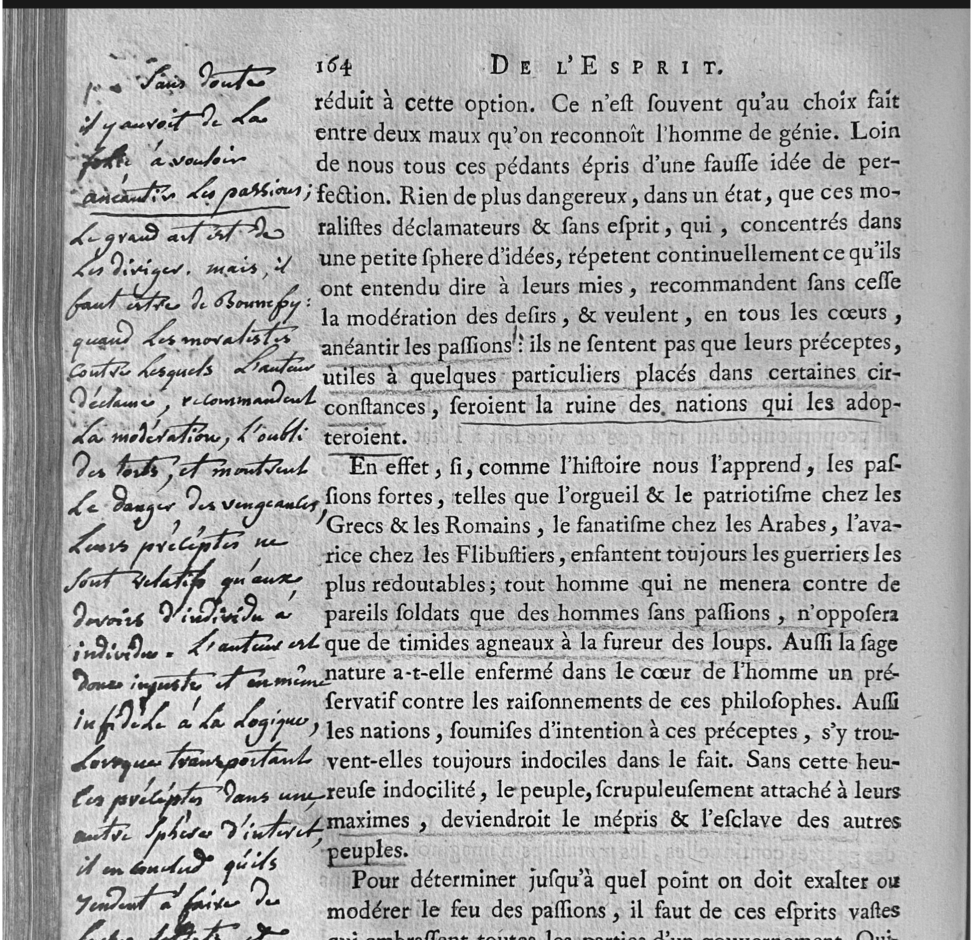
RBM:

A Journal of Rare Books, Manuscripts, and Cultural Heritage

Volume Twenty-Three, Number 1, Spring 2022

MANUSCRIPTS & PRINTED BOOKS IN ALL FIELDS



164 DE L'ESPRIT.

réduit à cette option. Ce n'eſt ſouvent qu'au choix fait entre deux maux qu'on reconnoît l'homme de génie. Loin de nous tous ces pédants épris d'une fauſſe idée de perfection. Rien de plus dangereux, dans un état, que ces moraliſtes déclamateurs & ſans eſprit, qui, concentrés dans une petite ſphere d'idées, répetent continuellement ce qu'ils ont entendu dire à leurs mies, recommandent ſans ceſſe la modération des deſirs, & veulent, en tous les cœurs, anéantir les paſſions: ils ne ſentent pas que leurs préceptes, utiles à quelques particuliers placés dans certaines circonſtances, feroient la ruine des nations qui les adopteroient.

En effet, ſi, comme l'hiſtoire nous l'apprend, les paſſions fortes, telles que l'orgueil & le patriotiſme chez les Grecs & les Romains, le fanatiſme chez les Arabes, l'avarice chez les Flibuſtiers, enfantent toujours les guerriers les plus redoutables; tout homme qui ne menera contre de pareils ſoldats que des hommes ſans paſſions, n'oppoſera que de timides agneaux à la fureur des loups. Auſſi la ſage nature a-t-elle enfermé dans le cœur de l'homme un préſervatif contre les raiſonnements de ces philoſophes. Auſſi les nations, ſoumiſes d'intention à ces préceptes, s'y trouvent-elles toujours indociles dans le fait. Sans cette heureuſe indocilité, le peuple, ſcrupuleuſement attaché à leurs maximes, deviendroit le mépris & l'eſclave des autres peuples.

Pour déterminer juſqu'à quel point on doit exalter ou modérer le feu des paſſions, il faut de ces eſprits vaſtes qui embraſſent toutes les parties d'un gouvernement. Qui-

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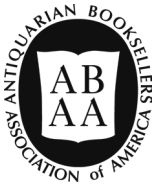

CONTENTS

On the Cover:
James Van Der Zee (1886–1983), "Interior view of the Division of Negro Literature, History and Prints, at the New York Public Library 135th Street Branch, in 1928," Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York Public Library.

Robert Hemmig, "Charles Todd at the recording machine surrounded by a group of Mexican boys and men" El Rio, Calif., 1941, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division.

CONTRIBUTORS

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Richard Saunders

Editor's Note

Because this issue has run short (sorry about that; editorial complications), I've indulged myself with a bit more of a reflective essay than what normally occupies this spot. COVID has sparked in me a fair bit of thought about the work we do and what we write about as working professionals. Part of my learning has involved looking outside myself. Now, as we are beginning to emerge from the ordeal of isolation, I encourage you to take the same opportunity.

ALA policy allows the *RBM* editor to serve three consecutive three-year terms if they choose to do so. Though I very much enjoy my role as scholarly editor, nothing good can last forever (and thankfully, nothing bad does either). My second term as *RBM* editor concludes in July 2023 and I plan to step aside for an eager successor. The search for a new editor will not kick off for a few months, but I mention the pending change now to encourage some individual reflections among readers. I've said before that a discipline is only as strong as the commitments made to its functions in the present. Serving as editor of a peer-reviewed professional journal is a systemic commitment but one that is manageable by someone committed to the discipline. Thankfully, an editor does not work alone; we operate with the support of good people on the editorial board and very competent people in the ACRL Publications Office, including a staff liaison to the editorial board. If you have learned from *RBM*, think about what else you might do to further your field as a reviewer, and potentially as an editor. Consider your own circumstances and obligations. No one who does this job is a genius, we're just energetic and committed. When questions come up in your mind, I'm happy to respond to any interested individual, and watch for an announcement later this year.

Now to the meat of my editorial reflection.

Some readers know that, while my day job is working as an academic librarian, my alter-ego is as a social historian of recent America, from World War II to the present. My particular field is postwar race and culture. A few years ago, my eyebrows went up as I searched *Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts* looking for what might be in the scholarly literature relating to cultural-minority librarianship. There wasn't much. As I set down this comment, I went back to *LISTA* to see what may have changed. No surprises there.

There are literally thousands of international research and magazine articles on special collections and archives, a subset of tens of thousands about librarianship and cultural custodianship generally. If one limits the results only to scholarly / peer-reviewed publications, the numbers don't fall by much. They reflect the challenges of documenting student movements, staffing reading rooms, mounting exhibitions, and training and employment. They examine the challenges of language, space allocation, with donor relations, fundraising—all things that working librarians and archivists deal with daily. Other than grant-funding announcements, I notice, however, that marginal communities have not fared as well in the literature, though parsing the general corpus into meaningful groups and subgroups is challenging. I think it is fair to observe that we, as a discipline, have not done as well in terms of examining special-collections service and collections in terms of cultural minorities. A critic might rightly charge that it should not be surprising that studies of minority-serving collections are in the minority. They'd be correct, but the existence of professional writing about collections documenting classes, cultures, minority populations, gender, and subgroups is disproportionally small.

So, what's the difference between simple expedience and systemic bias as we build and describe collections? After a lot of thought I have to conclude that there probably isn't much. If we intentionally collect the papers of "important" people and institutions in a community, doesn't that just as intentionally ignore those who are "unimportant?" What got me thinking about this was a comment made in 1947: "Conflict makes news, and news makes history, yet men live rich and quiet lives outside the boiling currents of their times, and who shall say whether the thousand existences in quiet do not more nearly express the shape of human experience than the fiercely spotlighted existence that survives as history.[1]"

Out of those thousands, merely 53 peer-reviewed articles address Hispanic culture in American libraries. Seven document Southeast Asian populations or collections, only one of which involves the United States, and it is a website review. There are 254 studies involving special collections or archives in any variation involving present or past black citizens, though many and perhaps most listed are literary studies—more writing has been generated on Native peoples in special collections (which still isn't much). Merely four have been generated on historically black colleges and university collections, none of which are actual research articles. Several sound studies examine alienation, omission, and erasure from special collections (including at least one recent article in *RBM*). Women and research on women's collections and services appear so often in the literature that writing in those sub-

1. Dale L. Morgan, The Great Salt Lake (Bobbs-Merrill, 1947), 325–32.

jects now effectively *are* the mainstream. To date, the most successful challenger of mainstream omission has been the LGBTQ movement, which has successfully contributed to a degree that no other group has been nearly so successful voicing. Making this observation isn't an assertion that nothing remains to be done, merely that an international effort toward balancing gendered subfields has seen the most activity.

Now let's be fair—*no* collection is ever absolutely or equitably representative, and documenting minority and mainstream populations often involve processes rather than discrete actions. In this case, similarities are not the issue, differences are: different assumptions, values, perspectives, world views, and experiences. To illustrate using an automotive example, both my 1949 Chevrolet pickup truck and our family's 2016 Chrysler Pacifica have the same elements: wheels, motor, brakes, steering, passenger compartment. Notice that I didn't include things like "sound system" or "climate control" or "lights." The truck never had a radio, the windows are the only means of climate control it ever had, and it was built before turn signals or brake lights were standard equipment on trucks. (I still signal turns by sticking my arm out the window.) Despite their structural similarities, driving either vehicle provides a functionally and qualitatively different experience than does driving the other. They are simply not the same.

For a profession dedicated to inclusivity, those earlier numbers reflecting our professional literature should spark some concerns. I don't raise the issue to generate guilt trips among librarians in and of the mainstream; I do it merely to acknowledge that, despite how far the country has progressed toward at least *de jure* forms of equality and inclusion, the profession itself and certainly its professional writing have not reached anything like *de facto* inclusivity. We are still unintentionally wearing blinders, to some extent, but blinders nonetheless. As a social historian, I can peg one important cause for librarians' lack of attention to the influence of the Consensus school of historians who wrote from the 1940s through 1960s. The Consensus approach reflected the (selective) sense of unity created by the Second World War. Generally, the Consensus approach was "that America owed more—and particularly more of its successes—to a tradition of consensus about fundamental principles than to a tradition of internal conflict" over things like labor or race.[2] Its theme was the basic applicability and continuity of American values. Its proponents producing affirming narratives emphasizing the nation as a unified (and, though unstated, entirely white) society of common goals, minimizing the conflicts of slavery, Western settlement, labor, and the "authentic color" of ethnic-

2. J.R. Pole, *Pastmasters: Some Essays on American Historians*, eds. Marcus Cunliffe and Robin W. Winks (New York, NY: Harper and Row, 1969), 211.

ity, regionalism, and local dialect.[3] In the hands of writers like Richard Hofstadter, Louis Hartz, Daniel Boorstin, Henry Comager Steele, and Allan Nevins, and in the name of unity, the Consensus version of US national history intentionally turned a blind eye to the social and economic immunities that color afforded mostly to Euroamericans, a group that was quickly accommodating white ethnic minorities into a unitary and "colorblind" form of economic, social, and racial nationalism.[4] The Consensus approach thus rested on unstated but inherent assumptions that the American mainstream simply took for granted because it was the mainstream. Omissions weren't a problem then, for America was still starkly segregated, anyway. The powerful image of America as a cultural "melting pot" had grown out of the Progressive era nearly a half-century earlier; the Consensus approach reflected a strain of largely white, inspirational, and definitely nationalist ethicism.

In the emerging world of special collections and archives, the Consensus underpinnings in postwar society supported large-scale developments in cultural institutions, like colleges and universities, and in social assumptions about the nation and its people. Those assumptions set the foundation for both academic librarianship and archives. It was the unstated approach shading even the choice of editorial projects, like *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson* or *The Papers of Andrew Jackson,* and the creation of the National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections (NUCMC). It privileged the admission of cultural-mainstream students to graduate programs. All of this development happened precisely as college and university libraries were expanding dramatically; at the same time, segregation remained a defining and as-yet unchallenged reality in public accommodations, including community and academic libraries—especially where segregation remained in place in higher education.

Yes, that was a long time ago, but with comparatively few exceptions, because our disciplines matured during that period, our collections and our professional writing still largely reflects those past approaches. For instance, Latin American and Hispanic populations make up between 8 and 35 percent of most urban settings in the United States—some are much greater. I previously lived and worked in a rural Southern community where practicing Jews had represented a large part of the twentieth-century business community. A generational shift and changes in the local economy encouraged families to migrate away, but their long presence in the region was invisible within the collection I curated. Does your own collection

3. cf. Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The Objectivity Question and the American Historical Profession* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1988), chap. 11; Peter Charles Hoffer, "The Rise of Consensus History," *Past Imperfect: Facts, Fictions, Fraud* (New York, NY: PublicAffairs, 2004); Mario DePillis, review of *History's Memory* by Ellen Fitzpatrick (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002) in *Journal of Social History* 37 (Summer 2004): 1116–18.

4. cf. Richard Moss, *Creating the New Ethnic Right in 1970s America: The Intersection of Anger and Nostalgia* (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2017).

reflect the percentage of Hispanic residents within your community? What about other populations?

Folks, the message of this editorial musing is that our discipline may not need many more case studies about special collections exhibits, but there remain huge opportunities to think beyond the mainstream, cross lines, involve people and communities, and engage what has too long been left unaddressed. This issue of *RBM* presents a couple of challenges to mainstream assumptions and thinking. Please step outside yourself and your privileges inherent to color, or economic standing, or education, or physical ability. Look into your communities and ask questions. Which *RBM* readers could write about engaging children or care-facility residents in special collections? Who will write about the challenges of including oral tradition and oral communities? Do we document the experience of the undocumented or homeless? If so, how? How are laboring people included in archives when they generate comparatively few records? Archival collections and rare books are one form of cultural monument. If that is the case, then perhaps it is time to consider who doesn't have a monument within your collection(s). Then tell our professional community what they might consider in addressing their own silences.

As you read this issue's contents, I hope you begin to read between the lines through your own lenses. Ask yourself who is part of the community but not represented in your collection. Then take a risk: start a conversation with people from one or more of those groups who don't have a monument among your collection. Ask individuals in those groups how they might expect to be included in the institutional collection, or why they may not want to be, and listen to their responses. Special collections are not only sites of privilege and domination, but also of trust. Trust, like culture, must be created. Only by listening to concerns and acting in good faith can trust be earned, whether as professionals or as institutions.

The answers might surprise you. They certainly have surprised me.

I conclude with a short list of works that I think raise issues that special collections librarians, archivists, and museum professionals could find useful to address their own microcosms. They won't apply to every reader; nevertheless, I encourage you to read them for what they can do to turn your head and widen your professional eyes.

Alex H. Poole. "The Strange Career of Jim Crow Archives: Race, Space, and History in the Mid-Twentieth-Century American South." *American Archivist* 77, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2014): 23–63. https://doi.org/10.17723/aarc.77.1.g621m3701g821442.

Jessica S. Johnson et al. "Practical Aspects of Consultation with Communities." *Journal of the American Institute for Conservation* 44, no. 3 (Fall/Winter 2005): 203–15.

Maggie Schreiner and Claro de los Reyes. "Social Practice Artists in the Archive: Collaborative Strategies for Documentation." *Urban Library Journal* 22, no. 2 (2016): 1–8.

David A. Hurley, Sara R. Kostelecky, and Paulita Aguilar. "Whose Knowledge? Representing Indigenous Realities in Library and Archival Collections." *Collection Management* 42, no. 3/4 (July–December 2017): 124–29. https://doi.org/10.1080/01462679.2017.1392805.

Michelle Caswell, Marika Cifor, and Mario H. Ramirez. "'To Suddenly Discover Yourself Existing': Uncovering the Impact of Community Archives." *American Archivist* 79, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2016): 56–81. https://doi.org/10.17723/0360-9081.79.1.56.

Elizabeth Dunham and Xaviera Flores, "Breaking the Language Barrier: Describing Chicano Archives with Bilingual Finding Aids." *American Archivist* 77, no. 2 (Fall/Winter 20014): 499–509. https://doi.org/10.17723/aarc.77.2.p66l555g15g981p6.

Elizabeth Joffrion and Natalia Fernández. "Collaboration between Tribal and Nontribal Organizations: Suggested Best Practices for Sharing Expertise, Cultural Resources, and Knowledge." *American Archivist* 78, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2015): 192–237. https://doi.org/10.17723/0360-9081.78.1.192.

Elaina Norlin and Patricia Morris. "Historically Black College and University Libraries in the 21st Century: Accomplishments, Challenges and Recommendations." *Journal of Library Administration 33*, no. 3/4 (April 2001): 183–97. https://doi.org/10.1300/J111v33n03_02.

Jesse R. Erickson

Discursive Perpendicularity: Intersections of Black Print Culture Studies and Bibliography

PART ONE: IN THEORY

Introduction

The summer of 2020 was a watershed moment in the United States. The brutal murder of George Floyd sparked a national conversation on racial politics that penetrated all aspects of American society. Both the private and the public sectors were forced to grapple with the impact that anti-Black racism has had on Black Americans; and many businesses and institutions were compelled not only to affirm a stated commitment to antiracist practice but also to bring about constructive change within their own organizational operations. In keeping with this broader national trend, libraries, museums, and archives temporarily shelved much of their "vocational awe"—a term introduced in 2018 by Fobazi Ettarh to describe "the set of ideas, values, and assumptions librarians have about themselves and the profession that result in beliefs that libraries as institutions are inherently good and sacred, and therefore beyond critique."[1] Leaders in these professions instead sought out to contend with how the racist and colonial legacies of these institutions have shaped current policies and workflows as well as their internal institutional cultures. The field was undoubtedly moving along this trajectory prior to the "racial reckoning" of 2020, but the upsurge of support for the Black Lives Matter movement ushered in an unprecedented amount of attention to these issues in all its facets.

The surge in attention broke the floodgates of special collections librarianship—arguably one of the most historically exclusive and hegemonic research environments within libraries and museums. Diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives have entered into meeting spaces, brainstorming sessions, and training programs in quantities that are seemingly exponential. As recently as four or five years ago, this racial and cultural hegemony was still being framed more innocently as the field's

1. Fobazi Ettarh, "Vocational Awe and Librarianship: The Lies We Tell Ourselves," *In the Library with the Lead Pipe: An Open Access, Open Peer Reviewed Journal* (2018), http://www.inthelibrarywiththeleadpipe.org/2018/vocational-awe/.

"diversity problem." Now, however, attention formerly paid to such issues as microaggressions and the conspicuous absence of "minority" representation among staff and collections has given way to much more nuanced discussions on concerns like curatorial blackface, performative allyship, the archival gig economy, and cultural appropriation in galleries and museums. In other words, during the course of the past decade or so, the term "diversity" has devolved from a powerful social ideal, to a professional imperative, to a corporatized *buzzword* that has become devoid of its original meaning. Yet the complexity of what diversity actually looks like when conceptualized on a deeper level than the somewhat limited agendas of broadening demographic and cultural representation in workforce and collection development-related issues is only beginning to be reckoned with in a serious and sustained manner.

As a professional who is a member of the Black Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) community, this latest wave of national introspection on race shed light on the kind of work that I have been invested in for more than a decade of professional development in the field. I have long been interested in methodically probing the colonizing episteme that underlies our ways of facilitating primary source research with printed books and ephemera. My main focus has been on how this episteme functions in the study of bibliography and the history of the book.[2] My work, though, has never been carried out on an island. It has grown out of a multitude of existing discourses, each with their own agency and intellectual histories. Throughout this analysis, I explore the path by which two separate discourses in particular have unfolded along different tracks and how they have come to a point of intersection. Detailing specific examples of recent partnerships and collaborations, I look at how academic bibliography and the study of Black print culture have begun to come together not by historical accident but through the concerted efforts of dedicated scholars who have the vision and fortitude to have productive conversations on the possibilities of effective and equitable scholarly communication. And, last, I consider the ways in which each has learned from one another and how this conversation can serve as a model for connecting communities of scholarship grounded in hegemony with those founded upon the radical notions of racial equity and liberation.

Methodology

I employ autotheory as a primary means of understanding the discursive perpendicularity involved in the meeting of two academic worlds. Prior to this study, I have used autoethnography to examine my personal reading and collecting practice in relation to the other communities of color who share my passion for nineteenth-

2. This agenda has been central to my work in developing ethnobibliography as a method of analysis.

century studies and Victorian literature. The use of autotheory, then, as a methodological framework has derived from my experience of the constructive value of reflexive examination. Autoethnographical method, which became increasingly popular as a method in anthropological work during the past decade, "Uses a researcher's personal experience to describe cultural beliefs, practices, and experiences. Acknowledges and values a researcher's relationships with others. Uses deep and careful self-reflection—typically referred to as "reflexivity"—to name and interrogate the intersections between self and society, the particular and the general, the personal and the political."[3] In essence, it is a formalization of a reflexive turn in anthropology that predated its development; and, in many respects, it is the culmination of the field's response to the internal, postmodern critiques that questioned the objectivity of a discipline so deeply rooted in its own colonial history.

In this analysis, in a slight but not insignificant shift away from the autoethnographical, I draw upon autotheory as a more productive mode of probing recent developments involving the intersection of Black print culture and bibliography. Lauren Fournier's recently published book on the subject, *Autotheory as Feminist Practice in Art, Writing, and Criticism*, provides one of the most extensive efforts at searching out the nature and purpose of autotheory in all its complexity.[4] She draws attention to Stacey Young's work on autotheory in the late 1990s, and she credits her with coining the term. Fournier, however, defines autotheory as "a mode of theorizing that draws attention to itself as such" that "exists in the place between criticism and autobiography" in a space of "radical self-reflection."[5] She describes it as "theory and performance, autobiography and philosophy, research and creation, knowledge that emerges from lived experience and material-conceptual experiments in the studio and the classroom."[6] Her study looks closely at how elements of autotheory were present in the writings of such thinkers as René Descartes, Immanuel Kant, Karl Marx, Friedrich Nietzsche, W.E.B. Du Bois, and Jacques Derrida; but she illustrates how the work of feminist artists and writers like Johanna Hedva and her *Sick Woman Theory* have combined embodied "practice and performance" to challenge the patriarchal suppression of the method's inherent potential to intervene as a radical departure from the colonialist model literary nonfiction and essay writing.

Fournier situates autotheory as a method of feminist praxis. Similarly, current leadership in the study of Black print culture also has Black feminist roots. Through the work of scholars like P. Gabrielle Foreman, Elizabeth McHenry, Joycelyn Moody,

3. *Autoethnography: Understanding Qualitative Research*, eds. Tony E. Adams, Stacy Linn Holman Jones, and Carolyn Ellis (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2014), 2.
4. Lauren Fournier, *Autotheory as Feminist Practice in Art, Writing, and Criticism* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2021).
5. Fournier, *Autotheory as Feminist Practice in Art, Writing, and Criticism*, 35.
6. Fournier, *Autotheory as Feminist Practice in Art, Writing, and Criticism*, 41.

and Brigette Fielder, my eyes have opened to how the patriarchal socialization that has permeated my earliest interfacings with the modern education system has become intermeshed with my internal framing of bibliography and the history of the book. Autotheory, then, helps me as a researcher to subvert and resist these patriarchal inducements by offering sustainable interventions to the colonial modes of knowledge-making that can involve multigendered perspectives in research practice and pedagogy.

I believe that my racial identity as a Black person, coupled with my positionality within both intellectual domains I am discussing, necessitates an autotheoretical approach to the scholarship. Pretenses to pure objectivity in this regard would be at once intellectually dishonest and impossible to maintain. Reflexivity in the study of books as material objects is a property that I have long argued as essential to arriving at sincere understandings of bibliographical analysis. Much like how Fournier has been able to identify the presence of autotheory in the philosophical discourses of canonical thinkers from St. Augustine to Derrida, bibliographers dating back to Thomas Frognall Dibdin and Alfred W. Pollard have interspersed their bibliographical research with personal narrative and biographical accounts. Even in the height of the twentieth century, in such cases where scholars like Fredson Bowers and Roy Stokes sought to underscore the objectivity of academic bibliography, there were always inherent biases in terms of the regions, chronologies, and cultures that were chosen at the expense of those that were simply left out of the picture.[7] The result, of course, whether intentional or not, was that marginalized cultures of print were treated as if they were unworthy of scholarly intention, further reinforcing the mythology that people of color, especially Black people, were incapable of producing a sophisticated print culture. My own study of bibliography from my earliest years in higher education involved challenging this form of disciplinary and historical marginalization by working, one step at a time, to find a way for my own cultural experience to be afforded the same bibliographical legitimacy as textual artifacts constructed upon whiteness.

Literature Review

Black Print Culture

I first encountered Black print culture studies in 2012, during my research in developing ethnobibliography as a method of bibliographical analysis. There was a flurry of scholarly activity focused on defining this field of study during that time. My own research agenda involved applying my bibliographical training toward

7. Examples of this approach can be found in Fredson Bowers, "Bibliography, Pure Bibliography, and Literary Studies," *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 46, no. 3 (1952): 186–208, www.jstor.org/stable/24298697; see also Roy Stokes, *The Function of Bibliography* (A Grafton Book; London, UK: Deutsch, 1969).

a serious consideration of the materiality of Black books and ephemera, and, in studying African American historiography under Robert A. Hill that year, I was introduced to the work of John Ernest.[8] Ernest's chapter on the Black press in his book *A Nation Within a Nation* opened my eyes to the importance of the periodical press in the early nineteenth century.[9] It highlighted the challenges that Black Americans faced in working to build communities across state lines through the printed word in an environment not only hostile to Black literacy and readership. The very premise of this anti-Black dehumanization was, in part, based upon the idea that Black people were incapable of producing a literary culture.

That same year, Lara Langer Cohen and Jordan Alexander Stein's edited volume, *Early African American Print Culture*, was published by the University of Pennsylvania Press.[10] Jonathan Senchyne, Meredith L. McGill, Daniel Hack, Radiclani Clytus, and Derrick Spires were among its contributors. Setting the stage for future conversations, the collection of essays explored a range of topics including the impact of race on the afterlives of antebellum Black authored texts, the mobility of format and the importance of ephemera in the circulation of works by authors like Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, the reimagining of canonical authors in Black newspapers, the aesthetics of William Wells Brown's *Clotel*, and the bicoastal expansion of the geographic parameters to Black publications to encompass the West and San Francisco's Black press.[11] Jonathan Senchyne's chapter on the "racial encoding materialities of paper and ink" and Dalila Scruggs' attention to engraving in particular begin to predict future developments in applying the descriptive bibliographical lens to Black print culture. Still, to achieve its aims, the editors of *Early African American Print Culture* had charted out the intellectual history of the field in their attempt to define it:

> Early African American Print Culture focuses on bridging early African American literature and print culture studies. The essays that follow do not take a single approach to this project; nor do they attempt to map its contours comprehensively. Rather, they showcase the variety of discoveries scholars might make when they ask what early African American literature looks like when read with an attention to its material condi-

8. John Ernest, *A Nation Within a Nation: Organizing African-American Communities Before the Civil War* (The American Ways Series; Chicago, IL: Ivan R. Dee, 2011).

9. Ernest, "Our Warfare Lies in the Field of Thought," in *A Nation Within a Nation: Organizing African-American Communities Before the Civil War* (The American Ways Series; Chicago, IL: Ivan R. Dee, 2011), 165–90.

10. *Early African American Print Culture*, Material Texts, eds. Lara Langer Cohen and Jordan Alexander Stein (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012).

11. Lara Langer Cohen and Jordan Alexander Stein, "Introduction: Early African American Print Culture," in *Early African American Print Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 10–11.

> tions, and what print culture looks like when it turns its attention to African American archives.[12]

By this definition, the book achieved its stated objective. Yet this germinal offering to a burgeoning discourse was by no means representative of the extent of the field's intellectual boundaries; it had only become the most visible distillation of these scholarly networks up to that point.

The editors of *Early African American Print Culture*, in fact, do make it a point to note the work that preceded their collection by a decade, mentioning that scholars like John Ernest, Eric Gardner, Edlie Wong, and Elizabeth McHenry had already "taken a materialist approach to African American texts, with enlightening results."[13] J. William Snorgrass, for instance, was charting out the importance of the earliest Black periodicals in the 1980s.[14] In the 1990s, Carl Senna produced a much more extensive book-length historical account of the Black periodical press with his book, *The Black Press and the Struggle for Civil Rights*.[15] These studies, however, were not yet designated as a part of print culture studies, as the field itself had yet to coalesce. It was not until the 2000s, when the momentum on Black print culture scholarship began to build with studies like James Danky's "Writing, and Resisting: African American Print Culture,"[16] which, like the scholarship of Derrick Spires and Elizabeth McHenry, discussed Black print culture specifically in relation to rising literacy rates and the imperative for Black Americans to secure their citizenship through civic engagement;[17] and Thabiti Asukile's 2010 study on Joel Augustus Rogers, in which he paid special attention to Rogers' contributions to the "African American scholarly tradition of biographical print culture."[18]

12. Cohen and Stein, "Introduction: Early African American Print Culture," 4.
13. Cohen and Stein, "Introduction: Early African American Print Culture," 3.
14. J. William Snorgrass, "America's Ten Oldest Black Newspapers," *Negro History Bulletin* 46, no. 1 (1983): 11–14, www.jstor.org.udel.idm.oclc.org/stable/44254722.
15. Carl Senna, *The Black Press and the Struggle for Civil Rights: The African-American Experience* (New York, NY: F. Watts, 1994).
16. James P. Danky, "Reading, Writing, and Resisting: African American Print Culture," in *A History of the Book in America: Volume 4: Print in Motion: The Expansion of Publishing and Reading in the United States, 1880–1940*, eds. Carl F. Kaestle and Janice A. Radway (University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 339–58; also, Eric Gardner, "Remembered (Black) Readers: Subscribers to the 'Christian Recorder', 1864–1865," *American Literary History* 23, no. 2 (2011): 229–59.
17. See, for example, Derrick R. Spires, "Imagining a State of Fellow Citizens: Early African American Politics of Publicity in the Black State Conventions," in *Early African American Print Culture*, 274–89; also, Derrick R. Spires, *The Practice of Citizenship: Black Politics and Print Culture in the Early United States* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019) and Elizabeth McHenry, "Dreaded Eloquence: The Origins and Rise of African American Literary Societies," in *Forgotten Readers: Recovering the Lost History of African American Literary Societies* (Durham; London, UK: Duke University Press, 2002), 23–83, https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv11smkcf.5.
18. Thabiti Asukile, "Joel Augustus Rogers: Black International Journalism, Archival Research, and Black Print Culture," *Journal of African American History* 95, no. 3/4 (2010): 322–47, https://doi.org/10.5323/jafriamerhist.95.3-4.0322.

For years, Black women have been at the forefront of this scholarship. In 1990, for instance, Violet J. Harris was among the first to make a sincere attempt at trying to address a serious omission in both children's literature and Black literary studies.[19] McHenry, in her book *Forgotten Readers*, issued one of the most in-depth histories of Black literary societies and book clubs.[20] Her exhaustive study of Black readership and reception history complicated prior notions of a strict divide between literacy and orality, and, with rigorously researched primary source evidence, it reinforced a growing area of the scholarship that looks at the ways in which literacy has had far different emancipatory ramifications for the Black community than for other populations. P. Gabrielle Foreman's research has been consistently predictive of future directions of the discourse, and her leadership has helped to move the field from a historicist stance toward its current critical turn.[21] Her study on "white mulatta genealogies," for example, looked closely at print culture's complicated connections with Black female embodiment and racial passing.[22] Her work on Julia C. Collins has shown how the *Christian Recorder*'s serialization of Collins' *The Curse of Caste* encouraged a "histotextual" reading of the narrative that functioned in a "future orientation" toward social change.[23] Clearly, such scholars have persisted in contributing some of the most innovative and socially relevant scholarship in the field. Accordingly, in response to a request to moderate and introduce a session on "Early African American Print Cultures" organized by Benjamin Fagan, when Joycelyn Moody invoked Ntozake Shange's poetry and the contemporary political discourse to explore the role that print journalism has played in furthering violence against Black women, connecting the history print culture seeks to elucidate with present-day cultures of misogyny.[24]

The imperative to tie the history of Black print culture to the most pressing issues facing today's Black community was taken up in a more recent edited volume in this field of study, *Against a Sharp White Background*.[25] Edited by Brigitte Fielder

19. Violet J. Harris, "African American Children's Literature: The First One Hundred Years," *Journal of Negro Education* 59, no. 4 (1990): 540–55.

20. McHenry, *Forgotten Readers*.

21. For a compelling look at how previous assumptions on racial representation are complicated and problematized by her critical readings on race and literature, see P. Gabrielle Foreman, "Reading/Photographs: Emma Dunham Kelley-Hawkins's Four Girls at Cottage City, Victoria Earle Matthews, and the Woman's Era," *Legacy* 24, no. 2 (2007): 248–77, www.jstor.org/stable/25679611.

22. P. Gabrielle Foreman, "Who's Your Mama? 'White' Mulatta Genealogies, Early Photography, and Anti-Passing Narratives of Slavery and Freedom," *American Literary History* 14, no. 3 (2002): 505–39, www.jstor.org.udel.idm.oclc.org/stable/3054582.

23. P. Gabrielle Foreman, "The Christian Recorder, Broken Families, and Educated Nations in Julia Collins's Civil War Novel the Curse of Caste," *African American Review* 40, no. 4 (2006): 705–16, www.jstor.org/stable/26446155.

24. Joycelyn Moody, "Obscene Questions and Righteous Hysteria," *Legacy: A Journal of American Women Writers* 33, no. 1 (2016): 1–7.

25. *Against a Sharp White Background: Infrastructures of African American Print*, eds. Brigitte Fielder and Jonathan Senchyne (The History of Print and Digital Culture; Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2019).

and Jonathan Senchyne, this collection represents somewhat of a radical departure from the way Cohen and Stein's volume had framed the discourse less than a decade prior to its release. Combining past and present, it offers a perspective that acknowledges multiple layers inherent in the historicity of print in relation to Blackness as it recedes from the dominance of grand narratives:

> This is indeed an important time for thinking and writing on African American print culture in particular, although this project as a whole is far from new. Interest in the relevance and resonances of African American print production for black people in the United States and throughout the black Atlantic began with the early production of African American print culture itself. Editors and compilers of black writing, ranging from Samuel Cornish, John Russworm, Frederick Douglass, and Elisha Weaver to Alice Dunbar-Nelson, W.E.B. Du Bois, Alain Locke, and John Harold Johnson, have worked to create and curate this print culture.[26]

Taking the long view of historiography, late nineteenth-century books like Irvine Garland Penn's *Afro-American Press* were engaged with Black print culture studies a century prior to its current academic instantiation.[27] Freed from chronological boundaries, then, and integrating the principles of Black activism, *Against a Sharp White Background* submits a series of essays from such contributors as Foreman and Ernest et al., whose chapters forge new connections of the physical and visual materiality of the Black book arts to fine art and the conceptual expansion of the "archive,"[28] Laura E. Helton and Jim Casey, whose research looks at the history of classification in relation to modern-day indexing and digital information retrieval systems,[29] and Beth A. McCoy and Jasmine Y. Montgomery looking at

26. Brigitte Fielder and Jonathan Senchyne, "Introduction: Infrastructure of African American Print," in *Against a Sharp White Background: Infrastructures of African American Print*, eds. Brigitte Fielder and Jonathan Senchyne (The History of Print and Digital Culture; Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2019), 10.

27. I. Garland Penn, *The Afro-American Press and Its Editors*, *The American Negro, His History and Literature* (New York, NY: Arno Press, 1969).

28. P. Gabrielle Foreman, "Slavery, Black Visual Culture, and the Promises and Problems of Print in the Work of David Drake, Theaster Gates, and Glenn Ligon," in *Against a Sharp White Background: Infrastructures of African American Print*, eds. Brigitte Fielder and Jonathan Senchyne (The History of Print and Digital Culture; Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2019), 29–61; John Ernest et al., "Visionary History: Recovery William J. Wilson's 'Afric-American Picture Gallery'," in *Against a Sharp White Background: Infrastructures of African American Print*, eds. Brigitte Fielder and Jonathan Senchyne (The History of Print and Digital Culture; Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2019), 221–39.

29. Laura E. Helton, "Making Lists, Keeping Time: Infrastructures of Black Inquiry, 1900–1950," in *Against a Sharp White Background: Infrastructures of African American Print*, eds. Brigitte Fielder and Jonathan Senchyne (The History of Print and Digital Culture; Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2019), 82–108; Jim Casey in "Parsing the Special Characters of African American Print Culture: Mary Ann Shadd and the * Limits of Search," in *Against a Sharp White Background: Infrastructures of African American Print*, eds. Brigitte Fielder and Jonathan Senchyne (The History of Print and Digital Culture; Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2019), 109–30.

the book as an anti-Black object.[30] The volume also features a chapter on Richard Wright's *Black Boy* by Kinohi Nishikawa,[31] which, much like his recent book *Street Players*, brings para- and intertextual analysis to provide nuance and multidimensionality to rigid conceptualizations of Black authorship and genre.[32] Books like *Against a Sharp White Background* and *Street Players* can be grouped with a wave of new scholarship emerging in this field. Other recent titles, such as Eurie Dahn's *Jim Crow Networks: African American Periodicals*, Elizabeth McHenry's *To Make Negro Literature: Writing Literary Practice, and African American Literature*, and James West's *Ebony Magazine and Lerone Bennett Jr.: Popular Black History in Postwar America*, are doing the necessary work of further building out the scholarship.[33]

Bibliography

I was introduced to bibliography as a field of study while in my mid-20s in the course of my work to pursue a career in the profession of rare book librarianship. During a 2007 internship at the Getty Center, I had the opportunity to read journals of bibliographical scholarship for the first time as a curious student. My first encounters with these essays can be likened to being lost in a dizzying maze of dense language and strange ciphers. Yet I was determined to keep proceeding down this educational path until I could read and interpret the essays with lucidity and comprehension, not fully understanding then that I, too, would someday be able to contribute something of value to the conversation.

Bibliography as it has been conceptualized and advanced as a part of Western scholarship and method stretched back centuries of intellectual development. Analytical bibliography, descriptive bibliography, and textual criticism, too, as subsets of this larger field of study have benefited from well over a century of scholarly attention. For the scope of this analysis, the quantity of notable offerings in these domains is far too voluminous to traverse comprehensively. However, in the interest of providing the appropriate context for the subject at hand, it is important to recognize the epistemological foundations as a basis for where the current divergent trajectory of the field has emerged.

30. Beth McCoy and Jasmine Y. Montgomery, "Dionne Brand's *A Map to the Door of No Return* and the Antiblackness of the Book as an Object," in *Against a Sharp White Background: Infrastructures of African American Print*, eds. Brigitte Fielder and Jonathan Senchyne (The History of Print and Digital Culture; Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2019), 131–46.

31. Kinohi Nishikawa, "Richard Wright between Two Fronts: *Black Boy* in the Black Metropolis," in *Against a Sharp White Background: Infrastructures of African American Print*, eds. Brigitte Fielder and Jonathan Senchyne (The History of Print and Digital Culture; Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2019), 179–98.

32. Kinohi Nishikawa, *Street Players: Black Pulp Fiction and the Making of a Literary Underground* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2018).

33. Eurie Dahn, *Jim Crow Networks: African American Periodical Cultures (Studies in Print Culture and the History of the Book)*(Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2021), Elizabeth McHenry, *To Make Negro Literature: Writing Literary Practice, and African American Literature* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press Books, 2021); E. James West, *Ebony Magazine and Lerone Bennett Jr.: Popular Black History in Postwar America* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 2020).

To those unfamiliar with the bibliography as an academic pursuit, there is not a great amount of daylight separating R.B. McKerrow's *Introduction to Bibliography for Literary Students*,[34] published in 1927, from Phillip Gaskell's *A New Introduction to Bibliography,* published nearly a half-century later in 1972.[35] They are similar in terms of their topical coverage, their purpose, and their geographical and chronological scope. The impact of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century bibliographers, in fact, has enjoyed remarkable longevity; and the epistemological parameters they established for the field are still resonant, even on the fringes of the current discourse. Much of their durability is a byproduct of the distinctive amalgamation of rationalism and empiricism underlying their methods. The field's philosophical debates have remained largely within these boundaries for generations. W.W. Greg's response to Percy Simpson's *Proof Reading in the Sixteenth, Seventeenth, and Eighteenth Centuries*, for example, uses the bibliographical method to scrutinize a debate involving the degree to which Elizabethan printers proofed their printing prior to publication, claiming that the *errata*-based evidence Simpson provided for the supposition that these printers proofed their work could actually be read as evidence to the contrary.[36] The argument, when read with D.F. McKenzie's work in mind, does reveal a preference for induction.[37] The key point to note here in this essay (and many other works of bibliographical scholarship published during this period) is the focus on what the material evidence of print production can empirically expose to editors about the physical transmission of a text. Best known for a comparatively major departure from bibliographical orthodoxy, D.F. McKenzie posits exchanging the inductive method of his predecessors for a hypothetico-deductive one—essentially advocating for an even greater application of a form of scientific methodology to the bibliographical investigation.[38] Both are still dealing with the same concerns in trying to rely upon the evidence to establish "bibliographical truth."

Bibliography had always maintained a close relationship with paleography and manuscript studies. Broadening the framework by which the material book could be analyzed, however, the second half of the twentieth century saw the rise of the history of book, and with it, such subfields as reception history and publishing history as well as significant growth in the areas of printing history and the study

34. R.B. McKerrow, *An Introduction to Bibliography for Literary Students* (Winchester, UK: St. Paul's Bibliographies, 1994).

35. Philip Gaskell, *A New Introduction to Bibliography* (New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press, 2007).

36. W.W. Greg, "From Manuscript to Print," *Review of English Studies* 13, no. 50 (1937): 190–205, www.jstor.org.udel.idm.oclc.org/stable/510116; note also that Greg specifically references the methodological potential of what is already called the "New Bibliography" in his short essay, "The 'Hamlet' Texts and Recent Work in Shakespearian Bibliography," *Modern Language Review* 14, no. 4 (1919): 380–85, www.jstor.org.udel.idm.oclc.org/stable/4623502.

37. D.F. McKenzie, "Printers of the Mind: Some Notes on Bibliographical Theories and Printing-House Practices," *Studies in Bibliography* 22 (1969): 1–75, www.jstor.org.udel.idm.oclc.org/stable/40371475.

38. McKenzie, "Printers of the Mind," 6.

of binding, paper, and print culture. Often viewed as contiguous to bibliography, the history of the book, which has its foundations in the *Annales* school of thought, situated the book within its macro-level sociohistorical and socioeconomic conditions. By comparison, bibliography was characterized by its emphasis on "bibliographical minutiae."[39] As Thomas Tanselle described the relationship, the "growth of histoire du livre, the historical study of the impact on society, has from time to time brought increased attention to the kinds of details that have long been examined by bibliographers."[40] Other scholars, like Michael Winship, particularly with his essay on the "'BAL' and American Book Trade History" would further demonstrate the potential value of bringing these discourses in closer conversation with one another.[41]

By the time I began studying bibliography in the early 2000s, the circular insularity of its internal debates had stunted the field's ability to acknowledge the patriarchal and Eurocentric exclusivity of its paradigmatic subjectivities. McKenzie's argument that the "essential task of the bibliographer is to establish the facts of transmission for a particular text, and he will use *all* relevant evidence to determine the bibliographical truth" was not simply indicative of an epistemological bias toward empiricism and causality; more tellingly, the unquestioned assumption of ascribing a masculine pronoun to the would-be bibliographer, a ubiquitous convention for the time, was indicative of deeper gender politics that effectively marginalized the contributions of scholars Elizabeth Eisenstein and Margaret Stillwell.[42] The intellectual inheritance of the field's orientation places works like Kate Ozment's "Rationale for Feminist Bibliography"[43] and Robin Anne Reid's "On the Shoulders of Gi(E)nts" at the nexus of bibliography's critical turn and its goal of becoming more inclusive.[44] Whereas Ozment charted the frontiers of bringing visibility to the erasure of women's robust contributions to the fields of bibliography and book history, Reid shows us what it looks like when the principles and perspectives of feminism are applied to bibliographical scholarship on an iconic male author. Matt Cohen argues along similar lines of expanding the field, in his essay "Time and the Bibliographer," although he does so with a focus on the field's epistemological

39. Thomas G. Tanselle, "A Description of Descriptive Bibliography," *Studies in Bibliography* 45 (1992): 1–30, www.jstor.org.udel.idm.oclc.org/stable/40371955.

40. Tanselle, "A Description of Descriptive Bibliography," 5.

41. Michael Winship, "'BAL' and American Book Trade History," *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 86, no. 2 (1992): 147–55, www.jstor.org.udel.idm.oclc.org/stable/24302952. The acronym BAL refers to the *Bibliography of American Literature*.

42. McKenzie, "Printers of the Mind," 61.

43. Kate Ozment, "Rationale for Feminist Bibliography," *Textual Cultures* 13, no. 1 (2020): 149–78, https://doi.org/10.2307/26954243.

44. Robin Anne Reid, "On the Shoulders of Gi(E)nts: The Joys of Bibliographic Scholarship and Fanzines in Tolkien Studies," *Mythlore* 37, no. 2 (134) (2019): 23–38, https://dc.swosu.edu/mythlore/vol37/iss2/3.

tension between notions of colonialism and indigeneity.[45] When he declared that bibliography "has for the most part functioned within a colonialist set of assumptions about its means and its ends," he put forth this controversial yet incontestable claim at a point where the turn in question had steered the field in entirely new directions.[46] The fact that discussions of Asian forms of bibliographical research and scholarship like Lianbin Dai's "China's Bibliographic Tradition and the History of the Book" are relatively scarce in the traditional discourse until the second decade of the twentieth century is not unconnected from the fact that one of the designations for the most influential practitioners of the field, the "Anglo Saxon School" was unwittingly based on a racial construction appropriated by ideologies of white supremacy.[47] This new way of thinking, then, centered on consciously changing the racial and gender dynamics of the field set the stage for a genuine, substantive merging of bibliography and the study of Black print culture.

PART TWO: IN PRACTICE

Case Studies

Derrick Spires's keynote for the Bibliographical Society of America's 2021 "Bibliography Week" was the culmination of years of intellectual exchange and relationship building. In one camp, scholars of Black print culture who are willing to share their extensive learning and expertise in the history of Black knowledge-making as mediated through modalities of print production; in the other, experts in the unique rigor that is conventional bibliographical scholarship. This characterization is of course a simplified abstraction that I am employing for rhetorical purposes. In terms of the respective knowledge-bases of each, the reality is much more complicated and intermingled. Demographically, however, one is self-evidently more diverse than the other. In actuality, Black scholars have been engaged in serious bibliographical work for generations. In 1897, W.E.B. Du Bois indicated that a "bibliography of the American Negro is a much needed undertaking," but by 1905 he was able to produce his own meta-bibliography in *A Selected Bibliography of the Negro American*.[48] Black bibliographic production since its earliest inception has tracked most closely with enumerative work. Yet, as Laura E. Helton has shown in her work in tracing and recovering a rich heritage of bibliographers, indexers,

45. Matt Cohen, "Time and the Bibliographer: A Meditation on the Spirit of Book Studies," *Textual Cultures* 13, no. 1 (2020): 179–206, https://doi.org/10.14434/textual.v13i1.30077. Note that Cohen's essay surveys much of the intellectual debates of the field that have occurred throughout its history in revisiting questions as to how it functions and, consequently, who it serves demographically.

46. Cohen, "Time and the Bibliographer," 181.

47. Lianbin Dai, "China's Bibliographic Tradition and the History of the Book," *Book History* 17 (2014): 1–50, www.jstor.org.udel.idm.oclc.org/stable/43956349; use of "Anglo-Saxon School" as a descriptor is found, for example, in Frans A. Janssen, "Le Livre À La Renaissance: Introduction À La Bibliographie Historique Et Matérielle, Written by Jean-Paul Pittion," *Quaerendo* 45, no. 1/2 (2015): 167–70.

48. W.E.B. Du Bois, "The Study of the Negro Problems (1897)," in *The Problem of the Color Line at the Turn of the Twentieth Century: The Essential Early Essays*, ed. Chandler Nahum Dimitri (New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 2015), 77–110, https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1287g49.7.

catalogers, and collectors that includes such notables as Daniel A.P. Murray, Arturo Schomburg, L.S. Alexander Gumby, and Dorothy B. Porter, not just the incentives for doing this work but also the ontologies for the classification were specific to the needs, motivations, and concerns of the Black community. Enumerative bibliography, which should be viewed as being in constant dialog with the descriptive, has its own value as a legitimate and practical form of scholarly production.[49] Alex Gil, I think, best articulated this value in his innovative work on Aimé Césaire, stating that "we must understand enumerative bibliography as a process or set of relations between the author's and the editor's sign, publishing and memory mechanisms, and the *long-durée* of bibliography."[50] Gil effectively used the affordances of digital scholarship to advance the enumerative work on Césaire cartographically with bibliographic mapping. Abdul Alkalimat and Irma McClaurin have done similar work in merging the data of enumerative bibliographical records with digital technologies to unearth new possibilities in mapping Black intellectual heritage.[51] All such advances, however, still left questions of Black bibliography's relation to the descriptive bibliographical tradition largely unanswered.

The Black Bibliography Project

Joe Weixlmann opened his 1978 review of Helen Ruth Houston's *The Afro-American Novel 1965–1975: A Descriptive Bibliography of Primary and Secondary Material* stating, "In actuality, Houston's book is not a descriptive but an annotated bibliography."[52] Weixlmann was even more critical of Elizabeth and Thomas A. Settle's bibliography of the works of Ishmael Reed when he lamented, "Reviewing bibliographies of contemporary writers is, in the main, an unsettling act, since the 'scholars' who assemble the volumes tend to ignore the existence of even the most basic tenets of bibliographical investigation."[53] The bibliographical standards in question were those established by the aforementioned so-called "Anglo-Saxon school" from Pollard, Greg, and McKerrow to Stokes, Bowers, and Gaskell. He dismissed the compilers' improper use of terms like "edition" and "printing," pointing out that "Settles tell us of the 'second edition' of *Yellow Back Radio Broke-Down* published

49. Helton, "Making Lists, Keeping Time"; see also Laura E. Helton, "On Decimals, Catalogs, and Racial Imaginaries of Reading," *PMLA/Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 134, no. 1 (2019): 99–120, https://doi.org/10.1632/pmla.2019.134.1.99.

50. Alex Gil, "Placing Césaire: Some Considerations on Cartography and Enumerative Bibliographies," *Caribbean Quarterly* 62, no. 3/4 (2016): 375, https://doi.org/10.1080/00086495.2016.1260278.

51. See, for example, Abdul Alkalimat, "Studies on Malcolm X: A Review Essay and Research Design: Bibliographic Essay," *SAGE Race Relations Abstracts* 17, no. 4 (1992): 4–22; and Abdul Alkalimat, "African American Bibliography: The Social Construction of a Literature of Record" (2012), http://alkalimat.org/writings.html; see also Irma McClaurin, "Commentary on Digital Publishing in African American Studies: Continuing the Dialogue and Expanding the Collaborations," *Fire!!!* 3, no. 2 (2017): 80–103.

52. Joe Weixlmann, "The Afro-American Novel 1965–1975: A Descriptive Bibliography of Primary and Secondary Material," *Black American Literature Forum* 12, no. 1 (1978): 39, https://doi.org/10.2307/3041499.

53. Joe Weixlmann, "Ishmael Reed: A Primary and Secondary Bibliography," *Black American Literature Forum* 16, no. 2 (1982): 81, https://doi.org/10.2307/2904143.

in England, whereas that 1973 Allison & Busby printing of the novel is actually the first impression of the third edition."[54] Yet, whether such sharp criticism was actually warranted given the variety of substantive and meaningful bibliographical production available to bibliographers, up until recently, the question of what descriptive and analytical bibliography can offer to Black literary and print cultures has remained an open one. As indicated in the project's rationale, the notion that descriptive bibliography could in fact offer something of value to these domains was largely the impetus behind Meredith McGill and Jacqueline Goldsby's founding of the Black Bibliography Project:

> The Black Bibliography Project (BBP) aims to revive the practice of descriptive bibliography for African American literary studies. Our goal is two-fold. First, we want to remedy the dearth of accurate, organized information about Black print by creating authoritative web-based bibliographies of major African-American authors. Our second goal is crucial: we're not interested in simply stirring and adding Black books to existing bibliographies like the BAL; rather, we want to ask: how would bibliographic and cataloguing practices have to change in order to accommodate Black print culture and its modes of production, dissemination, and use?[55]

It is the second goal, however, that asks the really important questions and establishes the trajectory for groundbreaking new discussions among library professionals, metadata specialists, literary scholars, and others who would have a direct stake in advancing the project.

The BBP worked to achieve its stated aims through a consortium model that was formed during a series of meetings that took place between 2017 and 2019.[56] The BBP held its first meeting in March of 2017, a brainstorming meeting that framed the project and discussed possibilities for how to proceed. I was invited to attend this first working meeting, and I participated as one of the collaborators in thinking through how the project's bibliographic data could be digitally rendered and made accessible. With Melissa Barton, Jim Casey, Ryan Cordell, Amy Earhart, Molly O'Hagan Hardy, Cecily Marcus, Eileen Moscoso, Sarah Patterson, and Carol Rudisell in attendance, among others, the meeting had representation from such institutions as the American Antiquarian Society, Yale University, Texas A&M, University of Minnesota, Northeastern University, and the University of Delaware.

54. Weixlmann, "Ishmael Reed," 82.
55. Jacqueline Goldsby and Meredith McGill, "Project Rationale," Black Bibliography Project, https://blackbibliog.org/about/.
56. Goldsby and McGill, "Consortium," Black Bibliography Project, https://blackbibliog.org/about/.

At this meeting, essentially two possibilities for digital mediation were discussed at length: one was converting entries to a PDF format and the other involved exploring the potential of drawing upon the accessibility and online ubiquity of Wikidata for creating digitally accessible reference materials. The next meeting happened the same year in October, and it continued building on the momentum of the first meeting by bringing librarians and Black print culture studies scholars in conversation with each other. The following year saw meetings in May and November, and the BBP working with Michael Winship used these meetings to work out prototypes for how the bibliographic metadata would be structured. The final meeting took place in January 2019 where participants continued working with Winship in integrating descriptive bibliographical methods into the project's standards and workflows.

The consortium work culminated on November 14 and 15, 2019, with the "New Directions in Black Bibliography" conference. Led by the project's leaders, Goldsby and McGill, the conference was divided into sessions covering a general introduction to the project with project team members Melissa Barton, Brenna Bychowsky, Mark Custer, Audrey Pearson, and Timothy Thompson; a session that brought attention to the work of curators with Barton, Cheryl Beredo, Beverly Cook, and Delisa Minor Harris; a session with leading Black print culture studies specialists including Kinohi Nishikawa and Derrick Spires; and one on new media that featured, among others, Jim Casey, Brandi Locke, and Elizabeth Watts Pope. The conference concluded the following day with a series of working groups and a descriptive bibliography workshop that I co-facilitated with Erin McGuirl, executive director of the Bibliographical Society of America.[57]

Black Bibliographia

"Black Bibliographia: Print/Culture/Art" was held at the University of Delaware on April 26 and 27, 2019 (see figure 1). Helton first proposed the idea for a symposium that would center the Black book arts to Curtis Small, Coordinator of Public Services for Special Collections at the University of Delaware, and me roughly a year prior to the event. We were both filled with enthusiasm for the idea from the start, and we all began brainstorming about how we would approach the theme, the range of issues the symposium would seek to address, and how we could go about organizing in terms of resources and logistical planning. We set about developing the theme and the call for papers with special attention to how we could achieve the best results with respect to attendee participation and the scholarship. As the year of organizing proceeded, Helton and Small in particular worked tire-

57. As the BSA's executive director, McGuirl has been instrumental in developing and implementing the association's recent Equity Action Plan, which seeks to codify many of the ideas that resulted from a serious engagement with BIPOC discourses and diverse forms of scholarship.

lessly in putting all the necessary pieces together for a successful symposium. We were especially impressed with the quality of the submissions, and we decided upon a 10-minute paper format to invite as many speakers as possible. We also made sure the symposium would be free and open to the public and that our keynotes and guests would be compensated and provided for with any accommodations that we could offer at our disposal.

The difficult work of what became a team of organizers and volunteers was rewarded in the intellectual quality of the proceedings, and the symposium turned out to be a landmark event for the meeting of the two discourses of bibliography and Black print culture. Goldsby and McGill of the BBP keynoted the event along with the book artist Tia Blassingame. Letterpress printer Amos Paul Kennedy, Jr. led a printing workshop at the University's Raven Press. Coordinating this workshop with the press was one of my primary contributions to the organizing effort. I had first printed with Kennedy close to a decade earlier at a poster printing workshop that was put on by the Southern California chapter of the American Printing History Association (APHA). My first impression of Kennedy as a printer was that he was a printer "for the people." He was a great teacher and brilliant with his craft. His letterpress work always contends with race and Blackness with a level of frankness that some find provocative.[58] That day I first printed under his instruction, I took note of the hard bop playing on a portable stereo as background music. It seemed as if the improvisation of the music flowed with the improvisational style of Kennedy's printing technique. As Andrew Steeves describes it, "Kennedy's ability to balance forethought with the exploitation of the unexpected opportunities that arise as many layers of ink hit paper is to a great extent what makes his technique and its result so evocative."[59] His letterpress workshop for "Black Bibliographia" introduced many of the attendees to letterpress printing for the first time, and they were able to learn more about his background and legacy with a workshop led by Courtney Becks the following morning that was coupled with a lunchtime screening of the 2008 documentary on Kennedy, *Proceed and Be Bold!*

In addition to the letterpress workshop, other attendees were able to participate in a bibliography workshop led by Maryemma Graham of the Black Book Interactive Project that included presentations from the project's staff. Among the many papers delivered during the course of the two days of proceedings, Nazera Sadiq Wright's presented her paper on nineteenth-century autograph albums and Black girlhood; Spires expounded abolitionist William Still's place in the literary history of Black

58. Courtney Becks, "Amos Paul Kennedy, Jr., Letterpress, and Black American Print Culture," *Art Documentation: Journal of the Art Libraries Society of North America* 38, no. 1 (2019): 174–83, https://doi.org/10.1086/703390.

59. Andrew Steeves, *Print! Amos Kennedy, Jr. & the Fine Art of Rabblerousery* (Kentville, NS: Gasperau Press, 2014), [4].

American literary production; Nishikawa delivered a paper on the work of Glenn Ligon; Charmaine A. Nelson spoke on the connections of enslavement with the print culture in Quebec during the eighteenth century. Closing out the symposium, Tia Blassingame's talk on her artistic and teaching practice and Robin Coste-Lewis's poetry reading were so moving that I (and I wasn't the only one) was filled with emotion at the unique way that their delivery was filled with hope and inspiration combined with pathos and power. One truly felt a sense of community being born in real time.

One Press, Many Hands

Organizing the 2019 conference was a labor of love. APHA was the first membership organization I joined as a budding community college student interested in pursuing a career in rare books. After 12 years of active membership, two conference papers, an article, and a service position in the Southern California chapter, I was entrusted with the opportunity of organizing APHA's 2019 conference. When I first joined in 2007, I immediately realized that the membership was predominantly non-Black. Nonetheless, I found that the Southern California chapter as a whole was incredibly open, welcoming, and generous in taking me under their wing as an aspiring student who, at that time, had comparatively little knowledge of printing history. As intimidated as I was by the content of APHA lectures and talks I would attend in those early years, the members always made me feel that I was part of the group. Therefore, when the opportunity to organize the national conference came to me, I decided to use it both for the purpose of helping to foster diversity and inclusivity in the organization and to continue the momentum that started with the Black Bibliography Project consortium. The result was the 2019 conference "One Press, Many Hands: Diversity in the History of American Printing" held at the University of Maryland, College Park during the last weekend of October that year.

Organizing this conference was hard work. The difficulty resulted from a number of factors: I was co-organizing "Black Bibliographia" at the same time; I was on a lecture tour that included talks at Harvard, Penn State, and Temple University; my daughter, my second child, was born the year of the conference; and, most of all, it was the first conference where I served as the lead organizer. I had trouble with all aspects of the organizing work from securing a venue to keeping within a reasonable budget. Teaming up with Matthew Kirschenbaum and UMD's BookLab in organizing the conference, and having help from other members like Mark Samuels Lasner and Casey Smith, proved to be a lifeline in seeing the project through to its conclusion. Yet one of the most difficult challenges I faced was working to ensure that a conference that focused on diversity was itself diverse and intersectional in terms of demographic makeup and intellectual representation. Achieving that goal

required careful and strategic decision making from the review of paper submissions to the price point for admission. In my view, the work proved to be successful.[60]

My intention for the conference, as I previously indicated, was to continue some of the important discussions that commenced with "Black Bibliographia" and the work of the BBP. Hence, I invited the graphic artist Colette Gaiter and the literary scholar Kinohi Nishikawa as keynotes. Their addresses approached the importance and vitality of Black print culture from two different angles: one, with an eye toward the significance of present work in letterpress and graphic design; the other, with a focus on the relationship of printing, graphic design, and Blackness from a historical standpoint. There were a number of shorter talks during the conference that also centered Black culture in the history of printing. Phillip Troutman's talk covered the work and career of Patrick Reason; Robyn Phillips-Pendleton delivered a moving lecture on the history of book illustration in its visual associations with race and racism; and Charmaine A. Nelson's research on enslavement and printing was brought into conversation with Jordan Wingate's research on enslaved labor in the printing of the *Charleston Courier*. The thematic focus of this conference, however, was expanded to encompass the histories of other *minoritized* populations in the United States, as scholars like Kadin Henningsen spoke on printing and gender construction and Kevin A. Wisniewski presented on Mary Katherine Goddard. Much like "Black Bibliographia," the proceedings were supplemented by other activities. In this case, attendees were able to take a tour of UMD's David C. Driskell Center, participate in a printing workshop with Lynette Spencer at UMD's BookLab, and watch a screening of the documentary *83M80: Letterpress in the Digital Era* hosted by the film's creators Gonzalo Hergueta and MRKA.

Conclusion

In my experience, the intellectual code switching involved with the strategic navigation of the interracial convolutions of academia is rooted in what I have come to understand about the nature of "discourse" itself. Discourse is a politically inflected, interrelated network of social and communicative processes by which knowledge is produced within a paradigm.[61] Being determined to participate in a discourse that historically has had almost no visible representation from someone of my racial identity has been a challenge. My initial experiences of the discursive

60. Attendees of the conference attested to this assessment; see, for example, Amy Papaelias, "One Press Many Hands: APHA Conference Notes," Alphabettes (2019), www.alphabettes.org/one-press-many-hands-apha-conference-notes/.

61. This framing of intellectual discourse is conceptually linked to Michel Foucault's many groundbreaking interventions on the study of discourse. See, for example, Foucault, "Orders of Discourse: Inaugural Lecture Delivered at the Collège de France," *Social Science Information* 10, no. 2 (1971): 7–30, https://doi.org/10.1177/053901847101000201.

practices of bibliographical scholarship were often characterized by isolation. I held a profound appreciation for both my mentors and my peers, and I genuinely enjoyed the material I was learning. Still, I felt a lingering, undeniable sense of remoteness from being, more often than not, the only person of color in the room and almost always the only Black person.

As I reflect on what the state of the discourse was like more than a decade ago, I do so with the recognition of how monumental the progress has been and how precarious that progress is in terms of its sustainability. Of course, when one views progress in accordance with a nonlinear relation to temporality and anti-Blackness as indivisibly wedded to modernity, it is not assumed that society is always on a clear path toward a better future.[62] Even now, part of the backlash to last year's collective focus on race in America has resulted in state-level bans on critical race theory that extend to public universities. The situation should stand as a testament to the dedication of those who have been doing the reparative work of fostering inclusivity in their respective domains not only since last summer but throughout the entirety of their academic careers. What the events of the past four years have shown is that serious literary scholars, book and print historians, bibliographers, librarians, catalogers, and other information professionals can come together with the goal of changing a paradigm. Through interdisciplinary collaborations, their vision and labor can expand the boundaries of an intellectual tradition while establishing new methods for scholarship in the process. And, although the events that facilitated the embodiment of this moment of discursive perpendicularity effectively culminated and concluded in 2019, the racial reckoning of the past year has attested their importance and vitality. The ripple effect of these conversations, too, has proven to be demonstrably impactful. As of 2021, one can take a course with Nishikawa or Spires at none other than the same Rare Book School that catalyzed my decision to pursue a career in the fields of bibliography and rare book librarianship.

As both an emergent area of intellectual discursive practice and as an evolving disciplinary methodology, merging Black print culture studies with bibliographical practice itself is not a panacea for all the previous deliberate silences, unintentional omissions, and multigenerational forms of erasure that have resulted in past forms of bibliographical scholarship. Bibliography, particularly when applied to marginalized literary traditions and especially when considering the racial politics of literacy in its relation to anti-Blackness, will at its best be representative of a privileged subset of cultural production crafted in a language largely accessible to the upper social echelon of the highly educated. Many of the same limitations imposed on

62. For an in-depth argument on Blackness and modernity, see Derrick R. Spires, "Genealogies of Black Modernities," *American Literary History* 32, no. 4 (2020): 611–22.

interracial representation of the bibliographic record have likewise arisen in our intraracial attempts at documentation because the logic of selection has exclusivity built into it. Even the idea of a universal bibliography must find ways to flatten diversity through abstraction, somewhat ironically, with the aim of producing a comprehensive inventory of a vast, ever-expanding universe of textuality. One can argue that this necessary dependency on abstraction was the Achilles' heel of Paul Otlet's dream for the *Mundaneum*, an international center devoted to organizing and housing all of the world's knowledge. For Otlet's grand vision to function, the historical materiality of each text's information vessel would need to be transformed to the point of losing all historical contextualization of previous forms of transmission. Accurately documenting the record of transmission is the very problem much of the work of descriptive bibliography has sought to address.

When applied to the intraracial documentation of Black cultural production the threat of erasure lies mostly in the flattening of format. As has been evidenced in the anthropological and sociological studies of W.E.B. Du Bois, Zora Neale Hurston, St. Clair Drake, and many others, the sophisticated orality of Black vernacular and the richness of its *orature* even today must find its representation restricted to bibliographic records of published transcriptions, retellings, and interpretative mediation, printed or otherwise encoded in accordance with an established metadata schema. The same can be said for practices that dwell at the edges of our understanding of textuality like quilting or narrative forms of dance choreographed to the accompaniment of Black poetry and lyrical song. There are also class-based forms of exclusion that can result in the discounting of a sizeable body of contemporary popular literature produced by, for, and within the Black community (e.g., urban lit, contemporary street poetry, independent Black comic books, etc.). Yet, the very idea of centering Blackness within bibliography offers new opportunities for expanding not just the scope but the logic of that representation. What emerges from a productive conversation between two genuinely interested intellectual discourses is a renewed sense of possibility of what each could be, or a new vitality infused in questions about what each could offer to the processes of knowledge-making through a more inclusive documentation of cultural production.

Book Reviews

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Lucas A. Dietrich. *Writing Across the Color Line: U.S. Print Culture and the Rise of Ethnic Literature, 1877–1920*. Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2020. Paper, 199 p. $26.95. ISBN: 978-1-62534-487-8.

Dietrich's *Writing Across the Color Line* is one of the most recent titles from the University of Massachusetts Press' *Studies in Print Culture and the History of the Book* series. Employing archival research to historicize the first major period of publication of "ethnic authors [by] well-known trade publishers" (3), *Writing Across the Color Line* explores the networks between publisher and book, editor and author, and critic and reviewer. In five case studies presented across four chapters, Dietrich argues that the authors he discusses used their national platform to subvert stereotypes and racist uses of realism, regionalism, caricature, dialect, and other literary devices through satire, metacriticism, paratext, and direct critique. As Dietrich explains, these writers were engaged in antiracist writing, seeking to challenge the latent and overt racism of a national audience of white readers. Dietrich's conclusion, while unsurprising, is disappointing: despite the efforts of these authors and their editors and presses, white readers rejected the antiracist content of these books by either misinterpreting them or by refusing the purchase the books. Still, Dietrich argues provocatively, in a period where there had been no national conversation about antiracism published by major trade publishers, even rejection was a significant step forward. *Writing Across the Color Line* is an important contribution to the ongoing scholarly conversation around race, publishing, and archives.

Dietrich selects authors whose racial and ethnic identities, publishers, genres, and levels of contemporary popularity, notoriety, or obscurity help provide a wide view of publication and readership trends during this period, making his argument about patterns in antiracist writing, publication, and readership at the turn of the century convincing. The racial and ethnic identities of these writers were often part of the marketing of their books, as he shows. The color line can be crossed strategically by adopting a pen name (for instance, Chinese American Edith Eaton published under the name Sin Sui Far and Irish American Peter Dunne added "Finley" to his name to emphasize his Irishness) or by racial passing (as Charles Chesnutt did initially), eroding its potency.

One of the most important contributions of *Writing Across the Color Line* is the way in which it demonstrates how negotiating identity was an important part of the relationship between author and editor. Some authors worked closely with their editors and publishers to develop the paratexts and marketing of their books, as did Charles W. Chesnutt, the first African American author published by Houghton Mifflin. Through paratextual analysis, Dietrich demonstrates that the material and commercial conditions of his books were as important to Chesnutt as their contents, by showing that "Chesnutt worked with Houghton Mifflin to negotiate how his work would be manufactured and advertised, where it would be distributed, and the extent to which his racial background would be known to readers" (47). When Chesnutt revealed his status as an African American man through paratextual materials for *The Marrow of Tradition* (1901), the book garnered the ire of critics and performed poorly in sales, ultimately ending his relationship with Houghton Mifflin. Other authors, like W.E.B. Du Bois, were sought out by their editor for publication, in this case Francis G. Browne of A. C. McClurg and Company. Similar to his approach to Chesnutt's work, Dietrich analyzes paratextual details to describe the first year of publication of Du Bois's *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), arguing that its paratexts "reappropriated benevolent fascinations with the racial other in an effort to lure the reader deeper within the veil of black experience" (118). Dietrich argues that white readers missed Du Bois's argument, but this meant his book sold, unlike Chesnutt's. By way of contrast, Dietrich argues that Browne also played a pivotal role in the publication of Edith Eaton/Sin Sui Far's *Mrs. Spring Fragrance* (1912), although in this case, Far's antiracist message was not commercially viable and the book quickly fell out of print, not to be recovered until the 1980s.

The road to publication can take many forms, and in a particularly interesting case study, Dietrich examines María Amparo Ruiz de Burton, the first Mexican American novelist to be published in English, who commissioned J.B. Lippincott, then the nation's largest book distributor, to publish her sensationalist novel *Who Would Have Thought It?* (1872). Dietrich outlines a history of the novel's publication, sales, and

cost through research in the Lippincott archives, thought to have been destroyed in a building fire in 1899. The archives were recovered in 1999 and processed in 2016, making Dietrich one of the first scholars to study them. Ruiz de Burton's impact, however, was limited by the fact that *Who Would Have Thought It?* received poor reviews and did not sell well, and has only recently been recovered. In contrast, second-generation Irish American Finley Peter Dunne was the most commercially successful of the five authors considered. Dunne's syndicated Mr. Dooley newspaper columns (collected and published in book format in 1899), satirical depictions of South Side Chicago life written in the Irish vernacular, were "a metacritique of the genre" (94). Unlike Ruiz de Burton and Chesnutt, Dunne's ethnic otherness was a benefit—unsurprisingly, as Irish ethnicity would soon cross the color line and be understood as white in the national consciousness.

In its methodology, this book grapples with the problem of archival excess: how does a researcher make sense of voluminous business records, or materials not directly related to literary study? What are the benefits for literary study of a book history perspective, and vice versa? How can the archives present vital new perspectives and confront limiting narratives about literary and book history? A major strength of the book is Dietrich's archival research and use of publishers' archives, which are often overlooked as important sources. In describing the social history of a book through the archives, from the relationship between author and publisher, to how the book was marketed, distributed, and sold, to its reception by critics and general readers, Dietrich is able to show the kinds of conversations about race, identity, and nation that were happening (and that were stifled) around turn of the century BIPOC writing. He looks at correspondence between authors and editors, as well as more peripheral archival materials like ledgers detailing expenses, royalties, sales, and other financial and budgetary information. This archival focus allows him to make novel claims about the contributions of editors to this work—labor that is often overlooked in scholarship. For instance, Dietrich argues that *The Souls of Black Folk* "was an experimental project for both the author *and* publisher as they sought strategies to popularize Du Bois's sociological essays" (129).

Dietrich also confronts the problem of archival silences: while the final chapter uses the archives for McClurg and Company, its plentiful resources on Du Bois's *Souls of Black Folk* are not matched by those on the publication history of Sui Sin Far's *Mrs. Spring Fragrance*, which, Dietrich admits, are virtually nonexistent, limiting the scope of his claims. Likewise, the Lippincott archives do not reveal the relationship between Ruiz de Burton and the publisher, nor why the book was selected for publication, but Dietrich creatively uses business records to reconstruct the social history of its publication. In another archival gap, Dietrich relies on published reviews to extrapolate the readership and reception of these books, but the lack of reader

responses and allowing the critic to stand in for the average reader is unsatisfying.

Most of the books discussed in *Writing Across the Color Line* had fallen out of print shortly after publication and have been rediscovered by scholars in the last 30 or 40 years, and the book opens up many questions for future scholars about the full possibilities and interpretations of paratextual and archival analysis. This book has been supported by the University of New Hampshire, the Northeast Modern Language Institute, and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and portions have been published in *MELUS, Book History,* and *The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*. Book history has traditionally under-studied BIPOC publishing history, and one hopes that projects like *Writing Across the Color Line* continue to receive institutional and publication support to address this gap. The book joins other recent scholarship and editorial projects, as well as work by curators, librarians, archivists, and other cultural heritage professionals working to amplify BIPOC voices in literary study and book history, and in our museums, libraries, and archives. Situating its argument more strongly within the larger context of this existing work, and answering more precisely the question of what were the wider results of the publication projects undertaken by these pioneering authors and editors on the later history of twentieth-century American book history and literature, would have made for a more satisfying conclusion.

While the primary readership of this book will be scholars of turn of the century literature and book history, *Writing Across the Color Line* shows cultural heritage professionals some of the ways in which the materials in our collections benefits research and addresses gaps in the scholarly record. It shows us materials that we and the scholars who use our collections might not think to consult, allowing us to provide better research services. In directing its attention to the ephemeral, understudied corners of collections, this book shifts our focus, helping us reevaluate what is important in our collections, and therefore what might be worth prioritizing for processing, acquisitions, or outreach. —*Alison Fraser, the Poetry Collection of the University Libraries, University at Buffalo*

Ballantyne, Tony, Lachy Paterson, and Angela Wanhalla, eds. *Indigenous Textual Cultures: Reading and Writing in the Age of Global Empire*. Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2020. Paperback, 368 p. $28.95 (978-1-4780-1081-4); cloth, $104.95 (978-1-4780-0976-4).

Indigenous Textual Cultures is a cohesive, well-edited collection of twelve articles written by an international community of experts in indigenous cultures and colonialism. Its geographic scope includes indigenous cultures from Australasia, North America, and the Pacific and is further enhanced with the inclusion of Africa, which has not received the same attention as recent work on indigenous

studies in these other areas. The editors, Tony Ballantyne, Lachy Paterson, and Angela Wanhalla, all three respected scholars of the Māori and colonialism, bring together work that emerged from the symposium "Indigenous Textual Cultures", held at the University of Otago in June 2014, and supplement the volume's scope with three additional chapters. Together, the authors challenge existing assumptions that indigenous cultures are marked by primitiveness, cling to orality, and do not have the ability to change. They employ a broad range of archival sources in their original indigenous languages that include epic poems, newspapers, letters, and even oral history interviews to challenge and refute western assumptions and show that indigenous peoples did adapt and innovate, combining aspects of their oral traditions with written literary practices as a powerful tool against colonial rule. These scholars bring a fresh approach that focuses on using original-language indigenous sources and interpreting this array of materials within their proper cultural contexts.

The introduction by Ballantyne and Paterson situates the twelve chapters within existing historiography and explains how the approaches taken and arguments made are important contributions to the fields of indigenous cultures, cultural history, and textual studies. Equally important, the introduction provides a thorough but succinct overview that allows non-specialist readers to engage with this important collection of articles. The thematic organization of the contents into four cohesive parts—Archives & Debates, Orality & Texts, Readers, and Writers—develop organically beginning with the types and extent of indigenous source materials.

Part One sets the foundation for this volume. The first two chapters challenge the assumption that the indigenous cultures in Hawai'i and New Caledonia were primarily oral. Noelani Arista, Alban Bensa, and Adrian Muckle demonstrate the complex intertwining of orality and textual traditions that the overlooked, original-language archival sources document. Arista analyzes the original-language sources in the archives rather than using English translations, the common practice by many scholars, and applies an approach to understand the sources in their cultural context with consideration given to how native Hawaiians engage with language and understand knowledge. Likewise, Bensa and Muckle examine correspondence and vernacular written traditions in their proper context of the distinct culture and written traditions that prevailed in the 1930s to disprove the common belief that the Karnak were primarily an oral culture; they show that the Karnak developed a vernacular literary culture that gave them affective control of contemporary events using a form of expression drawn from their oral heritage. Concluding Part One, Lachy Paterson shifts attention to debates over literary practices. Using written sources in the Māori archives, Paterson challenges D. F. McKenzie's argument about Māori literacy made in his influential work, *Oral Culture, Literacy, and Print in*

Early New Zealand: The Treaty of Waitangi.[1] As Arista, Bensa, and Muckle all showed, the indigenous cultures of the Pacific were not purely oral. Applying a methodology to analyze written indigenous sources in their original languages and in the proper cultural contexts, these authors show how indigenous peoples interwove their oral traditions into emerging written traditions to serve their needs and purposes in the new world colonialism was creating.

Building on the argument that indigenous cultures were not solely oral cultures, Keith Thor Carlson, Michael P. J. Reilly, and Bruno demonstrate in Part Two the relationship between orality and textuality. Drawing on the work of the communication theorist Harold Innis and the postcolonial theorist Homi Bhabha, Carlson examines the impact colonialism and modernity had on the Salish in British Columbia over a century. Examining communication media in the form of petroglyphs and pictographs, he established that the Salish had a written culture. This manifested in what Carlson calls a time-based literacy inscribed within their surroundings that required people to come to the immovable sources, in contrast to the European colonizers' practice of using paper to replicate and disseminate ideas across space. This mode of communication was threatening to the colonizers who sought ways to control the information the indigenous people conveyed. Similarly, Reilly examines two textual versions of an oral tradition from the island of Mangaia in eastern Oceania composed approximately a hundred years apart to show that reading and writing coexisted and worked with oral tradition to pass knowledge on through time. Turning to the written texts from Tahiti and Rurutu in the Austral Islands, Saura draws upon Jack Goody's theories about literacy and the logic of writing to show a similar interplay of oral tradition and textuality where details were adapted, modified, and augmented over time to suit the indigenous people's behavior and way of thinking. Carlson, Reilly, and Sauro reach similar conclusions from analyzing archival sources in their cultural contexts to show indigenous communities made effective use of integrating oral traditions with literacy to maintain their cultural values, knowledge, and practices.

The final two parts of this book go hand in hand examining indigenous peoples as readers and as writers. In Part Three, Emma Hunter, Laura Rademaker, and Evelyn Ellerman analyze a range of sources. Hunter focuses on the use of Swahili-language newspapers in Tanzania during the 1920s and 1930s to show that African readers and writers shaped the textual culture colonizers attempted to create. In a very different context, Rademaker turns to oral interviews with the Anindilyakwa people in the Northern Territory of Australia and their engagement with writing between the 1940s and 1960s. She argues that the Anindilyakwa people were

1. Donald Francis McKenzie, *Oral Culture, Literacy and Print in Early New Zealand: The Treaty of Waitangi* (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 1985).

ambivalent about learning to read and write and that they developed a new written culture that combined orality and literacy in a way that paid due respect to the authority of their oral tradition and not to the authority of script. The peoples Ellerman takes up also diverge from expectations, just as the Anindilyakwa people did. She analyzed how the Melanesians controlled content in newspapers and on radio to thwart the missionaries' attempts to implement their type of literacy program in Papua New Guinea. As in every other instance in this book, the indigenous people found ways for oral culture to work in conjunction with literacy to maintain their culture and values but also to resist colonizers.

Isabel Hofmeyr, Arini Loader, and Ivy Schweitzer turn their attention to the authorial practices of indigenous writers and consider how indigenous peoples chose the ways and extent to which they participated in the colonizers' literacy programs. They argue that these practices should be examined and understood not in terms of western practices but in the context of the authors' respective indigenous cultures and perspectives. Hofmeyr examines copyright in southern Africa to show that western assumptions are inaccurate and that African writers harnessed the power they found in copyright to claim ownership of their intellectual property. In similar fashion, Loader shows how an indigenous writer, Tāmihana Te Rauparaha, took control of how the deeds of his father, the renowned leader Te Rauparaha, were memorialized. By also examining the hundred-year publication history of biographies of Te Rauparaha, Loader shows how colonial authors distorted the original account and, like Arista advocated using the original Hawaiian-language sources in the archives, Loader too shows the importance of the original. She warns about "repackaging this history to fit within the conventions of 'other' historical traditions and narratives" (281); when this is done, the indigenous community, in this case the Māori, risk abandoning their own writers, intellectual traditions, and ways of participating in the world. Rounding out this section and the volume, Schweitzer returns to the debates over orality and literacy but focuses on the writing of a missionary-educated native, Samson Occam. In line with the other authors in this volume, Schweitzer argues that literacy took many different forms and stresses the need to analyze the various forms of literacy within Native perspectives.

The twelve chapters represent an important and welcome addition not only for scholars in disciplines including indigenous studies, anthropology, textual studies, and history but also for archival studies. The authors overturn long-held western assumptions that indigenous cultures were primarily oral. They also challenge western archival practices that removed original sources from their native contexts. This collection of well-documented articles written by scholars who bring to light native perspectives and practices is a long overdue, immensely valuable collection.

It sets new standards for scholarship and brings to the fore the importance of examining indigenous culture in their native contexts. —*Julie K. Tanaka, Arizona State University*

Mary Kandiuk, ed. *Archives and Special Collections as Sites of Contestation*. Sacramento, CA: Library Juice Press, 2020. Softcover, 520p. $35.00 (ISBN 9781634000628).

In the LIS and Archival Studies disciplines, attempts to operationalize theoretical frameworks that bring to center critical interpretations of social justice, intersectionality, and EDI (equity, diversity, and inclusion) are frequently covered in professional literature focusing on institutional policies and programmatic enhancements in real world settings. Much of this discourse incorporates critical theory as both frame and justification, attempting to link ideas that often originate in other disciplines to relevant areas of institutional and professional practice. The chapters in *Archives and Special Collections as Sites of Contestation* demonstrate the limits of this theory-laden approach as both rhetorical device and impactful process, while still providing a raft of instructive cases that might serve as models to make our institutions and profession more diverse, equitable, and justice-focused.

Adding to its growing list of titles emphasizing critical theory, social justice, and marginalized voices in the LIS field, Library Juice Press (http://libraryjuicepress.com) offers this new volume that "explores the reinterpretation and resituating of archives and special collections," seemingly in response to these intellectual frameworks, and with the acknowledgement that archives and special collections are often a product of the phenomena these frameworks critique (colonialism, white supremacy, masculinity, Eurocentrism, heteronormativity, neoliberal capitalism, and so on). The collection weighs in at a hefty 520 pages and appears to be the only one of the publisher's long-form titles focusing on archives and special collections. The chapters most closely adhere to a case study format and run the gamut of operational topics in archives and special collections (mostly in academic settings) including appraisal and acquisitions, cataloging and metadata, public programs and services, and professional standards and ethics. However, these are not how-to guides based on empirical investigation, and any practical takeaways seem secondary to the conceptual critiques underpinning every chapter. In *Archives and Special Collections as Sites of Contestation*, we find out a lot about what is wrong with our institutions and why it is wrong from certain theoretical and experiential perspectives, but we do not discover a lot of solutions that might be applicable outside of the contexts discussed, much less to address the larger structural issues at play.

Several of the chapters attempt to work through various technical and administrative matters using a critical lens, including: creating more inclusive intellectual

and physical spaces for archives and special collections (chapters 4 and 5); deciding how and when to impose access restrictions on controversial or sensitive materials (chapter 6); applying justice-based ethical criteria to cataloging (chapter 8); building context and encouraging open discussion around the digitization of problematic collections or materials that exemplify (and thus risk contributing to) social and institutional power imbalances (chapters 11, 13); and ensuring ethical partnerships with donors from vulnerable or marginalized communities (chapter 17). Although all deal in some way with archives and libraries as expressions or embodiments of society's overarching power dynamics, some accounts approach this with a more explicit emphasis on positionality. For example, chapters 1 and 12 discuss ongoing issues of representation, repatriation, and participation in Indigenous and First Nations archival projects in the United States and Canada. Similarly, several chapters examine the Black experience in White majority archives and special collections environments, which reveal a dual tendency toward the commodification of Black voices and historical erasure (chapters 9 and 11), both of which hold serious implications for institutional reputation and trust (chapter 14). Others recount archival projects that seek to redress state authority and imperial malpractice in shaping the historical record, including Canadian nativist attacks on Indian migration (chapter 7), the brutal legacy of American colonial efforts in the Caribbean (chapter 15), and the World War II-era incarceration of Japanese Americans (chapter 16). The remaining chapters concern areas typically associated with the educational mission of academic archives and special collections, including critical information and archival literacy instruction (chapter 10) and outreach and collection development around specific community problems or subaltern groups (chapters 2 and 3).

The most compelling and persuasive portions of *Archives and Special Collections as Sites of Contestation* are when the authors successfully connect the multitude of theoretical perspectives without repeating straw man arguments against an unidentified cohort touting archival "neutrality"—a concept that has not been taken seriously in disciplinary discussions for decades—or offering breathless platitudes about "interrogation" and "disruption" simply by virtue of filtering prosaic matters through an ideological lens. This is not an attack on theory *per se*, nor is it a rejection that archives and special collections are, in fact, contested spaces. It is perfectly reasonable and even necessary to incorporate theoretical frameworks and intellectual strands from within and outside of LIS and Archival Studies. But it is not necessary to stuff as many of these into the narrative just to inflate the scale of accomplishment or nobility of purpose. There are several instances where the accounts seem more concerned with the charms of the author's wokeness and their command of semi-relevant discourse than with providing useful or clear insights. The result is often a jumble of oblique terminology, clumsy metaphors, and name dropping that seems more of a rote strategy to demonstrate intellectual rigor than

a genuine attempt to provide something of substance. In some instances, this stops the discussion in its tracks, especially when employed in the service of unfalsifiable claims or undocumented speculation. The effect is jarring and does not really add to a deeper understanding of the cases under discussion or their wider implications. It also detracts from the good work being reported.

Furthermore, even with all of the talk of the power bound up in archives and special collections, several of the chapters reveal how relatively powerless these entities are in the grand scheme of social or organizational activity. For instance, chapter 3 describes the efforts of a university special collections department to gather collections, participate in community discussions, and promote awareness around issues relevant to the local homeless population, which are all legitimately wonderful pursuits. However, the authors also assert that the professional role as archivists must remain compartmentalized from any personal or civic role as activists, seemingly to ensure larger institutional buy-in for their nascent efforts to reimagine special collections. This is not exactly the radical stance that much of the critical literature cited in this chapter advocates, but it does reflect the reality of institutional control and accountability with which most traditional archives and special collections must contend. In another instance (chapter 14), a university archives unit was ignored in campus-wide discussions on the memorialization of a complicated historical figure—a segregationist football coach and administrator—even though they could have provided essential historical context and might have contributed significantly to the decision-making process. The authors note the frustration among the campus archives and library cohort with not being invited to the table, and the missed opportunity to help facilitate a sense of rapprochement between current students of color and this problematic legacy. In these instances, and several others in this book, it does not become clear how any degree of critically-informed praxis within the relevant archives or special collections unit might produce more favorable outcomes for them or for those they seek to empower.

Even if the theoretical exhortations of archival power far outstrip its actual reach and impact in the cases discussed, it does not mean that archivists and librarians should cease making such exhortations. Big ideas and big plans based around social justice concepts should inform the long view of archives and special collections. The recent proliferation of cases and analysis around the community archives movement, critical librarianship, and alternative epistemologies (often cited within these chapters) demonstrates a solid commitment to principles that seek to make the profession and the institutions they manage more equitable, inclusive, and justice-oriented. This scholarly communication has often been characterized by the inability or unwillingness to break totally free from the intellectual quagmire of postmodernism, but the maturation of this process (theory-informed practice) will hopefully serve as a proving ground for the best ideas and methods to flourish as the institutional landscape continues to evolve. In this regard, *Archives and Special Collections as Sites of Contestation* is a worthy addition to the conversation, even if at times it does not seem clear on the stakes involved. — *Bradley J. Wiles, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee*

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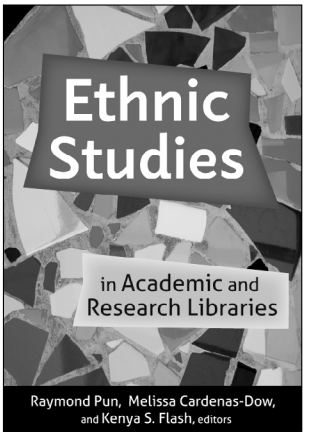

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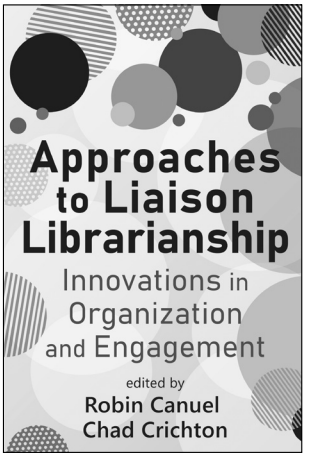

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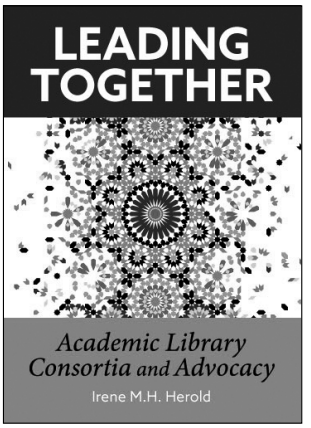

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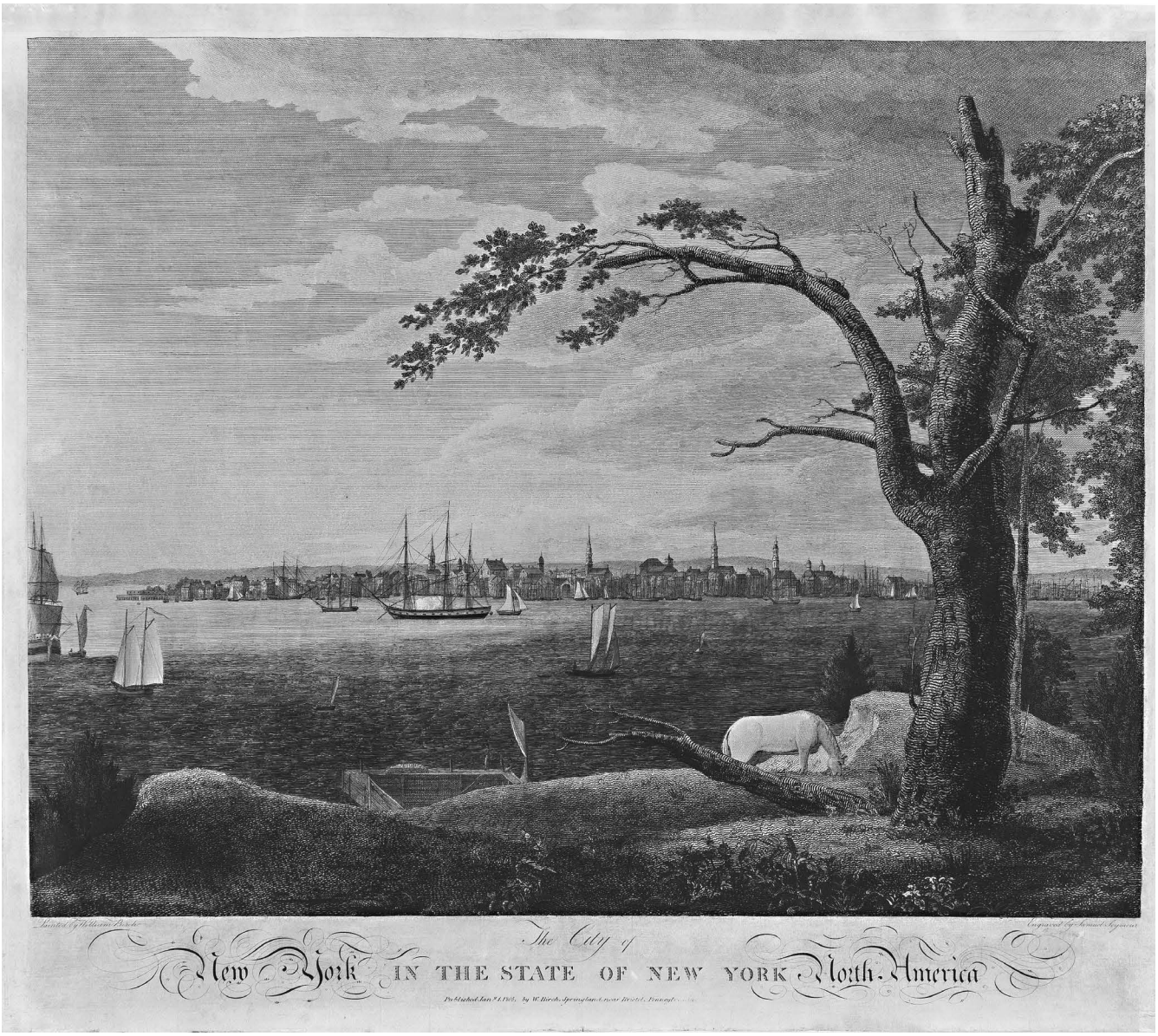

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