rose suggests that the struggle over and for Plath's archive illustrates the archive's interminable and unavoidable production of "a family saga" (see my discussion immediately below). The production, I think, is necessary: while archive readers, such as the narrator of *The Aspern Papers*, discover themselves among the archive's fragments, they also (and in so doing) cannot but implicate (themselves within) their family. This is evident in *The Scarlet Letter*'s narrator's establishment of his own trans-generationally haunted archival exploration and in *All the Names*' Senhor José's efforts to substitute archival connections for familial ones (and to begin a new family, perhaps, by wedding himself the Central Registry through an imagined liaison with the unknown woman). Vera Wollenberger and Juliana, however, also attest to the archive's imbrications with an archive reader's family: Wollenberger finds herself in the archive only after discovering that her husband trapped her there, while Juliana tasks Miss Tina with functioning as the object of the narrator's substitutive, archival affection.

woman, like Aspern, and like James, can only be understood in the context of the archive that contains her. This is not to say that the archive yields the body that the corpora's *corps morcelé* contains (105); instead, and as *The Aspern Papers* illustrates, the archive only ever yields fragments, it only ever provides its readers with the body in pieces. The responsibility of redemption, particularly in archives such as Plath's, where suicide makes redemption (more apparently) necessary, or James's, where his potential homosexuality may in fact be repressed, falls to the archive reader. What I hope I have made clear is that (and how) the archive reader, as mediator and medium, it also mediated: through his or her incorporation and assimilation—precursory processes to embodiment—the reader is incorporated and assimilated (105).

Plath's archive, broadly considered, exemplifies this reflexive relationship not only because she cannot and will not be positively identified or *saved*, in the sense of redeemed or preserved, from (out) of her archive or from (out) any of the bits and pieces contained in her *corps morcelé*, but also because every effort at this sort of identification or redemption expands her archive to include its readers, in part because those readers have so often been cast, by Ted Hughes, Olywn Hughes, or Aurelia Plath, for example, as publishing scoundrels.[327] Velody speaks to this, although obliquely, when he suggests that "what happens when an investigator reaches, or simply considers using an archive is an interesting question in itself, as the cache may require some kind of incantation to release its secrets" (8). The "interesting question" proves so because it demonstrates so

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[327] Rabinowitz makes this point in "Pulp Theory" when, playing on Anne Stevenson's *Correspondences*, she argues for a fluid definition of particularly feminist literary historians that accounts for their novel, biographical, and critical contributions to history and to their own contemporary politics. Their practice of "reinterpreting and rewriting narrative, reinscribing and reimagining history," according to Rabinowitz, ensures their own place in the "pantheon" (92-3).

much about the ways archives work, specifically about the kinds of investments they demand of their readers. In fact, the effect of requiring incantation from readers is a double-down on the part of the archon and archive: it consolidates the archive's claim to truth and reinvests its objects with the aura that provokes the reader's similarly invested responses.

These responses, as should be obvious to the reader of every dissertation, including and especially this one, necessarily expand the archive. This explains why Anita Helle focuses, in her introduction to *The Unraveling of Sylvia Plath*, on Rose's invocation of the *corps morcelé*, expanding Rose's reference to the "eaten body, the body consumed by culture" (6-7). Helle argues that understanding the archive as the *corps morcelé* means also understanding the archive as a mirror. Reading the archive, Helle implies, in a point that recasts in a critical mode the attempts made by the narrator of *The Aspern Papers* to incorporate and identify with Aspern's *corps morcelé*, means looking into a shattered mirror and seeing yourself not whole but likewise shattered. However, both metaphorically and literally, the archive-as-body-in-pieces and as appositely reflective mirror serves, Helle also argues, a "diagnostic purpose" (6-7). While it diagnoses archive fever, it makes such fever the natural consequence of the archive's stated attempt to contain and preserve a monolithic memory.

As the critical treatment of Sylvia Plath's archive indicates, *The Aspern Papers* and its narrator's conception of Juliana Bordereau as a *corps morcelé*, as a fragmented body that enables him to restage as identity-forming an expression of his own desire, does not merely reveal a most idiosyncratic, subjective, and unprofessional contribution to archival studies; it instead take a broad hint from Hawthorne to set as a convention the

archive reader's profoundly personal and therefore political struggle with the archive, which is also a developmental struggle with knowledge and with language and with objects, and which describes identifications promoted or necessitated by the archive that confuse or intertwine not only the personal with the political with the professional but also the archival corpora and detritus with the archive reader's corporeality. While most of the authors with whom this project engages illustrate and dramatize a similar convention, *The Aspern Papers* develops it through the trope, etymologically linked to "figure," of the miniature portrait of Aspern, the narrative's auratic fragment.

The portrait proves significant for all of the reasons I have so far discussed but also because it prefigures and therefore brings me back to the example with which this section begins. Edel, too, invokes the portrait when he describes the biographer's role. Again in "On the Use," Edel writes that "it is man's—and the given artist's—faculty for dreaming, imagining, creating that offers biography the best guide to the portrait that is to be painted. And when the portrait is done, then the best we can hope for is a good likeness; and at the same time it can be a work of art" ("On the Use," 48). Edel emphasizes "dreaming, imagining, creating," to counter the "modern" emphasis on the archive's role as the biographer's, or any reader of history's guide. In so doing, he expresses his own desire to confer upon himself, an inarguably feverish archive reader, his similarity to the artist he makes his subject: indeed, and as Edel points out, both artist and biographer—or here James and Edel—produce works of art. What Edel's formulation rather conspicuously fails to realize, however, and what both James and the contemporary archival discourse he anticipates emphatically underscore, is that the archive provides the place where biographers and other readers dream, imagine, and

create works that will not only count as art but that will also count as archival. Edel advocates burning, but what the portrait—saved from the fire—affirms is that "[w]e also come to the archive […] to feel the heat of those flames" (Enniss 120).

Coda: Anarchivaria, or Female Fevers and Fires

This project has striven to illustrate that fiction, from at least the mid-nineteenth century on, prominently—if variously—diagnoses the archival dis-ease that characterizes contemporary archival discourse. While my project accordingly works to expand the investigations and explorations of archive fever's aetiology currently underway among theorists, archivists, and other specialized and non-specialized readers of archives, it also works to identify within that aetiology its most persistent and metastatic strains. Fiction such as *The Scarlet Letter*, *All the Names*, and *The Aspern Papers* enables this identification and suggests, as I hope I have made clear, that archival dis-ease's metastasis depends on redemptive romance's recurrent germ. Defined by a reader's desire-filled search for and attempted resuscitation of highly significant fragments, the archival genre of redemptive romance takes on the pallor of disease through the designation of the archive or its fragments as feminine and the suggestion that desire's satiation depends on the suppressive, repressive figurative language such fragments require. Unlike *The Scarlet Letter*, *All the Names*, and *The Aspern Papers*, contemporary archival discourse does not straightforwardly invoke this femininity; it depends, however, on a particular kind of plenitude and fragmentation that in its solicitation of dangerous desires, in its coerciveness, and in its consent, may very well hold the woman that Ranke so influentially, and perhaps permanently, associated with archival files.[328]

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[328] Bonnie Smith, on whom Steedman's *Dust* rather heavily leans, has investigated the highly charged language—"sensual and bodily"—used by founding historiographers such as Ranke and Langlois to describe archival research. Smith, pointing to Rank's descriptions of archival fragments as virginal, as objects of his love and lust, and to Langlois's descriptions of the archival mutilations and "corpus disjecta," provides evidence for the particularly gendered focus such language has given historical discourse. Correspondingly, in addition to "provok[ing] this kind of imagery," writes Smith,

I do not wish, however, to suggest that contemporary archival discourse constitutes archive fever's rampant progression. I want rather to argue for archive fever as a constitutive factor of the archive that has only recently garnered methodical attention. Accordingly, despite the nearly one hundred and fifty years that separate them, *All the Names*'s substantive difference from *The Aspern Papers* and *The Scarlet Letter* depends not on its depiction of archive fever at a more highly developed stage of mutation than the fever illustrated in *The Scarlet Letter*, but on its more explicit depiction of archive fever's pathological morphology. While it demonstrates a metastatic condition whereby a primary site of dis-ease produces a secondary site that redefines the primary site as more productively malignant, *All the Names* and its allegorical status ensures that archive fever consists in not just a contribution to the "postmodern appreciation of the archive's position in society," but in a repetition of the archive's always feverish (because always productive of desire that can never be quite fulfilled, a hunger that can never be quite satiated) and therefore always postmodern status (Codebò 18). This is why Senhor José, unlike the narrators in *The Aspern Papers* and *The Scarlet Letter*, is explicitly infected with a fever that can be easily attributed to and located in the archive.

Indeed, Senhor José's infection even demands medical attention and treatment, and unsurprisingly, in *All the Names*, such attentive administration constitutes one of the book's defining moments.[329] A nurse, inexplicably hired by the otherwise a- or antipathetic Registrar to care for Senhor José's fever, dresses the wounds Senhor José

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archives "also provided a place where scenarios of pollution and danger might be envisioned" (1167). Cf. 137.

[329] Its significance as such depends on its illustration of a microcosmic description of archive fever's emergence and its designation of interminability as its perhaps most virulent a/effect.

received while breaking and entering into the unknown woman's former school to ransack its archive. As the nurse attends to these wounds, he explains to Senhor José that his attendance will require inclusion in the record of his visit because,

> if tomorrow you come down with a serious infection because of these wounds, then who's going to get blamed for neglect and lack of professionalism, me, besides, the boss likes to know everything, that's his way of pretending that he doesn't care about anything, All right, I'll tell him tomorrow, I would advise you most strongly to do so, that way the report will be confirmed, What report, Mine, I can't see that a few simple grazes can be significant enough to be mentioned in a report, Even the simplest graze is significant, Once mine have healed they'll leave nothing but a few small scars that will disappear in time, Ah, yes, wounds heal over on the body, but in the report they always stay open, they neither close up nor disappear. (110)[330]

Here, Senhor José's nurse, who also serves as an archontic nurse for the Registrar, is charged with explaining the anachronistic obstinacy by which Senhor José's fever, in the archive in which it is recorded, will be made to persist. By way of the allegorical status of *All the Names*, however, such obstinacy refers beyond Senhor José's feverish flu to indicate the obstinate anachronism of the archive and its dis-ease, an anachronism that helps to explain the existence of a canon, not at all obscure but unrecognized as such, characterized by redemptive archival romances that—whatever their historical context—

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[330] This passage, in its illustration of Saramago's predilection for eliminating the typographic marks that would otherwise enable an easy dissociation of speakers, reproduces the archival space, specifically as the Central Registry, wherein the searcher and what is searched-for become indistinguishable.

anticipate, inform, and appear to retrospectively draw from contemporary archival discourse. Contributions to this canon, specifically *All the Names*, *The Aspern Papers* and *The Scarlet Letter*, thereby constitute case studies or reports in which archival wounds, or fevers, do not heal, do not close up, do not disappear. While the patients that sustain such wounds or fevers do in fact—*must* in fact—*recover*, the very narratives that constitute recovery likewise persist in staying open, which is to say persist as fragmentary, or archival: they continue to burn.[331]

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[331] I would like here to point to Foucault's similar and lengthy formulation through Flaubert's *The Temptation of St. Anthony* in "Fantasia of the Library." Foucault's description of Flaubert's work and its contribution to the production of modern literature also describes the narratives that proceed from out of the archive:

> *The Temptation* is not a scholarly project which evolved into an artistically coherent whole. As a work, its form relies on its location within the domain of knowledge: it exists by virtue of its essential relationship to books. This explains why it may represent more than a mere episode in the history of Western imagination; it opens a literary space wholly dependent on the network formed by books of the past: as such, it serves to circulate the fiction of books. […] *The Temptation* […] is linked in a completely serious manner to the vast world of print and develops within the recognizable institution of writing. It may appear as merely another new book to be shelved alongside all the others, but it serves, in actuality, to extend the space that existing books can occupy. It recovers other books; it hides and displays them and, in a single movement, it causes them to glitter and disappear. […] it dreams other books, all other books that dream and that men dream of writing—books that are taken up, fragmented, displaced, combined, lost, set at an unapproachable distance by dreams, but also brought closer to the imaginary and sparkling realization of desires. […] The library is on fire. (91-2).

According to Foucault, reading, from the mid- to late-nineteenth century, produced dreams, produced the "true image" as "derive[d] from words spoken in the past, exact recensions, the amassing of minute facts, monuments reduced to infinitesimal fragments, and the reproductions of reproductions." Subsequently, "*only the assiduous clamor created by repetition can transmit to us what only happened once*. The imaginary is not formed in opposition to reality as its denial or compensation; it grows among signs, from book to book, in the interstice of repetitions and commentaries; it is born and takes shape in the interval between books" (90-1; my emphasis). I want to posit the archive as part of what takes shape in that interval.

To burn, in this sense, indicates both desire and destruction, both the reader's desire for the archive and the archive's desire for readers, both the reader's preservative-destruction of the archive and the archive's preservative-destruction of its readers. Promoted by and reflected in the relationship between the postulates of archival plenitude, archival fragmentation, and the postulate—or archival mandate—to save, the burning promoted by the archive assumes fevers of all kinds.[332] While my previous chapters have focused on archival destruction, on the archive fevers that burn and burn women—women like Hester Prynne, Vera Wollenberger, the unknown woman, Julianna, Miss Tina, Sylvia Plath—in particular, I now seek in this coda to modify archive fever's diagnosis by explicitly pointing to its productive possibilities. Specifically, I attend to two late-twentieth-century archival romances in which women explicitly rely on the archive's dangerous maternalism to author, through their destruction, the archival redemption they seek.

I therefore conclude with Eunice Lipton's *Alias Olympia* and David Markson's *Wittgenstein's Mistress*. Notwithstanding their meaningful differences, both narratives place a woman, and significantly a woman artist, at the center of stories about archival dis-ease and desire. Unlike the women featured in the preceding pages, however, Lipton's Lipton and Meurent and Markson's Kate speak not or not only to the repression,

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[332] My original conception of this project included a comparative chapter on James's *The Turn of the Screw* and Abraham and Torok's *The Wolf-Man's Magic Word* focused on the protagonists' (the governess in James's texts and Abraham and Torok in their own) explicitly stated efforts to "save" the victims that suffered in spite of their care (the Wolf-man's death notwithstanding). By situating their narratives as ameliorative, James's and Abraham and Torok's narrators erect, and not inadvertently, archives that contain their victims but that in so doing prompts a fever (evidenced in the critical apparatus that surrounds both texts) contributive to a kind of destructive salvation.

exploitation, and narrative absorption attendant to archives, archival fragments, and archival discourse; they instead emphasize the possibility of creating—of painting, of dramatizing, of authoring, of authorizing, of finding, of *not* finding—the destruction and thus also the ironic redemption of the female corpus they seek.

In many ways, *Alias Olympia* offers to contemporary archival discourse an epitomical strain of the redemptive romance I've made the focus of this project. Although its 1992 publication date suggests its self-conscious contribution to the archival turn, Lipton's narrative assumes instead that the turn toward recognizing the archive's dis-ease has long since taken place. Consequently, Lipton expects her readers will accept as unremarkable the archive's provocation of "pleasure," "paralysis and nausea," and "paranoia" (44-6, 96). Rather more unexpected is Lipton's straightforward presumption that the archive's dis-ease follows the archive's function as a place and facilitator of erotic desire. Hearkening back to *The Aspern Papers*, which she revises with an explicitly feminist agenda that posits the *missing* archival fragment—here again a painting—as meaningful, Lipton counters *The Aspern Papers'* narrator's "truth" by giving "desire" the first place in the "record" of her archival search (17). *Alias Olympia*'s subtitle, "A Woman's Search for Manet's Notorious Model and Her Own Desire" claims desire as concomitant with archival fragments, even and especially fragments that, à la Steedman, do not exist, while the last lines of Lipton's introduction emphasize that such concomitance makes every archival search also a search of the reader's past:

> As I set out in earnest to find Meurent, I kept losing my way. A two-step of desire and longing crossed by withdrawal and passivity. I had

> learned this dance as a child, but coming of age in the era of McCarthyism, Eisenhower, and Doris Day refined it immeasurably. Across this faraway history I started looking for Meurent. (16-7)

Accordingly, Lipton's longing is not only an erotic longing for Manet's model, through whom Lipton, like Aspern's narrator, can substitute and therefore fulfill herself; it is also—and in its very expression—an enactment of the redemption, which is the say the normalization through historiography, of Lipton's own "aberrant desire" (41). To this end, and claiming for and unto herself Aspern's narrator's "conquest," Lipton frames the record of her search by defining "aberrance" through her first, masturbatory, orgasm. Aligning her archival work to locate the fragments of "[t]hat face, those eyes" that "'no'" of Meurent with *this* climax, Lipton proceeds to posit her narrative as a historic redemption of women as self-possessed erotic figures, which is also to say as artists and critics.[333] Such redemption is both concrete and abstract: Lipton's expressly aims to rescue women artists and critics in and from the paternalistic field of art history, but her project also aims, and perhaps more surprisingly without the context provided by my previous chapters, to rescue women from the dangerous femininity—dangerous because of its maternalism—specifically associated by Lipton, as by so many others, with the archive (16).

I use the word "rescue" here to highlight the redemptive romance in which Lipton's archival project culminates. Lipton acknowledges her participation in the genre when she self-consciously considers her right to narrate her search for a female "hero," who, in the overwhelmingly patriarchal archive, simply cannot be located, (115). What

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[333] The quote reads, "That face, those eyes, that no. I wanted what she had: her confidence, her dignity, her 'no.'"

she also acknowledges (and similar to but far more explicitly than Hawthorne), is that the archive structures romantic and redemptive responses through its claim to and as a place *not* of memory, but of origins, of beginnings, and, as implicitly asserted by Benjamin and explicitly corroborated by Stewart, Saramago, and Steedman, of childhood, in which fragments enable the psychodramatic performance of the self.[334] Accordingly, despite Lipton's description of her search for a heroic Meurent as overwhelmingly frustrating—an often fruitless exploration of Paris's "veritable archival underworld" that yields and with few exceptions only already-discovered material—the very frustration of the search conditions her regression to earlier developmental positions wherein she can execute the potentially healing repetitions that will allow her to locate herself in the archive in which she ostensibly seeks Meurent. Even more important than the previously undiscovered fragments she ultimately *does* uncover in the archive (naturally only after she had already given up "trying to find more concrete material"), is therefore the archival search's provision, via its fragments (known and unknown alike), of that regressive environment.[335]

For Lipton, as for the narrators of *The Scarlet Letter* and *The Aspern Papers*, the archive's regressive environment gains its characterization as such by its proximity to dangerous mothers. Lipton consequently encourages her readers to associate her archival search not only with a psychodramatic performance of her childhood, but to associate the

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[334] In this sense, Lipton corroborates Derrida's restatement of Freud's (and Poe's) point (cf. 131, note 183) that searches, generally construed, structure destinations.

[335] This may be why "The End," which constitutes approximately fifteen pages, ends not with the previously undiscovered archival material sought by Lipton in the preceding one hundred sixty pages, but with Lipton's restated belief that the people who may know more about Meurent, "seem suspiciously secretive," with Lipton's admission that she now, like Meurent, has become a redhead, and, with Lipton's imagined production of Meurent's partial explanation for her own, self-authored, obscurity (174-5).

archive itself with her abusive, desiring, complicated mother, Trudy.[336] In fact, although Lipton's sexual self-awakening frames the record of her archival search, that self-awakening is framed by her explanation of an arrested-Oedipal childhood: she shared an intense "romance" with her father, but with her mother she was trapped in a suffocating maternal embrace; "[s]he threw me in a closet and tied me up. Nobody stopped her. Nobody knew."[337] The resulting physical struggle (spitting and pushing away) and the emotional evacuation (a "hopeless emptying of hearts") mattered little, however, in comparison to the relationship's staunching effect on Lipton's desire, an effect made mortifyingly obvious to Lipton not by that masturbatory revelation *per se* but by its very late arrival (only after her first marriage, after various lovers, and after her "Rumanian neighbor" John's point blank offer to help her reach what she had so conspicuously not yet achieved (35)). When Lipton's desire coalesces in Meurent, in the facial fragments—the face, the eyes, "unsmiling and serene"—which Lipton identifies as recoverable thanks to their correspondence in the archive's partial objects, she recognizes the opportunity by which she can recuperate what she still, despite her possession of her own sexual self, wants: that same look of desire that enabled Meurent to "go anywhere" (37).[338] Finding the archival fragments that attest to Meurent's self-possessed face—the fragments that therefore enable Lipton to impute to the archive a feminist and self-possessed

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[336] Her mother, like the archive, looms large in *Alias Olympia*: she withholds her intelligence (23), she appears, or perhaps pretends, besides all evidence to the contrary, to have nothing to do with erotic desire (36), her specter, sometimes in dreams, threatens Lipton's dreams of being a writer (46), and she embodies the archons who, in the French archives, deny Lipton entry, deny her access, deny her the *everything* she wants (63).
[337] Lipton's placement of the description of her first orgasm, the sexual awakening that her mother should have but did not tell her about, at the commencement of her archival search suggests not only that such sexual awakening should have occurred in her childhood, but also that the archive offers her the opportunity to situate it there (36).
[338] The parallel to *The Aspern Papers*' narrator is especially clear here.

womanhood—provides Lipton a mode of redemption—and from her mother first of all—that frees Lipton to go anywhere, too.[339]

To find and access this fragmentary face, to link it indissolubly to her own identity, Lipton must, through the book that displays her "*nachas,*" enact a Kleinian (re-)projection, (re-) introjection, and (re-)assimilation, Kleinian in the sense that it privileges dissociation, of the archival mother (both the *corps morcelé* and the phallic mother), on whom her pre-archival-search identity and development depends (33).[340] Accordingly, as she moves inexorably towards her book's publication, towards the biography of Meurent that will displace Meurent from the role she traditionally assumes in art history—as a drunk, dissolute, and degraded woman of "easy virtue"—and place her instead as a lesbian artist who lacked the designation "artist" because she sold her work "in order to live and performed these negotiations matter-of-factly," she also moves closer to displacing her mother as an embodiment of archon and archive. The latter displacement redefines Trudy's designation as the phallic mother (implicitly identified as such by Lipton, "'Ms. Psychoanalysis'" according to her friend), through Lipton's recognition that the too-visibly *phallic* mother, whose possession of everything makes her an object of deep desire but also of fear and anxiety, paradoxically hides or secrets the other women who also want or who also claim to possess a/the phallus (126). This is why

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[339] To "go anywhere" refers to an abstract anywhere/everywhere and to the more specific "anywhere" of the paternalistic discourse of art history in which Lipton was deemed to have "too many ideas" and to its reproduction in society in which Lipton and her fellow second-wave feminists forced their interventions (11). That Meurent was already able to go anywhere (although to places not recognized by her own cohort) attests to her relevance for Lipton and to the relevance of the "intricate psychological drama" in which Meurent, for Lipton, is implicated (15).

[340] As Foucault makes clear, there is no pre-archival self; what I mean here is Lipton's identity and development before she embarks on her literal archival search for Meurent.

Lipton's realization that Meurent has consistently been "invisible" to male artists and critics (visible, that is, only through her dejection), "makes [her] think of [her] mother" (155).

What sets Lipton's narrative apart from the other contributions to contemporary archival discourse that similarly illustrate the archive's facilitation of developmental space and that also identify and exploit the dangerous women who live or lurk therein is Lipton's assumption that the work completed by archive readers *necessarily* destroys these women (mothers, all, by virtue of withholding the phallus they possess) but that only by this destruction and dissociation do readers like Lipton instate in the archive and therefore preserve for futurity other mothers, including themselves, in the phallic mother's place.[341] This is emphatically not to suggest that Lipton (like Hawthorne, Saramago, or James) extracts or otherwise dispossesses from the archive its dangerous femininity; it is instead to argue that Lipton's regression back to the archive's *corps morcelé*, back to the archive's fragmentary plenitude, enables her to *re*define the phallic mother as not only an archaic danger signaling a malignant desire for everything, but also and *as such*, a negative and a nothing that can function as the facilitative, holding mother(s) defined by Winnicott and Bollas (and ultimately by Lipton, too) as therefore good enough.[342] Lipton accordingly refines Derrida's thesis regarding the archive's

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[341] Despite the argument put forth by Lipton, the "other" in other mothers does not universally mean "better." The narrators in *The Scarlet Letter*, *All the Names*, and *The Aspern Papers*, particularly in their erotic identifications with the dangerous maternal femininity in their respective archives, suggest that the role of "other mothers" is a profoundly political one.

[342] Unlike *The Scarlet Letter*, *All the Names*, and *The Aspern Papers*, Lipton in *Alias, Olympia* does not need nor seek total annihilation: by the end of her narrative, Trudy remains in the archive, her power tempered by the ascendance of the archive's other mothers.

simultaneous solicitation of preservation and destruction: whereas Derrida claims that archive fever develops as a consequence of the preservation that destroys, Lipton illustrates that archive fever develops as a consequence of a destruction that preserves.

Ultimately, Lipton's illustration, through which she claims her place from out of the archive as a woman author and artist—alias Olympia—depends on her explicit overlapping of "aberrant desire," and its denotations of wandering away, straying, getting lost, digressing, going *wrong* (which is to say certain forms of female desire), with the archive's historiographical interminability (41, *OED*). Promising plenitude, extending fragments as available for redemption, partaking in an anachronism that makes it always pertinent to the present by virtue of its future face, the archive signals its availability to aid in readers' regressions to earlier developmental positions by proffering feminized archival fragments as part objects through which readers can reconstruct their own identities. Clearly, Lipton quite reflexively recognizes, and without any remainder, the archive as a profoundly interpersonal space, a space in which women—dangerous and oppressive maternal women, in particular—must be suppressed, but also as a space in which repressed women can be resurrected. She does not therefore question or even note the archive's production of fevers; rather, she describes archival searches for highly significant fragments as wholly unremarkable in their solicitation of their readers' dis-ease:

> I'm struggling to pull Victorine's life out of the demeaning narratives that were written and the disgusting paintings made of her, but I know it's I who am stuck, I who am trying to pull free of some ancient sludge. I who am caught

> in a tale of longing and blame, with neither beginning nor end [sic]. (110)

For Lipton, its dis-ease facilitates its redemptive potential. Through her working through of Meurent's archival part objects, Lipton substitutes her phallic mother for a constellation of mothers, fragmented but connected, who also desire the phallus: Lipton herself, her mother Trudy, and her substitutive mothers and lovers Victorine Meurent, Linda Nochlin, Ken Aptekar, and Ida Bauer.[343] Subsequently, Lipton's rather anarchivistic substitution enables an assimilation of the desiring woman, "alias Olympia," back into the archive as a meaningful, which is to say extant, presence/present.

[343] I did not want to diffuse the focus of this coda anyvmore than necessary by including material on Ida Bauer; however, I cannot resist the opportunity to suggest in this footnote that Lipton's treatment of Bauer indicates that the archive enables this sort of destructive preservative work by prompting, for Lipton at least, a transferential relationship wherein she occupies the position of the analysand instead of that of the analyst. This relationship explicitly echoes Lipton's "mesmer[ization]" with Ida Bauer (112). Above, I referenced Freud's "Dora," the "fragment" in "Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria," as an illustration of Freud's archaeological and archival interest in using the unfinished, denotative fragmentary form as the medium for his narrative treatments, but Lipton references Bauer because she illustrates (and not despite of but because of Freud's censorship) that history views "aberrant desire" as woman. Although her treatment of Bauer suggests Lipton's repetition of the (Freudian) analyst's role, a recognition acutely recognized by Lipton when she asks after her own right to narrate her prescriptive search for Meurent, Lipton does not seek to make Bauer speak, nor does she speak for Bauer. Instead, and in relation to both Meurent and Bauer, Lipton positions herself as the patient who herself speaks and who, in speaking, recognizes that she who has herself also been managed as "a woman" is therefore "barren of women. Of a woman" (115). When, therefore, Lipton actually speaks, explicitly offering Meurent, at least, a voice (and a voice that emanates from but could not be located in the archive), Lipton highlights not Meurent's voice but her own. Here again, Lipton reverses James's narrator's silent assumption of Aspern's place: by refusing to break with her own tone, already established through her first-person voice, and by calling attention, at least typographically, to the bolded passages that express Lipton's archival rendering of Meurent's life, Lipton underscores her argument that in the archive the searcher and the searched emphatically and uncomfortably coalesce.

David Markson's *Wittgenstein's Mistress* provides in several ways an obvious echo, despite its earlier publication date, of *Alias Olympia*. In both narratives, a woman occupies the protagonist position in an archival redemptive romance: in fact, both the titular protagonists of *Wittgenstein's Mistress* and *Alias Olympia* are woman artists and authors, and in both their work as artists and authors, they self-consciously create, and therefore preserve, their own archives through acts of destruction. Lipton's narrative imagines an anarchivistic future wherein a potentially dangerous woman, through explicitly personal investments in the productive potential of destruction, destroys pieces of the archive to preserve on her own terms its dangerous femininity, while Markson's narrative pushes Lipton's archive reader into a post-apocalyptic, and apparently post-archival world of destruction. *Wittgenstein's Mistress*, which features an explicitly dangerous mother as not only the last remaining archive reader but the last remaining archon, envisions an obliquely (an)archivistic future in which an embodiment of the archive's dangerous femininity, set free from institutional restraints, nonetheless builds an archive through the fiery destruction of material fragments and a consequent preservation of fragmentary memories that, by virtue of their preservation, gain far more than testamentary weight.

Set in a dystopic future, *Wittgenstein's Mistress* centers on Kate, who calls herself Helen after Helen of Troy and who casts herself as the final, albeit incidental, Herodotus (189). Having awoken one "Wednesday or Thursday to discover that there was apparently not one other person left in the world," Kate searches culture's fragmentary detritus, "looking in desperation" for human connection (48). While her search and its abandonment indicate the trajectory of her madness, her relative health is illustrated by

her corollary attempt to communicate: she initially composed messages and left them on the street; later, when no longer looking for others and thus no longer mad, she composed messages in "make-believe Greek" and left them in the sand; and finally in the present of her narrative, she composes the messages of her narrative—the idiosyncratic and fragmentary history that attest to her search, to her destruction, and to the self-creation that constitutes her own continued preservation (48, 230-1). While Kate's narrative appears to situate her as a historian, her search among cultural detritus and its consequent record, which offers a partial testament to her madness, ensure that Kate also functions as the last living archive reader and, subsequently, the last living archon, too. Collecting fragments—from her experiences, from her memories—Kate offers not a personal diary but a narrative storehouse for the ostensible benefit of a future reader.

Despite fulfilling the roles of historian, archive reader, and archon, and despite her narrative's orientation towards the future, an orientation perhaps most obvious in Kate's repeated equivocation between first-person pronouns and the more universal, more potentially coercive use of the indefinite pronoun, "one," Kate's object cannot be considered to participate in archival discourse's conception of knowledge accumulation, communication, or explicit preservation. Indeed, the bits and pieces she collects and narrates signal not traditionally defined knowledge accrued from accessible experience or expert sources; instead, their provenance more often depends upon mis-remembered or mis-identified fragments—partial knowledge culled, perhaps, according to Kate, from footnotes and therefore indicative of extraneous, digressive, and *aberrant* information (which Kate may or may not have read, may or may not have imagined). These bits and pieces can also not be considered straightforward attempts to communicate bits and

pieces from the past: while the partial nature of fragments and footnotes necessarily assumes and invokes readers, Kate's narrative makes clear that her narrative's messages are self-referential and, like those written in unused streets or on shifting sands, will be neither received nor understood. The impermanent media of the street and sands also indicate her narrative's oblique view of preservation: while Kate records, she writes not only to remember but to forget. In fact, Kate's narrative revises the more familiar archival modes of accumulation, communication, and preservation through destruction: at the same time she writes—in the streets, in the sands, on a typewriter—and keeps messages, messages that cannot help but communicate, even if what they communicate is miscommunication, Kate burns.

The specter of fire, which fulfills a crucial function in *Wittgetnstein's Mistress*, occupies an important consideration in the establishment of archives and the protection of archival material. This is made particularly clear by the situation of the Stasi archives. Indeed, that the Stasi's originally torn files were saved at all depends on the fact that they were not originally burned. Stasi agents and SED bureaucrats feared that the appearance of massive smoke clouds on the horizon would attract the attention of an already suspicious population (a population perhaps particularly sensitive to the possibility that smoke clouds refer not just to fire but to the fact that something, or someone, is burning). Subsequently, the torn files were not burned but were stored in the "copper-kettle," a fireproof room designed for surveillance in the basement of Stasi's Berlin headquarters. Although contemporary German archivists lack the relative luxury of the copper-kettle, they, too, retain a system for protecting as-yet-unprocessed file scraps from the archive's most salient danger. The archivist with whom I spoke described the contemporary

system of marking with an orange sticker those boxes deemed "the first to be saved in [the event of] a fire."

Fire subsequently illustrates the archive's proximity to destruction and endows destruction with what Gaston Bachelard refers to as the totality of "apocalypse" (7). Fire also, however, suggests the burn of feverish desire. In fact, the correspondence between fire's literal and figurative potential to totally annihilate corresponds to the archive's potential to save everything, and this explains why fire looms so large in the archive's redemptive romances—in for example, the fire set by Miss Tina, which destroyed all, save one, of Aspern's fragments, or the fire set by James to thwart future publishing scoundrels, or the fire advocated by Edel as every author's right. Indeed, fire encroaches on Lipton's archives, too. Midway through *Alias Olympia*, apropos of a speculation about Meurent leaving "profession" blank on her birth certificate, she writes that "Ken told me an awful story that his friend Greg had related in a letter. A mutual friend's loft had gone up in flames and with it all of his paintings. Everything was gone. Imagine a life's work vanishing, just like that" (77). Lipton's rhetorical question, which implicitly asks the reader to consider *Alias Olympia* in the place of the archive's sometimes-equally destructive preservation, repeats Kate's fascination with fire, but Kate explicitly suggests what Miss Tina, James, Edel, and Lipton only obscurely and unconsciously hint at: fire does not result in absolute annihilation; "apocalypse," does not in fact refer only to "cataclysm" but to "revelation" (*OED*). The fire in *Wittgenstein's Mistress* endows not just fire but destruction itself with the "imaginative experience" associated by Northrup Frye with Bachelard's fire (vii).

In Kate's narrative fire therefore functions as a leitmotif that underscores Kate's capacity for destruction and, at the same time, undermines that capacity by constantly pointing out its futile aims at totality. To put this in other words, despite her desire to burn, Kate cannot help but to remember, if mistakenly, and to record, if disjointedly—"time out of mind"—for futurity (7). While Kate's narrative describes, explicitly and implicitly, her various efforts to destroy, she evidently cannot help but to return again and again to the houses, to the "artifacts and certain other objects" in museums, and to the books that she accidentally or purposefully sets to flame (10). These items, which taken together denote her domestic and cultural connections, constitute the "baggage" Kate must cast off in her necessary habituation to her isolated state, but their narrative repetition demonstrates that Kate's adoption of fire's destructive power, an adoption that defines her habituation, remains ineffectual and incomplete. By fragmenting—tearing frames from pictures, for example—and by burning, Kate attempts to master the destruction that defines her own isolation, but it is through the similarly fragmented narrative, in which repetition constitutes preservation, that Kate illustrates destruction's contribution to the archive her narrative constitutes (77).[344]

Unsurprisingly, the narrative invests the houses, artifacts, objects, and books that comprise the aim of her disintegration with an obvious symbolism that cannot help but refer to her status as both the literal and figural embodiment of the archive's dangerous

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[344] Kate writes,

> Actually, this is my second house on this same beach. The first, I burned to the ground. I am still not certain how that happened, though perhaps I had been cooking. For a moment I walked to the dunes to urinate, and when I looked back everything was ablaze
>
> These beach houses are all wood, of course. All I could do was sit at the dunes and watch it burn. It burned all night. (10-1)

femininity (15). Her destruction of houses, for example, which gestures to the house in which Derrida situates both the archive and its fever's genesis, also gestures to Kate's ambivalence and antipathy to maternal womanhood as defined through a traditionally conceived, although potentially archontic, "home." While ambivalence and antipathy do not necessarily equate to the sort of dangerous femininity—to the *corps morcelé* in which readers regress to a formerly fragmented state or to the phallic mother by which readers are rendered impotent—found in or imputed to the archive, the fire Kate sets to her former house in Mexico in which her young son died indicates her occupation as not only archive reader and archon, but as an embodiment of the archive's dangerous woman, too.

The destruction of the house in Mexico, the first house fire set by Kate, constitutes a screen memory for the fever of her son's meningitis-fueled death and the role Kate both did and did not play in that death.[345] Kate subsequently gains her designation as dangerous mother by virtue of the ambiguity of this role, an ambiguity underwritten by the eroticism implied in the possibility that she may or may not have

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[345] In her most explicit-evasive description of the events of her son's death, Kate writes, that there are,

> [S]urely as many things one would prefer never to remember as there are those one would wish to […]. Such as how drunk Adam had gotten on that weekend, for instance, and so did not even think to call for a doctor until far too late.
>
> Well, or why one was not there at the house one's self, those same few days. […].
>
> And even if it was nobody's fault that Lucien died after all.
>
> Although probably I did leave out this part before, about having taken lovers when I was still Adam's wife.
>
> Even if one forgets whether one's husband had become drunk because one had done that, or if one had done that because one's husband had become drunk. […].
>
> And none of what I have just written having been what really happened in either event.
>
> Since both of us were there, that weekend.
>
> And could do nothing about anything, was all. (225-6)

been with a lover the night her son died, but she also gains the designation by the very inclusion of this screen memory in her Herodotan narrative. In fact, Kate functions as the archive's dangerous mother because she is not only the last archon and thus indicative of its final disintegration in and capitulation to the *corps morcelé*, but because as the last archon, she is also the first. A woman and mother who sets fire to the house where she lived with a young son (first named Adam and finally named Lucien) and where he died clearly attempts to invert the Christian creation narrative. A woman and mother who provides a record of the episode, after an explanation that "[t]here [are] surely as many things one would prefer never to remember as there are those one would wish to, of course" (225), offers that creation narrative with its destructive substitution. Rather than the Christian god's conditional redemption, Kate's constant refrain of "I do remember," "I do not remember," "I seem to not remember," connects fire's destruction to the destruction of memory and therefore pointedly connects Kate's search for what has been saved with her desire to destroy the legacies that define saving as such.

Much as Lipton candidly assumes the archive's association with erotic dis-ease and straightforwardly explains the association by way of a dangerous mother, Kate explicitly assumes the role of dangerous mother in order to occupy an archontic role by which destruction, which necessitates narration, mothers creation. The assumption reveals that the archival dis-ease with which Kate is infected differs from the dis-ease that manifests in most of the archive readers I've previously discussed. Unlike the narratives of Hawthorne's narrator, or Baker, or Poppe, or Senhor José, or Juliana, or James's narrator, or James, or Plath's readers, or Lipton—each of whom is infected with a desire to search, to find, to represent, to preserve, to *save*—Kate, like Wollenberger, like Edel,

possesses a desire to search but also a desire to *not* remember, to *not* preserve, and to *not* save. When she sets her baggage afire, and specifically the house in which she and her family once lived, she therefore (and from the position of the last archon left) extends Edel's implicit illustration, via his explicit permission he grants to authors to burn, of the desirability of a post-archival future.

The danger Kate poses consequently consists not just in her position as the last archon and final, which is also to say first, arbiter of experience, and not just through her inherent eroticism, underwritten by her repetitive discussion of lovers, of masturbation, or of the "guilts" she feels consequent to her son's death. The danger presented by Kate depends on her fulfillment of Steedman's prophecy that "nothing need have been said or written in the way it has been…nothing at all" (108). Kate testifies to Steedman's formulation when, for example, she notes that "[o]ne is still prone to think of a house as a house, however, even if there is not remarkably much left to it" (11). She also testifies to the formulation through the connection she forges between fire's destruction and art's potential via her work as an artist. To put this in the parlance of the archive's redemptive romances, in the archive, desire's destruction promotes the language not necessarily of preservation but of creation.[346] Accordingly, the leitmotif of fire's destruction, and particularly the destruction that defines Kate's status as dangerous mother, is joined to the leitmotif of "a monstrosity of a canvas" that appears in Kate's narrative as a boundary-marking frame.[347]

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[346] See "Healthy Kate," Markson's short quasi-prequel to *Wittgenstein's Mistress*.
[347] "In a manner of speaking almost everything I am able to see, then, is like that nine-foot canvas of mine, with its opaque four white coats of gesso" (37); "everything that one is able to see, then, is like that nine-foot canvas of mine, with its opaque four white coats of plaster and glue […] it is almost as if one might paint the world, and in any manner

> Once during these years I did stretch one canvas, actually. A monstrosity of a canvas, in fact, at least nine feet by five. In fact I also sized it with no less than four coats of gesso.
>
> And thereafter gazed at it.
>
> Months, I suspect, I gazed at that canvas. Possibly, I even foolishly squeezed out some pigments onto my pallet.
>
> As a matter of fact I believe it was when I went back to Mexico, that I did that. In the house where I had once lived with Simon, and with Adam.
>
> I am basically positive that my husband was named Adam.
>
> And then after months of gazing set fire to the canvas with gasoline one morning and drove away. (24)

Initially destroyed only to re-appear in Kate's narrative first as the reason for Kate's debilitating sprained ankle and second as also and irredeemably "lost," the canvas evokes both the other canvases and the other fires she sets in the Louvre, the National Gallery, the Tate Gallery, the Metropolitan Museum, the Rijksmuseum, the Prado, the National Portrait Gallery, and others. While the canvas initially seems to point to Kate's failure to create herself in the face of her own destruction, the narrative in which she makes her canvas a trope ensures that in it creation and destruction subsist side by side. Further, because Kate no longer reads books, or reads but then tears up and burns their pages, her narrative constitutes the last and first fragmentary compendium of a past

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one wished" (47); "One moment I had been halfway up the stairs, and a moment after that I was making believe I was Icarus. What had I been doing was carrying that monstrosity of a canvas, which was extraordinarily unwieldy" (49); "So that almost everything I was able to see, then, was like that old lost nine-foot canvas of mine, with its four coats of gesso" (233).

indelibly rent by trauma, brought together emphatically not on canvas but on a typewriter. That is to say that when the lack of living connections makes materiality mostly meaningless, Kate offers in materiality's stead a fragmentary narrative written by the dangerous woman who inhabits what's left of the world, what must necessarily be considered an archive. Accordingly, as *Wittgenstein's Mistress* attests, despite its proximity to fevers, to dis-ease, to desire, and explicitly to fire, the archive persists through its feminine/feminized aspect. This is why Kate's own extinction is tempered by her material metamorphosis: "I turned into smoke," writes Kate, and although she clarifies her claim with "in a manner of speaking," fire's destruction and its transmutation of *stuff* into smoke's ashy immateriality emphasizes her own conception of destruction's provocation of its own, perhaps less tangible but no less indicative of plenitude in its fragmentation, replacement.

Kate's smoke expands self-referentiality to the archive itself, and particularly the archive represented through redemptive romances:

> But then what is there that is not in my head?
>
> So that it is like a bloody museum, sometimes.
>
> Or as if I have been appointed the curator of all the world.
>
> Well, as I was, in a manner of speaking I undeniably am.
>
> Even if every artifact in it ought to have made me even more surprised than I turned out to be at not having thought about Magritte until I did, actually.

> And so that even the very marker that Adam had promised to place beside the grave when I did not stay on for that had been in my head all of those years before I went back, as well.
>
> *Without there ever having been a marker*.
>
> God, the things men used to do.
>
> What do any of us ever truly know, however? (227; my emphasis)

Kate's desire to "go back," even to a place that, without a marker, is actually no-place, and even to render that no-place a place burned, indicates her feverish dis-ease. When she sounds the note early in her own narrative that "certain stories [are] gratifying to believe," and when she connects her own story's genesis to a madness contingent on creation's inversion in a destruction that does not save, or that does not save the object of hoped-for redemption, turning it instead to smoke, Kate implies that what the dangerous mother creates, what the last and first archon offers, is not only an integrative narrative of the past but what might as well be "something different altogether," something like "a novel, say" (228-9).

"Now and again things burn," Kate writes, "[An]d so bits and pieces of residue will sometimes be wafted great distances, or to astonishing heights" (29). I hope that with this project I have shown that in the archive things—pieces and parts—burn. The flames that lick the archive, evident in the archive's current assumption of an explicitly critical feverish position, can be attributed to the archive's production and solicitation of readers' desires, and contemporary archival discourse's response to these desires follow patterns established in the redemptive romances about the archive narrated in works of

fiction that, together, constitute a canon of archival literature. I believe that part of the utility of bringing fiction to bear on the current metastasis of archive fever depends on fiction's ability to reveal how and to what extent the archive, by virtue of its assumption of plenitude, its foundation in fragmentation, and its mandate to save, facilitates not just the self-conscious development of certain forms of capital-H History but the more unconscious development of a self as creative and destructive, too. As Kate remarks, in its feverish dis-ease, the archive may be something different altogether, something, perhaps, like a novel.

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