

Similarly, “Scene Changes” elaborates on the power of the printer in arranging and presenting plays to readers, offering a fascinating look into the handling of settings within a play, but doing so at the expense of deeper typographical analysis. This chapter introduces the technology of moveable scenery, which revolutionized the theatrical experience. Plays could now feature more backdrops, representing more places for action to take place, much to audiences’ delight. However, a change in the operation of the stage raised new questions about how it should be reflected in printed plays. In one example, Bourne notes that “scene” as a unit of division is expressed in italics, while “scene” as a visual entity is expressed with roman type; she discusses the tension between these two concepts as they both, in their own way, provide transitions within a play. Unfortunately, this is one of the few places in the chapter focusing on typography itself. This chapter is a fantastic examination of literary, theatrical, and even book history, but the emphasis on typography feels light in comparison.

Despite these critiques, I recommend *Typographies of Performance* without hesitation. For those strictly interested in traditional studies in typography, the first two chapters are illuminating. For those interested in typography in the author’s broader sense, including the use of illustrations and the more conceptual nature of textual and visual divisions, the book as a whole will be of interest. Anyone looking to know more about the history of English theatre will find it invaluable. However, the book is most successful for its ability to challenge assumptions about the printed page and help us, as readers, to acknowledge the rich inheritance we have from the typographical innovators who dared to redesign it.—*Brittany Adams, Northwestern Pritzker School of Law*

**Amy Hildreth Chen.** *Placing Papers: The American Literary Archives Market*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2020. Paperback, 192p. \$26.95 (ISBN 9781625344854). Hardcover, \$90.00.

Literary archives are unruly things. They are often expensive, labor-intensive to prepare for public use, and scattered across multiple institutions. Yet they are crucial to literary and cultural scholarship, influencing which authors can be researched, how they’re written about, and what works can be discovered.

In recent years, collections such as Carrie Smith and Lisa Stead’s *The Boundaries of the Literary Archive: Reclamation and Representation*, David C. Sutton and Ann Livingstone’s *The Future of Literary Archives: Diasporic and Dispersed Collections at Risk*, and Linda M. Morra’s *Moving Archives* have presented useful case studies exploring the distinctive aspects of literary archives. However, there has not yet been a monograph that more broadly examines literary archives, despite the prevalence of writers’ papers within American academic special collections.

This makes Amy Hildreth Chen's *Placing Papers: The American Literary Archives Market* an exciting and much needed volume. By documenting the history, evolution, and impact of American literary archives, Chen illustrates how they became a fundamental part of academic special collections in the United States. The origins of this can be traced back to the 1950s and 1960s, when American universities began actively seeking out writers' papers. Not only were these collections readily available and affordable, but they could serve as the raw material for the research projects of the growing number of graduate students and scholars. Acquiring the papers of high-profile authors was also a way for an institution to build its identity and reputation. Chen points to the University of Texas at Austin's Harry Ransom Center, established in 1957, as a notable example. Realizing that it could not compete with the older and renowned holdings of the Ivy League libraries, the institution instead prioritized collecting literary archives of contemporary authors, a strategy that helped it amass one of the country's foremost collections.

A significant component of *Placing Papers* is the findings from Chen's project documenting the trajectories of prominent American writers' papers. Using the authors featured in the seventh edition of *The Norton Anthology of American Literature* as her sample set, she locates where their collections now reside as well as when and how (and sometimes, for how much) they were acquired. A survey centered on canonical writers, she readily acknowledges, inevitably will have limitations. Yet this focus allows her to make important observations about the American literary canon, literary archives, and institutional collecting. This approach also means that Chen's object of study is not the material in these collections but rather the administrative information in their finding aids. She mines them for often overlooked but valuable information to provide an overview of collecting trends. For example, she observes that "of the 102 authors, 79 placed their papers beginning in 1955. The first authors to find a repository were white men. Twenty-six years would elapse before a woman of color's brand inspired repositories to seek her collection" (24–25). Surveying the size of these collections and the time and cost needed to arrange and describe them, she finds that the archives of white male writers are typically the largest and that universities have dedicated more resources to them. Although institutions have been slow to collect the archives of women writers of color, Chen notes that, "as repositories attempt to diversify their holdings," the papers of these authors will be in great demand (125).

It's also important to mention the organization of *Placing Papers*, which follows the lifecycle of a writer's archive from creation to public use. Each chapter considers a different stakeholder in the process: authors and families; literary agents and manuscript dealers; library directors and curators; archivists; and scholars and the public. In her discussion on authors, Chen details the factors a writer may consider when selecting an institution, such as a preexisting relationship, personal or geographic

affiliation, the university's reputation, and its financial resources. The section on directors and curators investigates past collecting models of institutions with substantial literary archival holdings, including the Ransom Center (aggressive and early), Yale University (slower and later), and Stanford University (a collection that shows the power of single curator at an opportune time). Because archivists too often are left out of scholarly discussions about archives, the chapter on them is particularly exciting. Chen argues that their work is central, if frequently undocumented and uncited, to researchers' discovery and interpretation of literary archives, particularly given that these collections typically require intensive processing and finding aids with item-level description. Her decision to champion the intellectual labor of archivists and not simply the collections they work with is significant.

Chen's experience has prepared her well to write about literary archives and think carefully about the various participants who engage with them. An independent scholar with a PhD in English, she also has held positions as a special collections librarian and an English subject librarian. As part of the University of Massachusetts Press's series *Studies in Print Culture and the History of the Book*, *Placing Papers* is aimed at scholars and practitioners. The book's writing, however, is refreshingly straightforward, making it accessible to a general audience interested in the topic.

*Placing Papers* concludes with a discussion of the Matthew Effect, a sociology concept best summarized by the maxim, "the rich get richer." While many American institutions actively collected throughout the latter half of the twentieth century, the weakened economy and subsequent decrease in funding at research libraries dramatically altered the landscape by the early 2000s. Yet, as budgets at many institutions have shrunk, the price of writers' papers has soared. Today, few organizations are able to purchase the papers of prominent authors, as "prices for 'typical' literary archives are between '\$50,000 and \$250,000'" (12). This shift has led to a wider gap between the top collecting institutions and everyone else: "now, the literary archives market largely reflects interests of the top two...schools" (the Ransom Center and Yale) (78).

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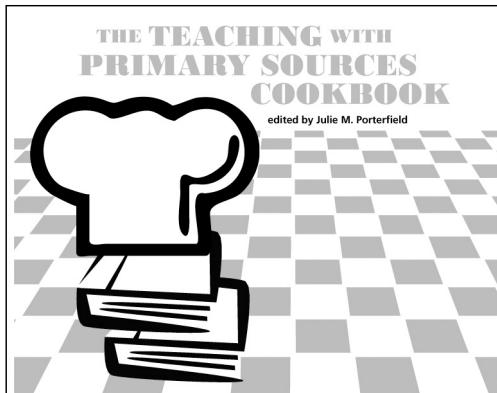
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*Placing Papers* presents a fascinating overview of the American literary archives market and should be read by anyone working with these collections. Chen's work not only provides important information and new insights, but it also raises many fruitful questions that should serve as a building block for future scholarship on writers' papers.—Jolie Braun, *The Ohio State University Libraries*

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