



Biblio-Notes

Issued by the Literatures in English Section of the Association of College & Research Libraries, a division of the American Library Association

#45 Spring 2005

ISSN 1076-8947

Notes from the Chair:

Rivers of Change

As I write this, the ACRL National Conference in April is swiftly approaching. It'll probably have long been over by the time that you see this column, but I think that its theme, "Navigating the Rivers of Change," will still be relevant.

Change seems to be the one constant for academic and research libraries. Some of this change comes from larger changes in higher education, such as the growth in distance education programs, while other changes seem largely driven by technology. Of course, we're not the only ones changing. Other libraries are changing too. Ask a roomful of reference librarians whether there will still be reference desks in ten years, and you'll likely to get a roomful of nervous laughter.

Not surprisingly, many of our LES discussions and programs have reflected that sense of change. We had a very lively discussion on graphic novels (also known as comic books) at last January's Midwinter Membership Meeting, a discussion that's been continued on the LES discussion email list. Ten years ago, few academic and research libraries collected graphic novels; now many of us are trying to decide how to catalog them.

Our upcoming program at the ALA Annual Meeting in Chicago is on digital full text primary source collections and their impact on scholarship. Many of these collections were previously available in micro formats, but online full text versions have far more scope and ease of use. Our speakers will be addressing the ways in which having access to such materials does more than make research "easier," but actually transforms it.

I invite you all to attend our program, as well as the rest of the LES events at ALA Annual, as we navigate our own "rivers of change."

Jen Stevens
LES Chair, 2004-2005
George Mason University
jsteven7@gmu.edu

LES Mentoring Program Call for Volunteers

Are you seeking guidance and direction in your professional career?

Would you like to help colleagues navigate their way through librarianship?

The ALA/ACRL Literatures in English Section is actively working to match mentors and mentees according to their needs, areas of interest, and work experience, among other criteria.

Mentors can provide invaluable information and advice on how to make the most of professional library careers. Successful mentoring involves a unique process whereby each participant learns to respect and trust the partner's commitment, experience, and distinctiveness. A firm commitment to the mentoring process and a willingness to invest time and energy are most important.

This program will give new and evolving librarians a unique opportunity to "learn the ropes" from those with broad and vast experience in their fields and areas of interest.

Online form found at:

<http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/aboutacrl/acrlsections/literaturesineng/lesmentoringform.htm>

Questions? Please contact Angela Courtney at ancourtn@indiana.edu

Life as a Literature Librarian

One of the greatest challenges I faced upon becoming the bibliographer for English and American Literature at Indiana University was not simply continuing to build and maintain a collection that is nationally and internationally recognized as one of high quality and thoroughness, but rather how to augment its historical strengths by incorporating emerging trends in literary criticism and scholarship to make a good collection stronger and more relevant to current and anticipated movements in literary scholarship. Recent trends include Anglophone literature from Australia, New Zealand, the West Indies, India, and more. Historically, IU's library has not actively collected literature (fiction, poetry, drama) from Anglophone countries at the research level. Yet the terminology used in this context refers to literature written outside of Great Britain and America. However, many of the Anglophone writers are not particularly concerned with the impact of colonialism on their cultures, which is one reason that current literary criticism does not always bear the more common "Postcolonial," "Postimperial," or "Commonwealth" literatures labels. Further, these writers have not, historically, been actively included in English literature library collections.

In my first semester at Indiana University, I realized that Anglophone literature was already becoming a part of the English Department's curriculum. A survey of recent library literature indicates that little if anything has been written regarding successful methodology for retrospective assessment or collection building, either prescriptive or anecdotal. Most research publications that address this area tend to be centered solely on compiling reference sources and pathfinders for postcolonial literature and do not focus on actual collection building and international cooperative efforts to expand this field. Many scholars are making their reputations on work in Anglophone literatures. This dichotomy creates a situation in which libraries must either act quickly to keep up with the direction of the discipline or find themselves years down the road trying to catch up with faculty needs. Current scholarship will create a greater demand for Anglophone literature.

My objective was three-fold: to understand and establish collection patterns by meeting

with and developing cooperative efforts with international libraries and librarians to accurately and effectively begin building the IU Libraries' Anglophone Literature collection both currently and retrospectively; to determine sources for acquiring materials that have historically been unavailable or difficult to obtain outside of their country of origin; to document and publish my experiences of building an Anglophone Literature collection and reinterpreting collection building techniques for the 21st century. The latter objective, a scholarly publication on the practicalities of starting, building, maintaining, and/or manicuring an Anglophone Literature collection would be of great importance to Literature librarians who have no first-hand knowledge or experience in this area. A particularly strong and resource-rich area of Anglophone Literature is that of Australia and, to a lesser-degree, New Zealand, and I saw this as an appropriate avenue to begin with building an Anglophone Literature collection, in part because of an interested and broad network from which I could learn.

During my trip to Australia and New Zealand, funded in part by an International Opportunities for Libraries and Librarians Grant and the Herbert S. White Librarian Development Award, I began this process through which I could improve the IU Libraries' collections in Anglophone literatures. My goals were: 1) to understand and establish collection patterns by meeting with and discussing cooperative efforts with international libraries and librarians to accurately and effectively begin building the IU Libraries' Anglophone Literature collection both currently and retrospectively; 2) to determine sources for acquiring materials that have historically been unavailable or difficult to obtain outside of their country of origin; 3) to document my experiences of building an Anglophone Literature collection and reinterpreting collection building techniques for the 21st century. I am pleased with the progress on all 3 areas.

The people who I was fortunate to be able to meet with were all genuinely interested in this project and generously gave me their time and experience to help me develop a system of retrospective and proactive collection development. I visited the University of Auckland, University of Sydney, and Melbourne University. Each visit proved to be very

different and offered equally practical insight into undertaking such a project.

I met with the Librarian for English Literature at the University of Auckland. She took the unique approach of coordinating meetings for me with their acquisitions department, the special collections department, and with a professor in the English department and an expert on New Zealand and Maori authors. The acquisitions department shared with me their preferred vendors, and noted which ones were particularly good for international purchases. The professor showed me many useful resources that students use for his classes, and he also walked me through new digital initiatives that are underway. He also asked my opinion of their library's collections in American literature, particularly regional writers. My librarian counterpart similarly showed me a variety of reference sources that their library considers of the utmost importance. My conversations with her were particularly interesting because we were each able to learn more about the other's career and to see that the need for subject librarians to create a network of similarly interested colleagues goes beyond national boundaries.

I met with the special collections librarian at the University of Sydney, where he showed me several examples of early Australian books. He introduced me to two librarians who are spearheading their digital library initiative. They both very eagerly told me about the genesis and development of their digital programs, and expressed interest at the possibility of collaborative work at sometime in the future. Notably, they have established a program with the University of Sydney Press through which the texts they have digitized can be printed on demand for purchase. Projects such as this one will be invaluable for efforts at retrospective collection development.

Finally, I met with the special collections librarian at Melbourne University. He was particularly interested in my project, and through our discussions we began to see vast similarities and equally vast divergences between our countries. Our explorations of their special collections made evident parallels not only in publishing history, but also in types of writing and as a result in national character. These parallels offer endless potential for library development and academic exploration. Currently I am working with a colleague at IU to continue this project with Australian

libraries and material, this time with an interdisciplinary approach inspired greatly by my meetings in Melbourne.

Angela Courtney
Indiana University
ancourtn@indiana.edu

The Lesbian Pulp Fiction Collection at Mount Saint Vincent University Library, Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada

Mount Saint Vincent - "the Mount" started as an academy established by the Sisters of Charity in Halifax in 1873. In 1925 the Nova Scotia Legislature awarded Mount Saint Vincent the right to grant degrees, making it the only independent women's college in the British Commonwealth.

At the time the college became Mount Saint Vincent University in 1966, there was a commitment to develop research collections in the field of women's studies. In 1967 the library received donations for the Women's Centenary Collection of materials by and about Canadian women to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the confederation of Canada. Shortly afterwards the library acquired large microform collections of research materials on the global history of women and women in the peace movement. In 1985 Petro-Canada, a major Canadian oil company, provided Mount Saint Vincent with an endowment which for twenty years has generated an annual fund to purchase materials in women's studies. In 1986 the Women's Studies Department was founded. Currently, Mount Saint Vincent, in partnership with Dalhousie University and Saint Mary's University, offers an MA in Women's Studies. In 2001 a BA program with a major in Cultural Studies was introduced.

The impetus for acquiring the books in the Lesbian Pulp Fiction Collection came from Dr. Rhoda Zuk, a professor in the English Department, who in 1996 taught a course in Feminism and Popular Culture. Part of the Petro-Canada fund income was used to purchase the bulk of the collection from Kaya Books, a Halifax bookseller, and from a New York collector.

The Lesbian Pulp Fiction collection consists of 120 paperback books shelved in a locked cabinet adjacent to the Library's reference book collection. Each title is recorded in the library's online catalog, and may be borrowed for a three-hour period.

The earliest title in the collection is The Strange Path by Gale Wilhelm, a 1950 paperback reprint of a book published in 1938 under the title Torchlight to Valhalla. The most recent title is A World Without Men by Valerie Taylor, the 1982 reprint by Naiad Press of the 1963 original. The majority date from the golden age of lesbian pulp - the period from 1952 to 1967.

The collection is rich in the exemplars of the genre. The commercial success of Women's Barracks by Tereska Torres (our copy is a 1960 reprint of the 1950 paperback edition), with its lesbian subtext, alerted the publishing industry to the appeal of lesbian themes. [1.] Marijane Meaker (using the pseudonym Vin Packer) was commissioned to write Spring Fire in 1952 as a Fawcett Gold Medal paperback original. While its sympathetic portrayal of a love affair between two sorority sisters ensured its popularity with a lesbian readership, Spring Fire acknowledges the prejudices of the era by consigning the bisexual Leda to an insane asylum.

Linnea A. Stenson contrasts the "typical" lesbian pulp fiction in which a young, innocent girl is victimized by "the lesbian on the prowl" with the rarer pro-lesbian novel with its theme of struggle, acceptance and hope. Stenson wryly observes that "given the prevalence of suicides and deaths, just being alive at the close could be considered an uplifting ending." [2.]

The sense of shame and impending tragedy is evoked in several of the collection's titles: The Damned One by Guy Des Cars, In the Shadows by Joan Ellis, Twilight Lovers by Miriam Gardner, Veil of Torment by March Hastings, Twilight Girl by Della Martin, The Twisted Year by Rea Michaels, The Evil Friendship by Vin Packer, The Corruption of Innocence by Marianne Sinclair. The widespread use of pseudonyms by the writers reinforces the sense that the writing of pulp fiction, especially lesbian pulp fiction, was a somewhat disreputable activity. Marijane Meaker is represented in our collections under the names Vin Packer and Ann Aldrich. Elaine Williams, an editor at Midwood, wrote The Delicate Vice and

Unnatural using the name Sloan Britton. Male writers also adopted female pseudonyms: Robert Silverberg wrote Strange Delights as Loren Beauchamp and Paul Little wrote From Torment to Rapture as Sylvia Sharon.

Some writers do suggest in their novels that conjugal happiness isn't exclusively the preserve of heterosexuals, but might be a possibility for same sex couples: witness Toni and Morgen in The Strange Path by Gale Wilhelm, Therese and Carol in The Price of Salt by Patricia Highsmith (writing as Claire Morgan), Jo and Betsy in Unlike Others and Kate and Erika in A World Without Men, both by Velma Young (writing as Valerie Taylor).

No matter if the protagonists were predator and prey or two steadfast lovers challenging a repressive society, their exploits were sold to drugstore and bus station customers employing the conventions of pulp art. Our collection represents the full range of pulp fiction cover art, the most common being a painting or photograph of two casually attired women in close proximity: often a self-possessed brunette gazing down at her innocent blonde companion in a bedroom or other intimate domestic space. Most cover art is anonymous; fortunately many of the fine covers painted by Paul Rader for Midwood-Tower bear his signature.

The Lesbian Pulp Fiction might seem rather quaint - a somewhat louche collection of artifacts from the McCarthyite era when the traditional values extolled by the North American establishment were challenged by ideological and cultural movements as disparate as Communism - the "Red Menace", Alfred Kinsey's Institute for Sex Research and rock and roll. We interpret the stealthy prurience manifested by the lesbian pulp genre in the context of Cold War anxieties, and find it both unsettling and amusing. Recent declarations in the United States and Canada against same sex marriage and in favor of traditional marriage suggest that many influential sectors of society willingly arouse latent anxieties. To quote from a recent letter from an alumna: "I am very disappointed that the Mount would have such volumes on lesbians proudly on display. I feel that myself and my fellow graduates are being dishonored.." While her reaction may be exceptional, it does suggest that our collection of vintage paperbacks still has the power to provoke and irritate.

1. In 2003 I received an e-mail from Tereska Torres' agent in Tel Aviv asking us to remove her name from our webpage <http://www.msvu.ca/library/collpollespulp.asp>. He advised me that she did not want her name associated with the genre.
2. Stenson, Linnea A. "Pulp Paperbacks." In Lesbian Histories and Cultures: An Encyclopedia. Ed. Bonnie Zimmerman. New York : Garland, 2000, pp.623-625.

Terrence Paris
Collections Development Librarian
terrence.paris@msvu.ca

Graphic Novels

Graphic Novels. They seem to be everywhere these days or perhaps they are finally being given the attention they deserve. What are graphic novels? Although the concept seems difficult to define, one possible definition is "juxtaposed pictorial and other images in deliberate sequence intended to convey information and/or to produce an aesthetic response in the viewer" (*Understanding Comics: the Invisible Art* by Scott McCloud; Northampton, MA; Kitchen Sink Press, 1993; p. 9). Some have called this definition "pretentious" while others have coined their own descriptions: Alan Moore, creator of *The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*, prefers "big expensive comic book" and Art Spiegelman is partial to "comic book that needs a bookmark" ("Not Funnies" by Charles McGrath, *New York Times Magazine*; July 11, 2004, p 26). Whatever one chooses to call this format, it presents some unique challenges to librarians who want to collect graphic novels for their libraries.

As a result of this increased interest, the Literatures in English Section hosted a discussion at the Membership Forum during the ALA Midwinter Meeting in Boston, MA. Notes from the discussion follow.

Juliet Kerico from Indiana State University started the program by discussing how she started developing a collection of graphic novels at her institution. She also graciously brought examples of the types of works she discussed. Her collection development initially started with a faculty member requesting a

title, and it met with some resistance within the library.

The collection started as a part of the browsing collection, with a 7-day checkout period and a budget of \$500. She began the collection based on award winning titles, and decided not to include Manga, a huge area but one that would also exceed the budget.

The collection was publicized with a display at a library open house and emails to the faculty.

After Juliet's presentation, the forum was open for questions and discussion. Most of the discussion centered on the key questions concerning the limitless space that this type of work seems to occupy—It can be a fiction and it can be non-fiction. It can be foreign language material. It can be placed in many areas of a library—special collections, art libraries, browsing, regular stacks...

There is increasing interest in graphic novels on the part of graduate students.

A question was asked regarding why some of the books are black and white and some are in color. The answer is that it all depends on how it was drawn and is not a money issue during printing.

There was a discussion on whether or not money should be diverted from other purchases for a graphic novel collection. A similar discussion debated where the responsibility for purchasing should fall, as well as where these items should be kept. Classification was discussed especially regarding call number ranges and assigned subject headings.

The US Naval Academy sees the graphic novel as an effective way to get students into the library.

Collecting graphic novels tells the current students that their generation is being collected and preserved.

Future issues regarding graphic novels may include: more discussion on definition and collecting policies, preservation, classification and cataloging, sources for purchasing and funding, etc.

Notes taken by Angela Courtney (Indiana University) with a couple of additions by Madeline Copp (Johns Hopkins University).

Madeline A. Copp,
Johns Hopkins University
mcopp@jhu.edu

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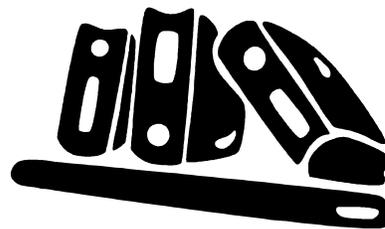
Websites:

MoCCA - Museum of Comic and Cartoon Art:
<http://www.moccany.org>

Comics Scholarship Annotated Bibliographies:
<http://www.comicsresearch.org>

See Also: Hurst, Leslie D. "Comic Book and Graphic Novel Resources." Public Libraries (March/April 2004): 91-92+.

Prepared by Michael R. Macan - LES
Membership Committee
United States Naval Academy
macan@usna.edu



Personal and Institutional News

David A. Berona, (<http://pubpages.unh.edu/~dberona>) University of New Hampshire, was invited to present a paper on Feb. 4, 2005, at Yale University, which hosted an international symposium and exhibition exploring the intersection of book arts and graphic art in Belgium. Berona is an international authority on woodcut novels and his articles and papers are highly regarded by scholars in the fields of visual art and communication. For more information see: <http://www.library.yale.edu/aob/belgianbooks>

Lori Rowland, of the Rutgers Camden Law Library will be presenting preliminary results on her study of librarians in academic novels at the New Jersey Library Association College & University Section Research Forum in April.

If you have news of note or just want the world to know you painted your house this spring, please send your information to still@camden.rutgers.edu.

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*Biblio-Notes* (ISSN 1076-8947) is published twice a year by the Literatures in English Section of the Association of College & Research Libraries, a division of the American Library Association (50 E. Huron St., Chicago IL, 60611; 800/545-2433 ext. 2519. Copies are free to members.

**Contributions welcome.** The editor especially encourages those who may not be able to travel to ALA meetings to contribute descriptions of new books of interest, essays on "My Life as a Humanities Librarian," "My Favorite Reference Tool" and "Personal and Institutional News." Deadlines for copy are roughly the end of September and the end of February of each year. Please contact the editor for the exact deadlines of specific issues.

Editor: Julie Still  
Paul Robeson Library  
Rutgers University  
300 N. 4<sup>th</sup> St. / P. O. Box 93990  
Camden, NJ 08101-3990  
856 225-6033 ext. 22  
[still@camden.rutgers.edu](mailto:still@camden.rutgers.edu)

Assistant Editor: Katharine Dean  
Ohio State University Libraries  
Information Services Department  
Main Library, Room 126  
1858 Neil Ave.  
Columbus, OH 43210  
614 688-5861  
[dean.202@osu.edu](mailto:dean.202@osu.edu)

Chair, 2004-2005: Jen Stevens  
Fenwick Library  
4400 University Drive  
George Mason University  
Fairfax, VA 22030-1000  
703 993-2211  
[jstevens7@gmu.edu](mailto:jstevens7@gmu.edu)

Vice Chair, 2004-2005: Susanna Van Sant  
McKeldin Library  
University of Maryland  
College Park, MD 20742-7011  
Phone: (301) 405-9283  
Fax: (301) 314-9416  
E-mail: [svansant@umd.edu](mailto:svansant@umd.edu)

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