

2022

Acts of Disruption in the Eighteenth-Century Archives: Cooperative Critical Bibliography and The Ballitore Project

Danielle Spratt

California State University, Northridge, danielle.spratt@csun.edu

Deena Al-halabieh

University of California, Santa Barbara

Stephen Martinez

California State University, Northridge

Quill Sang

University of California, Santa Barbara

Joseph Sweetnam

University of California, Santa Barbara

See next page for additional authors

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.wayne.edu/criticism>



Part of the [Intellectual History Commons](#), [Literature in English](#), [British Isles Commons](#), and the [Other History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Spratt, Danielle; Al-halabieh, Deena; Martinez, Stephen; Sang, Quill; Sweetnam, Joseph; Guerrero, Stephanie; and King, Rachael Scarborough (2022) "Acts of Disruption in the Eighteenth-Century Archives: Cooperative Critical Bibliography and The Ballitore Project," *Criticism*: Vol. 64: Iss. 3, Article 17. Available at: <https://digitalcommons.wayne.edu/criticism/vol64/iss3/17>

Acts of Disruption in the Eighteenth-Century Archives: Cooperative Critical Bibliography and The Ballitore Project

Cover Page Footnote

The authors thank the National Endowment for the Humanities, which provided funding for this project, NEH Program Officer Victoria Sams for her support, and our project fellows for their brilliant and energizing commitment to this work.

Authors

Danielle Spratt, Deena Al-halabieh, Stephen Martinez, Quill Sang, Joseph Sweetnam, Stephanie Guerrero, and Rachael Scarborough King

ACTS OF DISRUPTION IN THE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY ARCHIVES: COOPERATIVE CRITICAL BIBLIOGRAPHY AND THE BALLITORE PROJECT

Danielle Spratt, Deena Al-halabieh, Stephen
Martinez, Quill Sang, Joseph Sweetnam, Stephanie
Guerrero, and Rachael Scarborough King

Nearly three decades ago, bell hooks argued that “[t]he classroom remains the most radical space of possibility in the academy” and advocated for “teaching that enables transgressions—a movement against and beyond boundaries. It is that movement which makes education the practice of freedom.”¹ Central to this thesis is hooks’s urgent call for collaboration that “crosses boundaries and creates a space for intervention” through dialogue between “individuals who occupy different locations within structures.”² Informed by this challenge, this article outlines a method of intersectional feminist book history that we call “cooperative critical bibliography,” a practice of engaging faculty and students at different ranks and at different institutions in the act of collaboratively transcribing and digitizing historical archives of understudied communities, often those that comprise the quotidian and domestic daily lives of everyday people. Cooperative critical bibliography’s nonhierarchical method centers the shared expertise and scholarship of students as they participate in broadening the accessibility of historical knowledge and revising standards of the historical literary canon through transcription, digitization, and shared reflection.³ By creating a pedagogical space that resituates learning and institutional connections nonhierarchically and elevates experiential expertise to a crucial research skill, this practice offers an inclusive model of student-centered training that makes humanities and archival work welcoming for students of color, first-generation, and early career scholars: all groups who have been marginalized in university settings and in the fields of archival studies and book history.

Originally designed by and for elite, white audiences, the archives and the canon of the historical literature classroom have long been inaccessible and exclusionary spaces that have the capacity to inflict continued

harm on many nontraditional and first-generation students and students of color, to say nothing of those outside of the academy in general.⁴ Myrna E. Morales and Stacie Williams describe this phenomenon as “epistemic supremacy,” or “societal systems, infrastructures, and knowledge pathways that facilitate and uphold the conditions for tyranny and fascism by destroying any system of knowledge (epistemicide) not controlled by the ruling class.” To redress epistemic supremacy, Morales and Williams argue that we must “embrace collective knowledge building and organizing.”⁵

By emphasizing the transformative value of establishing partnerships among faculty, students, and campuses, cooperative critical bibliography seeks to reshape the archives, the literary canon, and pedagogy in both English studies and archival studies. In this way, our project follows Michelle Caswell’s provocation: “[P]eople create structures, people enable structures, and people can also disrupt and dismantle them.”⁶ At the same time, this work relies on the digital turn in book history and bibliography, which centers textual scholarship “as the foundation of every aspect of literary and cultural studies,” as Jerome McGann reminds us.⁷ Cooperative critical bibliography disrupts traditional canon-based pedagogy and research by placing collaborative archival engagement as a central component of faculty-student work.

This article outlines how cooperative critical bibliography involves both acknowledging and enhancing our students’ capacity to share their expertise in archival and classroom spaces. Fundamental to this task is creating a project that provides the material conditions necessary for students to participate in archival work. While necessary material support for our project involved providing digital access, tools, and training for our students, thanks to an NEH grant, it also involved stipends to pay the twelve student participants for their time and work outside of traditional coursework. We recognize that such grants are rare, so our experience has allowed us to provide a framework for cooperative critical bibliographic strategies that transfer effectively as part of more typical teaching assignments. In what follows, we outline a model for cooperative critical bibliography that unfolded from spring to fall 2021. We then turn to the centerpiece of this article, which features critical reflections from nearly half of the student participants whose collaborative research strategies sparked the overarching concept for this essay and demonstrate how collaborative archival work can remediate the historical record and yield new approaches to teaching humanities classes. Finally, we offer a suggested syllabus, a checklist, and an outline of some recommendations for teachers, students, and archivists who wish to develop their own courses and projects as a means of supporting further networked acts of cooperative critical bibliography.

The Ballitore Collection: A Pilot of Cooperative Critical Bibliography

This project began as an outgrowth of Rachael Scarborough King's work with the University of California, Santa Barbara's (USCB's) Special Research Collections, which houses the Ballitore Collection, fourteen boxes of manuscript materials that document a Quaker community and Irish peasantry in rural County Kildare, Ireland, across the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The collection's correspondence, journals, and manuscript drafts of works were collected and occasionally published by Mary Leadbeater (1758–1826), a poet and author of didactic literature. Leadbeater's grandfather (Abraham Shackleton, 1696–1771) and father (Richard Shackleton, 1728–92) served as headmasters to the Ballitore School, which famously educated Edmund Burke, who became a lifelong friend of the family.⁸ Much like another famous Irish father-daughter team, Richard and Maria Edgeworth, Leadbeater published multiple works that documented the social history of the Irish peasantry during a period of great turmoil, including the posthumously published *The Annals of Ballitore* (1862), a work that captured the 1798 Rebellion in Ireland, an anti-British uprising that was especially fraught for the pacifist Anglo-Irish Quaker community.

Despite the scope of the Ballitore Collection, which includes representations of dramatic sociopolitical events alongside intimate domestic correspondence about family, health, and religious matters, as well as the meticulous cataloging of the material (thanks in some part to Leadbeater's painstaking archiving), the collection was, as King notes, "almost entirely absent from literary and historical scholarship."⁹ As both King and Kate Ozment have argued, holdings like the Ballitore Collection present an opportunity to engage in intersectional feminist bibliography that "knits a narrative of book history through librarianship, book collecting, and textual editing," thus remediating the field's longstanding preference for white, male networks of print production.¹⁰ Intersectional feminist book history simultaneously demands an explicit decolonial approach to the materials, which often involves "reading against the grain" to fill in what Saidiya Hartman calls the "blank spaces" of the archives with regard to Black people and historically marginalized peoples.¹¹ In this regard, too, the Ballitore Collection is of significance: in addition to the collection's focus on these aforementioned concerns, this rural Quaker community, located in a contested site of British imperialism, has the potential to register less well-represented positions on the age of empire, as Quakers were active and vociferous supporters of the abolitionist movements in both Britain and America.¹² As we will discuss below, however, much of the Ballitore Collection documents quotidian domestic concerns, making

covert or underrepresented references to abolition rare. While our findings about abolitionist perspectives were limited, the training that students received in decolonial archival praxis resists the whiteness of the archives by supporting a much wider range of bibliographic practitioners to participate in collective knowledge-making and revise our histories and literatures.

Our project grew out of an earlier collaboration that King designed in coordination with Howard University professor Emily M. N. Kugler and her students, which received funding from a UC-HBCU Initiative grant to take place during the summer of 2019.¹³ A benefit of this collaboration was that UCSB's Special Collections librarians began the painstaking process of digitizing the Ballitore Collection in a way that would make it possible for participants to access the materials remotely, a step that was crucial for a multicampus, bicoastal geographical collaboration. With much of the collection still in need of transcription and analysis, King reached out to Danielle Spratt, a faculty member at California State University, Northridge (CSUN), who had been engaged in similar transcription projects with her students for several years. This connection resulted in "Hidden Archives: Race, Gender, and Religion in UCSB's Ballitore Collection," which received funding from an NEH Humanities Initiatives Hispanic-Serving Institution Grant, support that was necessary to develop the collaborative dimensions of this project. Like public universities throughout the country, both UCSB and CSUN have suffered from years of austerity measures, which have arisen in tandem with the diversification of the student population.¹⁴

In addition to the long-standing and increasing lack of financial support for students on campuses (primarily in the form of free or very low-cost tuition), institutional differences regarding faculty-student research are also important to recognize and redress as part of cooperative critical bibliographic practice. The project's home institution, UCSB, is designated as a research-intensive university, with most students living on or near campus. By contrast, CSUN is a regional comprehensive university that mostly serves commuting and non-traditional students and affords relatively few opportunities for sustained faculty-student research, especially in the humanities.¹⁵ Indeed, although faculty-student research improves student learning outcomes as well as faculty and student success, obstacles of time, space, and lack of material support often bar such projects from being designed, let alone being implemented. Digitized records in need of transcription, along with a healthy stipend to recognize the labor and time of students doing this extracurricular work, made it possible for students at both campuses to participate.

When we began designing this project in 2019, we assumed that some transcription work would happen digitally, but the core of the work would take place during regular visits to our campuses across semesters and for a sustained period during the summer. By the time we received funding, in December 2020, our campuses were in varying stages of hybrid or fully remote work in response to the first wave of COVID-19, meaning that we also needed to shift our project online. While this shift lost many of the psychosocial benefits of in-person collaboration, the fully online modality—possible precisely because the collections were being progressively digitized and made available for remote access—allowed students to participate in a more flexible format: weekly group transcription sessions took place, where students could ask questions, discuss findings, and share their knowledge. Additional transcription work could also happen at off-hours, at the pace that best suited the student participants.

This flexibility was also built into the weekly transcription sessions that occurred throughout spring, summer, and fall of 2021. King used the scheduling site *when2meet* to find one or two times per week that would work for our group and then scheduled weekly transcription sessions that were required for the first month of the project and optional for the duration of each term. While not every student attended each of the optional sessions, the majority joined to continue their collaborative work together, which is where, as described below, students were able to lead discussion and share their insights and expertise as head transcribers of different sections of manuscript material. Work during this time involved training in basic paleography, with examples drawn from the Ballitore Collection that demonstrated varying levels of difficulty and introduced common abbreviations (such as styles of ampersands and Quaker norms for writing dates). The digitized documents meant that all students, not just the two to three closest to the manuscript, could collectively puzzle over and support one another's transcriptions. Framing our paleography work were ongoing discussions about the history of the archives and intersectional feminist interventions into antiracist praxis. For readers who are interested, we have provided a sample syllabus of readings accessible by link in the footnotes, and we suggest that future project organizers also include readings tailored to the archival content of their projects.¹⁶

Using insights offered by archivists and scholars like those from Philadelphia's Anti-Racist Description Working Group, our group learned the basics of antiracist metadata creation and revision, which involved training students to create culturally sensitive and appropriate keywords to categorize the people, places, and subjects being represented. The group discussed the problems with seemingly objective, "neutral"

descriptions in the archives, and learned instead how to emphasize agency and humanity, such as using names rather than anonymous social categories for subjects of the archives. We also discussed how to create metadata descriptions that would be user-friendly for newer students and non-specialist audiences, and language that would be common to the community being depicted.¹⁷

Combining transcription with metadata creation is one core way of making these holdings accessible to readers regardless of their location, while it also allows for the creation of a more comprehensive set of data *about* the collection. This training revealed the human choices made in information management while it also showed how all research is an ongoing dialogue among transcribers, readers, and editors. The collation of digitized information linked from manuscript work to digitized text—photo, transcription, and metadata—allowed us to “reenvision the work of writing” to “see it as a collaboration between language and technology—between the words in our heads and the codes, keyboards, and screens that allow us to make pages.”¹⁸ In other words, combining the acts of transcribing and creating metadata emphasizes rather than erases the agents, choices, and technologies that work together to create information, histories, and canons. This process of collaboratively demystifying archival praxis became a key component of reading against the grain in the Ballitore archives, one that extended to students disseminating their findings through conference presentations and, as we see below, innovative reflective analyses of their work.

Student Analyses: Reading against the Grain as Cooperative Critical Bibliographic Praxis

As each student participant describes below, they initially had concerns about domain or subject knowledge, one of the three areas of knowledge that Elizabeth Yakel and Deborah Torres have identified as necessary to engage meaningfully with primary sources.¹⁹ In this case, although all participants had exposure to eighteenth-century literature courses taught by King or Spratt, the historical and sociopolitical context not just of the eighteenth century but particularly of the Anglo-Irish Quakers in Ballitore initially felt challenging to students, despite some strategic secondary readings that King had organized for the group. As the reflections here demonstrate, however, the students came to feel confident not only in their artifactual expertise but also and especially in their archival intelligence, or “the knowledge about the environment in which the search

for primary sources is being conducted,” the two other areas that Yakel and Torres cite as foundational to effective work with primary sources.²⁰ Indeed, the sophisticated critiques and questions that students developed out of their work suggest the ways that cooperative critical bibliography can allow students and faculty together to revise their coursework, assignments, and the surrounding literary and humanities canon. Underlying this work has been, as participant Stephanie Guerrero (CSUN, MA, BA) pinpointed, a process in learning how to “read against the grain,” which she describes as “perhaps the most ethical way that this collection can be approached in order to relate present-day concerns about archival silences to the implicit and explicit historical context of the archives, including matters of abolition, gender, and class.”

Absent Voices in the Archives

Deena Al-halabieh, PhD Candidate and Ballitore Project Mentor, UCSB

In “Venus in Two Acts,” Saidiya Hartman argues that although retrieving and redressing the stories and voices of enslaved women is essential, the centuries-long systemic violence of slavery and colonialism makes it virtually impossible to fully redress oppression and erasure that left us with “numbers, ciphers, and fragments of discourse, which is as close as we come to a biography of the captive and the enslaved.”²¹ Hartman’s work, and this passage in particular, cause me to reflect on the practices by which this process of recovery happens. Echoing J. J. Ghaddar and Michelle Caswell, I believe that one must also be attuned to the *place* of research in order to decolonize the archive and prevent further acts of violence and exclusion towards the groups of people we seek to recognize.²² This quote allows me to critically think about digital humanities tools and methods that have been helpful within multiple aspects of our project on the Ballitore Collection but in some way also contribute to the eliding of Black voices and references. For example, tools like topic modeling rely on language analysis: a dearth of language about abolition or experiences of enslavement means that some forms of digital humanities analysis will replicate these absences. Thus, as scholars, we must be aware of the process and method by which we carry out our research and writing and acknowledge the limits and benefits of using digital humanities tools to make sense of the names, numbers, ciphers, and references that are all that remain of these marginalized voices and peoples within archives. We still need to read against the grain.

As a mentor on the archival Ballitore Project, I worked with undergraduate students to train them in transcription, digitization, and metadata creation. I found the shared and collaborative spaces, both online and in person, with undergraduates, graduates, and faculty to be very productive in terms of working nonhierarchically. By allowing student archivists to discuss their transcriptions and metadata creation collaboratively and recognizing their growing subject matter expertise to guide these conversations, we train future generations of scholars to transform archival and digital humanities methods, a sequence that Stephen Martinez articulates below. As we returned to the questions posed by Hartman, Caswell and Ghaddar, and others about representation in the archives, our work remained attentive to the imbalance of power and representation within historical and archival spaces, and, as Quill Sang and Joseph Sweetnam's essays show, how students can reflect on their own experiences of discomfort or inexperience with the archives to make visible the absences and exclusions of certain ethnic groups.

Cooperative Critical Bibliography: Benefits of Cooperation within the Archives

Stephen Martinez, MA Student, CSUN

Ironically, even for projects that explicitly seek to recognize marginalized voices, it is challenging to find adequate representation in the content of archives. This was my experience with the Ballitore Collection. Concerns about slavery or the experiences of the enslaved were absent in the letters I transcribed for the collection. "Reading against the grain" thus meant collaborating with my peers across institutions to help drive this archival research forward. The Ballitore Collection's wide array of documents made it challenging to extrapolate broad claims about Quaker culture or beliefs as just one transcriber. In our weekly online meetings, students shared their own experiences, struggles, and information they received from transcribing. For instance, there were specific opportunities in which Dr. King and other members shared phrases and abbreviations that were common throughout their own transcriptions, which in turn helped me transcribe and decipher my own documents. Likewise, we consistently discussed norms in Quaker society, especially surrounding expectations of gender, health, and education. These discussions made me more aware of these topics, and in turn provided me insight into themes and key terms that helped me decode certain messages or comments I would have missed with my own archival lens.

The collaborative and cross-institutional structure of this project granted a wide range of students the ability to see firsthand how certain underrepresented voices are left out of the dominant constructed narratives, while it also gave us the power to acknowledge and potentially reclaim those voices through archiving. It places students in the forefront of the action where they themselves go beyond the scope of reading and collaborate with one another, through discussion and transcribing, to decode and untangle the threads of racism hidden in the archives. Before these projects, I had only read the canonical voices on the topic of slavery. Yet, through this experience with cooperative critical bibliography, my collaborators and I worked together to revise the grand narrative told in the collection as a team. We could question why these intimate letters left out details of abolition when the cause was so publicly important to eighteenth-century Quakers, while we also highlighted various gender and education norms that suggested new insights about domestic life. In every step of the archival process, whether it be reading, transcribing, or even our own writing, there was always a support network to help process what was being said and what was being omitted. This type of support network is crucial in promoting projects such as these because it subverts the trend of one dominant group or person dictating what is included in a collection, and instead splits that responsibility and power between multiple students, ensuring multiple voices are heard.

Trespass in the Archives

Quill Sang, BA Student, UCSB

In “Venus in Two Acts,” Hartman speaks about the violence of the archive, as done to a narrative by the archivist: what kind of information is recorded, by whom, and how. I found it much more rewarding to work with our primary sources in a transformative way, engaging directly in the act of archiving instead of secondhand analysis of the materials (as is so often the case in classes). But that raises the question “Why is the writing surrounding archives (and general academic writing, if we’re being honest) so boring?” The archives are interesting! The firsthand documentation of people who lived centuries ago is *fascinating*, so why is it presented so dryly? Stories want to be told, and the past wants to be remembered. Does a flat presentation not kill a story as well? Is that not too an act of trespass against a narrative, against archives? Historical documents, such as those in the Ballitore Collection, are not inherently boring! That means that “experts” have actively made them boring. The dry, clinical language

and facade of objectivity surrounding archival work often results in consigning a story to academic and cultural obscurity. There is no such thing as a neutral presentation, so we must instead choose an appropriate, culturally relevant framework of presentation instead of pretending there isn't one.

For instance, while I often initially felt that I lacked enough historical and personal context to parse what people were saying, I also found many familiar touchstones in sifting through the small lives of ordinary people. I found deciphering the handwriting to be difficult, and it gave me a new appreciation for my own elementary school teachers who had to decipher my terrible handwriting. All the same, my mother (a Chinese woman) writes her x's the same way as an Irish Quaker from the 1700s. The long thread of the English language and colonialism connects them both.

I was rather disappointed that the letters I transcribed and digitized did not write more about political events contemporary to their time; I would have liked to hear some 1700s hot takes. I was actually deeply curious about what these Ballitore Quakers would have thought about things such as American independence, slavery, colonialism, and so on and was surprised that the writers did not often speak about them. Then again, I can't say I deliver my thoughts on current events through long-form political manifestos mailed out to my friends and family. A future researcher looking through my texts might never know what my relationship with my roommate is; after all, I don't text them—I speak to them in person. As we do archival work, we must recognize the myriad ways that our data are similarly skewed and further influenced by the method of collection.

Lowercase “history”

Joseph Sweetnam, BA Student, UCSB

I was lucky enough that the Ballitore Project was one of a couple encounters I had with archival work in undergrad. The benefit for me was to see history as raw material—mundane, contradictory, sometimes literally illegible—rather than as the finished product, History, with gaps smoothed over. Archival work, then, is less neutral presentation of the cold hard facts than it is a politically motivated activity and as such should not only be left to the specialists. I don't know what to make of the fact

that the centuries-old letters of these Quakers—ordinary people embracing, wrestling with, new radical ideas of equality—would ordinarily be reserved only for the eyes of people with PhDs. Ideally this access to the archive will extend beyond those of us receiving our BAs, as such access to the site of history-making might lead to better histories. A meaningful extension of access, however, won't come simply through something like better promotion but rather might be a result of broader improvements in living standards, whereby things of less immediate material urgency, like Quaker letters saying hello, would naturally become more accessible. As Macheath in *The Threepenny Opera* sings, “[F]irst sort out the basic food position / Then start your preaching, that’s where it begins.”

For my part, in transcribing these letters I came to appreciate the sheer bulk of material—most of what I transcribed seemed more than anything to be friendly check-ins—which, for whatever its banality, remained meaningful, as it represented a whole way of life. This appreciation was well timed, coming as it did during lockdown, when the archive was located not in the UCSB library but rather on a Google Drive in my childhood bedroom. At this time, the least banal thing I could do was just this kind of friendly check-in. By seeing history through and in their everyday lives I felt less alienated from it. Despite the digital distance, here was a felt history, the tactility of which manifested in content, the everyday, and form, scraggly handwriting on soiled pages. In one extreme example, the subject of one letter was simply a metal pin poked through the page. By all this, history became the scene not of mythic individuals but of everyone else, and so both the people of Ballitore’s historical moment and mine lost their distance and were made vital. A line from Richard Shackleton in one of his letters to John Cristy stands out here: “The swift transit of a very little time levels us all, & those who go before, precede these that follow after, by a very little space.” I mean to keep this line with me whenever I think of those who came before us as well as those who might come after. The Ballitore letters helped me see the smallness of that space and the relation between, and it’s for this—of feeling history as immediate, as made up of these small but meaningful communications between regular people, of which the Ballitore Collection is a fraction—that I hope archival work like this can be shared. A move from History, the finished product, to a nonmythic, everyday history is a move toward including us in it and making it actionable.

And a final note on the finished product: the response from a third-grader I teach when I said their history textbooks spend too much time on what the presidents thought and did: “Finally, somebody *says* it!”

Designing Cooperative Critical Bibliography for the Classroom

As we noted at the outset, we recognize that most potential projects will *not* have the benefit of limited internal or external grant funds, so we have used our experience on this project to propose a parallel model for a quarter- or semester-based course that can use campus resources that are ubiquitous on most campuses, regardless of learning management systems and other proprietary software specific to each campus. We have also created a summary of these suggestions in the form of a checklist, including reflective essay prompts, to help organize the logistics of planning such work, which readers can access in the notes below.²³

First, we underscore that project organizers must create material conditions that will make archival work accessible by keeping in mind the limits of most students, librarians, and faculty members, all of whom—especially in the wake of the last two years—are overburdened and undersupported. Unless you can secure external funds to provide stipends for this work, this sort of pedagogical project needs to fit into existing work models for curricular development or institutional resource development. As a result, structuring a cooperative critical bibliographic project will likely involve multiple forms of project scaffolding across multiple academic years. First, a project organizer needs to identify archives in need of remediation: while a faculty member might believe they have done so simply through their own individual research, an important first step is to connect with your institution's archivists or head of special collections to identify a collection that is suitable to this project and to confirm that the project's goals would align and support the work of the library and its community.

Once a need is established, project partners need to determine workflow of the initial transcription process, including how many files need to be digitized and where the digital files of the archives as well as transcription and metadata will be stored. While campuses often have different learning management systems (some might have Canvas, others Blackboard), most people have institutional or personal access to the Google Drive suite, which is a useful first step for housing all documents related to the project.²⁴ In our experience, librarians have been able to provide high-quality digital scans and preferred to have faculty and students work primarily on transcription and metadata creation. Be sure to discuss ways that project organizers can track this work (a Google Sheet with signups is an easy way to do this). Finally, be explicit about how you will mutually recognize project planning labor: collaborators might write letters or provide other documentation of this work for retention, tenure, and promotion files.

Once these logistics have been determined, project planners might then reach out to other faculty and librarians, ideally with a focus on bringing in additional perspectives and experiences. Such outreach will vary based on the project's origination: for example, a project initiated at a four-year college might include finding collaborators at local high schools, community libraries, or community colleges to create a connection among institutions that can mutually benefit one another. This outreach would then create a kind of pathway for participants as they potentially move from high school to community college, to completing their BA or MA. Such institutional partnerships are possible via contemporaneous teaching models, where faculty or archivists engaged in teaching similar subject matter might collaboratively teach a course module or an entire course around a set of archives.

While some of this work can happen asynchronously, it is important to have a consistent time and space, likely part of instructional time for teachers and students, where all participants can meet in a synchronous lab space (this would require coordination with the department chair or schedule coordinator). This lab time can take place in person or more likely in multiple classroom/learning spaces via Zoom, allowing for consistent and open opportunities for students to develop comfort and competency with basic paleography and metadata skills, along with secondary readings that orient students to core sociohistorical contexts. For a quarter- or semester-based class, this work may involve replacing half of traditional class lecture/discussion time with lab time, either for a full term or for a unit of work within a term. For instance, a class that typically meets on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10:00 to 11:15 a.m. might have lab on Thursdays and a more traditional class meeting to discuss related literary works on Tuesdays. These open transcription sessions also afford opportunities for group discussion, analysis, and written reflection and dissemination, either through traditional essay assignments, social media posts, or other presentation or public-facing writing and presentation forums (see our checklist for suggested prompts). Overall, however, the lab work should be embedded in your syllabus and should replace other forms of coursework, which will entail reducing the number of novels, plays, or other literary texts and the number of written assignments or group projects typically assigned.

Cooperative critical bibliography is one way to create what Rachel Buurma and Laura Heffernan describe as “a larger ecosystem of knowledge production that takes place in classrooms, libraries, and studies, an ecosystem of knowledge in which many methods have comfortably existed.”²⁵ In making this work deliberate, the field of book history can

better realize its potential to be aligned not with exclusion but with equity, not with acts of foreclosure but with acts of freedom.

Danielle Spratt (she/her) is a professor of eighteenth-century literature in the Department of English at California State University, Northridge. With Bridget Draxler, she is the author of Engaging the Age of Jane Austen: Public Humanities in Practice (2018).

Rachael Scarborough King is an associate professor of English at the University of California, Santa Barbara, and director of the Ballitore Project. She is the author of Writing to the World: Letters and the Origins of Modern Print Genres (2018) and editor of After Print: Eighteenth-Century Manuscript Cultures (2020).

Deena Al-halabieh is a PhD candidate in the Department of English at the University of California, Santa Barbara. She studies eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Arabic and Anglophone slave narratives and has been the graduate project assistant for the Ballitore Project since 2021.

Stephanie Guerrero graduated with her BA in English from California State University, Channel Islands, and received her MA with a concentration in creative writing from California State University, Northridge.

Stephen Martinez (he/him) graduated from California State University, Northridge, with an MA in English literature. Stephen currently works there as a peer writing specialist, where he is also a student in the Single Subject Credential Program.

Quill Sang (they/them; ze/zir) is an undergraduate student at the University of California, Santa Barbara. They are an English major and intern for the Ballitore Project.

Joseph Sweetnam recently graduated with an English degree from the University of California, Santa Barbara. He currently works at an elementary school.

NOTES

The authors thank the National Endowment for the Humanities, which provided funding for this project, NEH Program Officer Victoria Sams for her support, and our project fellows for their brilliant and energizing commitment to this work.

1. bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress, Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 12.
2. hooks, 129–30.
3. For more on the value of nonhierarchical archival pedagogical practices, see Rachael Scarborough King, “Critical Pedagogy and Feminist Scholarship in the Archives,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 84, no. 1 (Spring 2021): 189–201, quotation on 191.
4. For more on the ties between the archives, whiteness, and oppression, see J. J. Ghaddar and Michelle Caswell, “‘To Go Beyond’: Towards a Decolonial Archival Praxis,”

- Archival Science* 19 (2019): 71–85; Harrison W. Inefuku, “Relegated to the Margins: Faculty of Color, the Scholarly Record, and the Necessity of Antiracist Library Disruptions,” *Knowledge Justice: Disrupting Library and Information Studies through Critical Race Theory*, ed. Sofia Y. Leung and Jorge R. López-McKnight (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2021), 197–216; and Jarret Martin Drake, “Diversity’s Discontents: In Search of an Archive of the Oppressed,” *Archives and Manuscripts* 47, no. 2 (2019): 270–79, esp. 272.
5. Myrna E. Morales and Stacie Williams, “Moving towards Transformative Librarianship: Naming and Identifying Epistemic Supremacy,” *Knowledge Justice: Disrupting Library and Information Studies through Critical Race Theory*, ed. Sofia Y. Leung and Jorge R. López-McKnight (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2021), 73–93, quotation on 75.
 6. Michelle Caswell, “Teaching to Dismantle White Supremacy in the Archives,” *Library Quarterly* 87, no. 3, 222–35, quotation on 225.
 7. Jerome McGann, “Why Digital Textual Scholarship Matters; or, Philology in a New Key,” *The Cambridge Companion to Textual Scholarship*, ed. Neil Fraistat and Julia Flanders (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 274–88, quotation on 275.
 8. James Ryan, “Guide to the Ballitore [Ireland] Collection,” Online Archive of California, 2012, accessed May 23, 2022, <http://pdf.oac.cdlib.org/pdf/ucsb/spcoll/cusb-mss4.pdf>.
 9. King, “Critical Pedagogy,” 191.
 10. Kate Ozment, “Rationale for Feminist Bibliography,” *Textual Cultures: Texts, Contexts, Interpretation* 13, no. 1 (Spring 2020): 149–78, quotation on 172. See also King, 190.
 11. King, “Critical Pedagogy,” 193; and Saidiya Hartman, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007), 16.
 12. See, for instance, Andrew O. Winckles, “Obscure Women, Obscure Networks, and Women’s Book History,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 84, no. 1 (Spring 2021): 113–22; and Clara I. Gandy, “The Conditions and Character of the Irish Peasantry as Seen in the *Annals and Cottage Dialogues* of Mary Leadbeater,” *Women & Literature* 3, no. 1 (1975): 28–38.
 13. The UC-HBCU Initiative is a competitive funding program that seeks to create connections between University of California campuses and historically Black colleges and universities. To learn more about this program, see <https://www.ucop.edu/uc-hbcu-initiative/>. For more details about this project between UCSB and Howard University, see King, “Critical Pedagogy,” esp. 191 and 200–2; see also Hannah Franz, Anne Charity Hudley, Rachael Scarborough King, Kendra Calhoun, deandre miles-hercules, Jamaal Muwwakkil, Jeremy Edwards, Cecily A. Duffie, Danielle Knox, Bishop Lawton, and John Henry Merritt, “The Role of the Graduate Student in Inclusive Undergraduate Research Experiences,” *Pedagogy: Critical Approaches to Teaching Literature, Language, Composition, and Culture* 22, no. 1 (2022): 121–41.
 14. Laura T. Hamilton and Kelly Nielsen, *Broke: The Racial Consequences of Underfunding Public Universities* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2021); and Rachel Sagner Buurma and Laura Heffernan, *The Teaching Archive: A New History for Literary Study* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2020), 208.
 15. For more on the distinctions and calls of the California institutions of higher education, see the California Master Plan, University of California, Office of the President, accessed May 23, 2022, <https://www.ucop.edu/institutional-research-academic-planning/content-analysis/academic-planning/california-master-plan.html>.

16. This sample syllabus can be found here: <https://tinyurl.com/4h4a74w5>.
17. See pages 3–5, Alexis A. Antracoli, Annalise Berdini, Kelly Bolding, Faith Charlton, and Amanda Ferrara, “Archives for Black Lives in Philadelphia: Anti-Racist Description Resources,” Black Lives in Philadelphia Anti-Racist Description Working Group, updated September 2020, https://archivesforblacklives.files.wordpress.com/2020/11/ardr_202010.pdf.
18. Lisa Maruca, *The Work of Print: Authorship and the English Text Trades, 1660–1760* (Seattle: Washington University Press, 2007), 171.
19. Elizabeth Yakel and Deborah Torres, “AI: Archival Intelligence and User Experience,” *American Archivist* 66, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2003): 51–78.
20. Yakel and Torres, 52.
21. Saidiya Hartman, “Venus in Two Acts,” *small axe* 26 (June 2008): 1–14, quotations on 2 and 3.
22. J. J. Ghaddar and Michelle Caswell, “To Go Beyond,” 73.
23. Our suggested Google Docs checklist is found here: <https://tinyurl.com/2p9bbss5>.
24. In later iterations of this project, participants may wish to use a free, crowdsourced platform like Zooniverse (www.zooniverse.org), which is what King has used to expand this project not just to our students but to the internet community at large.
25. Buurma and Heffernan, *Teaching Archive*, 211.