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Genre, Database, and the Anatomy of the Digital Archive

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GENRE, DATABASE, AND THE ANATOMY OF THE DIGITAL ARCHIVE

by

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this study was to define shared characteristics of literary digital archives, specifically to explore how conceptual and structural qualities of such archives express generic qualities. In order to describe digital media such as database or digital archives, scholars resort to metaphors, and this study offers the metaphor of *anatomy* as a generic inscription with historical and methodological implications. The definition of the anatomy genre draws from Northrop Frye's in *Anatomy of Criticism*, in which Frye describes how anatomies are characterized by proliferating lists, the mixing of prose and non-prose forms, and self-reflexivity—under the guise of knowledge accrual, investigation, and discovery.

Criticism from digital humanities, new media, historiography, literature, and archival studies informed this research, in particular critical theory on genre and epistemology, and research on physical and digital archives. Because the definitions we apply to our digital technologies are under development, this dissertation participates in the overall emergence of terms in digital humanities theory.

Several case studies analyzed the interface and underlying structures of four literary digital archives to consider how they represent the material past, and how design of visual elements and functionality manifest characteristics of the anatomy genre. The case studies suggest that literary websites, exhibits, and archives participate in the anatomy genre, but that some sites are more “anatomical” than others, and some sites do

not align with the genre at all. The ability to designate a digital project as an anatomy depends more on encyclopedism, detailism, and its continual updating, than on any other factors.

In addition, my own experience constructing a literary digital archive from historical manuscripts informs this investigation of genre, in particular my role as the researcher-archivist and how identity affects my approach to the archive. Historically, metacommentary has always been part of the anatomy genre, and this study positions methodological criticism as an expression of metacommentary.

The study concludes by considering the implications of literary digital archives for scholarship and research, including effects of power, institutional impact, and the profession of “English” itself, especially in light of the anatomy genre’s tendency towards proliferation and unfinishability.

For Jeffrey H. Richards, whose wisdom and ideas will continue to guide me.

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CHAPTER I

GENRE AND ANATOMY: THEORIES OF PHYSICAL AND DIGITAL ARCHIVES

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation examines how literary digital archives manifest generic qualities and theorizes on the construction of a literary digital archive. The theoretical and creative acts required by the journey of an archival collection from print to digital reflect genre, as well as relationships between digital archival methodology and existing generic forms. Because the definitions we apply to our digital technologies, unlike those we apply to print, are underdeveloped and under development, this work participates in the overall emergence of terms in the study of digital humanities; therefore, this dissertation addresses the need for a stable terminology while developing the definition of the database genre. Digital archives engage in epistemological formations of literary and textual history, and despite the widespread use and creation of digital archives, little has been written about the methodology of creating a database from the perspective of English studies.

Relevant literature for this research will focus on three major areas: critical theory on genre and epistemology; research on physical and digital archives in historical and literary disciplines; and digital humanities theory. The present chapter considers the scholarly conversation regarding database as a genre, and in particular, approaches to digital archives as a genre, especially the genre known as the *anatomy*. What, for example, does it mean to place something in a physical or digital archive, and how does

This paper follows the format requirements of the *Modern Language Association Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* 7th edition.

either practice affect how we view history? How does the act of archiving suggest aspects of the anatomy genre? How does genre involve both classification systems and the uses of a text? The second chapter of this dissertation focuses on bringing together the anatomy genre with digital humanities and archival theories, extending the concept of the body as a knowledge site—the archive as a “body of knowledge.” Considering the “archival body” necessitates confronting assumptions about the virtuality and materiality of texts and how we archive them physically and digitally. The third chapter consists of a methodology for creating a digital archive, including the role of the researcher-archivist and how subjectivity affects approaches to digital archiving. The fourth chapter includes case studies of existing digital archives that analyze the interface and underlying structure and meaning of digital archives in light of the anatomy genre. The scope of the case studies is modest, yet analysis of the content and form of these sites will suggest shared attributes of literary digital archives. The study concludes with the fifth chapter, which contemplates the implications of literary digital archives for scholarship and research, especially the effects of power, institutional impact, and the future of English studies.

Why Genre

This dissertation serves as an extended response to a forum on genre in “The Changing Profession” from the Fall 2007 special issue of *PMLA* entitled “Remapping Genre,” led by Ed Folsom’s article “Database as Genre: The Epic Transformation of Archives.” Like definitions of literary criticism, those of genre are inherently unstable. In English studies, reasons for generic classification are split between older and newer views—the older exercise of classification for knowledge or classification’s sake, and a newer emphasis on identifying genre for its social import or use-value. Recent activities

in genre studies suggest how to situate digital archives as a genre, extending, invigorating, and changing how consideration of genre has shifted over the last few decades. To Frederic Jameson (1981), genres are literary “*institutions*, or social contracts between a writer and a specific public, whose function is to specify the proper use of a particular cultural artifact” (106). Jameson’s turn toward broadening the concept of genre beyond the academy renewed interest in genre among scholars *in* the academy. Adena Rosmarin called for a renewed interest of literary critics in genre with *The Power of Genre* (1985), and in the following year Ralph Cohen, in “History and Genre” (1986), argued that although genres change for historical reasons, they are not closed categories, but processes. Thomas O. Beebee (1994) addressed the ideological aspect of genre with *The Ideology of Genre*, in particular the discursivity and instability of genre. Hayden White (2003) posited that historical, rather than theoretical, analysis of genre allows scholars to address how genre works instead of how different genres merit worth (“Anomalies”). Amy Devitt’s *Writing Genres* (2004) extended rhetorical theory of genre, asking scholars to see overlaps among linguistic, rhetorical, social, historical, and literary theories. From a literary and cultural studies stance, John Frow’s *Genre* (2006) offered an introductory guide to the topic and concluded that literary genres convey tension between historical forms and imagined ideal forms. The 2006 MLA convention included a panel entitled “Remapping Genre,” in which presenters reflected on the changing status of genre studies, especially in light of digital scholarship.

Genres are conceptually difficult to define because of their changeability—their constant invoking of past forms while suggesting the new. Tension between flexibility and stability parallels that between preservation and innovation. For example, Ralph

Cohen considers the shift from an oral to a literate society as one instance of generic classifications changing in response to historical conditions, often revolutions. Today's shift is towards a new sort of literacy, away from print to digital. Our digital works can reveal networks of social groups, discourse communities, and circles of influence, and creating new digital archives means opening new categories for intellectual inquiry and new categories of epistemology.

Because of continual changes in writing and publishing technologies, genre requires historicizing. With novels, poems, or other literary works, readers have interpreted texts differently through time periods, applying numerous critical ideologies and generic labels. *Moby Dick*, for example, problematic from a generic standpoint, allows multiple classifications of literary, historical, or generic categories and may be read as a tragedy, epic, adventure tale, or anatomy. All of these genres are possible to historicize and consider in light of social and cultural developments. When a genre is de-historicized, classification problems can result, because when detached from history, a genre's classificatory scheme appears to be absolute, reflecting only the genre itself and not its surrounding socio-cultural milieu. Genres are meta-critical constructs, necessary to studying literary history, but separate from the actual materials of literature, such as poems, books, novels, or manuscripts, to name a few. Paradoxically, then, genres exist inside and outside of literature. In our current age, studying literary history must therefore involve addressing representations of literature in digital formats and their participation in existing or new generic categories. Considering digital archives as a genre must, however, mean more than simply performing a classification exercise, particularly in light of how genres are consumed, read, or used.

To assign genres means to set limits, a paradox when a digital archive is—
theoretically—potentially limitless. To Tzvetan Todorov, Thomas Beebee, and Marie-Laure Ryan, understanding genre depends on identifying and naming features of how the genre is used, more than on formal features or rules. Kate Eichhorn asks how and when collections or information technologies become genres, noting that “[a]t the most basic level, what distinguishes a genre from a collection or system of information management is the presence of a voice (albeit not necessarily the unified voice of a single author), as well as evidence at the levels of content and structure that there has been an attempt to say something” (“Archival” 5). Surely editors of digital archives would agree that their work has a voice, or multiple voices, that express the importance of current historical and/or literary records. The editor’s voice, as well as those of an audience, point to the digital archive’s use, both by creator and audience (reflecting how this dissertation argues that understanding genre depends on both a text’s use and its formal features). Because of the prominence of an editor’s voice in understanding archives, this dissertation is largely influenced by the first-person narratives collected in *Beyond the Archives: Research as a Lived Process*, in which Lucille Schultz remarks that the authors of the essays in the collection “name the subjectivities with which they intentionally and unavoidably approach the print materials, the ephemera, and the physical sites they interrogate” (vii). Researchers write of their projects finding them in the archives, and not the other way around, examining their participation in archival creation. Such participation reflects the use aspect of genre, from the standpoint of the editor or creator of a project.

Anatomy and the Database Genre

The language we use to classify or describe literary digital archives has changed over time, and in order to describe digital media such as database or digital archives, scholars resort to metaphors, such as George Landow's and Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's rhizomes, Jorge Borges's labyrinths or library, and Jerome McGann's fractals. The metaphors all suggest branching, continual growth, multiple paths of information, and a sense of wholeness, attempts at complete knowledge, or encyclopedism. Northrop Frye argues that literary periods all create a type of encyclopedic form, "which is normally a scripture or sacred book in the mythical mode, and some 'analogy of revelation'" in other modes (315). In our current age, the central, encyclopedic form consists of database.

The term *database* is sometimes exchangeable with *digital archives*; it is important to note that whereas a digital archive may by strict definition be a database, not all databases are digital archives. More accurately, database is an over-arching, or parent category, to which a digital archive may belong. In this dissertation the term *digital archive* differentiates digital from physical archives or collections, and the term digital archive here indicates *literary* digital archives—specifically, databases with the purpose of collecting literary texts or manuscripts, correspondence, and ephemera written by or pertaining to documents created and used by authors who are part of the "literary world." Kenneth Price contrasts the "strict definition" of database as a technical term referring to a "collection of structured data that is managed by a database management system, most commonly based on a relational model," and a "looser" definition that works

metaphorically.¹ Lev Manovich, in turn, explains database in terms of cultural metaphors and is less concerned with the technical types of databases than with their cultural implications; his definition of database acknowledges a computer science definition while developing an argument about the social and cultural effects of database on narrative and on database as a genre.² Manovich contends that every web site is, in fact, a sort of database. At odds is how technical and precise to make the term database, and this dissertation prefers James Purdy's concise definition: "Databases are systems of categorization and retrieval" (15). Like Folsom, Price, and Manovich's work, this dissertation uses the term metaphorically, to encompass literary digital archives that may range from the loose concept that every web site is a database to the more strict parameters of the computer science definition.

These varying definitions of database can be situated historically in terms of genre. Folsom argues that database is a new genre of the twenty-first century, but it is, in fact, a manifestation of an old genre, the *anatomy*. Applying the term *anatomy* does present a few problems, though, in part because digital humanities scholarship is under development and its terms often shift. Price discusses this current instability of terms for electronic scholarship and how our terms are inadequate, calling for a "new term that is vivid enough to be memorable, elastic enough to cover a class of like things, and yet restrictive enough to allow us to include some scholarly undertakings and not others."

Anatomy is such a term, and the anatomy genre is not just another trope to add to the list

¹ Price continues that the *Whitman Archive* is "comprised of numerous databases (some public and some not) along with many XML files including TEI, EAD, and XHTML files" ("Edition").

² Manovich considers database as a "cultural form," and that in computer science, "database is defined as a structured collection of data . . . and therefore it is anything but a simple collection of items. Different types of databases—hierarchical, network, relational and object-oriented—use different models to organized data" ("Database").

of metaphors for database, but is a generic inscription with historical and methodological implications. Recent discussions point to an interest in digital humanities in finding appropriate terms for the database genre, as with Price's term *arsenal*, derived from an Italian word for "workshop," a term that emphasizes craft; the problem with the term, according to Price, is its militaristic connotation. While the term *arsenal* brings with it an etymologically meaningful history and the emphasis on creation, the term *anatomy* provides a richer metaphorical basis from which to consider literary databases. Even so, the term *anatomy* also catches in the mouth and is more useful for analysis of genre than for naming a site or actually discussing sites in the manner of "The Whitman Anatomy," for example.

Understanding the anatomy genre necessitates a brief overview of its parent genre the Menippean satire because the terms are closely related and sometimes conflated. The definition of anatomy in this dissertation draws from Northrop Frye's in *Anatomy of Criticism*, in which Frye explains the anatomy as the cousin to the Menippean satire, a genre that "spreads knowledge, proliferating ideas, expanding into an 'encyclopaedic farrago'" (311). Although the theories, history, and characteristics overlap, scholarship regarding Menippean satire is more abundant than on anatomy. Howard Weinbrot calls Menippean satire "the genre that ate the world," and W. Scott Blanchard's first chapter of *Scholar's Bedlam: Menippean Satire in the Renaissance* calls the genre the "form of formlessness." Mikhail Bakhtin proposed the polyphonic novel as Menippean satire, drawing a relationship between the genre and dialogism. This brief consideration of Menippean satire's breadth exposes how the genre involves a number of forms, including the novel, and how the Menippean satire, despite the word "satire," is distinct from

popular understandings of satire and is a more subtle form of intellectual wit than the overt parody or lampooning expected from most satires. Furthermore, the anatomy form of the genre retains the encyclopedism of the Menippean satire, but focuses less on parodic criticism than on accumulation of information and amassing of facts.³

The anatomy is difficult to define succinctly because it is, by definition, a slippery, transgeneric genre with unstable margins and an inherently paradoxical nature. More than anything, the anatomy is a genre of classification and expanding information for the purpose of representation. In a sense, then, the anatomy is a genre about genre, because it entails categorizing, and describing it reflects how the process of determining genre is an exercise in both understanding in how we classify and use texts. In other words, characterizing anatomy requires classifying a genre about classification, which itself is most concerned with organizing expanding information—or in the case of a digital archive or database—with expanding *data*. It is problematic determining the limits of a genre that is at once taxonomic and dialogic, unstable and corrective, sincere and ironic, and always tending towards circularity. Furthermore, the expansion of an anatomy is inseparable from how it is used by both the creator/author of the anatomy and its user/reader. Classification in an anatomy serves the anatomy creator, who represents the material contained in the anatomy, as well as its user, who reads and interprets the representations.

The term anatomy immediately brings to mind the medical term for dissection of a body—the actual, physical performance of an anatomy—and the descriptive anatomy of

³ As a manifestation of the larger category of the Menippean satire, the anatomy has not received as much attention as its parent genre. The genre received little scholarly treatment between Dryden's (1693) *Discourse concerning the Original and Progress of Satire* and Bakhtin's (1929) *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, and then with Frye's (1957) *Anatomy of Criticism*. In the twentieth century, Frye and Bakhtin renewed critical interest in the genre.

textbooks. Both of these, the action and the representation, inform the literary genre of anatomy. Dissection reflects the classification aspect of genre, and representation, in turn, affects the genre's use. The obvious metaphor of the *body of knowledge* is inescapable, and a look at the terms we use to describe editing and our relationships with media quickly reveals a list of body metaphors—*digital*, with its suggestion of the fingers; *corpora* for bodies of text; a *header* or *footer* as the top or bottom of a text; the *interface* for the surface or screen qualities of a digital text—the part with which we come face-to-face. Likewise, disease terms describe editing, print and digital alike; for example, “infected text” means code corrupted by malicious “viruses” that could crash or wreak havoc with a computer. The anatomist believes that the body and its structures can be understood through dissection, that one must cut the body (text) to know knowledge, paradoxically, cutting in order to make a whole (text). Cutting a body allows the anatomist to create a textual description of the body—to locate and define the parts before reassembling them into a whole. The first chapter of Ruth Fox's study of Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* is entitled “The Cutter's Art,” and the cutter, in this case, is Burton, who cuts knowledge into parts as an anatomist and author, but “cutter” also refers to the woodcutter at a Renaissance print shop, who cut the blocks for the printing press. The multi-layered meaning of “cutter” represents the intertextual nature of the anatomy genre. The body is cut in order to know it, is taken apart and then reassembled, metaphorically—textually. To understand biology, anatomy must be performed on the corpse, just as to understand bibliography, we dissect corpora—an action prior to generic classification.

Anatomies are characterized by proliferating lists, the mixing of prose and non-prose forms, and self-reflexivity—for the purpose of knowledge accrual, investigation, and discovery. Hans Kellner maintains that the anatomy “resembles satire in that it too is a *satura* (a medley or concoction of mixed fruits), and it too is saturated, sated, stuffed full” (162). The fullness, or attempt at saturation, dominates the impulse to create categories, labels, or tags. Two print examples of anatomies include *Moby-Dick*⁴ and Robert Burton’s (1621) *Anatomy of Melancholy*. Borges begins his famous short story “The Library of Babel” (often quoted in digital humanities and textual studies scholarship) with an epigraph from Burton’s *Anatomy of Melancholy*.⁵ The well-known story describes a library in which its inhabitants believe the library contains all the knowledge of the universe, with interlocking rooms filled with randomly shelved books of mostly nonsensical language. Librarians are brought to madness by the chaos, even as cults form with select individuals who purport to be able to decipher the codes. Such an idea of multiplicities of language, masses of information, and technical experts is the constant backdrop of the anatomic enterprise. As part of what he calls the “Tentative Conclusion” to his *Anatomy of Criticism*, Frye remarks, “Whenever we construct a system of thought to unite earth with heaven, the story of the Tower of Babel recurs: we discover that after all we can’t quite make it, and that what we have in the meantime is a plurality of languages” (354). Frye ends his book invoking Babel for the same reason Borges uses it in his story—to comment on the never-ending, self-serving nature of

⁴ Frye classifies the novel as an anatomy, and Beebee cites *Moby-Dick* as a text that “evade[s] generic classification” and also “discusses and theorizes its own generic instability” (19). Like Frye, I argue that it can be classified as an anatomy, but it is also characteristic of anatomies to theorize upon their “own generic instability.”

⁵ “By this art you may contemplate the variation of the 23 letters. . . .” from *Anatomy of Melancholy*, Pt. 2, Sec. II, Mem. IV (qtd. by Borges 112).

scholarship (a sort of ur-anatomy)—an important feature of the conversation about digital scholarship (to be addressed in the last chapter of this dissertation).

Digital archives shift our expectations of book-centered production, a transformation that is currently in progress. Literature must change and respond to the non-literary historical situation of information proliferation and digital textual forms. How we use and consume texts reflects the changing materiality of texts, from physical to digital, as well as the concurrent explosion of the amount of information available to us. Devon Hodges describes how the anatomy genre questions knowledge formations and the correspondence between words and things, whereby the “anatomy’s concern with this epistemological problem reveals it as a transitional form, a form uncertain about its relation to an older discourse of patterning or to the new analytical discourse of science that helps bring it into being. Its allegiance, however, is to the new” (18). As a transitional form, the Renaissance anatomy counted on the newness of scientific discourse, whereas the digital anatomy reflects technological discourse, past and present. The digital requires newness as it transitions from print media.

How we use digital archives reflects the “use value” aspect of defining genre, because although few would argue against the benefits of digital archiving technologies, there are numerous problems with making a blanket statement regarding the efficacy of all digital archives. It is possible, like never before, to publish information, but scholars debate the degree to which digital publication improves research and in what ways. What digital archives generally do, from a humanities standpoint, is to represent the material archives of boxes, papers, folders, and artifacts. As anatomies, digital archives represent and remediate massive amounts of material and data (not always the same thing). Thus,

although digital archives change how we do research, as a manifestation of new media, they are not entirely new and still depend primarily on print conventions. Anatomies, and by extension, database, mark a historical moment at which digital information replaces understandings of text, rooted in (paper-based) print.

Digital textuality requires us to question the authority not only of traditional texts, but of digital texts, especially the idea that information proliferation undermines an assumption of stability upheld by paper-based print technologies. But paper-based print genres are not necessarily stable either, and sometimes generic instability defines a genre, as with the anatomy. Digital archives can prompt us to question our quest for intellectual surety—how we use genres—and the anatomy genre forces us to confront the presumed instability of digital archives. We must also confront the ideological role of databases, which emerge as structures meant to help us seek information. Anatomies are genre-bending, forcing us to recognize that we expect certain writing styles and patterns when we read. We look to language and representation to do work for us—to present facts we can trust—in our literary and historical texts. When Stephen Ramsay considers what databases mean to humanities, he defines “humanistic inquiry” as an “activity fundamentally dependent on the location of pattern” (195). Pattern, which reflects the classification aspect of genre, affects the representation of knowledge and vice versa, so there are both ontological and epistemological questions in play. As researchers, readers, and authors, we seek genre, as much to fit what we know into a pattern as to create patterns from what we know.

An anatomy—generic or medical—operates with a synecdochic rationale, such that (theoretically) the more a researcher understands the parts—the organs—the more

she understands the entirety. Creating a medical anatomy necessitates excavating the body in order to create an organizational schema of the parts, whether on the surface or at depth. The anatomist cuts and constructs, dismantling and re-constructing at the same time performing an action that results in classifications. The synecdochic aspect of database works within a similar corporeal system, and part of its attraction is its vastness—the impossibility of reading an entire (textual) body. Literary digital archives are fictions, representing collection systems—parts—sembled by their authors, who create knowledge by disassembling and describing texts—the body. The archive/database creator cuts into the body of knowledge in order to enable or to perform discoveries. Just as medical researchers speak in terms of going deeper into the human body, both seeing and creating more detail in their representations with advances in technologies, textual scholars have the potential to create more detail in their digital representations or digital-anatomies. We cut and then we name. We add to original texts with markup, even as the digitization process also allows the continuing amassing of artifacts. In medicine, the increasing abilities to magnify—from the microscope to the MRI—parallel our capabilities to magnify texts with digital tools. The seeing and the creating of representations are inseparable, as we excavate in order to make a record, wherein creating an anatomy necessitates excavating the body, going through layers in order to create an organizational schema of the parts (a subject to be discussed in depth in Chapter 2). Scholars control what exists in academic digital spaces, both inviting the expansion of texts and enlarging our understanding of them.

Anatomies surprise with unexpected shapes of knowledge as we use them; history and its texts, for example, in the digital archive, create new forms and bodies of

knowledge that evolve and grow, at times into a grotesque body, like a textual Frankenstein's monster. With the anatomy genre, and database in particular, the irony is that cutting expands as it suggests added detail as an improvement on technological and spatial limits of amassing information. Herein the ironic and corrective functions of the anatomy are inseparable as the anatomist performs with self-awareness, knowing the impossibility of completion and of the instability of the genre in which she composes. Anyone creating an anatomy recognizes the potential endlessness of his or her task (a topic to be taken up in the third chapter on methodology and again in the conclusion of this dissertation, which considers the problems large-scale digital humanities face with finishing). The idea of theoretical infinitude must be addressed when creating a digital archive or database, and authors must consider how they limit knowledge by the structures and forms they use to write.

The anatomist offers representations as suggestions to improve the record, hoping to effect change. To a degree, all criticism serves as correction, and the anatomist might serve as revisionist, performing criticism through archival recovery and representation, even amending the canon. Often, in the digital humanities, a digital archive's subject is historical, born of the primary sources of the physical archive. *The* archive, as opposed to *an* archive, signifies the vast accumulation of undiscovered knowledge inhabiting all archives. More a metaphorical space than an actual place, the archive represents an ever-expanding—since the archive constantly accepts new materials—accumulation of texts. It is a place we can mine for discoveries. Likewise, the digital archive functions as the site at which we dig for texts, even while we create them, at once consuming and creating an anatomy.

DIGRESSIONS, DETAIL, AND NARRATIVE

Digressions in an anatomy often involve mixed modes of textuality, usually in an effort to elaborate detail, such in Renaissance anatomies, which often juxtapose verse and prose, and later in twentieth century anatomies, with the inclusion of diagrams, tables, maps, drawings, or other art. Hans Kellner describes how the earliest Menippean satires (in Roman times), the anatomy genre's parent form, alternated prose and verse but that later forms, such as Fernand Braudel's 1949 text⁶, substituted non-prose forms other than verse as part of the mixing of forms. For instance, Braudel includes maps, charts, tables, and paintings, all of which lead to what Kellner calls a "texture" of alternating verse and prose, with the alteration being more important than the forms alternated (172). Because texts found in a physical archive are likewise mixed, the digital archive allows revelation and representation of such texts; additionally, in a digital archive, the alteration of forms involves similar textures at the level of the interface and also in the less-visible deep structures of code. In other words, mixed modes in the database may consist of the descriptive text of a web page, the underlying code, and the visible layout of the page. Or the mixing may be of the text of a primary source document represented in an archive, which exists alongside the text's markup and metadata, as well as the code pertaining to the interface. Audio, video, images, and text often mingle on a "page." Furthermore, digital archives often contain manuscripts that are themselves of different genres—prose, poetry, personal, and public—and possibly from different time periods, thus mixing documents of the past with more contemporary writing. There may be a bricolage not

⁶ Braudel, Fernand. *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*. 3 Vols. Berkeley: U of California P, 1996. Originally published 1949.

only of authors but of language types—anything from images to newspaper writings to synopses of historical information, biography, and tags, to name a few possibilities.

As emporiums of such an array of textual forms, digital archives can serve as mnemonic devices, tools for memory, storage, and preservation. We consult digital archives because their capacity for vastness, but the size of such spaces can be problematic for such uses, at times reflecting Bert States's assessment of how anatomies allow the un-naming and the making strange. Digression in an anatomy is expected, and an anatomy's structure promotes departures and asides by its author, especially when a digital anatomy could include distracting detail such as links, or metadata that send a user in research loops. The anatomy has breadth, not depth, and anatomies are seldom read as a whole and are instead read in parts, as reference manuals. Often, the resultant digressions are productive, the stuff of discovery, or the reason and pleasure of research. The digital anatomist uses digital tools to perform encyclopedic discourse, and few users read the entirety of a digital archive or database, particularly not in any order. This is true of an anatomy and of database and digital archives, which hold the same attraction.

The digressions of the anatomy genre require a self-conscious proliferation of words. In order to question the validity of a topic, an anatomy relies on validating the same topic, resulting in the paradox of depending upon the thing of which it is suspicious. It is a process that reflects the practice of research itself, the creation of information from cognitive dissonance. User or reader behavior results from the organization of the anatomy, again reflecting the definition of genre in this dissertation as something resulting from both classification and use. Blanchard writes of how anatomies defy readers' expectations for a beginning, middle, and end (35). The digressions, as part of

quest for information, complicate development, or as Joel Relihan comments, “serve...to frustrate the reader’s (and the narrator’s) sense of the development plot or point . . . [with] the ruthless compilation of facts and information observed with an ironic eye, and an attempt to get all of life between the covers of the book” (28). The anatomies that Blanchard, Relihan, Frye, and others discuss are print codices, and a print anatomy’s attempt at comprehensiveness must occur within its covers, whereas a digital edition or archive permits linking beyond the “bindings” of its web pages. The form of the book suggests closure because the pages are bound within covers, unlike the pages of a digital text. As a codex, a print anatomy text, such as Burton’s, suggests the illusion of containment, even though the author’s ideas proliferate, and Burton saw his anatomy as a continual work-in-progress; but because it was a printed text, perpetuation occurred through its reprinting—as with the large number of editions produced during Burton’s life (and afterwards).⁷ Digital archives or database suggest continuity beyond what is allowed by a physical book, destroying what Christopher Keep calls the “*physical* mastery of the text” allowed by a codex (168). This sense of continuity is part of the design of the text, as well as something reflected by its use.

The architecture of the database-anatomy or of digital archives not only leads to increased interactivity on the part of its user, but to a need to consider how we construct narratives. The non-linearity of digital media is its strength, one that can lend a new geometry to historical interpretation and our understanding of the textual remains of the past. The topic of linearity in digital media has elicited much scholarly discussion, particularly regarding a metaphorical battle between database and narrative. For

⁷ Burton’s *Anatomy* was first published in 1621, and then in 1624, 1628, 1632, 1638, and then posthumously in a sixth edition in 1651.

instance, Manovich sets up a paradigm of database *versus* narrative, to which Folsom responds by considering that narrative might be threatened by database. In this battle, narrative needs protection, as chronologies and traditional scholarship come under attack. Database can allow iconoclasm, even, as representations of lives—biographies—can expand in directions not allowed by a printed page. Landow celebrates a new freedom of the reader, who can become more active moving through a digital text than through print. The reader's role changes as technology and media rapidly evolve, and a user might, for example, participate in an online discussion forum and even become a co-author. This behavior may or may not lead to new narratives, or as Manovich puts it, a new *language* that can re-create how we order narratives. Any user or reader could be constrained by the architecture and design of the digital text, and the assumption that new technologies are easy to use is often overstated, particularly in early new media theory (a topic addressed in the conclusion of this dissertation).

Serendipity is at work on the part of the researcher, and whether in physical or digital archives, someone at some point ordered the information, decentered or not. This ordering occurs in the creation of the archive, the classificatory activity inherent to genre. The *Whitman Archive*, for example, orders information by published works, manuscripts, biography and correspondence, criticism, media—including pictures and sound, and resources, such as pedagogical materials. These categories, found on the left-side navigation bar on the home page of the site, impose a structure on the information the reader will find therein. Within a site, hypertext can be organized to order and arrange concepts in sets that allow a large, potentially infinitely expanding, number of centers. McGann addresses the structure of hypertext in “The Rationale of Hypertext,” which

responds to the established norms for textual editing (W. W. Greg's classic "The Rationale of Copy Text," for one). McGann argues that hypertext textuality "operates as a radiant and decentered structure" (*Radiant* 25). The structures alter the researcher/reader's perception of time. Past, present, and future, are experienced simultaneously, even though the audience is constrained by the tale (a topic to be discussed in more detail in the two subsequent chapters of this dissertation). Our experiences of time are reflected in how we work with database and construct narratives, such that the episodic expectations and concurrence of times becomes exaggerated. Use and design can then either lead to breakthroughs or frustrated confusion and failure—or both. Digital texts might be more interactive than traditional texts, but the digital text is only as malleable or open as its author, editor, encoder, or institution intends or is able to attain.

In order to consider digital archives as representative of the anatomy genre, we should consider why the term *archive* matters. The term *digital archive* depends on the idea of a physical archive, not just in needing the term *archive*, but in needing the concept of a place or space where actual, material documents are stored and preserved, usually in an institutional setting. In digital humanities, often the term *archive* appears alongside of *digital edition*, which itself is a sort of archive—in the sense that a digital edition can include or store more information than possible in traditional print texts. Susan Hockey discusses the terminology debates within the digital humanities community, noting that the term *archive* is favored for a digital collection of materials that requires users to select how they navigate the text, whereas the term *edition* indicates scholarly amendments to a text that reflect editorial values that themselves suggest ways to navigate the text (14).

Price's consideration of the term *archive* offers a more precise view of the expectations of digital archives—that editing, is in fact, built in: “In a digital environment, *archive* has gradually come to mean a purposeful collection of surrogates. As we know, meanings change over time, and *archive* in a digital context has come to suggest something that blends features of editing and archiving.” The term *archive* encompasses collection, editing, authoring, and representation of materials, such that the term is muddled and imprecise. Its flexibility, though, is its strength.

The archive, in a sense, is no longer geographical, and users of digital archives are removed from the proximity of the body—the actual texts housed in boxes and files—in storage or special collections in libraries. The digital archive, even when not geographical, is anatomical, in the sense of the anatomy genre, and also metaphorically, because for a digital archive of the sort discussed in this dissertation, a database depends on a body of manuscripts or documents. Archiving or saving functions—some of the uses of a digital archive—represent a new facet of collecting, to the extent that making digital archives is commonplace, but literary digital archives must be something distinct, significant because of the story of its materials. They must function as more than digital museums of artifacts, despite how Manovich has suggested that a “library, a museum—in fact, any large collection of cultural data—is replaced by a computer database . . . [which then] becomes a new metaphor that we use to conceptualize individual and collective cultural memory, a collection of documents or objects, and other phenomena and experiences” (*The Language* 214). It is this effect on cultural memory that presents the long-term value—and consequence—of the transformed archive, and why the quality and

standards of how we construct our digital humanities projects matter so much (a topic addressed further in both the third and fourth chapters of this dissertation).

The archive, physical or digital, has never been neutral. An overview here of archival history and the workings of an archive will contribute to this discussion of the digital archive as a genre. Historically, archives were meant to function as controlled repositories of the past, with guarded and limited access. Archives were established as supervised spaces, which made research an activity under the watch of gatekeepers. Documents were kept to produce an authentic record, housed and protected with fortress-like custody. In *The Archeology of Knowledge*, Foucault examines archives as discursive formations, the never completed, never achieved quest of historians trying to authorize a view of the past. Physical archives have been the realm of historians, practitioners of the oldest social science, who positioned themselves as empiricists who were “not interested in arriving at scientific laws or even formulating hypotheses, often insisting that each particular ‘event’ had to be analyzed in terms of its own particular history” (Wallerstein 5). Historians made choices about what to study, and despite being under the aegis of empiricism, the choices were always interpretations. This sort of thinking not only established archives as a supervised space, but made historiography itself an activity under the watch of gatekeepers. Institutional controls—government, universities, or political organizations—affected national and cultural concepts about how we write the past, how we represent it, and who has access to the information.⁸ Likewise, digital archives, especially when they are standards-based digital humanities projects, are controlled repositories of the past, but an important difference is that they are meant to

⁸⁸ The story of the Dead Sea Scrolls is a classic case of limiting access. A small team of experts controlled who was allowed to study the Scrolls for the first forty years or so after their discovery; it was not until 1991 that the Huntington Library opened access to the materials.

increase access to materials, not guard them. It is important to point out that guardianship need not mean preventing access, but protecting documents for preservation and posterity, and most archivists and librarians today promote access to collections as a form of stewardship.

Because digital archives often depend on the contents of a physical archive, the items in a digital archive often already have an institutional history or pedigree. Manuscripts and artifacts arrive at a physical archive with provenance, a sort of ready-made history, whether or not accurate. Decisions are then made by archivists about what to include or exclude in a collection, choices inseparable from institutional and cultural expectations and power. When we address the changing nature of archives—from physical to digital—we must address how these institutional controls once again alter how we represent the past and how it can be accessed. The language we use to consider archives situates them as repositories of information, places to preserve the past. We must create systems to manage our collected objects. Antoinette Burton posits that “archives are always already stories” (20). They are orderings, classification systems, reflecting the taxonomic nature of the anatomy genre. Archives attempt to order disorganized items, resulting in the archival practice of categorizing things as they arrive, or if it is the case, as they are found, a principle known as *respect des fonds*, the practice of preserving the original order or the *fonds*, or “found objects.” The term *respect des fonds* imparts an idea of respecting, or honoring what is found, a sense of sanctioning an already-created historical product, which a researcher has been fortunate enough to discover. Additionally, the word *fond* also means “base” or “foundation,” suggesting a directional order to how we perceive evidence; origins are located at a base or root, and

from there we build up knowledge, even if we construct on footing often resulting from chance.

Acquisition contributes to the idea that knowledge can be owned, ordered, categorized, or hierarchically arranged. Once materials are “processed,” a *finding aid* is created for researchers, reinforcing the idea that records are “hidden” and await discovery. The practice makes the archive a scene of creation composed by author and researcher, what Barbara Biesecker calls a site of “doubled invention” rather than a site of a “singular discovery” (124). The past has been captured and systematized, and in a sense has been rescued and awaits resurrection. The metaphors of archiving overlap with those for recovering historical figures, the scraps of the past—with “recovering” as “uncovering,” a process by which artifacts are rehabilitated and revealed (to be discussed further in the third chapter regarding archival methodology). Carolyn Steedman refers to the archive a place of “longing and appropriation,” where a “whole world, a social order, may be imagined by the recurrence of a name in a register, through a scrap of paper, or some other little piece of flotsam” (81). The past has been captured and given an order, and in a sense it has been rescued and awaits resurrection. Archival terms associate the archive with discovery, and the archive becomes both a place to house and to discover *objets trouvées* or treasures. The public has faith in archives, such as the National Archives in Washington, D. C., where the Declaration of Independence is housed and protected. We rely on archives to preserve our national mythology. The archivist, then, acts as selector, arbiter, preservationist, maybe even priest, as the keeper of the faith. Before reaching this “stage” in its life as an archived object, an object presumably awaits discovery in a pre-mythological state. It is already important because it is in the archive

and has been processed. When the object becomes the witness, it can become central to a plot, so that scholars can become part of the history of manuscripts and texts by interacting with them.

A quotidian object can shift functions once its usefulness has past, and it may become a subjective representation—an object of history—much like the letters that form part of this dissertation’s digital archive project. At one time, these letters had a specific purpose to accomplish business between a newspaper and its writers, but once their usefulness passed, the letters were stored, probably in the editor’s office, and then later in a scrapbook, and later still in a university archive. At present their purpose is to make up part of a collection, having a subjective, not utilitarian function. The objects’ original usefulness becomes less important than what the objects mean, and a researcher ascribes value to creating information about items. Ascribing meaning in this way is part of the “use value” aspect of the anatomy genre, and illumines the continuum between classification and use. The process of shifting uses reflects what Walter Benjamin describes in *The Arcades Project* when he writes, “What is decisive in collecting is that the object is detached from all its original functions in order to enter into the closest conceivable relation to things of the same kind. This relation is the diametric opposite of any utility” (204). This might be true in physical archives, but in digital archiving, the researcher can assume that collecting results in a new utility, the audience’s ability to access the information virtually, and quickly. Often, objects are collected because of their ability to generate nostalgia in the person collecting, handling, or viewing the objects, playing into a larger sense of historical nostalgia—even when the objects have nothing to do with the viewer’s personal experience. We might feel nostalgia for a past

world unrelated to ourselves, a romantic sort of desire or fantasy. The object freezes a moment in time. When we encounter a historical object, much like the first time we visit a place we have seen only in photographs, we feel an intimate connection to our pre-existing knowledge of people, places, or time, whether real or imagined in our individually mapped fictions.

Jacques Derrida's seminal text *Archive Fever* describes such desire as a sickness, as Derrida confronts his longing for the past in the Freudian archive, where he tries to meet his desire for knowledge by delving further into the archive. This seminal text in theories of archives describes Derrida's longing as a "need" for archives—in the sense that "mal d'archive" is not so much a sickness as a "passion" to search through records that are traces of the self/subject, and that the historian/researcher tries to reassemble the traces/impressions collected or left in an archive. For Derrida, the archive is not only the site of cultural memory, but the site by which individuals structure their own memory, and ultimately, their identities. The self blurs with the archive that functions as a cultural medium, such that subjectivity is part of archival creation (a topic central to the archival methodology discussed in the third chapter of this dissertation). The archive is a place for transformation, a set of shifting rules for how we understand, conceptualize, create, and uncover knowledge. It is never complete, like encyclopedic knowledge, like the anatomy genre.

Without a text to organize it, knowledge is like a pile of parts—organs in need of a body—or in need of generic classification. As researchers, we perceive an object's importance, a stage in our pursuit prior to classification, a step before we create a textual body. We anatomize to create, using classification as part of knowledge production—

something that has always been a romantic enterprise. The anatomy genre—and more specifically, the database—provides a structure where the binary comes together—the empirical, in the form of data markup, and the romantic, in the form of research. The digital archive, as an authored representation, transforms documents and brings the unseen contents of the archive to be viewed. Julia Flanders writes of how the Women Writer’s Project (WWP) makes the texts contained within it “matter,” and “the central and originary assertions that this collection makes are that women did produce texts and that these are they, standing in witness on behalf of their creators” (“Learning” 54). The digital archivist creates a world—texts as testaments—and stories, and this act of creation depends on discoveries and subsequent editing.

The archive has a built-in narrative, as a researcher approaches the archive with anticipation in a romantic pursuit, and although her object may be to recover an under-represented history, the act remains inseparable from venerating the past, or seeing the past as a space that preserves material we can use to “correct” the historical record. As a place to find “corrections” for known history, the archive, physical or digital, has the use-value of restitution, restoration, or even reparation. Because of its potential to amend the past, archives bring with them the thrill of detective work, an archeological notion of excavating layers to uncover some forgotten past. There is continual hope in the digging, as one site is finished and a new one begun. A look through a week’s worth of American television programming provides an unscientific affirmation of how this narrative plays out in the popular imagination⁹, with shows such as *Forensic Files*, *Ancient Discoveries*, *Secrets of the Dead*, *Cities of the Underworld*, *Battlefield B.C.*,

⁹ It would be worth investigation, perhaps in a future study, to see if this fascination with archival materials in popular entertainment is a particularly American phenomenon.

History's Lost and Found, Lost Treasures of the Ancient World, Antiques Roadshow, History Detectives, Pawn Stars, and American Pickers. Certainly the relatively recent *DaVinci Code* craze is fueled by the audience's belief in the "correction" phenomenon. The description offered of *History Detectives* by PBS on its website¹⁰ reflects this fascination:

History Detectives is devoted to exploring the complexities of historical mysteries, searching out the facts, myths and conundrums that connect local folklore, family legends and interesting objects. Traditional investigative techniques, modern technologies, and plenty of legwork are the tools the History Detectives team of experts uses to give new – and sometimes shocking – insights into our national history.

The show makes the archive sexy, and its description reflects the belief that archives, attics, or closets might contain possibilities for re-authoring history—and, by extension—identity and assumptions that “need” to be amended or disproven. In scholarship, one way we offer “correction” is by recovering archival materials of historically under-represented subjects, *or*, somewhat conversely, by trying to find a minute aspect of a well-known figure's life or a much-studied event—an aspect that can re-invent a story, re-awakening scholarly or public curiosity. Frequent returns to the archive, in short, keep us in business.

ANATOMIZING THE ARCHIVE

Thus far this dissertation has discussed classification as one of the important features of genre, in general, and the anatomy genre, in particular. Like the archive,

¹⁰ See <http://www.pbs.org/opb/historydetectives/about/index.html>.

classification has a past worth reflecting upon, especially since classification is a fundamental aspect of both physical and digital archives. The sorts of classification systems used for archives are heir to Linnaean taxonomies and understandings of order, partly the subject of Foucault's *The Order of Things*, in which he examines epistemology, and how scientists organize phenomena. Foucault describes the history of classification, and how, at the end of the 18th century, Cuvier smashed his glass jars of specimens in his museum display—an action that represents a paradigm shift in how history was ordered and understood in Western culture—that is, a shift from ordering the visible to ordering the invisible, nothing less than reconceiving history as no longer object-centered but as language-based. Classification became concerned with language itself. Description requires ever-increasing detail as our technologies develop and allow us to see—or to describe—more. Knowledge organization reveals how each age has classified information, for example with Linnaean taxonomies, and countless taxonomic systems that have followed, in an anatomical trend towards classification in our research.

With archiving and classification systems, we create signifiers out of material objects or documents, as well as the immaterial notions we have about them. As Foucault writes of empirical classification systems and how the work of natural historians like Linnaeus used language to make history, we try to fill a “gap...between things and words” (*Order* 129-130).¹¹ Natural history, according to Foucault, became inseparable from representation, not only with the naming process, but with the advent of cabinets of

¹¹ “Natural history must provide, simultaneously, a certain *designation* and a controlled *derivation*” (Foucault, *Order* 138). Designation relates to and derivation to naming, deriving from, coming from an origin, branching off. Franco Moretti makes a similar remark about the relationship between convergence and divergence: “Divergence prepares the ground for convergence, which unleashes further divergence: this seems to be the typical pattern” of cultural evolution—to create a “cyclical matrix” (80). Moretti extends the idea by including convergence, making the process cyclical, whereas Foucault's description is linear.

curiosity, the early museums of Europe and America, which we can see as predecessors to our digital archives. In natural history collections, there was always a double nature, wherein unrealistic representations were meant to look realistic, and the displays simultaneously violated and celebrated nature. This double coded nature can be seen in Charles Willson Peale's famous self portrait in which he lifts the curtain to his museum; the picture acknowledges the artificiality of "natural" collections and is itself "artificially composed, deliberately overconstructed, as if Peale wanted to insist on its *fabricated* quality" (Irmscher 65). The curtain suggests lends theatricality to the scene, with the collection/archive/museum as theater. The collector is, and always has been an actor, part of his own collection, just as the anatomist is part of his or her anatomy, an important aspect of archival methodology.

Whether through the oral or written record or in specimen jars, display has its counterpart in preservation. The work of natural historians brought with it this desire to preserve and, subsequently, the beginnings of institutional archives. The drive towards mastery is an impulse related to archiving—both collecting and possessing. Elizabeth Yale writes of how early modern naturalists created archives to protect and preserve their papers, using print to preserve in the same way we use digital formats. These naturalists kept their papers and manuscripts the same way they preserved their specimens. Whether a relic is a specimen from natural history or a document, it inspires a likeminded desire to classify and then to display, in print or on shelves, or later, digitally. The researcher collects or anatomizes not only to make a record of the parts, but to display or share the record; the action is rhetorical and theatrical, with an imagined or actual audience. Anatomy has a tradition of theatricality, metaphorical and actual, both part of its use-

value, with an anatomy as a performance, as in the sense of a medical theatre or a lecture hall, famously captured in Rembrandt's painting "The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp" (1632) and Thomas Eakins's "Portrait of Dr. Samuel D. Gross" (also known as "The Gross Clinic," 1875). Grant Williams describes a public anatomy performed by Vesalius in Bologna in 1540, and while Vesalius dissected the corpse, the lecturer, Curtius, told the audience that dissection meant both cutting up the corpse and describing the cutting. Vesalius would hold up a body part while his assistant described and named the part. In keeping with such public display, and their goal of education, medical schools have a long tradition of teaching anatomy in an operating theater.

REPRESENTATION, ANATOMY, IRONY, AND MYTH

Our digital technologies allow us anatomical representation, even theatricality, and when the subject of a digital archive is historical, the anatomy genre becomes as much about the language used to write it as about events of the past, just as the language of classification surpasses the things classified. Historical representation, according to F. R. Ankersmit, values ever-proliferating representations, which often are re-inventions of past representations. Ankersmit contends that the Menippean satire, the parent genre of the anatomy, is our preferred "model of our relationship to the past" and that the genre characterizes the style and thought of contemporary historical writing (4). While Ankersmit does not consider digital media, certainly the database or digital archive-as-the-anatomy-genre allow us the explosion of representations on an unprecedented scale. The digital anatomist is a creator of systems, translating or remediating the physical archive into the digital, a process that is never-ending or incomplete. In *The Archeology of Knowledge*, Foucault writes of such incompleteness, noting that *physical* archives are

endless and are impossible to describe in totality, but easier to describe “with greater sharpness, the greater the time that separates us from it” (130). A necessary distance is needed between the historian and the artifacts. It is the distance of fiction and historical representation, a space in which history and texts overlap, as we create history from the materials of the past, often for display in a digital archive.

The anatomy, as the genre of historical representation, has the digital archive-anatomy as its latest manifestation. There is a clear relationship between the anatomy and how Foucault describes his genealogy in “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History.” Foucault probes into how the supposed uncovering and construction of micro-stories influences historical construction and representation. The guiding concept has to do with the part and the whole and the relationship between the part and the whole, an *Annales*-school approach. In the preface to his Menippean satire (parent genre of the anatomy) *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World*, Braudel admits that all historical projects must simultaneously contend with “conspicuous” and “submerged” history, and *Annales*-school stance (16). Authors must situate the hidden or archival within the known and the popular. They must create an addition to the known body of history, whereby the understanding of whatever object or topic is studied leads to the illusion of knowledge control—an action that reflects the same sort of work as an anatomist.¹² Regarding history and human faith in it, Foucault argues that “knowledge is not made for understanding; it is made for cutting” (NGH 154). His approach to historical study is marked by creating divisions, of looking at instances of the particular, an action or use-

¹² Writing about Menippean satire in the Renaissance, Blanchard argues that Menippean satire “exposes its readers to the common ground of a body, which, in its very anonymity, may be the only thing of which humans, in a pre-Cartesian universe, may be epistemologically certain” (30). Even today, it remains possible that the physical body serves the same function.

value inseparable from classification, the two guiding principles of genre outlined thus far in this dissertation.

When not aware of her own role in the larger enterprise of representation, a researcher labors in isolation, spinning off more and more interpretations of the past. The researcher looks for a gap, a silence to fill with her own voice, enacting what Emerson describes in “The American Scholar” with the myth of the unitary being, the idea that specialization leads away from the whole and that fragmentation means amputation, bit by bit. The researcher visits the archive, which preserves and stores the historical-textual body, looking for new material, an action that reflects how collections ensure our individual and cultural continuity, such that the motivation to collect and preserve is much like the motivation many authors have to write. The impulse to archive reflects an attempt to hold the past as it continually recedes. If not recorded, stories die as people die, and memory stands between past and future, with its recollection of the past in texts. Collecting happens in the present, as memory-making, and a possible genesis of stories (or a possible *naming as creation*). What we see becomes what we remember, but not without collecting, an action repeated in all narrative. Collecting is dialectic, like the story process, a performance of beginnings and ends with its own textual life-cycle.

Part of this life-cycle for an archival text involves its entrance into the archive. When collecting for an institutional archive, an archivist decides what is worth preserving—what to keep and, in archivist parlance, what to *weed*, determining trash from treasure. When items are first acquired by an archive, a record is made of their provenance, marking the pedigree or genealogy of the items, ensuring their institutional authority by virtue of the records. Records were and sometimes still are regarded as akin

to scientific proof, a view that has become synonymous with seeing records as commemorative data, even to the degree that with the creation of any archive, there is an ever-present threat of hagiolatry, cultural engineering, and monument building, what Antoinette Burton describes as the “evidentiary elitism” of much history-making, despite the good that comes from archival work (5). Objects serve as evidence of their times, and we archive some materials because of the sheer improbability that they have survived time, such as someone’s personal letters. When considering the collection featured in the digital archive created for this dissertation, one can wonder why, of the many thousands of letters exchanged in a given year in the United States in the 1880s, the letters entered the archive after beating the odds of being thrown away. These discards, and the detail they entail, suggest the research enterprise’s trend towards comprehensiveness, a characteristic of the anatomy genre, and in particular of our digital archives.

It is important to point out, though, that even though a researcher creates a narrative from the archive, this is not to say that all history is fiction; as Barbara Biesecker remarks, reducing the contents of archives to “‘mere’ literature or fiction” is the “most common and silliest of mistakes” (Biesecker 130). Verifiable evidence—veracity—exists. Even though the vanished world of the past often becomes part of a story world, there remains a material reality to the objects. These stories, our representations, can, however, present us with a new sort of seduction, one of access and speedy acquisition of information, offering a new space for preservation and access to texts, with attendant responsibilities of canon formation and reformation and questions of what warrants scholarly merit. As interpretive models, digital archives present an opportunity to consider the strategies involved in the writing the past, as represented

materials might be of interest to a large range of scholarship, including fields with opposing views of what “counts” as valuable—from Victorian literature to popular culture studies. Patrick Leary writes about how scholarship and research have been changed by the ability to access information online and how the “eureka moments in the life of today’s scholar-adventurer are much more likely to take place in front of a computer screen” than rummaging through trunks in attics or desk drawers (2). Database searches can lead a scholar to fortuitous—and even fortunate—finds, again the use-value of our digital archives. The search process has advantages over traditional research whereby virtually infinite hours in a library could not produce the same results as an online search performed in seconds.

Even so, there are caveats. While few would question the importance of expediting the search process, debates concerning how much to rely on new media for research have emerged. Large digitization projects allow a great deal of time saving, but there are numerous and growing problems with projects led by Google, large university libraries, and the Library of Congress; these endeavors must be seen as focused ventures that entail editorial decisions about what is included or excluded—choices that will undoubtedly restrict research when scholars pressed for time rely on e-text to the detriment of old-fashioned stints in the stacks. Digital collections do allow access to a larger range of texts, with the potential to affect the canon, but exalting the possibilities of access, either worshipping electronic texts as a savior of literature and taste—or as sites for reforming them—plays into the view of texts as sacred objects or evidence, a new sort of hope, fetishization or hagiography. We must, then, temper our welcoming of ease of use with questioning about access and quality of our work with digital archives (a topic

addressed further in Chapter 3, with a discussion of standards for digital archives, and in Chapter 4 with case studies, and finally in the last chapter, with an overview of the current and future state of digital humanities' projects).

As scholars, we must think carefully about what motivates our editing or creation of digital texts. Certainly, digital texts can alter cultural awareness and “the record,” as they have the potential to shape how, why, and what we study. Peter Schillingsburg considers the motivations for electronic archiving and how they can create problematic arguments of their own, including cultural engineering or monument building, and how archivists preserve the physical, whereas *editors* “undertake a miraculous process to reincarnate the texts from the past—or at least pretend to” (12). Schillingsburg chooses the word “reincarnate” for the process of locating and representing texts in archives, acts which always have unintended consequences, leading to the theoretical problem of considering if, in fact, the representation is the same text at all. Primarily, Schillingsburg’s approach posits authorship as a social contract, such that editing is not an act of restoration but a new creative act. One example of this type of work is the sort of literary maps discussed in Franco Moretti’s work. Moretti writes of how a critic can create a literary map by choosing a unit for study from a novel and then finding its occurrences, “*reduc*[ing] the text to a few elements, and *abstract*[ing] them from the narrative flow” to create a new “*artificial* object” such as a map (53). Moretti’s maps are not necessarily digital, but the process he describes is similar to the extrapolation and representation performed in digital literary studies. The product might result in a representation from which a reader cannot necessarily detect scale, perspective, and color. She might lose the ability to detect paper quality or other features that have

historically affected textual reception and status. Certainly, an aesthetic element is lost in the process, the smell of old books, the feel of leather bindings, or the slickness of faded gilt edges. A sense of the artistry involved in the creative act of book creation disappears, yet the disappearance of an aesthetic marks the creation of a new one.

In *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, Robert Pirsig divides human understanding into classical and romantic, with classical relying on form and romantic on appearance.¹³ If the romantic opposes the classic, according to Pirsig's definition, the romantic is not straightforward, but is adorned and emotional, as the classic is the opposite, stripped down, unemotional. Creators of digital archives must blend these two forms of understanding. Encoders must make the underlying form, constructing a blueprint from the romantic surface of the text—making the romantic into the mechanical. But the readers of digital texts can interact with the texts “romantically,” to the surface appearances, unless they want to look at the form—which can sometimes be revealed by a few clicks of the mouse. Most literary digital archives do not invite the readers to look at the XML, however, as opposed to the post-processed HTML, with the exception of the *Cather Archive*, which has a link at the tops of certain pages that enable users to access the source file of the page. For the most part, however, readers remain at the screen level, what Alan Liu identifies as a local site of transcendence, a romantic

¹³ Pirsig draws from a scene in Plato's *Phaedrus*, in which Socrates tells Phaedrus a “scientific” procedure for understanding the significance of a chosen topic—put simply, to define as a whole, and then to define by the parts. Socrates talks about the butcher dividing—about the relationship between division and knowing—and warns that the body should be divided as carefully as the logic of dialectic. Dialectic, then, functions like practicing medicine or anatomy. Socrates warns against “hack[ing] off parts like a clumsy butcher” but to consider “like-named members, right arm or leg” for example (265D-E; 266). A topic can be known the way madness or an ailment can be determined—by considering the entire body and then by examining the parts—by cutting the right or wrong way—per classifications—*like-named members*. Cuts reveal philosophical or ideological leanings, and authority rests in the hand of the cutter, an action manifested in the creation of a digital archive.

filter of sorts, which offers the perception of reality and sensory experience, but in the end is still a *screen*. Liu calls the computer screen the “postmodern version of romantic nature” (*Local* 137). It is an illusion, a barrier, a suggestion of something that is underneath, or even secret—a further irony of the database (a topic to be developed further in the next chapter).

Although irony is one of the most often discussed terms or topics in literary study, and the definition widely understood, it is worth considering irony as emerging from a discrepancy between appearance and intention, or as Frye puts it, “a technique of appearing to be less than one is, which in literature becomes most commonly a technique of saying as little and meaning as much as possible, or, in a more general way, a pattern of words that turns away from direct statement or its own obvious meaning” (40). In other words, irony signifies a discrepancy between the surface and what is beneath. The digital representations, after all, are still not the actual thing, but a representation of a thing. A digital text appears to be something other than what it actually is; a scanned image of a letter, for example, looks like the letter, but being digital, it is, of course, something entirely different, made of code or having textual apparatus, like markup, that is not immediately apparent to someone looking at the image on a screen. In this sense, the digital text is, as Frye puts it, seemingly “less than” it is, and the surface—or screen—is contrary to what someone sees, even with the simple click of the mouse to view the source code. And, even if a reader looks at the markup, she must know how to read the code to understand it, gaining a look at the composition of the digital text. But what of intent, the idea that the representation “turns away from direct statement or its own obvious meaning?” How does a digital representation of a literary text pretend to be

something other than what it is? Because a high-quality image of a text resembles the source text, on the screen, do we perceive it as being more pure or closer to the source text than a print version? Do all of our digital tools create ornate surfaces that really are, in fact, new versions of something old—new manifestations of print? It remains to be seen, as our digital tools develop, to what degree our technologies will our might take us beyond print, and in what ways.

Digital archiving of historical materials participates in a new myth-making, not only of historical representation, but of technological skills. As Brian Greenspan comments, our technological discourse “provides the contemporary correlative of myth, the discourse of the ancient gods” (30). Such discourse arises from our use of digital archives, to the degree that a humanities scholar savvy in technology has power not unlike the Renaissance anatomist, whose “pursuit of the final cause of structure, and his frequent ability to find it, made him seem both a metaphysician of godlike powers and a skilled investigator of sensible phenomena” (Kirk 4).¹⁴ The digital anatomist can perform a textual magic unfamiliar to traditional English scholars, but with consequences as the field of English changes. Technological representations might invite criticism of useless embellishment, or arouse mistrust. Some criticism entails how we presume that our digital representations give us access to texts, but it is worth pointing out that we claim access to texts, but it is access to *representation of texts*, not texts themselves. We take a potentially enormous array of texts and still, ultimately, package them into the experience of sitting at a computer. These experiences are not necessarily all alike or are all in one computer language, but texts represented digitally are, at least, all *digital*. We make

¹⁴I do not want to claim that digital scholars see divinity in their work, but want to call attention to how Hodges, regarding Renaissance anatomies, underscores how the anatomist saw his work as revealing the divine purpose of each part of the dissected body.

claims about possibilities of digital representation (expanding the canon, for instance), and we need to think about how on the other hand the experience of digital texts might be narrow—mediated by a monitor and keyboard.

The purpose of this dissertation is to examine such experiences and the structures that inform them, the interface and underlying parts of literary digital archives, and how these structures suggest the anatomy genre. Subsequent chapters focus on how digital archives create classification systems and the ways in which creators and users of such archives interact with such systems. The next chapter turns to the topic of detailism in order to develop a practical understanding of digital archival technologies and how they relate to the concept of database as a genre, particularly the characteristics and use of the anatomy genre. The seductions of digital archives are manifested by its methods of representation, in particular the detail allowed by markup, magnification, and the creation of digital surrogates. Chapter 3 explains how the digital archive technologies described in the second chapter are useful to a researcher creating a digital archive; importantly, a researcher's methodology regarding the creation of a digital archive involves explanation of classification and the use of his or her archive, both of which factors reflect the definition of genre in this first chapter—that is, that genre depends on formal features and use. The fourth chapter investigates how digital archives include detailism and methodology with four case studies of literary-historical digital archives. The concluding chapter investigates institutional implications of the digital anatomy genre.

CHAPTER II

DETAILISM: ANATOMIZING THE ARCHIVAL BODY

ANATOMY OF THE VIRTUAL BODY

More than any other characteristic, the anatomy genre requires detail. For a digital archive, the amount of detail is theoretically endless, and its potential enormousness prompts questions about reproduction, representation, and reality. To a degree, detail depends on what can be seen by a viewer, and the user's experience changes depending on how a creator of a digital archive increases the amount of detail of a digital representation. Whether number of pixels or amount of metadata, added detail can make a representation appear more real, and the ways in which creators of digital archive create such detail is the topic of this chapter. From a creator's standpoint, adding detail is a form of classification and elaboration meant to improve the audience's experience, and part of what this dissertation has identified as the "use-value" aspect of genre.

Our digital technologies are capable of rendering images of texts more accurately than ever before, often with the effect of surprise or delight, prompting reactions like that at the advent of photography. Naomi Schor discusses how prior to the twentieth century, photography astounded people by its ability to render details difficult or impossible to see with the naked eye or that were otherwise ignored (47). Digital texts offer the same allure, but some critics are skeptical of claims about revolutionary possibilities and the usefulness of computing tools, a discussion that reflects early criticism of photography. Folsom writes of how critics disparaged photography because of its "relentless appetite

for details, for every speck that appeared in the field of vision,” and how it “insisted on flaws and extraneous matter that a painter would have edited out of the scene to create beauty. But beauty, Whitman said, democratic beauty, was fullness, not exclusion, and required an eye for completeness, not a discriminating eye” (“Database” 1575). Here, Folsom’s comment moves from a critical view of elaborate detail as excessive, to detail as required for democratic beauty. The ornate can become inseparable from the democratic—or, in the terms of digital humanities and new media—from access, one that can be experienced by researchers, whether creator or user of a digital archive.

Photography prompted people to notice what they had previously deemed invisible, or it brought images of people and places otherwise inaccessible. The invisible was powerful *because* of its invisibility—its secrecy and mystery—or, alternately, the invisible was disregarded because it was impossible to see. Today’s digital technological developments follow a similar trajectory, and because of technologies of remediation, art or artifacts can be reproduced in facsimile and distributed to a wider audience than ever before in history. David Jay Bolter and Richard Grusin define remediation as the imitation, reinvention, and repurposing of older technologies; remediation is evident as each new technology borrows from and improves upon earlier forms of presentation and communication. Both immediacy and hypermediacy affect textual reception, which can involve a user’s understanding of a text’s ability to reflect reality, and, according to Bolter and Grusin, hypermedia. Bolter and Grusin regard hypermedia as a hypertextual, multimedia environment that is only the latest iteration of visual representation in the West, where trompe d’oeil paintings and photography have competed for greater and greater immediacy/reality, to the degree that even illuminated

manuscripts show us that hypermedia/multi-modal texts have long tried to mix technologies to approximate reality (11). Remediation involves the simultaneous destruction and adoption of an older media form—or at least its imaginary eradication; the process repurposes older technologies in an effort to achieve a close representation of reality. The erasure occurs alongside the act of replication. An understanding of the concept of remediation is particularly important when we address users' access to texts created for digital archives, texts that are parts of classification systems meant to reflect aspects of reality.

With increased technologies of reproduction, more people can access a work of art, though not the original. Availability affects the sense of a text's power, which is often predicated on its use either as sacred art objects or as scientific proof, and a sense of what Walter Benjamin refers to as "aura." Benjamin defines "aura" as a state of inapproachability and metaphysical distance, even of awe, a power of art held over from art's association with ritual and religion ("The Work of Art" 222). As containers for data, books—and more broadly, texts—are devoid of power, and their value arises with their use. Art's ritual value emanates from physical proximity or perceived proximity to its audience—which, in the case of digital texts, often depends on successful rendering detail. That is, it is more sublime or magical when it has provenance, pedigree, or proof, some of the qualities engendered by process of institutional archiving discussed in the previous chapter of this dissertation. Regarding this authority, reproductions cannot maintain the aura of paintings and other works of art, and the loss of aura, in fact, signifies the liberation of art from elitism and marks its ownership by the many—or, at the least, it makes art more accessible, when regarded from a socialist frame. In other

words, the archivist-as-guardian draws her authority, in part, from the aura of an object (as discussed in the previous chapter). The capability of digital forms to render elaborate detail can mark a return—albeit through reproduction—to the aura of a text—or at least suggests that a text scanned in high resolution is the next best thing to the original. As Bolter and Grusin suggest, reproductions can even create their own “auras,” such that “remediation does not destroy the aura of a work of art; instead it always refashions that aura in another media form” (75). Likewise, Fiona Cameron argues that digital copies have their own auras, and a copy can increase the value or importance of the original object (57). For example, a digitized manuscript of a Walt Whitman poem written in his hand is the next best thing to the original, and the presence of such manuscripts on the *Whitman Archive* increases the Whitman site’s overall authority. Paradoxically, through reproduction, we perceive closeness to an original text.

The digital surrogate may even become what Alan Liu calls a *manufactured original*, a hybrid entity. Describing a museum exhibit of the Spruce Goose aircraft, Liu argues that the “authenticity [of the display] depends on conflating the categories of the *natural original* (as it may be called) and the *manufactured original*. The result is that highly interesting synthetic category . . . of the *found original*” (*Local* 147). In the local situation of the display, the original, and the copy/reproduction merge. Functioning like “found art,” or “found objects,” the found original is a term for the display of art consisting of things not originally meant to be art, especially items that confound an audience’s understanding of what art actually is—such as Duchamp’s well-known Dadaist urinal. As with a museum display of a historical artifact, a digital representation of a historical text functions as a “found original,” whether in an online museum exhibit,

a university's digital archive, or on a disk; the point is not where the data is stored, but the moment when it is viewed—a moment of simultaneous invention between the creator of the display and the audience—an expression of the genre's use-value. In a museum space, we might be close to an actual object, but when we read about or view a text in a book or on a digital display such as our computer monitor, we can only feel close to it. Despite the fabrication of the "found original," the experience involves proximity to an object, and, like the experience of a found object, the experience can be confusing.

Actual or imagined, we conflate physical and historical proximity in our experience with texts. This feeling of proximity depends, in part, on a reader's ability to transport herself to an imagined place or space, that is, on the reader's perception of reality. The more real, more tactile, more anatomical and atomized, more detailed the digital illusion, the more authoritative it will seem. Mark Salber Phillips writes about the construction of "historical distance," the way historical writing necessitates imagining a reader's nearness or remoteness, or the perception of time or space between ourselves and a historical moment or object. Historical distance is historiographical, literary, filmic—in short, it is rhetorical. Reactions to museum exhibits, historical writings, literature, or films are responses to arrangements. Like the museum display, digital projects often show public and scholarly investment in creating a sense of correspondence with the past—whether for establishing a sense of closeness or for supporting notions of objectivity in historical reporting, or what is perceived of as a deeper understanding that comes with increasing distancing in time. With distance comes an assumption of objectivity, and with closeness comes sympathy. Proximity causes what Phillips describes as the feeling of "ideal presence" imagined by Henry Home, Lord Kames, a

feeling involving shortening the distance between reader and literary (or historical) representation, such that “ literary representation has the same power to stir the passions as actual experience, but only if the scene represented carries with it a high degree of vividness. This vivacity results in a loss of critical distance, turning the reader’s experience into a kind of ‘waking dream’” (Phillips 444). Furthermore, this experience is something a reader can repeat as often as desired, reliving the perception of closeness. When a representation is housed in a digital archive, the reader can repeat the experience at will, as long as she has access to the archive.

Many of our texts in digital archives are what we call facsimiles, which are, by definition, copies, but they are not exact, and even the term *surrogate*, as in “digital surrogate,” has shortcomings. *Surrogate* implies a stand-in, or parent, but the digital surrogate is more like the offspring of the original or parent text. At question is versioning—the number or types of versions, variations, or copies of reproduction, which are theoretically unlimited. Manovich considers the discrepancy between uniqueness and copy in a discussion of interface and database:

Database becomes the center of the creative process in the computer age. Historically, the artist made a unique work within a particular medium. Therefore the interface and the work were the same; in other words, the level of an interface did not exist. With new media, the content of the work and the interface become separate. It is therefore possible to create different interfaces to the same material. These interfaces may present different versions of the same work.¹⁵ (“Database”)

¹⁵ Manovich succinctly sums up digital composing: “In general, creating a work in new media can be understood as the construction of an interface to a database” (“Database”).

One could argue that it is no longer the same work at all, and that content/interface separation is not new to textual history. Different publications of the same content in book form occur, with resulting differences in book size, shape, jackets, fonts, ancillary materials, editing, etc. But what is new is the degree to which content and interface can change, the speed at which change can happen, and the reader's experience of the content/interface split. Alan Liu discusses the separation of content and presentation in digital textual authorship and delivery, arguing that the "very *ideology*...of strict division between content and presentation" is "at stake" because content might be revealed "only through an intermediary presentation that is purely interfacial"—in other words, at the site of the reader and at the moment of his interaction with the interface (*Local* 220). During such an interaction, an item's *perceived proximity* affects perception of its reality—a point that reflects Phillip's discussion of ideal presence earlier in this chapter. The focus of such an interaction often is on the outer layer of the digital body, the skin or visible part—the screen of a computer monitor or other digital device—and not on the less-visible parts underneath—the hardware or the data, or the digital objects and processes.

As our notion of the unseen shifts to smaller and smaller scales or depths, technologies capable of magnification develop alongside our efforts to display what we see. We can describe our experiences with ever-increasing detail and unprecedented expansion of information—the crux of the anatomy genre. As with medical anatomies, we use our tools to achieve, perform, and write about what we consider ever more accurate representations. Today's medical researchers know more about the human body than ever before in history; for example, imaging or virtual modeling might allow a look

at the brain at a level of complexity and detail impossible a generation ago. Likewise, today's textual researchers use technology to know more about the textual body—print, digital, and otherwise. The superiority of the machine-enhanced view to the naked eye depends on the situation—the research question, purpose of study, or condition or location of the problem, body, or artifact—and the interplay of these elements. The 1918 introduction of *Gray's Anatomy* addresses the role of vision in discovery, and the preference of the naked eye to machine-enhanced seeing:

The term human anatomy comprises a consideration of the various structures which make up the human organism. In a restricted sense it deals merely with the parts which form the fully developed individual and which can be rendered evident to the naked eye by various methods of dissection. Regarded from such a standpoint it may be studied by two methods: (1) the various structures may be separately considered—*systematic anatomy*; or (2) the organs and tissues may be studied in relation to one another—*topographical* or *regional* anatomy. It is, however, of much advantage to add to the facts ascertained by naked-eye dissection those obtained by the use of the microscope.

These concepts of systematic, topographical, or regional anatomy could be applied to textual study, and have counterparts in editorial theory, especially regarding digital work. What we think is virtual is actually “*physical* phenomena lacking the appropriate mediation to supplement wave-length optics; that is, the naked eye” (Kirschenbaum 19). The average computer user seldom looks at his or her machine's hardware. It remains

mostly hidden, covered by the outer casing of the machine, left to the purview of technical experts.

What is beyond the screen seems invisible and thus influences with the reader's assumptions about what is knowable. Our scholarship still focuses largely on what is seen on the screen—the interface, what Kirschenbaum refers to as a “bias in new media studies toward display technologies,” and what Nick Montfort calls “screen essentialism” (Kirschenbaum 31). Kirschenbaum elaborates upon how the “graphical user interface is often uncritically accepted as the ground zero of the user's experience” in our interactions with the virtual (34). The screen simultaneously makes visible and prevents—it screens—our view.¹⁶ The electronic text is distant, and the haptic aspect of textual consumption changes from the pleasure of holding a text to experiencing it through touching a keyboard or a mouse, an often unsatisfying, unromantic, synthetic experience of hard plastic under one's hands. The experience lacks intimacy, even while it can bring insights into texts that were impossible before digital technologies, and with it a sense of being closer to a text—even though it may be proximity to a reproduction. When working with a digital copy or facsimile, it is easy to forget it is a reproduction, and yet we can simultaneously experience the “otherness” (perhaps even sublimity) of the digital text and its counterpart that exists somewhere in the “real” world, most likely in a physical archive.

¹⁶ Kirschenbaum elaborates on this point: “At the core of medial ideology of electronic text is the notion that in place of inscription, mechanism, sweat of the brow (or its mechanical equivalent steam), and cramp of the hand, there is light, reason, and energy unleashed in the electric empyrean. Yet Clarke, Eco, and others among the first to write about word processors, both on and with their own home computers... were not simply deluded or wrong. Indeed, what was *new* about the technology was precisely that it succeeded so completely in rendering the workaday labor of textual production *fundamentally* immaterial” (39-40).

To see the reality of digital text readers can dissect—atomize—a digital text’s markup. A scanned image is not exactly what it appears to be—that is, a scanned image is actually binary code—ones and zeros in a data file, and if the reader is interested or skilled enough, the code could be accessed. When online, we can click on the word “View” at the top of our screen in the browser menu and then scroll down and click on “Source Code” if we want to see the code (though we cannot usually see all of it, such as a schema being applied to a TEI file, something discussed further in Chapter 3). But simply seeing the code does not equate to understanding it, and part of the magic of our technologies is the barrier between those in the know and those who need an interpreter in order to read—or break, as it were—the code. James Mussell comments on how scholars must pay attention in teaching and research to such “unglamorous aspects of digital production,” such as encoding (or markup), and that to do so follows practices of the history of the book scholars, who have set a precedent for looking at unglamorous aspects of textual production, such as “sales figures, paper quality and printing” (99). We must focus on our practices and revealing them, because text encoding translates, in a sense, what we see or can describe, and makes the information understandable to a computer; we anatomize with our markup, such as with TEI, the Textual Encoding Initiative.

TEI is the international standard for text encoding in the humanities. Syd Bauman and Julia Flanders describe it as a standards organization for humanities text encoding, an international membership consortium, and a community of people and

projects.¹⁷ The TEI, is an encoding language, or a vocabulary expressed through the computer language XML, and it is used to represent features of an electronic document in a digital archive or electronic edition. Scholars may find it useful for literary, historical, and cultural materials, dictionaries, or linguistic corpora, and in the social sciences, as well, where it could, for instance, be used to encode interviews that are part of a study. The TEI allows one to create and structure specifications tailored to a specific project. It is a form of descriptive markup that represents the structure of texts, and its features reflect the collective knowledge of scholars from a number of disciplines, initially by their meeting to standardize principles for textual encoding, and later by user feedback that is moderated by an elected council. As such, the TEI is social, but it is important to point out that although TEI is comprised of features defined by a number of scholars, it is not comprehensive, and when people encode texts with TEI, it is often necessary to create an “extension” tag set to describe textual elements that TEI does not anticipate. The TEI vocabulary defines what is called a *tag set* of XML used to encode, or mark-up, a text, a process not unlike working from an established set of comments marking a manuscript or draft in print.

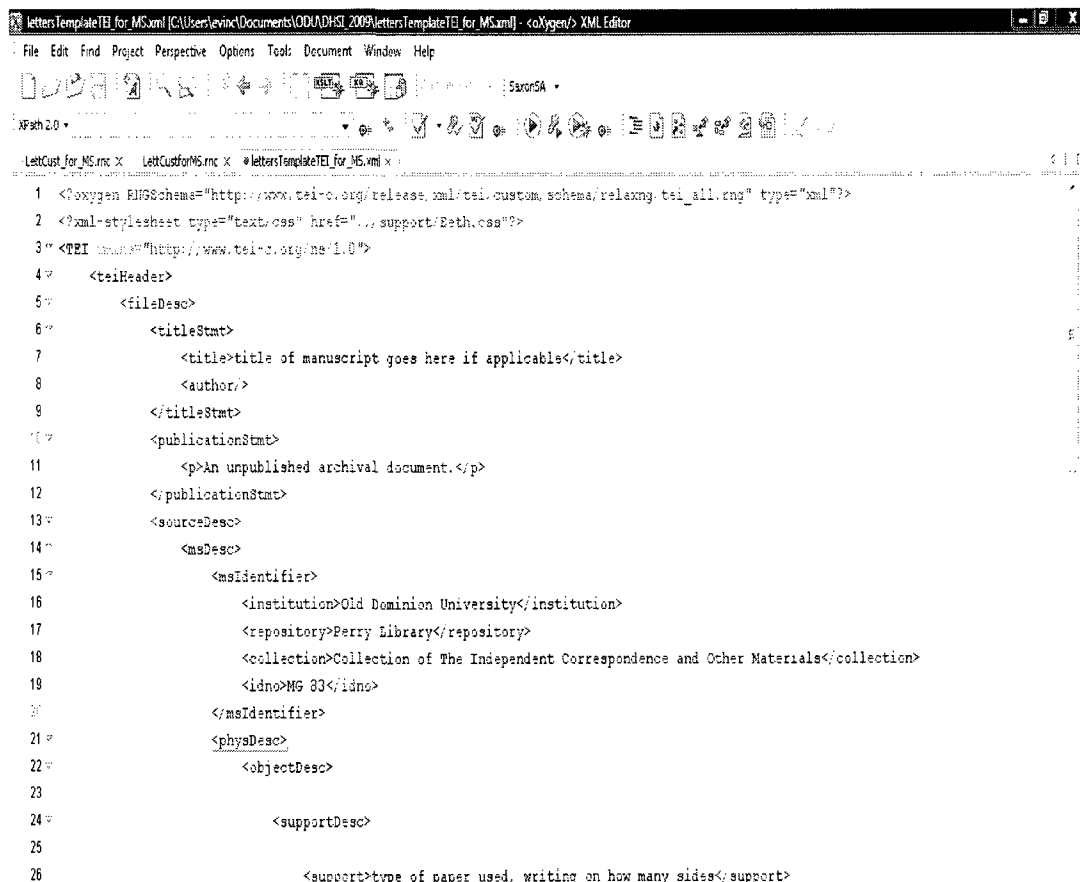
For the most part, TEI (and XML) are read by machines once the encoder has tagged a text; tagging involves describing characteristics of a text’s elements by labeling characteristics such as pagination, line breaks, chapters, sections, or other divisions, or it may involve emphasizing typographical characteristics, such as underlining or all capital letters. Tags are used in the searching process, when data files are sorted, ranked, or compared, for example, and all of these tags here reflect the tendency in the anatomy

¹⁷ This background information was first brought to my attention at a lecture given at the Digital Humanities Summer Institute at the University of Victoria in May 2008 at a class I attended entitled Text Encoding Fundamentals.

genre to classify. Two broad categories exist for the elements of a TEI tag set—those for the document itself and those for the metadata about the text being encoded. For XML and related languages like HTML and SGML, and for TEI’s descriptive markup—markup that describes text—tags are placed inside angle-brackets, around the feature of a text they describe; for example, in my encoding of letters, <salute> is the tag for a salutation; <dateline> marks the date; <physDesc> contains information regarding the physical description of the letter. Most elements can be modified or extended through attributes. Attributes limit and interpret definitions, and the creator of the TEI for a text wants to constrain attributes in order to control what can be entered about a text. For example, in a customization of the TEI created for this dissertation’s digital archive, “@rend” indicates how to render an element typographically, so that <epigraph rend=“italics”> will cause the epigraph being tagged to show up in italics.

The types of tags within a marked-up transcription of a text are different from those in a TEI header, which is a part of the document that provides metadata for the text and the file, such as date and keyword fields for the tags or other bibliographic information. The header specifies the type of document the text belongs to (often according to genre), such as drama, letter, or poem, for example (see Figure 1). Headers may serve as records in a library system’s catalog or as a sort of title page for the document. TEI headers are customized by individuals or institutions who decide what information to include, including information on how the file has been developed over time. The metadata in the header, like the set of tags created by the encoder, are driven by decision-making—what information to include or not. In the TEI header for letters in the archival collection for this dissertation project, some information can be changed,

such as a description of the type of paper used or number of pages a letter has (see Figure 2). Like a transcription, the writing in the header or marked up text is not neutral because it is created by choices made by its encoder or editor, reflecting the flexibility of the TEI can be applied strictly or loosely, much like a human language.



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12 </publicationStmt>
13 <sourceDesc>
14 <msDesc>
15 <msIdentifier>
16 <institution>Old Dominion University</institution>
17 <repository>Perry Library</repository>
18 <collection>Collection of The Independent Correspondence and Other Materials</collection>
19 <idno>MS 83</idno>
20 </msIdentifier>
21 <physDesc>
22 <objectDesc>
23
24 <supportDesc>
25
26 <support>type of paper used, writing on how many sides</support>

```

Fig. 1. Portion of a TEI header. Source: from the template created for letters for this dissertation project; page created by the author.

Before determining what to put into a customization for encoding, the encoder/editor should answer a number of questions, including who the audience is that will be reading the digital version of the document, more often than not the final product

on their screens. Addressing audience means that a researcher should always consider the relationship between classification—in this case encoding—and use-value. In particular, the encoder must decide what sorts of functions to provide for the audience, in terms of navigation, searching, and types

```

26         <support>type of paper used, writing on how many sides</support>
27         <extent>number of pages</extent>
28     </supportDesc>
29
30     </objectDesc>
31 </handDesc>
32     <p>Written by names of writer of manuscript</p>
33 </handDesc>
34     </physDesc>
35 </msDesc>
36 </sourceDesc>
37 </fileDesc>
38 </teiHeader>
39 <text>
40
41 <body>
42     <div type="letter">
43         <opener>
44             <name type="place">
45                 <lb>letterhead info if applicable </lb>letthead info </lb>letthead
46                 info</lb> letthead info</lb>letthead info</name>
47             <dateline>
48                 <date when="1880-07-13"> change date in this bracket and in red just before July 13, 1880 if date on MS</dat
49             </dateline>
50         </opener>
51 <p>Text of manuscript goes here. this is an example: he enclosed article written by my young English wife I send fo

```

Fig. 2. Portion of a TEI header showing where information can be changed. Template created for letters for this dissertation project; page created by the author.

of access that might be needed, such as for users with disabilities. The primary audience for the digital archive created for this dissertation, for example, is scholars and students studying American literature, especially nineteenth-century periodicals. The encoding of letters and manuscripts from an archival collection can provide access not only because of the limitation of visiting the physical archive, but also improves access for disabled

users who can receive the texts online. If, for example, there is an image or graphic element elsewhere that we link to as part of the file, we might use <figure>, and for users with visual impairments, we would have a description of the image, which occurs within the <figDesc> tags, that is the TEI tag for a figure description.

We must consider the effect of our markup or metadata as *metacommentary*, one of the features of the anatomy genre. *Metadata*, as the word itself implies, is data about data, or informational data made available to database users that helps to contextualize content in a database, such as the size and condition of a manuscript that has been encoded, its author, and where the item is stored. Digital texts have an illusion of objectivity because the surface is the first layer encountered by the user, an illusion that reflects the discussion of “screen essentialism” and proximity earlier in this chapter. Collection into tables, cataloguing in databases, and the appearance of metadata lend a sense of objectivity that belies the constructed nature of the documents, again underscoring the presumed authority of the archive. Metadata is present, but a user must look for it and reveal it, and users make rhetorical decisions that interact with rhetorical choices of the author. Marking up a text involves adding more text, and tagging could go on infinitely, at least theoretically—another example of digital anatomy’s detailism at work. At times, the detail and choices attached to it present problems, because in order to represent documents, we make more documents. This quality of theoretical infinitude is a quality of the anatomy genre, and is also a pressing topic in digital humanities research (a topic developed more fully in the final chapter of this dissertation).

When creating the detailism of markup, an encoder or institution either chooses a pre-made schema—a formal set—of possible tags appropriate for a certain document

type or makes a customized schema for the work to be encoded. The schema functions as a set of requirements, controlling the tags allowed for the type of document, such as a manuscript, poem, play, or letter. The TEI (P5 version) guidelines indicate that there is “no single schema encompassing the absolute truth about any text, although it may be convenient to privilege some schemas above others for particular types of analysis.” Tags, because they are labels, are always interpretive because they signify what the encoder (or team of encoders/editors) thinks is important, which sometimes requires making a decision to define something that might otherwise be ambiguous.

```

1 <?xml namespace = "http://www.tei-c.org/ns/1.0"
2 namespace al = "http://relaxng.org/ns/compatibility/annotations/1.0"
3 namespace rng = "http://relaxng.org/ns/structure/1.0"
4 namespace s = "http://www.aedon.net/xml/schematron"
5 namespace teix = "http://www.tei-c.org/ns/Examples"
6 namespace xlink = "http://www.w3.org/1999/xlink"
7 namespace xsi = "http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema-instance"
8
9 # Schema generated from ODD source 2008-05-29T13:42:24-04:00.
10
11 #
12 macro paraContent =
13   {text | model.gLike | model.phrase | model.inter | model.global}*
14 macro limitedContent = {text | model.limitedPhrase | model.inter!}*
15 macro phraseSeq = {text | model.gLike | model.phrase | model.global!}*
16 macro phraseSeq.limited = {text | model.limitedPhrase | model.global!}*
17 macro specialPara =
18   {text
19     | model.gLike
20     | model.phrase
21     | model.inter
22     | model.divPart
23     | model.global!}*
24 macro xtext = {text | model.gLike!}*
25 att.ascribed.attributes = att.ascribed.attribute.who, empty
26 att.ascribed.attribute.who =
27
28 #> indicates the person, or group of
  
```

Fig. 3. Example of a schema showing a portion of a customized file to be used for the TEI for manuscripts for this dissertation project. Page created by the author.

For example, the <choice> tag can hold alternate readings, including pairings such as <sic>/<corr>, for <orig>/<reg>, or <abbr>/<expan>. If, for example, an error is something made or intended by the original author, an encoder may choose for tags to be <sic> for *sic*, to represent text reproduced although it is inaccurate, and <corr>, which contains the correct text from the copy text. The <orig> tag is paired with the <reg> tag, with <orig> representing the unnormalized form of the original document and <reg> indicating the regularized or normalized reading. The <abbr> tag, for abbreviation, is paired with the <expan> tag, which holds an expanded reading of an abbreviation.

The amount and flexibility of tags depends on an editor's choice, as well as on the encoder—who may or may not be the editor. Editorial choices may even lead to an editor's sense of personal involvement with the texts she edits, blurring the boundary between editing and critical acts. An encoder's comments made through tagging always provide a subjective layer to the text. The sense of ownership is like that of an editor devoting a significant portion of her life's work to annotating a text for a scholarly edition or collection. As an example of this sort of subjectivity, Orlando project scholars analyze the interpretive work of the <intertextuality> tag, and discuss the impossibility of using textual markup to encode all possible intertextual relationships of a text, as intertextuality is like a living thing, always changing. In editorial work for digital archives in particular, because of such decisions made in creation, design, and selection, there is a blurred line among the tasks of author, editor, and encoder; these roles may even be assumed by the same person.

Authorship and editing act on a continuum, and editing is a form of authorship itself because it performs intensively critical decision-making and has its own

epistemology. Editors make choices about how, as in the work for this dissertation's digital archive, to portray work from the past, encoding and displaying letters or manuscripts that have only one physical copy, such that there are no textual variants other than the new one(s) generated digitally by the digital archivist or editor. Editing, from the viewpoint of Steven Mailloux, is a paradigm for critical and historical interpretation, including materiality, traditions of theory and practice, institutional and cultural locations, and involvement in ideologies, professional and other (585). In contrast, Schillingsburg defines archiving as collecting, describing, cataloguing, and indexing, but *not* editing (171). Archiving, if not editing, is also not authoring, if Schillingsburg's comment is extended, but the designer of a digital archive is more an author than an archivist who arranges a physical collection. It may depend on, as William G. Thomas puts it, the "stage" of authorship at which the texts have arrived. Authorship becomes even more complex in a digital archive, where archiving, authoring, and editing become inseparable. The question of authorship centers on where the creator situates herself in the process of creating a digital archive, and a creator who singles out any subject sets limits. The digital archive is always a *bricolage*, as Derrida describes in "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences," a discourse that reflects existing discourses, with infinite possibilities of reflexivity and reproduction, the origins of which are inaccessible.

Often, digital projects that reside online do not publicize (deliberately or not) the author or authors' names of the project itself. This can lead to what Thomas, in "Computing and the Historical Imagination," recognizes as a problem for digital archives, in that they "might appear for many users as undifferentiated collections of

evidence,” that are “often themselves an interpretative model open for reading and inquiry, and the objects within them, whether marked-up texts or hypermedia maps, derive from a complex series of authored stages” (65). Once an encoder has edited a text, for example, by marking it up in TEI, there is another step of editing necessary to control the presentation of a text. He or she must create stylesheets, and choices about how to present text with stylesheets can vary widely, as does the descriptive markup of the text in TEI. Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) or Extensible Stylesheet Language Transformations (XSLT) are two style sheet languages used to transform a TEI file for representation in a browser on a user’s screen (see Figure 4). One type of data, such as XML, must be transformed into another, such as HTML, in order to be capable of display in a browser. XSLT transforms one type of data into another, after which CSS styles the display’s aesthetics. For example, styling could be used to change the background color of a letter on a user’s screen, the margin widths, fonts by type, size, and color, borders, or even what the cursor looks like. A CSS stylesheet contains a set of rules that perform several functions, including selecting which elements in a document will be styled, identifying style properties, such the ones mentioned in the previous sentence, and attaching values to the style properties. For example, *border-width* is a style property, and a value that could be attached to it may be *2px*, if one wants the border to be two pixels.

ANATOMIZING MATERIALITY: DETAIL, DISCOVERY, AND READING

Creators of digital archives try to counter ambiguity and the flatness of our digital representations by amassing detail—more views of an object, more tags to describe it (more metadata)—always more—often to represent what is not ambiguous in our

experience of print texts—what we touch and what we see, especially. As such, detailism works towards closing a gap between object and user, making the proximity closer, and, as previously discussed, affecting what is called ideal presence. Physical distance from an object does not determine its virtuality or physicality, but our perception of physical distance does. Even though it is true that computer hardware has a real physicality, storage and curation problems can and often do entail loss to individual users, something we often understand—or misunderstand—as textual ephemerality. This is not to say that digital texts do not disappear, often due to human error—the accidental deletion—or to

An unpublished archival document.
 Old Dominion University
 Perry Library
 Collection of The Independent Correspondence and Other Materials
 MG 83
 single page with pre-printed letterhead, writing on one side only 1 pages
 Written by P. T. Barnum.

Office of
 P. T. Barnum
 Barnum Building
 Main St.
 Bridgeport, Conn.
 July 13, 1880

PRIVATE

Editor of the Independent

The enclosed article written by my young English wife I send for your consideration and for publication in the Independent never written for American magazines or journals. But she wrote anonymously an article for Edmund Yates' London consideration is asked for this article but if you should desire anything more [2] from her pen—the fact that it [be:

Truly yours,

P. T. Barnum

Fig. 4. Portion of a TEI file of a letter in a browser after CSS has been applied. Image cropped to fit. Page created by the author.

changes or problems in hardware or software, such as data migration. These are problems of use, in part stemming from continual shifts in hardware and software

platforms, which, at the least, create an experience of instability—a paradoxically predictable unreliability—and a key feature of the anatomy genre.

Folsom argues that an archive (in a building) suggests physicality, whereas database suggests virtuality. While Folsom does not say database “is” virtual, a number of scholars have discussed the virtuality of digital textuality, a move that leads to erroneous claims about digital texts, especially regarding their materiality (often equated with physicality) and ephemerality. A machine’s data is extremely small, but it is not *virtual* (Kirschenbaum 66). Digital texts have their own materiality. Data such as emails are often stored on a number of servers, and rarely disappear without leaving a trace somewhere. Electronic text is, after all, material. Johanna Drucker insists on the materiality of code, and as Kirschenbaum aptly puts, code it is not as “hopelessly ephemeral” as early new media theorists postulated (50). What is important, according to Kirschenbaum, is that the “digital environment” appears to be immaterial, but it is not, and is, in fact, “an “abstract projection supported and sustained by its capacity to propagate the illusion (or call it a working model) of *immaterial* behavior: identification without ambiguity, transmission without loss, repetition without originality” (11). We might click on a link to find it broken, but the data still exists somewhere, or at the very least, a trace of it remains; the original data is likely to exist somewhere on an individual’s hard drive, flash (or thumb) drive, on a CD—but is not altogether gone or erased.¹⁸ Although this usually does not affect how scholars, editors, or readers receive or read a text, the trace remains of a physical document or of data nevertheless reflects a

¹⁸ See Kirschenbaum’s *Mechanisms* for more on the concept of complete erasure (pp. 50-53; 70-71; and Kirschenbaum’s entire second chapter on hard drive inscription).

textual “life” of information, reflecting the anatomy genre’s tendency to accrue excessive detail.

It is more accurate to consider digital texts as having ambiguous materiality than as being virtual or ephemeral. We perceive the ambiguity because of our experiences of how long we can hold or read a print text, and how when finished reading we can physically set a book, or other text such as a photograph, on a shelf and return later to retrieve it at will. Diana Kichuk comments that photographs have the same ambiguous materiality as digital images, which are made of matrixes of dots, but that photographs are different from screen images on a computer because they “have duration and take up space” (296). Likewise, screen images technically do have duration and take up space, but we do not perceive them that way. Nevertheless, a scholar may feel closer to an original with a better quality reproduction and experience the illusion of closeness. Beyond the average user’s experiences with our keyboards and interfaces, the amount of detail in a digital text that we choose to see depends on how much we magnify. The investigative act required to reveal what appears invisible in electronic text is anatomical, from the first cut made to open the body/text to the smallest cut made to see a part, such as a tag. As scholars we must ask how the “operation of markup influence[s] the critical thinking of those who practise it” (Brown et al. 196). Markup is also what makes texts searchable when they are digital, and we can ask our machines to read and locate information that has been tagged. The tags of encoding practices such as the TEI serve the anatomical purpose—for discovery, intertextuality, classification, proliferation of information, and the anatomist’s own presence in the performance, but a scholar may not control the quality of the available representation. In order for the authenticity and

credibility of a reproduction to move a viewer, “the technologies of production and display must remain invisible” (Cameron 60). Knowing how something works removes a veneer, and we might even prefer the mystery of not knowing and want to believe in the magic of the representation without knowing the underlying apparatus—the technical aspects of transmission or code. Scholars, may willingly suspend disbelief when working with digital facsimiles, whose ease of access provides a “liberating experience” (Kichuk 296). It is a freedom from the difficulties of experiencing a text in person—the problems of time, money, and access. It is the enjoyment of the illusion. Flanders calls this the “liberationist argument,” one that places value on “pleasure: on the premise that having more of what feels good is a good thing, or conversely that by gaining what we feel we have been denied we are necessarily effecting a personal gain as well” (*Digital Humanities* 41). The liberationist argument lauds the freedom from a body or materiality, but the celebration of freedom is based on misassumptions; it is founded on the assumption that digital texts are virtual. The pleasures of this virtual freedom are therefore mythical, cultural, and historical, part of a narrative of a Cartesian belief in freedom from a body, and of our own materiality. As Hayles explains:

Information conceived as pattern and divorced from a material medium is information free to travel across time and space. Hackers are not the only ones who believe that information wants to be free. The great dream and promise of information is that it can be free from the material constraints that govern the mortal world. If we can become the information we have constructed, we, too, can soar free, immortal like the gods. (“Condition” 75)

This dream posits information free from the textual “container,” whether it is a book, computer, or inscribed stone. It is like a soul separate from a body, a thing the anatomist cannot “get” to; the medical anatomist cannot remove the soul and put it in a jar any more than a literary anatomist can take meaning and make it free from a book or archive, whether physical or digital. The work of literature exists both inside and outside of the textual artifact, to the degree that the work has its own existence separate from the objects that contain it. Schillingsburg makes a related point when he differentiates between lexical and bibliographic codes; lexical codes concern spelling, word order, and punctuation—that is, the verbal part of the text, whereas bibliographic codes have to do with the “container” of the book, such as the formatting and appearance, from the width between lines to the type of paper or binding of a book. By differentiating between lexical and bibliographic codes, Schillingsburg suggests a view of text not unlike the materiality/virtuality divide, with bibliographic codes corresponding with the material condition of texts, and lexical codes more virtual because they are verbal and capable of being placed in different containers.

Virtuality, then, is defined by a lack because it is independent of a container. Hayles argues that virtuality has depended on a perception of presence or absence, and according to Hayles, there is a shift under way towards understanding virtuality as a dialectic of pattern/randomness instead of presence/absence, but the presumptions of presence and absence are still with us, something Hayles likens to the duality to the traditional view of spirit/matter.¹⁹ The illusion of disembodiment—or, to see it another

¹⁹ In the history of ideas, there is a tendency to separate experience into two separate categories of “sensible experience” (body) and “conceptual experience,” (mind) wherein circumstantial knowledge is opposed to scientific knowledge—two “interpretive paradigms” that keep us from recognizing “how both kinds of experience are mutually interdependent” (Jed 55). Drucker considers the theological aspect of embodied

way, the presumed *lack* of a *physical* text—encourages imagining the theoretically unending proliferation of detail allowed by the digital anatomy. The argument is suspect because of its trend towards surplus—the same indulgence of the archive and the anatomy genre. Moreover, our sensory experience—and our sense of genre—of this surplus informs our use of digital textuality—whether individual texts or database. As a product and producer of discourse, the database-anatomy is discursive, involving conversation, narrative, digression, and excursions into collecting and finding knowledge, all of which underscore the dynamic aspect of the anatomy. Whether collection is prior to classification or vice versa is impossible to answer. The anatomical practice of classification and collecting reflect non-material and material aspects of epistemology, with collecting as the “material embodiment” of knowledge, and classification as a reflection of human knowledge (Elsner and Cardinal 2). An anatomy’s materiality depends on our perception and is part of our interpretation, both processes that contribute to popular assumptions about the materiality of digital texts. As Hayles points out in *Writing Machines*, materiality is born of interactions between sensible and conceptual experience, such that ultimately, content *means* materiality—an exchange between the physical world and the human mind. Kirschenbaum reflects this interplay—or continuum, even—with his discussion of types of materiality, forensic and formal.

Forensic materiality is a way of seeing and looking at what is not immediately apparent—

knowledge, particularly how, “[f]rom a theological perspective, images are subject to negative judgment except when they serve as instruments of meditation, as material forms whose properties function as a first rung on the long ladder towards enlightenment. Such attitudes are characterized by a disregard for embodied intelligence and of the positive capacities of sensory perception. Denigrating the epistemological capacity of visualization and, they assume that art and artifice are debased from the outset – as deceptive, indulgent acts of hubris – or worse, temptations to sinful sensuality. But if images are necessarily inferior to some “Idea” whose pale shadow they represent, digital images are redeemed only when they bring the ideal form of data into presentation. The difficulty of such reasoning, however, is that it collapses into questions about what form data has in a disembodied condition” (“Speculative” 435).

and rendering the presumed invisible as visible. Kirschenbaum's use of the term *forensic* reflects the fascination with forensic science in today's entertainment.²⁰ The word *forensic* itself has its roots in the Latin *forensis* and, in turn, *forum*, for *public*, and pertains to jurisprudence or debate (OED). The term's double-meaning reflects the inseparability of discovery and rhetorical performance. Language and the body are inseparable from public and private acts of display—whether findings from an anatomy or textual discoveries rendered on a screen. The body is an actor in the theater of the anatomy—with its virtual and actual cutting and examination of parts, naming and representation, and constitution of a virtual whole, an intact entity that can exist in language even after the separation of parts. Unity is constructed, imagined, contingent, and always of the body.

Sensory experience can expand our understanding of materiality, altering our perception of detail. Kirschenbaum cites injuries related to repetitive work as an example of forensic materiality, and how bodily manifestations represent one aspect of the relationship between human and machine, albeit a painful one. Forensic materiality occurs at the level of the individual machine or individual human body. Hayles describes the sensation of continuity in terms of *proprioception*, the “sense that tells us where the boundaries of our bodies are”; proprioceptive coherence describes how we form such boundaries, the way a computer user might experience the keyboard as an extension of

²⁰ Kirschenbaum's point is like the one I make in Chapter II of this dissertation. Kirschenbaum writes of how “forensic investigation has its origins in the same nineteenth-century era that produced the great inscribing engines of modernity—the gramophone, film, and the typewriter all among them. Even as these technological media were effacing the last trembling traces of the writing hand, *fingerprinting* was storing up the marks of individualized bodies in a new classification and recording system, making those marks both mobile and repeatable. Photography and microscopy, Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes and Samuel Clemens's extraordinary twins, Francis Galton and (somewhat later) Edmond Locard [and, I would add, Edgar Poe]—all lend their testimony to forensics as a signature discourse network of modernity at the juncture of instrumentation, inscription, and identification” (250). The cultural fascination with ratiocination and the relationship between ratiocination and technology is not new.

her hands, or the “screen surface as a space into which her subjectivity can flow” (“Condition” 88). It is not unlike the feeling that when riding a bicycle, the rider and the bike become one, the driver and car join, or the walking cane becomes an extension of the hand. Our bodies change shape when we interact with texts and technologies. Reading a book or watching a film might cause what Christopher Keep describes as a “border experience,” noting how we cross boundaries (not unlike a frontier) between human and machines, to the point of our imagining ourselves outside of ourselves (165). We can even have a sense of tunnel vision when writing, an actual feeling of falling into our screens when mind, body, and machine meet. Furthermore, computer overuse can cause physical problems, bodily changes, such as manifestations of pains from carpal tunnel syndrome, tendonitis, eye strain, or back discomfort from sitting too long, all instances of forensic materiality in individuals.

Formal processes are needed to make visible the invisible, which suggests the relationship between forensic materiality and formal materiality—with formal materiality as a process that complements the forensic. Formal materiality is the “imposition of multiple relational computational states on a data set or digital object,” but it is not as easy as saying that forensic materiality equals hardware and formal materiality equals software; the relationship between forensic and formal materiality is more of a product/process (Kirschenbaum 12). In order to define formal materiality, Kirschenbaum uses an image file as an example of the sort of entity that users usually presume to contain only information about the image, but can, in fact, also contain metadata about the image, such as information about who created it and where. Often, a user can see metadata only with certain software, so that software choice can make

different reading options available. Formal materiality encompasses this sort of use, the movement from one software use, or logic, to another, as a user determines how much detail to see. Formal materiality is a matter of form and how forms affect digital objects—images, audio files, encoded text, etc. Because of its capacity to encompass many forms—abstract and concrete, theoretical and actual—the digital anatomy’s formal materiality allows forensic discovery. The database can contain numerous forms and formats, one keystroke or mouse click away from discovery.

Through use of magnification, or simply by presenting side-by-side comparisons, a scholar can create a digital version of a text that might reveal more about the original than the “real” item ever could, enabling new discoveries. In an electronic archive, manuscripts can be reunited with post-publication editions of text, offering numerous new opportunities for scholarship. Martha Nell Smith argues that the Emily Dickinson archive allows critical inquiry into previously seldom seen texts—accessed only by few scholars—such as facsimiles of originals with marginalia and handwritten scrawls, and that a digital archive allows much more than a “typographical translation” (a Dickinson text rendered in print) because it reverses the “flattening” of the original texts (“Because” 141). Digital representations—especially high quality images—allow us to see interactions on a text, the scribblings of different readers over time—the marginal comments, the creases, tears, torn pages, ink blobs and blurs, and scratched-out errors—simultaneously on the screen. Our digital archives should “open up ways of seeing,” such that “no consensus need be developed on how to read” textual elements (Smith, “Electronic” 315). Digital tools can enable scholars to avoid normalizing and limiting

texts by providing the space for representing textual variants, including texts that have, literally, been recovered by use of digital technologies.

In the case of the Vindalana tablets, a set of Roman tablets unearthed near Hadrian's Wall in Northern England,²¹ the texts became readable through the work of image processing and computing probability software. The tablets were recovered, then, *twice*—from the ground and from unreadability. Modeling and computations enabled scholars to decipher the tablets and determine incisions in the stone from surrounding “noise,” such as scratches or cracks. A searchable, digital image of each tablet can be viewed online along with explanatory notes; the images of the tablets are not “cleaned” up, so in order to be read, the notes—which function as an image translation—are required. The reading process is not the same as, for example, translating hieroglyphics—no amount of expertise could make the tablets readable to the naked eye without magnification and data crunching. Readers, with new possibilities to see, may gain power and control because digitized materials can more accurately represent a text's material condition, such that in the case of the Vindalana tablets, their use-value as historical records are enabled by computing.

Increasingly, we use databases to access the particulars of history, from artifacts such as the Vindalana tablets, to three-dimensional visualizations of archeological digs, to facsimiles of household accounting ledgers or receipts for purchases. Database projects allow and encourage recovery work and attention to specialized topics, owing some share of their success to the state of academic publishing—the shifts from print to digital, as well as the folding of a number of academic presses. Remediation, recovery,

²¹ See <http://vindolanda.csad.ox.ac.uk/>. I would like to credit Dr. Melissa Terras for my knowledge of the Vindalana project; she discussed the tablets at the 2009 Digital Humanities Summer Institute.

and amassing detail merge in the database. As a platform for numerous recovery projects—the newest and perhaps even ideal genre *of* recovery projects—the database or digital archive can be less exclusive than print, or more democratic. This is not to say that scholarly quality is inferior in such projects (though it often may be), but that publishing opportunities are more, as is the ability to reach a larger audience than print. The capabilities and the use of electronic archives reflect a belief that the local, particular, and random become historical “reality” when represented. As researchers, we fill in gaps by what is often random accessing, whether reading portions of longer books or dipping into a small part of an enormous database. The database genre can level historical information by making so much of it available—leveling in the sense of balancing new information with old or known figures with unknown—or, depending on point of view—leveling in the sense of flattening it or destroying perspective, reflecting Ed Folsom’s comment about how over time, an edition of a work can grow to include a preponderance of an author’s “discarded” writings (“The Whitman Project” 374).

By adding detail, we attempt to make the both the visible and invisible easier to understand, although detail is always partial, no matter how elaborate—despite any anatomy’s self-conscious attempt at completeness. Pattern is part of the anatomy, which sees the body or text as a mass of parts, and a reader may even create new parts, in the form of paratexts, by searching a database. The paratext depends on print conventions to make sense—such as a table of contents or index of first lines—and on searching, which allows a reader to read not just within a text but across an entire collection and is a problem of scale (Flanders “Learning” 54-55). Searching is a way to navigate through the detail, to make sense of the enormity of the anatomy. The search function can undo a

pattern but also make a new one. The digital archive (or database-anatomy) provides a fitting vehicle for the sort of elaboration necessary for projects requiring significant detail, whether the sort of work inspired by the *Annales* school of history, or simply any scholar's esoteric specialty. Franco Moretti's *Graphs, Maps, Trees* suggests that digital tools can supply a long view of literary history impossible in traditional, close (human eye) readings. Moretti refers to Braudel's *longue durée*, explaining how graphical displays of trends in literary history—graph, maps, or tree diagrams—provide visual displays of the *longue durée*, allowing “distant reading” and new insights. Moretti's term *distant reading* plays against the idea of *close reading*—that is, distant reading involves use of mechanized computing tools to “read” a large number of texts (often in a way impossible without automation).²² The big picture missed by close reading requires backing away from a text, or losing proximity—the opposite stance required for traditional literary analysis—and a perspective far from Kames's ideal presence. For distant reading, Braudelian, and even New Historical perspectives, abundant detail presented as evidence can be used to structure a view of the past, to create an anatomy—whether from near or distant proximity. Instead of the *longue durée*, we can have the minute and particular of quotidian time, an endlessly proliferating number of fragments of the day or moment. Continually adding detail ensures the survival of any scholarly enterprise—and scholarship itself—aligning with the anatomy genre's unfinishability.

Software helps scholars make sense of the amount of detail, while at the same time making more detail for scholarship overall, but the vastness of information is difficult to process. Laura Mandell remarks, for instance, that “no one can read through

²² Flanders describes this sort of reading as “emphasiz[ing] context almost to the exclusion of detail” with two main methods, aggregation and linkage; aggregation emphasizes relationships among words or phrases, whereas linkage connects items into a system (“Close” 6).

400,000 texts and still have time to take a shower or eat a meal. Machine reading will provide us with alternate and infinitely malleable filters. . . For one thing, human close-reading follows and is beautifully supported by mechanized ‘distant reading,’ Franco Moretti’s term for data crunching” (“The Next Big Thing”). Creators of the Orlando Project, an electronic history of women’s writing in the British Isles, argue that electronic dissemination of literary history can resolve some of the detractions aimed at traditional literary history, especially “its exclusivity, its linearity, an over-reliance on narrative, [and] a certain totalizing or monologizing tendency” (Brown et al. 191). For example, users of Orlando can reveal different ways authors use quotations from other writers in their work by searching “intertextuality” with a Quotation attribute. After performing the search, users might question whether authors in the late 18th and early 19th centuries used epigraphs from “already-canonical literature” to “raise the status of the novel” and can allow us to imagine what was not possible with traditional research tools (Brown et al. 197).²³ The search function alone aids in the formulation of a hypothesis or in compiling data. Likewise, the MONK (Metadata Offer New Knowledge) project describes itself as “a digital environment designed to help humanities scholars discover and analyze patterns in the texts they study,” and provides open-access software to help researchers with text-mining (MONK). Creators hope to “cast the net . . . much more broadly than one could do without computers. In other words, although we expect that our users may end up reading, even reading closely, we begin by not reading”²⁴ (Clement et al). MONK

²³ “The tagging highlights the continuity of quotation as an intertextual practice, alongside innovations such as the modern prevalence of quotations in titles, and invites us to compare and contrast its occurrence in different writers, genres, movements, and historical periods” (Brown et al. 198).

²⁴ The following description gives an idea of the size of the MONK datastore: “It has the complete text of approximately 1,200 works, including 300 American novels published between 1851 and 1875, 250 British

software and other programs like it turn the idea of “cafeteria style” or “cherry-picking” reading upside down, looking at reading across massive amounts of detail as an opportunity and not a shortcut.

THE DECEPTION OF PERCEPTION

The addition and loss of detail born of the paradoxical containment and expansion of the anatomy genre can cause distortion when layers of information accumulate and create digressions, just as removal of information can cause gaps. When perceptions of what is on a screen lead to scholarly error, the potential for digital representations to disfigure can be problematic in the digital archive, or what could be called the digital anatomy. Because we have access to representations, not to originals, a facsimile might be distorting or confusing because of its flattening of textures, which could lead to erroneous assumptions. For example, microform blemishes may appear to be an ink blob from a printer or a pen, and confusion results, whereby “multiple layers of remediation and deterioration merge into a single undifferentiated layer, making it difficult for the digital scholar to distinguish ‘noise’ from ‘real’ evidence,” and errors might even represent the removal of part of a textual body, or as Kichuk terms it, a “content amputation” that might happen during digital facsimile production (298). For example, sometimes the process leads to missed beginning and end pages or of front matter, such as incunabula art in reproductions of texts created before 1501. Pages might be harmed

novels published between 1780 and 1900, 300 plays by Shakespeare and his contemporaries, 30 works of 16th and 17th century poetry, and 300 works of 16th and 17th prose, including fiction, sermons, travel literature, and witchcraft texts. 250 of these works, by 104 authors, come from Chadwyck-Healey's Nineteenth-Century Fiction collection; 658 works by 366 authors come from the Text Creation Partnership at the University of Michigan, with an emphasis on Early English Books Online; 244 works by 172 authors come from The Wright American Fiction collection at Indiana University. Taken together, these 1152 works contain about 81.5 million words, and they represent a reasonable sample of printed literature in English from the 16th, 17th, 18th, and 19th centuries” (Clement, et al).

in the digitization process, as well. Doubtless, many scholars who handle historical materials can attest to some amount of harm incurred to texts as they handle them—from the extreme of watching a document literally fall apart, to the less-obvious damage done by oils from fingertips or exposure of materials to air.

Because of the number of interpretations and subjective commentary in tagging—as well as the potential for errors—digital texts contribute to a shift in how scholars have traditionally viewed texts. The idea of textual purity may be increasingly abandoned as scholars recognize the materiality, authorship, and institutional implications of all texts—and that even digital texts are as constrained by these factors as the physical pages of any book. How information is ordered and arranged by its creator limits an electronic text's size, among other design factors. Some aspects of print are lost, while new features, such as metadata or textual encoding are gained, and may even alter the way we consider textual authority in general. Like Hayles, Marlene Manoff argues that in “book history, media studies, and the digital humanities, many critics have abandoned the notion that text or content can exist in some pure platonic form ready to be poured into whatever format or container is most convenient” (315). We always create a new text when we make a representation. Digital texts, according to editing theory, have the potential to be the most “diplomatic” of all, down to a highly detailed, granular view of a document, such as one enlarged with a magnifier (Gabler 205). Encoding foregrounds the same problems of any transcription, digital or otherwise, such as what to do about irregular spellings, spellings, capitalization, paragraphing, and punctuation—what W. W. Greg calls “accidentals,” or the surface features of the text such as spelling, punctuation, and word division.

At times, the virtual even proves the material existence of the physical, and the abstraction—what is usually the digital object—may appear more real than the actual object, especially as preservationists use digital projects to protect the lives of delicate texts. For example, EEBO (Early English Books Online) digitizes microfilms of EEB (Early English books) in order to preserve the microfilms, themselves preservations of paper texts. As such, EEBO is a remediation of a remediation—an electronic version of the microfilm that is a film version of print. A number of digital archives produce such remediations of remediations—when, for example, a print version is already a remediation of a hand-written manuscript. Kichuk describes how scholars began to regard the EEB microfilm as having its own mystique, and how the EEB became a “necessary evil” that no longer required consultation of an original text (294).²⁵ As Kichuk explains, a scholar might begin to regard a facsimile as an original since it is the only version she can or will be able to see (296).

A controlling pattern guides understandings of digital codes, even as scholars use the language of anatomy and biology and the body to describe the experience of texts. Historically, the language of editing adopts biological metaphors. Texts might be *corrupted* or *infected*, as though a diseased body. *Genetic editing* traces all copies of a text, looking at the layers of revisions of documents, their inheritance; the process opposes the assumption that information floats freely from whatever medium we put it in, like a soul or spirit separate from a body. Hayles discusses molecular biology as a source for an information/materiality duality in which the body is controlled by the genes, by a

²⁵ “Scholarship that was unlikely or impossible while print copies were rare, access forbidden or restricted, and travel costs prohibitive, became not only possible but also acceptable based on a microfilm surrogate without the scholar ever consulting the original” (Kichuk 294).

pattern, such that “the body’s materiality articulates a preexisting semantic structure,” as though the pattern/code brings the body into existence (“Print Is” 70). In other words, the genetic code governs the body. Editing language suggests that linguistic and bibliographic codes operate like inherited or determining factors in texts—textual DNA. MONK project creators refer to literary DNA, especially Martin Mueller’s discussion of the likeness between philological and biological sequences in corpora and/or genomes (Clement, et al.). Likewise, McGann uses a double helix metaphor to argue how all literary texts have linguistic and bibliographic codes (*Textual* 77).²⁶ Importantly, these are “perceptual” codes, which link them to the sensory experience of the reader.

The intertwining of language and how we structure it, our classifications, is organic—both a process of the codes twisting about or through a text and a process of readerly perception and use. Mind and body are as interdependent as text and content (or content and form). Digital formats often make information seem disembodied, but, according to Hayles, it is an illusion we must resist (“Condition” 94). The text might be free of the print body, but there is an electronic body, too; this body/non-body aspect of textuality points to a tradition in editing (now out-of-favor in history-of-the-book scholarship) whereby the text of a document is valued over the document itself in most editing, and that text should be seen as a function of a document instead of document functioning as a container for texts (Gabler 199). MONK project creators argue that the user’s experience is the most vital aspect of the metadata tools collection, the actual use of the tools and not the tools themselves. Text comprised of code that can take on any

²⁶ Kirschenbaum responds to McGann’s double helix metaphor: “I regard forensic and formal materiality as akin to the unique monodimensionality of the Möbius strip, at once separate and coextensive in the cascade of abstractions that is a von Neumann architecture. Engineering that paradox, and more importantly making it mundane, is the technological triumph of the stored program computer” (156).

number of shapes, such that we must question the ontology of text as data, storage, or perhaps something else—material or immaterial (Drucker “Intimations” 153-154). Our daily reality is composed of our interactions with texts that are presumed to be unattached to an embodied form.

The first chapter of this dissertation established the generic qualities of the anatomy genre, and this chapter explained how one of the anatomy’s features, detailism, figures in digital computing projects, not only in how they are constructed, but in how they are consumed, especially for historical projects. Collective knowledge of the past suggests memory, which is itself embodied, within text—words, pages, paper, binding, code—or in a computer’s hardware, on a server, disk, or other device. This sort of collected knowledge is a new body, one that performs anatomy’s encyclopedism—by allowing digression, dissection, amassing of facts. In digital media studies, the terms “creative commons” and “crowdsourcing” gesture towards embodied collective knowledge, as well as the utopian or idealistic possibilities of the anatomy genre, and the hope for Walt Whitman’s democratic beauty. When many readers are involved, individual perception can amount to collected knowledge. With the act of research, scholars draw on the collective knowledge of past and present, to create knowledge and representations of knowledge, a topic addressed in the discussion of methodology in the next chapter.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY: PERFORMING AN ANATOMY

INTRODUCTION

Little methodological criticism exists pertaining to the creation of digital archives, and much of our methodological criticism in digital humanities depends upon traditional—as in *print*—editing methodology in English studies. Digital humanities would gain from exploring methodologies from library archival science and composition and rhetoric, and by integrating these with established editorial practices in English. As the previous chapter argued, our digital archives present us with new ways of seeing and making narratives and literary criticism, acts of creation that emerge during editorial decision-making. By elaborating on the role of a researcher's subjectivity in archival creation, this chapter expands the conversation regarding editing in digital humanities theory.

Beginning with an overview of methodological studies in English, this chapter situates methodologies regarding digital archives within the field of English overall. Next, the chapter addresses the reasons for creating a digital archive, especially when the researcher's goal is recovering historical subjects. In particular, by writing about my own experience, I privilege the researcher's point of view with a narrative about the creation of a digital archive. This chapter describes how a researcher creating a digital archive makes decisions about how much detail to include in a digital project (extending discussions of the anatomy genre's characteristics from Chapter 1 and building on the discussion of detailism in Chapter 2). The chapter concludes by examining some of the

practical matters a researcher confronts when creating a digital archive, and how shifting expectations of scholarship, editing, and even authorship all align with the anatomy genre.

Although commonplace in composition studies, linguistics, and rhetoric, as well as in archival scholarship within library science, methods and methodological criticism seldom appear in literary studies, which in English studies overall is more closely tied to digital humanities than other sub-fields. Literary criticism stems from a tradition in which transparency in methods and methodology is neither expected nor required, a practice reflected in the humanities overall, as part of a stylistic and philosophical slant against metacommentary. One exception in literary studies is editorial theory, which offers a rich tradition of metacommentary. Methodological criticism entails metacommentary, in the sense of an overt unmasking of both the *methods* of a project, the “how-to” sort of information and step by step tasks of performance, as well as its *methodology*, the researcher’s theoretical stance. While this dissertation can be classified under “digital humanities” and English studies, the emergent nature of digital humanities, as well as the interdisciplinary nature of my own work, requires me to look across English studies for theoretical scaffolding regarding methodology.

Before considering the methodology for my creation of a digital archive, I will address the difference between methods and methodology. Barbara L’Eplattenier points out the difference between methods and methodology (in composition research by work by Kirsch and Sullivan²⁷), and how “methodology allows us to theorize the goals of our research, [whereas] methods allow us to contextualize the research process of the

²⁷ See Gesa Kirsch and Patrick A. Sullivan, eds. *Methods and Methodology in Composition Research*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1992. Print.

researched subject and materials. Methods make the invisible work of historical research visible” (69). Publishing one’s methods is revelatory, and a complement to philosophical or ideological views expressed in a methodology, such that publishing methods and methodology as part of our criticism will bolster emerging digital scholarship. At this historical moment, digital humanities is undergoing institutional and scholarly definition, and there is a wide range of accepted practices for writing and publishing, a variety that makes the need to explain our theory and methods a pressing concern.

Digital humanities work is often aligned with literary theory, but with its methodological criticism, digital humanities would benefit more from its relationship to editing theory. That is, the metacommentative nature of editing theory will strengthen digital humanities scholarship, which is currently at a formative stage. Literary criticism, unlike editorial criticism, works within a tradition in which transparency of methods is not expected or required. Some scholars, such as literary critic Tim Milnes, regard methodological criticism as little more than extraneous commentary. Milnes observes that metacommentary “is the product of a more basic misconception that underpins much institutionalized literary criticism and commentary today: namely, that interpretation requires a ‘methodology’ in the first place” (23). Milnes indicates that interpretation does not *require* a methodology, meaning that it is either unnecessary to criticism or that it is simply not necessary to include explanation of one’s methodology. Either way, interpretation inherently has a methodology, however messy, and Milnes’s comment, instead of causing us to disregard methodology, should prompt us to consider how we write our criticism. In early stages of writing, as in later, we have individual methodologies, whether or not expressly written by author, editor, or both.

Historically, metacommentary has always been part of the anatomy genre, although it can prove digressive and become excessive when anatomizing. As the anatomy genre manifests in its latest form, the overt discussion—or disclosure—of methodologies is increasingly important, especially as literary criticism merges with digital platforms, and as “open source” or creative commons sensibilities begin to shake up institutional expectations of intellectual property and authorship in the academy. When scholars explain the steps of creating and interpreting with digital tools, they unmask the mystery of the unseen processes of thinking—of epistemology itself. The metacommentary of methodologies reveals praxis, the linking of theory and practice, and exposes institutional, pedagogical, and even activist obligations of theory. Humanities computing should therefore promote the revelation of methods *and* methodology, and in this time of emerging digital projects in literary studies, we can shape the expectations of our scholarship to include such discussions. There are, however, few articles and publications to guide researchers through archival work, primary research methods, or digital humanities projects. For researchers developing theories and processes, metacommentary—through explication of methods and methodology—enriches the research process.

Digital humanities offers a few examples of methodologies, most of which are found as sections of Web projects. The site *Civil War Washington*²⁸ included a page explaining its methodology; it is important to point out that the site is more a product of digital humanities than of literature and is more closely aligned with editing methodology than that of literary studies. The site’s methodology notes some basics about the digital

²⁸ See <http://www.civilwardc.org/>. I have to use the past tense here because the page no longer appears on the site but was available on August 14, 2009, when I first accessed the information.

tools used in the project, and how the editors took an innovative approach towards studying Civil War-era Washington. Site editors (Susan C. Lawrence, Kenneth M. Price, and Kenneth J. Winkle) explain that the project aims to “provide data and tools for analysis that will enable scholars to understand this pivotal moment in history” by presenting information in a “fresh, multi-disciplinary, multi-media way” through the use of a “data-rich set of maps” populated with information pulled from an SQL (My Structured Query Language) database. A number of other digital humanities websites address methodological concerns on their “about” pages, usually with theoretical perspectives or reasons why the project has been developed. The *Women Writer’s Project* at Brown University, for example, explains its technical aspects and history of encoding on one page,²⁹ as well as a methodology for transcription and editing on another.

The MLA’s Committee on Scholarly Editions (CSE) regularly updates its *Guidelines for Editors of Scholarly Editions* to reflect current methods and methodologies of editing (last revised September 25, 2007).³⁰ The CSE was formed in 1976 in order to develop and produce guidelines for editing, and it follows a tradition established in 1950 with W. W. Greg’s “The Rationale of Copy Text.” Recently, the CSE has addressed the need to consider guidelines for electronic editing. In particular, the CSE’s report outlines principles of editing, including use of sources and theoretical stances, an editor’s theory of a text, and the medium or media form in which the edition is to be published. While all of these principles address methodological concerns, the editor’s theory of a text, in particular, reveal a methodological stance. The committee

²⁹Technical aspects are explained at <http://www.wwp.brown.edu/about/encoding.html> and the history of encoding at http://www.wwp.brown.edu/texts/help/ed_principles.html.

³⁰ See http://www.mla.org/resources/documents/rep_scholarly/cse_guidelines.

acknowledges the range of editorial perspectives possible in editing and how editors develop their own reasons for their editing practice. By recognizing different perspectives and remaining neutral, the committee promotes editorial choice. The CSE also suggests that editors refer to its annotated bibliography for textual editing theory in order to broaden knowledge regarding editorial methodology. The CSE's guidelines are published as part of the TEI guidelines for the creation of electronic editions, which indicates the TEI's own methodological alignment with the CSE.

The CSE's guidelines include a rubric for vetters of scholarly editions that editors can use to evaluate an edition. A number of the questions in the vetting guidelines refer to the necessity for editors to make explicit their methods and methodology. For example, one question asks if the editor has accounted for how relevant texts are interrelated, and another question asks if the edition includes a statement for readers indicating that transcriptions in an edition have not all been compared with the originals. Both of these examples indicate the CSE's own stance that editors should, as part of what could be called best practice, overtly discuss methodology in their work. One question asks vetters whether the textual essay offers an in-depth explanation of editorial principles and methods used in production. Because the CSE's guidelines are used by the TEI, even when the CSE does not specifically indicate that their discussion pertains to electronic editions, the TEI's use of the CSE makes the relationship clear—that is, that it is desirable in an electronic edition or digital archive project to explain methods and methodologies to users.

SOCIAL ACTION, GENRE, AND RECOVERY

Methodologies published for material culture studies influence my own digital project, including Ian Hodder's discussion of interpreting documents. Hodder considers how documents require contextualization in order to be understood, and that documents themselves are always contextualized by their material, social, or historical conditions; this leads to a built-in tension between text and context for any written artifact. Editorial theory has addressed such tension for decades, and the advent of cultural studies and composition—both interdisciplinary fields—influences how we can approach the creation of a digital archive. Much of this dissertation addresses how texts are contextualized by their containers, and the digital archive for this dissertation included a scrapbook with letters in it (again, I use past tense here because part of my preservation work included removing letters from the scrapbook, which no longer exists intact); the digital archive contains representations of the material objects in the archive. All of these containers involve exchanging artifacts, what Hodder argues is part of building social constructions, which themselves depend on material culture (159). The action of transferring an artifact creates relationships, in the same way that genre arises in part from a text's use.

The anatomy—in the form of database and the digital archive—serves as recovery's counterpart, a form of social action. Studies of genre have shifted away from classification exercises to viewing genre as a social action or as constituted by action, what this dissertation has been calling the "use-value" of genre. The database and digital archive, as examples of the anatomy genre, thus bring together historically competing views of genre. Action makes meaning, and in the case of the digital archive, its use often involves the recovery of little known authors or texts, usually by researchers and

students. Creating digital archives participates in a textual evolution, influencing, for example, what exists in scholarship about American women writers, and even changing how we know literary history.³¹ Literary-historical digital archives serve as a development in women's historiography overall, for example with my project *Independent Women*, which follows an upsurge of interest in scholarly attention to nineteenth-century American periodicals.

As with any project, a primary step in creating a digital archive includes gauging scholarly interest in one's topic. During the last twenty years, the Research Society for American Periodicals formed, and operates a gateway site on the subject. The journal *Legacy* and the Society for the Study of Women Writers promote recovery work, often including nineteenth-century women writers who published in periodicals. Patricia Okker considers women editors in *Our Sister Editors: Sarah J. Hale and the Tradition of Nineteenth-Century American Women Editors* (1995), and in *Social Stories* (2003) focuses on the magazine novel in its original periodical context. Kenneth M. Price and Susan Belasco Smith's collection *Periodical Literature in Nineteenth-Century America* (1995) includes essays on serialization, audience, and the role of periodicals in relation to the Civil War, among others. The edited collections *She Wields a Pen: American Women Poets of the Nineteenth Century*, edited by Janet Gray, and the *Nineteenth-Century American Women Writers* and *Nineteenth-Century American Women Poets* anthologies edited by Karen L. Kilcup recover a number of women authors whose work

³¹ In the foreword to *Blue Pencils and Hidden Hands*, Sharon Harris traces the interest in recovering women's editorial work in 19th-century American periodicals to the 1970s and traces the "burgeoning of women's historiography" overall to the same period (xi).

regularly appeared in periodicals.³² This survey of scholarship suggests interest in the topic of women's work in periodicals in the nineteenth century, although it is not direct evidence of scholarly interest in my own project (still under development). Recent (2009) calls for developing digital archival projects, such as Susan Belasco's, indicate growing involvement in the subject of recovering women writers; projects such as *Independent Women* undertake the "responsibility" Belasco urges.³³

Independent Women hopes to encourage interest in nineteenth-century women's authorship in American periodicals by representing primary source materials—the manuscripts and letters to the editor of a major newspaper, *The Independent*—and by developing biographies and critical resources. *Independent Women* aims to meet Sharon Harris's definition of the "best recovery work," which "forces us to reassess our understanding" of authors and "entire time periods" ("Presidential" xii). Like the digital sites *The Vault at Pfaff's*, *The Nineteenth-Century Concord Digital Archive*, and *Civil War Washington*, *Independent Women* focuses not on a single author, as with the Dickinson or Whitman archives, but on re-creating a world.³⁴ Meredith McGill suggests that the design of archives such as *The Vault at Pfaff's* can transform the possibilities of digital archives beyond the currently widely available models, as its design emphasizes

³² At the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Elizabeth Lorang's dissertation is the first study of nineteenth-century newspaper poetry in American newspapers, investigating these poems as a genre distinct from other types of poetry. Lorang's work recovers a large number of women and minority writers who published in the periodicals, which were the primary source of entertainment and information during the period. Ingrid Satelmajer's dissertation *Remapping Dickinson and Periodical Studies* (2004) and her subsequent publications, including "When a Consumer Becomes an Editor: Susan Hayes Ward and the Poetry of *The Independent*" examine the influence of periodicals on late nineteenth-century print culture.

³³ See Susan Belasco's "The Responsibility is Ours: The Failure of Infrastructure and the Limits of Scholarship," in *Legacy* 26.2 (2009): 329-336.

³⁴ The Pfaff's site is at <http://digital.lib.lehigh.edu/pfaffs/>; Digital Concord at <http://www.digitalconcord.org/>; Civil War Washington at <http://www.civilwardc.org/>.

“venturing beyond the mutually stabilizing categories of author and work, mapping cultural and social connections that have yet to be adequately traced in print” (1595). In other words, digital archives can reveal networks of social groups, discourse communities, and circles of influence, such as those of the women in my dissertation project, many of whom knew one another. The editing involved in such a project translates to the social action of recovery, not only for the women writers in the project, but today among scholarly and editorial circles.

As Nina Baym describes it, women’s work writing for nineteenth-century American periodicals is “constitutive of public acts, as interventions into and constructions of a female place in U.S. public culture” (2). Likewise, recovery work constitutes a public act, broadening these authors’ space in scholarly, literary culture. For many materials in archives, digital publication is the best chance at recovery, and can often be done with less expense than traditional publication. Judith Fetterly describes how when she first started to research nineteenth-century American women writers, she had to photocopy all of her resources, and that there were no reprints, nor book series, and that one could sift through the rummage bins in used bookstores to find first editions of Sedgwick, Stowe, or Cary for less than a dollar (5-6). Now, works by the authors she mentions, as well as biographical and critical information, are a mouse-click away, at the fingertips of computer users.

RESEARCH NARRATIVE: THE ANATOMIST’S STORY

W. Scott Blanchard argues that anatomists (writers of the anatomy genre) depend on intuition for discovery. The anatomist tells stories and is always part of his own anatomy, whether Robert Burton in *Anatomy of Melancholy*, Lawrence Sterne in

Tristram Shandy, Herman Melville in *Moby Dick*, James Joyce in *Ulysses*, or Northrop Frye in *Anatomy of Criticism*. He is an actor, like Charles Willson Peale, a collector who is part of his archive and part of the scene. There is always an aspect of self-indulgence in anatomy, as the anatomist attempts to include as much as possible about a given topic, while knowing that completion is elusive. Frequent or occasional asides break the narrative of the anatomy to reveal the anatomist's reflections or anxieties, often shifting the tone of the writing—not unlike footnotes in research writing. The story of the writer interrupts or parallels the plot, research discussion, or methodology. Though usually completely hidden in literary studies, or mentioned only in introductory material in anthologies or edited collections, the express revelation of writerly commentary is expected and necessary to advance the anatomy.

The exhaustive collection of the anatomy genre exposes the inability to collect or contain knowledge. Completing a collection, likewise, ends it, at which point many creators start new collections. The romance of a research quest stops at the moment of classification, and then something must be done with the materials, some meaning made from them. They must be made important and capable of being found. After locating an archival item, the researcher-anatomist must make order through classification—an intermediary step between discovery and story. With mock sincerity, Braudel comments on the process of discovery and classification even at the “risk of seeming ungrateful to [his] predecessors” because of his feeling of being buried by a “mass of publications...as it were under a rain of ash” (18). Braudel continues, remarking on his time researching in archives and pretending to apologize for not being able to look at every document on his topic, creating a “necessarily incomplete study,” and “know[ing] in advance that its

conclusions will be examined, discussed, and replaced by others” (18). Acknowledging one’s own replacement is part of a necessary progression of historical writing, something an anatomist always anticipates. Although Braudel’s anatomy allows for such teasing metacommentary, our digital archives-anatomies should take his point into consideration and guard against excessive tendencies by focusing on recovery—preventing the creation of a “rain of ash” by attempting to publish every arcane scrap of archival texts.

The historian (archivist, archeologist, or anatomist) participates in a discourse of power and knowledge in which history organizes and orders documents, reconstituting itself. During the nineteenth-century, Leopold Ranke charged that history should be written *wie es eigentlich gewesen ist*—or, as it “really did happen”—as a reaction against hagiography in historiography (Wallerstein 4). Ranke proposed that history should be written according to the scientific method, and that historical documents penned when events occurred should be protected in archives as methods to guard against presumably corrupt interpretation. But it is impossible to record something exactly as it happened and separate writing from perception and interpretation. We can guard against hagiography but not against romanticism. Historical writing is thus a compensatory act, a substitute for what cannot be retrieved. It is “instant epistemology” (Ankersmit 74). Historical representation is a means by which ideologies become universal and eternal, with history acting as a narrative construct; this does not, of course, mean that every scholar’s work will achieve such eminent status, but that the process reflects historical representation. Creation and the unification of the personal with others mark the role of artist, of storyteller, or of the digital archivist. The researcher becomes part of the story she wants

to represent when interacting with the materials and labors to create something significant while knowing her work is partly personal.

Although not expressly articulated, a similar methodological direction to the one outlined here emerges from recent essays concerning archival work, including the recently published (2008) *Beyond the Archives: Research as a Lived Process*, edited by Lucille Schultz, and *Archive Stories: Facts, Fictions, and the Writing of History*, edited by Antoinette Burton. Both collections focus on the researcher's experience in the archive. There is no separate, specific methodology chapter or discussion in either collection, but a methodological perspective manifests itself—that the personal experiences of the research process ultimately affect how we read and understand history. Furthermore, a researcher's task may depend on an archivists' work, but focuses on continual discovery how to contextualize archival materials. The work reflects a continuum among archiving, editing, and authoring, and the researcher must sift through an often vast amount of information that has already been partially anatomized already, and then anatomize some more. Whether for well-known or unknown figures, a researcher must locate a need to create a digital archive. In the case of authors like Walt Whitman, a researcher might want to add to what she sees as an “incomplete” record; she might want to reveal more—more of their writings, thoughts, process, accumulated texts. When discussing the history of the *Whitman Archive*, Kenneth Price describes how the website's editors choose not to include large numbers of texts from the print volume of Whitman's *Collected Writings*, so they can bring less-known Whitman texts to the fore. Such decisions foreground how a digital archive reflects the decision-making process, about what and how much to include—how much to anatomize and when to stop.

My work began with an internship in Special Collections during which I learned different institutional perspectives of archives. An archivist must consider what to accession, or take in to the archive. For example, patrons will call the archive to offer to donate an item that they think is important, sometimes asking for a fee in return. Gate-keeping has begun before the “gate” of the archive with the donors’ agendas. Then the archivist must act as a gate-keeper for the university’s archive, often accessioning items depending on a budget. The archivist must then decide what to keep or weed, and later, the researcher may enter the scene to study and publish about what she finds in the archive. As someone who usually works as a researcher, I needed to adjust to my role as archivist-intern, which involved decision-making to guide other researchers. Positioning myself as an archivist was difficult because I wanted to pursue research on the collection and often wrote with more detail or descriptive documents than was the norm (always anatomizing). For example, when creating a finding aid, I was unable several times to decipher signatures on letters. Rather than cataloguing the letter as an unknown, I spent hours reading about the recipient of the letter, as well as other contextual clues that might lead to identifying the author, often with no success. Researching detracted time from creating the finding aid, and I realized I acted as a researcher rather than as an archivist, and despite archivists’ forays into this sort of research, time constraints prevent their focusing on chasing leads. The two professions, though related, have dissimilar objectives, but the “line” between researcher and archivist is not cleanly defined, not only because an archivist’s activities affect research, but because archivists’ professional duties involve some amount of research when categorizing materials for preservation. Elizabeth Yakel argues that archivists’ work of ordering, re-ordering, interpreting, and

creating representation systems comprise archival representation, to the degree that archivists participate in a form of authorship, on a continuum with editing.

The digital archivist-anatomist cuts and categorizes, making sense of the parts of the archival body in order to create a new text, the digital archive/database-anatomy. Decision-making involves technical skills and the intellectual work of contextualizing. Julia Thomas argues that the “construction of the digital archive . . . is as much a scholarly resource and activity as the end product” (106). Organizing is creation, the cutting and classification of genre, in general, and the anatomy genre, in particular. Like Alexis Ramsey, I see the application of meaning to materials as what “makes” them an archive, and also note how viewing a collection this way identifies the collection itself as a mini-archive; that is, each collection within an archive functions like an archive itself. Additionally, the scrapbook I worked in the archive was already an archive of sorts, one that I took apart and re-archived, in a sense.

As a researcher, I became one of many centers in the archive, physical or digital, as my subjectivity and identity determined aspects of archival creation. In making a digital archive, I create a story from the materials, while incorporating narratives they inherently suggest, what Eric Ketelaar calls “tacit narratives.” Ketelaar describes how such narratives are unstable and contingent, evolving over time depending on how records are used. For example, the scrapbook I worked with has its own narratives—a story of its creator, who placed letters written to the editor of *The Independent* by a number of authors, mostly during the years 1880 and 1881, as well as a larger story about the importance of periodicals in the late nineteenth century. To create the digital archive *Independent Women*, I separated the women’s materials in the scrapbook from the

materials authored by men, removing them from their context and creating a new one. My decision-making to begin the project happened in stages—knowing first, that my university library needed someone to organize the collection; second, that there was some interest in the topic in scholarly circles; third, that I would have institutional support for my digitizing work once finished with the finding aid; fourth, that I was intellectually invested in the materials.

Objects in a collection begin to speak about their world as we invest time in them. Archival materials can break historical silences when researchers give them voices, and the silent object speaks through the experiences of those who interact with it. Archival texts are the same—with stories that can be told from the point of view of the hands that have held them through time or from the point of view of the object itself. In the collection I studied, the scrapbook presented a cultural object fascinating in its own right, despite its contents. I considered the number of people involved in handling the documents, from the authors who wrote them; to their editor and typesetter, whose newsprint-fingerprints appear on some pages; to the woman who carefully glued these papers onto the pages of a scrapbook, itself an archive. Because the pages of the scrapbook were not acid-free, according to archival preservation practices, I had to dismantle the scrapbook by slicing out the pages with a razor blade in order to “free them up” to fit in acid-free folders—in other words, for their own good. This sort of destructive activity, although necessary for preservation, does not square easily with the archival principle of *respect des fonds*, which the Society for American Archivists explains as a tenet of preservation.³⁵ Although context is destroyed, preservation is

³⁵ See the Society of American Archivists' (SAA) glossary at http://www.archivists.org/glossary/term_details.asp?DefinitionKey=196.

achieved, an inherent paradox of archival methodology. The process was a form of textual violence, a cutting and ordering, the anatomical dismemberment of a body, a sort of creation of a textual Frankenstein's monster. As I filed papers into acid-free folders, items became unglued, tape lost its stick, and newspaper clippings crumbled. Saving the scrapbook meant reversing the process of its creation, and recreating it in a new form, not only in folders in a Hollinger box housed in Special Collections, but again in a digital archive. Like at the site of an archeological dig, as objects were uncovered and removed from context, the "dig"—in this case the scrapbook—was itself destroyed.

Destruction can bring the opportunity for reinvention or rebirth, despite violent, or even morbid, associations. As the would-be editor of a digital archive that represents materials in a new textual body, I became not just anatomist, but undertaker and caretaker of texts, their curator. Dana Gioia likens the display of rare manuscripts under glass cases in library exhibits to the exhibition of "waxy cadavers of the blessed in the churches of Southern Europe," comparing preservation and representation of actual and textual bodies (25). Definitions of the word curator capture the paradox of discipline involved—with curing as *healing*, *guardianship*, and *restriction*, and the *OED* provides the etymology of curator as the Latin *curare*, to cure or to heal. Curation is central to the humanities and a particular responsibility of digital humanities, because curation in the digital humanities surpasses preservation or traditional custodial responsibilities by emphasizing public display, often of recovered materials, with revelation in new, digital textual bodies. Julia Flanders argues that an editor working in digital humanities operates as a curator to "preserve the propriety" of the relationship between the physical medium and the textual meaning—in other words, to discipline the text (*Digital Humanities* 32).

The sort of control can be likened to Foucauldian discipline; Foucault views discipline as institutional, part of how bodies function in systems, and considers disciplining.

For textual bodies, editors or curators do the same to texts, constructing resistances. We discipline them by dismantling, anatomizing, and encoding. As Stephanie Jed words it, we make texts chaste.³⁶ Jed defines the metacritical term “chaste thinking” as a

figure of thought constituted at the join of two conflicting lexical families of terms, one representing the impulse to touch and the other, the impulse to be cut off from contact. These lexical families include, on the one hand, words related to touching or the absence of touching—*tangible*, *contaminate*, *contact*, *integrit*, *intact*, etc., and, on the other hand, words related to cutting—*chastity*, *castigate*, *caste*, and Latin *career*. (8)

The irony is that in order to make a text chaste, it must be touched—not unlike the paradox of anatomy wherein cutting leads to an understanding of wholeness. For instance, when I dismantled the scrapbook with the razor blade, I violated a textual body with the agenda of preservation and eventual representation. Working with the collection continually reveals a series of dualities that are at the heart of creating an anatomy: recovering/covering up; destroying/preserving; dismantling/re-assembling; anatomizing/totalizing. Writing about a Renaissance anatomy textbook, Hodges comments that the anatomist threatens existence with “his painful procedure for revealing truths . . . [and although] he tells us that he will expose a tangible truth, the anatomist

³⁶ In her work on the politics of digital humanities, Flanders draws upon Jed’s argument in *Chaste Thinking*. Flanders points out how in neoclassical aesthetics the body and soul are gendered, with the body as female and the spirit as male, such that restoration of texts has meant believing in “restoring a lost wholeness” (*Digital Humanities* 29-30).

instead turns up depths, displaces parts from a coherent whole, and flattens out bodies . . . turning finally into fragments that are not immediately placed in a new order (6). The anatomist, or in my case the digital archivist, is motivated not only by a desire to correct a record but by fears of making errors, of perpetuating mistakes or creating a distorted body. When scanning the collection, I felt the anatomist's anxiety, a failure to grasp all details, perhaps by error or mis-transcription, a fear I would use the digital archive to misrepresent the physical.

Such concerns about textual accuracy and authenticity overlap with our widening access to texts. When a manuscript is available online, the potential for such corrections increases simply because of the ease of access. Digital representations can provide the possibilities for correcting the literary-historical record that in the past has only been offered by visits to a physical archive, where a scholar may discover an opportunity to expose a misguided line of reasoning, or even expose a well-respected idea that was built on an error. One famous instance of this sort of correction was esteemed literary critic F. O. Matthiesen's fascination with Herman Melville's phrase "soiled fish of the sea" in the novel *White Jacket* (Paulin). A look at the archival manuscript revealed the phrase to be "coiled fish of the sea." It was a misprint. This episode in literary, critical history preoccupies me as I construct a digital archive, and as the number of mistakes I have found in metadata—and those found by others working on the project—are more than I'd like to admit, though the project is small. But there is a point at which concession is necessary for practicality, and there is the realization that noncanonical writing, like the materials in *Independent Women*, is much less likely to receive the publicity (or, in this case notoriety) of Melville's ephemeral correspondence or working manuscripts.

Fear of incompleteness—either in the form of leaving behind mistakes or simply not including enough detail—drives any anatomical project. To preserve something does not mean to finish. Even with a small-scale project, I have needed to decide when to stop adding information, and also make decisions about how to preserve the digital archive itself. Knowing when something is finished arises from educated guesses about how useful more information would be to an audience. As Walter Benjamin remarks,

What is decisive in collecting is that the object is detached from all its original functions in order to enter into the closest conceivable relation to things of the same kind. This relation is the diametric opposite of any utility, and falls into the peculiar category of completeness. What is this ‘completeness’? Is it a grand attempt to overcome the wholly irrational character of the object’s mere presence at hand through its integration into a new, expressly devised historical system: the collection. And for the true collector, every single thing in this system becomes an encyclopedia of all knowledge of the epoch, the landscape, the industry, and the owner from which it comes. (*Arcades Project* 204-205)

Benjamin’s comment applies to finishing a digital archive and also finishing an anatomy, which has been called the unfinishable genre. After all, archives never end. Millions of items are sitting in boxes “awaiting” processing. Even as we process them, more items enter the physical archives. We can never catch up. We must wonder at what point the features of our digital archives, our computing tools or metadata, are self-serving, and at what point metadata is extraneous and something that so few will look at that certain things could be left out.

This process of preservation and its theoretical questions are inseparable from representation and questions of authorial intention. Archives present a constant tension between preservation and creation, characteristics that are more complimentary than opposite. When scanning the pages (now loose from the scrapbook), I regret not having photographed the intact pages of the scrapbook before its dismantling. I could have attempted to preserve the context of the original letters, or at least recorded it, in a fashion closer to Jefferis's, the scrapbooker's, intent (though some items had fallen loose). Jefferis had already altered the original context and intention of the letters in the collection, which had initially been addressed to the *Independent's* editors. In other words, the original authors' intentions had already been violated when the private and business correspondence to the editors were given to the scrapbook maker for her personal collection.³⁷ The manuscripts are final manuscripts, usually considered by scholars to best reflect authorial intent, and which Dana Gioia describes as having left the writer's desk and then entered the "public realm" (14). All of the manuscripts in the scrapbook became printed articles in *The Independent* and now become public again in the digital archive.

With this new public display, new problems arise, such as deciding how to display some of the materials, and not knowing how the efforts on "my end" will translate to a user's screen.

How does one scan letters that are folded in half with writing on each side folded page, the way someone writes on a card? Do I scan that as one page or two, when the

³⁷One prominent example concerns two letters written by P. T. Barnum, who labeled his correspondence PRIVATE in capital letters. From other letters in the collection, we can determine that the editor of *The Independent*, William Hayes Ward, shared such private correspondence with Miss Jefferis, a family friend, giving her the letters for her personal autograph collection.

letter writer meant it to be two separate, but attached pages, something the original recipient and a contemporary would understand? To what degree can I control representation? A digital archivist often must adopt principles other than *respect de fonds* and make choices based on themes or resemblances, so that digital copies do not necessarily mirror the contents of a folder (or of a material reality). Classification, in other words, may determine organization but not actual location. Manovich explains that in a database, there are “collections of individual items, with every item possessing the same significance as any other” (*The Language* 218). However, the design of a website that contains the database could emphasize certain items more than others, such as with color, arrangement, and the number of links. A designer must balance scholarly rigor with aesthetics. Ankersmit argues that the term *representation* is “primarily aesthetic,” but this “does not mean that the historian has the same freedom when representing the past as the artist” (284). Creators must act as designers to make sites that are both aesthetically pleasing and intellectually responsible. Nevertheless, one must accept that full control over a representation is impossible. As Cohen and Rosenzweig explain, no matter how much a web producer designs a project, the user’s screen will render each copy differently, such that “consistency is essentially impossible on the web.” The anatomizing does not end with the display created on the editor’s end, but continues with each individual view of a site, or an item on a site, each time representations are called up on separate monitors, at the moment of readerly interaction with the digital archive.

Authors and editors lose control of their digital work, not just because of the variety of iterations possible at the local level of the individual screen, but also because there is always the possibility that we do much of this preservation and representation in

vain. The possible crisis of data migration—moving documents from one medium, format, or technology, to another—haunts the archiving enterprise. Digital preservation depends upon software and hardware that might be obsolete in a few years. We make decisions meant to address the potential crisis, such as using Tagged Image File Format (TIFF) for images because it is not proprietary software, such as Adobe's Portable Document Format (PDF). TIFF offers high-quality detail, and when storage space is large, they are the best choice for archiving use in long-term storage. Often, institutions will save a copy of a document in XML (eXtensible Markup Language), a non-proprietary file format for describing texts, for preservation, but will use a PDF or the popular JPEG (Joint Photographic Experts Group) compression standard version for display. Despite the benefits of these applications and formats, we have to face the real possibility that machines in the future will be unable to read the materials we work to preserve (prompting the need for future technologies to be built with the ability to be back-compatible). Digital objects themselves meant to preserve archival objects must themselves be preserved.

PRACTICAL MATTERS: COLLABORATION

Thus far in this chapter, I have discussed my work as an individual scholar, but in reality the project would not have been possible without the collaboration of a team of people, all of whom have more experience working with digital platforms I do. At this year's MLA conference (2009), a digital humanities session entitled "Links and Kinks in the Chain: Collaboration in the Digital Humanities" brought a standing-room only crowd. Laura Mandell's discussion of collaboration was intriguing, especially her summary of an imagined debate between Harold Short (of the Centre for Computing in the Humanities at

King's College London) and Julia Flanders (Brown University). Mandell sums up Flanders's position as advocating a hybrid scholar competent in a humanities area and computing skills, whereas Short's position would envision scholars each specializing in their own fields but who come together to collaborate in the digital humanities. Bethany Nowviskie added that institutions employ an increasing number of scholars working in a hybrid professional category because institutions are not yet ready to develop and reward digital humanities collaboration. As a graduate student, I have worked as a hybrid scholar, facing a divide between being a specialist in a content-area or in digital humanities. When I began this project, I thought it possible to work as a lone scholar, but soon realized the limitations of my knowledge, as well as institutional barriers to my own scholarly self-definition.

I faced the challenge of meeting institutional needs, in this case the library's desire to represent the entire collection (not just the women's materials) in a digital archive, but also because a good digital humanities project must be something "more than" representation of archival information. The overall collection of materials related to *The Independent* in the library is small, with around 160 items, and simply putting the objects online with metadata would not comprise a project with scholarly merit. The value of a digital project arises in contextualizing the information, from design and research that reveals relationships among materials and their authors, meaning that the project needed to do more than represent the materials from Special Collections. For my work, this meant that there was not one project, but two, with the women's correspondence and manuscripts from the collection to form a separate site, *Independent Women*.

Because the library is rapidly changing how it develops its digital projects, the project team decided to use an open-source program to create the digital archive for the entire collection, Omeka, a package developed by George Mason University's Center of History and New Media (CHNM). Omeka permits users, identified by Omeka as individual scholars, small libraries, independent researchers, and museums, to create digital humanities projects based upon the free, built-in capabilities of the software. Omeka describes itself as a "web-based publishing platform for scholars, librarians, archivists, museum professionals, educators, and cultural enthusiasts" that "brings Web 2.0 technologies and approaches to academic and cultural websites to foster user interaction and participation" using a "a simple and flexible templating system" (*Project*). Omeka's templates, or themes, by their very existence, suggest genre—a way to style information within the larger genre of the database-anatomy (see Figure 5).³⁸

Omeka allows a larger number of items to be displayed (limited only by server space at the hosting individual or institution) and works with a MySQL database (My Structured Query Language). Nevertheless, while the Omeka package includes a tool for building exhibits, I decided to build the *Independent Women* site using Dreamweaver (see Figure 6). Omeka does not have the design look nor functionality the team wanted for the site. With standardization comes necessary limitations, and we desired certain features and flexibility difficult to achieve with Omeka.

The case studies for this dissertation (Chapter 4), lead to a conclusion that not all digital sites align with the anatomy genre, and that sites with extensive databases and/or copious linking are more anatomical than those without. Based upon the case study

³⁸ See the case studies in Chapter 4 for a discussion of the relationship among design, templates, and the anatomy genre.

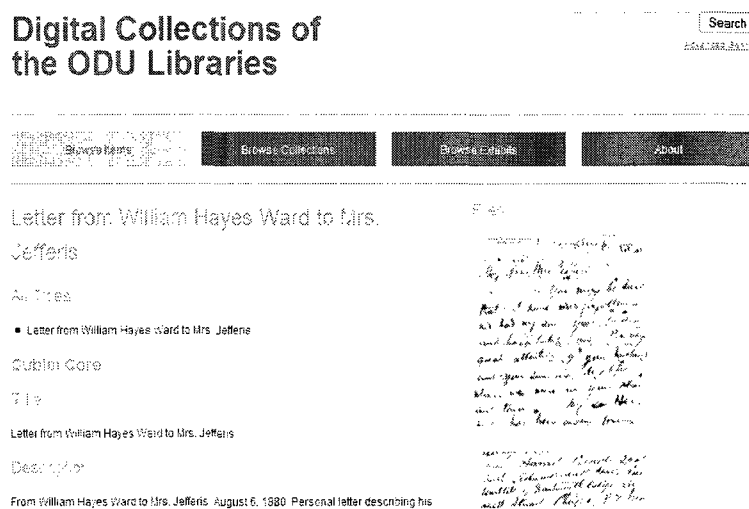


Fig. 5. Page from the Omeka site for the entire collection. Source: *Digital Collections of the ODU Libraries: The Independent*, 2009. Web. 25 Nov. 2009.

results, the Omeka site for the entire collection of *Independent* materials is an anatomy, whereas the *Independent Women* site, for now, is not. My eventual plan for *Independent Women* is to expand it into a gateway site about women authors who wrote for nineteenth-century American periodicals. The site will invite scholarly participation, with submission of articles, finding aids, links to biographical information, and sharing of primary source materials such as letters and manuscripts, ledgers, or other ephemera. Importantly, the site will move beyond representation of primary source materials in a library collection. It may include a wiki on the authors, with the wiki forming a sort archive within the archive. Doubtless, the site's feature will change, even as the list of what cannot be done because of lack of time, training, or funding, remains far longer than what can be done. It may be rare that a discussion of what one will *not* do is of any scholarly value, but not when addressing the anatomy genre—the so-called unfishable genre—and not when project completion is such an important topic in digital humanities.



Figure 6. Page from *Independent Women* using Dreamweaver. Source: from this dissertation project, created by the author.

During the course of this research project, my discoveries about the scrapbook maker, and nineteenth-century scrapbooks overall, have brought me to consider how scholars separate personal satisfaction from potential scholarly value. The cultural import of the scrapbook includes how it presents evidence of nineteenth-century leisure activities and a window into the world of American periodicals—and how hobbies and periodicals overlapped in the late nineteenth century. Katriel and Farrell identify three activities of scrapbook keeping, all of which overlap with digital archive creation: saving items for “future appreciation”; organizing with “spatial arrangement” and placement of items on pages; and “contemplating and sharing,” or inviting others to view the work (4-5). Construction of a scrapbook is not unlike that of a digital archive, as both participate in exhibition and memory-making. The ephemeral becomes material because of its preservation, and the act of including an item in an archive, digital or otherwise, assigns it value. As the creator of a digital archive, I was both archivist and anatomist, cutting and

constructing, performing scholarly activities that not only complicate what constitutes the canon, but genre, as well, aligning with the overall goal of this dissertation.

CHAPTER IV

CASE STUDIES: ANATOMIZING DESIGN

INTRODUCTION

The first chapters of this dissertation have identified genre as a historical process that depends on the features of a text as well as its use, with digital archives and database as developments of the anatomy genre. The first chapter's explanation of the qualities of the anatomy genre, as well as the history and development of archives, led to the extended development in the second chapter regarding detailism, classification, and how those qualities affect the creation and reception of a digital archive. The third chapter examined the ways in which a methodological explanation informs the creation of a digital archive, and this fourth chapter will investigate existing digital archives to see how they manifest qualities of the anatomy genre. Part of the discussion will focus on how established editorial theory and standards emerging in digital humanities scholarship square with our expectations of the genre of the digital archive.

As a historical process, genre is evolutionary, involving the development and the spread of genres from older generic categories to those of mass culture. Genres transform over time, with database—what this dissertation also calls digital archives or digital anatomies—as a contemporary development of the genre as it responds to shifts from print to digital literacy. As explained in the first chapter of this dissertation, characteristics of the anatomy include the dissection and representation of knowledge, encyclopedic proliferation of information, instability, self-reflexivity, and a utopian element—the last quality, which, when applied to anatomy and the database genre, can be

described as a sense of idealism. The definition of the database-anatomy genre, like that of any genre, must remain specific enough to include what characteristics constitute the genre, while remaining abstract enough to allow flexibility in interpretation.

To consider generic attributes of database, this chapter examines shared characteristics of digital archives using qualitative case studies. In order to narrow down what to analyze from the large and ever-growing number of literary-historical websites, these case studies focus on the collection, contextualization, and delivery of writings located on several digital archives related to nineteenth-century periodicals culture. These case studies will add to discussions of how literary-historical digital archives represent the material past, and how design of visual elements and functionality suggest characteristics of the anatomy genre.

The selection process—deciding which digital archives to study—entails some unavoidable amount of assumption of generic similarities before-the-fact. In addition to having a degree of relatedness to nineteenth-century American periodicals, sites have met a number of other characteristics for inclusion—including that each site has institutional support from a university or educational organization; the site represents an effort to collect and represent archival material; and the site contains facsimiles of archival manuscripts and/or TEI encoded versions. Furthermore, this small sample includes a range of project sizes, in terms of the amount of material represented, number of people involved, and potential for growth. A number of the digital literature projects online are from relatively early days of the web and do not present the latest technological innovations or web tools. Theoretically, any web publication can be changed, updated, and added to quickly or indefinitely, but a large number of digital archives have been

discontinued, including a number of small library projects that might be limited to a physical collection, projects whose funding has dried up, that lack institutional support, or that were abandoned because authors moved on to other work. We all have the experience of attempting to link to a site only to find that it has disappeared or moved to a place that requires a log-in, fee, or membership of some sort. This sort of variability presents an unavoidable problem in digital textual studies, which is further complicated by one of the fundamental tenets of research design overall—the ability to replicate findings. In other words, replicating findings proves difficult when the texts in question no longer exist. The scope of this dissertation requires a necessarily small number of case studies and cannot offer conclusions or inferences about all literary-historical digital archives, yet this research will suggest more in-depth studies of genre, and especially of the anatomy.

As discussed in the first chapter of this dissertation, understanding of genre often depends upon our expectations, and recent studies of genre focus on genre's social import and use-value. As Ann Wysocki notes, the look of a page or screen offers an "immediate sense of its genre" and its visual elements are part of its persuasive purpose (123-124). When researching online, we immediately close out sites that do not appear reputable, or that lack a sense of authority. In research on the relationship between visual design and perceptions of quality and reliability of academic websites, Patrick Lynch offers statistics on reader's reactions, noting that "users make aesthetic decisions about the overall visual impression of web pages in as little as 50 milliseconds (1/20th of a second). These instant visceral reactions to web pages happen to virtually all users, are consistent over visit length, and strongly influence the user's sense of trust in the information." Furthermore,

such instances represent readers' interactions with the interface, which functions as a "top level" or entry level of historical representation, that is, as the top layer or skin of the anatomy (the "screen essentialism" discussed in Chapter 2). Madeleine Clare Elish and Whitney Trettien call these moments of analysis *scenes*—a term that conveys the possibility of the reader's (or actor's, to continue the theater metaphor) more extensive interactions with an archive—that is, each moment of analysis functions as a scene in a longer act, as in a play (3). Analysis of each scene reveals a relationship among design, scholarly expectations, and genre. Allison Brovey Warner concurs, arguing that formal design can become transparent with a print text, but that web-based texts are more capable of defying readerly expectations; even so, users have a sense of what to see and how sites "feel." The point of analyzing sites is to make the experience *not* transparent. Furthermore, this experience, moment, or scene is not only individual, but social, and reflects institutional, authorial, and scholarly circumstances.

Most literary sites have qualities in common with one another, including aspects of design that could be noted just by anecdotal evidence. For example, literary-historical sites usually contain an image of a painted portrait or a photograph of an author, along with bibliographic information, and often facsimiles of documents or manuscripts; bright colors or unusual fonts are rare. In order to apply structure to such general observations, we need to look at what sorts of relationships exist between design and what sites do—the relationship between form and function—that is, the same sort of relationship between classification and use argued throughout this dissertation. As Wysocki points out, the similarities of page design in most books allow us to ignore the book's own materiality and free us up to think about its content, such that in academic pages, visual

similarities are valued more than differences (147-148). Although Wysocki writes about paper pages, the same principle applies to web pages, such that we often focus on content and usually do not actively analyze what we see, no matter how constructed. Design matters, especially because evidence from usability studies suggests that “beauty enhances usability” (Lynch). How a site is put together, and its look and feel, are not superficial considerations, and genre analysis will suggest how scholarly value meets already-emerging conventions in digital scholarly forms.

Because our interactions with digital archives usually happen initially at the level of the interface, these case studies focus on the interface more than on underlying structure or code and are particularly interested in how digital archives contribute to how we research. An allegory for research and discovery, the database is the counterpart for recovery work, a term usually used in feminist scholarship. Sara Crosby notes how feminist scholarship tends to take a “critique” or “recovery” point of view, and that print culture studies, when merged with feminist methodology, enable a “concrete way to track the construction of culture as a many-sided conversation and so promises to reveal a nuanced ‘big picture’ of both gender and textuality” (132). Digital media provides the best possible venue for participating in and representing this conversation, with its “big pictures” capabilities. In a sense, all research is related to a recovery process, and even a digital archive for a now-established canonical figure like Walt Whitman can function as a recovery project, because it seeks to represent heretofore unknown, under-studied, or dispersed information about a historical figure.

The type of digital work in an archive like the *Whitman Archive* represents a type of digital humanities work that is somewhat distinct from projects focusing on

applications that aggregate metadata or other such tools. While a number of literary-historical digital archives use such tools, there is a split of sorts between “the use of internet-based platforms to host resources of different kinds—e-texts, hypertexts, visual resources, searchable databases—and the use of computers to analyse and interrogate materials—usually in the form of a database of some kind” (Pearson 88). Even among literary-historical archives that host resources, there is a range of differences in site type. In an overview of digital archives in *American Periodicals*, Cynthia Patterson distinguishes among seven types of academic sites, including the following: those with the main purpose of representing archival primary source materials; sites that focus on pedagogy, with essay collections and teaching modules; gateway sites that provide a number of links to other sites but have little content; online publications or journals; sites run by organizations; and online communities (144). Patterson’s list proves helpful in categorizing academic sites by purpose, or even possible sub-genres, but as Patterson points out, the types of sites do overlap. Nevertheless, Patterson’s categories have influenced selections for this dissertation’s case studies, such as in whether to analyze big-name figures or less-known authors, and in choosing sites that represent a range of (for lack of a better word) sizes. These case studies reflect Patterson’s summation of site types and include the following texts: *American Women’s Dime Novel Project*, which mostly represents archival texts; the pedagogical site *Women with a Deadline* hosted by the National Women’s History Museum; the gateway site *Voice of the Shuttle*, a database of thousands of humanities’ links ; and *The Vault at Pfaff’s: An Archive of Art and Literature by New York City’s Nineteenth-century Bohemians*, which offers a look at the social dimension of a group of authors, as well as links and primary source materials.³⁹

³⁹ “American Women’s Dime Novel Project” is available at <http://chnm.gmu.edu/dimenovels/index.html>;

Before analyzing these sites, it is important to point out that these sites are not all equal, in terms of technical sophistication or rigor. Although the sites can all be called academic, they are all not necessarily what the digital humanities community would call valid humanities computing projects. One of the foremost scholars in digital humanities, John Unsworth, explains that it is important “to distinguish between exemplars of that activity [valid humanities computing projects] and charlatans,” and that a charlatan project “doesn’t have a way to be wrong,” and “one can’t say whether it does or doesn’t work, ether it is or isn’t internally consistent and logically coherent . . . The problem with charlatanism is that it undersells the market by providing a quick-and-dirty simulacrum of something that, done right, is expensive, time-consuming, and difficult” (“What Is”). Unsworth concedes that no humanities computing projects meet an ideal, and that all possess charlatanism to one degree or another; nevertheless, the two most important factors in judging a site for quality are its interactivity and its ability to allow structured searching that permits combinational inquiries and the changing of search values and parameters, such as keywords. These case studies therefore investigate each site’s interactivity and searchability, commenting on whether it meets Unsworth’s description of charlatanism. Towards its end, the chapter draws some conclusions about how charlatanism and the anatomy genre coincide.

For these case studies, Sonja Foss’s *generic application* provides a useful approach for considering the relationship among visual and functional design and the anatomy genre. Generic application evaluates an artifact’s characteristics—in this case each web site—against qualities of a genre (200). The overarching research question for

“Women with a Deadline” at <http://www.nwhm.org/womenwithdeadlines/wwd1.htm>); “Voice of the Shuttle” at <http://vos.ucsb.edu/>; and “The Vault at Pfaff’s” at <http://digital.lib.lehigh.edu/pfaffs/about/intro/>.

these case studies asks, “How do literary-digital archives manifest characteristics of the anatomy genre, and in what ways do they depart from them?” In order to break down this larger question into particulars and perform generic application, each case study uses a rubric with questions based, in part, upon Elish and Trettien’s case studies, Allison Brovey Warner’s assessment rubric for webtexts, and Anne Wysocki’s multimedia textual analysis. The rubric, outlined below, addresses purpose, organization, authorship, and completion, among its topics.

Purpose: Self-naming, Creating Expectations, and Story

What does the site call itself—an archive, collection, etc.? What expectation does that create?

This question explores the relationship among a site’s name, how its creators envision its purpose, and the audience’s initial reaction to the site based upon its name. There are separate generic expectations for gateway sites, exhibits, and large collections of primary source materials displayed in databases. The amount of detail varies among these types of sites and may correspond to how “anatomical” (according to the anatomy genre) the site is.

Does the site include a rationale? What purpose does it offer? Does it purport to improve the historical or scholarly record? How? What story does the site tell?

An author or institution includes a rationale or explanation of purpose when it wants to be overt in its mission, whether for clarity, activism, or in order to amend history. A site’s self-presentation through a narrative might indicate how the site participates in scholarly discourses—social, cultural, historical, educational, etc. The anatomy genre—a self-reflexive intellectual genre to begin with—often refers to an intellectual utopia, and scholarly activism suggests improving society through education by promoting ideology—for example, feminist recovery work.

Remediation and Detailism: Negotiating and Navigating the Anatomy

To what degree does the site remediate a physical archive? Is most of the content primary-source material, or is there another focus?

As discussed in Chapter 3, remediation reinvents older media technologies or forms. Both content and presentation of a digital archive often remediate a physical archive.

What features go beyond the ability of print? How?

This question establishes the degree to which the site remediates print and uses the allowances of digital media. Digital technologies enable the degree to which an artifact can be magnified or anatomized.

How does the site mix genres, discourses or styles? What types of materials are presented on the page?

The anatomy genre is a meta-genre and contains a mix of other genres, often ones that are widely different. Items from different time periods might be displayed; the language(s) may vary; multi-media offer a variety of ways to present information, from text and image to audio or video. Juxtapositions of different media, tone, or genres characterize the digital anatomy.

Does the site explain its organization? How? Is information organized chronologically, alphabetically, or thematically?

A site's organization might include a site map, table of contents, index, or other organizational scheme, which may or may not correlate with the amount of information—the encyclopedism—of the site.

How does the site dissect knowledge or amass facts? Databases? Metadata? Encoding? What methods, tools, or other design elements provide information or detail (such as magnification tools)?

Types of databases, the number of databases, the amount of metadata, magnification tools, and the presence of TEI encoding all indicate possible ways in which a site can anatomize.

Is there a lot of information or detail on each page?

Text-heavy designs reflect print-based publications and are difficult to read on a computer monitor. For computer reading, information is best organized in small chunks on a web page.⁴⁰ Scholarly writing consists of writing organized in longer, complex passages, and because of this, there is inherent discord between the purposes of scholarly writing and the best practices for writing for screen display. The amount detail on a page may or may not indicate how anatomical a site is. A site may be text-heavy and traditional (as in more like print); however, a site designed for anatomizing through use of multiple pages and/or database entries would contain a more easily read amount of information on a web page, but many more of those pages than a print-based design.

What tools does the site use for searching? Databases? Metadata? Encoding? Can the site be searched from each page? What sort of navigation does the site provide? What sort of browsing conventions or functionalities does the site have?

Genre depends on design and use—how characteristics of a text reflect a definition of a genre, as well as how a reader or user approaches or interacts with a text. For a literary-historical website, use depends, in part, on design, and a design is created in accordance with how the site will be used. Search and browsing functions can help a

⁴⁰ See Dan Cohen and Roy Rosenzweig. *Digital History: A Guide to Gathering, Preserving, and Presenting the Past on the Web*, Center for History and New Media. George Mason University, print Copy available by Penn State UP 2005; Patrick J. Lynch and Sarah Horton, *Web Style Guide*, 3rd Edition: Basic Design Principles for Creating Web Sites, New Haven: Yale UP, 2009; Paula Petrik, "Top Ten Mistakes in Academic Web Design," *History Computer Review 2000*, archiva.net; and Alysson Troffer, "Writing Effectively Online: How to Compose Hypertext," *Computers and Composition Online*, special feature (2000).

user explore vast amounts of information by using key words to select pages or items, often leading to accidental discoveries. Navigation tools, such as headings or links help the user make sense of the amount and type of information, especially because web-based texts are not read in a linear fashion. The degree of multi-linearity—or, number of possible paths—contributes to degree of anatomizing. The user becomes more dependent on navigation and browsing when a site is more encyclopedic or detailed.

Completion and Authorship

When was the site last updated? Does it appear to be maintained? Does the site comment on its completion or on a time frame for its development?

One of the problems critics cite regarding digital scholarship is its instability, meaning that when a user goes to retrieve an item online, the link is broken and the object appears no longer to exist. Changes in software or hardware, or movement from an open site to a password-protected or subscription-based site also affect retrieval. This impression of changeability reflects the instability of the anatomy genre, its apparent unreliability (as discussed in Chapter 1 of this dissertation). Additionally, some sites discuss their goals for completion and development. Although any web site or database could theoretically be added to indefinitely, most are not, but this potential infinitude marks digital archives as the ideal form of the anatomy genre, since such sites can continue their encyclopedic farrago in perpetuity. (Often, the ability to expand depends on funding; this dissertation will discuss the topic of unfinishability in the concluding chapter.)

Is there one author or multiple authors? Is there a place on the site for a user to leave a comment or participate in a discussion? Is the user invited to contribute to the site or make suggestions for the site's expansion?

Multiple authors allow the anatomy more expansion than allowed in print and at a faster rate. A text-based anatomy could have multiple authors, but not on the scale permitted by a web-based anatomy. With addition of interactivity to the anatomy genre (through what has come to be called Web 2.0 or social networking), information can proliferate on an unprecedented scale, and with any number of digressions.

Does the site reflect standards supported by the digital humanities community?

Standards have been developed by organizations such as the TEI and NINES in the field of digital humanities, and these sorts of standards are meant to ensure quality in digital scholarly projects—and, incidentally, also prevent what Unsworth refers to as charlatanism. Additionally, standards support the use of such projects in a number of different platforms or browsers, while also helping to increase a project’s longevity or sustainability over time. Because digital technologies change rapidly, adhering to standards can support a project’s use in the future. Furthermore, funding agencies such as the NEH award grants to projects that follow such standards.

CASE STUDY 1: *WOMEN WITH A DEADLINE*

The National Women’s History Museum⁴¹ (NWHM), founded in 1996, describes itself on its home page as “a nonpartisan, nonprofit educational institution dedicated to preserving, interpreting, and celebrating the diverse historic contributions of women, and integrating this rich heritage fully into our nation’s history.” On the website for the National Women’s History Museum, a visitor learns that the NWHM has a physical address where there is an office, but that the museum has not been built. Organizers for the NWHM are lobbying to get funding for the building, explaining, “Until legislation passes in Congress designating a permanent museum in Washington, D.C., the NWHM

⁴¹ See <http://www.nwhm.org/>.

promotes women's history through its temporary exhibits, special events, Cyber Museum, and online educational materials.” Because the level of writing is not scholarly, the information is accessible to older children, the general public, and is a possible starting place for higher-level research in undergraduate studies.

During the planning stages for creating the museum, the NWHM maintains an online museum as a “stand-in” or possible later accompaniment for the proposed physical museum. The exhibit *Women with a Deadline: Female Printers, Publishers, and Journalists from the Colonial Period to World War I* is hosted as part of the CyberMuseum of the NWHM online. A visitor to the site can enter from the home page of the NWHM, where there is a list of exhibits in the CyberMuseum. The expectation is that this site will reflect the experience of being in a museum building looking at a collection; one expects a display of artifacts and accompanying writing that will contextualize the materials.

The home page of *Women with a Deadline* reads like the introduction to an essay because it introduces the overall exhibit, giving an overview of the site; it offers a narrative of women working in the printing and publishing industry in America from the colonial period through the First World War. The site does not have a rationale page or overtly stated purpose on the home page, but because the site is part of the NWHM, the mission of the museum corresponds to the purpose of the site. The Conclusion page expresses a more targeted summary of the site’s purpose, which is to reveal aspects of American women’s history to the public, women whose “contributions to the social and political advancement of America cannot be overemphasized. As the momentous events of their times unfolded, women were there to report on them, while also using journalism

as a medium for social change and the advancement of women's rights.” The language in the passage promotes women’s activism and participation in the a narrative of progressively improving civil rights for women.

Women with a Deadline does not focus on displaying primary source materials from a specific museum’s holdings, nor does it bring forward and display unknown or undiscovered items. For example, most of the images on the site are borrowed with permission from the Library of Congress. The site remediates a physical archive in the sense that it can potentially reach a larger audience than print media, but overall it does not offer tools or abilities unavailable in print. It does, however, collect and contextualize dispersed information into one place online and offers an overview of the topic. Each page contains images of texts and/or people—for example, one page contains cartoons, newspapers, handbills, a facsimile of pages from the *Bay Psalm Book* and a photograph of the Daye Press, the first printing press brought to the Massachusetts colony. There are no multimedia applications, and the same sort of presentation could be achieved in a museum exhibit in a building, in a pamphlet, or in a textbook. In fact, the site deliberately tries to look like a book or pamphlet and in part replicates the experience of reading print.

The site does not include a site map but has a sidebar with fifteen sections on each page that functions like a table of contents (see Figure 7). The information is organized chronologically, and each sub-heading addresses a different period in American history. The sidebar with the fifteen categories provides links to each section of the site, and most pages have buttons at the bottom that allow the reader to move forward or back, the same way someone would turn a page (see Figure 8).

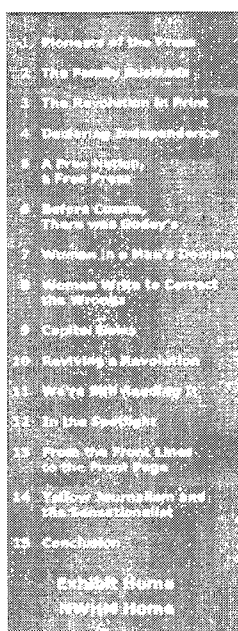


Fig. 7. Sidebar with categories that resemble book chapters. Source: *Women With a Deadline*. Web. 25 Nov. 2009.



Fig. 8. The look of typewriter keys for navigation buttons. Source: *Women With a Deadline*. Web. 25 Nov. 2009.

Each page contains an average of two paragraphs, which is actually *unlike* a comparable print resource, but the brevity of text makes it easier to read on a screen. There are thirty-one actual pages that make up the site, twenty-nine of which are numbered at the bottom using a courier-type font (see Figure 9). Most websites are not numbered this way—in the manner of print—because this convention is at odds with the hypertextual abilities of digital media, but for this site, the numbering evokes a sense of the past. Each page has an antique look because of the sepia-toned image of typewriter keys and Courier-type font of the header and page numbers (see Figure 10). The color scheme invokes

nostalgia, the “tools of the trade” of the printing industry of the nineteenth or earlier twentieth century—sepia-toned photography, old typewriters, the color of antique paper and print.

Page 2

Fig. 9. Use of page numbering. Source: *Women With a Deadline*. Web. 25 Nov. 2009.

Rather than dissecting a large amount of information or amassing facts, the site focuses on presenting a brief overview of the topic. There are no databases, metadata, TEI encoding, nor magnification tools, and the site offers a small number of links to other sites. For example, the bibliography page contains links to nine other web pages. On the

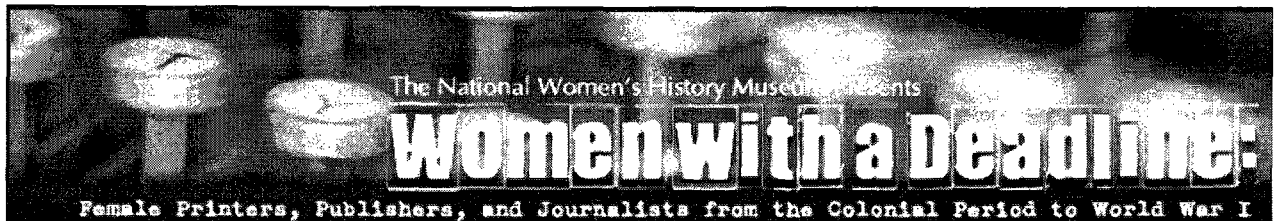


Fig. 10. Typewriter keys and a nostalgic look. Source: *Women With a Deadline*. Web. 25 Nov. 2009.

page *Before Cosmo, there was Godey's*, there is a link for Judith Sargent Murray.

Clicking on it brings the reader to a page of the NWHM on Murray that has additional resources on her life, works, and other museums. The site does not have search

functionality, but it is still easy to use because of the relatively small number of web pages and the site's reflection of a print-style design.

The NWHM site that houses the *Women with a Deadline* exhibit is maintained as of today, October 21, 2009; the last update was October 14, 2009. However, the exhibit *Women with a Deadline* was last updated in 2007, and the design of the site indicates that it is completed, as it has a Conclusion page. The Conclusion page has a link to a bibliography, which reinforces its educational purpose, and the bibliography comes at the "end" of the exhibit in the same way it would come at the conclusion of a print document. The Conclusion page also tells when the site was "curated" and by whom, a move that equates authorship with curation. It appears, though that the site does not receive active curation according to the sort of curation used on standards-based digital humanities projects, a fact that could cause problems in the future as technological platforms change. Additional credits for the site are given for historical consultation and web design. The site, then, is not a product of single authorship.

For the site *Women with a Deadline*, the creator's desire to create a finite, closed exhibit is more important than making a site that can be added to indefinitely. As an exhibit with authors that are called *curators*, the site mimics the reading of print materials and the visiting of an actual museum, both activities that focus on the user's experience in a moment of time. The focus is on education and scholarship, like most anatomy genres, but the design does not indicate an interest in excessive expansion and is focused on its topic of recovering women in the print industry in American history.

The design of the site emphasizes a nostalgic approach to the past, a romantic look and feel underscored by the color scheme and use of the antique typewriter in the

banner and font choices. By adopting a romantic design, the site offers its people and objects as participants in a story about American's past. It is the same sort of romance offered by the archive and by research itself (as discussed in Chapter 2 of this dissertation), but in the case of *Women With a Deadline*, the overall impression is that the site is not particularly anatomical, like sites that are heavily database-driven, such as the Whitman or Emily Dickinson online archives. It does subdivide information, but not in a way that does more than a book could do. The site does not mix materials or genre and does not appear to be interested in expansion. It does not need database features or other digital tools to meet its purpose. Although one could argue that the site would be stronger with these features, it is unclear whether the site lacks these tools or features because it does not desire them; in other words, the site functions as a stand-in for a physical museum space planned by the National Museum of Women's History, and if the site is meant to be limited like an exhibit in a museum, its lack of database or other digital tools may be deliberate. The design matches the purpose and audience of the project.

The site is neither encyclopedic nor anatomical, in the sense of the anatomy genre. In short, it is not an anatomy just because it is a web site. Instead, *Women With a Deadline* is more of an exhibit, a static web site that might appear as a link in a collection of historical websites—and thus *participates* in the anatomizing of information. That alone does not suggest affinity with the anatomy genre, which for digital projects involves investment in a site's expansion over time and its continual development. At some point in the future, however, the site may appear dated because its design will make it difficult to update. Certain software or tools added to a site make it more anatomical, including TEI encoding, which allows interpretive and search possibilities via markup; a

wiki, which allows numerous authors and collaborative knowledge; and social networking tools for bookmarking, which allow readers to rank sites amid the wash of information online. More than any other feature, though, the lack of a database marks the *Women With a Deadline* site as static, and although it is possible to add a database at any time, the site is a finished project. The creators' purpose, as much as the design, are self-limiting, and therefore not anatomical, in the sense of the anatomy genre.

The site is not a professional archive in the sense of a large-scale, high-quality digital humanities project like the *Whitman Archive*, as it is not standards-based. In keeping with Unsworth's argument regarding charlatan sites, the *Women With a Deadline* site would be an example of charlatanism. Unsworth explains that

charlatans trade intellectual self-consistency and internal logical coherence (in what probably ought to be a massive and complicated act of representation) for surface effects, immediate production, and canned conclusions . . . [and] is competing unfairly with projects that are more thorough and thoughtful, both in their approach to the problem of representation and in their planning and testing of technical and intellectual infrastructure. ("What Is")

The problem, however, with applying Unsworth's criticism here is that the *Women With a Deadline* never does *claim* to be a digital humanities or humanities computing site at all. From the point of view of Unsworth's description of what a digital humanities project is or is not, the site is not a legitimate digital humanities project, but it does not purport to be one, either. The site's surface effects include the nostalgic design features

discussed here, but it may be premature to assume that the site is fraudulent, despite the appearance of immediate production and canned conclusions.

The site may not be a quality product from the standpoint of digital humanities, but the site still has value that matches the rhetorical goals of its creators—to be an overview and limited exhibit meant to educate the general public. The exhibit is more for a general audience, so it should be evaluated with its purpose in mind. That said, the site is pleasant to look at but not necessarily original in its interpretation, and certainly not in its depth of information. The site would be appropriate for secondary school audiences or members of the public looking to gain a broad overview of the topic, but not for audiences seeking scholarly treatment of women working in publishing in American history. This analysis of the site does not intend to make it appear a less-developed variant of a large-scale digital humanities project; its purpose is different than that of a site like the *Whitman Archive*, the *Women Writer's Project* at Brown University, or *The Vault at Pfaff's* (one of the case studies for this dissertation project).

CASE STUDY 2: *VOICE OF THE SHUTTLE*

On its home page and under the heading “Welcome,” as of October, 2009, the site *Voice of the Shuttle*, abbreviated as *VoS*, calls itself a database that “serves content dynamically on the Web,” noting that it has evolved from its beginnings in 1994 as a “suite of static Web pages” (home page). With its promise of dynamic content and database capabilities, the site creates the expectation that it can provide access to a large amount of information by taking a visitor from the site to other places on the Web. The site offers its purpose in part from its “Welcome” address, which promises that the site is flexible and helps editors and scholars work efficiently while researching humanities-

based websites online. It emphasizes a belief that the scholarly record is improved by our engagement with technology, and less directly, that using a site such as *VoS* is one way to accomplish that goal.

The “Guide to *VoS*” links to a page on what the “Voice of the Shuttle” means, but that page does not contain direct statements or explanations of the *VoS*. Instead, it consists of allusions to a number of excerpts that contain links that form a pattern; most of the excerpts refer to the Greek myth in which Philomela’s tongue is cut out and she must weave a tapestry to tell her story because she has no speaking voice. The reader must figure out that she performs an act of weaving to deduce the meaning of the content; the *Voice of the Shuttle* means the voice of the shuttle passing back on a loom as the weaver makes a tapestry. The voice of the shuttle is therefore the voice of *the tool itself*, which tells a story of its own separate from the weaver (its author) and the tapestry (the textual product/textile), but is inseparable from both. The shuttle, then, represents the tool of the database, which the researcher uses to weave a tapestry of knowledge, a pattern always unique, a pattern influenced by mythology—cultural, intellectual, historical—and always inseparable from the technologies used to create it. The banner for the *VoS* site uses a script font over a red background with a subtle pattern to the left of the site name (see Figure 11). Upon close inspection, one can see a faint drop-shadow under the words “Voice of the Shuttle,” which appears to be woven in cloth—an allusion to the meaning behind the site’s name. The reds, blacks, and yellow colors repeat throughout the home page and other pages of the site.



Fig. 11. *Voice of the Shuttle* banner with its cloth-like design. Source: *Voice of the Shuttle*. Web. 20 Oct. 2009.

As a gateway site, the *VoS* contains thousands of links to humanities-based sites online, but it does not display primary-source material or its own collection of print-based objects. Its collection consists of other collections. By housing links in one online space, the site serves as an archive of archives, an *ür*-archive or meta-library. Another way to consider it with architectural metaphors is as an entryway (hence, the term “gateway” site), or as a foyer or vestibule that has thousands that connect to it, like the Borgesian library of Babel discussed in Chapter 1. *VoS* focuses on ease of access to scholarly materials online, in effect helping a scholar prevent aimless bumbling around following links through search engines such as Google or Bing. In effect, the sites linked to from *VoS* have been pre-screened by scholars or editors who have either collected the reviews themselves or have approved submission of links suggested by users who have emailed editors from the web site.

VoS is encyclopedic, and because its design reflects the same categories that form most university departments, the site helps a researcher by categorizing the links. Often, a scholar’s name is next to a link to a site, such as for *Emily Dickinson Electronic Archives*, which has the editors and institution next to the link (see Figure 12). This practice of annotating the links parenthetically has the effect of lending credibility to some links more than others, despite the scholarly value of some of the sites without

credentials. In effect, the links have been filtered and annotated by editors, but because of the amount of links on the site, it is not clear whether all links have been carefully considered for accuracy. For instance, the link to Emily Dickinson's *Poems. 1896* is to an edition of Dickinson's work notorious among Dickinson scholars because of its editing; the volume has titles given by editors, not Dickinson, as well as editor's presumed "corrections" to Dickinson's word choice and syntax (Gailey). The process of amassing such links could be replicated in print with a large index, but having such a document on paper would be pointless since the user can click on a link and arrive at information in seconds. The speed with which a researcher can arrive at web sites particular to specific topics is greater than when using a standard search engine like Google. For example, by clicking on "Literature (in English)," the user can navigate to "American Literature," with its own vast list of links, many of which have links attached to them.

While the site represents physical objects on its pages with images or other digital surrogates, it also does mix a number of discourses. The site projects receptiveness towards popular media tools and outlets. For example, the "News" category on the home page (as of October 26, 2009) includes a link to a story about *VoS* being in the "Best of the Web" directory in *Forbes* magazine and suggests that users try Google's experimental glossary. Furthermore, *VoS*'s explanation of itself as a "work in progress," suggests a willingness to share its development in the name of scholarship, while also functioning as a disclaimer of sorts (as when editors write how there are "still some mis-orderings of categories and author names that we are fixing as we convert our legacy resources"). Its promotion of wiki-style user participation marks the site as one that contains multiple

■ **Emily Dickinson**

- [BYU EMWEB Listserv Archive \(on Emily Dickinson's language\)](#)
- [Emily Dickinson Page \(U. Minnesota English Dept.\)](#)
- [The Homestead, Evergreens, and More: Virtual Dickinson Landscapes \(Jarom McDonald\)](#)
- [Emily Dickinson Electronic Archives \(Gen. Editors: Martha Nell Smith, Ellen Louise Hart, Marta Werner / IATH, U. Virginia\)](#)
- [Emily Dickinson Page](#)
- [Emily Dickinson \(Richard Darsie, U. California, Davis\)](#)
- [Emily Dickinson Page \(The Poetry Archives\)](#)
- [Emily Dickinson Journal](#)
- [Poems, 1896 \(Bartleby Library\)](#)
- [Selected Poetry \(inforM\)](#)

Fig. 12. Links of *Voice of the Shuttle* site with names of editors and institutions. Source: *Voice of the Shuttle*. Web. 20 Oct. 2009.

discourse styles—not to mention the access one has instantly to thousands of links containing a variety of discourses in academic disciplines.

VoS amasses facts and dissects knowledge by collection in a database. On the Help page, technical information about the site indicates that *VoS* uses a SQL database, short for *Structured Query Language*, a computer language that manages data in relational database management systems, or databases that help people organize data by matching up different categories the data is placed into, as in a table. Editors of *VoS* explain how

The new *VoS* holds its data—categories, links, descriptions, and other information—in a SQL Server 2000 database that developers add to and revise through Web forms. Macromedia's UltraDev4 program is used to create the 'middleware' programming (in this case, ASP2.0 and VBScript) that connects the database to the Web. When a user calls on the new *VoS*, the database in the background generates a page of data "on the fly" based on the latest records and the user's exact request.

In other words, *VoS* contains its information in a database that uses *middleware*, which is as it sounds—a program that is a connector between software programs, in this case the database of *VoS* and the Web. The structure allows users to access tremendous amounts of information online.

The site organizes information thematically, through the categories on the sidebar on the home page, but also, less directly, by key terms that can be searched. The vast number of links requires careful organization. The “Welcome” content explains that the site “models the way the humanities are organized for research and teaching as well as the way they are adapting to social, cultural, and technological changes.” In organizing itself according to “the humanities,” the site contains 28 content areas reflecting the departments often found in a large university listed in a sidebar on the left—such as anything from Anthropology to Technology of Writing. More information can be found on the *VoS* Help Page, which contains information on navigating, bookmarking, and searching, along with explanatory diagrams (see Figure 13). Each page on the site has a search box in the upper right corner where a user can type in terms, and each of the pages found on the Contents sidebar (the ones organized based upon a university’s departments) contains a box with a list of the contents on that page (see Figure 14). The site provides navigation with a sidebar on each page, a guide at the bottom of the page to some of the pages, the clickable link “[To Top]” at the bottom of pages, a search box on each page, and a box entitled “On This Page,” under Contents.

It is not easy to discern from the site how often it is maintained, as the information about its creators could be outdated. However, the site’s creator, Alan Liu, indicated in an email exchange that the site is regularly maintained. There is a “Spotlight On”

feature on the home page that draws links randomly from the *VoS* site, which gives the appearance that *VoS* receives daily maintenance, even though the feature is one that is programmed and may happen automatically. As of October 26, 2009, the “About *VoS*” link returns a server error. *VoS* is an ongoing project, and most pages on the site invite users to suggest links by using a prominently displayed button (see Figure 13). Because the button is on each page, a visitor to the site feels welcome to participate in the site’s authorship.

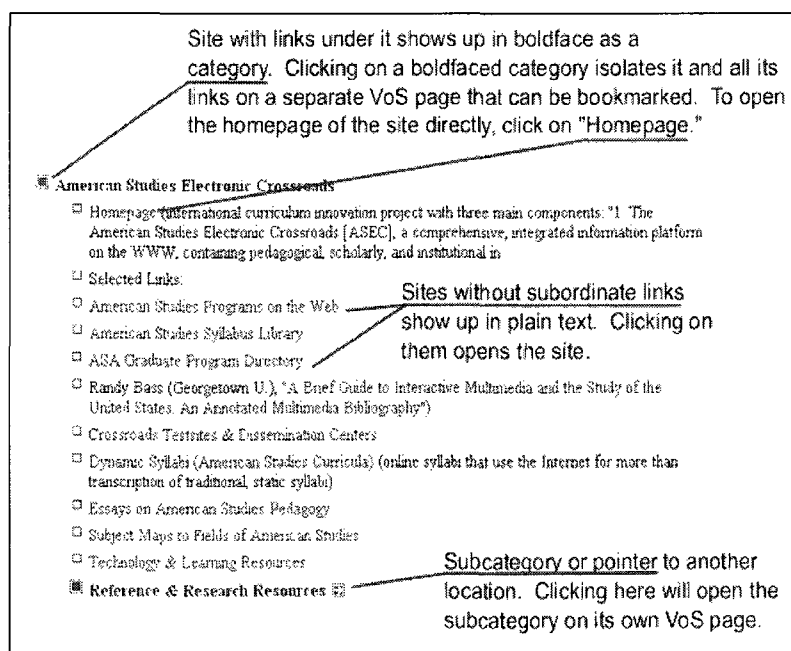


Fig. 13. Explanatory diagram to help user understand site structure. Source: Source: *Voice of the Shuttle*. Web. 20 Oct. 2009.

Alan Liu, the director of *VoS*, leads a large team of personnel who work on the site, including a technical development team and editorial assistants. On a *VoS* Credits page, the names of those involved in working on *VoS*, past and present, are listed, along

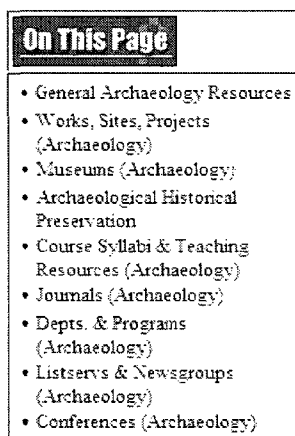


Fig. 14. Contents sidebar found on each page of *Voice of the Shuttle*. Source: *Voice of the Shuttle*. Web. 20 Oct. 2009.

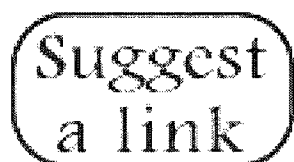


Fig. 15. Button on each page that invites contributions from users. Source: *Voice of the Shuttle*. Web. 20 Oct. 2009.

with sponsors and other persons involved. In addition to the number of people who edit and perform technical support for *VoS*, there are a number of indirect “authors”—a decidedly loose application of the term—as each site that *VoS* links to has one or more authors and/or technical design teams of its own.

This site is encyclopedic, with the express purpose of continually expanding and collecting information. As outlined in the first chapter of this dissertation, the anatomy genre requires exhaustive detail as its primary characteristic. By definition, gateway sites provide enormous amounts of information, with vast numbers of links, and have the potential to be the most anatomical. The amount of information unavoidably leads to

digression, a feature of encyclopedism as well. Not all of the links lead to academic sites, such that *VoS* mixes discourses, another feature of the anatomy genre, which juxtaposes language and artistic styles, often placing the “high” with the “low”; on the *VoS* site, the “high” culture item is represented by a link to an individual scholar or team of scholars’ site, usually under the aegis of a university; the “low” culture item is represented by, for example, the link to the a commercial site About.com, with its watered-down version of an academic topic. This sort of unexpected, or at least irregular, juxtaposition on an academic site could be seen as either elevating non-academic sites to a status closer to that of academic site, or conversely, as detracting from academic sites. It may, in fact, suggest an odd mixing on the *VoS* site, or point to an editing policy that does not discriminate among sites, to the detriment of some sites or even to *VoS* itself. Either way, the mixing of links from different discourses suggests the anatomy genre, with its tendency to commingle genres, textual types, voices, or registers.

The visual design of *VoS*, with its lengthy lists of links and sparse decoration—few images other than the banner and a red, white, and black color scheme—emphasizes the information rather than a particular feel, such as the nostalgic tone of the *Women with a Deadline* site. The page “Gender and Sexuality” contains 776 links (as of November 13, 2009), three items that could be called images—the *VoS* logo, the link suggestion button, and the “On This Page” sidebar. There are so many links that counting them—let alone reading them—is overwhelming. It is easy to get mired in the detail and begin to have difficulty sorting through links to scholarly and non-scholarly sites, anything from pages on Donna Haraway to campus date-rape hotlines.

When considered in light of Unsworth's charlatanism discussion, the *VoS* site does present features of as a quality site, but the sort of odd juxtapositions discussed in the previous paragraph, as well as the Emily Dickinson example, give pause; detailed editing regarding all links on the site appears to be a secondary concern to amassing information. Nevertheless, computing standards appear to work well with the site's purpose and audience. This particular case suggests that a site may be a solid representative of the anatomy genre and yet not be a valid digital humanities site, in accordance with Unsworth's much-cited definition.

CASE STUDY 3: *THE AMERICAN WOMEN'S DIME NOVEL PROJECT*

The American Women's Dime Novel Project: Dime Novels for Women, 1870-1920 identifies itself as a project, as indicated in the name of the site. On the "About" page, Felicia L. Carr, the project's creator, calls it a "web site" and a project interchangeably. The choice of terms is important because "web site" has become less popular in naming digital humanities projects over time; the term diminishes the perception of size and depth of work. The subtitle of the site places the scope of the materials for the project to 1870-1920 (see Figure 16). At the top of each page of the site, the banner and logo includes two images—black and white renderings—of women authors of dime novels, one on either side of the title of project. The overall look of the banner lends an antique feel to the site, with fonts resembling what would have been used on one of the dime novels or on other printed ephemera from the period, in the block-style lettering of the site title and in the courier-type of font of the subtitle; the women's portraits support the nostalgic feel.

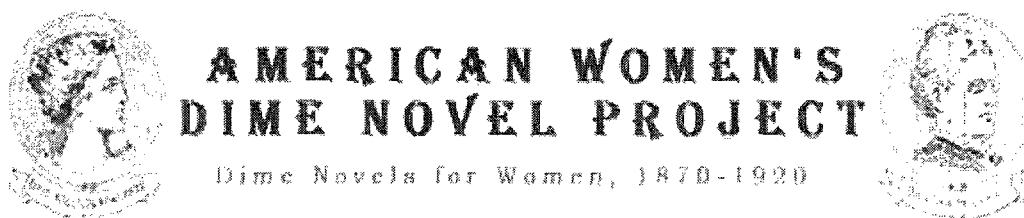


Fig. 16. Banner for the dime novels site. Source: *American Women's Dime Novel Project*. Web. 22 Nov. 2009.

Carr explains the rationale for the project on the “About” page, noting how the site began as an extension of her dissertation, “All For Love: Gender and Class and the Woman's Dime Novel in Nineteenth-Century America,” which “examines the genre of women's dime novel writing and its role in changing gender and class formations.”

While researching for her dissertation, Carr noted that the dime novel was not well-represented online, and that the novels

have not received the attention they deserve. This genre, once enormously popular with its readers, has been neglected for most of its history by scholars, collectors, and libraries. It suffers from the double burden of being both popular and written for working-class women. This project hopes to overcome the history of oversight to both the form and its readers by providing information about the novels themselves, the authors, the readers, and nineteenth century public reaction.

Carr's word choices situate the site as a recovery project, with the novels personified as a genre that *has been neglected*, not having the scholarly notice they *deserve*, and as a topic that *suffers* from a *burden* that the project *hopes to overcome*. The language tells the story of a forgotten form of entertainment, once popular among working and middle-class

women readers—a genre that reveals social and cultural mores from its time period, as well as participating in a historical relationship with contemporary popular fiction.

Overall, the site provides content regarding dime novels much like a book on the subject would, with information on scholarship, where to find physical copies of the novels, digital representations, publishers of the novels, and biographical information on authors of the genre. A page called “Primary Materials” contains links to texts of dime novels or related material, some scanned by Carr, and some housed on other sites, such as the e-text center at the University of Virginia, and at Project Gutenberg. The Dime Novel Archives page links to archives containing physical copies of the books (See Figure 17). Unlike a physical archive, the site can “locate” representations from across the Web at one place.

Most pages on the site contain lists of links with explanations, not unlike a gateway site would, but with more of a targeted focus—in this case on the topic of dime novels. Only one of the main pages of the site contains images, “The Series and Papers” page, which has images of text from the dime novel period. The other main pages link to sites with large numbers of images, such as the “Cover Gallery” page; a user will not find any representations of dime novels on the “Cover Gallery” page but will find three links to other pages online that contain such images. Two of the links take the user to pages where she can get to images of novel covers on a server at Syracuse University’s library, and one link contains images compiled by Carr. There is no site map and the site does not contain specific information on how to navigate or locate information. Each page has a sidebar to the left with the main pages listed (see Figure 18). At the bottom of each page one finds a footer with the same categories.

The site develops knowledge by combining a mixture of links to other collections online and with its representation of primary materials. It links to other databases but does not have its own database of dime novel-related material. While there are no

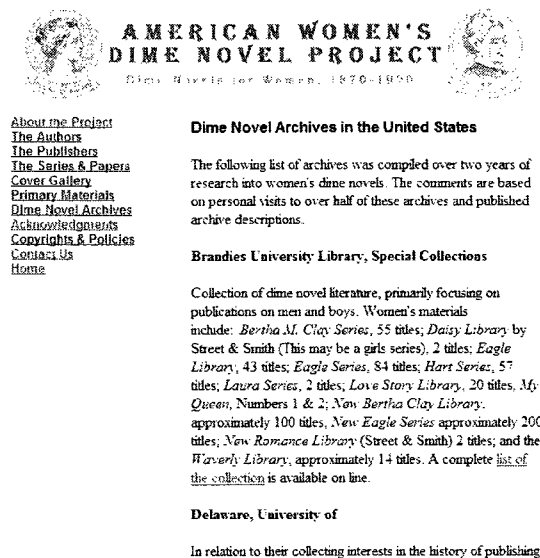


Fig. 17. Overview of archives containing dime novels in the United States. Source: *American Women's Dime Novel Project*. Web. 22 Nov. 2009.

instances of encoding, magnification tools, or search functionalities, the site provides the beginnings of a project that could become a developed study of the topic. The site achieves the objectives noted on the “About” page: it recovers the topic of dime novels in a focused overview unlike any other site online; and it has the potential to be continued in the future, with, perhaps, the functionalities of a database, encoding, magnification, or other tools. Because the contents of the site reflect the type of organization found in a book, information is organized according to the contents contained in the left sidebar and

[About the Project](#)
[The Authors](#)
[The Publishers](#)
[The Series & Papers](#)
[Cover Gallery](#)
[Primary Materials](#)
[Dime Novel Archives](#)
[Acknowledgments](#)
[Copyrights & Policies](#)
[Contact Us](#)
[Home](#)

Fig. 18. Sidebar with the main pages of the dime novels project. Source: *American Women's Dime Novel Project*. Web. 22 Nov. 2009.

footer, a thematic overview of dime novels. The amount of detail on each page varies, from “Cover Gallery” with three links to the text-heavy page “The Series and Papers,” which contains approximately 5,000 words.

Last updated on April 12, 2005, the site has not been developed nor maintained in keeping with the expectations on the About page, on which Carr notes, “I hope to add considerably more materials, such as primary sources on dime novels, biographies for lesser-known authors, and more cover art. I envision it as the premiere on-line source for information about women's dime novels.” Carr explains how the site will be continued pending the ability to acquire funding, and notes how she would like to change the site to make the content more dynamic, for example pulling the images of dime novel covers from a database rather than having them in static display (interview). Furthermore, Carr personally owns hundreds of dime novels still in need of scanning; she hopes to add these to the site in the future as part of its development.

Carr explains that her work on the web site is part of other work she does digitizing dime novels for Emory's Women Writers Resource Project. On the site, Carr describes the project as "still in its infancy," indicating her desire to add more information and have the site become the principal source for researching American women's dime novels. Carr is the sole author or creator listed on the site, having designed and built the project and written the text. On the Acknowledgments page Carr thanks a number of persons who contributed technical and writing support, including her professors and advisors, librarians, the Center for History and New Media at George Mason University, and the Women's Writing Group at the same institution. Although Carr invites interested readers to email her regarding contributions of information or materials on dime novels and acknowledges contributions, the site resembles a single-authored monograph rather than a collaborative venture.

The dime novels site has aspects of a gateway site, as it depends heavily on linking to information contained elsewhere online, and it also focuses on one topic area. The design of the site is not database-driven, nor searchable. A look at the source code shows that the site has been designed using HTML (HyperText Markup Language) and tables, and not CSS (Cascading Style Sheets), which are often used to style web sites that have been created more recently. Carr designed the site using Dreamweaver (interview). The site's design would make it difficult to add features more consistent with larger-scale digital humanities projects, and Carr has indicated in a personal interview that she would like to redesign the site to make it more usable—for example, by adding a database and search functionality. The site, though has not continued to develop since its last update in 2005, although its potential to develop remains.

Like the *Women with a Deadline* site, the dime novels site is similar to an exhibit, although with more material and more potential to expand. Most of the materials are reproductions of primary source materials, to which more may be added, but there is a finite number of actual dime novels in existence; once those are scanned and represented online, adding to the site—atomizing on the topic of dime novels—must be done by something more than digital reproduction, or the making of surrogates. Instead, the ability to expand must arise from either criticism or digital tools that further anatomize the primary source materials; for example, programs that allow magnification, such as Zoomify, could be added; metadata could be created for the digital objects; the novels could be encoded in TEI; and criticism regarding dime novels, popular culture, women's studies, working-class entertainment for women in the nineteenth century, among other topics, could be added to the site. Still, these are conjectures and do not reflect the current status of the project, which is for now a partial, even abandoned attempt at an archive. Pursuant to the anatomy genre, though, the site is still worthy of studying, despite its being unattended and its lack of tools or standards like the TEI. The site still has validity as a project that could give someone entry-level knowledge of the topic, or at least point them in the direction of finding more information, not unlike the way the *Voice of the Shuttle* site works overall.

According to the definition of the anatomy genre in this dissertation, the *Dime Novels* archive does not represent the anatomy genre well. It would also, in light of Unsworth's charlatan definition, serve as the sort of site that complicates our understanding of more developed archives. Most pointedly, Unsworth argues that the "problem with charlatanism is that it undersells the market by providing a quick-and-dirty

simulacrum of something that, done right, is expensive, time-consuming, and difficult” (“What Is”). In other words, a site like *Dime Novels* muddies the playing field for more complicated labors. Unsworth is right in pointing out that sites like this one might undersell the market, so to speak, but as the field of digital humanities grows and changes and users become savvier overall, possible muddying will lessen. As it already stands, a site like *Dime Novels* would be at a distinct disadvantage for receiving funding.

CASE STUDY 4: *THE VAULT AT PFAFF'S*

The Vault at Pfaff's: An Archive of Art and Literature by New York City's Nineteenth-Century Bohemians refers to itself as an archive in its title, which creates an expectation that the site contains and preserves historical textual artifacts, not unlike a physical archive. Information on the Welcome page and Introduction page explains the title of the site and what the “vault” means: the Introduction page notes how Walt Whitman penned an unfinished poem in the 1860s that referred to “The vault at Pfaffs where the drinkers and laughers meet to eat and drink and carouse”; the Welcome page describes Pfaff's as a “beer cellar in lower Manhattan” that was a “magnet for some of the most unconventional and creative individuals of nineteenth-century New York City,” among them Walt Whitman. Using the word *vault* in the title of the website refers to the actual meeting place while suggesting another meaning of *vault*—as a place of storage or safekeeping for valuables—an indication of the site's function as an archive.

Ed Whitley, creator of *Pfaff's*, characterizes the archive as a different sort of digital archive than most, in which one individual's work, such as Walt Whitman, is the focus (“Walt” 1). Whitley notes that the archival portion of the site is mostly in the hosting of *The Saturday Press*, and that it is the only major nineteenth-century document

represented in the digital archive in any significant detail (“Walt” 5). Instead of an archive of primary sources, the site is “more of a sorting-house for existing texts on the Web and less as an archive of wholly original material” (Whitley, “Walt” 5). Its purpose is to contextualize, to return the texts to a community that reflects the original community from which the texts originate. *Pfaff’s* describes its purpose as to bring “together in one place the poetry, drama, art, fiction, and social commentary that the Pfaff’s bohemians produced, including *The New York Saturday Press*, the weekly periodical that served as the group’s literary organ during this period.” The site functions as a reinvention of the physical meeting space of the Pfaffians—as an online space where the bohemians’ texts can meet. As a re-creation of a social world and a place to showcase and house its texts, the site offers a unique way of recovering an aspect of nineteenth-century culture.

As an online meeting place of past lives with the purpose of contextualizing the authors who met at Pfaff’s, the site remediates a physical archive. The Introduction page explains how the site launched in September of 2006 and includes biographies of “approximately 150 people who were connected to the bohemian scene at Pfaff’s, as well as an annotated bibliography of over four thousand texts by and about the Pfaff’s bohemians.” The texts meet their authors, who in a sense, are now also texts. Most of the authors’ texts are from *The New York Saturday Press*, which published the Pfaffians’ works, and *Pfaff’s* has digitally reproduced all 157 issues of the periodical. Additionally, the site includes related articles from the nineteenth century and contemporary scholarship and links to works that discuss the Pfaffians. Whitley explains how approximately 3,000 of the 4,500 entries on the site come from the periodical, but that in the early planning stages for *Pfaff’s*, editors wanted “to personally digitize every scrap of

paper that the Pfaffians ever published,” but as they did the work, they realized a better plan for the site would be to “exploit the digital medium to tell the story of the antebellum New York bohemians” (“Walt” 5).

Editors of the site argue that one of their goals is “to make transparent the sources used to identify someone as a Pfaffian also allows visitors to the site to connect these biographies with the database of works by and about the Pfaff’s bohemians.” The editors’ statement suggests a relationship between transparency in revealing sources and the integrity and encouragement of the research process itself. Part of this transparency involves not “pass[ing] judgment on the relative merits of the information available about the Pfaff’s bohemians,” which leaves the evaluation of information to individual researchers, who determine the efficacy of the materials for their individual projects.

One way in which the site remediates print is by its use of a relational database; Whitley explains that relational databases “are designed to store and then *sort* data in a way that foregrounds the relationships between various pieces of information. A database can stockpile millions of bytes of data for future use, but a relational database can arrange this data in ways that allow for meaningful patterns to emerge” (“Walt” 6-7). For *Pfaff’s*, the relational database technology allows cross-referencing of the Pfaffians. Each page of the site can access the database, which is the center—if it could be called that, since databases are by nature decentering—of the site; the pages on the site therefore are not text-heavy because it is the information to be called up by the user that is important, more so than commentary on the works that are stored. Unworth explains how a relational database, because of its establishing of fields in records in tables, “sanctions any sort of question” that relates to how those elements in tables are combined (“What Is”).

Importantly, the computation must be efficient. Pages are organized in part by a navigation bar with tabbed browsing, a familiar convention of the Web (see Figure 19); users can click on different tabs, which resemble tabs on file folders, to move from one page to another on the site. Users can also move within the site by using a search engine, in which they can enter keywords to find information. The search function looks different depending on what page the user is on, and the information he or she can enter

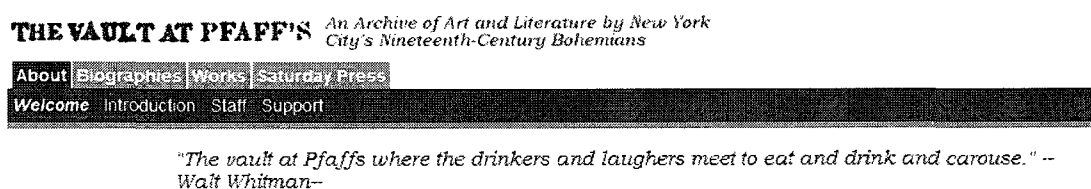


Fig. 19. Tabbed browsing. Source: *The Vault at Pfaff's*. Web. 22 Nov. 2009.

changes depending on whether searching from the Biographies page, the Works page, or the Saturday Press page (see Figures 20, 21, and 22). Having different platforms for searching builds detailism into the very functionalities of the site. The search functions access the detail “behind” the site—what is stored on the databases—and at the same time, the search functions add detail themselves. The site does not have a space where it indicates its last update, but it is maintained with regularity, according to my correspondence with Ed Whitley. *Pfaff's* is an ongoing project, and the the Introduction page explains that a “potential addition to the site could be the inclusion of visualization technologies to illustrate the web of connections between various of the Pfaff's

[About](#) [Biographies](#) [Works](#) [Saturday Press](#)
[Introduction](#) [Search](#) [Individuals](#) [Groups](#)

Search

Name:

Gender:

Profession:

Date of Birth: to

Date of Death: to

Fig. 20. Searching available from the Biographies page. Source: *The Vault at Pfaff's*. Web. 22 Nov. 2009.

[About](#) [Biographies](#) [Works](#) [Saturday Press](#)
[Introduction](#) [Search](#)

Search

Searching Tips

Author:

Person Mentioned:

Keywords:

Limit To:

Sort By:

Fig. 21. Searching available from the Works page. Source: *The Vault at Pfaff's*. Web. 22 Nov. 2009.

[Introduction](#) [Search](#)

Search

Searching Tips

Author:

Person Mentioned:

Keywords:

Limit To:

Sort By:

1-20 of 2877 works [show all]

1-20 21-40 41-60 61-80 81-100 >

- [\[details\]](#) [Clapp, Henry Jr.] "The Shadow on the Wall." *Saturday Press*. 23 Oct. 1858: 1.
- [\[details\]](#) North, William. "The Living Corpse." *Saturday Press*. 23 Oct. 1858: 1-2.
- [\[details\]](#) "[The Rev. Mr. Bowen, in his third and last lecture]." *Saturday Press*. 23 Oct. 1858: 2.
- [\[details\]](#) "Editorial." *Saturday Press*. 23 Oct. 1858: 2.
- [\[details\]](#) "A Very Pretty Quarrel as It Stands." *Saturday Press*. 23 Oct. 1858: 2.

Fig. 22. Searching issues of *The Saturday Evening Press*. Source: *The Vault at Pfaff's*. Web. 22 Nov. 2009.

bohemians. Such technologies would allow the data that has been and will be archived in *The Vault at Pfaff's* to be presented in a manner that will dynamically visualize the reciprocal influences between the patrons of Pfaff's" ("Walt"). Additionally, editors indicate that the annotation process on the Pfaffians' biographies is ongoing. As of January, 2009, in an article in *The Chronicle*, Whitley notes that there are about fifty people who need to be added to the site, and that searchable versions of texts are also a forthcoming possibility. Whitley remarks, "I could imagine this project coming to an end at some point, but I'd be hard pressed to put a date on that now" ("Archive").

Part of what makes *Pfaff's* develop successfully is the collaborative efforts that produce it. Whitley originated the project, but the site includes acknowledgments to its support staff. In his interview with *The Chronicle*, Whitley emphasizes the necessity for collaboration in *Pfaff's* creation. The site is licensed under a Creative Commons license, which indicates that the public is permitted to use what is on the site legally without copyright infringements.

Pfaff's use of a relational database and its purpose of adding additional materials align it with the anatomy genre. Each main page contains text and an image scanned from the pages of *The Saturday Evening Press*. The mixture of text and scanned originals from the newspaper blends a nostalgic feel with the ease of contemporary database technology on each page. Whitley notes how he thinks of "database less as the genre of a text or set of texts by a single author (as Folsom posits for Whitman's corpus), and more as a model for understanding the behaviors of a literary community, a model that challenges how we think about the supposedly solitary nature of authorship" ("Walt" 8). Consideration of database as a "model for understanding the behaviors of a literary

community,” in this case means the community at *Pfaff's*, but the statement could also apply to the behaviors of today's literary community—the scholars and researchers who use and develop *Pfaff's*. The idea of a community, of surpassing the concept of single-authorship, participates in the ideals of the anatomy genre—“the more the merrier,” so to speak, as we all annotate, construct, divide, anatomize. There is the original community of *Pfaff's*, lost to the past, and then there is the imagined community of *Pfaff's*, the recreation. Furthermore, there is the imagined community of scholars in cyberspace.

Of the four sites examined in these case studies, *Pfaff's* is both a model of the anatomy genre and typifies the sort of site that Unsworth would *not* call a charlatan venture. Because of its searchability, structure, adherence to standards, and its content, *Pfaff's* offers its users meaningful interactivity and functionality. It offers useful, high-quality representations and is both an anatomy and a sustainable, well-designed humanities computing project.

IMPLICATIONS FOR CASE STUDIES

These case studies suggest that the literary websites, exhibits, and archives participate in the anatomy genre, but that some sites are more anatomical than others, and some sites do not align with the genre well at all. Most scholarship in English studies, like most of these types of digital projects, includes knowledge dissection, its representation, and an idealistic quality—whether to recover new information, amend historical or social injustices, or both. Large amounts of dissection or detailism—whether or not a project involves information proliferation—are more in keeping with the anatomy genre. The ability to designate a digital project as an anatomy therefore depends more on encyclopedism, detailism, and its continual updating, than on any other factors.

Of the sites studied in this chapter, the gateway site *Voice of the Shuttle* and *The Vault at Pfaff's* both have the most in common with the anatomy genre as defined in this dissertation. *The Voice of the Shuttle*, with its thousands of links in the name of knowledge creation and dissemination, along with its invitation for visitors to contribute more information, demonstrates anatomical traits. *The Vault at Pfaff's* aligns well with the anatomy genre, too, and although it represents fewer materials—web pages, links, or database items—the site offers more detailism regarding the materials it houses. In other words, it may represent fewer items than a vast gateway site, but its purpose is different. The two sites, however, are very different in the way they are edited, again because of their purpose, with *Pfaff's* focusing on a specific time and place in American history and its desire to contextualize texts from that historical period, and with *VoS* amassing thousands of links that it categorizes, at times, as pointed out, without explaining or editorializing choices that appear as odd juxtapositions. It is important to note that just because both sites share traits of the anatomy, they are not alike, and this analysis does not intend to imply that they are; in fact, this ability for both sites to represent the anatomy even though they are so different underscores several of the fundamental traits of the anatomy genre—its changeability, amorphousness, and elusiveness regarding definition.

Pfaff's and *VoS*, plan to continue growing, aligning with the anatomy genre's tendency towards proliferation. The *American Women's Dime Novels* site has stopped developing, but the topic warrants expansion. The author discontinued working on the project temporarily but plans its redesign. The least anatomical site is the *Women with a Deadline*, which was designed to be a finite exhibit from its origins. Of the four sites, it

is most unlike the anatomy genre and is also the site least associated with academia. Because the anatomy is an intellectual genre, in order to examine how well a digital archive expresses its characteristics will involve the assumption that the project is scholarly. Web projects that include discussion boards, invite user contributions, or have wikis installed offer opportunities for the anatomy genre to develop in ways impossible in print formats, but these sites are often the least weighty with intellectual content. James Purdy comments that “[t]extual production is ongoing, not stopping with the author’s completion’ of a text, but rather continuing with the reader’s engagement with the text” (102). Potentially indefinitely, authorship continues, and it can be difficult to identify degrees of agency in controlling or authoring information—the user, original author(s), or editors. Purdy’s comments regarding Wikipedia and its provocation of anxiety apply to digital archives with multiple possibilities for authorship: wikis

depend on dynamic activity rather than static preservation, fueling anxieties about the instability of digital spaces . . . Through its design Wikipedia presents encyclopedic knowledge ideally as an evolving collaboration of all interested persons rather than a fixed production of credentialed experts. Encyclopedic knowledge for Wikipedia is necessarily unstable, impossible to crystallize, which challenges a system of scholarly publication that relies on fixed textual products, a source of scholarly anxiety about unreliability and lack of credentials. (158)

Purdy’s mention of “fixed” texts illuminates exactly what the anatomy genre opposes the most; as a genre, the anatomy has always generated anxieties and functioned at the borders where new media forms develop, unstable spaces with unstable margins.

Furthermore, other aspects of the digital anatomy's form also create instability, such as the non-linear—or, more accurately, multi-linear—nature of the digital archive.

Paths “through” web texts or databases are still linear, although they may be unpredictable. As discussed in the first chapter of this dissertation, a number of scholars have remarked upon the rhizomatic or labyrinthine nature of database, a quality that aligns with anatomical digressions. Manovich considers databases as anti-narrative, because collection and listing takes precedence over narrative, the argument of “database versus narrative” (as discussed in Chapter 1). The problem of the anatomy's excess can lead to what George Landow calls a “disorientation problem,” whereby a reader becomes confused or lost in a cyberspace environment (145). But good design can prevent such confusion.

The two sites that best represent the anatomy genre, *Pfaff's* and *Voice of the Shuttle*, are the two sites with the most technological capabilities, and both sites devote space to explaining their technical specifications that help users navigate the sites. The least anatomical sites, *American Women Dime Novels* and *Women with a Deadline* are also less dependent on tools and devote more consideration to appearance. In fact, the least anatomical site, *Women with a Deadline*, is the most nostalgic looking site. In this admittedly small study, there is not enough data to conclude that sites with more elaborate visual designs—color and arrangement of text and images on the page in particular—pay less attention to encoding or database. The sites with more focus on the aesthetics of the interface tend to have less emphasis on computing tools, but this study is too small to generalize that particular observation and comment upon a relationship between aesthetics, digital scholarship, and the scale of projects. This analysis can,

however, turn to how scholars are working to develop standards for the quality of the sorts of sites that are—or, in keeping with Unsworth—pretend to be digital humanities works.

With the current state of digital scholarship in English studies, guidelines for scholarly quality are still emerging, and a number of scholars are currently undertaking ways to address how we measure digital scholarship, not to mention the related topics of how such scholarship plays a role in making tenure. Allison Brovey Warner discusses informality and the scholarly assessment of webtexts, and how such texts may contain “a variety of contextually relevant digressions through links . . . where a less formal or non-standard tone may be tolerated, particularly if the informal digressions reside on the borders of the main argument. The online medium challenges the assumption that scholarly texts must exude a scholarly tone within every node of the webbed text.” Importantly, informality is not the same concern as one about quality. Instead, the quality of editing, as well as the digital standards for aggregation, preservation, and sustainability, are more important for determining quality. Warner’s comment, though, is important because the linked, multi-linear nature of digital texts could often lead to informal discussion boards, but if these boards contained exchanges among professors, undergraduates, and the public at large, they are still relevant to scholarship. One of the characteristics of the anatomy genre is shifts in tone and mixing of discourses, a quality enacted in such discussion boards. Warner points out how online texts often combine navigational options, mixing conventions of print and web-based forms (again, this is the mixing of the anatomy): “a text may offer a primary multi-linear navigation option through multiple points of entry to several main nodes while also including a secondary

guided option within a particular grouping of sub-nodes for readers who wish to follow a more linear/author-directed path through the content.” Perhaps it is the unpredictability of such online spaces that creates anxiety and confusion in assessing digital work.

Scholars interested in assessing quality could consult NINES (*Networked Infrastructure for Nineteenth-Century Electronic Scholarship*), which is developing standards for peer review. The guidelines suggested by NINES⁴² for peer review begin with two overarching questions, one that asks scholars to determine if the site in question is of a topic warranting scholarly merit (something also addressed in the methodology in Chapter 3). The second question asks if the site is clearly organized and efficient to use. NINES also suggests that site designers look at the guidelines for the *Journal of American History* Web Site Reviews, which contain information about site naming and design. Contributors to NINES are required to submit a rationale for their projects so that their methodology is overt and because an explanation by a site’s creators can provide information that may help users. The MLA’s CSE (the Committee on Scholarly Editing discussed in Chapter 2) suggests that digital projects include rationales, and that vectors of scholarly projects evaluate sites based on that inclusion.

NINES also requires technical standards that permit the data from a project to be aggregated with other NINES resources. In other words, the data must be able to work with data from other projects or across multiple platforms. NINES is particularly concerned with sustainability, meaning that projects are, literally, built to last. Proprietary formats should be avoided when possible because licensing, costs, and even what some call “built-in-obsolence” can become problems. One non-proprietary format that NINES and the CSE both recommend is the TEI (discussed in Chapter 2). In

⁴² See <http://www.nines.org/about/scholarship/peerReview.html>.

addition to TEI or XML files, audio and image (such as JPEG and PNG) files should meet current standards and be in sustainable formats whenever possible. Furthermore, the transformation instructions for rendering should also be in an ISO (International Organization for Standardization) standard such as XSL. Metadata also should be in a standard such as METS, the Metadata Encoding and Transmission Standards published by the Library of Congress. Stability and sustainability are desired, but as this dissertation has argued from the beginning, one of the anatomy genre's characteristics is its instability. No matter how much we try to create software or formats that are sustainable, some change can and will occur over time.

Even with the differences among the sites in the case studies in this chapter, all of these sites are invested in improving the scholarly record. The idealistic aspect of the anatomy genre is manifested as a sense of idealism in how these projects make an effort to recover and display historical materials or, in the case of *Voice of the Shuttle*, to put as much information as possible in one online space in order to facilitate research. *Pfaff's*, *Women with a Deadline*, and *Dime Novels* all hope to offer new possibilities for research, and could be classified as recovery work. It is utopian, after all, to imagine access to *all* information, a complete record of the past and the ongoing present, the democratic abilities lauded by new media and digital humanities scholars alike. This utopia, however, cannot be separated from the ironic tendency of the anatomy genre.

Anatomies have a tendency to vacillate between the romantic and the ironic, as the genre seeks to offer more and more detail while knowing that completion is impossible. The sites in these case studies do not exhibit the ironic tendencies of the menippean aspect of the anatomy genre and are sincere in their undertakings, but that

does not mean that irony does not exist. Recovering some knowledge means covering up other knowledge, just by choosing to represent one thing over another. Cutting and classifying knowledge reduces and expands it at the same time. Visitors to these websites view representations of originals but may experience the representations as the originals, or as what Alan Liu calls the “manufactured original” (as discussed in Chapter 2). Except in the case of a finished exhibit or abandoned site, there may never be enough links. Sometimes information is so obscure that the audience of interested readers may make the anatomization of a topic of questionable worth.

In part, the ability of digital archives to align with the anatomy genre depends on design. In our late age of print, the ultimate manifestation of the anatomy genre resides in digital work. Kress and van Leeuwen explain that design is “always contingent: contingent on domain of practice, contingent on the specific stage in a long chain of design-production, where at any point the implementer of a design can become a designer in respect to a particular facet of the productive process” (56). These contingencies are those of genre—the constraints and limitations of cultural, historical, and design expectations. In this age of digital reproduction, the chain of design production could involve the reader or user’s taking an image, for example, then altering it in an image editing program like Photoshop or Paint, and then re-publishing his or her creative work. With the dissemination of information on a scale never before experienced in history, the anatomy changes as the readers participate in the anatomizing, bookmarking sites via social networks, and linking sites to one another in a continually changing network.

The genre transforms while still retaining what Jameson identifies as “objectified survivals from older modes of cultural production, some anticipatory, but all together

projecting a formal conjuncture through which the ‘conjuncture’ of coexisting modes of production at a given historical moment can be detected and allegorically articulated” (99). Importantly, Jameson points out the *formal* nature of conjuncture, which for the database-anatomy means the conjoining of print and digital forms. More than ever before in textual history, the anatomy genre offers more than classification and preservation—it is the genre of immediate creation and immediate delivery. The designer-author has the capability to publish more information and faster, yet there is an unease about this freedom, a tension between liberty and loss. Power shifts and control erodes—that is, when scholarship aligns with a modernist notion of individual genius or intellectual property. The anatomy may no longer rest in the hands of the anatomist. And with automation tools—even the algorithms of the Google search engine—the anatomy may begin to run itself. The next and final chapter of this dissertation will consider such pitfalls of the anatomy genre, especially how its tendency for proliferation creates a number of problems for database and the digital archive.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION: ENDING THE ANATOMY

THE DIGITAL ANATOMY'S PROMISE

Humanities computing emphasizes creation, what Wendell Piez sees as a necessary contribution to English studies in the digital age—that is, the production of texts and not just of textual criticism. In other words, a digital humanities approach to scholarship involves producing more than analyses or debates regarding other scholarship. Yet digital humanities projects often do represent historical materials, the textual remains of the past (as discussed in Chapter 3). We produce research from other research, new texts from old, digital archives from physical, databases from databases. Texts beget texts. Our creative practices reflect the duality of originality/derivation inherent to all writing. Regarding this sort of iterative production, Cormac McCarthy once said, “The ugly fact is books are made out of books. The novel depends on its life on the novels that have been written” (Woodward). Likewise, the digital archive or database-anatomy creates texts from other text, and is less an “ugly fact” than an accurate glimpse into how we create narrative and scholarship.

As this dissertation has argued, the anatomy genre, perhaps more than other textual forms, thrives on self-reflexivity and excess. Chapter 1 outlines the form of the anatomy, and Chapter 2 develops the discussion about detailism and how it can lead to excess. The third chapter on methodology faces the idea of self-reflexivity head-on, with the argument that researchers should include their subjective experiences with archives as part of their research. Chapter 4, with case studies on structures and standards of digital

archives, leads up to the discussion in this chapter regarding what sorts of factors limit and stop the proliferation that is characteristic of the anatomy genre.

How we think of English studies is in part a reaction to the information proliferation of digital culture, with its technological sterility and numerous instabilities. As a field of study, English involves how we understand language and redefines itself in response to digital technologies, both with enthusiastic celebrations of the digital—the new—and anxieties about the status of print—the old. Reactions to digital culture often involve nostalgic views of materiality. In *The Gutenberg Elegies: the Fate of Reading in an Electronic Age*, Sven Birkerts presents a romantic view of his reading experiences as he confronts what it means to be a reader during the advent of our electronic culture. Birkerts offers the book as an elegy and a love letter to what he fears is a lost art of reading, arguing that the shift from a print-based culture to one dominated by new media forms causes language erosion, a flattening of historical perspective, and the waning of the private self.

Such critics of digital textuality often maintain a nostalgic, even Arnoldian, view of literature, and point to the digital as a threat to English overall—how we speak, read, write, socialize, and even our discipline—how we teach, publish, and exchange intellectual “property” and ideas. In the Summer 2008 issue of *Digital Humanities Quarterly*, Wendell Piez responds to William Deresiewicz’s dismissal of digital humanities in an issue of *The Nation*; in it Deresiewicz targets digital humanities as one of a host of problematic sub-fields in English studies that have led to the fragmentation of the discipline. This view of a fragmented English presupposes a mythical, whole English, a unified discipline that has become anatomized into meaninglessness and now

lacks an identity. Deresiewicz's ideas suggest that English studies was or should be literary studies, a past that, in reality, never was.

Deresiewicz and Birkerts's resistance to the digital contrasts with scholars such as Jerome McGann and Lev Manovich, who regard digital textuality as marking a material revolution, and celebrate its creative, scholarly, and social issue. What is at stake is institutional and political, involving how we represent history and ourselves. Despite some negative reaction to Presner and Schnapp's *A Digital Humanities Manifesto* within the digital humanities community, the document has some valid points, such as when the authors describe skeptics of digital humanities as "great diminishers," "false fellow travelers, and "all those who would falsely equate the tools of the present with a turn away from history in the name of presentism, voguishness, or vocationalism." Presner and Schnapp suggest that instead of a turn away from history, digital humanities offers a new turn, a digital turn that embraces technology as a savior of humanistic study. In part, their enthusiasm detracts from the *Manifesto*, because of the document's generalizing, indulgence, and tendency towards glorification of digital humanities.

The landscape of digital humanities is more complex than the *Manifesto* indicates, with competing—or complimentary, depending on point of view—types of projects vying for funding and recognition. Although tools and archival projects do appear to form two major, sub-sets of digital humanities scholarship, the two types of work complement one another, often with indexing, mapping, or aggregating programs working with primary source materials (usually from archives) to illuminate relationships within and among texts. In "Forms of Attention," Unsworth foresees a shift in digital humanities scholarship from a focus on the reproduction of primary source materials to an emphasis

on their analysis, a move from digitizing documents to using computing tools to see texts in new ways. Unsworth points out that the predicted change is less about a split between archive and computing “tools” projects than about what is currently popular in scholarship, part of an ongoing, oscillating movement of what gets privileged. These tools⁴³ do the work of the anatomy genre, its overall goal of expanding the historical and scholarly record. The future of humanities computing will doubtless include tools that allow more detail, more possibilities for magnification, and better surrogates, all things that users desire to increase their feelings of aura or ideal presence, as discussed in Chapter 2.

The editors of *A Companion to Digital Humanities* argue that the goals of digital humanities include “using information technology to illuminate the human record, and bringing and understanding of the human record to bear on the development and use of information technology” (xxx). The language here is romantic, heralding technology’s ability to alter and improve history for the benefit of the human race, a noble goal. With similar optimism, Ken Price explains how editorial work (in the context of digital archive projects) is “one way to engage in historical criticism and to help bring the past into the present so it may live in the future.” Such celebration opposes the “end-days” approach to English (the very real fact that English has lost status in the academy) in favor of form of idealism, a dream rooted in the capabilities of the database-anatomy. Digital work can allow us to re-imagine the past and extend English studies to include new forms of representation. Unsworth argues that an “extreme or limit case of the representational

⁴³ For a description of a number of humanities computing tools see John Unsworth, “Forms of Attention: Digital Humanities Beyond Representation,” from the 3rd Conference of the Canadian Symposium on Text Analysis, McMaster University, Toronto, Canada, available online. In the article, Unsworth provides brief summaries of a variety of software and applications in digital humanities. From my perspective, each of these tools offers a way to “anatomize” texts.

impulse in humanities computing is the modeling of building and sites of historical interest,” citing as examples the Amiens Cathedral project at Columbia, The Crystal Palace at the University of Virginia, and a number of projects at UCLA (“Forms of Attention”). Such models are always interpretations, and we must look past the seduction of their novelty. The *raison d’être* of the anatomy genre is to guard against the perils of absolutism as the enemy of scholarly inquiry.

After all, it is easy to assume that research is more objective when performed or represented by a computer. Martha Nell Smith, creator of the *Dickinson Electronic Archives*, recalls how at humanities computing conferences in the 1990s, presentations often suggested that computing would bring scientific rigor to the artistic and theoretical work of the humanities, “some new critical dreams of bringing objectivity, rational thought, and aesthetic purity to departments of English” (“The Human Touch” 4). Simultaneously, humanities computing work appeals to desire to bridge what C. P. Snow termed the “two cultures,” while also suggesting that the humanities needs science to regain legitimacy in the academy.⁴⁴ There is a popular belief that evidence produced by computers is more justifiable than that produced by people, reflecting a desire for scholarship to reveal reality or truth. We often look to facsimiles for objective representations of reality under the premise of verisimilitude and logic, investing faith in their accuracy while losing sight of their construction (as discussed in Chapter 3). D. Sculley and Brad Pasanek warn against the tendency to equate electronic textual processes with certainty: “The temptation⁴⁵ in applying machine learning methods to

⁴⁴ Historically, the anatomy genre has often mixed what we today see as scientific (or pseudo-scientific) with the literary, poetic, or artistic.

⁴⁵ The word “temptation” here is suggestive of the “sin” of absolutism in humanities pursuits.

humanities data is to interpret a computed result as some form of proof or determinate answer. In this case, the validity of the evidence lies inherent in the technology. This can be problematic when the methods are treated as a black box, a critic *ex machina*” (421). The idea of the *critic ex machina* suggests the *deus ex machina*, whereby the critic would appear to resolve a problematic plot in an overall drama of how we do research in the humanities.

In any anatomy, the anatomist seeks resolution and truth. As Devon Hodges remarks, the anatomists “turns his process of negating forms into a positive program for revealing the truth by assuming the existence of a separation between false forms and true contents,” and by “cutting away illusory forms or ‘idols,’ he will penetrate to the ‘real’ truth” (15). But the truth and value of humanities research lies in its uncertainty, not in scientific or documentary evidence presumed to lend stability to shifting realities. The digital anatomy has the potential to take the quest for knowledge further than ever possible in the history of print texts and should extend the exploration of textual ambiguities, not answer a desire for objectivity. For instance, textual analysis using computerized automation cannot lend unbiased, factual dimensions to interpretation, but it can provide new interpretive possibilities.⁴⁶ In the early reactions to humanities computing, exposing the “truth” aligned with a belief that discoveries made from text-mining or archival representations were somehow more real or valid when they involved a machine—a belief that by adding more detail, we could make something more

⁴⁶ As Sculley and Pasanek note, “[T]he virtue of automated analysis is not the ready delivery of objective truth, but instead the more profound virtue of bringing us up short, of disturbing us in our preconceptions and our basic assumptions so that we can exist, if only for a moment, in uncertainties, mysteries, and doubts. Should we learn to forestall interpretation we may come to revise our prejudices, theories, and fore-projections in terms of what emerges. As with the word “temptation” in the previous Sculley and Pasanek quote, the word “virtue” in this passage suggests a moral or even theological dimension to how we talk about our work.

immediate, more true—more akin to ideal presence.⁴⁷ Unsworth concurs, noting that how “until recently, the problems those tools could solve were not ones that were of central importance in the humanities. Statistics are all about measuring the measurable, whereas the humanities are all about effing the ineffable” (“Forms of Attention”). Humanities computing brings together these false binaries, exposing idolatry all around, and joining together the empirical and the not. It expands the borders of English studies and embraces the digital anatomy’s ability to encompass potentially self-contradictory forms.

THE DIGITAL ANATOMY’S DREAM

The assumption that new technologies improve access or ease of use may be overstated. For example, electronic editions of books are not necessarily easier to use or read than print texts. In some ways they can be, as with searchability, but even then, some sites are difficult to navigate and lead to frustration. Until recently, readers could not make annotations and marginal notes on websites, but even now programs like Zotero and Endnote do not necessarily improve an audience’s reading or research experience, and may often complicate it. Few readers would argue that the physical state of the book figures prominently in their reading experience, and there is a certain pleasure in feeling the weight of the paper, the smell of old books, and seeing the finished book on the shelf as a marker of accomplishment.

Digital text removes certain experiences, including a romance that certain books emit, but at the same time can create new charms, including a democratic ethic or utopian ideal. Sean Latham argues that the electronic archive can reinvigorate scholarship in

⁴⁷ Truth and immediacy are discussed in Chapter 3, in particular Mark Salber Phillips’s consideration of “ideal presence.”

cultural studies, and by removing geographical constraints and the need for travel and research grants by “literally dematerializing the text”(418). The text is not dematerialized as much as it is transformed, but Latham’s idea of freedom of access is nevertheless a popular and valid point (as discussed in Chapter 3). Not only can researchers more easily find information, they may be able to compare versions of manuscripts, for example, in ways limited by print formats. Martha Nell Smith, editor of the *Emily Dickinson Electronic Archive*, argues that editorial work always has been “hieratic” and “faith-based,” but that digital humanities projects, by revealing multiple versions of manuscripts, fosters a “more demotic” critical ethos (“Computing” 940). What had been hidden—the editorial decision making or apparatus—may now be revealed, common, and easy to access on a screen, an everyday reality. Undiscovered or unsanctioned texts can be represented in public forums via digital repositories, which allow unprecedented access to intellectual property and historical records.⁴⁸ For example, unlike a more static, printed text, an online (not just digital) archive, depending on its design, can allow readers to contribute directly to texts, with the activities of users as part of an interactive archive. For the digital anatomy, utopianism is reflected in the language of new media scholars who promote digital environments as sites where entertainment, scholarship, pedagogy, art, and cultural criticism can intersect and infinite creation, unlimited access, and democracy are the norm. It remains to be seen, however, the degree to which ownership, knowledge circulation, and access have really changed,

⁴⁸ Nevertheless, as James Purdy points out, access is not only about technological capabilities, but exists “at the level of access to technology itself,” because large populations of people are “potentially marginalized” by their lack of access to digital technologies (8).

and the degree to which the digital anatomy creates utopian spaces for criticism, authorship, and intellectual property.

As discussed throughout this dissertation, the digital anatomy takes the instability and capacity for proliferation of the anatomy genre to a new level, as each interaction with a digital text may change the text if comments are added, even as each monitor displays a different version of the text. The ideal is at play, with the notion that digital texts are somehow open to infinite authorship, not only by comment features or wiki features, but simply because a site can be added to or can link to a massive (theoretically endless) web of information. Beyond what is possible in a physical archive, online readers can participate in the imagined community of cyberspace. Both in cyberspace and physical spaces, communities are involved in the making of scholarly electronic texts—editors, computer programmers, webmasters, librarians, and more. The possibility of collaborative authorship and perpetual authorship removes scholarship (especially in the humanities) from being a product of solitary intellectual pursuit to being a collaborative endeavor (as discussed in the methodology chapter of this dissertation). George Landow explains how collaboration creates communities but that the notion also brings with it a “deep suspicion of working with others” an aesthetic and emotional holdover from Romanticism, “which exalts the idea of individual effort to such a degree that it, like copyright law, often fails to recognize, or even suppress, the fact that artists and writers work collaboratively with texts created by others” (137-138). As the humanities change in response to digital scholarship, we must re-think what we value—both in how we fund and promote scholars.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ Landow remarks that the humanities, unlike in the sciences, do not rely on an “inclusive conception of authorship,” and that the tendency arises, in part, from means of funding (138); in the sciences, the

Institutional change lags behind shifting notions of what may bring new life to the humanities. The ancestry of digital humanities includes activist, anti-capitalist scholarship that called for inclusivity and access, and the early days of cyberspace prompted celebration. But Alan Liu asserts that the initial “cheerleading” aspect of digital studies is over and that scholars should move beyond the idea that users have unprecedented power in online spaces (“Imagining”). The authors of digital texts still control the options available to users, and the creators are themselves are constrained by what hardware, software, and institutional controls can or will allow. Is it time to move past the “hype” of hypertext and recognize that the new media landscape contains an inevitable paradox, wherein the ür-anatomy, the World Wide Web, once heralded as a possible democratic utopia, is a far more complex landscape with funding or consumerism as its capital, despite the ethical and activist goals of scholars?

Lawrence Lessig in “The Laws of Cyberspace” questions the concept of cyberspace as unregulated, where “individuals are, inherently, free from the control of real space sovereigns” (3). Consumer freedom can operate only within a framework determined by an economic architecture. In academe, the consumers may be old-guard scholars skeptical of digital media, or, perhaps less expectedly, granting agencies that provide funding for humanities computing projects. Henry Jenkins and David Thorburn argue that the early anticorporate “counterculture” of cyberculture has been “coopted by digital entrepreneurs who transformed utopian longings for participatory culture into pitches for high-tech commodities” (11). Historically, the anatomy genre has always

abundance of research funding supports a system in which graduate students often work with advisors on publications, whereas in the humanities, graduate student research is often funded by teaching assistantships, in turn promoting a model individual authorship. As with the possibility of bridging C. P. Snow’s two cultures with computing projects, we may also adapt institutional structures for promotion expectations and authorship from the sciences.

possessed a revolutionary appeal, but heralding the digital revolution as a shift as significant as the rise of the printing press requires revisiting historical notions of who owns or has power over production, rights, and the ability to circulate information; who is allowed to speak; what institutions control production; and how is knowledge commodified. These questions are not new. In the age of what Henry Jenkins calls our current “convergence culture,” our “emergent knowledge culture will never fully escape the influence of the commodity culture, any more than commodity culture can totally function outside the constraints of the *nation-state*” (27) [italics mine]. Jenkins’s warning extends that offered by Walter Benjamin, who proposes an even darker warning alluding to the relationship between power and texts in “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Production,” a conclusion often glossed over or ignored despite the wide use of the essay in new media and digital humanities scholarship. Benjamin warns that reproducible art allows for the destructive propaganda of fascism, the proliferation of the aesthetics, tools, and art of war, rendered by technological innovation and consumed by the masses.

The potential utopia offered by the digital anatomy’s openness is threatened by economic realities, especially when costs of creating quality projects run high, as scholars make efforts to avoid the charlatanism or imposter product discussed in this dissertation’s case studies. Notwithstanding the implied criticism of consumerist effects on scholarship, the fact remains that the features of scholarly digital projects more often than not reflect commercial design, from color combinations to software applications, including the use of social-networking features with academic projects. Christopher Keep views readerly freedom as a myth based upon consumerist ideology, with the reader

making choices in a hypertext much like a shopper choosing brands in a supermarket (175). As with commercial work, we must design sites that people will actually want to use, no matter how important we deem our individual research. Good design, though, comes with a price tag, one not easily afforded in this time of budget constraints. Audiences expect digital projects housed at or promoted by universities to have a professional quality, which does come at a price.⁵⁰

Quality may suffer when institutions lack funds, but good design may still be in reach, especially as open-source software offers some relief for poorly-funded projects. The Collex at NINES and Omeka, for example, can help scholars design projects with small, or no, budgets. The open-source movement is as much the friend of the digital anatomy as copyright is its foe. Unsworth sees the “copyright regime” as a major scholarly hindrance to the humanities, one that keeps scholarship perpetually behind cultural production (“Forms of Attention”). Especially problematic is material that is in the public domain according to copyright law, but that once digitized by a university or corporation, can be placed in a subscription database. Although the material of a physical archive may be in the public domain, bringing it to the public is an expensive undertaking. Kenneth Price discusses the problems of paying for permissions and the need for sites to be commercial in order to pay for those permissions, and that a “free” site “means no cost to the end user, not the creators.” Taking something that was once “free” and requiring payment for it limits access and research, yet the funding for digital projects has to come from somewhere. Someone has to pay.

⁵⁰ Cohen & Rosenzweig note how, increasingly, large institutions hire web design firms for their sites, but that sites with “extensive programming or databases can easily top \$100,000 because hourly rates for software developers and database administrators are commensurately high.”

THE DIGITAL ANATOMY'S LIMITATION

Scholars depend on the (increasingly digital) archive as a counterpart to recovery, a belief that more is better, as a step towards a more total history that remains incomplete by design. With its taxonomies, classifications, and elaboration of detail, the anatomy genre involves questioning knowledge formation. The anatomy requires incompleteness even as it gestures towards making definitive surveys of a particular topic. Research in general depends upon incompleteness, not only for the perpetuation of our own individual projects, but for what we perceive to be the benefit of history (as discussed in Chapter 1). Dimock remarks how we need the archive to develop literary studies, because

the literary field is still incomplete, its kinship network only partly actualized, with many new members still to be added. Such a field needs to maintain an archive that is as broad-based as possible, as fine-grained as possible, an archive that errs on the side of randomness rather than on the side of undue coherence, if only to allow new permutations to come into being. (*Through Other* 79)

In computing parlance, the term *perpetual beta* describes systems or software that are indefinitely in development, even though they have been released or launched; completion is neither required nor desired, as the release of new features continually improves the product. For scholarship, we require a *perpetual beta* in order to keep producing knowledge; the archive is already a perpetual beta, an anatomy, necessarily incomplete and self-perpetuating, its unfinishedness part of its appeal.

Editors of the *Orlando Project*, a database of British women's writing, explain how multiple releases are the norm for digital humanities work, unlike for the traditional book publication model. Using version numbers to keep track of releases helps mark discrete increments, not unlike updating editions of a print text. However, it is not just the reality of numerous releases, but the nature of electronic textuality itself that is unfinishable. George Landow remarks that any presumed-complete text becomes incomplete when it becomes hypertextual, and even a "work conventionally considered complete, such as *Ulysses*, [once put] into a hypertext format" no longer is finished, since with electronic linking, it expands beyond the "fixity and physical isolation of book technology" (113). Landow's argument here refers to the new textual form of the novel and how hypertextuality marks *Ulysses* (which, incidentally, is labeled as an anatomy by a number of critics) as unfinished; it would be worth pointing out that Landow's claim here is problematic, however, because the novel in its textual form has been finished for nearly a century. Landow's point underscores the potential for expansion in digital textuality, nonetheless. Theoretically, all digital texts are in perpetual beta, in need of updating when technologies change, and we can always feed the database with more data. We can bookmark an item with social networking like Digg or del.icio.us⁵¹, endlessly classifying, correcting, anatomizing.

The digital anatomy functions as a catalyst, reinvigorating the physical archive and scholarship, yet also bordering on excess. Dana Gioia comments that "[n]o other culture in history has even approached the level of activity now routine in America" for constructing archives of primary materials (11). While Gioia refers to physical archives,

⁵¹ Tools like Digg and del.icio.us allow web users to rank webtexts based on popularity, originality, or usefulness.

changing technologies of textual production, transmission, and preservation alter the archive's authority in digital environments as well, complementing and expanding our understanding of what it means to collect information. Likewise, Peter Schillingsburg questions the value of too much information, how the "comprehensiveness of the electronic archive threatens to create a salt, estranging sea of information, separating the archive user from insights into the critical significance of textual histories" (165).

Anyone from professor to graduate student to hobbyist can create an archive of any topic, an inclusiveness that alters the traditional power and control of institutional archives.

This is, in fact, why clear standards, as discussed in this dissertation's case studies chapter, are so important. Although it appears democratic that anyone could create a web site on a scholarly topic, this sort of democracy conflicts with needed vetting and peer review (as argued in the previous chapter). There is an uneasy tension between the openness of the digital landscape and the credential-checking we need to apply to it.

Creators of digital archives already face some of the same threats to their credibility as archivists in the physical archives, whom D. C. Greetham remarks are "always in danger of looking like conservational idiots" because of the potential to overlook important items, such as non-canonical works like scraps, fragments, and trash that are most in need of preservation ("Who's In" 8). But there is another way to look at this problem—not that conservators overlook items but that they include too many, creating a sort of archival anarchy. The World Wide Web continuously expands, as a sort of entropic archive, and the supreme example of the anatomy. As a measure of how much information could potentially be added to digital archives, statistics regarding physical archives suggest an enormous potential scope. A survey of one hundred special

collections departments conducted in 2003-2004 by Mark Greene and Dennis Meissner showed that 34% of institutions have over 50% of their holdings unprocessed, meaning that the holdings exist in no catalog, index, or finding aid, not on paper nor digitally; the same report shows that 60% of repositories have at least one third unprocessed, with 59% of repositories citing the backlog of work a major problem (1). The holdings in these archives are effectively invisible, existing in what is often called the “hidden archive.” Patrons of archives lack access to such materials, either because there is no finding aid, or items are in remote storage, or they are lost or mis-filed.⁵² Furthermore, where an object is located affects its popularity, but lack of funding or space (often dependent on one another) prevents process or relocating materials. Some see digital archives as helping to solve these issues of space and access, but often, the digital anatomy faces limits similar to physical archive, namely problems acquiring funding and space, but on servers instead of shelves. In short, the limitlessness of the digital anatomy is more theoretical than actual.

The Spring 2009 issue of *Digital Humanities Quarterly* focuses on project completion, a problem considering the presumed limitlessness of digital archives. David Sewell discusses two projects, digital editions of Melville’s *Typee* and the *Papers of George Washington*, and how these projects represent different stages of completeness. Sewell argues we can create generic categories for digital projects based upon how finished projects are, establishing four categories of intrinsic criteria based on completion. For example, some projects begin their lives designed as though they never should be finished, such as a wiki, whereas others require set dates for completion, often

⁵² We depend upon physical archives for public memory, but, as Kate Eichhorn points out, “Archival memories are just as ephemeral as those that belong to the repertoire of speech, live performance, and ritual. Objects and documents can and do disappear, even in the archives” (“Archival” 4).

because of funding. Sewell provides a list of extrinsic factors that affect completion, including economic constraints such as the ending of funding; competition from other projects; changing technologies that render a project out-of-date or non-functional; and aggregation of one publication with another, which requires revision of interface and/or encoding. Likewise, one of the creators of the *American Linguistic Atlas Project*, William A. Kretzschmar, Jr., contends that for digital humanities projects to “avoid the charge of being the snake that eats its own tail,” the perception of “finished” must change, since most large-scale projects need continuing funding in order to remain current, stable, and maintained; even the “idea of finishing big humanities computing projects once and for all is just an illusion. We will always need to address changes in technology and changes in our disciplines, even subject materials that are historical and unchanging.” Archiving an object has historically meant to preserve it, and many digital archives purport to preserve materials by using representation, yet the irony is that the very preservation means we use are themselves threatened by obsolescence. Data migration, the moving documents from one medium, format, or technology, to another, could fail once certain hardware and software are obsolete. The medium meant to preserve might itself need to be preserved. The problem of data migration reflects the built-in obsolescence of most technological equipment, something most consumers face. For our personal use, we buy products knowing that a newer version will replace our purchase in several months or years, and academia is as subject to the corporate cycle of a product as any at-home consumer beholden to technical innovators as tools become outdated and then replaced.

Despite such threats, Roy Rosenzweig, one of the founders of George Mason University's Center for History and New Media, reacts to alarmist cries of archivists and librarians who see a looming crisis in the possible loss of digital records due to data migration. Rosenzweig argues that the worry is exaggerated, and that tension between researchers and archivists is inevitable in the new landscape of abundance, and that "when historians get to the preservation table, they will discover a cultural and professional clash between their own impulses, which are to save everything, and those of librarians and archivists who believe that selection, whether passive or active, is inevitable." Rosenzweig contends that we should celebrate the abundance. Kenneth Price takes a similar approach, arguing that humanities scholars should be responsible for information abundance, but that there is a "a danger that if humanities scholars do not undertake the key work of textual transmission, this work will be done librarians and systems engineers—that is, it will be done by people with less specialized knowledge of the content." Humanities scholars must then collaborate with librarians and archivists to maintain digital projects in the face of changing technologies. We need to protect our digital archives as much as the physical, else risk loss of our cultural wealth. Digital publications, as *Orlando Project* editors explain, require "active curation," as "even even a quite straightforward web publication becomes unusable if it can't keep pace with browser releases" (Brown et al.). The relative stability of print technology is being replaced by the instability of the digital anatomy, and addressing the problem means acquiring maintenance funding to provide ongoing support for a project. However, the more complete something appears to be, the less likely it is to receive continued funding.

COSTS OF THE UTOPIA

McGann writes of how capitalist entrepreneurs view knowledge as a commodity, warning that we should not consider our cultural heritage “safe from commercial exploitation by agents that view our work—what they call ‘the content’ we create—as a marketable commodity” (“The Future” 87). By creating and controlling our work with our own institutional mechanisms, as McGann terms it, we can take steps towards protecting our endeavors. The economic pressures of publishing often drive researchers’ topic choices, as popularity determines market value, and the decline in university publishing drives scholars to seek commercial venues. A number of projects and journals in digital humanities exist because they are inexpensive compared to traditional publishing, even as a great amount of digital material is available only through subscription. But large, well-funded projects like the *Whitman Archive* don’t come cheap. The big business of education can act as a gate-keeper to scholarly opportunities, locating power squarely in the budgets of corporations-cum-universities and stopping the anatomy, and while digital spaces might take steps towards a “creative commons,” it remains likely that universities and scholars will continue to control intellectual property and function as arbiters of “what counts” as worthy of scholarship.

Institutions and individual authors will have difficulty achieving control of the digital anatomy as was possible with print. The same tools we celebrate and use to promote our work can backlash against us. Although we enjoy easy access to information, the accuracy of what we find using search engines is dubious. Geoffrey Nunberg cites Google Books as an example of the corporate influence on scholarship gone wrong, in particular because Google’s metadata for its books is a “train wreck: a

mishmash wrapped in a muddle wrapped in a mess,” with numerous misdatings and classification errors, such as a book of Virginia Woolf’s letters dated to eight years before her birth, and the classification of Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass* under Counterfeits and Counterfeiting. The problem can even be comical, such as how Google’s automation affects ad placement on a web page. When someone brings up *Leaves of Grass* in a search, she might see advertisements for plant and sod retailers (Nunberg). James Mussell argues that the Google and Microsoft mass-digitization projects provide access to millions of pages, but are “underpinned by a tawdry deal in which the custodians of culture of the Western world hold the material with which they are entrusted to ransom (for the period of a license) so that Microsoft and Google can sell advertising” (95).⁵³ Consumerism could corrupt scholarship, and when the anatomy perpetuates itself through automation, as in the case of advertising placements on Google, or with misleading search engine rankings, we simply cannot trust what we find.

The big business of corporate-academic partnerships may be more imperialistic than democratic. Jonathan Freedman argues that Google’s massive digitization project perpetuates U. S. cultural imperialism, even though he describes Walt Whitman’s democratic “vision” as “Google-like”; with a search engine like Google, that orders its subjects by a “complex algorithm that records the number of links to (and in) any given Web site, so that what one receives and the order in which one receives it come constructed by the interests and preferences of one’s fellow Net citizens” (1598). Freedman’s comment sums up the tension between what some call “crowd wisdom” and

⁵³ Nevertheless, scholars such as Laura Mandell and Alan Liu warn that we should be careful not to demonize business. Mandell argues that projects such as NINES and 18th Connect should work to unite humanities and business interests (see Mandell’s interview with Kevin D. Franklin and Karen Rodriguez’G in *HPCwire*, November 24, 2008.)

the crowd's fallibility. Access to books through Google's massive digitization project often saves time, and for some, money, but Google's results may be misleading or wildly inaccurate.

Perhaps most alarming, how information is fed into the digital anatomy is less than democratic, as many (most?) databases representing scholarly materials rely on graduate student labor. The result is that larger universities still control available information more than institutions on smaller budgets, despite the celebration of freedom of access or open-source. Worse, as James Purdy points out, "In order for texts to become part of a digital document repository archive . . . these texts must be secured from publishers; categorized and indexed by repository personnel; and scanned in and treated with optical character recognition, work usually performed by laborers in developing countries" (7). The anatomy's abundance might come at the cost of workers feeding data into digital storage in a sort of digital sweatshop. Conditions of database creation clash with the utopian ideals of "free" information.

Still, few, if any, scholars knowingly support potentially abusive labor conditions to support digital projects. Despite corporate influence and standing-room-only crowds at digital humanities sessions at the 2009 MLA, digital scholarship lags behind traditional work in terms of respect, funding, and institutional support. Jerome McGann sums up the state of digital scholarship, which for now

is all more or less atomized, growing like so many Topsyies.⁵⁴ Worse, these creatures are idiosyncratically designed and so can't easily talk to

⁵⁴ Perhaps, per this dissertation, I cannot help suggest "anatomized," rather than "atomized," as McGann does. McGann's allusion to the Topsy characters proliferating in 19th-century stage productions of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* touches on a theme I have developed throughout this dissertation, the theatrical aspect of the digital anatomy.

each other. They also typically get born into poverty—even the best-funded ones. Ensuring their maintenance, development, and survival is a daunting challenge. Worst of all, the work regularly passes without much practical institutional notice. Acceptable professional standards function for the most part indirectly, through funding institutions, since the normal scholarly channels of communication remain paper-based. (“The Future” 82)

A best-case scenario is that McGann’s comment will one day be looked upon as a remark from the early days of digital humanities, hearkening to days before digital projects are instead born with support as rich as the abundance the projects promise, collaboration is rewarded, and such work is routinely accepted in tenure files. But, for now, more than any other factor, the digital anatomy’s tendency towards proliferation and access is mitigated by economic realities. Funding and politics stop the anatomy, not the imagination.

While it is tempting to see, somewhat rightly, that the anatomy genre can be applied to almost any form of collecting or research—even the process of writing this dissertation itself as a form of anatomizing—anatomies are not catch-all texts. They are revelatory and are about representation, classification, and use. The expansion of the anatomy is not just about detailism but is about research as creation, and invention. As Paul Valéry quipped, “A poem is never finished, only abandoned.” Theoretically an anatomy is always the same, never finished. One of the first pages of this dissertation quoted Ed Folsom’s remark that “database invites big imagining” (1611). Historically, our archives have stored our public memory, as well as our museums and public

monuments, statues, grand buildings, and the like, all the stuff of imagination and purpose. And now our public memory-making, the form of remembrance of the *digital archive*, the great anatomy of information, alters how we read history and ourselves. Whether encyclopedias, electronic text, or scrapbooks, we anatomize to leave a mark of ourselves, hoping to affect a change, hoping to matter. And when we see database as the counterpart to recovery—by extension of the research enterprise itself—we recognize the anatomy as the promise of desire, the stuff of dreams.

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PUBLICATIONS

“Parody and Penalty: Digital Creativity, Identity, and the Law.” Co-authored with E. Ashley Hall and Kathie Gossett. In *Copy(write): Intellectual Property in the Writing Classroom*. Eds. Danielle Nicole DeVoss, Martine Rife, and Shaun Slatterly. Forthcoming.

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“Transparent Methodology and the Digital Archive.” American Literature Association (ALA) conference. San Francisco, CA, May 2010.

“Moving Past the Hype of Hypertext: Limits of Scholarly Digital Ventures.” MLA conference. Philadelphia, PA, December 2009.

“Vice and Advice: Technical Writing and the American Domestic Manual.” CCCC conference. San Francisco, CA, March 2009.

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