The James Merrill Digital Archive: Channeling the Collaborative Spirit(s)

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CONTENT

THE BOOK OF EPHRAIM

- Merrill’s first epic poem, part of his Pulitzer Prize-winning book, Divine Comedies
- Chronicles the Ouija sessions in which Merrill and his partner converse with the spirit, Ephraim

OUIJA TRANSCRIPTS

- Merrill transcribed each Ouija session by hand, as it happened, then typed the transcripts up later for use in his poetry
- The James Merrill Papers hold over 500 leaves of transcripts, all available in the James Merrill Digital Archive

MERRILL IN PROCESS

- Notes, manuscripts and typescripts documenting the development of each section of the poem
- Curated by Washington University graduate students – a work-in-progress

CODING

- Transcription of handwritten notes, possibly using Omeka’s Scripto plug-in
- Digitize transcripts, drafts, and other materials (over 1,700 pages so far)
- OCR and transcription work on typeset drafts with handwritten notes (Section A done so far)
- TEI encoding of all typescript drafts (Section A done so far)
- Set up comparison of draft versions using Juxta collation software

COMING UP...

- Transcription of handwritten notes, possibly using Juxta collation software
- Move section-by-section through the poem to OCR, transcribe, and encode drafts in TEI
- Demonstrate comparisons between versions using Juxta collation software
- Add content from other drafts in the James Merrill Papers
- Add content from Yale University’s Stephen Yenser Papers Relating to James Merrill

COLLABORATORS

FACULTY

- Provided initial direction for project
- Help set priorities
- Recruit undergraduate and graduate students
- Liaison with Merrill’s literary executors

STAFF

- Organize and provide access to paper materials
- Train students on scanning, transcription, and encoding
- Create TEI XML document models for transcriptions
- Oversee creation of Omeka digital exhibit, including design, custom JavaScript coding for navigation, and configuration of Omeka plug-ins

STUDENTS

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<l><del rend="strikethrough"><unclear reason="illegible" quantity="2" unit="words"></del></l>

<l>I most <unclear reason="illegible" quantity="1" unit="chars"></l>

<l>The <del type="instant_correction" rend="crossed out" rendition="#typewriter">very</del> things I most yearned to transcend.</l>

<l>My knack was for <soCalled>"word-painting."</soCalled> I <subst rendition="#pencil">wrote</subst></l>

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