

# *Diasporic Literary Archives Network and the Commonwealth: Namibia, Nigeria, Trinidad & Tobago, and other examples*

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Sutton, D. C. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7556-3292>  
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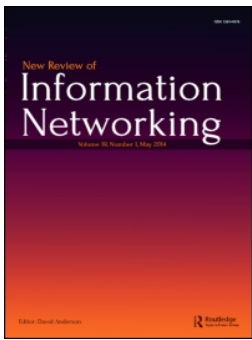
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David C. Sutton

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# Diasporic Literary Archives Network and the Commonwealth: Namibia, Nigeria, Trinidad & Tobago, and Other Examples

David C. Sutton

University of Reading Library, Reading, UK

## ABSTRACT

This article brings together three themes: primary sources for the study of literature; the diasporic nature of literary manuscripts; and the impact of the diaspora on the English-speaking world, in general, and the Commonwealth, in particular. The article begins by describing some general characteristics of literary manuscripts, focusing in particular on their diasporic nature. It then outlines the work of the project known as the Diasporic Literary Archives Network in the years 2012–15. It concludes with an assessment of the archival diaspora as it affects cultural and literary heritage work in Commonwealth countries.

## KEYWORDS

Archives; collaboration; commonwealth; diasporic; literary; manuscripts; network

## Introduction: Literature, diasporas, and the commonwealth

This article brings together three themes that are at the heart of this special issue and of my own work: primary sources for the study of literature; the diasporic nature of literary manuscripts; and the impact of the diaspora on the English-speaking world in general and the Commonwealth in particular. The article begins by describing some general characteristics of literary manuscripts, including their diasporic nature. It then outlines the work of a project known as the Diasporic Literary Archives Network in the years 2012–15. It concludes with an assessment of the archival diaspora as it affects cultural and literary heritage work in Commonwealth countries.

## Literary manuscripts and the word “diaspora”

In earlier research (Sutton March 2014, November 2014, 2016), I have identified several key characteristics of literary manuscripts that sets them apart from other types of archival materials. If we begin with the categories which are represented by Sections within the International Council on Archives, and then add some categories for which future Sections have been proposed, the principal nonliterary types of archives might be said to

**CONTACT** David C. Sutton  [d.c.sutton@reading.ac.uk](mailto:d.c.sutton@reading.ac.uk)  University of Reading Library, Whiteknights, P.O. Box 223, Reading, Berkshire RG6 6AE, UK.

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be archaeological; architectural; business and company archives; educational and university archives; international organizations' archives; judicial, legal and notarial archives; labor and trade union archives; local, municipal and territorial archives; medical and hospital archives; military and police archives; political and parliamentary archives; religious archives and archives of faith traditions; sports archives, as well as archives and articles of various other clubs, organizations, and individuals.

I am interested in the ways in which literary articles differ from these other archival categories, and in the characteristics that make literary manuscripts unique. This is my own description of the uniqueness of archives in the domain of literature (Sutton, "The Destinies" 2014):

Literary manuscripts are not like other archives. Their importance lies in who made them and how they were made, the unique relationship between author and evolving text, the insights they give into the act of creation. (295)

The financial value of literary archives is often substantial and they are often acquired by research and higher education institutions; in general, they are more likely to be found within the special collections sections in libraries rather than in archival institutions. In addition, literary archives are often housed in literary museums and houses, and in private foundations.

There is a substantial difference in the institutionalization of literary archives across the world:

In countries such as the USA, Canada and the UK, university libraries play a leading role, but this is by no means true in all countries. In France, for example, public libraries [often in the author's home town] are the principal repositories, together with the Bibliothèque Nationale. In contrast with most other types of archives—business archives, medical archives, architectural archives, religious archives or municipal archives—literary archives are often scattered in diverse locations without any sense of appropriateness or "spirit of place." (Sutton, "The Destinies" 2014, 295–296)

There are also examples of literary archives acquired by another country; such acquisitions often cause controversy in their country of origin; in one well-known case this happened when the archive of the Mexican author Carlos Fuentes was acquired in 1995 by Princeton University Library and is now residing within its Latin American Literary Archives. There are even more complicated cases; here are some examples from (Sutton, "The Destinies" 2014):

In other cases serendipitous acquisition or purchase has led to locations that would never have been guessed. There are well-known examples such as the Ernest Hemingway Archives which ended up in the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library or the J. R. R. Tolkien Archive which found its way to the Marquette University in Milwaukee, and curious cases of personal initiatives in collection-building such as the fine set of Australian literary manuscripts to be found

amongst the military training resources of the Australian Defence Force Academy. The examples abound, however, of literary papers in locations a long way from home: papers of Franz Kafka owned or jointly-owned by Oxford University; papers of Paul Claudel owned by Cambridge University; Jean Anouilh and Yehuda Amichai in the Beinecke Library at Yale University; Raymond Queneau, Evelyn Waugh and Wilson Harris in the Ransom Center in Austin; Chinua Achebe and Wole Soyinka in Harvard University; Mario Vargas Llosa and Giorgos Seferis in Princeton; Angus Wilson and Iris Murdoch in the University of Iowa; for John Betjeman, whose papers are in the University of Victoria, British Columbia, it would be difficult to be very much further from home. (296)

Literary archives, then, tend to travel much further than other types of research and to be housed in unpredictable locations—often in locations determined by market forces rather than by internal archival logic—making the work of literary researchers more complex, more dependent upon careful research travel plans, and often more expensive. This situation is compounded by the way that literary articles are usually found, for any one author, to be divided between several collecting institutions. This phenomenon, which we have come to call “split collections,” will be familiar to most literary researchers. My own university in Reading has an outstanding collection of the papers of Samuel Beckett, but it is a collection that can only make archival sense by constant cross-referencing to the Beckett holdings in Trinity College Dublin and the Harry Ransom Center in Austin, Texas. In 2013 at a workshop in Pavia, Italy (see Diasporic Literary Archives Network), Michael Forstrom of Yale’s Beinecke Library gave a very complete description of the ways in which literary collections can be “split.” Forstrom identified for his Diasporic Literary Archives audience no fewer than fourteen ways in which literary fonds might be divided:

- Split between different collecting repositories
- Split between fonds and what survives
- Split by collecting strategy or agreement
- Split between early portion of papers and (living) creator
- Split by relocation and change in custody
- Split between collected portion of papers and component in private hands
- Split by provenance: papers versus artificial collection
- Split by accession(s)
- Split within institutions
- Split between personal, professional, and family papers
- Split between papers and media
- Split between papers and born-digital
- Split by reproduction
- Split between collection(s) and national interest

“Split collections” represent an essential part of the world of literary manuscripts. We are starting to see a small number of digitization projects which are able to bring split collections back together again (such as the online Shelley-Godwin archive), but these remain rare and special (well-funded) cases.

The word “diaspora” was principally used in the past to describe the scattering of peoples, races or linguistic groups, but more recently it has begun to be used also about literary manuscripts. For the period from January 2012 to February 2015 a new initiative known as the Diasporic Literary Archives Network was generously funded by a British charity called the Leverhulme Trust, enabling a six-partner team from the UK, France, Italy, Namibia, Trinidad, and the United States to explore both general and specific issues concerning literary manuscripts. The work of the Diasporic Literary Archives Network since 2012 informs most of the ideas which follow.

### **Market in literary manuscripts**

Many non-literary archival collections are deposited, usually by organizations, in their “normal” archival repository as a matter of course. The great majority of collections world-wide, certainly by shelf-mileage, find their homes in this way. The principal exception is provided by personal papers, and the most volatile and unpredictable type within that principal exception comprises literary papers. Literary papers, when they are the right papers at the right time, can have an extraordinary financial value. A single love letter by one of the great English Romantic poets will easily go past 100,000 euros or pounds at auction, often with a miscellaneous set of public and private bidders. The greatest collections, like those of the succession of publishers all called John Murray, can be valued in the tens of millions.

There have always been private collectors, whose motives I must leave others to explain neutrally, but whose activities will often force the prices of literary papers still higher. Private collectors tend to have little interest in administrative or medical or religious or business archives, but literary collecting can become an obsession for certain very wealthy individuals.

The market in literary manuscripts follows fashion to a considerable extent, and it is part of the skill of the new generation of literary archivists to anticipate fashion and make early acquisitions. Acquiring the papers of out-of-favor authors can significantly enhance a literary archivist’s reputation if the author returns to popular or curricular esteem. In cases where the author’s reputation is established and the papers have a clear and well understood value, then the richest institutions will normally prevail.

In very few countries, however, is the market permitted to follow an unfettered financial course. Most European countries and many Commonwealth

countries have some form of state involvement in heritage sales, whether through export licenses, requirements to give first refusal within the country, or various forms of incentives. Some countries have favorable tax regimes for donation or bequest, and other original incentives to donate have been devised. In Spain, for example, donation of the whole *Nachlass* to a recognized foundation can be rewarded with an extension of the copyright duration, which is why Federico García Lorca (who was killed in 1936) remains in copyright in Spain.

A few non-European countries have been prepared to take a much stronger defensive (anti-market) position. To take a Commonwealth example, when this issue was discussed at a business meeting of the International Council of Archives, the National Archivist of Sri Lanka informed the meeting that any export of personal papers of cultural or heritage significance would be illegal under Sri Lankan law.

### **Diaspora of literary manuscripts**

It is thus a defining characteristic that the locations of literary manuscripts tend to lack any sense of appropriateness or “spirit of place,” and that in this they differ from most other types of archives. Even within the category of personal papers, literary manuscripts are particularly “diasporic” in nature, and the Diasporic Literary Archives Network was named accordingly, with a remit to study questions of location, ownership, and interpretation.

In funding the Diasporic Literary Archives Network for three years, the Leverhulme Trust gave us, wonderfully, a primary remit which was – to network – to talk to each other, to bring in new and varied colleagues and partners, to compare experiences and to share best practice.

This has been one example among many of the growing propensity of literary archivists to work together and synergize their activities. Just to give a sense of the range of the Network, I will give the themes of the five workshops which it prepared during 2012-14.

- (1) Questions informing scattered legacies: an introduction to the ideas of diasporic literary manuscripts (Reading, June 2012).
- (2) Examining split collections (as discussed earlier, Pavia, February-March 2013).
- (3) The stakes of public/private ownership: including the ways in which literary manuscripts are represented in business, publishing, and other nonliterary collections (Caen, May 2013).
- (4) The politics of location: a workshop on sensitive issues of acquisition, including the “loss” by less wealthy countries of their archival literary heritage (Trinidad, March 2014).
- (5) Diaspora and possibilities for digitization (at the Beinecke Library, Yale University, October 2014). This was a meeting which covered



some of the exciting new initiatives which are opening up in respect of born-digital and digitized archives, especially in richer countries, but also explored some of the more controversial areas for poorer countries—not only as regards technological problems, but also issues relating to equalities, human rights, and the politics of purchasing power.

At the end of our three years' work, we have created a rich dialogue on the world of literary manuscripts, and some parts of our work will certainly continue beyond the final project year in 2015, hosted either at the University of Reading or through the Section for Literary Archives of the International Council on Archives, or by one or more of the Network's partners.

### **Literary diaspora and authors' languages**

One aspect of the diaspora which has become clear during the work of the Network, and on which I first wrote after the archive of Jose Saramago found a splendid new home in Lisbon, is that there are really only four countries in the world which regularly and systematically collect the literary papers of nonnationals, namely the USA, the UK, Canada, and France.

As the Network members witnessed in visits to Pavia and Venice, there is a striking contrast with literary archival activity in Italy, where they have been diligently collecting their own literary papers since the formation of the marvelous collection of papers of the poet Petrarch in the Vatican Library, dating from nearly 700 years ago, but have no mandate to collect papers from other countries—although of course authors from other countries do find their way diasporically into Italian archival collections.

I have reflected upon what the four-country model meant for the papers of some of the greatest late twentieth-century authors: for example José Saramago, Margaret Atwood, Samuel Beckett, Carlos Fuentes, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Elfriede Jelinek, Doris Lessing, Naguib Mahfouz, and Orhan Pamuk. That personal list provides some interesting stories and some telling controversies from the world of modern literary manuscripts. As I outlined earlier, the purchase by Princeton University of the Carlos Fuentes Archive provoked front-page outrage and accusations of “cultural theft” in Mexico. Similarly, the proposed Sotheby's sale of Naguib Mahfouz's papers in December 2011 caused controversy in Egypt, and the sale was abandoned. It seems that at least some members of the family now want these papers to go to the American University in Cairo, or to another Cairo library. Meanwhile the archive of Margaret Atwood is arriving in regular instalments at the University of Toronto, and Elfriede Jelinek has a similar arrangement with the University of Vienna. Samuel Beckett's papers present a classic example of a “split collection”—being divided between the

Universities of Reading and Texas and Trinity College Dublin. Similarly, although some Doris Lessing papers have recently gone to the University of East Anglia and more will be going there soon, the main collections established by purchase during her lifetime are split between the Universities of Texas and Tulsa.

Given that there is almost no interest in Turkish language and literature in the four big purchasing countries, there is every chance that the Orhan Pamuk Archive will stay in Istanbul, where it so obviously belongs. It could be said that Pamuk is to Istanbul what Saramago is to Lisbon and Mahfouz to Cairo. With a self-referential appropriateness, in 2012 Pamuk himself established a museum in Istanbul displaying his own novel “The Museum of Innocence.”

That leaves Gabriel García Márquez, one of the most marketable of authors. After his death there were many rumors about the likely destination of his literary papers, and there appeared to be some confidence amongst Colombian archivists and librarians that they would succeed in acquiring the papers for the country which provided not only the author’s nationality, but also the subject-matter for most of his books. García Márquez was certainly a citizen of the world, but equally certainly a Colombian citizen of the world. In November 2014, however, it was announced that the papers had been purchased by the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas at Austin.<sup>1</sup> The ability to pay the highest price, together with the outstanding quality of conservation promised, had proved to be the decisive factors. The logic of the market had prevailed.

My conclusion, in this international context, is that the language used by an author is a decisive factor in the eventual destination of his or her literary archive. This means that English-language manuscripts, notably from Commonwealth countries, are more likely to be acquisitioned by the rich collecting countries, while countries with a fully developed literary tradition in a language which is not much used in those rich countries would reside in their home environments. One very positive example of this which the Diasporic Network has considered in some detail concerns the collecting of literary manuscripts in Brazil. Following the case of the Saramago Archive, it is another example which starts from the noncollectability of Portuguese-language manuscripts in the USA, Canada, the UK, or France.

We identified no fewer than thirteen major Brazilian collecting institutions for literary manuscripts, in addition to the collections of the National Archives and the National Library (see [Table 1](#)).

Brazil combines several features which contribute to its excellent achievement in collecting literary manuscripts: a literary language which is not

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<sup>1</sup> Some details on the 22-mln USD acquisition of this archive are provided in the article of Joe Gross; in 2016 the digitization of 24 000 pages from the archive was launched after a grant from the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR) had been secured (see the blog post of Sebastian Gurciullo).

**Table 1.** Institutions Collecting Literary Manuscripts in Brazil.

Institution (original name)	Objects	Web address
Arquivo da Academia Brasileira de Letras	Preserves the personal documentation of the permanent members, patrons and corresponding members and Institutional Archives with documents dating back to 1897, the founding year of the Academy.	<a href="http://www.academia.org.br/memoria-da-abl/arquivo">http://www.academia.org.br/memoria-da-abl/arquivo</a>
Arquivo da Fundação Casa de Jorge Amado	The foundation Casa de Jorge Amado is a non-governmental, non-for-profit organization with the mission to preserve and make more accessible the archives of Jorge Amado.	<a href="http://www.jorgeamado.org.br/?lang=en">http://www.jorgeamado.org.br/?lang=en</a>
Arquivo do Museu Casa Guimarães Rosa	Guimarães Rosa Museum is a reference center of the life and literary works of João Guimarães Rosa. Located in the house where Guimarães Rosa spent part of his childhood, the museum houses a documentary collection, photographs and other objects which belonged to the writer.	<a href="https://www.bertholdo.com.br/portfolio/museu-casa-guimaraes-rosa/">https://www.bertholdo.com.br/portfolio/museu-casa-guimaraes-rosa/</a>
Casa de Memória Edmundo Cardoso, Santa Maria	The House of Edmundo Cardoso memory combines an archive, bibliographical center, and a museum.	<a href="https://casamemoriaedmundo.wordpress.com/">https://casamemoriaedmundo.wordpress.com/</a>
Casa Guilherme de Almeida	A literary museum in the house where Guilherme de Almeida lived from 1946 until his death in 1969. The museum hosts the private collection of the poet.	<a href="http://www.casaguilhermedealmeida.org.br/">http://www.casaguilhermedealmeida.org.br/</a>
Fundação Casa de Rui Barbosa	The museum has an archive which takes care of some 60,000 documents Rui Barbosa wrote and received in 1849–1923.	<a href="http://www.casaruibarbosa.gov.br/interna.php?ID_S=130">http://www.casaruibarbosa.gov.br/interna.php?ID_S=130</a>
Fundação Cultural Cassiano Ricardo (FCCR)	The foundation manages public policy related to culture in São José dos Campos. Its Public Archives established in October 1993 has about 800 series of documents dating from the eighteenth century, nearly 3000 linear meters of documents in total. Some are related to literature and various arts.	<a href="http://www.fccr.sp.gov.br/index.php/espacos/todos/arquivo-publico">http://www.fccr.sp.gov.br/index.php/espacos/todos/arquivo-publico</a>
Fundação Darcy Ribeiro	Darcy Ribeiro Foundation Heritage takes care of books, documents, and personal belongings of Darcy Ribeiro and his first wife, anthropologist Berta Ribeiro Gleizer. Files are accumulated for over 50 years.	<a href="http://www.fundar.org.br/">http://www.fundar.org.br/</a>
Acervo dos Escritores Mineiros (AEM), UFMG	Permanent exhibition space and research that houses collections and collections of books, documents and objects of writers, artists and prominent characters in the literary and cultural history of Minas Gerais and Brazil.	<a href="http://phpext01.fale.ufmg.br/">http://phpext01.fale.ufmg.br/</a>
Instituto de Estudos Brasileiros (IEB-USP)	The Archive was founded in 1968 It takes care of some 450,000 documents.	<a href="http://www.ieb.usp.br/arquivo">http://www.ieb.usp.br/arquivo</a>

*(Continued)*

**Table 1.** (Continued).

Institution (original name)	Objects	Web address
Instituto de Estudos da Linguagem (IEL-Unicamp)	Created in 1984 as a space to present appropriate conditions for the organization and storage of materials produced in research and projects conducted by teachers of the Language Studies Institute	<a href="http://www3.iel.unicamp.br/cedae/">http://www3.iel.unicamp.br/cedae/</a>
Instituto Moreira Salles	The Instituto Moreira Salles holds assets in four areas: photography, music, literature, and iconography. At the time of writing it has 12 objects featured on Google Arts & Culture.	<a href="http://www.ims.com.br/ims/">http://www.ims.com.br/ims/</a>
Instituto de Filosofia e Ciências Humanas (IFCH-Unicamp)	The Archive of IFCH began operations in 1974 with the arrival of the collection of printed documents gathered by Edgard Leuenroth. Currently it hosts some 215,000 items.	

widely known or studied by the wealthy collecting countries, certainly; but also a pride in its literary culture; a good number of collecting institutions, public, and private, which are disposed to cooperate with each other; a former colonial power which (unlike France or Britain) does not use its language to claim some archival sovereignty over its former colonies (there is no lusophone equivalent to the much-debated idea of *francophonie*); and a good understanding by literary authors and their heirs of the potential importance of literary manuscripts. It may also be a factor that Brazil, despite its deep literary culture, has produced no global literary super-stars, no Nobel Prizewinners. Whatever the balance of these reasons, Brazil presents an example of a country whose literary papers have been for these reasons much less “diasporic” than those of many other countries in the world, especially in post-colonial situations.

The Leverhulme Trust funding of the Diasporic Literary Archives Network came to an end in March 2015, but nevertheless in the future we see great prospects for many of the Network’s key projects to be continued and developed further, some as academic research projects, some as ongoing programs of international solidarity.

Examples of such future activities would include (Diasporic Literary Archives Network):

- “Archives at risk”: new protocols for collaboration on endangered collections worldwide (with a first meeting of up to forty potential partners planned for 2015 under the auspices of UNESCO).
- The dispersal of literary papers through publishing and business archives.

- Protocols for collaboration between repositories with “split collections.”
- Mapping split collections: a cartographic approach.
- The diaspora of digital literary archives: best practice and digital solutions.
- The literary archives of Namibia: a case study and model.
- Caribbean archives in Caribbean institutions: a new future.
- “Hidden archives”: the uncatalogued troves: locating uncatalogued collections and finding shared solutions.
- The creation of a guidance document for authors considering placing their papers in an archival institution (a joint project with the Society of Authors, the Group for Literary Archives and Manuscripts and the UK National Archives)
- Locations of literary collections: creation of a world-wide list (joint work with ICA’s Section for Literary Archives).
- Examples of diasporic literary collections: the maintenance of an online database.

This exciting and diverse range of ongoing and future projects will keep the Diasporic Literary Archives Network active long beyond its official finish, and it is hoped that a good number of them will be adopted by other funders or consortia, by some or all of the existing six partners, or by the Section for Archives of Literature and Art (SLA) within the International Council on Archives.

### **Diasporic literary manuscripts in commonwealth countries**

There are a number of Commonwealth countries whose experience of collecting literary manuscripts is of special interest and relevance to the theme of this conference. Within the Diasporic Literary Archives Network, we were able to record significant progress working with our partners in Namibia and in Trinidad and Tobago. Many Commonwealth countries, however, would probably relate more directly to the comparatively unhappy example of Nigeria.

Nigeria has played an important role, indeed a leadership role, in the development of African literature in the past fifty or sixty years. Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* was the first book to be published in the Heinemann African Writers series, and became an inspiration to writers, and especially novelists, throughout the African continent. Achebe’s decision to write in English rather than in Standard Igbo, which he carefully explained and justified, had the additional effects of internationalizing his audience and setting a precedent for later Nigerian authors. It seems clear, however, that there is a regrettable disconnection between the impressive literary culture of Nigeria, on the one hand, and the absence of literary manuscripts in Nigerian institutions, on the other.

A new National Library of Nigeria is being built, but it is not clear that its collecting mandate includes literary papers. Similarly, the University of Ibadan Library does not have a section for manuscripts or archives. Neither does the University of Port Harcourt Library (both these universities have close connections with the playwright and novelist Elechi Amadi). There is a fine collection of Arabic literary manuscripts in Bayero University Library, and Arabic manuscripts in Nigeria may present a rather different story, outside the scope of this article.

The National Archives of Nigeria has a small number of collections of private papers, but none of them appear to be literary collections. There are fewer than a dozen fully-catalogued collections and these are principally concerned with the history of colonial occupation and the work of collections of missionaries (with examples including papers of Ernest Sesi Ikoli, Rev. G. A. Oke, King Jaja of Opobo and the records of the African Church Organisation, Agege).

In his 1995 book *Long drums and canons*, Bernth Lindfors describes his own actions in connection with the Amos Tutuola manuscripts and his attempt to place them in the Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas at Austin. Reporting to a conference in Ibadan on the probable Texan purchase of these papers (with money for the elderly Tutuola and prestige for Nigerian literature), he was disappointed to be heckled by the audience and to be told that Nigeria's literary heritage belonged in Nigeria. He says that he later came to agree with that view, but asks (Lindfors 1995):

Has any Nigerian institutional library or archive started collecting literary manuscripts? If not, why not? Are there no literature department chairmen, deans, or vice-chancellors in Nigeria who are prepared to devote a portion of the university funds they administer to the preservation of Nigeria's literary culture? If not, why not? Please forgive my monotonous aggressiveness. I'm only asking the questions that your posterity will ask of you. (167)

The questions went unanswered, and as we read Lindfors' text twenty years on, it is not clear that very much has changed in Nigeria since 1995. The Amos Tutuola Archive is now indeed the property of the University of Texas. The iconic archive of Chinua Achebe is divided, with the principal literary collection, including manuscripts from *Arrow of God* (1964) onward, now housed in the Houghton Library at Harvard University, while the archival papers detailing his long connection with the African Writers Series form part of the Heinemann Archive held at the University of Reading. The papers of Wole Soyinka are also divided, in his case between the Universities of Harvard and Leeds. Literary specialists at Harvard have worked very closely with Nigerian authors, in full and generous recognition of their standing in world literature. For example, Achebe accepted an invitation to deliver the

Harvard African Studies Lecture of 2008, and attended with members of his family.

The papers of some of the great Nigerian authors are thus preserved in some of the finest archival repositories in the world. None, however, are being collected or preserved in Nigeria itself. In this regard, a keynote address of Professor Ernest Emenyonu given in 2008 gives an updated version of the story told thirteen years earlier by Bernth Lindfors, together with a tantalizing hint of the story of the manuscript of *Things Fall Apart* (Keynote address):

There should be established in Nigeria an International Center for African Literature Research and Documentation, one of whose responsibilities should be the location, retrieval and collection of the original manuscripts of published Nigerian creative works and the letters (correspondence) of Nigerian writers. The Center should also have an active unit for the translation of exceptional creative works of African Literature into Nigerian languages. The film industry in Nigeria should be legitimized, empowered and assisted to produce film versions of important Nigerian creative works especially novels, as well as documentaries on Nigerian writers for use in schools and the promotion of tourism. And in this regard, a well produced authentic film version of *Things Fall Apart* is long overdue.

I would plead specifically with Governor Peter Obi of Anambra State, to please stop at nothing to ensure the location and retrieval of the original manuscript of *Things Fall Apart* hidden somewhere today in a town in the Francophone part of the Cameroons. This is of the greatest importance in Chinua Achebe's heart today. The recovery of the original manuscript of *Things Fall Apart* and its repatriation to Nigeria will be the crowning point of this celebration this year. On November 16, 1930, Ogidi and the entire Anambra State, gave to the world Chinua Achebe, once described as "one of the ten greatest novelists in the world today dead or alive." The history of the literary super-eminence of Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* will forever remain incomplete, until its original manuscript adorns a museum or archives somewhere in Anambra State for tourists, researchers, teachers, students and the whole world to come and behold the amazing wonders of the African mind.

As far as can be established, this resounding call also remains unanswered. Perhaps it is not too late for the remit of the new National Library to be expanded to take account of this critical cultural need.

There are more positive stories to be told about the collecting of literary manuscripts in the Commonwealth countries, which became two of the most enterprising partners of the Diasporic Literary Archives Network: Namibia and Trinidad and Tobago.

The choice of Namibia as a partner in the Diasporic Literary Archives Network was partly driven by the fact that, although it has a fairly well funded National Archives and a strong literary culture (in society and embedded in the history of the liberation movement SWAPO), the country had, until 2012, no tradition of building collections of literary manuscripts. Namibian participation in the Network has led to a change in attitude and



practice, and the National Archives of Namibia has developed a number of strategies for collecting literary manuscripts. One original approach draws upon the fact that the National Archives and the National Library are unified in a single body, and the National Library has a copyright deposit scheme for all books published in Namibia, derived ultimately from the British copyright deposit law of 1911. Since 2014, each time that a literary author deposits a copyright copy of a book in the National Library of Namibia, they receive an enquiry from the National Archives of Namibia about the original manuscript of the book.

Members of the Diasporic Literary Archives Network (notably the Universities of Reading and Toronto) have committed to working with Namibia in the future on methodologies for collecting, accessioning, cataloguing and conserving literary manuscripts, and a progress meeting was held in Windhoek in October 2015.

It is clear that the British model for the collection of literary manuscripts (Baker et al. 2010; Sutton 1985) has not been followed in many Commonwealth countries. The model is in fact completely unstructured and based on historical accident, such that literary manuscripts are found in national collections (especially the British Library); in large and small museums (notably the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Theatre Museum); in local record offices and county archives; in public libraries; in writers' houses; and, above all, in university libraries. The literary manuscripts held in this extraordinarily diverse range of institutions (around 400 of them in all) have been listed and now consolidated into a website known as the Location Register of English Literary Manuscripts and Letters (Location register; Sutton 1985, 1988).

It is not surprising that this random historical model for collecting institutions has not been widely followed in the Commonwealth. There are some similarities to be found with the collecting institutions in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and South Africa, but the countries of the so-called "New Commonwealth" have understandably looked at much simpler models, with the main roles played by the national archives, the national library and the universities. For a simple model that works perfectly well in a small Commonwealth country, we might look to Singapore, where collected literary archives are principally divided between the National Library (which has the brief to develop literary and other personal manuscript collections) and the National Archives (which has the brief to develop archival collections of national interest, inevitably including some nonliterary collections with literary authors represented in them).

The Caribbean region demonstrates the challenge of creating a national literary heritage, illustrated by literary manuscripts, in circumstances where many of the authors are themselves diasporic and may have ended up as residents of the UK, the USA, Canada, and other richer countries. There are



particular personal stories which partly explain why the papers of James Berry and Andrew Salkey, for example, have been collected by the British Library, or those of Lorna Goodison and Derek Walcott by the University of Toronto. The market in literary manuscripts and their high value have also played a part, notably in the acquisition of the V. S. Naipaul papers by the University of Tulsa and the Samuel Selvon papers by the University of Texas.

There are, however, some Caribbean institutions which are perfectly well adapted to build collections of Caribbean authors—the best examples probably being the libraries on the various campuses of the University of the West Indies. In the cases of several Caribbean institutions, what appears to have happened is that there was a heroic start to collection building in the aftermath of independence in the 1960s and 1970s, followed by a period of discouragement where Caribbean institutions tended to conclude that they could not compete in the globalized market for English-language literary manuscripts.

The Diasporic Literary Archives Network, working in partnership with Trinidadian colleagues in particular, was able to mitigate some of this discouragement and to encourage resumption of collection-building in the region. In facilitating the acquisition in 2014 of the archive of Monique Roffey by the University of the West Indies at St. Augustine, the Network is hopeful that a good precedent has been set for future collection development.

All the partners of the Diasporic Literary Archives Network are very keen to see its continuation in some form into the future. The achievements it was able to demonstrate in working with Commonwealth partners, and the promise that those achievements hold for the future, provide a strong rationale for sustaining the Network in the years ahead.

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