



Michael Longley, Seamus Heaney, and Derek Mahon, c.1977. Seamus Heaney Papers, MSS 960, box 90, folder 56. Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.

“What Hobsbaum achieved...was to give a generation a sense of themselves...; it allowed a small public to think of us as **The Group.**”

--Seamus Heaney, *Honest Ulsterman*

It’s “a **load of hoey** cooked up by some journalists...”

--Derek Mahon, *Guardian*

Networking the Belfast Group through the Automated Semantic Enhancement of Existing Digital Content

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Data, Data Everywhere

Libraries and other cultural heritage institutions already have vast amounts of digital data about their collections. Unfortunately, these data are in forms that do not readily lend themselves to analysis.

Enhancing EAD and TEI with NameDropper

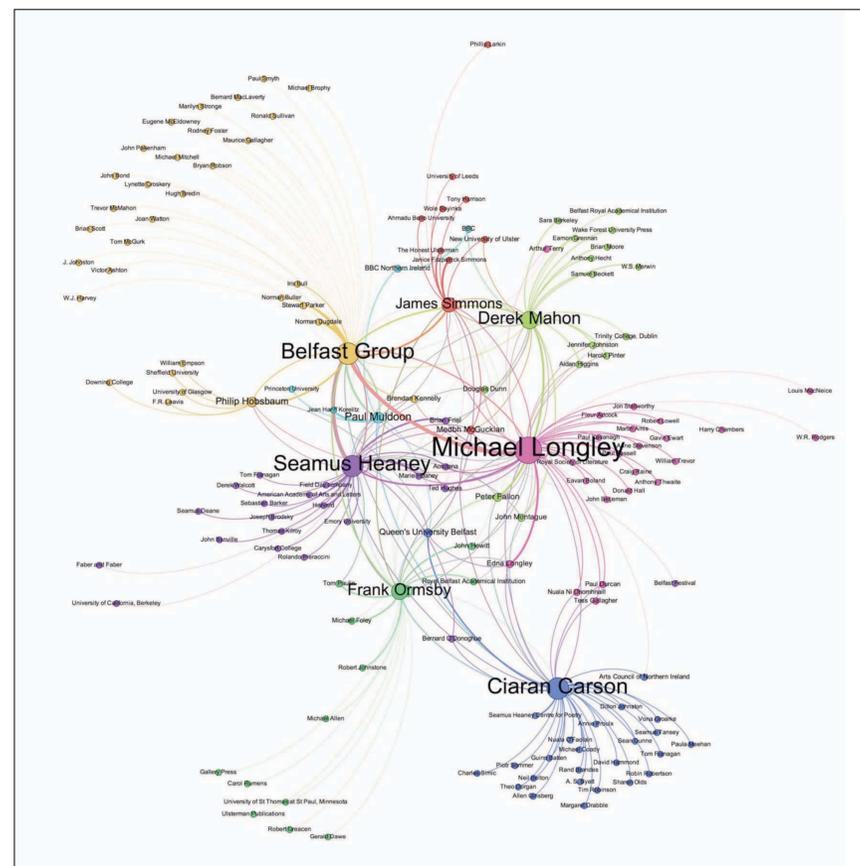
We have developed NameDropper: software tools for enhancing the documents created by archives and text centers. Using either command-line scripts or plugins for the Oxygen XML editor, users can identify people, places, and organizations much more quickly.

NameDropper is open-source and in beta release. We invite others to experiment with and fork the tools at <http://github.com/emory-libraries-disc/name-dropper>.

Do More with Linked Data and RDF

NameDropper also links these named entities to linked-data datasets including VIAF, GeoNames, and DBpedia. Incorporating linked data makes it possible to identify the same entity throughout a corpus, regardless of spelling variants, abbreviations, or nicknames. One possible application is tracing the connections of an individual across an archive’s collections.

Using RDF, named entities within a document can also be related to one another in a machine-readable format. Semantic web technologies can then use these relationships determine Seamus Heaney was born in County Derry and that he studied at Queen’s University. These relationships can be extracted then visualized as networks, maps, timelines, and more.



Open Data Throughout

Since our data is still being processed, our results are preliminary. We will be making our complete data available: an update to the sites for the electronic finding aids and the digital editions of the draft poems will allow other researchers to harvest the same authority-linked names, places, and organizations.

Did the Belfast Group Matter?

As a test case, we are enhancing the documents related to the Northern Irish poets who participated in Philip Hobsbaum’s writing workshop known as the “Belfast Group.” The poets themselves have often downplayed their connection to this Group or its impact on their writing, but their poetry and correspondence suggests an important literary community that includes the Belfast Group.

Examining literary connections via letters or poems dedicated to one another provides a deeper understanding of how these poets were connected. What’s more, it becomes apparent that literary histories often underrepresent those who might be considered part of the Group. Women such as Marie Heaney and Edna Longley, who played a more supporting role in the Group, and the poet Medbh McGuckian, who did not participate in the Group at all, are ultimately central to the network surrounding it.

Others, like Derek Mahon, who have regularly denied involvement in the Group turn out not only to be connected to individuals around it but also to the Group itself.

Michael Longley, Seamus Heaney, and David Hammond, c.1965. Michael Longley Papers, MSS 744, box 57, folder 4. Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University.



“The history of poetry is a history of **friendships and rivalries...**”

--Donald Hall, *Poetry and Ambition*