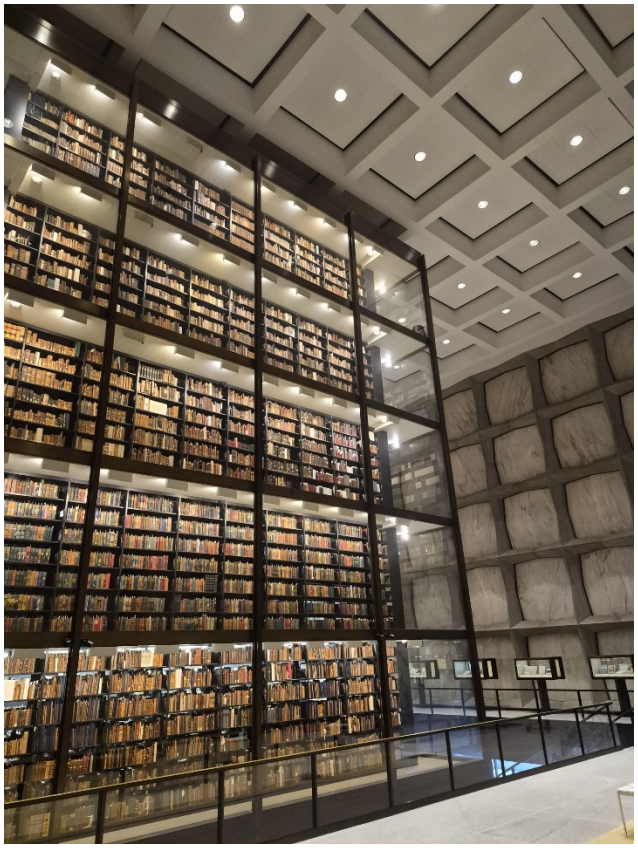
Rob Kroes Travel Grant 2027 – Report, Nicolas Turner

This summer I was excited to be able to use the Rob Kroes Travel Grant, which I was honoured to be awarded by the Netherlands American Studies Association. This grant allowed me to extend an existing research trip to Chicago, itself made possible by the award of a Robert L. Platzman Memorial Fellowship, and include a week at the Beinecke Library at Yale to view the Cynthia Ozick papers.

These papers are critical for my dissertation's third chapter, which explores the rise of 'theory' – particularly as represented by the so-called 'Yale School' critics – in the 1970s and of queer and gender studies in the 1980s. In particular, the chapter examines how Jewishness related to notions of marginality, deconstruction, and sexuality in these theoretical approaches, as well as how Jewish American writing encountered and managed the increasing centrality of 'theory' to academic literary criticism. The chapter is in part, therefore, an intellectual history of the institutionalization of 'theory' in relation to the theme of Jewishness and in part an analysis of how 'theory' shaped the work and canonization of Jewish American writers – with Cynthia Ozick's writings, particularly her novels *The Cannibal Galaxy* (1983) and *The Messiah of Stockholm* (1987), the central lens through which these themes are explored.

My research at the Beinecke was focused on examining early drafts of these novels, as well as Ozick's correspondence from the 1970s and 1980s, in order to track her own engagement with the rise of 'theory' during this period. I was very interested to discover Ozick discussing the so-called 'Paul de Man affair' (the revelation in 1987 of de Man's collaborationist wartime writings), as well as ongoing correspondence with two members of the Yale School, Harold Bloom and Geoffrey Hartman, and with numerous other academics writing on both American and Jewish topics. These pieces of correspondence will be invaluable in helping to locate Ozick in the wider intellectual context of the period and to better understand her relationship to 'theory.'

The staff of the library were incredibly helpful throughout my visit, allowing me to explore a wide range of material rapidly and efficiently. It was a real thrill to be able to hold handwritten drafts of well-known Ozick writings, as well as to have sight of personal correspondence that touches on her thinking on a wide range of topics. The Beinecke is a wonderful space to do research, with the building clad in a translucent marble that lets the light through and makes it feel inside a little like you are under the water. Most strikingly, in the middle of the library is a glass box filled with books – a bibliophile's dream!



While in New Haven, where Yale is based, I also took the opportunity to explore the city and enjoy two of the town's iconic foods: apizza, a thin-crust coal-fired pizza, and a hamburger at Louis' Lunch, where the American staple was (apparently) invented! I also went to the waterfront and enjoyed sampling from the many Mexican spots all along the sea. It was also lovely just to wander through the historic quads and buildings of the Yale campus, which lives up to all the images of what an Ivy League college looks like.



It was a privilege and an honour to have the opportunity to conduct this research and to return to the United States, a country that continues to shock, intrigue, and excite me, always driving me always to better understand its history, its people, and its literature.

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