Modern Manuscripts and Drafts
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Summary
The presence (or absence) of compositional precursors and leftovers raise for critics and editors methodological, epistemological, ethical, and aesthetic questions: What gets collected and preserved? What does not—for what reasons? How can these materials be interpreted? And to what ends? A draft may refer to written materials that never attain printed form as well as early manuscript compositions and fair copies, typescripts, digital text, scribbles, doodles, leftovers, or other marginalia and extraneous materials that may or may not find their way into archives. The manuscript draft came of age following the invention of printing, although unfinished or working drafts only began to be self-consciously collected with the emergence of the state archive in the late 18th century. The draft is, therefore, intimately connected to the archival, whether the archive is taken as a material site, a discursive structure, or a depository of feeling.

Any interpretation of drafts must take into account the limits and limitations of matter including the bare fact of a draft’s material existence or its absence. In the 20th and 21st centuries, there have evolved a diverse network of theoretical approaches to interpreting drafts and compositional materials. Scholars of drafts may ask questions about authorship, materiality, production, technology and media, pedagogy, social norms and conventions, ownership and capital, preservation or destruction, even ethics and ontology. However, these investigations have been most pronounced within four fields: (a) media theory, histories of the book, and historical materialisms that investigate the substance, matter, and means of production of drafts as well as the technological, pedagogical, and social norms that mediate writing, and the cultural/historical specifics of these materials and media; (b) textual editing, which establishes methods that regularize (or complicate) how scholarly editions are produced and related mid-20th century New Bibliography approaches, which illuminated some of the limitations of manuscript-and-edition blind close reading, especially by the New Critics; (c) French genetic criticism in the late 20th and early 21st centuries, which engages with French post-structuralism and psychoanalysis to look at writing as a dynamic and developmental process that has both conscious and unconscious components;
Modern manuscripts differ in function from medieval manuscripts, which had a public function; they were a form of publication. Modern manuscripts, conversely, are usually more private in nature. Nonetheless, many twentieth-century authors have donated their manuscripts to public archives. The way these exogenous elements were incorporated into the drafts is part of what Debray-Genette calls “endogenesis.” In the “Dream’ Notebook,” Beckett jotted down that Venus was also called “Hesperus” when regarded as the evening star. Fifty years later, Beckett

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included Venus in the opening line of Mal vu mal dit / Ill Seen Ill Said: “From where she lies she sees Venus rise.” This collection of manuscript sheets and typescripts contain notes, drafts and fair copies for stories from The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories by Angela Carter (1979), including ‘The Company of Wolves’, ‘The Snow Child’, ‘The Lady of the House of Love’ and ‘Wolf Alice’. The first draft reveals that the story was originally titled ‘Vampira/La Belle au Bois Dormante’, which suggests that Carter conceived it as merging a glamorous television vampire (‘Vampira’ is a 1950s horror television character portrayed by Maila Nurmi) and Perrault’s classic Sleeping Beauty fairy tale (‘La Belle au Bois Dormante’, or ‘The Beauty in the Sleeping Wood’). The Bloody Chamber is a collection of modern fairy tales, many of which incorporate elements of Gothic literature. Modern Manuscripts book. Read reviews from world's largest community for readers. The twentieth century has been called “the golden age of the modern man... Start by marking “Modern Manuscripts: The Extended Mind and Creative Undoing from Darwin to Beckett and Beyond” as Want to Read: Want to Read saving…. Want to Read.