

## IN MEMORY AND ARCHIVES

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“Go Betweens: Crossing Borders,” an Interdisciplinary Conference  
*organized in tandem with the*  
Ninth Annual Graduate Comparative Literature Conference *at the*  
University of Texas at Austin, 12-13 October, 2012.



## Contents

I. Paper Abstracts.....	1
II. Hannah Alpert-Abrams. “Drunken Archives”.....	3
III. Responses from Saul and Rachel.....	9
IV. Saul Alpert-Abrams. “Longinus’ περὶ ὕψους, and the Sublime as a Mode of Cultural Defense”.....	11
V. Responses from Rachel and Hannah.....	15
VI. Rachel Colwell. “Natural Archives,’ Poems, and Stories from Beyond the Grave(yard).....	17
VII. Responses from Saul and Hannah.....	27

Hannah Alpert-Abrams.

### **“Drunken Archives”**

*How do archives construct communities (and how do communities construct archives)?*

In this paper, I will be talking about subversive, disappearing, and silent archives in Roberto Bolaño’s *Los detectives salvajes*. In 1989, Roberto González Echevarría’s *Myth and Archive* offered a definitive historiography of Latin American literature culminating in the “archival novel,” mid-twentieth-century novels by authors like Alejo Carpentier and Gabriel García Márquez that combine a mythic or cyclical narrative structure with a more teleological narrative based in the archive — in a collection of canonical national and historical texts. Bolaño’s novel can be read as a continuation of and a return to the “archival novel” because of the way in which it collects and catalogues texts. This suggests that it can also be read as a continuation of the project of building a national or continental Latin American identity, and Bolaño has often been read this way, striking an ongoing debate over his Chilean, Mexican, and Latin American authenticity.

Although the archives in *Los detectives salvajes* do follow archival convention, however, they are both parodic and subversive. One archive catalogues the great Latin American poets by way of their (imagined) sexuality; another contains books that are stolen but not read; another contains the poems rejected by a literary magazine. These archives are constructed in bars, in bedrooms, and on rooftops; the archivists themselves are dropouts and poets and prostitutes, often drunk or high. I will argue that this archival parody makes obsolete the concept of the fixed national archive and, thus, the project of constructing identities along geopolitical lines. Bolaño’s archives, instead, offer an escape from a violent and chaotic world, indulging the fantasy of narrative stability and of play.

Saul Alpert-Abrams.

### **“Longinus’ περὶ ὕψους, and the Sublime as a Mode of Cultural Defense”**

In this paper, I will be discussing what it means to construct a canon of literature in the 1st century CE for a Greek writing under the Roman Empire. Longinus, as the author of *περὶ ὕψους* is often called, wrote his only surviving treatise probably in the mid- to late-1st century CE. It is a rhetorical treatise, claiming to deal with the ways in which men of its time can produce truly sublime (*ὕψος*) writing. In form and content it purports to be a standard work of rhetoric and aesthetics, which has led scholars throughout its modern history (from its rediscovery in the 16th century) to treat it as a work dealing with the universal constructs and rules of style and excellence in writing. However, following Tim Whitmarsh and Yun Lee Too, I propose to examine the treatise from a cultural

## In Memory and Archives, Abstracts

standpoint, a tricky subject considering Longinus' purposeful avoidance of contemporary references. But it is just in these moments of evasion that the political content of the treatise can be observed, which in turn forces us to ask whether the very process of collecting texts is inherently political, and inherently subversive.

By carefully constructing his “archive” (here a deeply ingrained—yet moldable—canon of great authors who were taught in the standard educational system of a Greek (or Roman) of the 1st century CE), Longinus sets out his canon to act as a Greek cultural signifier. But when this Greekhood is presented in the face of a ruler or tyrant (as it necessarily is in the case of the public speaker), certain linguistic requirements must be set in place to keep the tyrant from becoming wild with rage, that is, to uphold the political system already in place. Longinus is concerned both with maintaining a Greek cultural continuity with the past, through his sublime authors, and with upholding the pre-established socio-political order. But are both possible at once? And how can a rhetorical treatise—and the treatment of the canon—act to hold firm the seemingly fragile boundaries between culture and politics, between a Greek and a Roman, between the subjugated and the ruling? That is, in what way do the ethno-political debates of the 1st century play out in a treatise supposedly on “the sublime?”

Rachel Colwell.

### **“Natural Archives,’ Poems, and Stories from Beyond the Grave(yard)**

*Do “natural archives”—pre-existent, bounded, and discrete collections—exist external to historicized, politicized, and culturally charged systems of value? If so, what responsibilities does the archivist have in honoring or problematizing collections of records as fixed or dynamic?*

I explore these questions through a study of the diversity, distribution, and “life-span” of grave poems and biblical verses as inscribed on headstones in Northeastern Connecticut between 1760 and 1820. A glaring lacuna in graveyard studies, the significance of headstone texts has long been overshadowed by genealogical and iconographic research. Patterns of poem occurrences tell stories not only of changing conceptions of life and death, but stand as well dated and geographically grounded records of human and literary migration, borrowing, descent, diversification, creative innovation, misremembering, and imitation.

We all too easily imagine “inactive” graveyards as dead, as places frozen in time and space. However, in doing so, we forget the days when new additions to the yard (bodily and poetic) were commonplace, and we turn a blind eye to the very real weathering and deterioration of the stones and the slow but absolute blotting-out of their texts. I approach my own graveyard studies in true interdisciplinary spirit, engaging methods, techniques, and databasing tools from anthropology, archaeology, literature, history, ecology, and biogeography.

Is the graveyard archivist’s charge simply to document “natural” archives or is her assignment, knowingly or unknowingly, to make choices, to draw lines in the sand? By following trends in the prevalence and persistence of certain poems across several counties I work to destabilize assumed units of analysis—the individual grave, the graveyard, the town, etc.—and challenge the graveyard as a clearly bounded and historically fixed “natural” archive.

## Drunken Archives

Hannah Alpert-Abrams, University of Texas at Austin

My paper is listed under the name of “Flipping the Archive,” but I think a more appropriate name would be “drunken archives” or even “archiving under the influence.” I will be reading Roberto Bolaño’s *Los detectives salvajes* as a subversion of the archive as a meaning-making device through its fragmentation and relocation into the bar, the bedroom, or the carnival. These drunken archives radically re-characterize the archive, forcing us to confront the possibility that meaning making is not the archive’s primary function.

Before I dive into Bolaño, I’d like to say that I am really excited to have all of us here today because this panel is nothing if not evidence that the archive is a truly interdisciplinary concept. We have an ethnomusicologist; we have a classical scholar; and I study contemporary literature. This is appropriate because if we think about what an archive does, literally, it functions as a space that brings scholars together. (If you’ve been in the Harry Ransom Center reading room anytime recently, you know what I mean.) It provides the raw stuff out of which all of our work is made. In a sense the archive is not just interdisciplinary. It is the site of discipline.

Given the scholarly nature of the archive, it’s not really surprising that we in the humanities find it to be a useful framing concept for a conversation about memory, about identity, about history, and discourse, because in many ways it is the model that is most entirely ours. I’m going to start off our panel today with some speculations on this model, and then contrast it with the model that Bolaño seems to use.

What is an archive? The archive is a space that contains fragments and notes, letters and marginalia, all catalogued according to an organizing principle: the nation, or the institution, or the individual. These fragments and books and slips of paper are gathered together with the express purpose of allowing researchers like ourselves to reconstruct memory. We go to these places when we want to tell a true story about the institution, or the nation, or the self.

Constructing a story out of incomplete information is a premise of the archive. Using that story to produce a kind of coherent truth is the purpose of the archival researcher.

The archive is an important element of poststructuralist thought. Foucault talks about the archive in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. He uses the concept of the archive to describe the way that we organize a hierarchy of discourse. He’s not talking about the place of the archive. He is talking about how all of our utterances are fragmentary and forgotten. He is talking about how discourses orient themselves towards power over time. We flip back through them.

Derrida talks about the archive in *Archive Fever*. He is talking about a real archive: the archive of Freud’s house. For Derrida the archive unifies, identifies, and classifies memories. The things that fall out of the archive are the things that we forget. Derrida is worried about this forgetting. For Derrida, following Freud, forgetting is a violation and it is violent. It has evil consequences. It opens the door to totalitarianism. Nazis.

The stakes here are high. In poststructuralist theory, the archive contains and maintains hierarchies of power. It commits violence to memory, and opens the door to totalitarian ways of thinking.

Take, as a case study, the Latin American archive.

## Drunken Archives, Hannah Alpert-Abrams

Already we encounter some problems. There is no real Latin American archive, and if there were, it would be wildly insufficient to the task. So when I say the “Latin American archive” I am talking about imaginary archives, the idea of a curated collection of private and public texts that are brought together and mined for contained truths. It is paradoxical because it claims to contain all the fragments – it is both complete and, by definition, partial.

The constructing of an imagined pan-Latin-American archive is an important aspect of Latin American literary study, particularly here in the United States. Doris Sommer’s essential work *Foundational Fictions* looks back into the archive to open up the canon; Juan Carlos González Espitia’s *The Dark Side of the Archive* opens the archive even farther to find unpopular or never read texts. Particularly important to my project here, Roberto González Echevarría’s 1989 work *Myth and Archive* actively seeks to shift Latin American literary history away from European models by reorienting the archive. In this case, his archive pits the hegemonic discourse of Latin America against its discursively subversive fiction. So for example, the novels of the Spanish Picaresque are in confrontation with the language of colonial law. Nineteenth century Latin American romances are in confrontation with naturalistic documents of exploration, like Darwin’s journals. Twentieth century novels of the boom are in confrontation with anthropological discourse.

We can imagine what this archive might look like if it were a physical space: enormous, neoclassical or maybe colonial, with stacks full of first-edition manuscripts of canonical fiction, and back rooms containing manuscripts, documents, letters, and other artifacts from Latin American history. The archivist is Borgesian. The reading room is silent. The space is owned by Yale, where González Echevarría works, or perhaps Duke, which published his book. It might also be owned by Harvard, where Doris Sommer works, or the University of California, where *Foundational Fictions* was published. Or, because I don’t mean to be anglocentric, it might be UNAM, in Mexico.

This imagined archive is suspended in a state of eternal tension, because it can never be brought down to earth. In which city – Buenos Aires, Havana, Caracas, Mexico City – would this archive be constructed?

The implication here is not that because his archive is impossible, González Echevarría’s project fails. I am locating my interrogation of the archive at the moment when the imagined archive is brought down to earth. This moment inevitably produces a shattering of the archive as it falls out of stasis and is brought into diachronic and physical being. (That is, time and space.) This fragmentation can be observed in Roberto Bolaño’s *The Savage Detectives*.

*The Savage Detectives* is replete with archives. (If you haven’t read it already, you should probably just leave this panel and go get yourself a copy right now.) The novel itself is constructed as an archival project: it is a collection of documents pertaining to the history of a 1970’s poetic movement in Mexico City known as visceral realism. These documents tell the story of Ulises Lima and Arturo Belano, the founders of the movement, as they try to track down their literary antecedent, the unknown poet Cesarea Tinajero. Their search is a journey through the archives, although it is also perhaps a trip to the border in search of drugs. Already we encounter the compromised position of the archive in this novel: is it the heart of the novel, or is it an alibi?

In addition to this meta-archive, the novel is replete with imagined archives. I calculate approximately 240 explicit references to real writers or literary works in the novel, in addition to a proliferation of imaginary texts. These references are used in many ways: I am particularly interested

## Drunken Archives, Hannah Alpert-Abrams

in the moments when they seem to call into being an archive, acting like finding aids for a research site that will disappear as quickly as it became manifest. Consider the following examples:

- The archive of novels carried around by Ulises Lima
- The archive of books stolen but not read
- The archive of books found in the apartment of the poets Pancho and Moctezuma (and the absence of books in the room of Piel Divina)
- The archive of poets who did not appear in the journal of Lisandro Morales (205).
- The actual archives, like the Instituto Sonorense de Cultura, to which the visceral realists are not admitted

What can be said about these archives? Their very fragmentation defies the effort to offer a unifying thesis. They refuse the very possibility of a totalizing archival idea, because they are fragmentary and ephemeral. The meaning we make of them must be localized both in space and in time.

Even further, they are not open to any unified approach or methodology. Finding aids don't function in an archive where there are no manuscripts. They are equally useless when we, as researchers, are turned away at the door.

Additionally, these archives are explicitly arbitrary in a way that defies meaning-making. One example that I particularly like is the archive of books stolen but not read by the visceral realists. We can speak of this archive hypothetically, but when we try to enter it, we find ourselves back on the street.

Speaking more broadly, when we approach these archives academically, the way we might approach the HRC or the Benson Latin American Collection, we are rebuffed. That is because this novel actively defies authorized spaces as sites of meaning making. It relocates meaning to the margins of the city – to the rooftops, the alleyways, the suburbs, and the dive bars. It places interpretive power in the hands of the intoxicated. I call them “drunken” because these archives are constructed and interpreted by people who are under the influence.

I'm speaking literally. One example of the drunken archive comes into being during something like a love story; the first encounter between future lovers, Luis Sebastián Rosado and Piel Divina (154). The story is told as a recollection by Luis: he goes with a group of friends, including Ulises Lima, to a bar. They get drunk, they dance, there is a violent homophobic encounter. Alongside these events, there is a long episode where Ulises Lima recites a poem and later tells a sordid war anecdote which is most likely false. Luis spends a long time trying to figure out who the poem is by, calling up a catalogue of potential poets including Nerval, and Mendés, and Mallarmé, and Baudelaire. In the end the poem is by Rimbaud, and it is included in full, in French, in the novel.

I read this conversation as an archival project: collectively, the group is reaching into the archives to tell a story about love and violence which, in the end, reflects and in a sense explains the actual events at the bar. In this case, the archive functions as what Bakhtin might call a *balagan*: — a carnivalesque theatrical performance held at a socially sanctioned site of excess. It protects the participants from the violence of the carnival, offering a literary allegory through which to interpret chaotic events.

## Drunken Archives, Hannah Alpert-Abrams

This archive is not just the source of a literary allegory, though: it is a construction made up partly of lies, in a language that we may or may not understand. Lima, Luis, and his friends are making things up. Most of them haven't read the texts that they are referring to. Some of them don't speak French. Nothing that they talk about is true, and they have no means of verification, or, and this is more important, they have no interest in verification.

A sober analysis of this archival event might point out that the story which Lima tells parallels the events of the bar, offering a historical narrative that explains and grounds the violence. But a sober analysis fails to comprehend the full articulation of the archive here because it is nonsensical. Not only is Lima drunk and lying; his friends, the people to whom the meaning matters, are drunk and lying too. I said earlier that the archive is an academic safe space. Bolaño's archives take away that authoritative security. What value does our analysis have, then, if it is not authorized? Does it bring us closer to a center of meaning, or is it an alibi too?

Let's take a look at another example, the archive of Ernesto San Epifanio, a peripheral member of the visceral realists. His project is more academic: he is seeking to reorient the Latin American poetic canon around the new poetic movement. Like González Echevarría, he is engaging with the imagined Latin American archive as a site through which to orient Mexican and Latin American identities. But San Epifanio uses a radically different curatorial approach, and he locates his archive in a radically different space from that of González Echevarría. The organizing element of his archive is perceived sexuality, and it comes into being not at Yale, but at a party at the house of a woman named Catalina O'Hara.



Ernesto San Epifanio's archive is obviously parodic. In this system, Walt Whitman is *un maricón* (in English we'd say a *fag*). Pablo Neruda and Octavio Paz are *maricas* (*queer*). Jorge Luis Borges is *un fileno* (*Nancy*), and Rubén Darío is *una loca* (*a queen*). In a perfect literary move, San Epifanio is queering the archive. He starts with the foundational fathers of Mexican literature, who you will notice are pan-national, and then moves on to consider specific nations. According to San Epifanio France, Spain, and England are dominated by *maricas*, while Nicaragua is dominated by *mariposas*, Cuba by *mariquitas*, and contemporary Mexican poetry is all *maricas* (a fact which is, apparently, a cause for despair).

San Epifanio's archive makes a mockery of the archival project by drawing attention to the arbitrary nature of selecting and cataloguing texts. At the same time, it mocks the possibility of constructing a meaningful national identity by way of the archive. If you attempt that, San Epifanio suggests, your whole nation might just get queered.

This is not necessarily a bad thing, of course. But it is a violation of the kind of project put forth by González Echevarría, whose stated purpose was to imagine a Latin American history that was not Eurocentric. It is also a response to the poststructuralist's straight(forward) insistence on archives as sites of power and violence. By all means re-center the archive in Mexico City, San Epifanio seems to be saying. But don't expect me to imagine it in poststructuralist terms.

At the center of San Epifanio's queer canon is Cesarea Tinajero, the little-known 1920's poet who is the inspiration for the visceral realists. San Epifanio labels her "the horror," thereby qualifying her as categorically different from all the other poets. We can imagine her poem alongside the Gutenberg Bible exhibit at the HRC: set apart, terrifyingly. "The horror" must mean the most poetically violent, the step beyond meaning, perhaps something evil, or something sublime.

Or it could mean that she is horrible, the worst, the most aggravating, irritating, exhausting. It could mean: I don't want to hear about her anymore damn it.

After all, San Epifanio is intoxicated when he imagines this archive; his archive is another drunken archive.

So we return, again, to the original question: is this drunken archive the foundation for a subversive literary history, or is it a cover story?

The concept of the archive as a cover story or an alibi is so pleasing to me because it implies that we are reading a book by its cover when we put faith in the archive. It implies, furthermore, that the cover is intentionally false, a marketing ploy intended to distract us from a truth that may implicate the morality or legality of the archivist's behavior. Like throwing the guard dog a bone, it leaves the archivist free to act outside of meaning, and interpretation, and judgment. While we are busy flipping through the archive, these protagonists are getting away with murder.

To conclude, I want to pose the following question to my fellow panelists:

What are the implications of empty, imaginary, or intoxicated archives?

### Saul's Response to "Drunken Archives"

I want to talk about being “under the influence.” First, however, let me give a brief introduction to my subject, who is known as “Longinus.” Longinus, as I too shall call the unknown Greek author of the infamous rhetorical treatise, “*Peri Hupsous*,” or, “On the Sublime,” lived, we speculate, during the 1st century C.E, probably in Rome. The treatise’s subject is “upsos,” or what some have translated as “sublimity in writing.” The treatise, which purportedly consists of techniques and mindsets that guide the writer toward becoming more “sublime,” was written in response to Caecilius of Caleacte’s treatise of earlier in the century on the same subject, which Longinus judged to be inadequate. Unfortunately Caecilius’ treatise is lost to us. That is about all we can say with surety about his biography, and so I will leave it at that.

The archive, as I am going to be using it, is both more and less than a canon. I will discuss this more later, but I will say now that it is not merely a list of great authors who are to serve as examples to students, but an internalized collection of primary source snippets: quotations and amalgamations of quotations, and it consists--ideally--in every sublime author’s mind.

Now Longinus claims that one of the most valuable techniques for becoming an excellent writer is mimesis, a sort of mimicry which consists not so much in imitating directly the style of others, but in channelling their being.

Many gather the divine impulse from another’s spirit,” he says, “just as we are told that the Pythian priestess, when she takes her seat on the tripod, where there is said to be a rent in the ground breathing upwards a heavenly emanation, straightway conceives from that source the godlike gift of prophecy, and utters her inspired oracles; so likewise from the mighty genius of the great writers of antiquity there is carried into the souls of their rivals, as from a fount of inspiration, an effluence which breathes upon them until, even though their natural temper be but cold, they share the sublime enthusiasm of others. Thus Homer’s name is associated with a numerous band of illustrious disciples—not only Herodotus, but Stesichorus before him, and the great Archilochus, and above all Plato, who from the great fountain-head of Homer’s genius drew into himself innumerable tributary streams.

Now Longinus here, like Luis Sebastian Rosado and his friends, is on an archival process of identity seeking: he recommends that his authors trace the tributaries of their ancestors to establish a lineage of Greek literary identity—it was the task of many Greek writers under the Roman empire to establish a Greek cultural continuity with their past. But he reimagines the use of sources in a way which blurs the distinctions that are usually used to categorize archival materials. The penetrating power is taken away from the researcher, and redirected into the researched as a domineering cultural force from the past, threatening to overwhelm the writer: the pythia, like the writer, is “impregnated” by the divine spirits, and is often described as being seized and overcome by the masculine, patriarchal, or rather, patriarchal, force. However Longinus notes that this struggling with the ancestors is, in Hesiod’s words, “good for men,” and that even losing to one’s ancestors in a literary battle is “not ignoble.” But where is the author’s own voice, if he is, as is the Pythia, merely a vocal outlet for the divine, for his semi-divine literary ancestors? If he becomes so far “under the influence,” he eventually loses his claim on personal ownership. And this is perhaps what is dangerous about a divine, incestuous, and paternalistic intoxication. But it is also what is necessary: in the struggle for a Greek voice, the individual is raped, even destroyed, by the cultural force which has built up over the ages. And this loss of self, this being under the influence, is necessary in allowing a cultural transmission.

### Rachel's Responses to "Drunken Archives"

Hannah's definition of the archive as a "framing concept for a conversation about memory" and, further, her description of the archive as fragmented, as containing only pieces of texts, of stories, and of history, certainly resonates with the graveyard as archive *in situ*. The texts I've been working with, transcribing, and amassing through my own representational practices and meta-archival practices, are products of their times, their places, and their authors. They are what remain. For lack of a better term, they constitute the "archaeological record." Using what texts are extant and what portions of these texts remain calls to mind questions of representation, constructed meaning and memory, scientific approaches to extrapolation, and the types of authority wrapped up in making sense of things yet unknown, from imagined, un-theorized, or yet un-imagined archives of text and texts.

There are at least three realms of imagined or unknown bodies of text that haunt the graveyard as archive. These are, in no particular order of importance, (1) the text erased from graveyard poems and verse, either intentionally through revision or re-use of stones, (2) the larger, longer texts from which verses and poems were drawn — I am speaking here primarily of particular editions of the King James Bible or Alexander Pope's poems that run longer than headstone-length verse — and (3) the texts that were, for any number of reasons, *not* selected by particular customers at certain times or in certain locales to memorialize their loved ones and warn passersby of death's imminence. I'll address each of these three, in turn. Of course, an infinite number of unknown or imagined archives "exist." We can't really make positivist statements about these archives.

The first sort of imagined archive that may be of use to graveyard studies are those texts which have been erased by human agents or by natural deterioration—particularly destructive, acid rain is one tricky hybrid combination. Carving mistakes are often times corrected without use of erasure; missing letters are added above in non-standard orthographic positions. Others—like the example below from the Old Mansfield Cemetery (or Mansfield Center Cemetery)—were likely re-used

stones or a removal of *several* mistakes. Chiseled away text that was once present is important to distinguish from the erosive work done by wind, water, and erosive wear.



The typical sinking of stones underground also obscures texts, which are, at least theoretically, retrievable.

"Discovery" of these texts, however, is only possible through invasive procedures; a problem that plagues all somewhat-destructive archaeological work. I should mention that Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR), an extraordinary advance in archaeology, has made visible bodies of knowledge previously only "imagined" to be part of the archaeological record. Wolf stones, which I'll discuss further in my own paper, have been discovered buried deep under the grass in several Connecticut graveyards.

Second, another important unseen archive tied directly to gravestone texts are the larger works from which

## Drunken Archives, Hannah Alpert-Abrams

short headstone verses were drawn or modified for use in the yard. Some of these sources are easily identified and searchable texts, available from any number of editions of several bibles online, make them easy to recontextualize. Other gravestone texts are much more difficult to tie to literature external to the burial ground and, as far as the texts I'm familiar with are concerned, these poems in question may not have "external sources" besides poems within the same lineage that were used at earlier dates.

Finally, the most imaged texts, perhaps, are those not used at all in a particular locale or during a given era. I picture these texts as "inverse archives," the unseen and rejected textual materials. Perhaps the poems posted in the yard would not have been the choices made by the men who cut the stones or the favorites of the recently departed, themselves? What would those people have chosen to say of and inscribe of their lives, their legacies, and their times and places? I imagine these texts as the un-built blueprints for furniture never selected from the catalogues available for customers to flip through in the show room. What texts might be housed in these "inverse archives" and what do the unsung texts sound like?

Implications for imagined archives in graveyard work center, for me at least, on questions of method. What is the place of extrapolation and of representational techniques in "filling in" imagined archives? Is extrapolation from the archaeological record, from the texts as we read them today, a scientific endeavor or a more "strictly" creative pursuit? In calling extrapolation "scientific,"—filling the gaps where lichens have obscured three critical letters or imagining the final stanza that has sunken below the ground—archivists make a statement regarding the degree of authority they claim in their familiarity and experience with related or similar texts. We wield a certain power, which should be commented upon and constantly tested.

## “Longinus’ περὶ θύμου, and the Sublime as a Mode of Cultural Defense”

Saul Alpert-Abrams, Independent Scholar, Oberlin ‘12

I want to talk about categories, a primary concern of the archivist. Longinus organizes his treatise into five categories which aid in sublime writing: great thoughts, strong emotions, figures of thought and speech, noble diction, and word arrangement. But these are not the categories I am interested in. Within each category are descriptions of topics which aid the burgeoning orator, for example metaphors, metathesis, hyperbaton, polyptoton, figures, fantasia, *etc.* However these descriptions do not form the teaching point of his argument. Rather, his method is primary: he presents directly for our eyes a highly curated collection of quotations and frankensteinian quotations, which seem at once to be both integral parts of the sublimity of Longinus’ own treatise, and portraits of the artists from whose pens or mouths they came. They are, as it were, double portraits, and it is to these quotations more than anything that the treatise points, to the moments of expression rather than explanation. The categorizing of these is what I am interested in.

Because of this primary source methodology, coupled with the truncation of the references and their manner of being introduced, a reader of *On the Sublime* will undoubtedly find herself in a circumstance similar to that which occurs when she enters an archive. Neil Hertz, in his essay “A Reading of Longinus,” has described very well this incredible sensation.

“One finds in the treatise a rhetorician’s argument conducted with great intelligence and energy, but one also discovers that it is remarkably easy to lose one’s way, to forget which rhetorical topic is under consideration at a particular point, to find oneself attending to a quotation, a fragment of analysis, a metaphor—some interestingly resonant bit of language that draws one into quite another system of relationships...Longinus interweaves language of his own with that of the authors he admires...it is here, out of the play of text with quotation and of quotations with one another, that the most interesting meaning as well as the peculiar power of the treatise are generated.” (1-2)

The blurring of categories that Hertz mentions—for example between Longinus’ own writing and that of his authors—is an essential element in Longinus’ mode of teaching, and essential as well, it would seem, to his understanding of how to portray reality.

Let us look to an example of this, to show you what I mean. Chapter 9 is supposedly on high-mindedness, “our first source of greatness,” which occurs when an author’s mind is neither humble nor ignoble. At first Longinus concedes that this can be observed through authorial conception, and he gives as proof Homer’s description of the silence of Ajax when Achilles visits him in the underworld. “The silence of Ajax,” he says, “is superb, greater than any speech he could make.” But quickly we realize that simply pointing out the genius of conception is not adequate to describe this high-mindedness, because it exists in the author’s way of thinking. How can we be certain, from examples alone, that a long-dead author really only concerned himself with the thoughts fit for sublime writing? It is a moment when an archive would come in handy.

Instead, in a discussion of Homer, we find a series of quotations from the author, and somewhere tucked among them we are meant to discover his genius as a man. But where?

After a set of examples from the Iliad, Longinus describes Homer in these words:

Mad, as Ares is mad when hurling his spear,  
 As is deadly fire raging on the hills  
 Or in the forest deep; and from his lips  
 Foam started...

At the moment when we might have expected Longinus to give a clear explanation, to get to the heart of the matter, to say “How could Homer have written such a thing, had his mind not been full exclusively of the most noble thoughts?” we instead get another quotation which, like those surrounding it, is itself from the author being described. Thus it serves at least a dual purpose: it is both an example of Homer’s high-mindedness, and a description of Homer’s high-mindedness. In aiming at the reality which one assumes lies behind the surface of the text (here Homer’s genius) Longinus diverts us and can only, through a kind of self-reflexive and incestuous metaphor, aim at and around the central claim. We are left with models and impressions, and we find ourselves in a loop. Reality cannot—or, perhaps, should not—be represented directly, but only through an echo, or rather, an echo of an echo; as Longinus himself says, “Sublimity is the echo of a great mind.” And to further distance the matter, the comparison of Ares with fire is itself only a simile to describe Hector, storming the Achaeans’ ships. Even within the quotation, we are granted at best a feeling of twice-remove. But, as Erwin Schrodinger said, “There is a difference between a shaky or out-of-focus photograph and a snapshot of clouds and fog banks.” This, I think, is a snapshot of a snapshot of clouds and fog banks.

But it is perhaps more true that the sublime coexists comfortably in Longinus’ text in multiple phases or states at once. There is the series of quotations which illustrate Homer’s sublimity; there is Longinus’ description of that sublimity; there is the quotation meant to illustrate Homer; there is the story of the *Iliad*; there is the fire raging on the hills; there is Ares, mad when hurling his spear; there is Hector, raging upon the Achaeans’ ships; there is Homer; there is Homer’s high-mindedness. Yet Longinus never asks us to parse these out, and especially never to try to reconcile them all; the sublime is found in their simultaneous coexistence, and only so. If one were to say, “the sublime is clearly in the authorial conception,” it would be falsely accusing it of not existing anywhere else. The sublime as an abstract is not so easily pinned down either. The word hupsos is used interchangeably with megalofuh, upshlon, MORE, and itself gathers many, seemingly irreconcilable meanings—it is a quality of the mind of the author, it is the authorial conception, it is the phrasing and technique, it is the passage, it is the effect on the audience, and it is something unnamable which pervades all of these, yet can only be located obliquely and at remove, by the blurring of categories. Although it has been the task of scholars since the treatise’s rediscovery in the 17th century to unify and cohere these seemingly contradictory phases, and to pin down exactly what the sublime is (who wouldn’t want to know?) Longinus’ insistence on an oblique style of teaching suggests that we ought not to do so. We ought to let sleeping cats lie.

I say “cats,” rather than the customary “dogs,” because I am thinking again of Schrodinger, and his famous mind game to help illustrate the difficulties of describing quantum mechanics, and to refute the customary model for describing quantum particles as “smeared,” or existing in multiple states at once. The experiment relies on a physical, real, model for an unviewable quantum-mechanical reality, and shows, as Einstein said, that “one cannot get around the assumption of reality, if only one is honest.” The experiment is essentially this: A cat is penned up in a steel chamber, along with a Geiger counter, containing a tiny bit of radioactive substance which may or may not, in the course of an hour, decay; if it does, the counter tube discharges, and through a relay releases a hammer that shatters a small flask of hydrocyanic acid, killing the cat. If one has left this entire system to itself for an hour, one would say that the cat still lives if meanwhile no atom has decayed, and is dead if it has. The equation describing the state of the cat would express this by having in it the living and dead cat mixed or smeared out in

## The Sublime as Cultural Defense, Saul Alpert-Abrams

equal parts, which seems to us clearly absurd. “It is typical of these cases” Schrodinger continues, “that an indeterminacy originally restricted to the atomic domain becomes transformed into macroscopic indeterminacy, which can then be resolved by direct observation. That prevents us from so naively accepting as valid a ‘blurred model’ for representing reality. In itself, it would not embody anything unclear or contradictory. There is a difference between a shaky or out-of-focus photograph and a snapshot of clouds and fog banks.”

Now I imagine that whole dissertations can be written on the relationships between Longinus and quantum mechanics, and the interaction between the disciplines in which both are involved. But I am interested in the comparison because both of them are struggling with similar problems of how to represent reality. Both are grappling with blurred models for representing what is “real.”

Schrodinger’s experiment suggests that a model for describing reality as blurred is challenged by *observing* that model in action, or at least by observing a physical manifestation of that model. He introduces the objective viewer to debunk the ‘smeared’ state of the cat, and by *classifying* it, that is, as dead or alive, he relieves the tension of indeterminacy. But when Longinus introduces an observer, the observer, as I am about to explain, is unable to engage in the reality of what is presented to him. By acknowledging the subjectivity of the viewer, Longinus insists that a blurred reality must, in fact, be presented in order for social norms to be upheld, that is, for the world not to be interrupted and turned upside-down. I begin to wonder how things would have been different if Schrodinger’s observer hadn’t been sure whether the cat were dead or alive.

In a chapter on the use of figures, Longinus proposes a thought experiment of his own to test the introduction of the observer. “The cunning use of figures,” Longinus says, “arouses a peculiar suspicion in the hearer’s mind, a feeling of being deliberately trapped and misled.” We are thrown into a situation in which the use of a figure, a technique of sublime writing, comes under the scrutiny of an observer. But he goes on. “This [suspicion] occurs,” Longinus continues, “when we are addressing a single judge with power of decision, and especially a dictator, a king, or an eminent leader. He is easily angered by the thought that he is being outwitted like a silly child by the expert speaker’s pretty figures; he sees in the fallacious reasoning a personal insult; sometimes he may altogether give way to savage exasperation, but even if he controls his anger he remains impervious to persuasion.” These effects, one might imagine, are undesirable.

So how do we prevent this suspicion in the ruler? It is easy, because it depends on how the figure *appears*, and not what it truly *is*: you need simply to conceal that you are using figures whatsoever. And how does one do this? With the sublime. This concealment suggests that two states *appear* to exist at once, and that it is simply our labeling of them, based on our best observation, that determines their effect: the orator is perfectly conscious of his use of figures—as would be, presumably, anyone who has read Longinus’ treatise—while the tyrant, although hearing the figure, is left unaware. Longinus seems to want, even require, that when there is a disparity of power, multiple states exist at the same time in order for social order to be upheld, that is, for the king, bringer of civilization, not to become wild, and the *pater patriae*, father of the fatherland, not to feel like a child. He affects this by concealing the categories into which the orator’s speech fits, by leaving them in a state of absolute indetermination. Like in the cat experiment, when the tyrant opens the box, he finds a single state: there is no figure, no trick, only pure and valid persuasion. But he is biased. On the other hand the ideal observer—the sublime author, that is—is able to see both phases at once: figure, and not, since it is he who has affected the trick. In this way, he has the upper hand, though surreptitiously. Unlike in Schrodinger’s scenario, in this case the tension between reality and expectation, or model, is relieved not by valid

## The Sublime as Cultural Defense, Saul Alpert-Abrams

observation, but by manipulated observation. This harmonizes with Longinus' own oblique and removed style of teaching: reality is not so easily represented, and is best represented at a distance, through an echo, or a double photograph. It brings to mind the Emily Dickinson poem:

Tell all the Truth but tell it slant --  
 Success in Circuit lies  
 Too bright for our infirm Delight  
 The Truth's superb surprise

As Lightning to the Children eased  
 With explanation kind  
 The Truth must dazzle gradually  
 Or every man be blind --

I believe that Longinus desires this concealment for cultural reasons, and that choosing the tyrant as listener is not simply practical: after all, as Timothy Whitmarsh has pointed out, the treatise is written by a clever Greek to a Roman. There is a sense that something cultural is at stake, some defense of the greatness of Greek identity (all his examples, after all, come from Greek writers, and he mentions Cicero, a Roman, only in passing). This defense is necessary in light of Roman political dominance; an orator, a beacon of culture, before a potentially censorial tyrant and despot.

Longinus' interest in coexisting states and categories is subversive in that it permits expression of identity: that of the unnamable genius of Homer, or that of the Greek orator before the Roman ruler. It doesn't aim to overthrow power and shatter reality, but it allows for a sense of purpose and a belief in cultural continuity uninterrupted by the changing of governmental regimes. And to do so, Longinus asks his orator to use oblique and blurring language, as he does, and multiple simultaneous classifications, to best represent reality as he sees it. One would like to think that this disjoining is an outcome of the chaos of 1<sup>st</sup> century AD Rome. In any case, he asks us, as readers, to question the objectiveness of our analytic powers, and most of all, to question whether our bias and position of authority necessarily allows us to see only part of the picture, only one phase or category of many. The truly sublime author—the perfect curator, Longinus himself—acts as the magician of categories, just as the treatise itself seems to defy categories: is it a rhetorical treatise? a pedagogical handbook? a literary criticism? a cultural commentary? But anyone who has read Longinus' treatise, and so learns how he himself can use the sublime, is able to see many categories at once: we would recognize the figures in the orator's speech, *and* his attempt to conceal them. Sublimity is not so much a greatness in writing, as it is an acutely perceiving, almost divine nature, which allows us to glance the unglanceable, to observe and comprehend the infinitely overlapping categories into which all things fit, and how the biases of men affect their ability to see these categories. In sum, it allows us to be the perfect archivists.

### Rachel's Response to "Longinus' περὶ Ὑψους, and the Sublime as a Mode of Cultural Defense"

Building categories, especially hierarchical ones, engages subjectively positioned meanings. If we bear this in mind, that *our* categories are one way among many for organizing information, little violence is committed on the part of the archivist. It is when categories begin to become reified or naturalized that we must be on the alert. As I'll discuss further in my paper, I've thought a bit about some of the repercussions of using scientific software to map relations between poems and distributions of gravestone texts as idiosyncratic aesthetic objects. What does it mean to call these poem types "species" or "genera"? Who has the authority to "scientize" art?

It might be helpful here to bring up a subject I see as related, where a science, or at least a pseudo science of taxonomy intersects with physical artistic cultural objects. This is the field of organology, a subdiscipline of ethnomusicology developed primarily by German comparative musicologists in the early twentieth-century. Organology is a system for describing and classifying musical instruments into hierarchical taxonomies based on how the instrument produces sound: membranophones produce sound by way of a stretched membrane or skin, aerophones produce sound by way of a vibrating column of air, chordophones by a taught string, et cetera, you get the idea. Why am I bringing up instruments? Organology is a wholly *Western European* defined system for meaning making. There are any numbers of alternate instrument categorization schemata in China, India, Peru, The Central African Republic of Congo, and elsewhere. No one system is in any way more accurate than the other.

It is with these types of culturally constructed categories in mind that I position my work as science in some way or another. Making a decided effort to build categories that question directionality and Darwinian models of "development" are important, as is, and I'll discuss in my paper, leaving open potential for overlapping and multi-faceted meanings. For me, one key element in employing categories—boundary-making work, essentially—is retaining transparency in descriptions of how these categories came to be. Categories must always highlight the agents who created them, the purposes for which they were constructed, the means by which they may be re-invented and re-configured, and their detailed description so that future researchers may accurately repeat studies or use these same categories to ask related questions. However subjective you see my graveyard poem taxonomies, I've kept detailed records of how I structured and built this taxonomy. My methods are traceable which de-naturalizes and positions them as subjective productions of my own reasoning and invention.

In response to your discussion of overlapping categories, Saul, a chance at a glimpse of the sublime, I certainly hope to get at something *interesting* and something new, if not sublime, through seeing graveyard texts as complexly categorically laden with myriad meanings. Of course, the accumulation and description of every characteristic or aspect of the artifact, overlapping or otherwise, drives us towards maddening ends. We needn't become Borges' cartographer, documenting the topography of the world in such detail so as our maps fit one-to-one in measure to the earth itself. We must settle for the paucity of representation.

Of course, we all too often conceal motivations for choosing particular questions to ask, the selective data we choose to collect, and the organization we use to make sense of these pieces. Even isolating poems and biblical verses as "texts" on the gravestone as "texted artifact" privileges certain graveyard-goers. In New England in the mid eighteenth-century, a significant portion of the population remained illiterate. Perhaps these readers may have made sense of these poems as images or only in relation to

## The Sublime as Cultural Defense, Saul Alpert-Abrams

iconography. Even isolating the objects of our studies as singular entities poses difficulties and is bound up with social and cultural implications.

### **Hannah's Response to "Longinus' περὶ ὕψους, and the Sublime as a Mode of Cultural Defense"**

My work on Bolaño was inspired by an interest in the reception that Bolano has received internationally. I was interested in looking at the varying ways that people talk about him in the sites of his work: Chile, Mexico, Spain, and, since we're here, the United States.

My findings were not exactly startling, but they did provoke some questions for me. I found three articles that I think point to the core of the issue. The first, Sarah Pollack's article "Latin America Translated (Again): Roberto Bolaño's *The Savage Detectives* in the United States" looks at *The Savage Detectives'* appearance on Oprah and subsequent storming of the North American literary scene. For Pollack, North American readers use Bolaño to "translate" Latin American culture more broadly, a project that she finds unfaithful to the original text.

Similarly, Diana Eguía Armenteros' "Un necesario cambio de términos. La recepción española ante la obra de Roberto Bolaño" looks at Bolaño's position in Spain as an icon of "Latin-Americaness," using the figure of Bolaño to draw similar conclusions about the uneasy relationship between Spain and its former colonies.

Finally, "Los detectives salvajes de Roberto Bolaño: Revisión de su recepción crítica en Chile," by Carolina Andrea Navarrete González, offers a review of criticism produced by Chilean readers. This essay is unusual because it doesn't make any claims about the relationship between Chile and Mexico, Chile and Latin America, or Chile and Bolaño, contenting itself with a summary of what the author considers to be the most interesting readings of Bolaño from Chilean critics. It is as though the project of reading Bolaño in Chile does not need justification. By omission, the article implies that Bolaño's Chileanness is a given, and of course Bolaño was Chilean by birth.

What drew my attention, in other words, was the way that these three articles seek to lay claim to an authentic reading of Bolano rooted in nationality. Only by first categorizing his work in terms of the nation, it seems, can we begin to interpret him. Saul asked about the consequences of recategorizing an archive or a text, and I think here we see an academic battle of sorts over the authority to categorize.

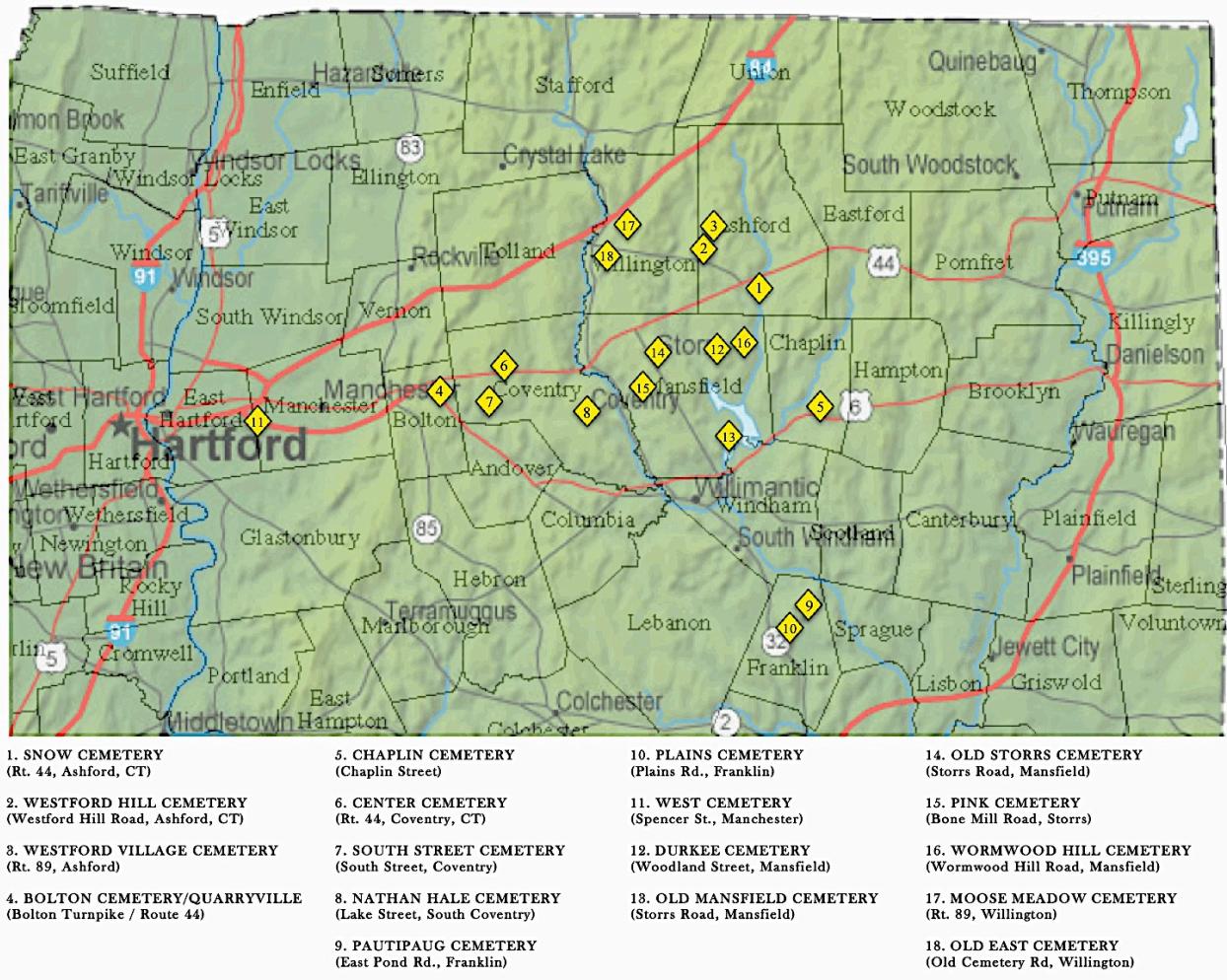
This battle works at crosspurposes with my own analysis, which seeks a cross-cutting or extra-national means of approaching Bolaño's work. What I find distressing is that rather than interacting, these two interpretations seem to coexist in peaceful ignorance of the other. I say Bolaño's text is best read extra-nationally; other people say it is Chilean, or Mexican, or Latin American. Furthermore: I say, along with other scholars, that there are disturbing political implications to the effort to nationalize Bolaño.

And the public discourse goes on.

### “Natural Archives,” Poems, and Stories from Beyond the Grave(yard)

Rachel Colwell, University of California, Berkeley

Recently, my thoughts on graveyard studies and, more specifically, my work with collected graveyard texts are ever-entangled with ideas of ethnographic fieldwork—travel, dwelling, and study that looms large in my near future as an ethnomusicologist in training. Readings in my own discipline and in anthropology have pushed me to ask important questions about my role in *this* project as collector, analyst, and most pertinent here, archivist of the graveyard poems and biblical verses I have amassed as data in my research. Somehow, it is always during the tedious labors—the hours spent transcribing particularly wind-worn verses and calculating proportions for drawing up poem type battleship curves by hand—that I wonder *what* exactly I am trying to get at by using scientific tools to tap into or listen properly to stories, lived meanings, circulations, and shifting aesthetics in texts beholden to and imbedded in material culture mediations of death and death ways.



**Figure 1.** Graveyard Sites.

Composite map built from Connecticut Town Map (CT.gov) and a Connecticut Road and Topography Map ([thathouseinmilford.com](http://thathouseinmilford.com))

Besides the question of whether what I'm doing is "science," and I'll return to this question later, if I am an *archivist*, what responsibilities do I have to honor or problematize "the archive"—the graveyard sites themselves or my transcriptions, mimetic representations I've re-inscribed—as fixed or as dynamic? What work need be done to examine the relation between the texted cultural artifacts and transcriptions? Further, what sorts of symbolic violence are committed by the archivist when she overlooks what is lost in badly drawn representations, in establishing canons of texts which, under the banner of "science" gloss erasures and interpretive guesswork in data collection?

Gravestone texts and archives of transcriptions afford a relatively "safe" space for approaching and reconciling schisms between texts and their mimetic representations. Graveyards—where the only persons or bodies at risk of injury or disenfranchisement may be harmed only symbolically—are helpful spaces to begin working through the ways we objectify "others," and their cultural artifacts (music, stories, knowledge) through particular essentializing gestures inherent, to some degree, to ethnographic research and anthropology. Are the dead of eighteenth and nineteenth-century Connecticut "others" comparable to geographically and culturally "distant" peoples today? In Lowenthal's "The Past is a foreign country," 1985, a widely-read text in anthropology, distant times are analogously compared with physical space. Lowenthal says "yes;" approaches to and challenges in learning of distant places are important to keep in mind when studying peoples and cultural practice of the past.

Pursuing responsible methods for representing, relating, and analyzing material artifacts beyond flat, lifeless representation, has allowed me to examine more closely my discomfort with ethnographic methods of site demarcation, circumscription of geographic and temporal place in order to localize and nativize certain peoples and communities, clearing the field of important data dismissed as noise, muting of multivocality through inscription of realities as "reality," and—the musical counterpart to grave poem transcription, as I see it—schizophrenia, the abstraction of musical soundings from their sources and from fully contextualized music-making through recording technologies. Rather than sterilizing, isolating, and dismembering, anthropologist James Clifford writes in *Routes*, his book on travel and translation, "reworking the field must mean multiplying the range of acceptable routes and practices" (Clifford, 78). We should do our best to be fully aware of our fear of the ever-receding "tradition" of the exotic other and the anxieties of loss and death, of deterioration, and of change that drive so many preservationist collection agendas, and archival projects. My own collection, besides having been spurred by aesthetic appreciation and intellectual curiosity, does seek, no matter the paucity of representations, to preserve some form of these texts before they sink deeper into the earth, crack under their own weight, or are erased beyond comprehension by the elements.

Well, I've painted a somewhat troubling picture thus far, but this is a narrative of liberation, of latent meanings and relations re-borned and re-imagined, of story re-readings and new ways of remembering. For too long, historians have attended to graveyards as fixed, bounded, and discrete sites, as what I've taken to calling "natural archives" seemingly preexistent and frozen in spaces and time. Actively working to "clear the field" in preparation for unbiased, controlled, and sanitized data collection, scholars like Slater and Tucker took to photographing headstones in "the field" with what looks like a white cloth backdrop. In these photographs here, you can see the shadows of the stones cast by the sun or the camera's flash.



Figure 10 Israel Ela, Haverhill, Mass., 1700.



Figure 31 John Hartshorne Junr and Joanna Hartshorne, Haverhill, Mass., 1708.

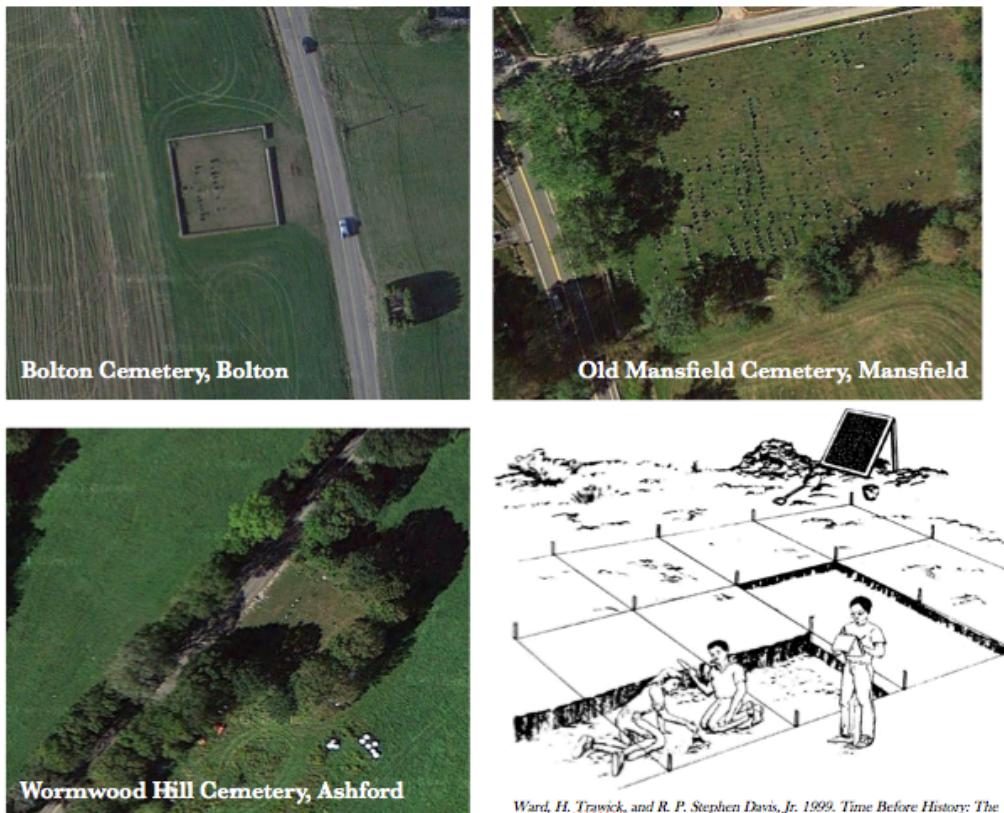
**Figure 2.** Two examples of Slater and Tucker's style of gravestone photography (page 91).

These sterilized frames do “boundary work” of their own, are carry-over from museum curatorial practice, and are an artifact of scientific study. These sorts of methods work to dislocate the texted artifact from its rightful place. As Clifford warns, “in the past, clearing spaces of scientific work have been constituted through the suppression of cosmopolitan experiences, especially those of the people under study” (Clifford, 78). In one visit, a synchronic snap shot of the history of a burial ground, it is no surprise that a passer by might assume that “inactive” graveyards are dead, that they are void of movement and mobility, as archaeological sites. However, in doing so, we forget and undo diachronic stories; we foreclose on potential understandings of the days when new additions to the yard, bodily and poetic, were commonplace. We forsake the land as momentarily used and then abandoned. We call a place a space.

Identifying the graveyard as the *only* unit of analysis or, similarly, bounding the graveyard as a singular locale, myopically disregards burial grounds as geographically, topographically, culturally, economically, and socio-politically situated spaces, built to be *places* only in their situation and human-use performances as place. Focusing on circulation, particularly in regards to the complexly interwoven histories of the provenience (the location of discovery at a site) and provenance (the chain of ownership and origins)<sup>1</sup> of a headstones’ material and carving; the descent of poems’ textual content, orthography, and stylistic specificities; and texts’ relations to iconographic imagery in the yard rely upon broader, more comparative, and less fixed lenses to be thoroughly and accurately understood. As Clifford advocates, “If we rethink culture and its science, anthropology, in terms of travel, then the organic, naturalizing bias of the term ‘culture’—seen as a rooted body that grows, lives, dies, and so on—is questioned. Constructed and disputed *historicitie*s, sites of displacement, interference, and interaction, come more sharply into view” (Clifford’s emphasis, 25). In the case of eighteenth and nineteenth Eastern Connecticut graveyard poems, patterns of occurrence, viewed across a *number* of locales and time periods, not only narrate shifting conceptions of life and death, but stand as well time-stamped and geographically grounded records of human and literary migration, borrowing, descent, diversification, creative innovation, misremembering, and imitation.

<sup>1</sup> This is Rosemary Joyce’s usage as in her recent paper: “From Place to Place: Provenience, Provenance, and Archaeology” at the “Current Questions in Authenticity” Conference, University of California, Berkeley, Spring 2011.

It is easy to see why so many scholars have isolated the graveyard site as bounded, and localized. Originally laid out by masons, surveyors, and farmers, the regularity of the standard rectangular stonewalled burial ground lends itself immediately to utility as a “natural,” if man-made site.



**Figure 3.** The graveyard bounded and delineated site. Maps from GoogleMaps.com

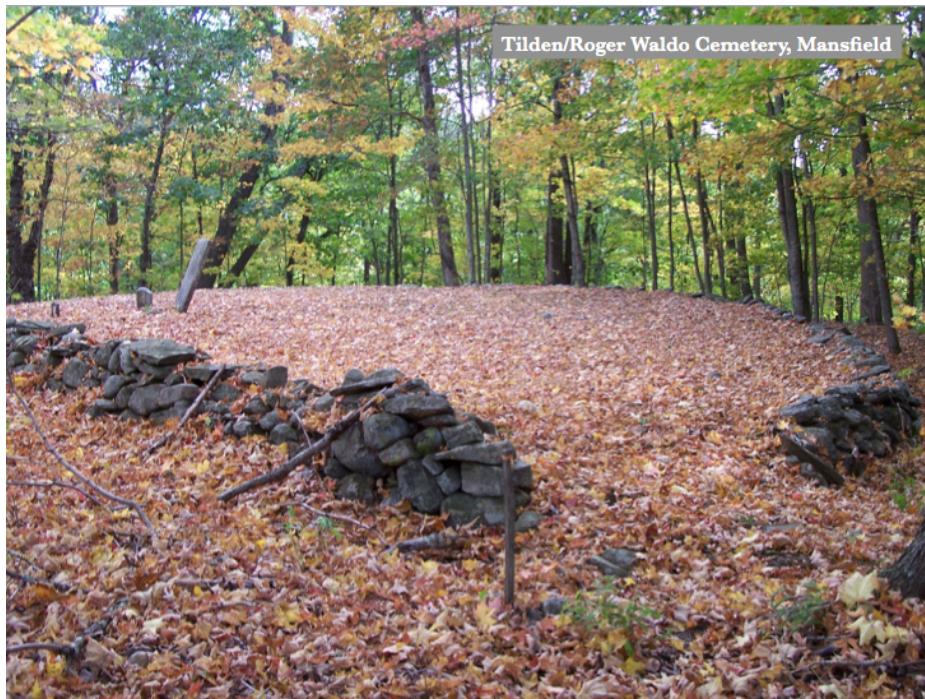


**Figure 4.** An example of a typical rectangular graveyard (Durkee Cemetery, Mansfield, CT)

*Ward, H. Trawick, and R. P. Stephen Davis, Jr. 1999. Time Before History: The Archaeology of North Carolina. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press. [Figure 5.18.]*

Natural Archives, Rachel Colwell

Round graveyards are a rarity; there is only one to my knowledge among the twenty-one burial grounds in Mansfield, Connecticut and no others in the county.



**Figure 5.** An atypical round graveyard surrounded by forest on all sides  
(Tilden/Roger Waldo Cemetery, Mansfield, CT)

No less important, the orthogonal rows of headstones, if read as texted stone tablets, are readily imagined as pre-arranged and ordered books on the shelf of a library or literary archive.



**Figure 6.** The graveyard as archive *in situ* with stone texted “books.” Upper Left:  
Plains Cemetery, Franklin; Lower Left: South Street Cemetery, Coventry;  
Right: Old Mansfield Cemetery, Mansfield.

New England's stonewalls once demarcated agricultural and domestic private properties. Today, they wind their way aimlessly through secondary forests, along streams and roads, flanking pastures long since overgrown to lush, dense woods. Crumbled at times to scattered boulders, stonewalls surrounding graveyards once bore iron hooks to which visitors hitch their horses.



**Figure 7.** Typical graveyard stonewalls. Left: Westford Village Cemetery, Willington; Right: Gurleyville Cemetery, Mansfield, CT.

Up until 1743, when the last wolf in Connecticut was shot in her own den, “wolf stones,” large flat slabs—borrowed, I suspect, from along the graveyard periphery wall—were used to protect bodies buried cheaply in shallow graves from scavengers (see Fig. 8). Redundant by the 1740s, most of these stones have since been returned to the walls. Stonewalls are still significant spatial boundary delineations today. Considerate visitors placed toppled and misplaced and toppled footstones alongside graveyard walls. Now and then, shaped sandstone, slate, or marble slab monuments integrated into stonewalls, stick out like sore thumbs amidst oddly shaped granites once painstakingly removed from the earth for plowing.



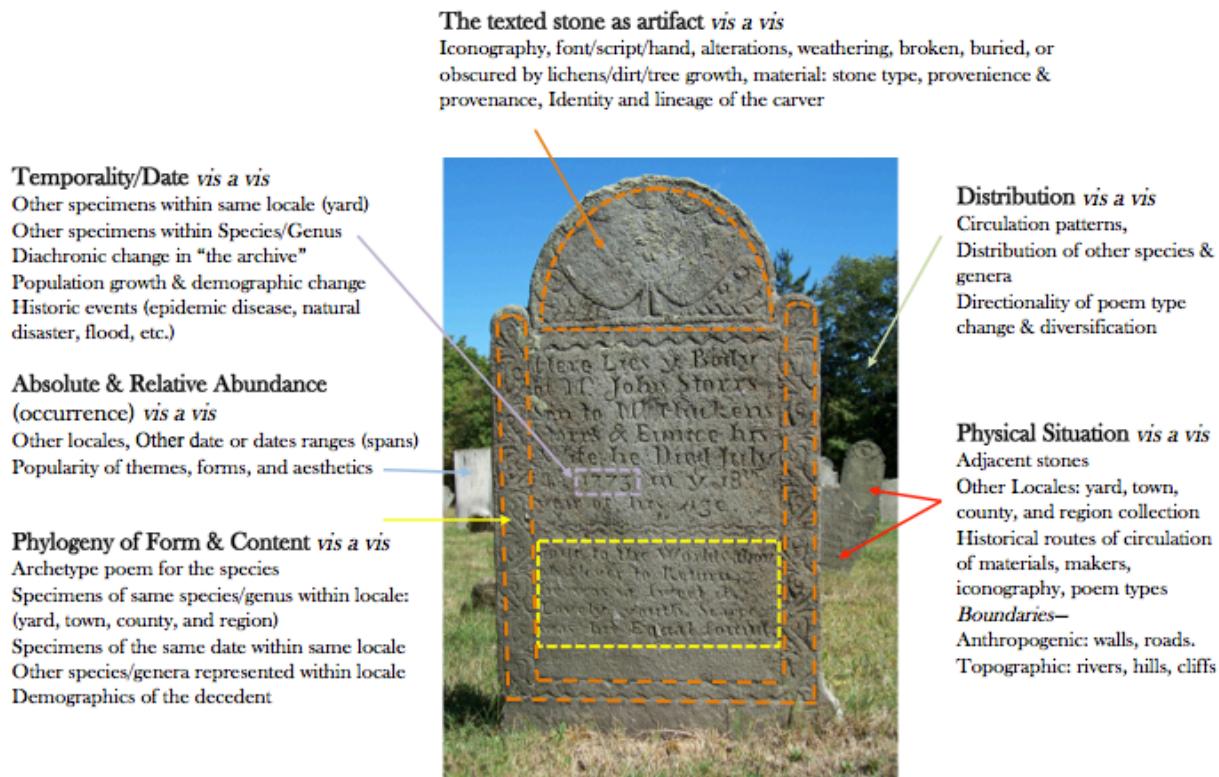
**Figure 8.** Walls as boundaries. Left: Pautipaug Cemetery, Franklin; Upper Right: Spring Hill Cemetery, Mansfield; Lower Right: Iva Arpin, historian, besides a wolf stone in Mystic, Connecticut (Hartford Courant).

But there have been further, perhaps more significant stone, bodily, and textual relocations. Several of the small graveyards in my hometown, Mansfield Connecticut, have played host to “relocated” graves from sites since abandoned. The specific reasons for these relocations are largely unknown, but, given the value of tillable land in a region of particularly stony ground and acidic soil, smaller burial grounds were likely “relocated” to larger nearby sites for economic, agricultural reasons. Clearly, fixity and permanence in the archive are troubled here.

Un-binding the graveyard as a closed, fixed, as a “naturally” preexistent archive *in-situ*, is a critical move towards gravestone texts as richly and thickly contextualized cultural artifacts, as memorials situated in time, culturally modified spaces, topographically distinct place, and as part of stylistic lineages of descent and creative innovation. This diagram, and I know there’s a lot here, helps to illustrate the dozens of contextual and relational aspects of a single grave poem on a single headstone (see Fig. 9).

But what methodologies afford holistic reckonings of texts? How do we do them justice as multi-dimensional and as complexly positioned? The quantity of data contained and tied to each text is considerable, and seemingly expanding. Some sort of quantitative techniques seem a necessary evil here, even to the archivist.

### Relational Aspects of the Grave Poem



**Figure 9.** Relational aspects of the grave poem.

As the daughter of two ecologists, I was fortunate to have grown up knowing that there excellent tools used by biologists across the globe for logging and organizing complicated sets of scientific data. In the mid 1990s, my father, Robert Colwell designed a piece of open source software called “Biota,” a relational data basing system intended for biodiversity data. Taken up by over a thousand biogeographers and ecologists in forty countries.

But it was Metin Erin’s particularly innovative use of my father’s other program, EstimateS, that got me thinking. Erin is not a biogeographer by trade; he is an archaeologist working with PaleoIndian projectile points. Seeing a social scientist using one of my Dad’s programs was a real “well duh” moment for me. Of course, it was Biota, a hierarchically searchable *relational* database, that I needed in order to make sense of the hundreds of poems I had, up until this point, transcribed and simply listed along hundreds of pieces of data: dates, sites, cross streets, double burials with a single headstone, stones with two poems, etc, information I’d haphazardly crammed into a *non-relational* flat file. As it turned out, what I needed was a platform originally designed for invertebrate biogeography in tropical rainforests—which were, not incidentally at all, *also* studies of distributions of species across time and place—and flexible enough to accommodate texted artifacts, projectile points, and insects. How better to thoroughly retain the imbricated relational qualities of the data with which I was concerned; how better than through ecology software to get at qualitative questions regarding circulation, mobility, and stylistic change over time by way of quantitative data.

As explained in the manual, in Biota, virtually any number of parameters, termed *specimen-based biodiversity data*, “not only taxonomic information (Species, Genus, Family, and so on) for each specimen or group of specimens, but also collection and location data (collector or observer, collection or observation date, method, site characteristics, map coordinates, and names for localities and political units)” are hierarchically searchable (Colwell 2004: Chapter 2, page 1). This means localities needn’t be just sites, but are searchable as “nested” locals, (yard, town, county, state) and can even be tied to elevations and geographic coordinates. Equally more important, taxonomies afford a variety of scales and decrees of similarity between individual iterations of the “same” poem and relation between poem types. Here, for instance, I’ve called up all of the specimens of a given genera organized by species, by town, by graveyard locale, and by date.

**Specimen Records**

Double click a Specimen to view or modify record

Specimen Code	Genus	Species	Collection Code	Collector	Date Coll.	Loc. Code	Host	Additio	Age	Img	Aux
ASSN001	As You Are Now So	As You Are Now So	ASSN001	Rachel Colwell	1769	ASSN			0	0	
ASSN026	As You Are Now So	As You Are Now So	ASSN026	Rachel Colwell	1810	ASSN			0	0	
ASVW005	As You Are Now So	As You Are Now So	ASVW005	Rachel Colwell	1816	ASVW			0	0	
B0BC004	As You Are Now So	As You Are Now So	B0BC004	Rachel Colwell	1801	B0BC			0	0	
CHCC006	As You Are Now So	As You Are Now So	CHCC006	Rachel Colwell	1789	CHCC			0	0	
C0SS010b	As You Are Now So	As You Are Now So	C0SS010b	Rachel Colwell	1785	C0SS			0	0	
FRPL001	As You Are Now So	As You Are Now So	FRPL001	Rachel Colwell	1762	FRPA			0	0	
MABH1010	As You Are Now So	As You Are Now So	MABH1009	Rachel Colwell	1809	MABH			0	0	
MABH1009	As You Are Now So	As You Are Now So	MABH1009	Rachel Colwell	1809	MABH			0	0	
MADU001	As You Are Now So	As You Are Now So	MADU001	Rachel Colwell	1802	MADU			0	0	
MADU002b	As You Are Now So	As You Are Now So	MADU002b	Rachel Colwell	1802	MADU			0	0	
MA0S023	As You Are Now So	As You Are Now So	MA0S023	Rachel Colwell	1802	MA0S			0	0	
MA0S024	As You Are Now So	As You Are Now So	MA0S024	Rachel Colwell	1804	MA0S			0	0	
MA0S025	As You Are Now So	As You Are Now So	MA0S025	Rachel Colwell	1814	MA0S			0	0	
MARI002	As You Are Now So	As You Are Now So	MARI002	Rachel Colwell	1786	MARI			0	0	
W10E035	As You Are Now So	As You Are Now So	W10E035	Rachel Colwell	1809	W10E			0	0	

Var Field 1 Var Field 2

16 Records

Change Var Fields Add Specimen Sort Print Aux Fields  
Display Images Scroll Page Delete Selection Sub-Selection Done

**Poem type**

Code for each individual poem (“texted artifact”)

Locale imbedded in each specimen code

**Poem subtype**

**Burial Date**

Code for graveyard and town locales  
*in this example, “AS” stands for “Ashford, CT” and “SN” stands for “Snow Cemetery”*

**Specimen Records**

Double click a Specimens to view or modify record

Specimen Code	Genus	Species	Collection Code	Collector	Date Coll.	Loc. Code	Host	Additio	Age	Img	Aux
ASSN001	As You Are Now So	As You Are Now So	ASSN001	Rachel Colwell	1769	ASSN			0	0	
ASSN026	As You Are Now So	As You Are Now So	ASSN026	Rachel Colwell	1810	ASSN			0	0	
ASVW005	As You Are Now So	As You Are Now So	ASVW005	Rachel Colwell	1816	ASVW			0	0	
B0BC004	As You Are Now So	As You Are Now So	B0BC004	Rachel Colwell	1801	B0BC			0	0	
CHCC006	As You Are Now So	As You Are Now So	CHCC006	Rachel Colwell	1789	CHCC			0	0	
C0SS010b	As You Are Now So	As You Are Now So	C0SS010b	Rachel Colwell	1785	C0SS			0	0	
FRPL001	As You Are Now So	As You Are Now So	FRPL001	Rachel Colwell	1762	FRPA			0	0	
MABH1010	As You Are Now So	As You Are Now So	MABH1009	Rachel Colwell	1809	MABH			0	0	
MABH1009	As You Are Now So	As You Are Now So	MABH1009	Rachel Colwell	1809	MABH			0	0	
MADU001	As You Are Now So	As You Are Now So	MADU001	Rachel Colwell	1802	MADU			0	0	
MADU002b	As You Are Now So	As You Are Now So	MADU002b	Rachel Colwell	1802	MADU			0	0	
MA0S023	As You Are Now So	As You Are Now So	MA0S023	Rachel Colwell	1802	MA0S			0	0	
MA0S024	As You Are Now So	As You Are Now So	MA0S024	Rachel Colwell	1804	MA0S			0	0	
MA0S025	As You Are Now So	As You Are Now So	MA0S025	Rachel Colwell	1814	MA0S			0	0	
MARI002	As You Are Now So	As You Are Now So	MARI002	Rachel Colwell	1786	MARI			0	0	
W10E035	As You Are Now So	As You Are Now So	W10E035	Rachel Colwell	1809	W10E			0	0	

Var Field 1 Var Field 2

16 Records

Specimen Records

Record Number 1 of 1 Created 2010-07-17 Last changed 2010-07-17 Changed By Kevin Author or Poem Source Kevin Maker Type Status Abundance

Classification Genus As You Are Now So Once Was I Species As You Are Now So Once Was I Family

Collection Data Call. by Rachel Colwell Date 1769 Locality Snow Cemetery

Detailed and searchable nesting localities

**Figure 10.** Examples of Biota’s relational database potential for graveyard studies.

Just in case you think now that I was planted here to shameless champion my Dad's software, I should say there are plenty of problems that come with pretending individual texts or artifacts are organisms. Besides that fact that some fields in Biota are not re-label-able—I was able to easily change "sex" to "gender," but still had to use "collection date" as a stand-in for "burial date"—building phylogenies mandates particular decisions in lumping together or splitting apart types and requires arbitrary choices in defining the "basic" forms or "archetypes" for each poem.

It is worth grappling with what it might mean to be an archivist and what responsibilities I have toward the texts, memorial cultural artifacts, the people to whom these texts gave solace and warning, and those for whom these monuments remain meaningful remembrance. If I've come to any conclusion, it is that in choosing to do archival work, that is, in amassing documentation and transcriptions of these texts, I need not dismember and dislocate them from their contexts, situations, relation, and mobility. These are crucial and holistic concepts I've internalized as a cultural anthropologist and ethnomusicologist in training, *and* as an aspiring biogeographer. Just ask an archaeologist, we humans integrate and modify tools for more efficient, more effective, or novel uses; this is what folks have always done to make a living. Engaging techniques inter-disciplinarily is one important way to tell larger, more multi-vocal, more accurate, and more meaningful stories from beyond the graveyard. These are the ways to acknowledge boundaries and begin imagining the ways we've always traversed them. So, fellow panelists, if you would like to comment, in brief, what responsibilities might we have as archivists to bound or unbind our archives or to imagine our archives as fixed/static or dynamic?

Thanks to the Mansfield Historical Society for information and encouragement, Robert Colwell for Biota assistance, and UT Austin for having me.

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*All photographs by Rachel Colwell unless otherwise noted*

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Natural Archives, Rachel Colwell

### **Hannah's Response to "Natural Archives," Poems, and Stories from Beyond the Grave(yard)**

I'm interested in drawing out the implications of the graveyard as archive for a moment. Rachel is reading gravestones as though they were the manuscripts in an archive. They function as both objects and texts, just as a book or a letter might. But they also function as placeholders, and I wanted to consider this possibility a little more closely. Every gravestone corresponds to a body that was once alive. We can consider the ways in which that correspondence functions: is the stone metonymic? Mimetic? Representative? Interpretive?

We can also ask: if the stone corresponds to the book in the library, what does the body correspond to? Is there a once-living text to which the work refers? (We can imagine this in a Barthesian sense, considering the correlation between work and text.) Is that once-living text decomposing, disappearing, even as the work rises up to replace it, becomes a text in its own right, and begins to lose its form?

Conceiving of the archive as a graveyard allows us to imagine the possibility of a textual lifecycle.

In *The Savage Detectives*, Lima and Belano visit the home of Amadeo Salvatierra, a poet who was linked to Cesarea Tinajero. They drink bottles of mezcal and look at old forgotten magazines from the poet's personal archives. It is like an archival séance, the resuscitation of these dead texts by way of the works.

Unlike archival research, which we imagine as scientific and empirical, the séance is mystical and spiritual, breaking down the borders of the real. This effect is heightened by the increasing intoxication of the characters over the course of the evening. Salvatierra becomes confused, losing sight of the boundaries between past and present, self and other, in this mystical space, surrounded by manuscripts that have been brought back to life.

When I say the book is brought back to life, I refer to two distinct acts. The first is the act of reading and reinterpreting texts that have been archived. The second is storytelling, remembering the subjective, emotional context in which those texts were first encountered, the way we might visit a grave. Through the séance, then, the text is reborn both on an analytic and an emotive plane.

That rebirth, of course, is only as temporary as this chance encounter between poets; it only lasts as long as the liquor stays in their system. It is destructive, the way liquor is destructive, and it leaves them hung over. Is this where we are left when we finish our archival research?

**Saul's Response Response to "Natural Archives,' Poems, and Stories from Beyond the Grave(yard)**

There is no question in my mind that Longinus thinks of his archive of quotations as living. In fact, he often employs language comparing the text to a body, and even his own treatise to the body, the treatise which contains his entire archive. In fact, his treatise is prompted by a threat posed by "certain men," that a critical essay will, in fact, "kataskeleutotai," or "skeletonize," a text. Longinus is deeply offended, claiming that the opposite will necessarily happen.

But the moment that Longinus is most interested in within a story, and in his own treatise as well, is the moment just before death, the point, as Neil Hertz points out, "where the near-fatal stress of passion can be thought of turning into--as indistinguishable from—the energy that is constituting the [text]." So, for example, when Homer describes a scene of sailors buffeted by a storm, Longinus says that "instead of dismissing the danger once and for all, [Homer] depicts the sailors as being all the time, again and again, with every wave on the very brink of death," and he affects this by compressing two contractions: "upo" and "ek." That perpetual state of half-deadness, of continually being saved, is enacted in Longinus' own treatise, when near the end, his chapters begin to shorten, and he can speak of nothing except effects which will, in fact, ruin the sublime, like short phrases, when long ones are needed. Some have seen this as laziness on his part, or a sort of bipolar lack of enthusiasm. But I see it as a purposeful deterioration, which can only be saved, as it were, by the reader's own knowledge of how to bring about the sublime: in the final chapter, he offers them the option to do this, if they have learned best his techniques, through the saving of a metaphorical literary body. So as we come to the end of Longinus' treatise, we realize that a knowledge of the sublime is, as I was saying earlier, what allows us to act as constant preservationists of this material, as keeping alive--if just barely--the body of knowledge which constitutes Longinus' archive, and by doing it in the face of near destruction, near annihilation, perhaps by a politically dominant other. Once again, the sublime allows us to be archivists, if we believe, with Longinus, that texts are bodies, and bodies are worth preserving.