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## ***Placing Papers* Update: The Black and Latino Experience in the Literary Archive Market**

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*Placing Papers: The American Literary Archive Market (University of Massachusetts Press, 2020) discussed the post–World War II trade in authors’ papers. One finding of *Placing Papers* was how well Black writers did on the market as measured by the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) rank of their papers’ housing institutions and the frequency with which Black authors were paid for their materials. However, this boon for Black writers only occurred once colleges and universities sought to improve the diversity of their holdings. In this update to *Placing Papers*, the author expands her data set to include more authors of color to verify her original findings for Black writers and determine the comparative success of Latino authors. The study determined that while Black writers indeed do just as well or better than white authors on the archive market, Latino writers remain understudied and undercollected.*

Libraries and archives often seek to acquire papers written by acclaimed authors, as these materials are part of our shared cultural heritage and worthy of preservation. However, American institutions more frequently collected authors’ published materials, such as their books and periodicals, than their manuscripts, which include items like drafts and correspondence, at the start of the twentieth century.<sup>1</sup> Institutions’ interest in papers began to gradually increase after World War II, leading to competition between archives and libraries that resulted in the dynamic market for author’s manuscripts that we see today.

When I began my doctorate in 2007, literary scholars had not studied the emergence of the literary archive market, while researchers in the library and archive fields had only published case histories of particularly notable acquisitions. I sought to begin to correct this interdisciplinary blind spot in my dissertation, “Archival Bodies: Twentieth-Century British, Irish, and American Literary Collections”

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1. J. Kevin Graffagnino, Terese M. Austin, Jayne Ptolemy, and Brian Leigh Dunnigan, eds. *The Pioneer Americanists: Early Collectors, Dealers, and Bibliographers* (Ann Arbor: The Clements Library at the University of Michigan, 2017).

(2013), which traced the trans-Atlantic Anglophone literary collections market as seen in the holdings of Emory University's Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library.<sup>2</sup>

However, I quickly realized that three improvements were needed to turn my dissertation on literary archives into a monograph on the literary archive market. First, a monograph would need to focus on a single country's trade in writers' papers due to the complexity of transnational acquisitions. I chose the United States as I had more familiarity with American institutions. Second, while individual case studies were suitable for my dissertation, a more complete history would require tracking a larger set of writers, which would entail a switch from qualitative to quantitative methods. Because my choice of which authors to study could invite critiques of my selection criteria, I decided to concentrate on authors whose work had been anthologized in a widely used teaching compilation: the *Norton Anthology of American Literature: Literature since 1945* (NAAL).<sup>3</sup> In that way, I could defend my selection by defining the most-read authors in a college setting as also the most canonical writers. Third, I realized I could not limit myself to a single repository if I wanted to write a market history. Rather, I should include all institutions where my set of authors had placed their papers. Altogether, these refinements to my research topic and approach culminated in *Placing Papers: The American Literary Archive Market* (2020), which depicted the American twentieth-century market for literary papers from its post-World War II inception to the 2010s through data-driven methods.<sup>4</sup>

An unexpected finding in *Placing Papers* was the difference in white and Black authors' experiences in the archive market. *Placing Papers* determined that authors of color placed better than white authors once the market determined them to be of interest. That was the key issue—the papers of the authors of color who appeared in my NAAL data set did not start to be collected until twenty-five years after white writers. Largely due to the rapid addition of Black studies programs to American university curricula,<sup>5</sup> higher-ranking Association of Research Libraries (ARL) institutions sought non-white writers beginning in 1960. However, while 65% (66/102) of authors listed in NAAL and included in *Placing Papers* were authors of color, only 8% (8/102) were Asian, 16% (16/102) Black, 7% (7/102) Latino, and 5% (5/102) Indigenous.

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2. Amy Hildreth Chen, "Archival Bodies: Twentieth-Century British, Irish, and American Literary Collections," Emory University, 2013, <https://etd.library.emory.edu/concern/etds/3j333252m?locale=en>

3. Nina Baym, ed. *Norton Anthology of American Literature: Literature since 1945*, Volume E, 6th edition (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, 2002).

4. Amy Hildreth Chen, *Placing Papers: The American Literary Archive Market* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2020).

5. Noliwe M. Rooks, "The Beginnings of Black Studies," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, February 10, 2006, <https://www.chronicle.com/article/the-beginnings-of-black-studies/>.

Accordingly, when I decided to update the work I did in *Placing Papers*, I needed to focus on writers of color. I concentrated on Black and Latino authors as these groups had dedicated Norton anthologies, while neither Asian and Pacific Islanders nor Indigenous writers did. Adding writers born after 1900 from the *Norton Anthology of Latino Literature* and *Norton Anthology of African-American Literature* to the data set alongside only the white writers from NAAL provided an expanded data set of 136 Latino, 75 Black, and 66 white authors.<sup>6</sup> The white writers were to be my control variable for comparison purposes.

This expanded set of writers of color reinforced *Placing Papers*'s findings. Once the papers of Black authors were sought by institutions, these writers were able to place their papers in top-ranked repositories. But a new insight emerged: while Black writers did well in the literary archives market, Latino authors lagged behind in most key measures.

To summarize, institutions first collected white authors' papers in 1955 but did not acquire Black authors' holdings until 1960, matching my initial findings from *Placing Papers*. Institutions did not acquire literary archives of Latino authors until 1968. Both Black and white authors were most likely to place their papers in New England (26%, 15/57; 21%, 12/56) and sell their collections (54.4%, 31/57; 66%, 37/56), but Black authors placed their papers at higher-ranked ARL institutions than white authors (ARL Rank 20 vs ARL Rank 26, respectively). In contrast, the literary archives of Latino authors continue to remain under-collected, as 43% (59/136) of these papers have yet to be acquired. And, I observed, when Latino archives are placed, their authors are more likely to donate (64%; 38/59) their holdings to lower-ranked ARL institutions (ARL Rank 37). Accordingly, this article highlights the need for greater investment in Latino literary archives to better represent and compensate these writers for their contribution to American culture.

## Methodology

To investigate how and when literary archives are placed, the following four steps were followed to identify authors of interest, locate their data, and analyze trends.

First, I edited my preexisting Excel spreadsheet of authors listed in NAAL by omitting authors of color and adding the deaths of Philip Roth, Ursula Le Guin, Mary Oliver, and W.S. Merwin.<sup>7</sup> New rows were added for Latino authors from the

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6. This article uses the term "Latino" instead of Latinx to follow the precedent set by the Norton anthology. Ilan Stavans, ed., *The Norton Anthology of Latino Literature*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2010); Henry Louis Gates, Jr. and Valerie A. Smith eds., *The Norton Anthology of African-American Literature* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2014).

7. To learn more about why I use anthologies to create my data set, please see Chen, *Placing Papers*, chapter 1.

*Norton Anthology of Latino Literature* and Black writers from the *Norton Anthology of African-American Literature*. I only included authors born after 1900 from these three anthologies in the data set.<sup>8</sup>

Second, I kept the columns (variables) in the Excel spreadsheet similar to those used for *Placing Papers*: placement, location, stakeholders, circumstances, date, age, and size. Placement identified whether I found the author's literary collection at an institution. If so, the URL of the finding aid was also included in the spreadsheet. The location identified the repository name, which of four US Census Regions and nine US Census Divisions the repository belonged to, and its Association of Research Libraries (ARL) rank, if applicable.<sup>9</sup> Stakeholders could be either the author, their family, a literary agent, a rare book and manuscript dealer, or other (e.g., a work colleague). Circumstances could be if a collection was bought or given while the date recorded the placement year. The birth and death dates as well as the age of the author at acquisition were added, as was the length of the collection in linear feet.<sup>10</sup>

Third, I populated the spreadsheet by searching for the authors' archives in Google with their name and "archive" and then their name and "papers." If a literary archive did not appear, I searched the person's name—without the word archive or papers—in ArchiveGrid.<sup>11</sup> I marked authors as unplaced if I could not find a literary archive connected to their name in either location. I read the finding aids for the collections I found and entered their data into the spreadsheet. Then I contacted the repositories if any information was missing. When repositories did not respond to queries, I marked the missing data as not listed; if it was provided, I entered it into the spreadsheet. Once all possible data was entered, I locked the data set on July 26, 2022. Locking data is critical as new information added on an *ad hoc* basis alters results.

Fourth, I moved the Excel sheet to Google Sheets and analyzed it using pivot tables and charts. Quantitative data is represented either as whole numbers and/or as percentages rounded to the nearest whole number; accordingly, this rounding may result in total percentages that do not equal 100%. Quantitative data was contextualized with qualitative discussion focusing on notable patterns or outliers.

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8. With one exception: Melvin B. Tolson was born in 1898, a correction which was made after data analysis concluded. I opted to leave him in.

9. Census Regions and Divisions of the United States, US Census, [https://www2.census.gov/geo/pdfs/maps-data/maps/reference/us\\_regdiv.pdf](https://www2.census.gov/geo/pdfs/maps-data/maps/reference/us_regdiv.pdf); Anam Mian and Gary Roebuck, "Total Library Expenditures from University Libraries," *ARL Statistics 2020* (Association of Research Libraries, Washington DC, 2022): 50.

10. I occasionally converted boxes to linear feet using the Linear Footage Calculator provided by the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University, <https://beinecke.library.yale.edu/research-teaching/doing-research-beinecke/linear-footage-calculator>.

11. ArchiveGrid, <https://researchworks.oclc.org/archivegrid/>.

## Results

### Placement

When an author's papers are placed in an archival repository, their place in literary history is more assured. After all, acquisition is a type of peer review: a curator must find the writer of sufficient value to be willing to provide adequate, climate-controlled space for their holdings in perpetuity; funds for arrangement and description; ongoing access through the institution's reading room; and possibly even digitization. As archives cannot be deaccessioned like art, the commitment an institution makes when it acquires a set of papers is high.<sup>12</sup> Although the presence of a writer's archives does not indicate that the author will remain of consistent popular and scholarly interest, it does allow the author to weather changes in opinion without those shifts resulting in their personal effects being lost. After all, "in human history [...] forgetting has been the natural tendency."<sup>13</sup> Institutional acquisition is an attempt to combat readers' natural tendency to forget.

Consider the case of Zora Neale Hurston, now one of the most acclaimed Black authors of the twentieth century. Hurston's gravesite was not marked until Alice Walker led a search for her distinguished literary predecessor.<sup>14</sup> While Walker did find Hurston's final resting place and pay for a stone to mark it, as the now-famous story goes, the need for Walker to locate Hurston in the first place demonstrates that prestige alone does not lead to preservation, especially when acclaim is slow to arrive. Hurston died of a stroke in a welfare facility.<sup>15</sup> As her finding aid at the George A. Smathers Library at the University of Florida partially recounts, her papers were in the process of being burned by a janitor at the facility where she died when her friend, Patrick DuVal, saved them from the fire.<sup>16</sup> While few authors would have their papers burned now, many would have them simply thrown out or lost if they died before their reputation was sufficiently established to pique the interest of the literary archive market. Contemporary writers who compose their work primarily or entirely on a computer incur even more risk, as digital components become dated and degrade faster than printed or handwritten manuscripts.

12. Andrew Russeth, "As Museums Pushing to Sell Art, Competing Ideas about Deaccessioning Are Playing Out in Public," *ArtNews*, February 8, 2021, <https://www.artnews.com/art-news/market/museum-deaccessioning-coronavirus-pandemic-1234583143/>.

13. Ivan Szekeley, "Do Archives Have a Future in the Digital Age?" *Journal of Contemporary Archival Studies* 4.1 (2017), <http://elischolar.library.yale.edu/jcas/vol4/iss2/1>.

14. Alice Walker, "Zora Neale Hurston," *Ms.* (1975): 74–84.

15. Walker, "Hurston," 87.

16. Zora Neale Hurston Papers, George A. Smathers Libraries, University of Florida, August 2008, <https://findingaids.uflib.ufl.edu/repositories/2/resources/587>; Jean Tamarin, "Zora Neale Hurston's Poignant and Powerful Story Told," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, June 5, 1991, <https://www.chronicle.com/article/zora-neale-hurstons-poignant-and-powerful-story-told/>.

Placement, therefore, is the most important metric when evaluating the literary archive market. If papers are not placed, any author is more liable to be forgotten. Plus, as literary history is a primarily white narrative due to long-standing historical bias, writers of color are in even more jeopardy without this type of institutional support.

Overall, 38% (104/276) of literary archives connected to writers listed in the *Norton Anthology of African-American Literature*, *Norton Anthology of Latino Literature*, and *Norton Anthology of American Literature* have yet to be acquired. By ethnicity, 23% (17/74) of Black, 57% (77/136) of Latino, and 15% (10/66) of white papers are left to be collected. These writers are 20–90 (Black), 29–90 (Latino), or 31–93 (white) years old. Black and white authors with unplaced collections are the same average age, 59 years old. Latino authors with unplaced collections are on average 57 years old. By these measures, the literary archives market is more biased by ethnicity than age.

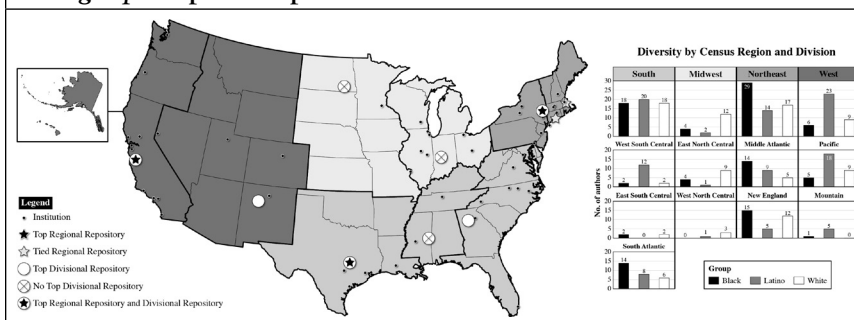
A critical point to consider is that while the anthologies used to create this data set of authors are all Nortons, and therefore comparable, they nevertheless demonstrated differing inclusion criteria. Overall, 75 Black and 56 white writers are included in their respective Nortons, while 137 writers of Latino origin were chosen for theirs, an indication that the Latino canon has yet to be fully established. As critical appraisal coalesces over time, a more mature canon would have fewer authors.

Alternatively, 38% (104/276) of literary archives connected to writers listed in the *Norton Anthology of African-American Literature*, *Norton Anthology of Latino Literature*, and *Norton Anthology of American Literature* have been acquired. By ethnicity, 77% (57/74) of Black, 43% (59/136) of Latino, and 85% (56/66) of white papers were already collected. While this data is simply the converse of the data regarding which papers are yet to be transferred to institutional hands, it is reassuring to see that the majority of anthologized Black authors have already been placed. It also demonstrates the skew introduced by the much-larger population of authors selected for inclusion in the *Norton Anthology of Latino Literature*.

### ***Location***

While placement is the primary criterion to see if the literary archive market is sufficiently diverse, where authors place their papers is important as well. Where an author's literary collection resides can mimic or contrast against a region's ethnic diversity. Likewise, not all repositories are equal. Some repositories are connected to higher-ranking, meaning better-funded, institutions. Others may have strong holdings but more modest funding levels, limiting their ability to showcase their materials and attract researchers.

FIGURE 1

*Placing Papers Update Map*

Stratifying repositories and their respective collections by US Census Region reveals geographic acquisition gaps. Of the four Census Regions—Midwest, Northeast, South, and West—the Midwest has the most growth potential in the field of literary papers, as it holds the least of any of the regions.<sup>17</sup> The Midwest has eighteen collections in eleven repositories, the Northeast sixty collections in nineteen repositories, the South fifty-six collections in nineteen repositories, and the West thirty-eight collections in seventeen repositories. By percentage, that means that the Midwest has 10% (18/172), the Northeast 35% (60/172), the South 33% (56/172), and the West 22% (38/172) of all literary archives in this data set.

The major repositories of each region, or the institutions with the most holdings in this survey of literary archives, are Indiana University Bloomington (Midwest); Harvard University, the New York Public Library, and Yale University (Northeast); University of Texas at Austin (South); and Stanford University (West). However, the Midwest's repository is the only one among these institutions that is not a leading collector of American literary papers from this data set. Indiana University Bloomington, which is represented by the Lilly Library, only has three sets of papers in this data set, those of Galway Kinnell, Sylvia Plath, and Kurt Vonnegut—which places it in the same cohort as the City University of New York, Hunter; the University of Miami; and the University of California, Berkeley, each of which also holds three literary archives. The Lilly does hold many more literary archives, but their particular strength in American Modernist authors, such as John Dos Passos, Ezra Pound, and William Carlos Williams, is out of scope for this study, as those authors were born prior to 1900.<sup>18</sup> If the Lilly could seek more contemporary authors of color, particularly from Latino authors who have Midwestern ties, it would be well positioned to maintain its role as the leading regional institution.

17. Census Regions and Divisions of the United States, US Census, [https://www2.census.gov/geo/pdfs/maps-data/maps/reference/us\\_regdiv.pdf](https://www2.census.gov/geo/pdfs/maps-data/maps/reference/us_regdiv.pdf).

18. American Literature, Lilly Library, Indiana University Bloomington, <https://libraries.indiana.edu/lilly-library/american-literature>

Similarly, while Emory University's holdings of eleven literary archives cannot compare to the University of Texas at Austin's twenty in the South, Emory has the same number of holdings as the tied Northeastern institutions: Harvard University, the New York Public Library, and Yale University. Thus, the number of collections held by one institution may make it a regional but not a national market leader (Indiana University Bloomington), or a national but not a regional leader (Emory University).

An additional collection gap appeared when analyzing this data set by US Census Divisions, which subdivides the four regions into nine zones: East North Central and West North Central (Midwest); Middle Atlantic and New England (Northeast); East South Central, South Atlantic, and West South Central (South); and Mountain and Pacific (West). Divisions with less representation on the literary collections market included East South Central with two archives in two repositories, West North Central with four in two, and Mountain with six in five. As the East South Central and West North Central Divisions have so few collections and relatively similar demographics, their ability to grow national-level holdings in American literature may be limited. Of the two, the Mountain Division shows more potential. Of the five repositories in the Mountain region—Brigham Young University, New Mexico History Museum, University of Nevada, Reno, and the University of New Mexico—the University of New Mexico is best poised to increase its role in the literary market, as it is the only institution that holds more than one set of literary papers. The University of New Mexico could draw on its strong Latino and Indigenous population base, its interdisciplinary Latin American Studies program, plus its prestigious MFA program in Creative Writing to become a regional destination repository.

Black, Latino, and white literary archives are present in all four US Census Regions. Encouragingly, the West (29/38; 76%), Northeast (43/60, 72%), and South (38/56; 68%) all have a majority (>50%) of their papers connected to authors of color. Only the Midwest (6/8; 33%) still has primarily white-authored literary archives according to this data set. By Census Region, most Black literary archives are in the Northeast (51%; 29/57), most Latino papers are in the West (39%; 23/59), and most white literary archives are in the South (32%; 18/56), demonstrating the difference between which Regions have a greater percentage of white papers in their holdings compared to which Region has the most white papers.

However, diversity levels differ at the level of the US Census Division. In the Northeast, Black papers were equally likely to be found in New England (50%; 14/28) or the Middle Atlantic (50%; 14/28), while in the West Latino papers are less likely to be found in the Pacific Region (56%; 18/32) than the Mountain Region (83%, 5/6), even



though the Pacific has more Latino papers (18) than the Mountain Region (5). In the South, more white papers are in the South Atlantic (21%, 6/28) than the West South Central (13%; 2/16) or East South Central Regions (50%; 2/4), yet the highest percentage of white papers is found in the East South Central. Notably, the East South Central does not have any Latino papers, the West South Central does not have any holdings by Black authors, and the Mountain Region does not have any white authors.

Literary archive placement does parallel US Census population data. The South and the Northeast Divisions have the highest Black population.<sup>19</sup> California in the Pacific Region has the largest Latino population, while Texas, which belongs to the West South Central Region, has the fastest-growing Latino population.<sup>20</sup> The US is still primarily white at 61.6% of the population in the 2020 Census, but the US will become “minority white”—meaning whites will still be the largest racial group, but they will no longer be the majority—in 2045.<sup>21</sup> This future can be seen in the Midwest. White literary archives are predominant in the Midwest (67%; 12/18), home to a declining population.<sup>22</sup>

Assuming institutions that acquire literary archives seek to mimic their demographic base in order to better represent their patron population, repositories in the West and South—particularly in the Pacific and West South Central Divisions—are best positioned to grow, while those in the Midwest face a decline. This projection reiterates that Stanford and UT Austin will continue to be well situated to maintain their position in the market and could use their Latino population to further diversify and expand their holdings.

However, just because a repository is situated in a growing population base does not mean that it has the resources to acquire the best literary archives. ARL in-

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19. Christine Tamir, Abby Budiman, Luis Noe-Bustamante, and Lauren Mora, “Facts about the U.S. Black Population,” Pew Research Center, March 25, 2021, <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/fact-sheet/facts-about-the-us-black-population/>.

20. Antonio Flores, “How the U.S. Hispanic Population Is Changing,” Pew Research Center, September 18, 2017, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/09/18/how-the-u-s-hispanic-population-is-changing/>.

21. Nicholas Jones, Rachel Marks, Roberto Ramirez, Merarys Río-Vargas, “2020 Census Illuminates Racial and Ethnic Composition of the Country,” United States Census Bureau, August 12, 2021, <https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2021/08/improved-race-ethnicity-measures-reveal-united-states-population-much-more-multiracial.html>; William H. Frey, “The US Will Become ‘Minority White’ in 2045, Census projects,” Brookings Institute, March 14, 2018, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/the-avenue/2018/03/14/the-us-will-become-minority-white-in-2045-census-projects/>.

22. Barb Rosewicz, Melissa Maynard, and Alexandre Fall, “Population Growth Sputters in Midwestern, Eastern States,” Pew Trusts, July 27, 2021, <https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/articles/2021/07/27/population-growth-sputters-in-midwestern-eastern-states>; Mike Schneider, “Census Shows US Is Diversifying, White Population Shrinking,” Pew Trusts, August 12, 2021, <https://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/articles/2021/07/27/population-growth-sputters-in-midwestern-eastern-states>.

cludes 124 member libraries from the United States and Canada.<sup>23</sup> The ARL Library Investment Index indicates which academic repositories have high levels of funding, which would give them a competitive advantage when seeking collections that are for sale rather than offered as a donation. Higher-ranked repositories are better able to showcase their holdings to a greater number and variety of researchers and house additional collections of related interest, as higher funding levels lead to more strategic collection development policies.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, without sufficient funds, curators are forced to be reactive rather than proactive by choosing among materials offered for donation rather than intentionally sought—and bought. If a repository does not appear in the index, its funding level is usually not public knowledge.<sup>25</sup> However, non-ARL institutions often have lower funding levels than member institutions.<sup>26</sup>

Overall, 47% (31/66) of institutions in the data set belong to ARL. These repositories together hold 61% (106/172) of the literary archives. Repositories included in the data set spanned from rank 1 (Harvard University) to 110 (University of California, Riverside) out of a possible 116. The average ARL repository in this data set was ranked 28.<sup>27</sup> The repositories that held the literary archives of Black and white authors were above this average, while those that collected Latino writers fell below. Black writers, on average, were housed in repositories ranked 20, compared to white writers at rank 26 and Latino at rank 37. This result highlights how Black authors continue to place at better-resourced institutions than their white or Latino peers.

Of the sixty-six repositories that participated in the literary archive market, the University of Texas at Austin (UT Austin) and Stanford University were the most active institutions. UT Austin has twenty literary archives and Stanford thirteen, representing 12% (20/172) and 8% (13/172) of the market, respectively. Emory University, Harvard University, the New York Public Library (NYPL), and Yale University tied for third place, each with 6% (11/172) of the market. Together, these top six institutions hold seventy-seven collections. Another way to conceptualize this data is that six institutions control 45% (77/172) of the overall market for American literary papers. In contrast, fifty-nine institutions hold only one collection each;

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23. Mian and Roebuck, *ARL Statistics 2020* (2020).

24. The ARL Library Investment Index does not track researcher statistics in archives, only circulation within library collections.

25. Find the current list of ARL-affiliated institutions here: <https://www.arl.org/list-of-arl-members/>.

26. For example, see Lynne M. Thomas's recent article, "Special Collections on a Shoestring: A Survey of Non-ARL Libraries Servicing Rare Book Collections," *RBM: A Journal of Rare Books, Manuscripts, and Cultural Heritage* 23, no. 2 (2022): 75–97.

27. However, this does not mean that the 28th ranked institution is represented in the data set. The 28th ranked institution is Michigan State University, which did not collect any of these literary archives.

35% (20/57) of repositories with Black papers, 7% (24/27) repositories with Latino papers, and 56% (15/27) repositories with white papers. Notably, Latino authors are more likely to be collected by institutions that are well-established participants in the market, which is reasonable, as papers by Latino authors were not collected until much later than Black or white authors.

The top two repositories, UT Austin and Stanford, have similar collection development priorities. UT Austin specializes in papers from authors who are white (10) or Latino (9), not Black (1). Stanford, likewise, concentrates on authors who are Latino (8) or white (5), not Black (0). The third most-active repositories, however, all focus on Black authors. Eight of Emory's eleven collections are from Black authors, the same as NYPL. Six of Harvard's eleven collections are from Black authors. Only Yale splits its attention evenly; its holdings include five collections each from black and white authors but only one Latino collection.

Considering that more Black and white writers have placed collections overall, it is notable that UT Austin and Stanford, the most active repositories on the market, favor Latino collections. Perhaps this result is because these two institutions are more inclined to lead collecting trends than follow them. As Latino collections remain underappreciated, identifying this gap and seeking to ameliorate it not only satisfies a critical national need—to diversify American cultural heritage holdings—but also allows their respective repositories to retain their profile as forward-looking institutions.

However, UT Austin and Stanford did not pursue Latino collections in the same way. UT Austin benefitted from the mission of the Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection, which partners with the Teresa Lozano Long Institute of Latin American Studies. Without the Benson Collection, UT Austin would not have such a diverse set of holdings as the Harry Ransom Center, UT Austin's primary special collections center, primarily collecting white authors. The only papers the Ransom Center possesses from an author of color in this data set came from Adrienne Kennedy, a Black playwright. Stanford does not have separate special collections repositories; instead, it places all archives together in a single manuscripts division. Accordingly, Stanford's holdings reflect its holistic commitment to Latino papers, while UT Austin's collections demonstrate a single center's attention to the importance of diversity.

### ***Stakeholders***

The literary archives market includes five types of stakeholders: authors, their families, literary agents, book and manuscript dealers, and others. For this article, stakeholders do not include archivists and librarians, who provide access to acquired resources, or academic researchers or the general public, who seek to

use these resources. While those populations were explored in depth in *Placing Papers*, due to length this update focuses only on those stakeholders whose roles are related to acquisition.

Stakeholders matter for four possible reasons: payment, prestige, timeline, and restrictions. Certain stakeholders are more likely to offer collections as donations rather than for sale. Accordingly, some literary agents or rare book and manuscript dealers exert an outsized effect on the field. They only take on the most significant holdings and thus are likely to be able to command high prices for their clients, which can only be paid by top-tier institutions. Some stakeholders may take longer to bring an author's papers to the market and could impose more restrictions on their use once they are acquired, which in effect controls scholarship and the shaping of future narratives of an author's life and work.

The author is always the most likely stakeholder to facilitate the placement of literary archives. However, Latino writers are much more likely (58%; 34/59) to represent themselves than white (45%; 25/56) or Black (40%; 23/57) authors. Families are the second-most common executor choice. The proportion of literary archives associated with families was relatively consistent across ethnicity: 16% (9/57) of Black, 19% (11/59) of Latino, and 21% (12/56) of white writers chose this option. The third most common executor choice is professionals, either rare book and manuscript dealers or literary agents. However, these professional executors are more likely to represent Black and white authors than Latinos. Dealers represented 9% (5/57) of Black and 14% (8/56) of white authors, while agents assisted 4% (2/57) of Black and 5% (3/56) of white authors, for a total of 13% Black (7/57) and 20% (11/56) white writers represented by professional executors. In stark contrast, only one (2%; 1/59) Latino writer had a professional help place their papers: John Rechy, known for his LGBT-focused writing, had a literary agent help him with the acquisition. Rechy's literary archive resides at Texas State University. As rare book and manuscript dealers and literary agents place literary archives as part of their business, the materials they steward are sales, not donations. Therefore, the underrepresentation of dealers and agents as executors of Latino writers indicates a larger concern: that Latino authors are not being paid for their literary archives at rates equivalent to their Black and white peers.

The other category for executors is a catchall for all other circumstances. For example, a work colleague could wind up serving as an executor for literary archives that were primarily kept at an office. Ten writers fell into this group, including two

Black, four Latino, and four white authors, two of whom were paid.<sup>28</sup> The story of how these acquisitions were handled by people who were not typical executors would be interesting for future investigators, as the events that led to these authors' placement significantly differed from other writers.

### *Circumstances*

Whether an archive was bought or donated shows an author's desirability. While not all writers presumably want to make a profit on their papers, most likely do. Overall, 45% (86/172) of literary archives were sold, while 45% (77/172) were donated and 5% (9/172) of institutions did not provide this information. Repositories provided acquisition years and whether the collections were bought or sold for 161 authors in total, of which 50 were Black, 55 Latino, and 56 white. Although the overall literary archive market using this data set spanned 1955 to 2021, institutions did not purchase any papers until 1972. That first purchase was made by the University of Connecticut, which purchased the literary archive of a white author, Charles Olson. The first Black author, Richard Wright, sold his literary archive in 1976 to Yale University, while the first sale of a Latino writer's literary archive was not until Roland Hinojosa and Carmen Tafolla both sold their papers to the University of Texas at Austin in 1980. In general, Latino authors were more likely to donate their papers than Black or white writers. Altogether, 64% (38/59) of Latino authors donated their papers, compared to 35% (20/57) of Black or 34% (19/56) of white writers. Furthermore, sales comprised 100% of acquisitions in nine of the sixty-seven years of the literary archive market and 0% of acquisitions in fifteen of these years.<sup>29</sup> Thirteen years did not have any activity.<sup>30</sup>

Additional research would be needed to determine which types of authors are most likely to be able to sell rather than donate their collections. Are these authors more widely read and/or anthologized and thus command more interest from potential repositories? And, for top flight authors who chose to donate rather than sell, what motivated this decision?

### *Age*

Overall, the average age at placement was fifty-eight years old. Latino authors were fifty-seven, Black authors fifty-nine, and white authors fifty-nine years old. The

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28. These authors included Thomas Pynchon, Jesus Colon, Jovita Gonzales de Mireles, Denise Chavez, Lorine Niedecker, Essex Hemphill, Eudora Welty, Maria Irene Fornes, Flannery O'Connor, and Haki R. Madhubhuti. Flannery O'Connor and Haki R. Madhubhuti were paid for their collections, but O'Connor died fifty years prior to placement so the payment presumably went to her estate.

29. Years that had 100% of their acquisitions as sales included 1972, 1976, 1982, 1987, 1993, 1994, 1997, 2015, and 2016. Years that had 0% of their acquisitions as sales included 1955, 1961, 1962, 1964, 1965, 1968, 1969, 1970, 1971, 1974, 2004, 2005, 2009, 2011, and 2021.

30. Years without any literary archives acquired were 1956-1960, 1963, 1966, 1967, 1975, 1977, 1979, 1991, and 2020.

maximum ages at placement were similar, too. The oldest white author, Stanley Kuntz, was ninety-three when Princeton University acquired his archive, while the oldest Latino author, Gus Arriola, was ninety when the University of California, Berkeley, acquired his papers. The oldest Black author, Mari Evans, was also ninety when Emory University acquired her archive. Similar, too, are the minimum age of authors at the point of literary archive acquisition. Thomas Pynchon, the youngest white author, placed his collection at UT Austin when he was thirty-one. Carmen Tafolla, the youngest Latino writer, placed her papers at UT Austin when she was twenty-nine. The youngest author in the entire data set, as well as the youngest Black writer, Charles Johnson, was twenty when his papers went to Fisk University. Accordingly, authors' archives were collected at roughly the same point in their lives, regardless of their ethnicity.

Not all collections are acquired before an author dies. Posthumous placement was the only occasion in this analysis when Latino writers had a better outcome than their Black or white peers. Overall, forty-five writers died before they could place their papers with an institutional repository, although seven died the same year that their papers were placed, so it is unclear from the data if the transfer happened immediately before or after they died. In total, posthumous placement years varied from 0 to fifty years. By group, 39% (22/57) Black, 23% (13/56) white, and 22% (13/59) Latino writers died prior to the acquisition of their archives. This observation highlights that since Latino writers are more likely to represent themselves, they are less likely to have their papers placed after their death.

White authors have their papers transferred to zero to fifty years after their death in comparison to zero to thirty-seven years for Black or zero to fifteen years for Latino authors. By race/ethnicity, the authors with the longest wait times between their death and the acquisition of their papers are Flannery O'Connor (white, fifty years, Emory University), Malcolm X (Black, thirty years, NYPL), and Oscar "Zeta" Acosta (Latino, fifteen years, University of California, Santa Barbara). On average, ten years elapse before the papers of Black and white authors can be posthumously acquired in comparison to Latino authors, who will wait only four years on average. The reason for longer wait times for white and Black authors varies by individual, but these overall results suggest that white and Black writers can choose to wait longer for optimal circumstances in the literary archive market to arise (i.e., higher tier institutions and/or payment) than Latino authors can.

### *Date*

Collection dates help identify acquisition trends, such as when the market was the most active and if that activity was due to the acquisition of certain groups rather than others. In this data set, placement rates roughly followed a bell-shaped

curve, with the 2000s as the most active decade, when thirty-eight collections were acquired. The next-most active decades were the 1990s and 2010s, during each of which thirty-six collections were acquired. Additionally, since this article was drafted in 2022, the 2020s only had two years (2020 and 2021) available as options. By individual year, 1980 was the most active year, with eight collections acquired—two collections from Black, two from Latino writers, and four by white authors—followed by 1993, 2013, and 2017, each of which had seven literary archives come into institutional hands.

Placement rates by group show that the literary archive market is interested in the literary archives of writers of color. More white authors had their papers placed in the 1990s (27%; 15/56), while Latino writers had the most archives acquired in the 2000s (27%; 16/59) and Black authors had the most collections acquired in the 2010s (30%; 17/57). However, white authors also had the highest number of papers acquired in any one year; in 1993, seven sets of literary archives were acquired and four in 1980. Neither Black nor Latino writers had more than four collections acquired in any given year. Latino authors sold or donated four archives in 2013 and three in 1985, 1989, 2004, and 2017, while Black authors only sold or donated three archives in 1998, 2008, 2013, and 2018.

Three authors did not list or not provide acquisition years for their collections: Toni Cade Bambara at Spelman College, Frey Angelico Chávez at the New Mexico History Museum, and Margaret Walker at Jackson State University. These collections do not have public acquisition years due to the authors' or the institutions' preference to restrict acquisition information. This type of restriction can be due to an author's request for privacy, but it could also be a symptom of archival practice. Even today, acquisition information is not consistently featured on finding aids, although acquisition dates are more commonly included than other types of metadata, such as acquisition source.

### *Size*

The size of a collection is significant because space is a valuable resource at all institutions. For example, the University of Northern Colorado faced pressure to limit storage space for archives to prioritize user-focused needs.<sup>31</sup> Plus, a larger collection may mean a greater variety of content and a higher likelihood that a given collection is the author's primary literary archive. Additional archives may exist because an author's content is present in correspondence, the author's participation in a given artistic movement or presence at a certain event, and so forth.

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31. Kacy L. Guill, "Arguing for Space in a User-Focused Environment," *Library & Archival Security* 22, no. 2 (2009): 115.

Latino literary archives are smaller on average than Black or white authors' papers. All 172 collections have a minimum size of 0.05 linear feet, which is the standard measure for one file folder of content using the Linear Footage Calculator.<sup>32</sup> However, the size of collections varied by ethnicity. White collections were the largest, averaging 111.53 linear feet and ranging from 0.84 to 1,000 linear feet, compared to Black collections' average of 61.33 linear feet and range of 0.05 to 450 linear feet and Latino collections' substantially smaller average of 26.56 linear feet and range of 0.05 to 128 linear feet. White collections also varied the most, with a standard deviation of 209.68 linear feet. Black collections had a standard deviation of 84.54 compared to Latino collections' 31.40 linear feet.

The largest and smallest Black collections belonged to Haki R. Madhubhuti and Henry Dumas, respectively. Madhubhuti's archive stretched to 450 linear feet at the University of Illinois, while Dumas's archive at the NYPL consisted of the minimum 0.05 linear feet. In contrast, the largest and smallest Latino collections belonged to Gloria Anzaldua and Nicholasa Mohr, respectively. Anzaldua's archive at UT Austin was 128 linear feet, Mohr's at the University of Minnesota 0.05 linear feet. The largest white literary archives belonged to Galway Kinnell and Allen Ginsberg, who both had papers stretching to 1,000 linear feet at Indiana University and Stanford University, respectively, while the smallest white literary archive belonged to AR Ammonds, whose papers at Cornell University were only 2 linear feet.

Size differences could be caused either by collections being smaller from the start or a larger amount of material being deaccessioned during the process of arrangement and description. Without data—collection sizes at acquisition and after arrangement are not tracked—these differences may be the result of Latino authors retaining the least amount of material and white authors the most from their careers. Why this could be the case is complicated: do white authors feel that more of what they do is worthy of preservation? Do white authors move less frequently and thus keep more? Or are there other reasons? Future research could help explain this finding. For now, it is simply worthy to point it out.

### *Not Covered*

While *Placing Papers* discussed the impact of sex on the literary archive market, this study did not consider that variable due to spatial limitations. Future work could compare the impact of sex to race/ethnicity. Additionally, as transgender and nonbinary writers like Jos Charles become more visible and thus more collectible, it would be helpful to study how they fare in comparison to authors who identify as male or female.

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32. Linear Footage Calculator, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, <https://beinecke.library.yale.edu/research-teaching/doing-research-beinecke/linear-footage-calculator>.



Asian, Pacific Islander, or Indigenous authors were not included in this study because neither group (API or Indigenous) had Norton anthologies devoted to their work. Similar volumes that could have been used are *The Cambridge Companion to Asian American Literature* and *The Cambridge Companion to Native American Literature*, although these two Cambridge Companions are literary criticism rather than literary anthologies.<sup>33</sup> Scholars would need to document the names of authors mentioned in the Companions rather than simply recording the authors' names from the table of contents, as was done here with the Norton Anthologies.

This research did not track born digital holdings as *Placing Papers* showed that this material type was rare. *Placing Papers* found that the Greatest Generation, born between 1901 and 1925, had this material in 7% (2/29) of its literary archives. The Silent Generation, born between 1926 and 1945, had digital content in 24% (12/50) of its collections, while the Baby Boomers, born between 1946 and 1960, actually had a slightly lower amount of digital material—23% (5/22). Generation X, born between 1961 and 1980, had only two collections, neither with digital holdings. Generation Y (Millennials), born between 1981 and 2000, were not represented in the *Pacing Papers* data set.<sup>34</sup> This study included 30% (51/172) Greatest Generation, 45% (78/172) Silent Generation, 21% (36/172) Baby Boomer, and 9% (15/172) Generation X.<sup>35</sup> As this study determined, literary archives do not come into institutional hands until an author is around sixty years old, so literary archives will mostly contain physical content until all of Generation X has hit sixty years old in 2040. Until then, digital content will remain merely an optional supplement to physical materials.

Furthermore, many repositories do not have the financial capacity to process or preserve born digital materials, because the technical expertise required to make digital archives accessible is expensive. Digital archivists generally are paid more than traditional paper-based processors. Digital archivists have an average annual salary of \$55,587–\$67,418 while digital asset managers, a related job title, begin around \$70,000. In comparison, archivists have an average annual salary of \$56,760.<sup>36</sup> While these numbers are estimates taken from a variety of sources over the past decade, a base salary differential for asset managers and the upper range

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33. Crystal Parikh and Daniel Y. Kim eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Asian-American Literature* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Joy Porter and Kenneth M. Roemer eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Native American Literature* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

34. Chen, *Placing Papers*, 80–105.

35. Three individuals, Amus More, Alice Wilson, and Roberto Valero, did not have their birth date recorded as I was not able to find information about them online.

36. "Digital Archivist Salary," Salary.com, <https://www.salary.com/research/salary/recruiting/digital-archivist-salary>; Conrad De Aenlle, "Digital Archivists, Now in Demand," *New York Times*, February 7, 2009, <https://www.nytimes.com/2009/02/08/jobs/08starts.html>; "Archivists, Curators, and Museum Workers," Occupational Outlook Handbook (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, May 2020) <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/education-training-and-library/curators-museum-technicians-and-conservators.htm#tab-5>.

for the most experienced digital archivists does have the potential to make an impact on the type of content repositories are willing to accept if they must provide preservation and access to that material. Those of us who worked in archives and special collections in the last decade or so know this to be true: the amount of digital content that could be placed even now is much higher than these institutions accept. Accordingly, the presence of digital content says just as much or more about an institution's resources than an author's compositional practices.

## Conclusion

This update reaffirmed my initial finding in *Placing Papers* that Black authors have done well on the American literary archives market. Overall, 77% of Black writers in this data set placed their papers and their institutions are ranked higher (20) than white (26) or Latino (37) institutions, on average. Plus, the collections of Black and white writers are sold at similar rates (34% and 35%, respectively) and at similar ages (59 and 60). Additionally, Black and white papers were most often placed in the 2010s (30% and 64%), represented by the authors themselves (40% and 45%), and found in New England (26% and 21%).

This update did find a potential problem: 57% of Latino authors in this data set have not placed their papers. However, the *Norton Anthology of Latino Literature* included sixty-two and seventy more authors than the American and African-American volumes, respectively. This difference skewed my analysis. If the *Norton Anthology of Latino Literature* included a more comparable number of authors to the other two volumes, Latinos would be more likely to have parallel placement rates. Nevertheless, even if Latino authors are not underplaced, when this skew is taken into consideration Latino writers have had worse outcomes on the market.

This oversight is important to correct not only to better represent the diversity and strength of late twentieth and early twenty-first century literature, but also to better reflect the population of the United States. People who self-identified as Hispanic/Latino became the largest minority group in the US in 2001, and Spanish is spoken by 13.2% of the US population.<sup>37</sup> While the top two repositories in the literary archive market, UT Austin and Stanford, both specialize in Latino papers and should continue to do so, regions with fewer literary archives could bolster their profile by adding this focus to their collection strategy. The Lilly Library at Indiana University Bloomington and the University of New Mexico are well positioned to emerge respectively as regional (Midwest) and division (Mountain) leaders. However, all institutions should make a commitment to purchasing Latino papers,

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37. D'Vera Cohn, "Census History: Counting Hispanics," Pew Research Center, March 3, 2020, <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2010/03/03/census-history-counting-hispanics-2/>; Language Spoken at Home, US Census Bureau, <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/profile?g=0100000US>.

as only 31% (18/59) of Latino collections were sold compared to 54% (31/57) of Black and 66% (37/56) of white collections.

Since March 2020, when COVID-19 first began to be a concern in the United States, the economy has oscillated wildly, affecting cultural heritage institutions and higher education alike. How strong the economy will be as the country rebuilds from this period of insecurity as well how this era will impact acquisition rates remains to be seen. While the literary archive market is clearly and commendably committed to diversity, a greater number of Latino collections in institutional hands would help repositories better reflect the richness of American belles lettres.

### **Data Set**

The data set for this article can be downloaded at: <http://amyhildrethchen.com/> under the article name.

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