

● -Introduction- ●

The *Sonnets* by Ted Berrigan, a compilation of collage-like poems, and *I Remember* by Joe Brainard, a collage of Brainard's memories, both establish themselves as marquee New York School (NYS) texts through their use of the New York School aesthetic. The main features of this aesthetic style include collaboration between artists of the New York School, emphasis upon the collage style, and an overall sense of artistic and personal community. It is important to realize that these features are not independent, but rather they converge to highlight one other. In our experience with these books, we wanted to further analyze the effects of these unique characteristics, specifically the collage style. These texts portray the New York School artists as a community through their collage and collaborative style. These aesthetic features also acknowledge a broader community of artists. The major effect of this constructed community is a sense of familiarity and intimacy with the community members and the artistic atmosphere of the New York School.

COMMUNITY THROUGH

C O L L A G E



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● -Artistic Collaboration in the NYS- ●

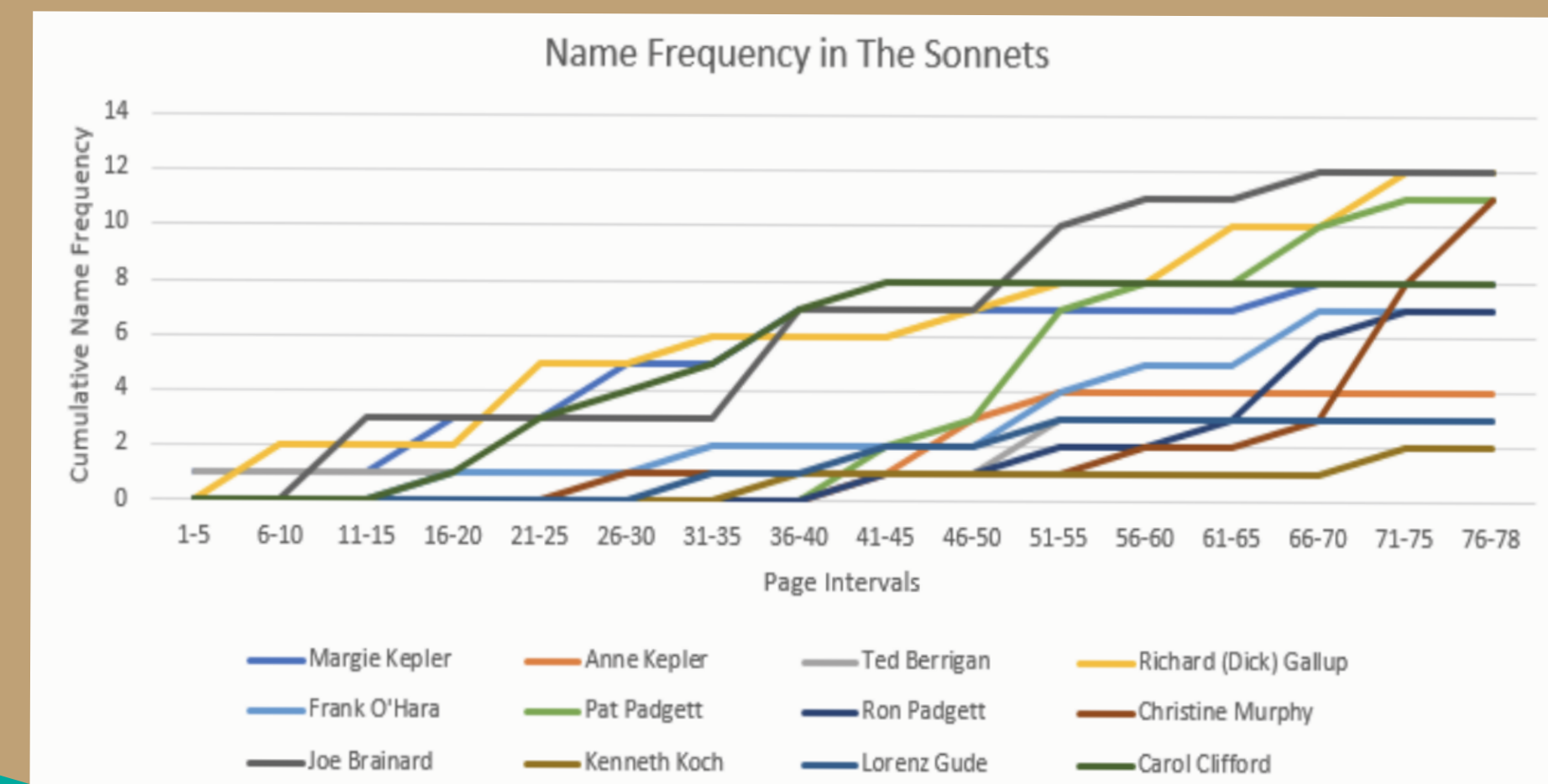
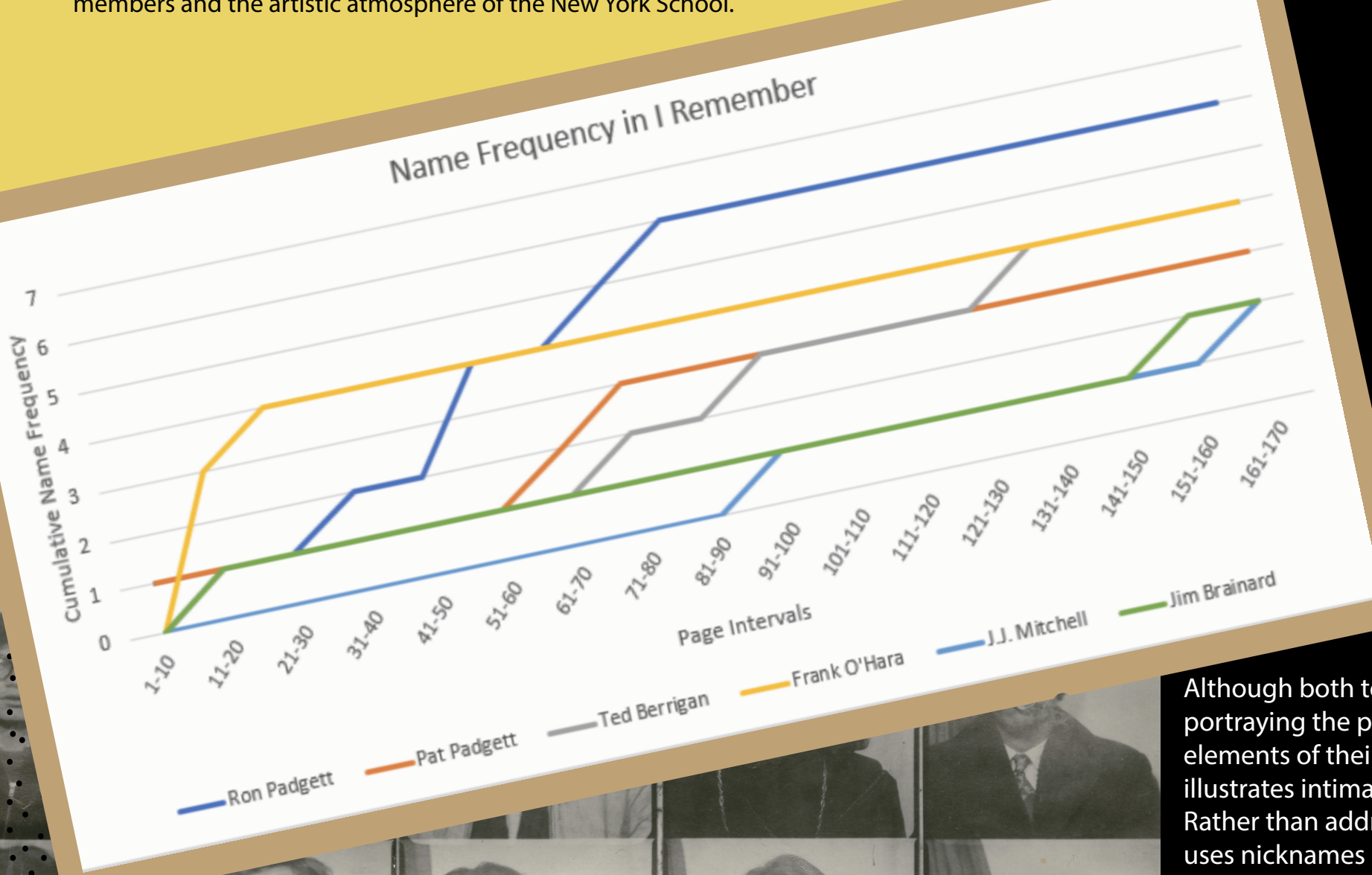
Collaboration in order to produce new and unique works was a popular method in the NYS which contributed to the community. In his *Encyclopedia of the New York School Poets*, Terrance Diggory, professor emeritus of English at Skidmore College, mentions Frank O'Hara, who said that "[collaboration] is a social process but usually on an intimate scale, 'between two persons instead of two pages'". The New York School saw collaboration as a social act rather than an act of work, and working together strengthened this already tightly knit community. For the second generation, collaboration was so important that many people believed it to be a defining characteristic for them; even Diggory, through the words of Daniel Kane, said that, "In the 1960s, the second generation of New York School poets emphasized collaboration to such a degree that one commentator, Daniel Kane, has taken it as the sign of a shift in aesthetics". Two such poets from the second generation, Ted Berrigan and Joe Brainard, were no exception to this collaborative process; "In a 1962 diary entry for instance, Berrigan recorded, 'Yesterday Joe and I did 5 successful collaborations...'" (Quilter 156).

Both *The Sonnets* and *I Remember* are products of this collaborative tendency. While it is true that Berrigan's work incorporates more instances of this process than Brainard's, the level of intimacy of Brainard's novel should be noted. Berrigan utilized lines from his fellow poets' works, including works from John Ashbery and Frank O'Hara; he also formatted many of his sonnets with similar structures to that of Kenneth Koch's and Joe Brainard's works. Both novels utilize an aesthetic aspect that was unique to their generation; collaboration to an intimate level. In doing this, along with other aesthetic qualities, the poets allow their audience to feel the effects of this tight-knit and intimate community.

● -Personal Connection in The NYS- ●

In their texts, Ted Berrigan and Joe Brainard both focus on the intimate nature of the relationships they possess with the artists of the New York School. One of the ways they accomplish this portrayal of community and friendship is through the repetition of names of various NYS artists. As seen in Visuals One and Two, both Berrigan and Brainard use repetition as a method to establish intimacy and familiarity. This progression of familiarity over time is shown through these graphs, as unfamiliar names become familiar throughout the course of the texts due to their previous acknowledgments earlier on. Through this repetition, the audience becomes familiar with these names and establishes a relationship with them that can almost be described as that of a friendship. This is especially prominent in *The Sonnets* as Berrigan's text is so unpredictable and non-linear. Names which become familiar to the audience throughout the text provide a sense of comfort and relief due to the established degree of familiarity.

Although both texts include repetition as a key component in portraying the personal ties of the NYS artists, they include elements of their own as well. In Berrigan's *The Sonnets*, he illustrates intimacy through his informal naming style. Rather than addressing New York School artists formally, he uses nicknames like "Margie", "Bernie", and "Dick". This naming style adds to the degree of intimacy and familiarity that Berrigan, and thus the audience, has with each of these people. In Brainard's *I Remember*, he addresses members of the NYS by their full names and titles, illustrating the degrees of intimacy he possesses with each person through the memories he selects to present rather than the use of intimate naming style seen in *The Sonnets*. Statements such as, "I remember trying to convince Ron Padgett that I didn't believe in God anymore but he wouldn't believe me. We were in the back of a truck. I don't remember why," convey Brainard's personal connection with other members of the NYS through their content (56). Topics Brainard focuses on, such as "first times", sexuality, humorous experiences, existential crises, and religion, illustrate his relationship with each name mentioned as well as how familiar and comfortable he seems to be with each person.



● -Shared Lineage and The Broader Artistic Community- ●

Both *The Sonnets* and *I Remember* use their collage nature to shed light onto the broader atmosphere of artistic influence which shaped their creator's works. Repeated references to over thirty unique artists such as Juan Gris (67, 68, 70) display influence on Berrigan and the NYS artistic atmosphere. Jackson Pollock (1912-1956), a trailblazer in methods of abstract expressionism and a forefather to the New York School, is also mentioned several times (18, 27) further supporting this community. Similarly, *I Remember* references Dostoevsky (14), Van Gogh (29), Picasso (86), and Shakespeare (86). These references serve to display how Brainard's experiences and memories are influenced by famous artists, which in turn impacts his works. These mentions are an acknowledgement of the artistic lineage of the NYS and contribute to the greater community of artists who the NYS were inspired by across time and location. The method of collage is also used to promote this community through appropriation and augmentation. In *The Sonnets*, Berrigan adapts Henri Michaux's *Mes Occupations* into "Mess Occupations" through a homophonic translation (36). This adaptation shows Berrigan's admiration and interest towards Michaux, one of many relationships developed between artists through their work. Such intangible relationships form the foundation of this larger community.

The variety of influences on Berrigan and Brainard as a result of the global artistic community and the artistic atmosphere are shown in Visual Three, a map which displays the quantity and breadth of the text's references to international artists. While each reference itself is of lesser significance, when considered together, it is clear that these authors have taken inspiration from countless non-American, non-local sources. Thus through repeated mentions of international artists, and appropriations of their works, *The Sonnets* and *I Remember* reveal the impact of a global artistic community whom the New York School borrowed from and were influenced by.

The map below is meant to stand as a representation of the broader community of artists. Each pin point marks the birthplace of an artist mentioned in one (or both) of the texts. Artists whose hometowns were included in the map were the following: Nijinsky, Keats, Johann Strauss, Bernard Shaw, May Morris, Juan Gris, John Greenleaf Whittier, Mary Shelley, Henri Michaux, Max Jacob, Jacques Louis David, Gus Cannon, Gertrude Stein, Guillaume Apollinaire, Herman Melville, Shakespeare, Auden Spenser, Frank O'Hara, Seurat, Hans Hoffman, Huddie Ledbetter, Henry Miller, Ford Maddox Ford, Dostoevsky, Van Gogh, and Picasso.

