

Before Blogs There Were Zines: Berman, Danky, and the Political Case for Zine Collecting in North American Academic Libraries

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Abstract:

Recent attention has been paid to collecting born-digital, nontraditional, self-published forms, such as blogs and tweets. However, what of print-based, nontraditional, self-published materials? Before there were blogs, there were zines. Zines, much like blogs and tweets, are a challenging and difficult material to collect, but upon consideration of the concepts of Sandy Berman and James Danky, the onus is on academic libraries to have zine collections. An examination of ARL and CARL websites indicates that zine collecting is not a widespread practice in academic libraries; this article argues that, even in our contemporary digital, social-networked era, it should be.

Zines, in their content, form, and organization, constitute an alternative ideal of how human relations, creation, and consumption could be organized. Critically, their strength lies not in what they say they will do, but in what they actually are. They are politics by example. – Stephen Duncombe

Being a librarian is in general way too comfortable a job. And it should be much less so. – James Danky

1. Introduction

The term ‘zine’ refers to publications of varying physical form and quality, often consisting merely of several photocopied pages stapled together by the author and containing anything from comics and art to poetry and political discussion. Due to this variance of form, one can say that zines are defined best by their intention. Zines are “the variegated voices of a subterranean world staking out its identity through the cracks of capitalism and in the shadows of the mass media” (Duncombe, 1997, p. 2). Expressed in less purple prose, zines, as they are often produced quickly and cheaply, are generally made without thought as to their purchase but rather for the sake of the author’s (often raw) expression. Stated succinctly, zines are “published for love rather than profit” (Gissony and Freedman, 2006, p. 26). As such, they serve as an alternative medium in

comparison to works produced through the machinations of multi-national corporations—such works being the vast majority of print media currently available. They are “unmediated by mainstream publishing practices” (Skalkos, 2012, p. 14) and hence “are one of the most direct links to the viewpoints and artistic endeavours, and therefore the understandings, of individual members of a society” (Stoddart and Kiser, 2004, p. 191). Zines represent individual expressions unconcerned with adhering to viewpoints that encourage sales, or even readership for that matter. Zine writers often expose the most personal details of their lives and disseminate printed copies of those details to whoever may care to pick up a copy.

Additionally, and equally important, zines are a primary method of communication for members of particular political movements and, as such, can serve as documentation of those movements at their earliest stages. This is in part because zines are able to sidestep the problem of censorship of alternative and controversial viewpoints and opinions, a problem inherent in the publishing industry (Herrada, 1995, p. 80). There is a strong connection between zines and politically charged music including punk, and zines often carry the political critique of punk into written form: “[p]unk fanzines are sites for oppositional practice in that they provide a forum for cultural communication as well as for political action, which should be included in any broader political discourse” (Triggs, 2006, p. 73).

An exemplary of how zine networks can go a long way toward unifying a political group is found in considering the Riot Grrl movement of the early- to mid-1990s. Riot Grrl was an informal political appellation/movement, associated primarily with women participating within the punk subculture. It can be defined by its woman-centred

approach to that music scene and rejection of the repetition of structures of female inequality within it. Zines were an integral part of the spread of the ideas of Riot Grrl; the movement's writing was "a tactic for critical or alternative subject formation outside of both the male punk scene and the mainstream feminist movement" (Comstock, 2001, p. 386; see also Eby, 2012, and Freedman, 2009). Thus, in order to conduct an academic analysis of this particular political movement, access to primary sources, namely the zines of well-known figures within that movement, would be necessary. To see the contemporary parallel of this situation in terms of the necessity of collecting, one merely has to think of Occupy Wall Street and the large number of zines produced by participants in that movement, one that spread to major cities across North America in late 2011.¹ Surely the mass mobilization in New York and other cities will warrant careful historical analysis, which, if it is to be thorough, will necessitate reading, amongst other documents, the zines published during and as a part of that mobilization.

The main impetus for this paper, tying the above discussion together, is expressed by Chris Dodge (1995):

[a]cademic and research librarians must foresee that this era's zines will one day be important historical sources. Future researchers will rely on materials like zines for evidence of cultural dissent and innovation in the late twentieth century. (p. 1)

Zines, as much as monographs, journals, and the like, are and will be important to study, both for their form as examples of contemporary print culture and their content as one of

¹ A sample of some of the zines, as well as other printed ephemera, produced during Occupy Wall Street can be found here: <http://theclustermag.com/2012/06/rags-we-love-ows-edition/>. Interestingly, the inspiration for Occupy Wall Street originated in a print publication, *Adbusters* (although the call to 'occupy' first appeared in a blog post published 13 July 2011). While certainly not a zine in the sense discussed in this paper, *Adbusters* is a venue in which many of the current progressive political tendencies, e.g., environmentalism, anti-consumerism, and general dissatisfaction with government responses to potential global economic disaster, find expression. See Asher (2011) for further discussion.

the means by which contemporary political and cultural movements may communicate and disseminate ideas. Dodge (2008) also provides a concrete example of the importance of zines for academic research:

Those skeptical of the research value of *Math Club Porno* and *Dumpstered Ivan* should take note of Daniel Brouwer's 'Counterpublicity and Corporeality in HIV/AIDS Zines' in *Critical Studies in Media Communication* (2005), which examines *Diseased Pariah News* and *Infected Faggot [sic] Perspectives*. (p. 671)

As the possibly offensive titles just mentioned show, zines can be construed as inherently antagonistic if held against the more cordial standards of academic discourse. This does not mean that there is not important information warranting academic attention within them, however.² As stated in Duffy (2005), “[g]ood librarians risk offending some patrons” (p. 40). Zine collecting is one of the possible ways to take this risk.

In this paper, we will argue the case for the collection of zines in academic libraries. As the research will show, this argument has already been decided in zines' favor by librarians working in several Association of Research Libraries (ARL) and Canadian Association of Research Libraries (CARL) throughout North America, the geographic scope of this research. By examining the websites of these libraries, we hope to give a picture, however vague its outlines, of the prevalence and method of zine collecting in North American academic research libraries. However, the examination of these websites, discussed in this paper, indicates that work remains to be done to further encourage the collection of zines. The argument developed by Dodge (1995) for the collection of zines by academic libraries deserves to be reassessed. The hope is this paper will convince some of the more adventurous librarians developing collections in subjects

² For further examples of academic work based on zine collections, see West (2006), p. 267.

such as art history, women's studies, English, and numerous other disciplines to take up the cause.

This is a particularly timely consideration in light of recent interest and initiatives for collecting and preserving self-published, born-digital ephemera. Consider blogs. Further, consider the appreciable size of the blog landscape. Technorati (<http://technorati.com/blogs/directory/>), a blog search service, currently indexes over 1.3 billion blogs. Advocates have called for the stewardship of blogs due to their potentially valuable addition to the social, historical, cultural and scholarly records (e.g., Dempsey, 2007; Entlich, 2004; O'Sullivan; 2005; Paulus, 2006). One example of action in response to such advocacy is the Library of Congress' 2007 establishment of their Legal Blawg Archive (<http://www.loc.gov/law/find/web-archive/legal-blawgs.php>). More recently, the Library of Congress also took action toward archiving tweets, per their announcement in April 2010 of their acquisition of all publicly available tweets since Twitter's inception (Raymond, 2010). As of early 2013, the Library of Congress has digitally archived about 170 billion tweets and is currently working how to make this collection publicly available to end-users (Gross, 2013).

The volume of zines produced, it can be safely assumed, is in no way equivalent to the volume of tweets or blogs. However, in consideration of format, while blogs and tweets, as natively digital, are distinct from zines, as represented via paper-based media, the different forms do share similar characteristics and hence challenges. Both, as alternative, non-traditional communications typically self-published, may be best characterized as ephemeral in nature. How these unconventional formats fit within academic libraries' respective mission statements and collection parameters will inform

an array of acquisition decisions. However, in regard to access and long-term stewardship, digital and paper-based formats present their own unique challenges. While a complete treatment of such issues is beyond the scope of this paper, it is telling to note that blogs, tweets and the like, due to problems inherent in their hardware and software dependencies, including issues of obsolescence and proprietary code, may be more challenging to make useable into the long-term future than their paper-counterparts, including zines. However, zines and the like run the risk of being lost simply because the current digital era has seen an emphasis on research, development and collection of digital ephemera with less attention being paid to more stable, paper-based formats. Dodge's (1995) argument for zine collecting is just as compelling now, nearly 20 years after it was first advanced, because a consequence of the ubiquity of digital ephemera today may be a lack of attention for stewarding such paper-based ephemera.

The strongest theoretical case for collecting zines can be made through recourse to collection development principles derived from the work of Sandy Berman and James Danky. Both figures, controversial in the library world, can safely be placed in the politically 'progressive' camp. Their respective bodies of work, often converging, can be seen at least in some aspects as the attempt to politicize collection development, and with it to politicize librarianship as a whole, be it conducted in a public, private, or special library context. The question of zines, approached from both Berman and Danky's respective work as well as that of some of those librarians who followed their lead, opens to a more general consideration of the concept of the library in relation to political life, specifically the role that a library has in both handing down the tradition of the population it serves and enlarging the intellectual horizon of that same population.

As was mentioned above, this paper also includes a summary of an examination of ARL and CARL library websites and catalogues in order to see which libraries currently hold zines in their collections and the form in which those materials are organized and made accessible. In addition to this, the results of research conducted on WorldCat, undertaken to discover exactly where some of the more well-known zine publications are currently collected, is included. This has been accomplished in order to show how limited the collecting has been of even some of the most popular zines.

With these considerations in mind, we will finally discuss some of the special considerations of zine collecting derived from research already published by those directly involved in bringing zines to their libraries. It is hoped, then, that this paper successfully interweaves both theoretical and practical considerations of zine collecting, with the purpose to renew the call, expressed often in the 1990s (Chepesiuk, 1997; Dodge, 1995; Herrada, 1995) and again in the 2000s (Dodge, 2008; Freedman, 2006) for academic libraries to collect zines.

2. Summary of Berman and Danky's respective approaches to librarianship

Sandy Berman and James Danky both worked in public information professional settings. Berman worked as a cataloguer at the Hennepin County Library in Minnesota (Dodge and DeSirey, 1995, p. 122), while Danky was the Newspapers and Periodicals Librarian at the Wisconsin Historical Society (Wiegand, 2008, p. 569). Berman is well known in cataloguing circles as a perpetual gadfly to the Library of Congress, as from 1969 he has been sending numerous suggestions for revisions to subject headings in light of what he viewed as the political bias inherent in those headings (Dodge and DeSirey,

1995, p. 11). For example, as of this writing it is not possible to search Library of Congress Subject Headings for information concerning 'aboriginal,' 'indigenous,' or 'First Nations' information. Instead, one must use 'Indians of North America,' a politically fraught term that has been all but abandoned in contemporary Canadian English usage. Not only this; in addition to his explicitly political critiques, Berman has approached cataloguing from a user's perspective, claiming that subject headings must be modified in accordance with the actual use of terms, thereby increasing access. For example, if someone were to look up the subject heading for 'light bulb,' searching for a history of Edison's invention, they would not find it. Instead, in such a search it would be necessary to use ELECTRIC LIGHTING, INCANDESCENT, which of course is not a term used in everyday speech.³ For Berman, these and other examples led him to challenge the Library of Congress directly, so much so that the head LC cataloguer refused further communication with him (Dodge and DeSirey, 1995, p. 15-16).

For the purposes of this paper, Berman's example indicates the importance of a political framework in which to view one's activities as an information professional. This framework takes the form of a critical eye toward the structures, procedures, and goals that shape the information profession. First, these structures, procedures, and goals take place within a particular political environment, defined by state and cultural beliefs and values; second, they are expressed in language, itself inherently laden with political and ethical evaluations. Berman thus encourages librarians, including those in charge of collection development, to think again about the alleged liberal neutrality of the work that

³ With contemporary OPACs, using the query 'light bulb' in a keyword search would certainly retrieve many results. However, the LC classification still stands to this day. This brings up the interesting issue of the relation between natural language and the controlled vocabulary used in libraries, but a discussion of this is beyond the scope of this paper.

they do, and to consider the possibility that continuing to follow the traditions of librarianship with an uncritical eye can lead to perpetuating the inequalities contained within those traditions.

It is to this notion of ‘liberal neutrality,’ as it is critiqued in the work of James Danky, that we now turn. Danky has contributed to numerous academic studies on the role of print culture for oppressed groups in the United States, not to mention his editorial work, the biennial *Alternative Library Literature* series, published from 1982 to 2000, which are worthy of study in their own right.⁴ Danky is also responsible for the zine collection at his former place of employment, the Wisconsin Historical Society (Dodge, 2008, p. 668-669). However, it is important to note that one may interpret Danky to believe that collection development more generally, including zine collecting, is a politically charged activity. Dilevko (2008) notes that “Danky’s belief in the value of alternative periodicals...may be interpreted as a rejection of increasingly mechanical and generic ways to develop library collections” (p. 678). Danky was fighting against the corporatization of the library, encouraging those in charge of collection development to reject procedures like standing orders developed by companies concerned with profit, and instead to consider carefully the political nature of the materials being purchased by the library. Danky believed that “collecting contemporary alternative and small-press publications was key to providing an in-depth picture of current social, cultural, and political issues and debates” (Dilevko, 2008, p. 679). Even further, though,

⁴ It is in the first edition of this anthology that, notes Dodge (2008), “Danky urged librarians to consider ‘self-publication and the whole spectrum of alternative materials’” (p. 669). Dodge goes on to acknowledge that this statement was published by Danky in 1982, long before anything like a ‘zine library’ existed conceptually.

[i]f only mainstream publications were collected, Danky felt, substantive neutrality was impossible...[and c]ollecting alternative materials--those on the margins of accepted contemporary discourse--was therefore a necessary part of librarianship's commitment to substantive neutrality. (p. 680)

This notion of substantive neutrality may be explained through the conception that any and all voices expressing themselves, even if they do not necessarily adhere to the standards of 'academic discourse,' deserve to be collected. This is a step beyond mere 'liberal neutrality' in an academic context, i.e., merely permitting those voices to be heard and considered. As Koh (2008) states, "the unfiltered voices found in zines are probably the most accurate reflection of societal diversity" (p. 48), including voices which are outside of the mainstream. It is for Danky the duty of the librarian in charge of collection development to collect things that could be construed as politically divisive or controversial. This duty is for the sake not only of being politically progressive, but also for the purposes of following ethical standards for academic librarianship. In choosing to collect one thing over another, there is an implicit bias on the part of the collector which can lead to unintentional suppression of dissenting opinion, and which therefore must be examined critically. Collecting is implicitly and explicitly political. As Dilevko puts it, "[i]ntellectual freedom was...a collection development issue" (681). It still is.

Danky considers zines to be exemplars of political writing. As Dodge (2008) states, "Danky sees them with 'other print forms that served the same purposes'—radical handbills of the 1880s, poetry pamphlets of the 1950s, and underground newspapers of the 1960s" (p. 669). As such, zines contribute to the 'substantive neutrality' of a collection via their expression of alternative, marginalized viewpoints.

Berman and Danky's pioneering work, what could be called 'helping to make librarianship politically aware,' inspired many others to connect their library work with their (progressive) politics. This is evident when one considers certain zine librarians and their expressed relationship to Berman and Danky.⁵ However, the relationship between Berman and Danky's ideas and the actual practical implementation of those ideas, in terms of zine library establishment, is unclear. In this research, the only zine library documentation found that mentioned either Berman or Danky was that of the Barnard College Zine Library (<http://zines.barnard.edu/blog>). For the sake of limiting the scope of this paper to something wieldy, only ARL and CARL library websites were examined, and there, mentions of Berman and Danky did not occur. Regardless, it is to the examination of ARL and CARL websites that this paper now turns.

3. Examination of ARL and CARL library websites and OPACs

Under the heading of 'Diversity,' the ARL mission statement states that they "encourage and support [their] members as they strive to reflect society's diversity in their staffing, collections, leadership, and programs" (Association of Research Libraries, 2009). As such, it is an expressed goal of ARL that the collections of member libraries reflect 'society's diversity.' Similarly, CARL libraries are exhorted

... to facilitate access to all expressions of knowledge, opinion, intellectual activity and creativity from all periods of history to the current era including those which

⁵ Dodge, arguing for zine collecting in academic libraries (1995), worked with Berman, and responds directly to Danky's collection development concepts (2008). Jenna Freedman unified her interest in zine collection with her professional position via starting a zine library at Barnard College, inspired by both Berman and Danky (Freedman, 2003; Coleman, 2011).

some may consider unconventional, unpopular, unorthodox, or unacceptable.

(Canadian Association of Research Libraries, 2012)

CARL member libraries thus should strive to include materials that express diverse, even controversial, opinions. For both ARL and CARL libraries, one way of upholding these recommendations is to begin or continue to collect zines, paragon examples of diverse voices. The question thus becomes: which ARL and CARL libraries are already doing so?

3.1 Methodology

From the listings of all ARL (125 libraries) and CARL (31 libraries) members published at the respective organizations' websites, a list was derived excluding non-university affiliated members (e.g., New York Public Library, etc.). This resulted in a revised sample of 132 unique academic libraries, after removing duplicates as several hold membership in both ARL and CARL.⁶ From this sample, each library's respective Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) was searched, using both catalogue and general search query functions. For the catalogue search, the 'format' and 'keyword' fields were used, and the keywords 'zine,' 'zines,' 'fanzine,' 'fanzines,' and the keyword phrases 'zine collection' and 'fanzine collection' were entered. Due to the nature of the materials sought, the keyword phrase 'little magazine' as well as its plural permutation was not used.⁷ A search was also conducted on the library's website, from the search function

⁶ In the samples discussed below, CARL membership is considered to supersede ARL membership for the sake of clarifying geographical difference, if any. In total, 8 CARL members also hold ARL membership.

⁷ Little magazines are defined as "magazines that have as their purpose the publication of art, literature, or social theory by comparatively little-known writers" ("Little Magazine," 2013); this would seem to indicate that there is not much difference between zines and little magazines. Again, however, it is best to define zines by their intention, i.e., to stand outside of and apart from 'mass media' (Duncombe, 2007, p. 2). By contrast, little magazines, as their name implies, attempt to follow the form of the larger magazines from which they are distinguished. Little magazines "differ from the large commercial periodicals and major scholarly reviews by their emphasis on experimentation in writing, their perilous non-profit operation, and

featured on the respective library's homepage; the same terms and keywords as above were used. The findings were then recorded and tabulated, to be found below.

3.2 Findings

Concerning ARL libraries, out of 105 libraries included in the sample, 29 (23%) were found to contain significant zine collections. The vast majority, however, included them as part of other collections, for example, the Poetry Collection at SUNY Buffalo and the Human Sexuality Collection at Cornell. Several libraries had more prominent and extensive zine collections: Duke University, University of Chicago, UC Santa Barbara, University of Kansas, New York University (especially notable for having zines in *ten* separate special collections), and University of Wisconsin. Zines were generally searchable in the libraries' respective OPAC by title or format. Some libraries, e.g., Temple University, included zine collection study guides on their website. Several websites (e.g., University of Alabama and UC Davis) mentioned zine collection development plans, but as of the time when this research was conducted, it appeared that the collections, if existing at all, had not yet been made accessible online.

Concerning CARL libraries, 4 out of a total of 27 (14%) had significant zine collections discoverable online. Two of these 5 libraries, Brock University and Queen's University, permitted online access to records of zine collections held by their respectively affiliated Ontario Public Interest Research Groups (OPIRGs),⁸ i.e., to collections held spatially apart from the library itself. Additionally, while not associated

their comparatively small audience of intellectuals" ("Little Magazine," 2013). As such, one can say that they do not embody the spirit of zine culture, most clearly expressed in the principles of do-it-yourself, or DIY, culture.

⁸ A Public Interest Research Group is an organization, generally run by students in the cases of Ontario and Quebec, which attempts to provide information for and encourage grassroots activism for a variety of causes.

with the libraries per se, both McGill University and Concordia University's respective Quebec Public Interest Research Groups (QPIRGs) possess substantial zine collections, searchable online via a federated OPAC (<http://www.alternativelibraries.org/>). McGill and Concordia Libraries do not permit access to the collections of their institution's respective QPIRGs via their own OPACs, however.⁹ See Appendix 1 for a list of the 33 ARL and CARL-affiliated academic libraries containing significant zine collections discoverable from their respective OPACs.

Next, a search for six specific titles identified as well-known and having longevity,¹⁰ was conducted using WorldCat. Selected were three titles still being produced, as well as three titles that were popular in the 1990s, arguably the most prolific moment of zine production in North America. From this search, all titles were collected and housed across multiple academic libraries, as shown in Table 1 below. For additional detail, see Appendix 2 for the list of academic libraries found to collect these specific zine titles.

Table 1. Retrospective and Current Zines in WorldCat

Zine Title	No. of library locations in WorldCat	No. of academic libraries
Ben is Dead (retrospective)	12	7
HeartattaCk (retrospective)	6	5
Punk Planet (retrospective)	23	10
Cometbus (current)	11	5
Maximum Rockandroll (current)	17	11
Razorcake (current)	13	9

¹⁰ It is a possibility that other QPIRG and OPIRG collections are represented in their institution's respective OPACs, but these cases fall outside of the scope of the specific CARL libraries under examination in this paper.

¹¹ Selection of specific titles was based entirely on the lead author's personal opinion as having been an active member of the punk/DIY community in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, for much of the late 1990s and early 2000s.

It should be noted that, due to the ephemeral nature of zines and the difficulty in cataloguing them in accordance with metadata schemas searchable via WorldCat, it may be the case that more libraries collect these titles than a WorldCat search would imply. If it is indeed the case that ARL and CARL libraries are collecting zines that are not appearing via WorldCat, it falls to these libraries' respective librarians to investigate this situation in order to avoid researchers looking for zines being stymied from the start. It should also be noted that the above titles are among the most well-known, popular, and widely available in the zine world, and as such arguably could fall outside the purview of zines as the paper above identified them, i.e., they could be considered more as periodicals. However, given the express intent of the creators/editors of the above titles to consider them as alternatives to traditional publication venues and hence part of the zine world, their selection is justified. And, even given the relative stature of the above titles, the comparative lack of academic libraries' collecting them, according to WorldCat at least, indicates that this paper's argument for zine collection in academic libraries needs to be repeated and, it is hoped, heeded.

4. Special considerations for zines in academic libraries

There are several considerations specific to zine collection development in an academic library context. The first is to define the scope of the zine collection, and how to place it within the overall collecting scope of the library. As Chepesiuk (1997) discusses, most zine libraries focus on a particular geographic location. Danky's Wisconsin Historical Society zine collection is an example of this approach. However, other libraries choose to collect from as wide a geographic range as possible. For

example, Bowling Green State University's Popular Culture Library collects zines from anywhere, and this "has earned [the Library] an international reputation as a resource for interdisciplinary cultural research" (Chepesiuk, 1997, p. 70).

The second consideration faced is where the zine collection should be housed within the academic library. As Freedman (2011) notes, zines tend to be housed in special collections in academic libraries. This fact brings with it a host of issues, including preservation (zines tend to be poorly constructed from a durability perspective) and access (as part of special collections, zines will often be housed outside of the circulating stacks).

Once libraries establish the why and where of collecting zines, then the issues are how to collect. Several concerns arise. First, authorial permission is necessary for acquisition and, subsequent, providing access. Many zines are the product of youthful emotion, especially considering the connection between zine culture and punk. As such, zines may be something that their authors 'outgrow' and do not wish to have accessible to the public. Kathleen Hanna, writer of the zine *Bikini Kill* and an important figure in the history of Riot Grrl, states in an interview that she considers some of her adolescent work to be "embarrassing" (LaCoss, 2011). As a consequence, she appreciates the decreased access that her materials, housed in a special collection at New York University and unavailable digitally, end up having. This notion of regret is apparent in bloggers' publication activities as well. From Hank's (2011) research on scholar bloggers, a leading cause for deleting blog posts was "post regret;" that is, the bloggers did not want the posts out there anymore. However, this tendency to limit access to zines may contradict the concept of collection developing from Berman and Danky's ideas discussed above.

As Dodge (2008) states, “[t]he vaunted freedom to read means nothing if the things we want or need to read are unavailable” (p. 670).

Often, zine writers may not wish to be associated with academic settings at all. Zines can be “[d]esigned in some ways to completely defy all the rules imposed by libraries, catalogers, or organizational systems of any kind” (Sellie, 2006, p. 36), e.g., through intentionally committing acts of plagiarism “as a political act” (Triggs, 2006, p. 77). Thus, the zine librarian may encounter writers wishing their work to be taken out of the collection, even given the merit of including that work in the collection (Chepesiuk, 1997, p. 70). As zines are not published by corporations holding copyright, their authors have the final say as to how their publications are treated.¹¹ However, it can be the case that zine authors, initially suspicious of being pursued by an academic library, come around not only to accept but even herald inclusion in that library’s collection (Herrada, 1995, p. 82-84).¹²

Due to their publication format, zines are difficult to preserve. In terms of creation, zines may contain content published elsewhere, such as images or text taken from other resources. Just as it is easy to import or embed content originating elsewhere on a blog, through the convenience of hyperlinks and cut-and-paste features, it is likewise easy to do so for paper-based forms such as zines. And permission for doing so is not necessarily sought or documented by zine authors. This was found to be the case in a survey of scholar bloggers. For those using content originating elsewhere, almost a

¹¹ For a literature review and further discussion of these issues, see Gardner (2009).

¹² For discussions of the more practical issues faced by zine librarians, such as cataloguing, see Bartel (2004), Stoddart and Kiser (2004), Koh (2008), and Williams and Prasertwaitaya (2012), as well as work by Barnard Zine Library librarian Jenna Freedman (2006), Gissony and Freedman (2006), and an interview with Freedman in West (2006). These issues are not discussed in further detail both for the paper to remain at a more conceptual level, and because they have been covered thoroughly, and continue to be adeptly elaborated, by Freedman and others.

quarter never check to see if there are any rights or use statements associated with imported content (Hank, 2011).

In terms of format, zines tend to be photocopies, usually on highly acidic paper, which means special steps must be taken to prevent them from deteriorating over time, particularly if allowed to circulate. What is then to be done with them? Placement in special collections does provide some protections not afforded in a library's circulating collections. One solution, adopted by the Barnard Zine Library, is to acquire two copies of each zine, one for the archive and one for general circulation. However, having a second copy to preserve does not stop the natural deterioration of photocopy paper. One possible solution to ensure continued access is through digitization, but this raises again the issue of authorial permission.. The question of acquiring permission from authors, many of whom are rightfully suspicious of academic procedures and the 'gate-keeper' image of academic libraries, is one each zine librarian will face. Such permission should be sought at the time of acquisition, whether or not plans for digitization are actually planned or are only a future possibility.

5. Concluding Remarks

As the above discussion has remained relatively abstract, an avenue for future investigation based on and suggested by the above research is examining the *concrete* ties between the work of Berman and Danky and the impetus for zine collecting in academic libraries. Doing so could strengthen the link between Berman and Danky's suggestions for the politicization of the librarian profession, and one potential application of this politicization, zine collecting, thereby encouraging librarians to take up the zine cause in

an even more profound way. However, this would entail a research project with a much greater scope than the one undertaken in this paper.

Regardless, the above investigation leads to the conclusion zines are not yet widely discoverable online in ARL and CARL library catalogues. This in turn likely means that zines are in fact not often collected in those libraries. Due to zines' ephemeral nature and their often brazenly anti-authoritative stance, which includes flaunting conventional publishing standards, it is assumed that many academic librarians in charge of collection development would likely pass over acquiring zines for their library. This is especially the case in institutions where the curriculum does not require collecting such materials. However, as those who grew up in the 1990s have ended up becoming the researchers of today, it is likely that, at least in humanities and social sciences, focus on era-specific zines as primary source materials will continue to grow. As Wiegand (in Danky and Wiegand, 1998) notes, recently there has been "a much broader shift in the focus of humanities research 'from culture as text to culture as agency and practice'" (p. 1), and zines are prime materials for this type of research.

In addition, as mentioned above, contemporary North American political movements often express themselves in the zine format, which means that future academic work on these movements will require access to these zines as primary source materials. Finally, and most importantly, zines are expressions of the plurality of voices present in any particular North American context, as, in the words of Danky, zines are "the latest self-defined print genre that's produced" (Bradford and Fristoe, 2007). According to the principles of ARL and CARL, zines should at least be considered as important to collect. And, from the consideration of ARL and CARL library websites and

OPACs, it appears that zines are not commonly found in those libraries. Academic librarians, especially special collections librarians who have the means to house and offer access to zines in accordance with the special considerations outlined above, are encouraged to take a look (or a second look) at zine collecting.

Zines are instantiations of personal expressive agency, in a form extracted as much as possible from mainstream publishing processes and their implicit political motives. It has been almost two decades since Chris Dodge argued for academic libraries to consider collecting zines. Now that we are in the second decade of the twenty-first century, it is time to sound the call to collect zines once again.

Appendix 1: ARL and CARL libraries containing zine collections discoverable from their respective OPACs

ARL:

University of Alabama
 UC Berkeley
 UC Davis
 UC Los Angeles
 UC Riverside
 UC Santa Barbara
 University of Chicago
 Cornell University
 University of Delaware
 Duke University
 Harvard University
 University of Iowa
 University of Kansas
 University of Kentucky
 University of Miami
 Michigan State
 University
 New York University
 North Carolina State
 University
 Ohio State University
 SUNY Albany
 SUNY Buffalo
 SUNY Stony Brook
 Syracuse University
 Temple University
 Texas A&M University
 Washington State
 University
 University of Wisconsin
 Yale University

CARL:

Brock University (OPIRG)
 Concordia University (QPIRG)
 McGill University (QPIRG)
 McMaster University
 Queen's University (OPIRG)
 York University

Appendix 2: Academic libraries who collect selected zines, by title

Ben is Dead: Columbia University, New York University, University of Michigan, Michigan State University Libraries, Bowling Green State University, Harry Ransom Humanities Research Centre (University of Texas at Austin), Getty Research Institute, University of Southern California.

HeartattaCk: Cornell University, New York University, University of Michigan, Michigan State University Libraries, Bowling Green State University, University of Oregon.

Punk Planet: Amherst College, Yale University, University of Michigan, Michigan State University Libraries, Bowling Green State University, Emerson College, University of Connecticut, New York University, Pratt Institute Libraries, University of Chicago Library.

Cometbus: Brooklyn College, Michigan State University Libraries, Bowling Green State University, University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee, University of Southern California.

Maximum Rockandroll: Cornell University Library, University of Connecticut, SUNY Buffalo, New York University, Pratt Institute Libraries, University of Michigan, Michigan State University Libraries, Bowling Green State University, University of Florida, University of California Berkeley, University of Amsterdam Central Library.

Razorcake: SUNY Buffalo, New York University, Michigan State University Libraries, Bowling Green State University, University of Texas Libraries, University of Oregon Libraries, San Diego State University Libraries, University of California Los Angeles.

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