Evaluating the Archives: 20th Century Australian Literature

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Twentieth-century Australian literary culture is strongly represented in Australia's archival collecting institutions. Several institutions, including the National Library of Australia, the State Library of NSW, the University of New South Wales at the Australian Defence Force Academy Library, and the University of Queensland Library have actively collected the papers of leading and developing writers, literary publishers, journals and other organisations, and these endeavours are supported by smaller holdings at a range of state, public and educational libraries. While holdings in all these areas and in special interest areas such as drama and children's literature are healthy and capable of supporting a wide range of research, some concerns about future collecting in this area remain.

Introduction

How well have we documented 20th century *literary* Australia? In a nutshell, Australian literature is very well covered indeed – especially, perhaps, in relation to some other areas of cultural life. The nation's major institutions – the National Library of Australia and the State Libraries of Victoria and New South Wales – have made strong and effective efforts to represent the works of older and more established writers, and the seismic shifts in the literary landscapes, while the National, the SLNSW and a number of university libraries have contributed strongly to collecting archives relating to the latter half of

the century. In this paper, I investigate holdings of major writers, organisations and facets of the literary landscape, and conclude with some concerns about whether this robust situation will be continued into the next century.

Australian literature: What should be collected?

At the risk of being accused of relativism, to ask how well Australian archives represent Australian literature is to ask questions about what Australian literature *is*. The notion of an Australian literary 'canon' has been hotly contested over the last quarter of a century, as international debates about the limits of canonicity, and the tendency for canons to represent entrenched interests, have been taken up enthusiastically in both academe and the wider cultural milieu. Interrogations of canonicity have raised important questions about 'high' versus 'popular' literature, gender and cultural biases, aesthetic versus political concerns, notions of 'Australianness', and literature as cultural and economic production. These questions are of great importance to collection developers – and also pose serious problems when scarce resources must be allocated.

'Great writers'

Notwithstanding these questions, it remains important to 'test' the strength of Australia's archival holdings against a putative list of 'top' writers. How might such a list be arrived at or justified? A number of quite disparate and contradictory criteria could be employed in this task: book sales; appearance on school and university syllabuses; literary awards; and consultations with senior figures in the field. However, given that the prime purpose for collecting literary archives is to collect evidence for research, for the purposes of this study I have checked the archival holdings of those writers who, according to the AustLit Gateway[1] have been the subject of more than 300 scholarly articles and reviews.

There are, of course, caveats which must be borne in mind here. While AustLit records citations for more than 350 000 literary and critical works, its coverage is much stronger for the second half of the century than the first. Every critic would dispute the validity of including some of the writers included in the following list – most, I am sure, would want to add writers, rather than remove them. The writers on this list appear in order of the numbers of critical works and articles written about them.[2] It is worth noting here that Patrick White continues to be Australia's literary 'giant': more than 1600 works about White or his works are recorded, while just over 900 works are recorded about his nearest 'competitor', Henry Lawson.

1. Patrick White
2. Henry Lawson
3. Tom Keneally
4. David Williamson
5. Les Murray
6. David Malouf
7. Judith Wright
8. Peter Carey
9. Elizabeth Jolley
10. Dorothy Hewett
11. Christina Stead
12. AD Hope
13. James McAuley
14. Rodney Hall
15. Douglas Stewart
16. Kenneth Slessor
17. Katharine Susannah Prichard
18. Tom Shapcott
19. Henry Handel Richardson
20. Randolph Stow
21. Frank Moorhouse
22. Helen Garner
23. Helen Demidenko
24. Geoffrey Dutton
25. Thea Astley
26. Morris West
27. Christopher Brennan
28. Louis Nowra
29. Joseph Furphy
30. AB 'Banjo' Paterson
31. Hal Porter
32. Norman Lindsay
33. Vance Palmer
34. Peter Porter
35. Martin Boyd
36. Tim Winton

At least half of these thirty-six writers are represented with very strong collections – mostly held by the National Library of Australia, but with several important collections held at the University of Queensland. Another quarter is represented by reasonably strong collections, but with some concerns about depth of coverage. Peter Porter, for example, has published more than 900 poems, but drafts of only around 250 of these are so far recorded in his collection at the NLA. Morris West's collection of only 1.2 linear metres at the National Library seems surprisingly small (although it will presumably be augmented as a result of West's death in 2000). And researchers must hope that archives relating to Rodney Hall's and David Malouf's later works are safe with the authors and will eventually become available to the public.

Ironically, several of the remaining quarter of these writers – whose archives are either not apparent at all, very small, or very dispersed – are in the top group of most-written-about writers. Among these are Henry Lawson and Christopher Brennan, whose rather chaotic lives undoubtedly contributed to a scattering of their archival material. Henry Lawson is still sufficiently revered that a 'find' of Lawson manuscripts in the Lothian archive at the State Library of Victoria was reported in the national press in 1982.[3] The papers of James McAuley are still held by his family, and lengthy negotiations to secure their placement in a public library continue. Helen Garner allowed some of her manuscripts to be used for Kate Grenville and Sue Woolfe's 1993

compilation of author interviews and literary manuscript facsimiles[4] (the only Australian monograph devoted specifically to examining the drafting processes of a range of Australian authors), but her papers have not yet been placed with any collecting institutions.

As might be expected, less than half of these writers are still living, and of those, most have had very long careers.[5] Augmenting this list by adding in a group of writers whose works have either been high 'scorers' in terms of works published about them in Australia's major literary journals,[6] or who have won the Miles Franklin Award[7] or other major awards reveals that coverage of these authors is also pleasingly strong. Leading Australian writers such as Rosemary Dobson, John Shaw Neilson, Dorothy Green, Christopher Koch, Vincent Buckley, George Johnston, Glenda Adams, Alex Miller, David Foster, Hal Porter, David Campbell, Mary Gilmore, Robert Adamson, John Tranter, Roger McDonald, Eleanor Dark, Bob Brissenden, Geoffrey Dutton, Alan Gould, and Frank Hardy are all well-represented at one or more of the major collecting institutions.

The special case of Patrick White

Patrick White is, of course, a special case. White deliberately excluded evidence of his writing processes from posterity, often citing a contempt for 'academic scrabbling'. The only extant 'manuscript' of White novels – that of the pseudonymous 'autobiography', *Memoirs of Many in One* (1996) has been the subject of considerable controversy. This manuscript has a curious story: White gave it to the anti-apartheid organisation, Canon Collins Education Trust for Southern Africa in 1988, as a contribution to a fund-raising exercise. The National Library of Australia and the State Library of New South Wales jointly purchased the manuscript in 1991. The Australian newspaper press published a number of pieces on the acquisition during mid-1991, generally applauding the purchase of what was described as an 'icon of Australian culture.'[8] By May 1992, however, the tide of media interest had turned, with several articles appearing after Paul Brunton, Curator of Manuscripts at the Mitchell Library, argued that the manuscript was a hoax.[9] There is not, and is unlikely to be, any consensus on whether White did, in fact, 'manufacture' the manuscript. Brunton's comments on the style and manner of textual emendation carry considerable weight, and certainly passages from the novel support his view that the manuscript was an elaborate joke:

> Some way back Hilda had started to fossick for the papers. The house was stuffed with them. Under the eaves in what has been referred to as the priest hole. Crammed into drawers, so full they refused at first to open. Under the mattress. In old mouldy suitcases.

...

> It was only later that I got to know the real Hilda. Perhaps Alex had known all the time and bequeathed Hilda, along with the papers recording our actual and created lives as a kick in the pants, or monstrous joke.[10]

But biographer David Marr asserts that White would not have played such a 'joke' on an organisation whose aims he supported passionately, and that White was not as antipathetical to academic enquiry as he sometimes appeared.[11] In any case, the almost total absence of White 'manuscripts' per se, of a 'body' of papers collected and presented by White himself, belies the wealth of archival evidence White left to posterity. A natural correspondent, White wrote thousands of letters during his long life, and despite his requests (sometimes obeyed, often refused) to his correspondents to destroy his letters, David Marr was able to find and publish a huge body of letters in his monumental *Patrick White: Letters,*[12] and to use these and extensive interviewing to construct what is widely believed to be a masterpiece of biography, *Patrick White: A Life.*[13] Many of these letters are held in Australian collections: some collections of other Australian writers contain hundreds of White letters, some only a few. In any case, Marr's own research for both the *Letters* and the *Biography* have now been placed in the National Library of Australia, ensuring that a rich store of evidence is more readily accessible than had been the case before his work.

Other parts of Australian literary culture

'Great' authors, of course, are but one part of Australia's literary history, and certainly hundreds of writers of lesser reputations are represented in Australian archives. Other sectors of the literary industry are very important to scholarship, especially a literary scholarship which is broadening out from the heavily textual focus of the Leavisite years into the areas of cultural history, reading history, publishing history etc. For scholars seeking evidence on how literature interacts with the society from which it springs, other archival sources are of enormous value. These include papers relating to the large number of authors who never quite make it to the 'Great Authors' list but nevertheless can be the mainstay of publishing and literary life, publishing and bookselling archives, the archives of influential journals, archives relating to festivals, awards and the 'business' of literature, and archives of organisations which support writers, literary production, or indeed the study of Australian literature.

Writers and literary organisations, of course, exist in a complex cultural context, and their interactions with other parts of Australian cultural and institutional life are sometimes documented in surprising sources. The

National Archives, for instance, holds a significant set of ASIO records relating to (mostly left-wing) writers and organisations. Many of Australia's literary luminaries, including Katharine Susannah Prichard, Frank Hardy, Mary Gilmore, Judith Wright and Vance Palmer, were of sufficient interest to ASIO to merit substantial files.[14] The National Archives also holds war service files (providing intriguing documentation of the service lives of writers including Banjo Paterson), papers relating to the Literature Board, and a substantial copyright collection of Australian literary works published before the 1968 Copyright Act.

Publishers

University presses have played a large role in publishing serious Australian literature. In most cases, their archival ethos is strong, and a rich store of information is available for researchers. The University of Queensland Press, for instance, has placed more than 300 archival boxes of papers relating to production, correspondence, meetings, its interaction with the Literature Board, and its many series – Paperback Poets, Australian Authors, Studies in Australian Literature, Black Australian Writers etc – with the UQ Fryer Library. Correspondence and papers relating to key 'UQP authors' is also included, and in many cases this has driven the development of an individual collecting relationship between the Fryer and leading authors including Peter Carey, Olga Masters, David Malouf, Tom Shapcott and Oodgeroo Noonuccal.[15] The Melbourne University Press archives, while still held by the Press rather than being placed with the University of Melbourne Library, is similarly large, rich, well-maintained – and available to researchers.

Other major publishers are similarly well-represented in archives: the Lothian archive at the State Library of Victoria; the papers of McPhee Gribble at the University of Melbourne; the enormous and well-mined Angus & Robertson collection at the State Library of New South Wales; and the Currency Press archive (of immense importance as the only major publisher of Australian drama) at the National Library are all indicators of this strength. However, in the current publishing climate which is seeing formerly Australian publishers become part of international publishing conglomerates (and with early indications that the new incarnations of these publishers may not place a high value on archiving their records[16]), a reduction in the commitment of those publishers to less saleable works (notably poetry), and a concomitant rise in small presses such as Black Pepper, Five Islands and Brandl and Schlesinger, it will be important for archival institutions to develop good relationships with a wider range of publishing houses in order to maintain a good base of archival records representing the intersection of Australian literature and Australian publishing.

Journal archives

During the 20th century, Australian literature was substantially shaped by a number of long-standing and respected journals. Archives from the journals of the first half of the twentieth century are perhaps less well-represented than those of the second half. Nevertheless, important collections are held. The *Jindyworobak Review* and the various Jindyworobak anthologies are well-represented in the Rex Ingamells collection at the State Library of Victoria. Editors of these journals, including Stephen Murray-Smith (*Overland*), Clem Christesen (*Meanjin*), Laurie Hergenhan (*Australian Literary Studies*), Elizabeth Webby (*Southerly*), and their various associate, poetry and reviews editors and many other editors of journals both large and small, 'mainstream' and 'alternative', have had their hands at the tiller of Australian creative literature, especially in relation to poetry, and the critical literature, including reviews and major criticisms. Australia is fortunate that the archives of all the major journals and many of the minor ones of the latter half of the century are held by major institutions. These archives are likely to be an important source of evidence about the construction of Australian literature in the 20th century for future researchers, especially the political and aesthetic shifts which are an inevitable part of the organic development of a literature.

Festivals and awards

Literary festivals and awards have played an increasingly important role in the 'public face' of Australian literature in the second half of the century. Some festivals, such as the Adelaide Festival, National Word Festival and Tasmanian Salamanca Festival are well-represented with archival holdings, at the State Library of South Australia, National Library and UNSW at ADFA Library respectively. Other major festivals, however, such as the Melbourne Writers Festival and the Sydney Writers Week are not currently represented in public library holdings, and it is to be hoped that their organisers have made arrangements for archiving what would presumably be very significant collections indeed. Similarly, archives relating to Australia's literary awards are not particularly in evidence, but this probably relates more to their nature – tied to the funders of the awards – than to anything else. Harry Heseltine's recent *That Most Glittering Prize*[17] is a masterful investigation of the available archives on the Miles Franklin Prize: these papers, however, are not held in a public library, but are still held by the trustee, Permanent.

Controversies

Archives relating to literary controversies are a particularly rich source of cultural evidence. Papers relating to the Ern Malley hoax are held in the Max Harris collection at the University of Adelaide and the Harold Stewart collection

at the National Library of Australia, and it must be assumed that more will become available when McAuley's papers are accessible. The Fryer Library at the University of Queensland holds a substantial collection from Helen Darville/Demidenko, and the very extensive debates on the Demidenko affair conducted through various email listservs etc. are themselves archived. Helen Garner's papers relating to the controversial *The First Stone* are not yet publicly available, but papers relating to its origin, the Ormond College case, and the part played in that case by Jenna Mead are held by UNSW at ADFA, as are the manuscripts of *Jack Rivers and Me*, which won the Vogel Prize for an unpublished manuscript in 1980, more than fifteen years before the 'author', Paul Radley, admitted that his uncle Jack Radley actually wrote the book.[18]

Writers' organisations

Most states have well-developed writers' associations and centres, and these are an important source of archives relating to writers' collective interests and actions. While holdings in relation to some states, such as NSW, are stronger than others, such as Queensland, overall this sector is in a healthy state. Archives relating to 'peak bodies' such as the Australian Society of Authors and the Association for the Study of Australian Literature are also held by major institutions.

Special cases: drama and children's literature

Twentieth-century Australian drama – especially the drama of the last thirty years of the century – is particularly well covered. This includes collections from individual playwrights – including David Williamson, Louis Nowra, Nick Enright, John Romeril, Alma De Groen, Dorothy Hewett and Robyn Archer – and collections relating to the larger business of theatre. UNSW at ADFA, for instance, holds vast collections relating to the Australian Performing Group – including the rich collection of papers, theatre plans and photographs from Peter Corrigan – and to the 'business' of lives in theatre as evidenced by the archive of the Almost Managing Company. The National Library's Australian National Playwrights' Conference archive is a substantial resource in this area.

The National Archives holds many playscripts in its Copyright Collection, and the Dennis Wolanski Library of the Performinig Arts, now held by the State Library of New South Wales, holds playscripts, theses, handbills and scrapbooks relating to Australian drama, including often overlooked vaudeville and amateur theatre sectors.

Children's literature is the special province of the Lu Rees Archive at the University of Canberra (supported by the Children's Book Council), and to a

lesser extent, organisations such as the Dromkeen Children's Literature Collection in Victoria. These organisations have worked hard to ensure that archives relating to children's literature – including manuscripts, illustrations, book jackets, and correspondence – are collected and made available to researchers. It is certainly the case that these collections are stronger in relation to activity in the latter years of the century than for earlier work: this, however, corresponds with the timing of a true flowering of this sector of the Australian literary landscape. 'Giants' such as Colin Thiele, Nadia Wheatley, Ruth Park, Paul Jennings, and Mem Fox are all well-represented: some notable omissions are John Marsden and Victor Kelleher. Publishing archives are also reasonably strong in this area.

Acquiring literary manuscripts

Any consideration of how well Australian libraries have collected our 20th century literary archives must consider how those archives are acquired in the first place.

In 1966, Deputy Mitchell Librarian, Marjorie Hancock hoped that:

> the 'patriotic feelings' of Australian writers will induce them to hand over for local preservation their MSS, notebooks, letters and other papers, instead of tossing them out with the rubbish or posting them off to overseas libraries and collectors.[19]

Certainly, Australian writers in the earlier part of the century had often taken this rather genteel approach. Money is, of course, only one part of the 'exchange' which occurs when personal or organisational literary archives pass into the custody of a library. In a recent essay on the collecting of archives published in the centenary history of the National Library, John Thompson[209] notes that among earlier generations of Australian writers and public figures, there was:

> an extreme reluctance to countenance suggestions that what seem to be purely personal papers might have any larger literary or historical significance.[21]

Thompson traces the long and painstaking negotiations required to acquire the papers of Vance and Nettie Palmer, now among the NLA's most used collections. While there was eventually a negotiated purchase (with the valuation undertaken by Sir John Ferguson himself), Thompson's careful mining of the NLA's administrative files reveals that the negotiations surrounding what he calls 'the turmoil of the private sensibility against the public claims of posterity' (p. 111), together with issues of trust, mutual regard, and the need for collecting institutions to demonstrate their *gravitas*, were at least as important as financial considerations in the business of collecting during the middle half of the century.[22]

By contrast, in 1996, the *Australian* described manuscripts (rather erroneously in the author's opinion) as a 'cash cow for writers, most of whom live below the poverty line'.[23] The truth of collecting is rather more complex than this suggests. It is now very rare for writers – particularly those of any stature – to donate their papers outright to collecting institutions. At UNSW at ADFA, for instance, more than one third of the total collection has been acquired through the Cultural Gifts Program (formerly the Taxation Incentives for the Arts Scheme), and more than three-quarters of all acquisitions over the last five years have been under the auspices of the program.

The program has its critics: curators, valuers and committee members are probably entitled to the view that collections which either have little intrinsic value, or which are presented by authors in a condition which necessitates considerable and expensive sorting and arrangement by archivists, are more often acquired under the program than would be the case via purchase.

Unlike comparable schemes in the United States and the United Kingdom, such tax-deductible donations can be made while the writer is still living, rather than from literary estates after the death of the author. It is less effective, of course, for financially struggling writers for whom a tax deduction is meaningless. As I often remind student visitors to the Special Collections at ADFA, however, while literary earnings of writers are generally low, more writers combine their literary careers with other careers (teaching, medicine, law, academia, architecture), than write in the proverbial lonely writer's garret. And a recent change to the program, allowing donors to apportion the relevant tax deduction over a number of financial years also serves to make this option more attractive to writers. Unfortunately, even this change cannot make the scheme effective for small organisations, journals or writers' associations which do not pay income tax and therefore cannot benefit from such a deduction.

But the program has also been of enormous benefit to donors, institutions and the literary community alike. Purchase dollars are scarce and becoming scarcer in our major institutions. In the absence of large-scale philanthropy, the Cultural Gifts Program has been remarkably effective at ensuring that a broad range of personal literary archives – from 'high' to 'lower' – are acquired for posterity. Some of the nation's most important archives have been acquired via this method. Playwright David Williamson's papers, for instance, were acquired by the National Library using the program, with Williamson himself noting that the scheme was 'a halfway house between grabbing the money and making a free gift'.[24]

The program also reflects, and has certainly contributed to, a fundamental change in manuscripts acquisitions. As John Thompson, one of Australia's

most experienced manuscripts curators, noted in a newspaper interview on the acquisition of the Williamson papers:

> The old tradition for libraries of this kind was that you acquired materials when writers were dead or near the end of their life. That's something we've seen a big shift in. The phenomenon reflects a dynamic interest in writers. Writers are now being promoted, they're literary property.[25]

Other factors have, of course, influenced the move from a 'donation for the national good at the end of a career' to a 'sale or donation for the personal good whilst still building a reputation' paradigm. The advent of UNSW at ADFA to the manuscripts market under the aegis of Lynn Hard, ADFA Librarian from 1985 to 1997 is often mentioned – not always flatteringly – as a significant factor in this change. Certainly the ADFA Library had generous funds at its disposal in its first heady decade[26] and Hard, influenced by his long career in major US and Canadian academic libraries, took a very proactive approach to the market, 'punting' on younger and developing writers, targeting key sections of the literary market such as the world of Melbourne drama in the 1970s, and sometimes paying purchase prices well ahead of what was still a fledgling market.

With the benefit of hindsight, however, Hard's campaign can be seen as an accelerator, rather than a catalyst. Australian libraries were conducting lengthy negotiations with and paying considerable sums to well-established writers long before the advent of ADFA into the market. With a tightening of the purchase market, a dearth of qualified Cultural Gifts Program valuers, and a greatly increased recognition of the long-term costs of storing, preserving and providing intellectual access to collections, it is perhaps inevitable that collecting of Australian literary archives will revert to some extent to its earlier practice of concerning primarily established writers with extensive collections. If, in the meantime, the move to collecting from living and developing writers has educated writers about the potential research and financial value of their collections, this can only be to the good.

Australian manuscripts in overseas libraries

Concerns about 'poaching' of Australian literary archives by wealthy American institutions have been expressed by a number of commentators since the 1960s.[27] Nan Albinskis' *Australian Literary Manuscripts in North American Libraries*[28] runs to 262 pages. However, most North American holdings of archives relating to Australian writers and writing are small and fragmentary, most often consisting of correspondence sent by Australian writers to their overseas counterparts. The striking exception to this picture is that of Sumner Locke Elliot, whose entire and substantial collection is held by Boston

University. However, while Australia may still want to 'claim' Locke Elliot, he spent most of his life in the US, was an American citizen, and conducted most of his successful career in that country. Thus far, therefore, these concerns have not been borne out. There is no reason to suppose that more than a trickle of Australian literature archives have made their way into UK or European institutions, nor that this will become a problem in the future.

Finding Australian literary manuscripts

Australian literary researchers benefit from the developing resource discovery services which have significantly changed the task of locating manuscript collections, at least, and manuscript items to a lesser extent. The *Register of Australian Archives and Manuscripts* (RAAM)[29] maintained by the National Library provides access to nearly 40 000 archival collections – a substantial proportion of these relate to literary resources. More recently, a consortium of collecting institutions collaborated in the establishment of a database of EAD (Encoded Archival Description) guides to Australian literary manuscript collections (*Guide to Australian Literary Manuscripts*),[30] which allows users to search across the contents of a large number of individual finding aids. It is likely that these two services will be more closely integrated in the future. Together, these services allow users to maximise the likelihood of finding papers related to authors, publishers and the other elements of Australian literary production outlined above.

Gaps and lacks

Deficiencies in collections relating to key individual authors, publishers and other literary institutions are outlined above. It is important, however, to consider whether some *groups* are less well-represented than they should be. Some years ago, I analysed our collection statistics and realised that only 25% of our literary collections were from female writers: other collections are likely to have a similar gender profile. This is certainly a lack which should be addressed, but one which needs to be seen in the context of an ascending hierarchy of 'value'. Almost half of all journal publications are by female writers, and once journal publication has been achieved, there is only a slight advantage to male writers in terms of achieving monograph publication. However, female writers are less likely to enjoy 'collected works' or other retrospective publication of their works, and are substantially less likely to be the subject of criticism (women form only 25% of the list of most-written-about authors presented above), especially in its higher forms: literary biographies, full-length criticisms and postgraduate theses.[31] In other words, the higher up the hierarchy 'tree' – with initial journal publication at the

bottom and full-length critical study at the top – the less likely women are to be represented. Archives should be seen as at the upper echelons of this hierarchy: while institutions should remain vigilant about their tendency to collect less from women writers, they cannot be totally responsible for redressing what is a wider issue about representation.

Indigenous writers are not currently well-represented in archives, but this situation is changing with an increased awareness of the importance of collecting in this area. The papers of major writers such as Oodgeroo Noonuccal and Herb Wharton are held, but there are some significant gaps: Mudrooroo, for example, is currently represented with only a very small archive at the National Library. The AIATSIS archival collection policy does not mention the literary or theatre arts,[32] despite these areas being a key component of Indigenous culture. Younger Indigenous writers are beginning to approach archives about their collections: unfortunately, this is occurring at the very time that there is a reduction in the ability of Australian institutions to collect from developing writers.

Similarly, writers identifying with particular cultural heritages are perhaps not as well-represented as they should be, although some leading writers, including Jasmine Gooneratne, Gillian Bouras, Angelika Fremd-Wiese and Manfred Jurgensen, and journals such as *Outrider* are collected.

Conclusion and some concerns

Australia's collecting institutions have done a remarkably good job at collecting from Australia's leading 20th century writers and, understandably, a less comprehensive but still eminently representative job at collecting from the broader sweep of literary production and activity. The nation owes much to the foresight, patience and commitment of a range of collectors and curators in a large number of institutions. But what of the future? Will the same be said at the end of the 21st century? Collecting archives of any kind is essentially about collecting for the 'great unborn', and while judgement and foresight can be employed to collect what is most important, many factors impinge on this. The factors most likely to affect future collecting of Australian literary manuscripts are the financial willingness and capacity for a range of institutions to buy, preserve and catalogue a wide range of collections, and the challenges which the electronic age poses to all document preservation.

The first problem should not be underestimated. Australia currently has only a small number of institutions actively collecting in this area. Two of those institutions – UNSW at ADFA and the University of Queensland – have severely curtailed their collecting and access programs due to the financial

constraints all university libraries find themselves faced with, and to the redirection of resources required to accommodate the ever increasing costs of library materials, especially electronic databases. The University of Queensland, for instance, holds the majority of Peter Carey's papers, but were presumably unable to meet the asking price for some of Carey's early papers, which have recently been sold to other collectors, reportedly for a figure in excess of $70 000. The State Library of Victoria continues to concentrate on acquiring historical documents, and while other state libraries and university libraries have small, mostly historical literary collections, none can be said to have expressed strong commitment to developing their collections in this area. Nor can it be supposed that either singly or collectively, these smaller players have the capacity to jointly or collaboratively ensure the future of collecting literary archives.

The mainstays of literary archives – the National Library of Australia and the State Library of NSW – are still actively collecting, but at slower rates than was the case in the middle of last century, and increasingly and understandably concentrate on the 'high end' of literary production. The Cultural Gifts Program is a very welcome aid to manuscripts acquisitions but provides no assistance with the most expensive elements of collections: preservation and intellectual control. Despite recent government rhetoric, both the percentage and the outright size of philanthropic dollars going to support the arts in Australia is falling, and unlike the situation in the US (where libraries such as the Beinecke enjoy enormous private endowments) or the UK (which has a smaller philanthropic tradition but where archives nevertheless enjoy funding opportunities from large companies such as Unilever), there are no major contributions to Australian literary archive collections from individual philanthropists or the corporate sector.

The second is not unique to this segment of the archival record – but it does pose additional problems. In literary archival work, the textual history of documents is of prime importance. Already, curators find themselves faced with literary collections which are sadly lacking in the wealth of 'evidence' which allows textual scholars to track the history of the novel or play or poem, to trace the different choices the writer made. Much of the drafting 'messiness' which gladdens the hearts of both curators and scholars has disappeared with the advent of the personal computer. Similarly, while the advent of email may revive the fortunes of correspondence, it too poses particular problems of location and preservation. These problems are not insoluble – but like all problems concerned with electronic preservation, and indeed, all problems concerned with access to archives – they will be difficult and expensive to tackle, and will require collaborative work from various sectors.

ENDNOTES

1 At the time of writing, the AustLit Gateway at *www.austlit.edu.au* contains more than 370 000 citations to works by more than 60 000 Australian authors.

2 1660 works about Patrick White to 307 works about Tim Winton as at August 2001.

3 Janet Hawley, 'How the manuscripts were found', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 27/11/82, p. 31.

4 Kate Grenville and Sue Woolfe, *Making Stories: How Ten Australian Novels Were Written*, Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, NSW, 1993.

5 Tim Winton, born in 1960, and with his first work published only twenty years ago, is the exception. It should be noted that more than half of the works about Winton are reviews, rather than full-length articles.

6 *Meanjin, Southerly, Westerly, Quadrant, Overland* and *Australian Literary Studies.*

7 List of winners derived from the AustLit Gateway and reported in HP Heseltine, *That Most Glittering Prize*, UNSW Press, Sydney, 2001.

8 See, for example, William Fraser, 'Libraries buy White papers', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20/7/91, p. 7 and 'Rare glance over White's shoulder', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 25/9/91, p. 10.

9 See, for example, John Stapleton, 'The Patrick White hoax: A novel theory', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17/5/94, p. 4 and a lengthy expose by William Fraser, 'Patrick White's Last Laugh', *Good Weekend*, 16/5/92, pp. 18–24.

10 Patrick White, writing as Alex Xenophon Demirjian Gray, *Memoirs of Many in One*, Jonathan Cape, London, 1986, pp. 179 and 180.

11 David Marr, quoted in William Fraser, 'Patrick White's Last Laugh', *Good Weekend*, 16/5/92, p. 24.

12 David Marr (ed.), *Patrick White: Letters*, Random House, Milsons Point, NSW, 1994.

13 David Marr, *Patrick White: A Life*, Vintage, Milsons Point, NSW, 1992.

14 The National Archives has produced a Fact Sheet on the ASIO files, available at *www.naa.gov.au/publications/fact_sheets/fs69.html.*

15 Appendix II, Fryer Library UQP Archive, in Craig Munro (ed.), *UQP: The Writer's Press, 1948–1998*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, Qld, 1998.

16 Private communication with a senior fiction editor and commissioner with a major publishing house.

17 HP Heseltine, *That Most Glittering Prize*, UNSW Press, Sydney, 2001.

18 ADFA's administrative file relating to Paul and Jack Radley reveals that Librarian Lynn Hard, who purchased the papers, suspected the fraud from the beginning. Paul Radley returned the prize in 1996.

19 Quoted in Neil Jillett, 'Filing away the papers', *The Age*, 14/5/1966, p. 22.

20 John Thompson was Manuscripts Librarian at the State Library of Victoria 1971–79, before working at the National Library, in manuscripts and other Australian collections roles, 1979–99. I am indebted to him for many valuable discussions on manuscripts collecting and valuations in recent years, and for his freely offered and knowledgeable insights contributing to this article.

21 John Thompson, '"Let time and chance decide": Deliberation and fate in the collecting of personal papers', in Peter Cochrane (ed.), *Remarkable Occurrences: The National Library of Australia's First 100 Years, 1901–2001*, National Library of Australia, Canberra, 2001, p. 108.

22 This investigation, like others in the centenary history, also demonstrates the importance of collection administrative files – the archive of the collecting *relationship* - as crucial 'evidence' in their own right.

23 Sian Powell, 'A fortune for your thoughts', *The Weekend Australian*, 15–16/6/1996, p. 6.

24 Quoted in Pamela Payne, 'The Gift, by David Williamson', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11/10/89, p. 3.

25 Quoted in Robert Hefner, 'William papers a coup for National Library', *Canberra Times*, 5/11/89, p. 24.

26 Not, alas, now the case.

27 See, for example, Neil Jillett, 'Filing away the papers', *The Age*, 14/5/1966, p. 22, in which Jillett raises this issue, discusses Australian collecting, and asserts 'It is unlikely that more than three Australian novelists and perhaps a few poets could make more than $100 from the sale of their MSS here or overseas'.

28 Nan Albinski, *Australian Literary Manuscripts in North American Libraries*, Australian Scholarly Editions Centre and the National Library of Australia, Canberra, 1997.

29 Available at *www.nla.gov.au/raam/*.

30 Available at *findaid.library.uwa.edu.au*.

31 Data on gender and publishing patterns in *Southerly*, *Westerly*, *Meanjin*, *Overland* and *Quadrant* was derived from statistical analysis of AustLit data and presented in a paper to the Association for the Study of Australian Literature in July 2001: data on gender and the subject of postgraduate Australian literature theses was the subject of a paper on 'Gender and the Canon' I presented to the ANU Literature and Art Program in 1991.

32 Available at *www.aiatsis.gov.au/archprod/avarch/Arts_and_Artefacts_Policy.pdf*.