In 1971 I wrote an article for American Libraries, "An Approach to Special Collections," about my experiences in forming a collection of twentieth-century American and English literature at Washington University in St. Louis. I continued to think about the materials appropriate for inclusion in an author collection in the position to which I was appointed in 1972, Chief of the Rare Book and Special Collections Division of the Library of Congress. By 1987 my conception of the kind of author collection useful for present-day scholarship had changed as the result of reading Fredson Bowers and G. Thomas Tanselle (in particular the latter's discussion of the Newberry Library Melville Collection), of thinking about the implications of recent trends in scholarship (including l'histoire du livre), and of incorporating into my conception of an author collection such recent changes in publishing practices and marketing strategies as prepublication formats. The kind of author collection I had come to see as desirable takes energy and financial resources to assemble, and it made less and less sense to me for a number of institutions to compete with one another in forming comprehensive collections of the same writer. Cooperation seemed to me the answer in this collecting effort, as it has widely been agreed to be in the collecting of manuscripts.

I decided to find out whether my views about comprehensive collecting and the desirability of cooperation were shared by my colleagues in rare book and special collections facilities in the United States and Canada. Accordingly, I formulated the questionnaire printed at the end of this article and sent it to 115 libraries that, according to the American Library Directory, had rare books or special collections, some of which, at least, were from the twentieth century.
I had characterized the Washington University collection as "research-oriented," seeking "not only first editions, but all editions published during an author's lifetime in which textual changes might be revealed..."\(^2\) I had come to realize early that this definition of comprehensiveness was inadequate. Far too many authors (one hundred at the time I left) were included in the collection for "comprehensive" collecting to be a reasonable goal. It is true that it was easy to have a false sense of the collecting effort when some of the authors had published only one or two books (in one case no book) at the time they were included in the collecting project. If in 1971 some of the authors had published too little to be a collecting challenge, sixteen years later virtually every one of them would have been a challenge to collect if "comprehensive" were to mean what I had come to take it to mean—the "balanced accumulation of editions that will preserve the full publishing history of an author" described by Fredson Bowers\(^5\) and amplified by G. Thomas Tanselle in many writings, most particularly his description of the Newberry Library Melville Collection in "Melville and the World of Books."\(^4\) In his chapter, "Non-firsts," Tanselle notes that though the Newberry Library aims at comprehensiveness in the editions and impressions (in book and periodical form) dating from Melville's lifetime, it does not stop with them, but seeks as well comprehensiveness in all the following areas:

- posthumous editions and impressions (including every printing of every paperback and classroom edition), adaptations and excerpts, translations, anthology appearances, Melville's source books, biographical and critical studies (including dissertations and articles in journals), and works inspired by Melville.\(^6\)

In the article and chapters cited and in other writings, Bowers and Tanselle have described the difficulties editorial projects have in locating a full range of editions published during an author's lifetime and posthumously. The first editions of important writers are readily found in the libraries of major institutions and private collectors. Editions and impressions other than the first have ordinarily been routinely preserved only when they are known to have been revised by the author or to have interest beyond their texts. In his article on collecting non-firsts, Tanselle observes that many of the non-first editions that have been traditionally collected are actually firsts in some sense (first edition to contain a new preface, first edition to be published by a particular publisher, first edition to appear in a certain locality, first edition to contain illustrations, etc.). Despite the efforts of those involved in building the Newberry Library Melville Collection it "still does not have a sufficient sampling of many of [the nineteenth-century printings] for bibliographical purposes."\(^7\)

In contrast to the Bowers-Tanselle conception of comprehensiveness, the collecting effort at Washington University sought only editions published during an author's lifetime, assuming that an author had nothing further to do with his
texts once he died. It is clear to me now that a later edition can be textually significant if its editor makes use of authoritative documents. Beyond that, posthumous editions and printings are an important aspect of an author's reputation and influence.

Years before the proliferation of rare book and special collections facilities in the United States, private collectors were ambitiously forming author collections. In *Taste & Technique in Book Collecting* John Carter refers to the effect that the publication of full-dress author bibliographies had on the method of attack used by collectors. These bibliographies did not distinguish between more and less important items, and collectors, like stamp collectors looking at a stamp album, sought to fill in every missing item, however trifling. Carter goes on to say that in this effort "the foundations were...being laid of that principle of absolute completeness in an author-collection which has so powerfully influenced many of the most distinguished and thoughtful bibliophiles of the past fifty years."

In the period described by Carter (roughly the 1890s to the time Carter delivered his Sandars lectures in 1947) "absolute completeness" of an author collection generally meant everything included in an author bibliography. Since the tradition of author bibliographies of the period was to include first editions but not later editions and printings, the collecting effort fell far short of "comprehensive" as it would be defined today. The best of today's author bibliographies describe all the editions and impressions of a given text. As a result many collectors of twentieth-century authors seek this full range of material, and the collections they form have frequently been invaluable to bibliographers. In "Jaguars and Book Collections" Louis Daniel Brodsky says of his Faulkner collection:

Setting outrageous standards of thoroughness, I proceeded to acquire every state of a printing, all issues and printings of an edition, each variant in binding or dust jacket design of a particular edition, all editions of a title. I sought magazine appearances, too, and ephemeral materials relating to Faulkner's life and literary career...."

He also "attempted to maintain the strictest standards of condition with regard to dust jackets and books alike, discarding, exchanging, bartering, always upgrading, when possible, a lesser item for one of greater quality."

I hoped through my questionnaire to determine whether institutional collectors had been influenced by recent trends in author bibliographies and by the example of private collectors in their definition of "comprehensiveness" (it should be noted that the Newberry Library Melville Collection has as its nucleus the collection formed by Harrison Hayford) and in their concern about condition. Ninety-one institutional representatives from the 115 institutions to which I sent the questionnaire responded (in one case two people from an institution,
representing different perspectives or responsibilities, responded and in another case three). With only three exceptions, these ninety-one respondents indicated that their institutions collect twentieth-century American and English literature or hope to revive collecting programs when funds or opportunities come their way.

In a letter accompanying the questionnaire I explained that I sought information on institutional collecting of twentieth-century American and English literature for an article I intended to write for Rare Books & Manuscripts Librarianship. I went on to explain that though the basic thrust of the article was on printed materials, I wished to look into the extent to which the presence of a collection of manuscripts by an author affected institutional collecting of his or her printed work. I also encouraged my correspondents to make general comments or to amplify responses to specific points in the questionnaire. When I refer to the results of the questionnaire in the discussion that follows, eighty-nine is the maximum possible given the total response of ninety-one, the three institutions which did not collect twentieth-century authors, and the one curator from such an institution who answered the questions "hypothetically."

In my comments on the results of the questionnaire I will frequently quote G. Thomas Tanselle. His article on collecting modern imprints, his chapter on non-firsts, and his chapter on the Newberry Library Melville Collection are essential reading for a private or institutional collector of twentieth-century literature who wishes to move beyond first edition collecting." In other writings whose basic subjects are not collecting Tanselle has demonstrated, among other things, the scholarly relevance of the materials collectors assemble, the way in which every surviving artifact is a witness to the past, and the responsibility institutions have to preserve bibliographical evidence. Though he has not yet synthesized his thinking in a book on collecting, the body of writings he has produced is as important for collectors as John Carter's seminal book, Taste & Technique in Book Collecting.

I was disappointed in a number of cases that my respondents seem not to have thought through the implications of what they are doing. In my discussion of the questionnaire responses I occasionally quote a respondent whose point of view seems to me wrongheaded. Rather than take issue with each of these comments as they arise, I have tried to present a framework that will make it clear why some of the responses I quote are, in my view, inadequate.

COLLECTING TWENTIETH-CENTURY MANUSCRIPTS: SECTION A

On the basis of my Washington University experience, I expected that the ownership of manuscripts would be a significant factor in institutional decisions
to collect the printed works. This proved to be the case. Eighty-one respondents
indicated that when they have a substantial manuscript holding they collect the
printed work “most of the time” or “always” (A2). Because manuscripts of major
writers of the earlier years of this century are expensive (often extremely so) and
much sought, one might expect institutions to be actively seeking the manus-
scripts of writers of the present. They do seek manuscripts (though the question-
naire does not distinguish those of the present from those of the earlier years of
the century): 25 of 84 respondents indicate that they collect manuscripts only if
they are gifts; 21 of 84 “when we can afford them.” Only 36 are collecting manu-
scripts “nearly always when available” or “when they are significant” (Al).

Peter Howard’s chapter, “American Fiction since 1960,” makes interesting
reading in this connection. Of the 429 fiction writers of the 1960s included in
Catalogue 38 of his firm, Serendipity Books, manuscripts of only a tiny handful
had, by 1979, when his chapter was published, been reported by libraries. Howard
observes:

However incomplete these records (they seem incredibly spotty), the implica-
tion is inescapable that a vast quantity of contemporary manuscripts remains
available, depending upon the attitudes of the authors themselves toward “be-
ing collected” and their sense of their own dollar value. 

Howard’s figures indicate that the mechanisms libraries employ to obtain manu-
scripts had not, as of 1979, been successful with the group of fiction writers in-
cluded in his catalogue. Evidence indicates that the changes in the tax law have
taken away much of the incentive for writers to give their manuscripts to li-
braries. Writers aware of high prices brought by manuscripts of some of their
established contemporaries may be reluctant to sell their own papers at a rela-
tively early stage in their career. If we assume, and I think we can, that virtually
all of the fiction writers of the 1960s whom “the acceptance of critical opinion”
has, for the present at least, judged as serious were included in Howard’s cata-
logue, there are clearly factors such as these at work that make it difficult for
libraries routinely to amass large numbers of manuscripts by “collected” authors
of the present.

In my American Libraries article I made the statement that “manuscripts of
creative works are only as interesting as the quality of the mind which produces
them.” This view is not shared by my colleagues, a majority of whom believe
that “literary manuscripts may be studied to advantage for what they reveal of
the creative process even though the author’s printed output will never be the
subject of academic research” (A4b). The issue is an important one. In formu-
lating this question I assumed that libraries committed to manuscript collect-
ing but forced to rely entirely on gifts or to function with very limited resources
might be taking into their collections literary manuscripts of local writers, fac-
ulty, and others who had not received, and might well never receive, “the acceptance of critical opinion” as serious writers that served as the basis for inclusion in Howard’s catalogue. Every institution faces the statistical probability that even the work of many of today’s “serious” writers will be of little interest to scholars a hundred years hence. To the extent that institutions were taking into their collections manuscripts of writers of lesser current literary reputation, the chances seemed to me greater that their work would not be of future scholarly interest.

In my view there is a difference between the potential scholarly value of the printed work of an author seen by posterity to have little literary merit and that author’s manuscripts. More and more evidence is accumulating of the continuous emergence of new approaches to the study of books, including the uses of collections for studying marketing and distribution strategies and binding practices, and of the dismaying attrition of copies of books not in demand. My earlier conception of a book of “little interest” has changed as a result of thinking about the implications of G. Thomas Tanselle’s statement, one of a number of times he has expressed a similar idea, that “there is no piece of printed matter that is not a collector’s item, because each one is a document of historical interest, providing evidence of its time and place and worthy of preservation.”

The value for the study of the creative process of the manuscripts of an author in whom posterity has demonstrated no interest seems to me more problematic. Two respondents commented on the doubtful value of such manuscripts, the first observing that the “study of the creative process of an author whose work is of no worth or interest would be an exercise in psychology, not literary study,” and the second:

If the writer will never be the subject of academic inquiry, and if we can be entirely sure of this, then presumably she/he is a writer of such minimal value that whatever a study of his/her MSS might reveal about the “creative process” would also be minimal. I suppose my feeling here is that lousy writers reveal less about the “creative” than about the confusion process.

Two curators of important collections have provided insights into the origins of libraries’ interest in manuscripts. Decherd Turner has called the collecting activities of Harry Ransom during his years as director of the Humanities Research Center at the University of Texas in Austin the “Ransom Revolution,” describing the “revolution” as follows:

Reduced to its ultimate simplicity, the Ransom Revolution worked on one basic conclusion: that the first edition is not the beginning of the literary process, but rather its end. The first edition, the printed book, comes at the end of a long and at times tortuous process consisting of 1) author’s original notes; 2) manuscript; 3) corrected, rewritten manuscript (sometimes many times rewritten); 4) copy
for printer; 5) galley proofs; 6) corrected galley proofs; 7) page proofs; 8) corrected page proofs; 9) and ultimately, the printed book. 16

Turner amplifies his remarks by saying:

The true seat of analysis, criticism, and understanding the literary process is in the prepublication materials, and thus the need for complete author archival collections....When Ransom turned the attention to the preliminary artifacts, it opened a fertile whole new world, and gave scholarship a massive area in which to work and come to a new understanding of the literary process. 17

Donald Gallup traced the interest in literary papers to changes in curricula:

In an attempt to meet the demand for “relevant” courses, administrators have introduced more and more nearly contemporary subjects, and in American universities generally more and more doctoral dissertations are being devoted to authors either still living or only recently dead...To supply research materials for degree candidates in such programs, libraries have been obliged to try to secure papers of contemporary writers. During this same period the rise of the New Criticism and the vast influence of such textbooks as the Brooks-Warren Understanding Poetry have given a new importance to the notes and drafts that usually precede the final text of a literary work...To give the new critics a little more to go on, writers have been encouraged to preserve drafts which would normally have been consigned to wastepaper baskets. 18

In comments on the scholarship of William Jackson, Librarian of Harvard’s Houghton Library, Fredson Bowers assigned a high status to manuscripts:

[Jackson] knew that first editions were precious documents, but he knew that manuscripts were more precious, and that the more these were the working manuscripts, the rough drafts, the notes, the trials, the more valuable they were for the future scholar. 19

Desirable as it might be to preserve everything (and Tanselle, in his 1987 Rosenbach lectures at the University of Pennsylvania, made the point that all surviving artifacts deserve our respect and present us with textual problems), 20 librarians are faced with limited funds for acquisitions, space for processing, funds for conservation, and the likelihood of a commitment to maintain a given collection as long as the rare book collection survives. Given the nature of present-day curricula and the demonstrated scholarly interest in drafts and notes, it is easy to understand the high value assigned to manuscripts by my respondents. However, one curator felt that scholarship is already moving away from an interest in literary manuscripts and observed that it is

at least arguable that a concentration in MS collecting and on “literary” MSS of the present age may be something of a blind alley. It commits those libraries choosing to specialize in this field to something likely to prove recondite, relatively un- or undervalued in the profession such collections putatively serve,
and limiting vis-à-vis the other possible fields in which MSS or research value are also produced; to a field which may itself wither (we forget how recent an arrival to academic respectability “literature” is; there is no special reason to assume that what has recently come may not also quickly go; and the economic pressures on higher education in this country may reduce literary studies even more drastically than they have been reduced since their heyday in the 1950s and '60s); to a highly speculative field even in the best of circumstances...

Trends are fickle. Curators who keep abreast of the scholarly use of manuscript collections, including their use for the study of the “creative process,” will have the best chance of assembling collections with long-term scholarly potential.

Several people rapped me on the knuckles for statement A4b of the questionnaire, noting that there is no way to know that anyone will “never” be the subject of academic research. That is true, and it is true, too, that a manuscript collection of a writer judged by posterity to have no literary merit may contain letters of writers of greater scholarly interest (correspondence was the most sought of the kinds of literary manuscripts itemized in the questionnaire) and that there is something to be learned about publishing and editorial practices of a given period from a body of manuscripts of any published writer.

A respondent who had agreed with the statement, “the importance of manuscripts is vastly over-rated,” added the note: “as indicated by the prices fetched by fair copies which have little research value.” In commenting on the flaws in the Ransom Revolution induced by the “pressures of the times and commerce,” Decherd Turner refers to the “insanity” of a price for a printed prepublication text and adds “but this is mild. Consider the case of a third revised typescript with only two minor pencil changes in the hand of the author being offered for $10,000—and being sold.”

**SELECTION CRITERIA FOR AN AUTHOR’S PRINTED WORK:**

**SECTION B**

In book collectors’ manuals modest price and availability are often put forward as reasons for collecting contemporary literature (B1b and B1d). These are not the factors motivating my respondents. Research potential, presence of an author’s manuscripts, and faculty interest were the principal reasons circled. In response to B1h thirteen curators reported that they sought authors of interest to the region, including in some instances faculty, alumni, and writers on visiting appointments. Eight curators wrote that they sought authors whose works interrelate with existing holdings. Of price relative to other materials one respondent said, “Hardly! Modern firsts are vastly overpriced” and added that collecting twentieth-century literature is “rather like laying down a wine cellar. We buy
what we hope will be worth having one or two generations later." Another respondent observed that "plenty of 20th-c. authors have such established reputations that collecting them in this sense is equivalent to collecting 19th-century figures."

Rare book librarians are determined to face the challenge of trying to collect before the rise in prices, as indicated by the sixty-two people who responded "yes" to question B4 on their responsibility for anticipating the future. One curator commented, "If we wait until they are established, we can rarely afford them." Another curator noted that he had "trouble with the idea of 'responsibility.' Such a responsibility is not unlike the commodities market; one could make huge and expensive mistakes." A third curator remarked that anticipating the future is "quite a chancy affair—success quite elusive."

I was struck by the heavy weight assigned to personal taste. At Washington University in deciding which authors to include in the collecting project I consulted writers on the faculty, and at the Library of Congress I sought the advice of the Poetry Consultant, recommending officers in literature, specialists in the Manuscript Division, writers on the staff, and anyone else with a demonstrated interest in literature. There was a strong sense in the responses to B2 that curators, not unlike private collectors, welcome the chance to pit their knowledge and taste against the future.

Respondents volunteered other motivating factors such as the comments of literary critics on an author, reviews, the quality of the publisher or journal in which the work of an author appears, and literary awards. Two respondents referred to the opinion of the "invisible college" and the "invisible college of literati." Twenty-eight curators, in their written comments about motivation, included a personal reaction as being one of the factors in choosing a writer to collect, sometimes as a "hunch" or "intuition."

I was surprised that advice from booksellers or evidence from their catalogues was mentioned by only two respondents, one of whom did so rather apologetically, referring to using "critical writings about the author, but a more honest answer may be the frequency with which the author appears in book catalogues." This is odd, since members of the antiquarian book trade such as John Carter are responsible for some of the most perceptive analyses of book collecting written in this century. Many of the dealers specializing in modern literature read widely, keep up with the critical literature, are familiar with the market and consequently better able than many librarians to say which authors are currently neglected, and frequently have assembled staffs that bring to their jobs additional backgrounds relevant to the study of twentieth-century literature. David Randall, more than twenty years before he became the Librarian of Indiana University's Lilly Library, noted that the activities of modern book collectors
represent a synthesis of opinion which registers, crudely perhaps, but unmistakably and mathematically, both the present value and the estimated future worth of any collected author at any time; and it lends to the literary critic, if he but deign to use it, a tool of indisputable worth.

and then went on to note:

Best-seller lists denote only quantitative appeal; the reviews of critics, some measure of critical opinion, which is often at the widest variance; but the price of first editions reflects what Henry Hazlitt in his excellent Anatomy of Criticism calls “The Social Mind.”

I have found the expression of interest in authors as revealed by dealers’ catalogues to be one of the most useful pieces of evidence of burgeoning interest in a writer and of changes in his or her reputation. At the Library of Congress, in preparing the list of emerging writers to be submitted to my colleagues for their suggested additions and deletions, I used this evidence regularly.

In “Bibliography and Modern Librarianship” Fredson Bowers observed that “one of the central problems of today...is the selection of what will be of significant value to future scholars from among the unsorted higgledy-piggledy raw materials available from contemporary writers” and remarked that Harry Ransom [recall Decherd Turner’s comments on the “Ransom Revolution”] “has been particularly knowing, as time will tell.” Where once there was time to make a more leisurely estimate of a writer’s importance before launching a collecting effort, authors are more and more quickly becoming “collectible” and prices of their printed works and manuscripts are rising accordingly. In his chapter already referred to David Randall speaks of the “uniform tendency of collectors to neglect collecting, or even considering collecting, an author’s work, until he has published an outstanding success.” In contrast, today an author has only to publish one book—one receiving critical esteem, not large sales—to be forecast to be the next “superstar.” Particularly in genres such as thrillers, detective stories, horror, and science fiction, countless examples of startling prices of books published in good-sized editions in the last few years could be evidenced. In “The Rare Book World Today” Gordon Ray remarks on the interest the current generation of collectors has in certain kinds of popular fiction, noting that “these tastes, indeed, may have been acquired in part in the country’s English departments themselves, which for some time past have turned to courses in film and popular culture to shore up falling enrollments.”

Fredson Bowers observed that “William Jackson made it his special business to match his own literary taste and foresight against such problems [collecting what will be of value to future scholars] to assure himself that, when reputations were sorted out in the future, Harvard would have more than its share of the basic documents for scholarship devoted to still-living literature.” Interestingly, Jackson had
reservations about collecting "any book which is being actively collected at the moment," noting that it "would seem a poor choice for an institution." He continued:

In general, this would rule out most, if not all, contemporary "collected" authors, for two reasons: first, because of the uncertainty of their future importance and the cost of keeping as rare books such questionable gambles; and, secondly, because if they are now popular among collectors, it is likely either that the price will fall when they are no longer fashionable or that the institution may be given one of the collections currently being formed.

Institutional collectors of the 1980s are not in general following Jackson's somewhat Olympian advice on this point, though they may wish that they could be as prescient as he was about collecting. Julian Roberts characterized Jackson as an institutional collector... always prepared to break new ground. His successor at the Houghton notes that before the vogue for collecting literary archives existed, Jackson recognised Harvard's responsibility for the leading New England authors, and set out to collect their personal papers. In the early sixties he grew disillusioned with the absurd prices of early English books and concentrated on early French books and upon the great Russian authors.

When credit of this kind is extended to a curator, admittedly an unusual one, and his contribution is still being acknowledged twenty-five years after his death, one can understand why institutional collectors of the present welcome the opportunity to put their personal stamp on the collections in their charge.

A number of curators believe there is plenty of room for imaginative collecting, though a fair number of the examples cited did not pertain to literature. Among those of literary interest were:

a. Collecting writers from a "school" or coterie.
b. Nuclear war fiction.
c. Australian, New Zealand, Canadian, West Indian writers.
d. Non-literary, but significant, people associated with a writer being collected.
e. Sub-literary or popular genres.
f. Collecting a circle of minor writers around a major one.
g. Literature in fine printing.

No one mentioned the possibility or desirability of expanding the conception of what might fit into an author collection.

There was considerable disagreement about whether institutions should collect letters or manuscripts if the bulk of the materials were in another institution (B5e). Those who marked "depends on circumstances" noted that donors sometimes strongly wish to present manuscripts to a specific institution, that there are times when a seller is prejudiced against a particular institution, and that the principal holding institution may be unwilling to make a continued commit-
ment or lacks the funds for a particular acquisition. Others indicated that they would buy an example for exhibit use, would want to have a representative manuscript or letter of anyone the institution collected, or would want the letter if it pertained to their region, another writer in the collection, a specific book in the collection, or a subject in which the institution specialized. Only one person indicated that he would “buy any matter apposite to our holdings when available, and reasonably priced.” Others indicated that they would buy single items but would give a photocopy of it to the institution having the bulk of the holdings or otherwise bring to its attention that they have it.

As for the importance of condition (B6), a majority believe libraries should get materials in fine condition unless there is something unique about the item, in which case condition is irrelevant. Dust jackets are an aspect to which private collectors of twentieth-century literature pay particular attention. Librarians assembling collections in this field are somewhat less concerned than private collectors that dust jackets be present (B7) and in particular that they be in fine condition. In one respondent’s view they are “only important to private collectors” and not of importance “for research.”

Tanselle addressed the importance of dust jackets in his article, “Book Jackets, Blurbs and Bibliographers,” pointing out the significance of blurbs for literary study and of dust jackets as a source of biographical information, particularly about minor writers; of photographs, in some cases published nowhere else; and of publishing information, from the practice of some publishers to list the dates of successive impressions on the jacket. He notes that though printed paper jackets had at the time of his writing been in use for nearly 150 years, “less serious bibliographical attention has been paid to them, it is probably safe to say, than to any other prominent feature of modern book production.” In “Bibliographers and the Library” he spoke again of the dust jacket, observing it “is worth the extra expense, and the sooner this fact is widely understood, the better the chances that jackets will be routinely saved.”

During my years at the Library of Congress as the prices of modern literature in pristine dust jackets continued to soar, I came to question, not the importance of dust jackets, but the need for libraries to acquire immaculate examples. William Jackson observed that institutional libraries occasionally find themselves “custodians for posterity of books in remarkably fine and fragile condition” which “if the state of such items be unique, or of such rarity that it would be extremely difficult to find other examples, their use for normal scholarly purposes may be precluded, in order that they may be preserved physically as bibliographical ‘type specimens.” In Jackson’s view “it would be the negation of the normal reasons for the acquisition by university libraries of rare books if they were sought always in the finest condition, in ‘original boards,’ in ‘immaculate wrappers,’ etc.” It is true that boards and printed wrappers cannot be removed
when a volume is given to a reader, as jackets can. Dust jackets also can be more readily protected from normal handling. Nevertheless, the book on which the pristine dust jacket is found will itself most frequently be pristine and subject to the concerns Jackson voices.

Two of my respondents spoke of the realities of their institutional collecting, the first saying:

Generally, I agree that condition matters, but it seems to me possible to be too fanatic about this criterion. We are in the business of collecting materials for use, and, if they are used, materials will deteriorate however well we care for them. If we are not getting them for use (as “museum pieces”?), why bother?

and the second:

Our books get used, & thus worn, however carefully handled—“mint” condition becomes “very good” all too soon.

The strong interest in association copies (B8) surprised me. At the Library of Congress I almost never recommended the purchase of an association copy, not from any feeling that such books are unimportant, but because the limited funds available suggested the desirability of acquiring a wider range of texts and foregoing the purchase of a category of book which can be expensive. So few association copies had ever been purchased by the Library of Congress that there seemed to be an unwritten policy not to purchase them, despite the fact that some of the treasures most frequently brought out to show visitors (in particular books once owned by Jefferson, Lincoln, and Benjamin Franklin) are association copies. In his 1982 survey, “The Rare Book World Today,” Gordon Ray included outstanding association copies as one of the categories in which the “prices for exceptional items will continue their ascending spiral....”

The reality, of course, is that much of the association material that is listed in dealers’ catalogues consists of copies inscribed by the author at someone’s request, with little more biographical, bibliographical, or textual interest than signed copies. A number of respondents indicated that they would seek association copies only for collections of highest priority or would buy a particularly special book by a “seriously collected” author for display. One respondent observed that institutional collecting differs from private collecting in this way: the association must be of “real” use to scholars, not simply “interesting.” Association copies of some authors, it was noted, are so widely available—Robert Frost was instanced—that a simple signed copy would be of little interest and would have to have a “poem or two” or in some way be detailed and revealing. Regrets were expressed by one curator about an association copy that documented a relationship of presenter and presentee already known. Both were people the institution specialized in. Though this was the curator’s justification for purchasing the copy, he felt that he had made a mistake. The purchase was not “inappropriate,
merely unnecessary.” And yet, as another curator remarked, an association copy can be important even if the only biographical data it provides is that the person owned or gave the book. Tanselle’s demonstration of the scholarly value of two Melville association copies and how “the investigation of the immediate association in each case draws one on to discover other unsuspected ‘associations’ or to focus on old problems from new angles” is essential reading for any curator weighing the pros and cons of association copies.  

**COMPREHENSIVE COLLECTING: SECTION C**

In framing this section of the questionnaire I deliberately left the definition of such a collection vague, assuming that the specific examples of collecting possibilities in C4 would reveal how seriously institutions are pursuing the kind of comprehensive collection I had come to feel was desirable. “Well beyond first editions” is, of course, an inadequate definition of comprehensive collecting, if we take the Newberry Library Melville Collection as a model. A very high percentage of those who filled out the questionnaire commented on their motivations in forming comprehensive collections (C2). Research headed the list, though the nature of the research was almost never specified. Several people spoke of such collections enhancing the reputations of their institutions and one person described such collections as a “lure” in attracting faculty to his institution. Five of those who made specific comments about their motivations noted the usefulness of author collections for the study of publishing history and five spoke of their utility for textual study. A respondent who put together four author collections in the years when it was relatively easy to do so, thinking that at a later time he would “steer” Ph. D. candidates and other scholars towards them, found it worked for Robert Coates and Kay Boyle but not for Caroline Gordon or Hortense Calisher. He added of the latter two, “I’m not giving up on either.”

In response to the invitation to write in reasons for not collecting comprehensively (C3g) a correspondent spoke of the very low research potential of a comprehensive author collection in relation to the cost. Though in his personal collecting he sought all printing and all binding variants “for the personal satisfaction that comes from seeking to complete the whole and to produce a descriptive bibliography,” he regarded the research value of such a collection as so low that he would never consider building one from the perspective of institutional needs and interests. Another respondent doubted the usefulness of modern author collections in the absence of substantial manuscript holdings, adding that he was “not sure what research value such a collection holds” or “to what extent
a public institution, in particular, ought to indulge in what appears to be collecting for collecting’s sake.”

In a letter accompanying his completed questionnaire, a curator said he believed that far too much attention is being paid to twentieth-century literature by special collections departments, to the detriment of other aspects of twentieth-century culture:

This may reflect a bias of scholarship in general but does not confirm the fondly held notion of special collections librarians that they are in a position of anticipating research interests. I would be willing to bet that for every hundred collections of Yeats there is one of Maynard Keynes or Einstein.

The question of the future direction of scholarship concerned another curator who observed that

much of nineteenth-century scholarship in the humanities was text critical and concerned with the establishment of standard texts. Some of this effort continues today but more often academic interest is concerned with ways of reading a given text. Thus, much of the motivation for the development of extensive collections of variant texts is not supported by current academic needs and interests.

Twenty-five years ago Gordon Ray made quite a different prediction of the growth of collections of variant texts:

And since we are clearly moving into an age of great scholarly editions, for which there will have to be assembled materials illustrating all stages of the development of each text from manuscript to final printed version, the emergence to visibility and consequent demand of books other than first editions can confidently be predicted.34

The situation as revealed by the questionnaire is an odd one. Virtually all American special collections associated with institutions with a wide-ranging curriculum are collecting at least some modern literature. Many of these institutions pay lip service to the idea of comprehensive collecting but the responses to the questionnaire indicate that the level of comprehensiveness of their collections falls short of that necessary for today’s textual and bibliographic scholarship. In a 1951 lecture Gordon Ray himself excluded a class of material that has its place in bibliographical and textual study and that a collection aiming at comprehensiveness would need to acquire:

One class of publications it [an institution] can safely ignore entirely, the “manufactured rarities” created by issuing the trivial by-blows of important authors in editions limited to a few copies.36

One understands Ray’s position. He was speaking of nineteenth-century books and at the time he was writing the money spent on these “trivial by-blows” could
acquire a number of nineteenth-century books quite likely in the long run to be more difficult to obtain than the manufactured rarities. Still, Ray's statement needs qualification, if an institution is setting out to represent the full publishing history of an author.

We have evidence that a collection consisting only of first editions is not useful to textual and bibliographical scholars. We have seen another current drift of literary scholarship interested in studying notes and drafts but not in editing literary texts. Frequently scholars of the creative process are undiscriminating about which printed text they use. We have further seen that institutions that acquire the manuscripts of a given writer (primarily for their use in studying the "creative process") will also very likely seek the printed texts of that writer's work. The situation is paradoxical. The kinds of study for which the manuscripts are being acquired do not depend on—and are often largely not concerned with—the printed texts. A comprehensive collection of the kind being assembled at the Newberry Library and other institutions at which editions are being prepared under the Center for Scholarly Editions auspices can function perfectly well, whether or not the bulk of a writer's manuscripts are present at that institution. To the extent that they are present, the work of scholars presumably will be simplified. Since it is likely that the manuscripts of writers publishing in the last quarter of this century will be fragmented unless the tax laws change or an institution as active as the University of Texas in Harry Ransom's days enters the current market, a number of institutions may end up having some portion of an author's manuscripts. If this turns out to be the case, I question the need for a number of special collections facilities to put significant resources into collecting the printed work of that one writer whose papers have been widely scattered.

No institution familiar with the Newberry Library Melville Collection would be likely to decide to collect Melville in comparable depth. It seems to me that collections like the Melville Collection should be formed for many American and English writers and that once an institution has committed itself to forming such a major collection of an author's printed work, other institutions should turn their attention to another writer. There would then be no need for institutions to proliferate the collecting of "trivial by-blows." The Rare Books and Manuscripts Section of ACRL could play a role in making information about such in-depth collecting available, possibly in the pages of Rare Books & Manuscripts Librarianship.

In light of the nature of listings in the many catalogues of the many book dealers specializing in modern literature, I was particularly struck by the high totals reported for "all editions of any kind published during an author's lifetime" (C4c). A respondent instanced as one reason that his institution did less in-depth collecting than he would have wished the fact that
the market itself all too rarely pays attention to later editions and translations and paperbacks. I suspect we could afford them; I suspect dealers cannot afford to be bothered with them.

In “The World of Rare Books Re-Examined” Gordon Ray quotes a scholar who collects the output of a number of turn-of-the-century and early twentieth-century publishing firms. In his collecting this scholar sought later printings of the books published by the firms in which he was interested and had this to say of his sources:

My principal form of buying, it goes without saying, is visiting bookshops and searching their stocks directly; many of the books I find in that way would never be put in catalogues....

In specialist catalogues “non-firsts” seem to appear only when they have association interest or known textual variations. When one thinks of the very real effort that must be expended to find books not of sufficient interest to dealers to list them in their catalogues, it is startling that seventeen respondents indicated that their institutions collect more than fifty authors comprehensively. Collecting at the “all editions of any kind” level seems much more possible for the twenty-five institutions that indicated they collect ten or fewer authors comprehensively and the thirty that said they collect five or fewer. My difficulties with collections of Walt Whitman and Rudyard Kipling at the Library of Congress made me sympathize with the respondent who said “we collect very few authors comprehensively, but in those few cases we attempt to take the term ‘comprehensive’ literally.” He added, “This does not mean, of course, that we are successful in our efforts to be comprehensive, and I fear that our collections frequently have larger lacunae than they ought.”

The kinds of prepublication materials listed under point C4g are taken from Peter Howard’s “American Fiction Since 1960.” Publishers have produced uncorrected prepublication forms of certain texts for many years. In 1941 Jacob Blanck noted that a current feature of book collecting is the “more frequent occurrence of so-called advance copies” and went on to say:

In some instances the advance copies are issued in quantities so large that they well might qualify as first issues. The collector must redefine “advance copy” and decide whether it is what it proclaims itself, or whether it is in fact the first issue. In either case, a certain amount of judgment must be used, for if one insists on having the advance copy rather than the regularly issued first issue, then why not the page-proofs (which preceded the advance copies), and if the page-proofs, then why not the galley-sheets...and so on ad absurdum.

The advance copies to which Blanck referred were most typically the sheets of the book, glued or sewn, but unbound, with the dust jacket used as wrappers. Page proofs were known but tended to be seen as in-house documents not in-
tended for distribution. Only relatively recently have “uncorrected proofs” been produced so regularly and in such numbers that they could be seen both as part of a publisher’s distribution network and a collecting genre. Modern literature dealers Quill & Brush and H. E. Turlington have issued catalogues devoted to uncorrected proof copies. Though these prepublication forms are of interest to libraries, as revealed by the responses in C4g, they are still being collected by fewer libraries than collect “any edition published during an author’s lifetime.”

Uncorrected proof copies are part (an increasingly large part) of the documentation that will survive from this period and as such are of interest to textual and bibliographical scholars, students of present-day publishing, marketing, and distribution practices, and those who study the creative process. Though publishers print “uncorrected proof copy” on the wrappers of the copies they produce, bibliographers differ in the terms they apply to them. In the revised edition of his bibliography of F. Scott Fitzgerald, Matthew J. Bruccoli describes review copy B of The Notebooks of F. Scott Fitzgerald:

Review copy B: Xeroxed page proofs perfect-bound in brilliant purplish blue wrappers printed in front in black: ‘UNCORRECTED PROOF....”

In their bibliography of Kurt Vonnegut, Asa Pieratt, Jr. and his fellow compilers include a full-page description of a proof copy (called by the publisher an uncorrected proof) of Slaughterhouse-five but note “this is probably more correctly termed a review copy, as it was prepared for reviewers from the galleys.”

In his bibliography of John Berryman, Ernest C. Stefanik, Jr. devotes half a page to a description of what he terms a “proof copy” of Recovery and the publisher calls an uncorrected page proof. In his bibliography of Malcolm Lowry, J. Howard Woolmer contents himself with saying, of October Ferry to Gabriola, “advance copies in wrappers were issued.” Stuart Wright describes “page proofs” (called by the publisher “Unrevised proofs. Confidential”) of A Palpable God in his and James L. W. West III’s bibliography of Reynolds Price, “advance proof copies” of A Wake for the Living in his bibliography of Andrew Nelson Lytle, and, in his bibliography of Peter Taylor, “bound uncorrected proof copies” of A Summons to Memphis and “advance proof copies” of In the Miro District (called by the publisher an “Uncorrected Proof”).

Though the terminology used by publishers may not be bibliographically exact, these “uncorrected proof copies” are not the equivalent of review copies, as they have been known in the past. They are prepublication forms of a given work available substantially in advance of the published edition and distributed in a different format. They are not, on the evidence of bibliographies that describe the number of copies produced, as common as they at this particular moment seem. Stuart Wright reports that fifteen copies of the page proofs of Rey-
nold Price’s *A Palpable God* were issued and “approx. 20” proof copies of Peter Taylor’s *A Summons to Memphis*.

One would think that there might be a built-in limitation on the number of copies likely to be produced of such prepublication forms as galley proofs, since they are, according to Peter Howard in his *Collectible Books* chapter, “expensive to assemble; the sheets must be hand pulled.” The note to librarians and collectors in the Quill & Brush uncorrected proofs catalogue says “one of the reasons for the small quantities is the fact that these editions are very expensive to produce and may cost the publisher $40 or $50 each (or even more).” Peter Howard speaks of uncorrected proofs being “probably manufactured in quantities of 75.” The Quill & Brush catalogue says “the standard quantity appears to be less than 100 copies....” Judith Lowry (Argosy Book Store) says “proof copies are never printed in numbers of more than 200....” In 1979 modern literature dealer Ralph Sipper (Joseph the Provider Books) reported that “it is not unusual for a publisher to issue as few as twenty-five copies, many of which never get to the book market.” For some widely read authors at least, the situation has changed markedly in recent years. In a recent conversation, novelist Larry McMurtry told me that at least 500 proof copies, and possibly as many as 1,000, had been produced of his recent novels. He reported that his agent requests and obtains at least seventy-five and sometimes 100 copies for distribution to movie studios, foreign publishers, book clubs, etc. The publisher, in turn, sends out large numbers of copies to newspapers, even very small ones, to reviewing media, here and abroad, etc. Accurate information is needed on the current practices of individual publishers.

Just as quantities manufactured by publishers vary, so do prices charged by book dealers. In *Book Collecting: the Book of First Books* Allen Ahearn notes that it is difficult to place a value on the prepublication forms “because there does not seem to be any consistent formula,” but says that generally:

Trade editions containing advance review slips or other advance publication evidence will sell for perhaps 50% more than the regular trade edition; the advance review/reader copies in paperwraps will sell for twice the trade value; the uncorrected proofs (also in paperwraps but with “uncorrected” indicated) for somewhat more than the advance review copies; and the galley proofs (normally on long sheets either bound or unbound) will bring the most.

There is no consistent pattern in pricing prepublication forms. I have seen the “proof copy” and the trade edition of authors in only moderate demand priced the same. H. E. Turlington’s 1987 sale list, Part II, literature, included fine copies of the proof copy and the first edition of Harry H. Taylor’s *The Divorce Sonnets*, 1984, each priced at ten dollars. On occasion the proof copy is priced less. Maurice Neville’s 1988 catalogue 17 lists the uncorrected proof copy of Anita
Brookner’s *A Start in Life* (1981), fine in wrappers, at $100 and the first edition, fine in dust jacket, for $125.

Decherd Turner includes printed prepublication materials in his examples of flaws that pressures of commerce have introduced into the Ransom Revolution:

> Bits and pieces and prepublication review copies have come to command prices that are astronomical and foolish. Viewed at any other time in history, it would be judged to be insanity to pay $575 for the unbound prepublication printed copy of a major modern novel with wrapper or dust jacket sent to a reviewer, while the first edition, in its publisher’s binding is available for $35.  

Here Turner presumably refers to Peter Howard’s category C3g7, advance reading (or promotional) copy. The printing runs of advance reading copies can be substantial. According to Howard, 1,500 copies of the “advance issue” of John Irving’s *The World According to Carp* were produced, preceded by uncorrected galley proofs in either mustard or blue-green wrappers distributed in much smaller numbers. Though a comprehensive collection will strive to include all the forms in which a text was made available to the public, collectors, both private and institutional, need to keep in mind that substantial numbers of the advance forms of certain texts have been produced. Since one of the interests of the prepublication forms is the possibility of textual variation, librarians may question whether advance uncorrected proofs of William Faulkner’s posthumous (1984) *Vision in Spring* are worth $250 to their institution (1988 Beasley Books catalogue) or unbound advance sheets, folded and gathered into five signatures $1,000 (James & Mary Laurie list 33).

Until recently locating prepublication forms of a given work was problematic and collectors often felt that their inclusion in an in-depth collection was a matter of individual preference. Now that evidence is available in the published literature, in dealers’ catalogues, and on the shelves of modern literature specialists of the wide availability of prepublication forms of most novels being published for the first time and of many poetry collections as well, they can be seen as one of the aspects of the publishing history of a given work, energetically to be sought for inclusion in a comprehensive collection. Finding proof copies of the more recent books of an author whose publishing history spans a considerable period will be easier than finding them for books first published many years ago. Presumably it was with this in mind that the Quill & Brush proofs catalogue says that including all the proofs of an author in a collection ”would be almost impossible even if you had unlimited funds...”

The reasons advanced for collecting prepublication forms of a text are frequently trivial. After saying that “the lure of endless and writhing chains of galley-proofs has so far been resisted by the serious collector,” Joseph Connolly adds of proof copies:
A lot of collectors of these oddities often have the regular first edition alongside as well, which is an expensive and space-consuming way of going about things; but visually it breaks up the shelves, and saves the library from resembling a rummage shop or, worse, a publisher’s office.

Peter Howard concludes his discussion of prepublication forms by saying “the charm for collectors of all of these advance states lies perhaps in their transitoriness. They wish to preserve what was designed to be discarded.” I indicated in the introduction to the book in which this chapter appeared that I felt Howard was, in this remark, failing to give collectors their due. The note in the Quill & Brush catalogue of uncorrected proofs puts forward, among a number of less important reasons for collecting proofs, the valid one that they “can differ in content from the published book and these differences make them unique and important in tracing the evolution of the book.” The catalogue then quotes a covering letter on a proof (the title and author of the book are not indicated) that contains the statement “the galleys contain several passages that will be removed or changed from the final book as legal requirements.” The covering letter has an attachment indicating the changes that will be made to the text. The letter also contains instructions on altering the text of the galleys before passing them on to anyone else.

Just as the opportunities for study offered by an intelligently conceived collection continually expand, so the definition of what is appropriate for inclusion in the collection grows. I expect before too much time goes by to see “uncorrected proof copies” described first in some bibliography and not, as at present, in a note to the “first edition.” These proofs, differing in format from the published edition and frequently lacking obvious physical features of the published book, are part of the distribution network of a given text. Almost certainly collation will reveal textual differences in some instances, but even if in many instances there are none the uncorrected proof copies will have their place in a comprehensive collection. Since the number of copies produced, on occasion at least, is small, the desirability of limiting the number of libraries collecting these formats is clear. If libraries were to come to see that the same principles should apply to book collecting as to manuscript collecting (we have seen that institutions are usually willing to cede the field to the institution that has the bulk of the manuscripts), scholars’ needs would be better served and institutional funds more intelligently deployed.

It seems very likely that many paperback editions will in the course of time be more difficult to locate in decent original condition than the various limited forms of a work which have been prized by collectors and housed in rare book collections. Peter Howard’s description of the seven-week life of most paperback editions makes disturbing reading for anyone trying to represent all forms of an author’s work. The present publishing trend of enormous printings of block-
buster books may be reducing the variety of trade paperback editions available, but a very large body of material has been published since the burgeoning of the paperback book in the 1930s.

I asked the institutions that collected five writers or fewer comprehensively to tell me who they were (C5). One hundred thirty-five names were listed. Again the responses surprised me. Contrary to my expectations only one institution each listed William Faulkner, Ernest Hemingway, and John Updike. No one listed Wallace Stevens or W. B. Yeats. The most collected author in this small sample was Ezra Pound (3), followed by Joyce Carol Oates (2), and Virginia Woolf (2). All the others were single responses and included a few names unfamiliar to me.

In C7 I introduced a point that particularly interests me—cooperation among libraries in the forming of comprehensive collections—by asking curators if their institutions would be deterred if they knew another institution was forming such a collection of the printed work of a given author. The thirty-four correspondents who answered “yes”—and possibly the forty-five who responded “perhaps”—would find it useful to know what authors are presently being collected comprehensively. Whether the medium for making this information available is this journal, as proposed earlier in this article, or some other publication, there would need to be agreement on the meaning of the term “comprehensive” and an assurance that the institution collecting an author understands the implications of the commitment and has the resources to pursue it.

I attempted to characterize further the kind of materials included in an author collection in section C8. Bowers and Tanselle have had scathing things to say about collecting only the first editions from an author’s native country (the “follow the flag” controversy). In “Bibliography Revisited” Bowers has this to say of the practice:

When for collecting purposes the arbitrary decision was made (as it may still be made in some circles) that without regard for priority of publication or of the history of textual transmission the edition first printed in an author’s native country is to be considered the first on an absolute basis, one can see how little book collectors and librarians weigh considerations that are of primary concern to the scholar.  

The response to C8e5 would indicate that there will be for certain authors, as reputations are sorted out and the major figures of the present identified, demand greatly in excess of supply, unless the demand is lessened by some conscious decision on the part of libraries to share the collecting responsibility of forming comprehensive collections.

In his discussion of these limited forms Peter Howard speaks of the “collector who must have every issue of every one of ‘his’ or ‘her’ author’s books, and many
collectors could be named who suffer from this peculiar psychology....” He goes on to say that such a collector is a “sitting duck, and the publishers have been firing three to a blind.” One of my respondents described his “especial annoyance” with certain publishers who produce too many limited editions. He finds himself having to purchase the least expensive of the various forms in which a work by one of the authors he is trying to collect in depth is published. Gone are the days when he could acquire “one of five copies containing the blood of the poet, especially when so many of the poets are anemic.” Another irritated curator refuses to buy certain “rarities” produced for the collector’s market and singled out a press that routinely produces limited editions of short texts by “collected” figures of the present.

If institutional collectors spend what must inevitably be limited resources in seeking all the forms in which a work is simultaneously published and fail to assemble later editions and impressions of works by the same author, they are indeed suffering from a “peculiar psychology.” Logically an institution collecting an author comprehensively will want to represent in the collection all the forms I enumerated in my questionnaire and other limited forms as well, since the possibility of textual variation exists here, as it does in all the forms in which a work is published. These editions are part of the textual and bibliographical evidence that a comprehensive collection provides. If there are instances in which a publisher seems to be taking advantage of institutional and private collectors by issuing a work in a ridiculously small number of copies at an exorbitant price the institution has the choice of turning it down, as it may decide to do with any book (e.g., the prepublication forms of William Faulkner’s Vision in Spring mentioned earlier) if the price and the interest are not in balance. As the reputations of authors rise and fall many of these matters will sort themselves out. To the extent that many libraries are trying to collect all the forms in which a given text is published they are contributing to the climate in which artificial rarities are produced.

Thinking particularly of the paperback but aware also of the difficulties of obtaining non-firsts in general in a market oriented to the first edition, I asked my correspondents what procedures they used to acquire books on publication, feeling that this is the point at which to capture works published in ephemeral formats (C9). Again I was surprised that standing orders with antiquarian book dealers were used by such a small number of libraries, having used such arrangements for both current and non-current books at Washington University and for non-current books at the Library of Congress. The energy exerted by the late Margie Cohn of House of Books in New York in obtaining paperback editions for her private and institutional collectors constantly amazed me. Though no one can replace Mrs. Cohn, surely other modern literature specialists would be happy to take on some of the challenges she undertook for so many years.
A curator in an institution possessing a particularly wide-ranging literary collection with a long collecting history reported that his library

has always tried to acquire at the time of publication; it’s saved us a fortune in the long run. It’s particularly important in the matter of ephemeral material, which will disappear, and expensive publications, most of which will just get more expensive.

**COLLECTION USE: SECTION D**

Earlier in this discussion I reproduced comments from several curators who had quite gloomy views of the use of author collections. The responses to D1 indicate that the use of author collections is uneven, that the presence of manuscript collections has a bearing on use, but a smaller one than might have been guessed, and that the work of a small number of writers gets a disproportionately heavy percentage of use. A curator of a collection containing important holdings in twentieth-century literature reported

very little use of printed materials. Heavy use of large manuscript collections. Of the latter, heavy use of correspondence and very little use of manuscripts unless unpublished.

Another respondent also noted with reference to literary collections that “it does tend to be the MSS rather than the printed books that attract most of the attention.” He went on to say that “use’ has got to be a criterion very cautiously applied in any special collections situation,” since only a relative handful of his patrons use the twentieth-century manuscripts. A third respondent reported that the use of his institution’s literary collections, including its only comprehensive author collection—Ezra Pound—“approaches zero.” A fourth curator described four author collections and concluded, “There is virtually no use made of these collections.”

The responses and written comments indicate that present scholarship is not taking full advantage of the literary collections being formed in institutions in the United States and Canada and this situation is troubling curators who have to face the space, processing, preservation, and budgetary implications of the collections they have formed and are forming. If comprehensive collections are viewed as useful for only one kind of study, a person might well ask how many comprehensive collections can be formed on the chance that the author will be the subject of bibliographical and textual study in the years to come. An optimistic curator noted that a “writer’s contribution is always in a state of reevaluation, and in many happy cases rediscovery...so collecting in the end be-
comes a kind of multibranched affair,” in which there is great unpredictability about the kind of study a patron will want to pursue:

Robert Barr is today’s example—collected by us as a Canadian writer, and for his association with Stephen Crane. He also appears to have written some Ruritanian stuff which brought us a reader for him today.

William Jackson made a similar point in his discussion of the ballad and folklore collections built by George Lyman Kittredge at Harvard:

These collections are not now being used in the same way and for the same purposes that Kittredge used them. Studies in ballad literature in the Child-Kittredge-Rollins tradition are not at the moment in fashion. However, these collections are in constant use by the students of the American folk ballad and those studying ballad music. It is, perhaps, not proper for a mere librarian to say whether there is a better use or not, but I refer to it in order to call your attention to the fact that a collection of rare books, even one severely restricted in scope, may be used for many different purposes by many different students.

CONCLUSION

Literature collections built only of first and “significant” editions lack the research potential which a high percentage of respondents indicated was the motivation behind their institutional collecting. The responses to the questionnaire suggest that many institutions have taken at best only a few steps beyond that level of collecting. At various points in this survey I have tried to indicate the substantial effort that must go into forming a collection at a comprehensive level and to suggest that institutional sharing of responsibilities is appropriate here, as it is in the collecting of twentieth-century literary manuscripts. Because so few of the collections currently being formed are comprehensive, as I defined such a collection, based on the Newberry Library Melville Collection model, it is not clear whether the pessimistic view of many curators about the use of printed collections of twentieth-century literature is justified. What can be said is that any focused collection can be put to a variety of uses and an author collection, in addition to its uses for literary study, has particular potential for the study of printing history, binding history, dust jacket design, distribution and marketing strategies, and other studies grouped together under the term l’histoire du livre. When we think how relatively recently the various approaches to the study of books grouped under that heading emerged, we can only be optimistic that in the long term intelligently formed author collections will be the subject of continuously evolving kinds of scholarly scrutiny.
QUESTIONNAIRE:
COLLECTING TWENTIETH-CENTURY LITERATURE

A. Collecting Twentieth-Century Manuscripts

1. Do you collect the manuscripts of twentieth-century authors? Circle the most usual case:
   a. Never (2).
   b. Only if gifts (25).
   c. When we can afford them (21).
   d. When they are significant (28).
   e. Nearly always when available (8).

2. If your institution has a substantial manuscript holding of a 20th century author, would you collect the printed work? Circle the most usual case:
   a. Unlikely (0).
   b. Sometimes (5).
   c. Most of the time (25).
   d. Always (56).

3. What kinds of literary manuscripts do you seek?
   a. Correspondence (80).
   b. Drafts (78).
   c. Corrected typescripts (73).
   d. Revised and corrected galleys (69).
   e. Other __________________________

4. What is your opinion of the following statements:
   a. The main value of literary manuscripts lies in what they reveal of the creative process
      [75] Agree [ ] Disagree
   b. Literary manuscripts may be studied to advantage for what they reveal of the creative process even though the author’s printed output will never be the subject of academic research
      [60] Agree [ ] Disagree
   c. Literary manuscripts are chiefly museum pieces for display
   d. The importance of literary manuscripts is vastly overrated
      [18] Agree [ ] Disagree

B. Selection criteria for an author’s printed work

1. In your collecting of 20th Century literature, which of the following are principal motivating factors? Circle all that apply:
a. Presence of an author's papers or prospect of obtaining substantial manuscript holdings (70)
b. Current availability (42)
c. Feeling that some kinds of material must be picked up now, if they are to be had at all (47)
d. Price relative to other materials (22)
e. Opportunities for imaginative collecting (32)
f. Conviction of research potential (76)
g. Faculty interest at your institution (60)
h. Other ____________________________

2. How do you decide which modern authors to collect?
   a. Faculty advice (57)
   b. Input from special collections staff (50)
   c. Own sense of the writer's importance (67)
   d. Established reputation of author (53)
   e. Authors of importance who are currently neglected (33)
   f. Other ____________________________

3. If the decision is based on a sense of the writer's importance, how would you say this sense is generally arrived at?

4. Do you believe it is your responsibility to anticipate the future and collect authors before their reputations are established?
   [62] Yes [ ] No

5. What is your opinion of the following statements? Feel free to add comments:
   a. Collecting 20th C. literature is pretty cut and dried
   b. There is plenty of room for imaginative approaches to collecting
      [77] Agree [ ] Disagree
   c. If your answer is "agree" can you cite examples?
   d. I stop collecting an author when he/she becomes expensive
      [ 7] Agree [ ] Disagree
   e. Institutions should not collect single letters or manuscripts of 20th C. writers if the bulk of these materials is in another institution
   f. If your answer is "depends on circumstances" can you cite examples?

6. How important is condition?
   a. Libraries should only collect 20th C. literature that is in fine condition
   b. Condition is not relevant if there is something unique about the particular item in hand
      [79] Agree [ ] Disagree
c. Libraries should, within reason, pay the premium required to get materials in fine condition  

7. How important are dust jackets in twentieth-century literary collections?  
   a. Book jackets are not important?  
   b. One should acquire a book lacking dust jacket only in the most exceptional circumstances  
   c. The condition of a book jacket is not very important so long as it is present  
   d. The book jacket must be in fine condition as well as the book  

8. How important are association copies?  
   a. Inappropriate for a library to purchase  
   b. Important enough to duplicate a book already collected if the association is of interest  
   c. One should acquire an association copy if it has  
      1) Biographical interest  
      2) Bibliographical interest  
      3) Textual interest  
      4) Other ________________  

C. Comprehensive collecting  

1. Does your institution collect authors comprehensively (i.e., well beyond first editions)?  

2. What is your principal motivation in forming comprehensive collections?  

3. If your institution does not collect authors comprehensively, what are the reasons? Circle those that apply:  
   a. Lack of space (11)  
   b. Lack of time (13)  
   c. Lack of conviction that it is important to do (11)  
   d. Feel that some other institution is already doing it (18)  
   e. Other priorities (25)
f. Insufficient funding (30)
g. Other __________________________

4. If your institution does collect authors comprehensively, what do you include? Circle all those that apply:
   a. First editions (73)
   b. Later editions known to have been revised by the author (72)
   c. All editions of any kind published during an author's lifetime (62)
   d. All editions published to the present (40)
   e. Foreign language editions (58)
   f. Pre-publication galleys—corrected (58)
   g. Pre-publication galleys—uncorrected (46)
      1) Folio sheets, folded or unfolded, uncut, printed on rectos only (17)
      2) Sheets cut to page size, banded (17)
      3) Sheets, folio or quarto size, secured by a ring or rings (18)
      4) Sheets, perfect bound (18)
      5) Sheets, spiral bound (18)
      6) Sheets, glued or sewn into printed, full wrap-around wrappers (18)
      7) Advance reading (or promotional) copy (17)
   h. Review copies (37)
   i. Broadsides (57)
   j. Magazine appearances (52)
   k. Anthology appearances (52)
   l. Translations (55)
   m. Offprints (35)
   n. Variants (states of bindings, dust jackets, particular text pages, etc.) (55)
   o. Paperback editions: (52)
      1) All paperback printings (19)
      2) Paperback originals (37)
      3) First printings in paperback (34)
      4) Special editions in paperback (e.g., movie tie-ins, series, cover art) (31)

5. How many 20th C. authors does your institution collect comprehensively? Circle the most appropriate:
   a. 5 or fewer (30)
   b. 10 or fewer (25)
   c. 25 or fewer (4)
   d. More than 50 (17)

6. If you collect 5 or fewer 20th C. authors comprehensively, please name them:

7. Would your institution be deterred from collecting an author comprehen-
sively if another institution is known to be forming or has formed such a collection?


8. For the authors in which your institution specializes do you collect the following? Circle all that apply:
   a. First editions from the country of origin only (i.e., British editions but not American editions of British authors)
   b. Non-first editions?
   c. Duplicate copies?
   d. An edition in all its limited states?
   e. If a given edition were published in the following forms, what would you acquire? Circle all that apply:
      1) One of 1,000 in wrappers (68)
      2) One of 300 copies in cloth (56)
      3) One of 100 copies, numbered and signed (57)
      4) One of 50 copies, numbered and signed, on special paper (44)
      5) One of 26 lettered copies, not for sale (43)
   f. If you acquire the above selectively, what criteria apply? Circle the most important:
      1) Cost (47)
      2) Age of publication (i.e., would be more likely to do this for a book published in the 1930s than in the 1980s) (10)
      3) Importance of the particular work (42)

9. What procedures do you use to acquire books on publication? Circle the most frequently used:
   a. Standing orders with jobbers (6)
   b. Standing orders with antiquarian book dealers (9)
   c. Individual titles as identified (48)

D. Collection use

1. How would you characterize the use of your 20th C. writers? Circle the usual case:
   a. A relatively small number of authors is used (23)
   b. Heavy use of authors that are the subjects of dissertations (15)
   c. Use is uneven but across the spectrum of the collection (40)
   d. Use of printed works is highly correlated with manuscript holdings (11)
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NOTES

3. Fredson Bowers, "Bibliography Revisited," in Essays in Bibliography, Text, and Editing (Charlottesville, Va.: Published for the Bibliographical Society of the University of Virginia by the University Press of Virginia, [1975]), 169.
18. Donald Gallup, A Curator's Responsibilities, Rutgers University GSLS Occasional Pa-

19. Fredson Bowers, "Bibliography and Modern Librarianship," in Essays in Bibliography, Text, and Editing (Charlottesville, Va.: Published for the Bibliographical Society of the University of Virginia by the University Press of Virginia, [1975]), 85.


47. Stuart Wright, *Peter Taylor: A Descriptive Bibliography 1934–87* (Charlottesville, Va.: Published for the Bibliographical Society of the University of Virginia by the University Press of Virginia, [1988]), 64.


50. Wright, *Peter Taylor*, 64.


66. Jackson, “The Importance of Rare Books and Manuscripts in a University Library,” 229.