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Citation
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Harold Brodkey's Paper Attachments

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Introduction

It's difficult to think of an American novel with a publication history more complicated than Harold Brodkey's *The Runaway Soul* (1991). First contracted by Random House in 1964 but unfinished for nearly three decades, the novel—then known under its working title, *A Party of Animals*—moved between two other publishing houses before its controversial publication under a new name. The publication history of Brodkey's novel is so labyrinthian that it is at times difficult to know what's fact and what's apocryphal, but the following events demarcate the broad lines of the story. In 1970, Farrar Straus and Giroux (FSG) purchased the novel from Random House, with Brodkey agreeing to a "three-book contract" that would be fulfilled "later that year."[1] During the 1970s, two long stories appeared in the *New Yorker*—"A Story in an Almost Classical Mode" (1973) and "Largely an Oral History of My Mother" (1976)—that a subscriber might reasonably have assumed were from the forthcoming novel. The stories described situations that resembled Brodkey's life. A precocious Jewish boy grows up in the Midwest and leaves for Harvard. He reflects on the circumstances of his adoption, the subtle disappointments of childhood, and his complicated relationship with his adoptive family. Befitting Brodkey's eventual reputation as the "American Proust," the stories dramatized the actions of memory, where murky events of the past contend with the "gray, electrical hush of the mind, remembering, running."[2] In 1979, the novel went from FSG to Knopf, a

move that eventuated in the publication of *Stories in an Almost Classical Mode* (1988), a 600-page-long collection of fiction that contained Brodkey's short fiction, including his stories for the *New Yorker*, but not the novel itself.

What had happened to Brodkey's novel? Were the stories that he had published in the *New Yorker* related to *A Party of Animals*? Between Knopf's acquisition of Brodkey's novel and the publication of *Stories in an Almost Classical Mode*, a slim volume of stories titled *Women and Angels* (1985) had appeared from the Jewish Publication Society. An unsigned note at the start of the book that explained the mandate of the JPS's *Authors' Workshop* series offered a hint about Brodkey's elusive project. It stated that the small circulation edition presented excerpts from the "long-anticipated major novel, which is nearing completion"—a claim that Brodkey would dispute after the collection's publication.[3] Questions grew about the status of Brodkey's novel. As if to assuage doubts about whether the novel really existed, reporters visited the Upper West Side apartment Brodkey shared with his wife, the novelist Ellen Schwamm Brodkey, and described the shape of Brodkey's manuscripts "stashed in … eleven Formica cabinets or hidden away by his wife. Others are strewn on the study floor, packed in cardboard boxes waiting to be thrown out. Yet more of the manuscript … is in an early-American bittersweet cabinet. Plus there are 36 cartons of papers in storage."[4] Beyond the walls of Brodkey's apartment, public opinion on the long-awaited novel swung between opposite poles. It was either a masterpiece thousands of pages long or a "bloated hoax." [5]

When Brodkey finally published this project in 1991—not as *A Party of Animals*, the working title under which it had accumulated notoriety, but *The Runaway Soul*, and not with his third publisher, Knopf, but his second, FSG—he was met with a response shaped by the rumors, legends, and expectation that built during the decades. The bewildered reception of Brodkey's novel seemed uninterested in the evolution of Brodkey's art since his contract with Random House. Although he had completed—and delivered—a draft of the novel by the late 1960s, Brodkey had spent the intervening decades conducting work that ran counter to the aims of a conventional publishing agreement, cutting up and reassembling previous drafts to produce something sprung from past work but alienated from it. The process of working on the project came to take on its own importance: "publishing it," he explained, "would interfere with working on it."[6] The book that culminated—a tome of 835 pages—was far from the well-wrought, lyric fiction of *First Love and Other Sorrows* (Dial Press, 1958) that established Brodkey's early reputation. Nor could it be said to follow, in narrative form—if it could be said to possess a narrative form—the book that the reading public might have expected given one of his publishers'

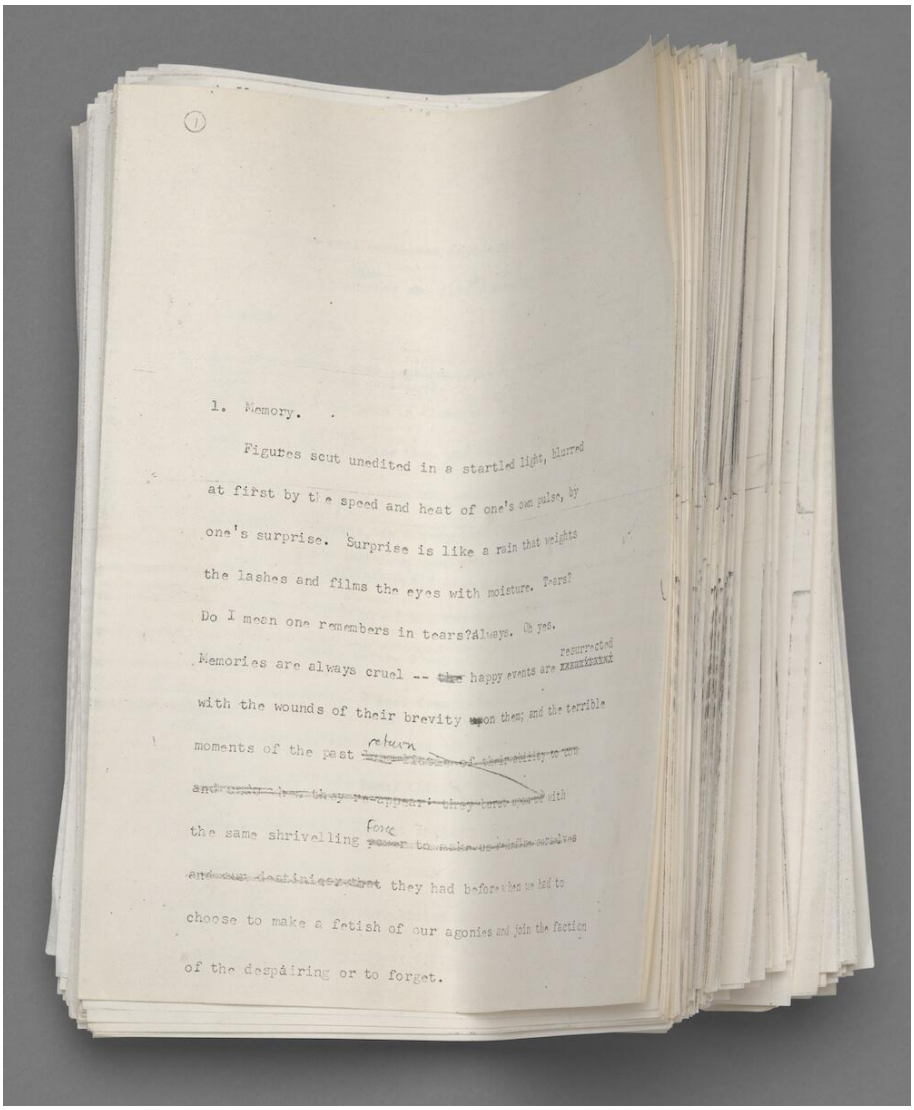
descriptions of the project as "a long Proustian novel that takes the main character from childhood to his graduation from college."[7] Reviewers reprinted Brodkey's tortuous, maximalist sentences to illustrate the novel's "monstrously, gargantuanly, unbelievably, believably (for [Brodkey is] also fond of tricky paradoxes) awful" style.[8] Brodkey had finally fulfilled the terms of his contract for a novel. Yet, *The Runaway Soul* did little to dispel the specter of a broken promise: "An author of long first-person books," wrote the reviewer for the *New York Times*, "owes it to the reader to make his narrator able to use language with some decency."[9] Brodkey's break from his early career style was understood as his abrogation of a different kind of contractual promise—one between the author and a "reader" projected into the literary marketplace.

The negative reception of *The Runaway Soul* concentrated on the illegibility of Brodkey's style. The *New York Times* called the voice of the novel's narrator, Wiley Silenowicz, "pretentiously *unreadable*," although conceding that Brodkey himself is "clearly … a brilliant writer."[10] "If books this long, this highly touted, and this *unreadable* came along much more often than once in a generation," wrote *Entertainment Weekly*, "they'd have to pass out lottery numbers and hire book reviewers by government draft."[11] The *Independent* went further. Calling Brodkey's novel "*unreadable*," the newspaper's critic wrote, "was an understatement; it was anti-reader."[12] Describing the reception of Brodkey's novel a few years on from publication, the *Baltimore Sun* acknowledged that "some people" had found the novel "comparable in reach and grasp to the late works of Henry James," but noted that "others, more of them perhaps, found it virtually *unreadable*."[13] The years between Brodkey's first contract in 1964 and the publication of his novel in 1991 had inaugurated the radical transformation of the conditions of production of U.S. literature, as publishers that once enjoyed relative autonomy were acquired and consolidated by large media conglomerations—a development that scholars have deemed the "conglomerate era."[14] Despite and because of its larger-than-life status, Brodkey's project was part of an increasingly small number of literary novels that earned sizable advances as publishers attempted to fill their list with books that were more likely to produce commercial returns.[15] By diagnosing *The Runaway Soul* as unreadable, book reviewers reflected and solidified the bifurcation of fiction in this period between commercial bestsellers and the kind of belletristic writing that had cemented Brodkey's early reputation.[16]

To this day, Brodkey is memorialized in terms of a broken promise, as a kind of "literary bogeyman" or a "major figure without a biography, reputed to be interesting but seldom studied."[17] This romantic characterization has assigned to Brodkey a curiously marginal

fate—too far from the center to be read closely, but also always kept in view as a cautionary tale. A closed circuit forms between forgetting and memorialization: Brodkey is remembered because he has not been sufficiently remembered; his work is discussed because it hasn't been read.[18] Yet, the failure narratives around *The Runaway Soul* obscure and naturalize the conditions under which Brodkey's experiments became unreadable. They also overlook the experimental nature of Brodkey's revision process, which dismantled and reconstituted completed drafts of the novel into new versions that would furnish the materials for the next stage of cutting up and reassembly. Inverting the relationship between composition and publication ("publishing it would interfere with working on it"), Brodkey was turning the corporate logics of publishing on its head.[19] This allowed him to write a novel that rejected the representational demands of conglomerate publishing while staying close to the center of the system.

The scale of Brodkey's revisions, and the fact that the majority of his literary career was marked by an overarching project without a clear division into individual projects, makes the Harold Brodkey Collection (nearly 150 linear feet of unprocessed archival material in 117 boxes, with only an internal file to suggest the contents) difficult to organize in a conventional way. The majority of these materials, gathered by Ellen Schwamm Brodkey from the couple's West 88th Street apartment and acquired by Harvard University's Houghton Library between 1998–2000, pertain to *A Party of Animals*.[20] Leslie A. Morris, Houghton's curator of modern books and manuscripts, remarks that "the bulk of the cartons are drafts of *The Runaway Soul*—or at least that's how he, and later Ellen Brodkey, identified them. I'm not sure that an archivist will ever be able to bring order to them, but perhaps order wasn't the intention."[21] The intractable nature of Brodkey's papers is appropriate for a writer whose major work describes the "fantastic sloppiness of one's coming into existence."[22] Nearly every object in the author's papers from the 1950s through the 1980s can be traced to the novel that defined Brodkey's career. The scale of Brodkey's archive is too great for comprehensive description here. Yet, the boxes of manuscripts allow us to fill in—and complicate—the publication history of Brodkey's novel outlined above. One box of materials from the 1960s, for instance, suggests that Brodkey finished a long version of the novel—1,201 typescript pages possibly following a three-volume structure—that he showed Random House (fig. 1).[23] The novel opens with the narrator's retrieval of childhood memories amidst the "literary shoptalk" of the 1960s.[24]



1. Memory.

Figures scut unedited in a startled light, blurred at first by the speed and heat of one's own pulse, by one's surprise. Surprise is like a rain that weights the lashes and films the eyes with moisture. Tears? Do I mean one remembers in tears? Always. Oh yes. Memories are always cruel -- ~~the~~ happy events are resurrected with the wounds of their brevity ~~upon~~ on them; and the terrible moments of the past return with the same shrivelling force they had before when we had to choose to make a fetish of our agonies and join the faction of the despairing or to forget.

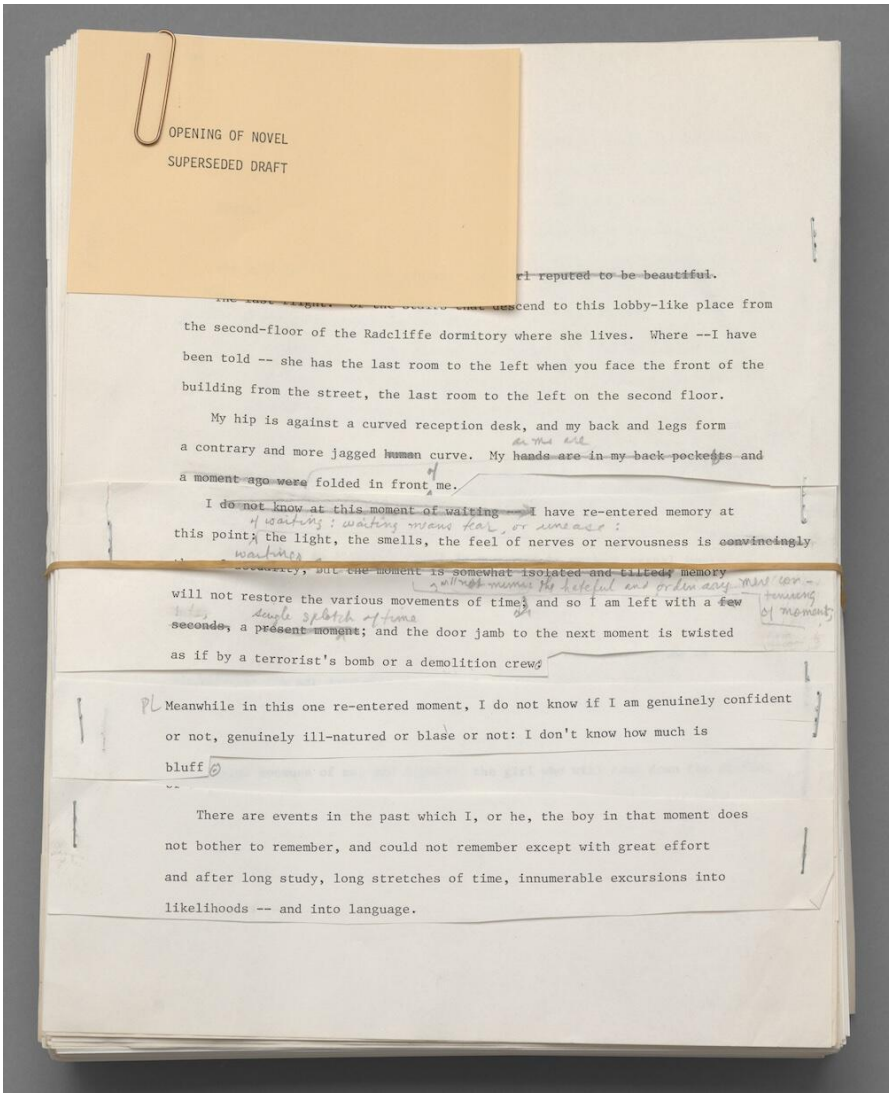
Figure 1. Evidence suggests that Brodkey had written, revised, and even delivered *A Party of Animals* to Random House by 1969.

Brodkey's work over the next decade resulted in a version of the novel that ran up to 2,087 typescript pages—double the already considerable length of the Random House version completed in the 1960s (fig. 2). Robert Gottlieb, Knopf's editor-in-chief when the publisher acquired this iteration of *A Party of Animals* from FSG in 1979, describes the challenges of "wrest[ing] a novel from the material" of Brodkey's writings as the project continued to grow "longer and longer" under the author's hand:

> I spent months hard at it, and produced what seemed to me a coherent and compelling text. The talent was his, the readability mine. As I had known would happen, he didn't want this version published; he was full of compliments over the

> job I'd done, but it wasn't his book. And he was right—it was too conventional, too orderly for him.[25]

Gottlieb's reflections place Brodkey's project at the logical terminus of the familiar opposition between author and publisher: the singular talent on one side, and conventionality, order and *readability* on the other.



OPENING OF NOVEL
SUPERSEDED DRAFT

descend to this lobby-like place from the second-floor of the Radcliffe dormitory where she lives. Where --I have been told -- she has the last room to the left when you face the front of the building from the street, the last room to the left on the second floor.

My hip is against a curved reception desk, and my back and legs form a contrary and more jagged human curve. My hands are in my back pockets and a moment ago were folded in front me.

I do not know at this moment of waiting -- I have re-entered memory at this point; the light, the smells, the feel of nerves or nervousness is convincingly

memory will not restore the various movements of time; and so I am left with a few seconds, a present moment; and the door jamb to the next moment is twisted as if by a terrorist's bomb or a demolition crew.

Meanwhile in this one re-entered moment, I do not know if I am genuinely confident or not, genuinely ill-natured or blase or not: I don't know how much is bluff.

There are events in the past which I, or he, the boy in that moment does not bother to remember, and could not remember except with great effort and after long study, long stretches of time, innumerable excursions into likelihoods -- and into language.

Figure 2. Typescript of *A Party of Animals*, 1979 version. Harold Brodkey papers (97M-48), Box 09.

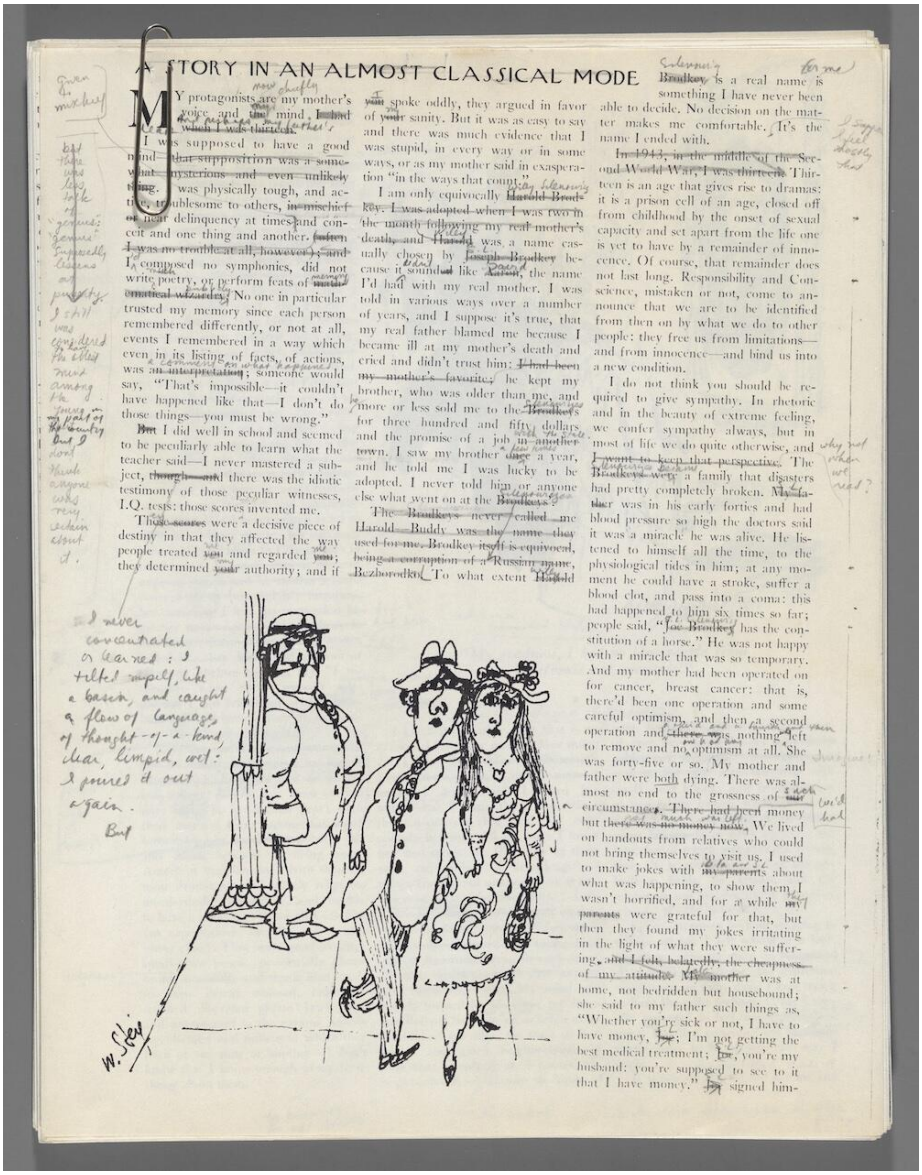
If the consensus on Brodkey's work formed around a term that was intended as a careless dismissal, that term—"unreadability"— nevertheless carries the potential for a neutral, and useful, diagnosis about postwar American literature that this paper actualizes through a close reading of select examples from the Brodkey Collection.[26] I foreground two moments from Brodkey's novel-in-progress: his work cutting up and recombining *A*

Party of Animals into short fiction for magazines that would eventually be collected into *Stories in an Almost Classical Mode* (1985) and, shortly after, his adaptation of his cutting and stapling practices to digital writing platforms. What surfaces in this reading are two related historical developments behind Brodkey's novel that are obscured in a chronological account of artistic development from youth to maturity, or, conversely, a story of unfulfilled promise and decline. The first is the conglomeration of the publishing industry that took place over the same period as Brodkey's protracted work on *A Party of Animals* and its aesthetic pressures on U.S. literary production. The second relates to the proliferation of digital technologies that would change not only the ways books were written and published but the technological and historical status of the book-object itself.[27] Under these historical conditions, Brodkey's work—in its rejection of the conglomerate era's bifurcation of fiction into "marketable" best-sellers and "literary" prize-winners—becomes unreadable in a stronger sense than implied in contemporary aesthetic appraisals and posthumous memorialization. It becomes a project that seeks to return the object of the "book" to an indexical form by refusing the logic of conglomerate publishing.

I. Parts of a Larger Work

When FSG finally published *The Runaway Soul*, there was doubt about whether it was actually that long-awaited project, *A Party of Animals*. On the eve of publication, Brodkey himself "declined to say whether this is the first of a multivolume novel, or even that this is 'The Book.'"[28] The continuous transformation of the project had made it difficult to identify any particular draft as "the book"—an ambiguity that is reflected in the author's papers, which reveal that Brodkey's work on *A Party of Animals* did not follow a clear division between genres and projects. It is a common practice that authors publish excerpts of books in progress in a provisional, anticipatory form in periodicals and literary journals. The copyright page of *The Runaway Soul*, which states that "*Portions of this book have appeared in a different form in* The New Yorker," suggests that Brodkey either expanded a published short story into a novel-length narrative or, close to completing his project, excerpted his work in the form of a self-contained short story. However, Brodkey's short stories stand in a formally and generically ambiguous relation to his novel-in-progress. The story published in the *New Yorker* as "A Story in an Almost Classical Mode" (1973) is an example of a narrative Brodkey took from *A Party of Animals*, edited into a short story for the magazine, then revised back into novel form before scrapping it into fragments that were eventually incorporated into *The Runaway*

Soul. The variations cover Brodkey's recurrent subjects: the narrator's boyhood in a suburb of St. Louis, his departure for Harvard, and the illness of his adoptive mother back home. In the version published in the *New Yorker*, the narrator, also named Harold Brodkey, meditates on the circumstances of his adoption by the characters Doris and Joseph Brodkey, who share the names of the author's own adoptive parents: "I am only equivocally Harold Brodkey. I was adopted when I was two in the month following my real mother's death, and Harold was a name casually chosen by Joseph Brodkey because it sounded like Aaron, the name I'd had with my real mother."[29] In *A Party of Animals*, the unsteady circumstances of identity narrated in Brodkey's magazine story rises from a theme to something like a principle of composition.



A STORY IN AN ALMOST CLASSICAL MODE

MY protagonists are my mother's voice and the mind. I was supposed to have a good mind—that supposition was a somewhat mysterious and even unlikely thing. I was physically tough, and active, troublesome to others, in mischief or near delinquency at times (and conceit and one thing and another. (often I was no trouble at all, however); and I composed no symphonies, did not write poetry, or perform feats of mathematical wizardry. No one in particular trusted my memory since each person remembered differently, or not at all, events I remembered in a way which even in its listing of facts, of actions, was an interpretation; someone would say, "That's impossible—it couldn't have happened like that—I don't do those things—you must be wrong."

But I did well in school and seemed to be peculiarly able to learn what the teacher said—I never mastered a subject, though—and there was the idiotic testimony of those peculiar witnesses, I.Q. tests: those scores invented me.

Those scores were a decisive piece of destiny in that they affected the way people treated you and regarded you; they determined your authority; and if you spoke oddly, they argued in favor of your sanity. But it was as easy to say and there was much evidence that I was stupid, in every way or in some ways, or as my mother said in exasperation "in the ways that count."

I am only equivocally Harold Brodkey. I was adopted when I was two in the month following my real mother's death, and Harold was a name casually chosen by Joseph Brodkey because it sounded like Aaron, the name I'd had with my real mother. I was told in various ways over a number of years, and I suppose it's true, that my real father blamed me because I became ill at my mother's death and cried and didn't trust him; I had been my mother's favorite; he kept my brother, who was older than me, and more or less sold me to the Brodkeys for three hundred and fifty dollars and the promise of a job in another town. I saw my brother once a year, and he told me I was lucky to be adopted. I never told him or anyone else what went on at the Brodkeys.

The Brodkeys never called me Harold—Buddy was the name they used for me. Brodkey itself is equivocal, being a corruption of a Russian name, Bezborodko. To what extent Harold Brodkey is a real name is something I have never been able to decide. No decision on the matter makes me comfortable. It's the name I ended with.

In 1943, in the middle of the Second World War, I was thirteen. Thirteen is an age that gives rise to dramas: it is a prison cell of an age, closed off from childhood by the onset of sexual capacity and set apart from the life one is yet to have by a remainder of innocence. Of course, that remainder does not last long. Responsibility and Conscience, mistaken or not, come to announce that we are to be identified from then on by what we do to other people: they free us from limitations—and from innocence—and bind us into a new condition.

I do not think you should be required to give sympathy. In rhetoric and in the beauty of extreme feeling, we confer sympathy always, but in most of life we do quite otherwise, and I want to keep that perspective. The Brodkeys were a family that disasters had pretty completely broken. My father was in his early forties and had blood pressure so high the doctors said it was a miracle he was alive. He listened to himself all the time, to the physiological tides in him; at any moment he could have a stroke, suffer a blood clot, and pass into a coma: this had happened to him six times so far; people said, "Joe Brodkey has the constitution of a horse." He was not happy with a miracle that was so temporary. And my mother had been operated on for cancer, breast cancer: that is, there'd been one operation and some careful optimism, and then a second operation and there was nothing left to remove and no optimism at all. She was forty-five or so. My mother and father were both dying. There was almost no end to the grossness of circumstance. There had been money but there was no money now. We lived on handouts from relatives who could not bring themselves to visit us. I used to make jokes with my parents about what was happening, to show them I wasn't horrified, and for a while my parents were grateful for that, but then they found my jokes irritating in the light of what they were suffering, and I felt, belatedly, the cheapness of my attitude. My mother was at home, not bedridden but housebound; she said to my father such things as, "Whether you're sick or not, I have to have money, I'm not getting the best medical treatment; you're my husband: you're supposed to see to it that I have money." He signed him-

Brodkey experiments with changing the names of his characters. Harold Brodkey papers (97M-48), Box 72.

Over the years, Brodkey produced several versions of *A Party of Animals* that never saw publication. Figure 3 (above) illustrates the decoupling of writing and publication that took place through the author's experimentation with the material elements of revision. Brodkey took a photocopy of "A Story in an Almost Classical Mode" from the September 17, 1973 issue of the *New Yorker* and conducted detailed revisions by hand, thus literalizing the process of editing a short story to form part of a novel.[30] He assiduously changed the narrator's name from "Harold Brodkey" to "Wiley Silenowicz," his other literary alter ego and the narrator of *A Party of Animals*. He made corresponding changes to the parent characters, changing them from "Doris and Joseph Brodkey" to "Lila and S.L. Silenowicz." The changes are surprising, given that so much of the story depends on the particular resonances of "Brodkey."

> I am only equivocally ~~Harold Brodkey~~ [Wiley Silenowicz]. ~~I was adopted when I was two in the month following my real mother's death, and~~ [Wiley] was a name casually chosen by [S.L.] ~~Joseph Brodkey~~ because it [didn't] sound~~ed~~ like ~~Aaron~~ [David], the name I'd had with my real mother.

Who is given a name because it *doesn't* sound like another name? Brodkey's inversion of the mimetic connection in Aaron/Harold only emphasizes the difficulty with which the *New Yorker* story might be incorporated into the novel. The circumstances explaining Brodkey's adoption are crossed out, perhaps in order to accommodate the story's inclusion in a draft of the novel that addresses the narrator's birth elsewhere. Brodkey's experiments here likely predate "Lila," a variation on the same story published in the collection *Women and Angels* (1985), which included the narrator's description of the circumstances of his adoption. In that version of the story, the negative relationship—"Wiley *didn't* sound like David"—is reversed, with "Wiley" introduced as a name whose resemblance to "Isaac" lacks the original double assonance of Aaron/Harold:

> I am only equivocally Wiley Silenowicz. I was adopted when I was two in the month following my real mother's death, and Wiley was a name casually chosen by S.L. Silenowicz because it sounded like Isaac, the name I'd had with my real mother.[31]

Women and Angels, Brodkey's first book since his 1958 debut, appeared with an unsigned note stating that the book presented a "significant portion from the author's long-anticipated major novel, which is nearing completion."[32] The promise was echoed in an "author's introduction" following the unsigned note, which stated that "[t]he pieces of

fiction in this volume … are parts of a larger work nearing completion."[33] The slight difference in phrasing—between a *novel* nearing completion and a *larger work* nearing completion—would, as I argue shortly, prove critical. Behind the scenes, however, Brodkey was displeased with the promises made in both introductory texts. In a letter that he wrote to Lynn Nesbit shortly after the Jewish Publication Society sent out review copies, Brodkey disputed that the collection was representative of the novel: "[*Women and Angels*] contains two stories that were published in the New Yorker and another long piece that is a kind of a story. None of these pieces at the moment is to be in the novel. Some of the sentences here might be but none of the paragraphs. The stuff I do for The New Yorker is redone in a different scale and often with a different theme—violence, for instance, is omitted, and sexual stuff and verbal cruelty."[34] In that letter, he states that he is the author of neither the unsigned prefatory note promising the completion of the "major novel" nor the author's introduction promising the "larger work."

In the years following *Women and Angels*, Brodkey would publish a "larger work" with Knopf, but it wouldn't be the "major novel" itself. *Stories in an Almost Classical Mode* (1988) collected Brodkey's stories in the *New Yorker*, the *American Review*, *Esquire*, the *Partisan Review*, *Vanity Fair*, and the *Quarterly*. At nearly 600 pages, the Knopf collection covered the autobiographical ground that readers expected from Brodkey's infamous unfinished novel. "Innocence" describes Wiley's relationship with Orra Perkins, the Radcliffe student central to many iterations of Brodkey's novel project. "S.L." describes Wiley's relationship with his adoptive father, as does "His Son, in His Arms, in Light, Aloft." The stories were created out of the thousands of pages of fiction that Brodkey had written toward *A Party of Animals*. Brodkey would later credit Gordon Lish with "inventing" "His Son…," which appeared in *Esquire* in 1975: "He saw it lurking in a long section of the novel, showed me how a sequence could be built of the sort that then I did build."[35] The name changes that Brodkey experimented with in his magazine publications continue in the collection. The titular story is told not by Wiley Silenowicz but the author's other alter ego, "Harold Brodkey," thus suggesting that Brodkey ultimately reversed the revisions that he had once tried out on photocopied pages of the *New Yorker*. "Largely an Oral History of My Mother" presents yet another variation on Brodkey's fictional names. In that story, the narrator's father is named "S.L." as in other stories in the collection, as well as the eventual *Runaway Soul*, but has the last name Cohn rather than Silenowicz: "My father, S.L. Cohn [was] usually called S.L.: when people who spoke Yiddish wanted to make trouble they called him *Esel*."[36]

The publication of *Stories in an Almost Classical Mode* constituted a major event in the composition of *A Party of Animals*, the subtraction of a complexly entangled body of work that would shape the final form of *The Runaway Soul*. Although the stories address a rotating set of themes in nearly identical settings, the collection does not neatly compose an overlapping narrative universe as seen in short story cycles like Sherwood Anderson's *Winesburg, Ohio*. If the stories about "Harold Brodkey" and "Wiley Silenowicz" are nearly indistinguishable, the connections fail because the names, seemingly so casually chosen, are not interchangeable. The stories are simultaneously too close and too disconnected to build up to a novel-length narrative, a problem that Brodkey addresses with a metafictional conceit that attempts to resolve the contradictions of irreconcilable autobiographical personas. A draft of a version of *A Party of Animals* in a dot matrix printout bears the subtitle "Brodkey's Novel, Silenowicz's Book." It opens with a narrator who describes Wiley Silenowicz in experimental prose with line breaks: "His name … is a Jew form of Ulysses Silenus; he is a Jew American. The fifty-year-old scribbling Silenowicz and the nineteen-year-old Wiley are in Brodkey's novel / which is to say Silenowicz's book; / (here is a fifty year old semi-public man scribbling away at six-ten in the morning, August 21, 1982)."[37] The metafictional experiment, which Brodkey appears to have begun after adopting digital writing technologies, would continue into the 1980s. A computer printout dated May 5, 1986 features both Wiley and Harold, with the subjective and objective points of view in the 1982 draft reversed: "I am Wiley Silenowicz, a character in a book. I don't think Harold Brodkey can exist on a page."[38] The outcome of Brodkey's computer experiments would, as I argue below, result in the fragmented structure of *The Runaway Soul* (1991) that would contribute to its "unreadability."

II. Brodkey's Office Supplies

Fully understanding Brodkey's digital experiments—and therefore the unconventional *Runaway Soul*—requires examining Brodkey's revision practices using the material affordances of paper that predate his adoption of the computer. If Brodkey's papers cannot be processed to fit a conventionally linear scheme, they nevertheless possess a unique mode of organization that tells us about his working methods. The computer printouts for *Runaway Soul* are contained in a storage box labeled "STUFF UNDER COMPUTER TABLE (1)."[39] A box containing the 1979 version of the novel is in the "RIGHT SIDE OF DESK."[40] According to a label on the storage box, Brodkey's post-*Runaway Soul* work on *This Wild Darkness* was retrieved from the "4-Drawer Stand by

Door." The organizational challenges of reading Brodkey's papers reflect the conditions in which the writing was produced. The work in progress, which came to encompass the "eleven Formica cabinets" described in the 1988 *New York Magazine* profile alongside boxes in storage and boxes awaiting disposal, exceeded the scales at which a singular project can be managed according to intention.[41] The acts of storage, retrieval, destruction, loss, and re-discovery became essential parts of the writing process, reflecting the themes of contingency that Brodkey explored in the writing.

The interpretive challenges of Brodkey's massive archive require a dramatic narrowing of focus, down to the staples, clips, and rubber bands that the Brodkeys used to keep track of the work in progress. A quote attributed to Harold Brodkey states that when Knopf purchased *A Party of Animals* from Random House in 1979 for $75,000, the sum was for "interest and paper clips."[42] The papers at Houghton Library contain hundreds, if not thousands, of paper clips that hold together Brodkey's disparate writings toward *A Party of Animals*. Alongside related office supplies like staples and rubber bands, the paper clips in the Brodkey papers disclose the author's fragmentary conception, composition, and revision of the novel. Even as they perform the routine task of keeping together the stacks of writings, these clips reveal the connective structure of the prose fragments within larger narrative units contained in the novel-in-progress (fig. 4). Collectively, these office implements form the material evidence that we can use to reconstruct, at a microscopic level, the compositional decisions that Brodkey made toward creating the unconventional, disorderly structures that would characterize *The Runaway Soul*.

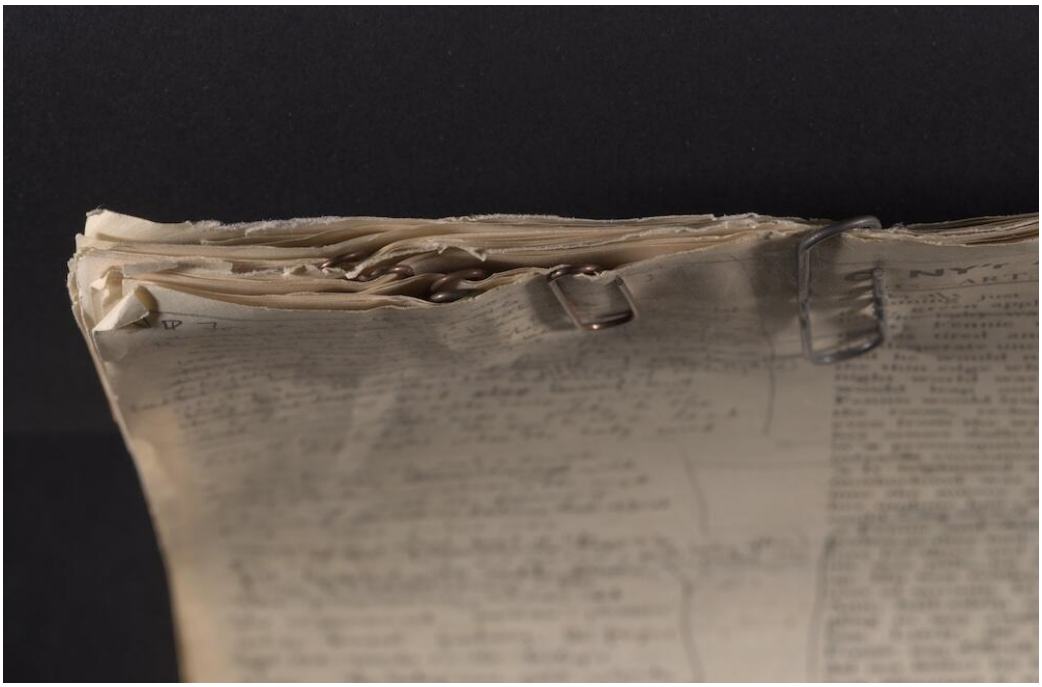
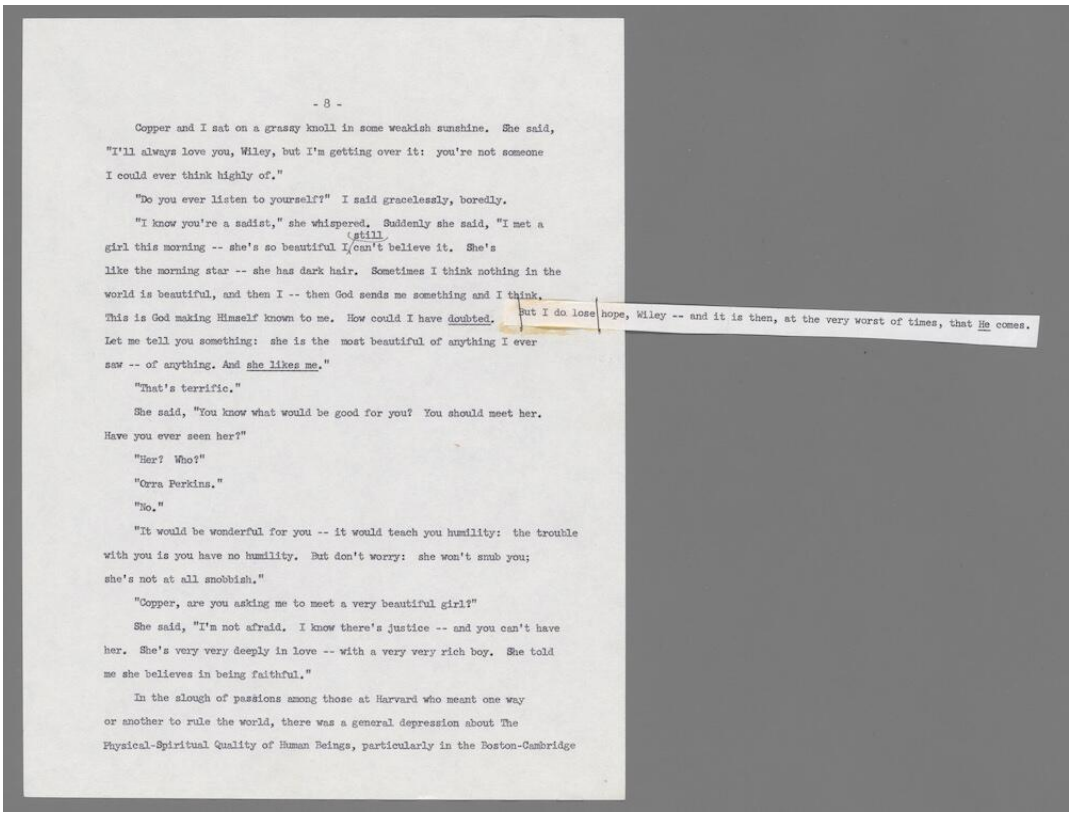


Figure 4. A single paper clip gathers together shorter episodes that are individually connected with paper clips that are interwoven throughout the pages. Harold Brodkey papers (97M-48), Box 21.

Although metal fixtures such as the paper clip are often removed at the accessioning stage, the media theorist Lisa Gitelman tells us that these "potential agents of rust" make visible the particular "micro-logics by which bureaucratic labor collects and connects."[43] The unprocessed state of Brodkey's papers means that these fasteners materially preserve the narrative groupings that the author created—and later re-encountered—while assembling a novel out of previous work. The scale of this work obscures not only the author's own decisions on the project and his collaborations with numerous editors at magazines and publishing houses, but also his close collaboration with his second wife, Ellen Schwamm Brodkey, the author of *Adjacent Lives* (1978) and *How He Saved Her* (1983), who helped type, revise, and archive Brodkey's work-in-progress.[44] In the case of those unpublished manuscripts that were sent to publishers, the microscopic moments of composition bear the imprint of the editorial assistants at the publishing house who called themselves Brodkey's "word processor," in reference to their days "retyping version after version" of the project, which they took to calling "Party of Typing."[45] In John Bryant's terminology, the clips and staples in Brodkey's archives constitute the "variable materiality" that speaks to the "immaterial processes of change" that produce an ever-evolving text.[46]

Techniques of "attachment" such as paper clips and staples, possess a relation to temporality that distinguishes them from techniques of "enclosure," such as the

envelope.[47] The staple or a clip, in connecting two pieces of paper together, produces a type of connection that is open-ended and implicitly temporary. As Gitelman explains, "paper attachments can be composed *after* the documents to which they adhere—think of annotated coversheets— while paper enclosures necessarily antedate the missives that enclose them. … Bent steel paperclips harbor a sort of attachment theory in miniature … whereby a document negotiates its own identity as/and others."[48] Enclosures, by contrast, produce a single object out of disparate materials.[49] In aim, if not in daily practice, the act of writing a book typically builds toward the latter type of object—an envelope that, like the one that traveled between Brodkey and Random House in 1969, gathers different moments of writing and revision into a singular entity that can be formatted and printed into a book. While Brodkey would continue to use techniques of enclosure throughout the 1970s and 1980s—from mailing other versions of the novel to his agent and editors to, later on, saving his work on floppy diskettes—his archival materials reveal his daily work becoming concentrated on the micro-logics of the paper attachment, which enabled a continuous process of revision. Figure 5 shows an example of a paper attachment on an excerpt titled "Orra," in reference to the character Orra Perkins—sometimes referenced as "Ora"—in early versions of *A Party of Animals*. A single sentence from a different draft of the novel has been cut out and stapled to a clean typescript. Residue beneath the strip suggests the piece might have been glued before the stapling.



- 8 -

Copper and I sat on a grassy knoll in some weakish sunshine. She said, "I'll always love you, Wiley, but I'm getting over it: you're not someone I could ever think highly of."

"Do you ever listen to yourself?" I said gracelessly, boredly.

"I know you're a sadist," she whispered. Suddenly she said, "I met a girl this morning -- she's so beautiful I (still) can't believe it. She's like the morning star -- she has dark hair. Sometimes I think nothing in the world is beautiful, and then I -- then God sends me something and I think, This is God making Himself known to me. How could I have doubted. But I do lose hope, Wiley -- and it is then, at the very worst of times, that He comes. Let me tell you something: she is the most beautiful of anything I ever saw -- of anything. And she likes me."

"That's terrific."

She said, "You know what would be good for you? You should meet her. Have you ever seen her?"

"Her? Who?"

"Orra Perkins."

"No."

"It would be wonderful for you -- it would teach you humility: the trouble with you is you have no humility. But don't worry: she won't snub you; she's not at all snobbish."

"Copper, are you asking me to meet a very beautiful girl?"

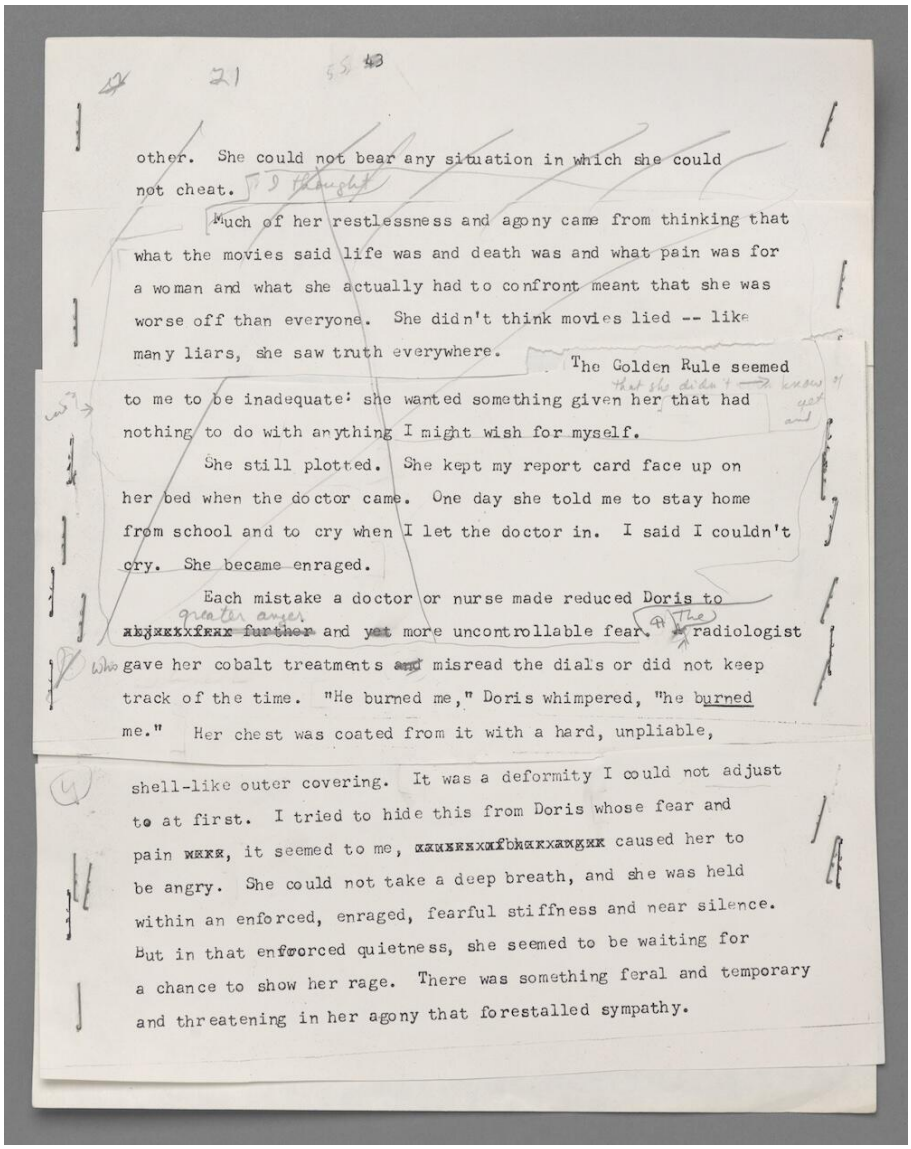
She said, "I'm not afraid. I know there's justice -- and you can't have her. She's very very deeply in love -- with a very very rich boy. She told me she believes in being faithful."

In the slough of passions among those at Harvard who meant one way or another to rule the world, there was a general depression about The Physical-Spiritual Quality of Human Beings, particularly in the Boston-Cambridge

Figure 5. Brodkey's paper attachment from "Orra." Orra Perkins, a student at Radcliffe College whom the narrator meets when he attends Harvard, is a major character in earlier versions of *A Party of Animals*, though her role is reduced in *The Runaway Soul*. Harold Brodkey papers (97M-48), Box 26.

The staples and clips that proliferate in the archive furnish a material basis for the fragmented representations of time and space that characterize Brodkey's writings. These techniques of attachment reveal an author increasingly concerned with the possibilities of writing that continually "negotiates its own identity as/and others," through a method of organization that allowed, in principle, for indefinite growth, in contradistinction to the methods of enclosure that are associated with the finished and finishable book.[50] The collocations enabled by these attachments became sedimented as signature aspects of Brodkey's middle- and later-period style, which is marked by disjunctive movements and independent clauses conjoined into elongated sentences. Figure 6 shows a page from the typescript labeled "Story in an Almost Classical Mode" in Box 43. The object, which comprises three attachments that have been stapled onto a base page, shows how Brodkey manipulated the materiality of paper to alter the significations that take place in his fiction. In the represented world constructed from Brodkey's techniques of attachment, the narrator recounts memories of his mother's illness. The second piece joined to the page ends on a partial sentence that describes the wounds that the radiation treatments leave on his mother's—Doris's—body. Brodkey has cut the sentence at the end of the

line ("hard, unpliable") and joined it to a fragment that ends the sentence in the next line ("shell-like outer covering"). If each strip of paper corresponds to a distinct stage of previous work, then Brodkey's paper attachments imply a revision strategy that materializes the narrator's attempts to separate the workings of memory from the linear passage of time.



21

other. She could not bear any situation in which she could not cheat.

Much of her restlessness and agony came from thinking that what the movies said life was and death was and what pain was for a woman and what she actually had to confront meant that she was worse off than everyone. She didn't think movies lied -- like many liars, she saw truth everywhere. The Golden Rule seemed to me to be inadequate: she wanted something given her that had nothing to do with anything I might wish for myself.

She still plotted. She kept my report card face up on her bed when the doctor came. One day she told me to stay home from school and to cry when I let the doctor in. I said I couldn't cry. She became enraged.

Each mistake a doctor or nurse made reduced Doris to greater anger and more uncontrollable fear. The radiologist who gave her cobalt treatments misread the dials or did not keep track of the time. "He burned me," Doris whimpered, "he burned me." Her chest was coated from it with a hard, unpliable, shell-like outer covering. It was a deformity I could not adjust to at first. I tried to hide this from Doris whose fear and pain, it seemed to me, caused her to be angry. She could not take a deep breath, and she was held within an enforced, enraged, fearful stiffness and near silence. But in that enforced quietness, she seemed to be waiting for a chance to show her rage. There was something feral and temporary and threatening in her agony that forestalled sympathy.

Figure 6. A page from Brodkey's typescripts of "A Story in an Almost Classical Mode," which was published in the *New Yorker* in 1973 and collected in *Stories in an Almost Classical Mode* in 1988. Harold Brodkey papers (97M-48), Box 43.

Brodkey's application of this method constitutes a formal exploration of his characters' helplessness to alter the hardened shape of the past. (Doris's wounds, as the narrator recounts in the reconstructed typescript page, resulted because the radiologist "misread

the dials or did not keep track of the time.”) Through recursive application of this technique, Brodkey transformed his novel in microscopic increments. As the detail of the page in figure 7 shows, each of the attachments on the page from “Story in an Almost Classical Mode” are themselves a composite of smaller attachments that have been photographed, revised, cut, and pieced together.

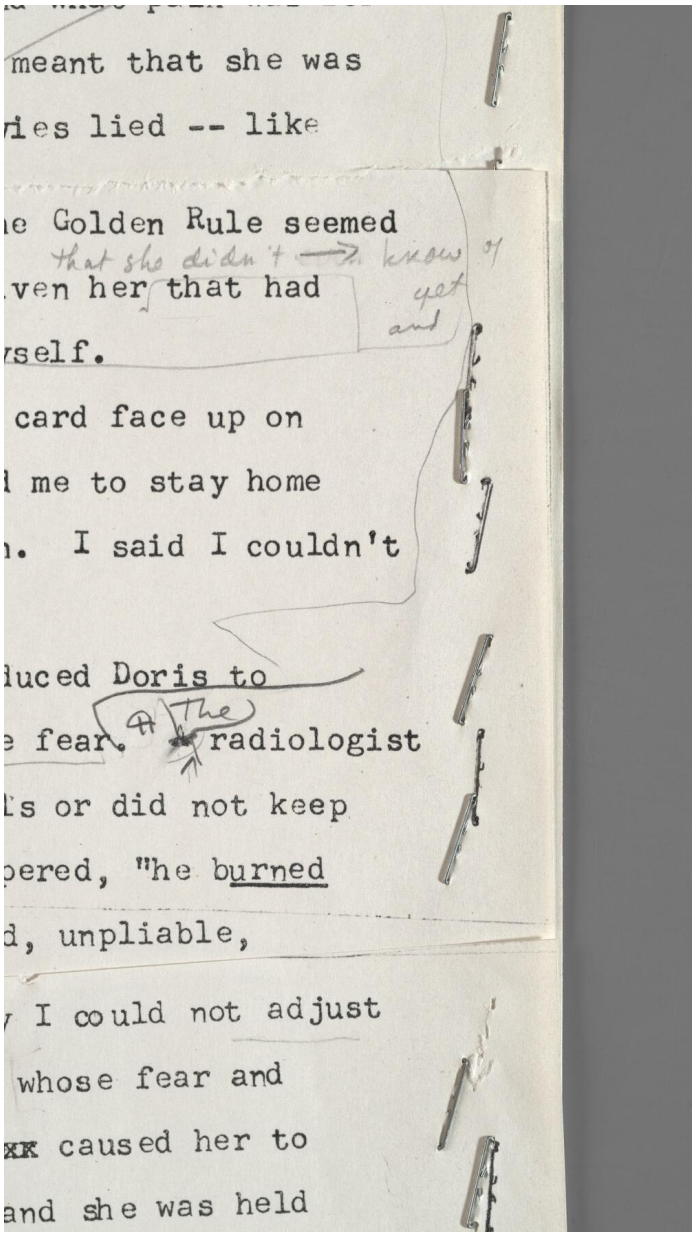


Figure 7. Detail of figure 6, revealing the layers of previous revision. Staples from previous assemblages can be seen as photocopied artifacts in the margins indicating previous rounds of revision, with newer rounds featuring metal staples. Harold Brodkey papers (97M-48), Box 43.

Brodkey's paper attachments transformed the project at macroscopic levels as well, affecting the sequencing of events that readers would ultimately encounter in *The Runaway Soul*. The emendations of page numbers in the top margin of the typescript from "Story in an Almost Classical Mode" as shown in figure 6 suggest that Brodkey's techniques of attachment exceeded the scale of the page. The typewritten page number "43" is crossed out; a "55" has been written in pencil at some point but subsequently erased; a "52" is written in pencil and crossed out in pencil. Only a "21" remains, suggesting that at some point Brodkey wanted this page to appear earlier in the larger narrative unit in which it is contained. It would be difficult, if not impossible, to ascertain the significance of moving this page three pages from 55 to 52, or from 52 to 55, as the previous versions from which Brodkey constructed this draft were cut up in the process of creation.[51] But the relocations from pages 52/55 to page 21, or even 43 to 55, furnish a somewhat more stable basis for speculation. We could ask, for instance, about the narrative effects of deferring by approximately 10 pages the moment when the narrator perceives in his mother's "agony" a quality that "forestalls sympathy." Alternatively, working within the version in which this constructed page is "21," we might ask what it means for Brodkey to pull forward by 20 typescript pages the narrator's shock in seeing his mother following her cancer treatment. Compounding the dizzying number of hypothetical differences implicated in Brodkey's work on this one page, we can also consider the fate of the crossed-out text in the first half of the page. Readers familiar with Brodkey's fiction might recognize some of the language from the top half of the page, crossed out in multiple temporal stages, in the published versions of this work: the excerpts in the first two attachments crossed out with the large *X* later appear in "A Story in an Almost Classical Mode," where the narrator's forestalled sympathy actualizes into a realization of the Golden Rule, which, in Brodkian fashion, is unreciprocated by the mother.[52]

The hypothetical versions that accrete on a single page of Brodkey's revisions confirm the futility of trying to understand *A Party of Animals* according to a teleological perspective or by intuiting authorial intention. Instead, the apparent and implied temporal layers in Brodkey's drafts attest to a recursive process in which the material dimension of writing stands in a dialectic relation to the immaterial elements of poetics and signification. The paper attachments that circulate in Brodkey's archive reveal the author exploring an ontology of memory, stated in the Random House draft of the novel, in which "happy moments are resurrected with the wounds of their brevity on them."[53] Ellen Schwamm Brodkey compares Brodkey's paper experiments with the *paperoles* found in the pages of Proust's notebooks, a feature of the French novelist's work that might be the

strongest substantiation of Brodkey's reputation as the "American Proust."[54] Drawing on archival materials, John Lurz interprets Proust's practice of "pasting … loose sheets onto the edges of his notebook pages" as "entail[ing] a move away from linguistic signification … to material manipulation."[55] For Lurz, the interplay between Proust's material extensions of his drafts and those moments in "Proust's novel in which the material embodiedness of a book takes on significance for the novel's narrator" reveals the *Recherche*'s investment in "showing the way in which the creation of art functions not as an escape or exit from the world but as an action that takes place *within the confines of the world*. It does this by showing how both writing and reading operate 'in between' the material and the immaterial."[56]

Brodkey's paper attachments entail a similar dissolution of the boundary between the material and the immaterial, albeit through implements that differ from those of Proust's, belonging more properly to the bureaucratic world of the magazine offices and publishing houses though which his drafts circulated in the latter half of the 20th century. We might thus return to Figure 2 (above), which shows the opening paragraphs of a "superseded" version of the novel from 1979. The first page is made up of smaller strips of paper that have been stapled together. On top of the strips, Brodkey has revised the language in pencil.

> But ~~the moment is somewhat isolated and tilted;~~ memory will not restore the various moments of time~~;~~, will not mimic the hateful and ordinary mere containing of moments, and so I am left with ~~a few seconds,~~ a ~~present moment~~ a single splotch of time; and a door jamb to the next moment is twisted as if by a terrorist's bomb or a demolition crew: [57]

Brodkey's practice of re-incorporating "superceded" drafts of the novel implicates the problems of textual loss that go back to the modernist technique of "excision."[58] The passage above, which shows Brodkey's hand emendations within a stapled attachment, shows the construction of a "single splotch of time" that exists between narrative and material registers. What lay in that next moment when Brodkey conceived of it? The colon prepending the moment to follow is circled in pencil, indicating the absence of whatever was excised by the scissor's turn. The question of loss replicates throughout Brodkey's archive, where each paper attachment indexes a deletion of material that cannot be reconstructed.

Brodkey's attachments materialize what Hannah Sullivan has called the "bibliographical consequences of Hemingway's [iceberg] principle."[59] For Sullivan, the famous image of the "condensed final draft" as the tip of an iceberg supported by "earlier versions … tidily tucked away from sight" presents contradictory claims for literary interpretation: "should we assume," Sullivan asks, with skepticism, "that final texts only 'resonate with significance' of certain, correct parts of the earlier version?" Doing so "would require that different parts of abandoned drafts have different ontologies: some would be merely refuse; others would be resonant ghosts."[60] Brodkey's paper attachments were a complex adaptation of the iceberg technique. In their leveraging of the affordances of the paper medium, the layers of stapled, clipped, and glued bits that form Brodkey's typescript drafts literalize the differential ontology at the heart of what Sullivan diagnoses as the "magical thinking" in modernist excision.[61] For Brodkey, the scissor's edge demarcated the line between what would be used and what would be discarded into the archive. His recursive attachment to this process resulted in a work shaped so much by deletion that it could no longer stand as an internally coherent narrative—a novel with "all the past contained [in it] like bits of ghost-plash of sensation" (RS 381).[62] Yet, Brodkey's ability to render the results of his paper techniques in a publishable form depended, as discussed below, on his jump to digital writing platforms that enabled him to explore the non-linear, indexical capabilities of the book format.

III. Brodkey's Disks: Fragmented Files, Narrative Links

The pivotal period of 1985–1988 when Brodkey split the Knopf collection from the novel coincided with an important historical development that had implications for the structure of *The Runaway Soul*: the embrace of digital computers by creative writers. In 1985, Brodkey was named a recipient of a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. That year, the NEA ran an experimental program in partnership with Wang Laboratories in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Grant recipients could lease a Wang digital writer, described by NEA director Frank Conroy as the "Rolls Royce of word-processors."[63] Sometime after this encounter with digital devices, Brodkey became a convert to the personal computer. His first computer was a Hewlett Packard model, followed by an IBM desktop computer, and finally a Macintosh with two monitors.[64] Like his file storage system, Brodkey's digital setup became incorporated into the legend of his novel. Leading up to the publication of *The Runaway Soul*, reporters described Brodkey's setup, with "equipment worthy of a bond-trading room," which involved printers, scanners, and multiple monitors.[65]

Brodkey's work leading up to *The Runaway Soul* surfaces in stacks of computer printouts that fill storage boxes 64A and 64B of his papers. Unlike the typescripts discussed earlier, the printouts generally do not reveal the layers of revision that Brodkey conducted to produce his work. The clean pages are stapled into units corresponding to the files in which they were written on Brodkey's computer, with the file name and access dates hand-written in the top right-hand corner. Returning to Lisa Gitelman's theorization of bureaucratic techniques, the staple in this instance corresponds not to the techniques of attachment, but to the techniques of enclosure. The staples that gather Brodkey's computer printouts impose a temporal logic that differs from those used on his scrambled typescripts. Unlike the paper attachments that allowed Brodkey to conceive of writing as an unending, recursive process, the digital file neatly divided Brodkey's composition into distinct stages in the requisite action of saving—and thereby exiting—his works in progress.

Brodkey's method of digital storage can be seen in figure 8, which shows a stack of 8-inch floppy diskettes held in a plastic cartridge case. At the top of each diskette is a large paper label on which users could write descriptions of the information held in magnetic storage. These diskettes, which had a storage capacity in the order of kilobytes, split Brodkey's writing process between discontinuous media environments. The primary act of writing took place in the software of the word processor while the file was stored on a magnetic storage medium.

How did Brodkey's process, which previously used paper attachments to work between the material and immaterial divide, adapt to a digital environment? For Gitelman, enclosures and attachments in paper form are distinguishable from email attachments in that the latter "is always a distinct entity" that "reverses [the] clock" of "paper enclosures," which "necessarily antedate the missives that enclose them."[66] The floppy diskettes that Brodkey used—as well as the CDs, USB drives, and cloud storage technologies to come—follow the paper/digital division that Gitelman identifies in creating a piece of writing that must be completed (in however provisional a sense) before becoming a distinct identity, much in the way a word processing document must be saved (and thus provisionally finalized) before being created as a distinct file.

Figure 8. Eight-inch floppy disks on which Brodkey saved his writings. Harold Brodkey additional papers (98M-10), Box 1.

Figure 9 shows Brodkey's work on the paper label of an 8-inch diskette. As Matthew Kirschenabum writes, paper labels were an "indispensable" component of magnetic storage media as the "legible text" written on them not only pointed to but stood "in implicit counterpoint to the machine-readable markings … within the plastic envelope" of the diskette.[67] The labels were indispensable to Brodkey's work on *A Party of Animals* as well, as they became incorporated into the author's previous experiments with paper attachments. Brodkey's writing on the label in different pens indicate layers of backups and revisions that he performed on the magnetic medium. The redaction and labeling in felt pen, in particular, suggest at least one final layer of revision where Brodkey deleted materials, perhaps to make space for new writing. Several titles reference Nonie, a major character in *The Runaway Soul* who appears throughout *Stories in an Almost Classical Mode*, suggesting that this diskette houses files that pertain to episodes that involve the narrator's sister. The appearance of "Jimmy" and "Jimbo" on the label—perhaps in reference to a single character—suggests Brodkey's intention to weave the story of Jimmy/Jimbo and Nonie together.

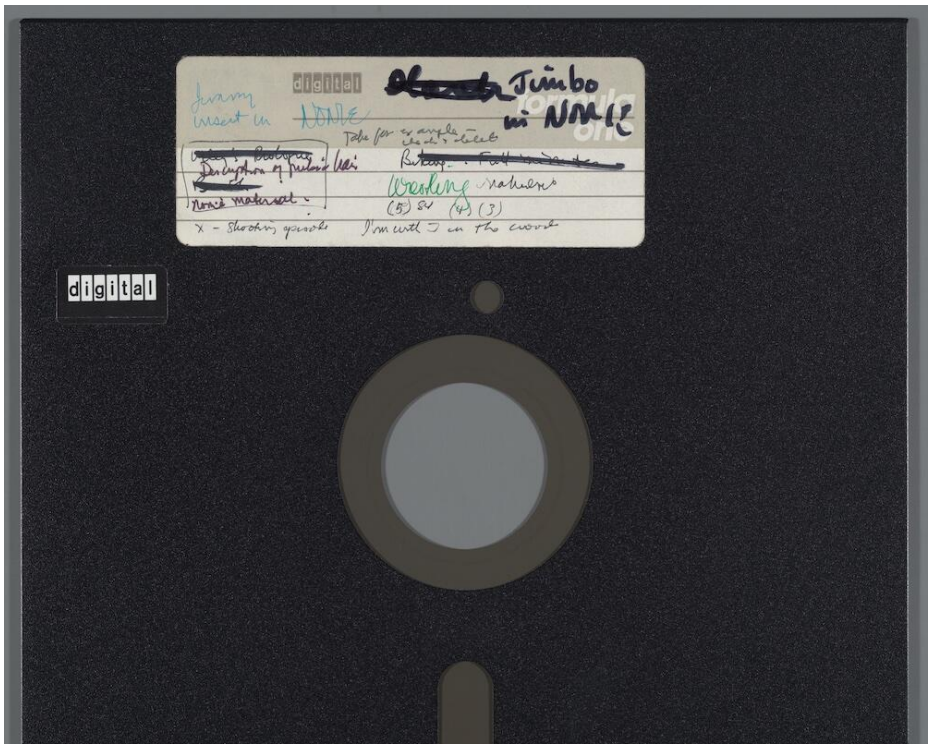
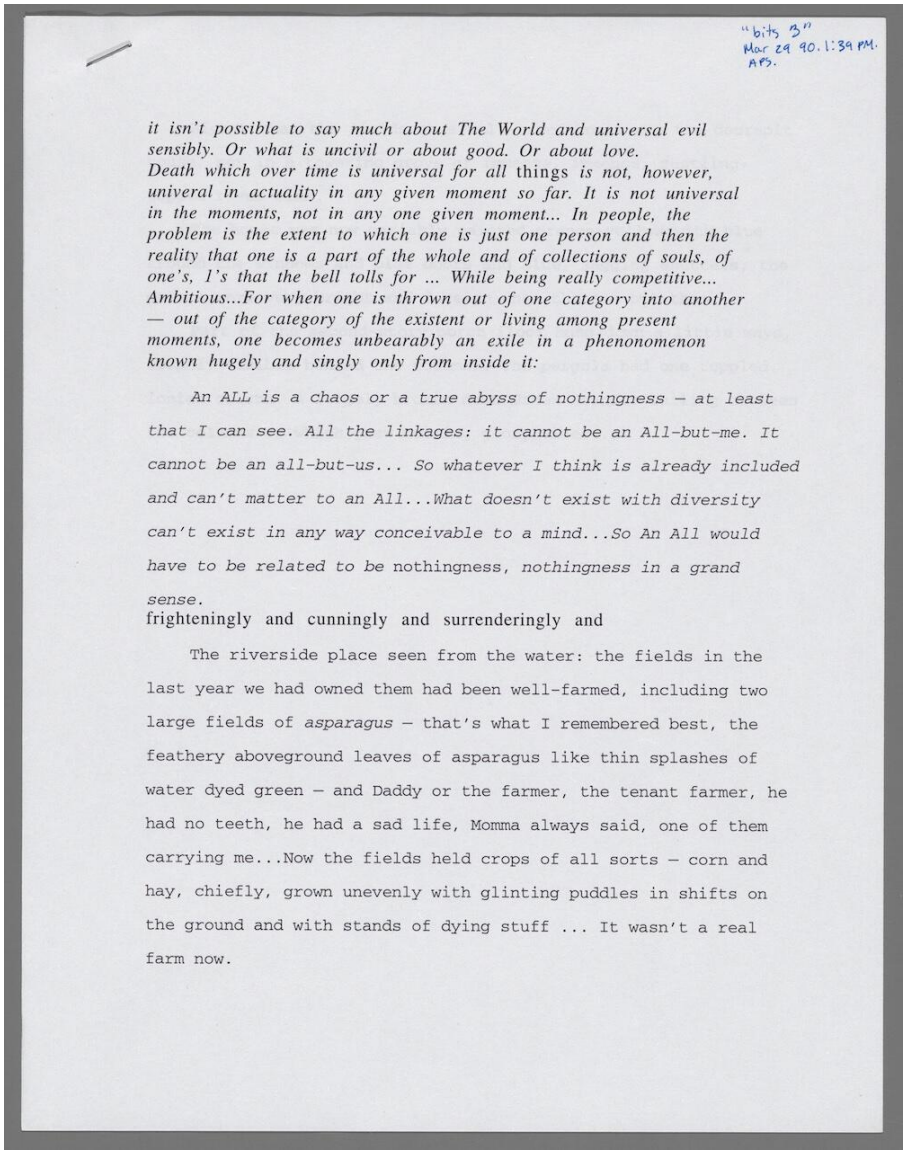


Figure 9. Detail of Brodkey's diskette. Harold Brodkey additional papers (98M-10), Box 1.

Like the paper attachments discussed above, the paper diskette labels allow a reconstruction of Brodkey's narrative manipulations. At the center of the label, between the space reserved for a diskette title and the space reserved for detailed description, is a line taken from the first sentence of a standalone story featuring the Jimmy/Jimbo character. Published in *Vanity Fair* and the *Quarterly* in different versions, and later collected in the Knopf collection, "The Boys on Their Bikes" begins with the sentence "Take, for example, me and Jimmy Setchell."[68] The opening sentence of that story depends for its effect on a sense of discontinuity created by a missing—or deleted—antecedent. What are Brodkey's narrator and Jimmy Setchell (or their relationship) an example of? On the paper label, the incomplete phrase "Take, for example" serves as a piece of language to be incorporated into the novel as a fragment to be expanded upon (as in one of his paper cut-outs) as well as a token of the published story that references the piece as it appeared in magazines (as in an entry in a bibliography). Here, we might remember Brodkey's letter to his agent Lynn Nesbit regarding the prefatory pieces to *Women and Angels*: "None of these pieces at the moment is to be in the novel. Some of the sentences here might be but none of the paragraphs." The specificity with Brodkey re-incorporated bits of language from previous works suggests that he sought to retain his practice of cutting and stapling into digital environments.

Brodkey's printouts from close to the publication of *The Runaway Soul* show the continuation of his fragmentary process. Figure 10 is a printout of a file titled "bits 3" that Brodkey last edited in the afternoon of March 29, 1990. The different typefaces suggest that the discontinuous fragments shown on the page came from different files that he created on the computer. The vast majority of the printouts in Brodkey's papers do not feature such copy-pasted artifacts that make visible his process on the computer. Yet, these "bit" files reveal that Brodkey continued his practice of cutting up and reusing previous pieces of his writing (see figure 11). They are an equivalent to the clippings of his earlier writings that he gathered for his paper attachments.



"bits 3"
Mar 29 90. 1:39 PM.
AB.

it isn't possible to say much about The World and universal evil sensibly. Or what is uncivil or about good. Or about love.
Death which over time is universal for all things *is not, however, univeral in actuality in any given moment so far. It is not universal in the moments, not in any one given moment... In people, the problem is the extent to which one is just one person and then the reality that one is a part of the whole and of collections of souls, of one's, I's that the bell tolls for ... While being really competitive... Ambitious...For when one is thrown out of one category into another — out of the category of the existent or living among present moments, one becomes unbearably an exile in a phenonomenon known hugely and singly only from inside it:*

An ALL is a chaos or a true abyss of nothingness — at least that I can see. All the linkages: it cannot be an All-but-me. It cannot be an all-but-us... So whatever I think is already included and can't matter to an All...What doesn't exist with diversity can't exist in any way conceivable to a mind...So An All would have to be related to be nothingness, *nothingness in a grand sense.*
frighteningly and cunningly and surrenderingly and

The riverside place seen from the water: the fields in the last year we had owned them had been well-farmed, including two large fields of *asparagus* — that's what I remembered best, the feathery aboveground leaves of asparagus like thin splashes of water dyed green — and Daddy or the farmer, the tenant farmer, he had no teeth, he had a sad life, Momma always said, one of them carrying me...Now the fields held crops of all sorts — corn and hay, chiefly, grown unevenly with glinting puddles in shifts on the ground and with stands of dying stuff ... It wasn't a real farm now.

Figure 10. From a file titled "bits 3," dated 9:19 PM, Mar. 28, 1990. The formatting of the text suggests that Brodkey created computer documents that functioned as a digital clipboard, which allowed him to continue reserving previously written fragments for future work. Harold Brodkey papers (97M-48), Box 64A.

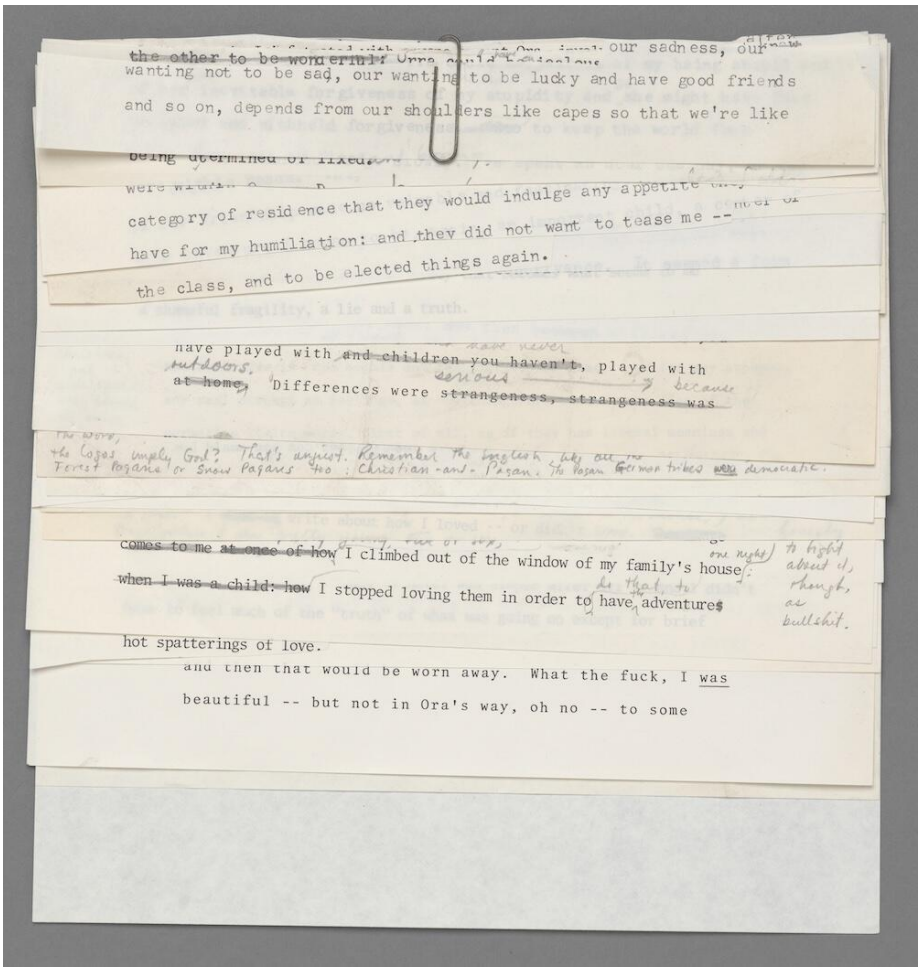


Figure 11. Brodkey's practice of creating "bit" files on the computer had antecedents in his paper-period. The clippings photographed here, which appear to be leftovers from Brodkey's paper attachments, feature excised language from the 1979 draft of *A Party of Animals*. Harold Brodkey papers (97M-48), Box 09.

Absent copy-pasted artifacts as those seen in figure 10, it is difficult to reconstruct the attachments that Brodkey used to assemble *The Runaway Soul* from what remained of *A Party of Animals* after the pieces in *Stories in an Almost Classical Mode* were expunged. If we follow Kirschenbaum's argument that studies of digital writing begin not at the screen but at the "site of inscription"—that is, with the computer's storage media—then Brodkey's stapled assemblages of his previous writings seem not eccentric but anticipatory.[69] The "bits" of writing that Brodkey removes from previous writings take on an additional significance in the data-stream, prompting examinations of their recombination in digitally-enabled narrative forms.[70]

As a writer whose fiction collated disparate moments of writing, Brodkey might have been particularly suited to the "database paradigm" inaugurated by the computer era, in which the "computer database becomes a new metaphor that we use to conceptualize individual and collective cultural memory."[71] Stated more strongly, the discontinuous, fragmented data structures that enabled the computer to "quickly access, sort, and reorganize millions of records" also made it possible for Brodkey to produce successive versions of the novel that continued his practice of writing-by-attachment without retaining the edges of the superseded work: the glue residues, staples, cuts, and photocopied artifacts that we find throughout his paper period.[72] As the novel project moved to the computer, such fixtures and artifacts disappeared from the project, and the novel became a vessel for the narrative specters produced by Brodkey's cutting and stapling.[73] For example, a line that appears at the end of Brodkey's first published story, "A State of Grace"—"Love him, you damn fool, love him"[74]—re-appears, italicized, in *The Runaway Soul*. In the original story, the line applies to a neighborhood boy whom the adolescent narrator tutors in St. Louis; in the novel, it applies to an entirely different character, a "late-in-adolescence" boy who is two years older than Brodkey's narrator (RS 764). The appearance of this line—excised from the story, rendered in italics, and transplanted to a seemingly unrelated narrative context—implies a corresponding deletion of the rest of the story and the loss of a potential novel that never came into being. The process by which Brodkey converted his work in progress into a format that could be printed in book form thus resulted in a kind of textual loss that materializes in the archive, as when we find Brodkey's early drafts of "A State of Grace" in a box containing "novel rejects" from the 1960s and 1980s.[75]

Such deletions and rearrangements would give shape to the book that Brodkey finally published. *The Runaway Soul* covers events that are described in the author's short fiction, including the illness and death of Wiley's mother, Lila, as well as his relationship with Ora, with the majority of the narrative covering Wiley's childhood and early adolescence. Yet, the events are described non-sequentially and in patterns that reoccur across the novel without coalescing into a conventional novelistic form: the mother's illness—as narrated in "A Story in an Almost Classical Mode"—takes place over 400 pages in the novel, as the narrator recounts early sexual experiences, friendships, and his relationship to his sister, Nonie. The gradual illness and death of S.L. takes place in similarly repetitive patterns, with his funeral mentioned several times without ever expanding into its own scene. Wiley's remembrances progress out of step with the sequencing of information within the novel.

The novel that resulted from Brodkey's cutting and recycling is marked by large gaps in time. Two hundred pages separate the "first hints that [Lila] might have cancer" (RS 343) and the moment that Wiley is "called to Lila's deathbed in Los Angeles" (RS 567)—a space in the narrative that includes the advent of the Second World War, the illness and death of his father, S.L., and the narrator's earliest sexual experiences. Wiley leaves for Los Angeles, but another one hundred pages pass before the moment of Lila's death (RS 630). The intervening material progresses across, or even against, the arc of Lila's illness. Wiley's narration rewinds on itself, returning to his sister Nonie's departure from the family to live with their Aunt Casey ("the story I am excluded from" [RS 579]), introducing expository information out of sequence: "Casey is not yet old. She strides along the platform. One of the men who works for her will carry Nonie's suitcases. Isobel, Casey's daughter, four years younger than Nonie, is there. No. Omissions improve the text when you don't have good information" (RS 579). In a jarring prolepsis, Wiley's narration then leaps ahead to the time he returns to his hometown after "all my parents were dead": he is recognized by an "oldish woman on the street" who asks him, "Are you from around here? Are you Aaron Weintraub?" (RS 591). Aaron Weintraub, of course, isn't the birth name of Wiley Silenowicz, the narrator of *The Runaway Soul*, but Harold Brodkey, its author.

The scrambled fragments of *The Runaway Soul* not only retain the project's revision history but explicitly depend on it for its structure. This feature of the novel, which early readers perceived as its "unreadability," derives from what Wiley perceives as the limits of his mother's monologic speech: "It was for me, she told the story to me; but her solitude—her *solipsism*—was like someone attempting to write a novel" (RS 613). When Lila finally draws her last breath, Wiley informs us that "I was ill off and on for a year after her death and then I resumed my life. I experimented with homosexuality" (RS 631). The statement implies a causal relationship between the narratives of his mother's death and his queer experiences; yet, the organization of *The Runaway Soul* rejects this theory of cause and effect, as those sexual encounters have already been described in earlier sections of the book. The abandonment of narrative causality in this instance reflects other recombinations that we saw in Brodkey's archive at smaller scales, from the cutting out of "bits" from a short story or draft of a novel to the changing of the names (and perhaps identities) of major characters. But the circulation of language, names, and personalities occurring in Brodkey's project is more than the withdrawal of a self into a closed system. Instead, the currents of language, names, and fragments of memory within the system of the book become something like the preconditions for the formation of a self, which for Brodkey is necessarily a social process:

> as time ticks along; the speed of the abortive dialogue is still that of a dialogue, a peculiarly homegrown *stichomythia*, a thing in Greek plays in olden time, where the exchanges are short and often idiomatic; but it is the short rat-a-tat-ness that defines them; the speeches are bits of a flying moment with all the past contained like bits of ghost-plash of sensations, bits of pictures and of syllables—so that there is no need for a prompter or a book or a continuity expert. (RS 381)

Adapting the Classical dramatic technique of stichomythia, Brodkey articulates the structuring principle of *The Runaway Soul*: the combination of sensory "bits" into a unitary structure that does not possess the continuity of conventional speech.

Although the computer played a critical part in Brodkey's narrative experiments, it would be a mistake to overemphasize the influence of digital technology to the production of *The Runaway Soul*. The book historian Peter Stallybrass has warned against deterministic theorizations about the relationship between narrative forms and the data structures that subtend their production. Discontinuous reading practices, after all, were not the innovation of digital devices, as common sense might suggest, but that of the early codex, and in particular the book-marking and indexing techniques that have existed since the medieval period.[76] As Jordan Stein has written, the now familiar association of the format of the book with "continuous, or cover-to-cover" reading practices can be located at an inflection point early in the history of the novel, with the "increasing reliance on character in the design of Protestant-inflected Anglophone texts" in the late 17th century.[77] If, throughout the 18th century, the "tendency toward continuous reading seems also to generate an upswing in reading for identification," or "the process by which readers relate their experiences of the world with those of characters, and vice versa," then the late 20th century context in which Brodkey worked presented the culmination of this association with the novel and continuous reading practices in a concept that surfaced over and over again in the reception to Brodkey's novel—its readability.[78] Indeed, the books that found commercial success during the years Brodkey labored on *A Party of Animals / The Runaway Soul* explicitly worked against the inherent discontinuity of the book. As Stallybrass writes, these were "notoriously 'gripping' novels or 'page-turners'" that impose on the reading experience a "teleological drive from page to page [and] mitigate against dipping about or turning back (although not, in the case of the unbearable suspense of a mystery, from skipping forward to find out 'whodunit')."[79] "The novel," Stallybrass continues, "has only been a brilliantly perverse interlude in the long history of discontinuous reading."[80] If Brodkey's digital attachments resulted in a

work that is not readable in the same way as a literary thriller, they nevertheless yielded a text that acts more like a "book" than a "novel," an object that continually dips about, turns back, skips ahead.

In considering *The Runaway Soul*'s relationship to the object of the book, we might thus say that it is the kind of work that must necessarily take the form of the discontinuous reading technology of the printed codex. For Mikhail Bakhtin, the novel was historically distinct from the other "major genres" of literature, such as the poem or the epic, in that "only the novel is younger than writing and the book: it alone is organically receptive to new forms of mute perception, that is, to reading."[81] Bakhtin's argument about the novel's capability to accommodate the "mute perception" of reading rests on the idea that the codex inaugurated new modes of textual engagement that differed from the social situation of poetry and the epic, which were recited or performed to a live audience. Brodkey's explorations of the possibilities of "mute perception" emerges at key moments within *The Runaway Soul*, where he analogizes acts of communication and memory through the metaphor of reading: "*Talking to you is like reading a book*, I said to myself once—the rank communicativeness head-to-head but in only one head in the dark was no metronome tick-tick of noticed time—only words" (RS 31). As I argue below, this exploration took place through Brodkey's canny navigations of the shifting terrains of U.S. publishing in the second half of the 20th century.

Conclusion: Brodkey and the Conglomerate Era

Whether as the "Proust of Manhattan" or a "long-winded solipsist," the reputation that preceded Brodkey called up a writer who existed outside of the world, whose style was singular to the point of being unreadable.[82] Brodkey's experiments with the discontinuous capacities of the codex reflects this portrait of an exceptional figure in the postwar literary world. But a paradox remains in that Brodkey's singular style also came out of his contact with some of the most central institutions of U.S. publishing, involving trade publishers and independent houses as well as influential magazines like the *New Yorker* and the *Partisan Review*. In a refracted way, the trajectory of Brodkey's novel occupied a surprisingly central place in the establishment of what Dan Sinykin has recently called the conglomerate era—a period in U.S. literary history characterized by the "waves of conglomeration in the publishing industry that submitted publishers to greater commercial pressures and compelled more attention to the bottom line."[83] Indeed, an event that Sinykin identifies as an early inflection point in the history of conglomeration,

and possibly its very beginning—the acquisition of Random House by the Radio Corporation of America, in the first instance of a "media corporation outside [of] publishing … purchasing a publishing firm"—occurred only a year after Brodkey's 1964 contract with Random House for *A Party of Animals*.[84] The high-profile contracts that Brodkey's project garnered through his subsequent deals with Knopf and FSG can be understood as part of a larger development in which external pressures led publishers to "pay outrageous advances in the hope of achieving that ideal crossover of prestige and sales."[85] Indeed, the very idiosyncrasies that relegated *A Party of Animals* / *The Runaway Soul* to the margins of literary history make it an important cultural artifact for understanding the material changes of U.S. publishing and reading culture in the later 20th century.

Brodkey's maneuvers through the changing publishing world presents an illustrative if extreme example of the antithetical, or at least self-conscious, orientation to the marketplace that became common in literary fiction over the course of the conglomerate era. [86] As a high-profile commodity that garnered large advances as it moved between large and independent publishers, Brodkey's blockbuster novel allows us to track the broader historical changes to U.S. literary production inaugurated by conglomeration. These changes covered publishing at nearly all levels, from big trade publishers like Simon and Schuster and Random House to small, not-for-profit publishers that were established in the 1980s as the "obverse of the conglomerates." [87] Conscious of the large-scale transformations occurring in large houses, independent editors working in small presses sought out potentially "transformative" manuscripts that might otherwise be overlooked in the literary marketplace—innovative works with the potential to "satisfy donors by producing prestige" in the form of prizes and accolades if not generate financial returns.[88] The economic transformations of the publishing scene, from large publishers to independents, in turn affected the shape of the literature produced within these changes. For example, Sinykin explains the rise of "autofiction, where novelists blur the line between autobiography and fiction," as the "reflexive expression" of the "institutional conditions" of publishing under conglomeration.[89]

Unlike works that incorporate the contradictory demands of conglomeration by "negotiating the entertainment-edification dialectic," Brodkey's work cannot easily be situated within the sea changes of American publishing. [90] Brodkey's success in remaining close to the very centers of American publishing while producing a work so experimental as to be deemed "unreadable" lay in his ability to navigate the tricky politics of a changing industry even as his vision for the novel became incompatible with

books published in the conglomerate era. Indeed, for a writer with a reputation for being difficult to work with, Brodkey was remarkably canny at navigating the changing tides of American publishing. In the mid 1970s, when the novel was at FSG for the first time, Brodkey penned a letter to his agent Lynn Nesbit about the "people side" of publishing. In this letter to Nesbit, Brodkey references behind-the-scenes disagreements at the independent publisher. Belying familiar narratives about the literary writer who cannot make it in the commercial era, Brodkey proved adept at navigating the "utterly senseless ego-ridden situation" at the publisher—more comfortable, perhaps, than Roger Straus, in stepping outside the "book side" of publishing. Brodkey asked Nesbit for more writing time—"a year, a year with a contract"—in what was to be one of his signature moves in dealing with publishers. [91] As Dinitia Smith writes, Brodkey spent years "financing and refinancing the book—much the way some people refinance a mortgage."[92] This strategy turned the financialization of publishing on its head, allowing Brodkey to operate between New York's commercial and independent publishing houses while working on a project that, strictly speaking, belonged to neither. This publishing strategy allowed Brodkey to pursue an experimental practice that reflected the complexities of his life history and subject position, as a Jewish man from the Midwest who had homosexual and heterosexual relationships at different times in his life without publicly claiming a category, and who used his fiction to explore the complicated circumstances of his adoption, early childhood, and entry into the East Coast intelligentsia.

Brodkey's negotiations were one historical instance—perhaps impossible to replicate—of a writer navigating the transformations to publishing that were antithetical to the production of literature—at least in the way books were composed, edited, and published when Brodkey signed his first contract for *A Party of Animals*. Yet, as I have argued above, these maneuvers also stemmed from a more fundamental estrangement from the book as an aesthetic object and commodity: "My memories," writes Brodkey in a version of the novel finished in the 1970s, "do not have the form that my reading suggests memories ought to have: they are more like torn, or otherwise damaged, volumes of recollection in odd languages, languages I don't know how to speak."[93] If Brodkey resolved this tension by writing a novel whose structure brought out the non-linear, indexical affordances of the book—a "torn, or otherwise damaged" book created from paper attachments that speaks to an uncategorizable life—then the particular story of *A Party of Animals*/*The Runaway Soul* constitutes an important piece in a larger story of marginalized authors writing themselves into literary culture in the 20th century. "I was born Aaron Roy Weintraub instead of Harold Roy Brodkey," the author says in his 1988

New York Magazine profile. "I do have to spend a certain amount of time just looking at my name in print, just to get it fixed in my mind." [94]

Notes

Acknowledgements: This article would not have been possible without the extraordinary work of Ellen Schwamm Brodkey, who created the fonds of the Brodkey Collection. I would also like to thank Leslie A. Morris, Mary Haegert, and the staff at Houghton Library and Harvard Library Imaging Services for their patient and expert help on my research and documentation of the Harold Brodkey Collection; Tabitha Sparks and two anonymous readers for their generative comments on this work; and Mitch Nakaue for her close reading and editorial acumen in preparing this article for publication. The archival research for this article was made possible through travel funding from McGill University's Faculty of Arts.

[1] Boris Kachka, *Hothouse: The Art of Survival and the Survival of Art at America's Most Celebrated Publishing House, Farrar, Straus, and Giroux* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2014), 192.
[2] Dinitia Smith attributes the "American Proust" appellation to Harold Bloom ("The Genius: Harold Brodkey and His Great (Unpublished) Novel," *New York Magazine* 21, no. 37, Sept. 19, 1988, 55). Harold Brodkey, "Largely an Oral History of My Mother," *New Yorker*, Apr. 26, 1976, 36.
[3] Harold Brodkey, *Women and Angels* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1985), viii.
[4] Smith, "The Genius," 66.
[5] James Linville, "Harold Brodkey, The Art of Fiction No. 126," *Paris Review* 121 (1991), https://www.theparisreview.org/interviews/2128/harold-brodkey-the-art-of-fiction-no-126-harold-brodkey.
[6] Smith, "The Genius," 61.
[7] Thomas Lash, "Publishing: Brodkey Delivers," *New York Times*, June 4, 1976, https://www.nytimes.com/1976/06/04/archives/publishing-brodkey-delivers.html.
[8] D. M. Thomas, "What We Are Is Lovers," *New York Times*, Nov. 10, 1991, https://www.nytimes.com/1991/11/10/books/what-we-are-is-lovers.html.
[9] Thomas, "What We Are Is Lovers."
[10] Thomas, "What We Are Is Lovers," emphasis mine.
[11] Gene Lyons, "The Runaway Soul," *Entertainment*, Nov. 8, 1991, https://ew.com/article/1991/11/08/runaway-soul (emphasis mine).
[12] Natasha Walker, "Pseudo-logical Pseudo-stages," *Independent*, Apr. 9, 1994, https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/book-review-pseudo-logical-pseudo-stages-natasha-walker-on-harold-brodkey-a-writer-with-much-talent-1368808.html (emphasis mine).
[13] Richard Dryer, "Venice a Shimmering Setting for Brodkey," *Baltimore Sun*, Apr. 28, 1994, https://www.baltimoresun.com/news/bs-xpm-1994-04-28-1994118015-story.html (emphasis mine).

[14] Dan Sinykin, "The Conglomerate Era: Publishing, Authorship, and Literary Form, 1965–2007," *Contemporary Literature* 58, no. 4 (2017), 462–491.
[15] Sinykin, "Conglomerate Era," 470–471.
[16] Among the supporters of Brodkey's work from the 1980s and 1990s was the essayist and theater critic Hilton Als, who reviewed Brodkey's second novel *Profane Friendship* (1992) favorably in the *New Yorker*. The review begins with his encounter with Brodkey's story, "Nonie," published in the magazine in 1984: "Brodkey's syntax—idiosyncratic, monumental, an inimitable kind of music—conveyed many things simultaneously: that the phrase 'dysfunctional' is a pleonasm; that American colloquial speech can convey expansive thought; that a literature documenting the awful in everyday life can have the stately force of Greek tragedy" ("Birth in Venice," *New Yorker*, Jun. 24, 1995, 88).
[17] Michael LaPointe, "Harold Brodkey: Yesterday's Genius," *Brick* 101, May 29, 2018, https://brickmag.com/harold-brodkey-yesterdays-genius/.
[18] The scant scholarly attention on Brodkey's work has concentrated on *This Wild Darkness: The Story of My Death* (New York: Henry Holt, 1996), a posthumously published collection of Brodkey's autobiographical essays for the *New Yorker* describing his life after his AIDS diagnosis. See, in particular, Einat Avrahami, "Impacts of Truth(s): The Confessional Mode in Harold Brodkey's Illness Autobiography," *Literature and Medicine*, 22, no. 2 (2003): 164-187; Tom Ratekin, *Final Acts: Traversing the Fantasy in the Modern Memoir* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2009).
[19] Smith, "The Genius," 61.
[20] This paper refers to the published text of Brodkey's novel as *The Runaway Soul* and Brodkey's long work on the novel as *A Party of Animals*.
[21] Leslie A. Morris, email to author, April 2, 2019.
[22] Harold Brodkey, *The Runaway Soul* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1991), 3. Hereafter cited parenthetically as "RS."
[23] Harold Brodkey papers, 1937–1996 (97M-48), Box 56, Houghton Library, Harvard University. The organization scheme of the typescript pages appears supported by shifts in the language that appear near the section breaks. The last page of the section paginated pp. 1–235, for instance, takes on an epilogue-like tone as it reflects on the nature of memory and perspective. Other material in Brodkey's 1960s materials suggests that the author sent sections of this novel to his editor. An envelope from Random House to Brodkey postmarked October 10, 1969 can be found at the bottom of Box 56 of the Brodkey papers, containing pp. 700–1,201 of the novel.
[24] Typescript of A Party of Animals, c. 1960s. Harold Brodkey papers (97M-48), Box 56, 6.
[25] Robert Gottlieb, *Avid Reader: A Life* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2016), 179. Gottlieb's version of the novel can be found in Harold Brodkey additional papers (89M-60), Box 2, Houghton Library, Harvard University.
[26] For a theoretical account of "nonreading and compromised forms of reading" of texts deemed "unreadable," see Natalia Cecire, "Ways of Not Reading Gertrude Stein," *ELH* 82, no. 1 (2015): 283.
[27] Sinykin's periodization of the conglomerate era ends with Amazon's Kindle e-reader and self-publishing platforms: "The combination of Amazon's hegemonic ascendance and the 2007–2008 global financial crisis produced a situation in which … publishers have less freedom to acquire literary fiction that may not sell in great numbers immediately but will sell steadily for a long

time—once, not long ago, in the conglomerate era, this was a viable element of a publisher's portfolio of risk" (*Conglomerate Era*, 486–489).
[28] Linville, "Art of Fiction."
[29] Harold Brodkey, "A Story in an Almost Classical Mode," *New Yorker*, Sep. 17, 1973, 42.
[30] This is a practice that appears in different moments from the archive, sometimes directly on the glossy pages of copies from the newsstand. See, for example, Harold Brodkey papers (97M-48), Box 78.
[31] Harold Brodkey, *Women and Angels*, 30.
[32] Brodkey, *Women and* Angels, viii.
[33] Brodkey, *Women and Angels*, 5.
[34] Harold Brodkey to Lynn Nesbit, n.d. Harold Brodkey papers (97M-48), Box 80, 82, 83 [barcode: HH0285].
[35] Harold Brodkey to James Linville, Apr. 7, 1986 (2008M-21), Houghton Library, Harvard University.
[36] Harold Brodkey, *Stories in an Almost Classical Mode* (New York: Knopf, 1988), 327.
[37] Harold Brodkey papers (97M-48), Box 05.
[38] Computer printout of "Brodkey 5/20/86," Harold Brodkey additional papers (90M-62), Houghton Library, Harvard University. In Brodkey's manuscripts from the 1960s, the narrator is named Aaron Barak, born to Mathilde and Lewis Arke and adopted by Doris and Joseph Brodkey. See Photocopied typescript of A Party of Animals, ca. 1960s. Harold Brodkey papers (97M-48), Box 56.
[39] Harold Brodkey papers (97M-48), Box 64A.
[40] Harold Brodkey papers (97M-48), Box 72.
[41] Smith, "The Genius," 66.
[42] Smith, "The Genius," 62. For an account of Brodkey's novel at FSG in the 1970s, see Kachka, *Hothouse*, 192–193.
[43] Lisa Gitelman, "Rethinking Attachment," *Media Commons*, June 29, 2010, https://mediacommons.org/tne/pieces/rethinking-attachment.
[44] William Wilson, "Salvaging Harold Brodkey," *American Book Review*, May 1997: 16; Ellen Schwamm, *Adjacent Lives* (New York: Knopf, 1978); Ellen Schwamm, *How He Saved Her* (New York: Knopf, 1983).
[45] Kachka, *Hothouse*, 193.
[46] John Bryant, *Fluid Text: A Theory of Revision and Editing for Book and Screen* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002), 4.
[47] Gitelman, "Rethinking Attachment."
[48] Gitelman, "Rethinking Attachment," my emphasis.
[49] Gitelman, "Rethinking Attachment."
[50] Gitelman, "Rethinking Attachment."
[51] For a theoretical account of "the erasures, cancellations, and insertions on a manuscript, or the blue-pencilings of an editor, which are the manifestations of revision, [which] are frequently lost" in studies of revision, see Bryant, *Fluid Text*, 4.
[52] The close reader might also notice other revisions in the short story version not apparent here. For example, the radiologist's error described from the point of view of the narrator becomes, in "A Story in an Almost Classical Mode," an intentional affront described in the mother's direct speech (*Stories in an Almost Classical Mode*, 231).
[53] Typescript of A Party of Animals, c. 1960s. Harold Brodkey papers (97M-48), Box 56, 1.

[54] Ellen Schwamm Brodkey, interview by author, Jul. 12, 2019. Smith, "The Genius," 55.
[55] John Lurz, "Sleeping with Proust: Reading, Sensation, and the Books of the *Recherche*," *New Literary History* volume 42, no. 1 (2011), 130.
[56] Lurz, "Sleeping with Proust," 131.
[57] Typescript of A Party of Animals, 1979. Harold Brodkey papers (97M-48), Box 9.
[58] Hannah Sullivan, "Modernist Excision and Its Consequences," *Publication of the Bibliographical Society of America* 102, no. 4 (2008): 506.
[59] Sullivan, "Modernist Excision," 502.
[60] Sullivan, "Modernist Excision," 514.
[61] Sullivan, "Modernist Excision," 515.
[62] This coherence is notably preserved in modernist revision, where "excision will always function as a form of hermeneutic torsion; at the very least, it will alter a text's point of emphasis and structural shape while, in more extreme cases, it can function as a strong form of misprision and radically alter meaning" (Sullivan, "Modernist Excision," 515.)
[63] Letter, Frank Conroy to Harold Brodkey, Jan. 4, 1985, Harold Brodkey additional papers, 1980–1991 and undated (98M-10), Box 3, Houghton Library, Harvard University. For a discussion of the Wang writer, see Matthew Kirschenbaum and Doug Reside, "Tracking the Changes: Textual Scholarship and the Challenge of the Born Digital," in *The Cambridge Companion to Textual Scholarship* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 257.
[64] Ellen Schwamm Brodkey, email to author, Jul. 13, 2019.
[65] Linville, "Art of Fiction."
[66] Gitelman, "Rethinking Attachment."
[67] Matthew Kirschenbaum, *Mechanisms: New Media and the Forensic Imagination* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007), 33.
[68] Brodkey, *Stories in an Almost Classical Mode*, 521.
[69] Kirschenbaum, *Mechanisms*, 14.
[70] For a discussion of the ontology of digital writing, see Kirschenbaum, *Mechanisms*, 27–50.
[71] Lev Manovich, *The Language of New Media* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2001), 214.
[72] Manovich, *The Language of New Media*, 214.
[73] I thank Mitch Nakaue for this image of Brodkey's book.
[74] Harold Brodkey, *First Love and Other Sorrows* (London: Pavanne, 1986), 31.
[75] "Party of Animals: (1960's and 70's) Wiley and Ora (late in book sections), novel rejects." Harold Brodkey papers (97M-48), Box 18.
[76] Peter Stallybrass, "Books and Scrolls: Navigating the Bible," in *Books and Readers in Early Modern England*, eds. Jennifer Andersen, Elizabeth Sauer, Stephen Orgel (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 42–79.
[77] Jordan A. Stein, *When Novels Were Books* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2020), 8–9.
[78] Stein, *When Novels Were Books*, 9.
[79] Stallybrass, "Books and Scrolls," 47.
[80] Stallybrass, "Books and Scrolls," 47.
[81] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 3.
[82] Deborah Garrison, "The True Lover," *New Yorker*, Oct. 7, 1996: 85.
[83] Sinykin, "Conglomerate Era," 462.
[84] Sinykin, "Conglomerate Era," 470n8.

[85] Sinykin, "Conglomerate Era," 471.
[86] On aesthetic responses to literary fiction's need to "demonstrate its potential profitability" during the composition and acquisition process, see Sinykin, "Conglomerate Era," 472. For an account of literary fiction during this period theorized through the increasing centrality of literary agents, see Laura B. McGrath, "Literary Agency," 351.
[87] Sinykin, "Conglomerate Era," 483.
[88] Sinykin, "Conglomerate Era," 483. On a quantitative analysis of the role that literary prizes have on the way books are "studies, taught, and read" in the U.S. literary field, see Alexander Manshel, Laura B. McGrath, and J.D. Porter, "Who Cares about Literary Prizes?", *Public Books*, Sept. 3, 2019, https://www.publicbooks.org/who-cares-about-literary-prizes/.
[89] Sinykin, "Conglomerate Era," 474.
[90] Sinykin, "Conglomerate Era," 483.
[91] Harold Brodkey to Lynn Nesbit, n.d., Harold Brodkey papers (96M-48), Box 41. On Nesbit's significance in U.S. publishing and literature, see Laura B. McGrath, "Literary Agency," *American Literary History* 33, no. 2 (2021): 350.
[92] Smith, "The Genius," 61.
[93] Typescript of A Party of Animals ["A Voyage Among My Self's Secrets"], 1975-1976. Harold Brodkey papers (97M-48) Box 41, 5.
[94] Smith, "The Genius," 56.