

The Poetess Archive Database

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Abstract

Since it was first mounted in 2005, the Poetess Archive has housed a bibliography of materials for studying popular poetry written between 1750 and 1900 in Britain and America. Recently, we have transferred what were static html pages presenting that bibliography into an Oracle database to allow multiple ways of organizing and generating bibliographic lists. The archive includes primary materials: works by the authors producing Anglo-American popular poetry between 1750 and 1900, and by their contemporaneous critics. But it also includes secondary materials: later criticism of and scholarship about these writers and their literary productions.

Poster Abstract

Since it was first mounted in 2005, the Poetess Archive has housed a bibliography of materials for studying popular poetry written between 1750 and 1900 in Britain and America. We call it the Poetess Archive because it contains writings by and about 19th-century poets writing in the poetess tradition, as well as writings by men and women who feel the need to work against that tradition. Recently, we have transferred what were static html pages presenting that bibliography into an Oracle database to allow multiple ways of organizing and generating bibliographic lists. The archive includes primary materials: works by the authors producing Anglo-American popular poetry between 1750 and 1900, and by their contemporaneous critics. But it also includes secondary materials: later criticism of and scholarship about these writers and their literary productions. The bibliography of secondary (critical and scholarly) materials spans the 20th century up to our own moment. In addition to offering bibliographic data and multiple ways of searching that data, the Poetess Archive also presents some full texts, engravings, and pictures of the physical aspects of collections – book boards, slipcases, etc. All are TEI-encoded and accompanied by metadata in RDF (Resource Description Framework) for interoperability with aggregated sites within the NINES network.

The Forget Me Not Hypertextual Archive, edited by Katherine D. Harris, has recently been folded into the Poetess Archive. Dr. Harris is now editor of our literary annuals collection. Also to be folded into the Poetess Archive is the Literary Annual Database by Harry Hootman and Anthologies and Miscellanies by Laura Mandell and Rita Raley. Once this work is complete, one will be able to find all the poems published in collections by specific authors in Britain, a feat that is not even possible using the proprietary English Poetry Database published by Chadwyck-Healey. Recently, Laura Mandell has started working with digital artist Ira Greenberg to create a visualization tool for the Poetess Archive (<http://unixgen.muohio.edu/~poetess/vmodel/vmodel.html>).

This tool will produce new kinds of Humanities research by allowing scholars to ask research questions about relationships among the form, themes, and physical media of nineteenth-century British and American popular poetry. The tool will generate multiple graphics produced with minor variations in search constraints that can be viewed all together, juxtaposed on a page. Enabling quickly apprehensible, visible comparisons, this tool will encourage perceiving and investigating correlations among data that might have gone unnoticed without it.

Poster

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