

Northwestern University Library Collection Development Policy Statement

German Literature by Jeffrey Garrett April 13, 1999

I. Brief overview of the collection

A. History of the collection

The inception of Northwestern University's collections in German literature—and indeed across the scholarly spectrum in German language—took place with the purchase, in 1870, of the personal library of Johannes Schulze (1786–1869), a leading minister in the Prussian educational bureaucracy, among whose friends had been Goethe, von Humboldt, Schopenhauer, and other luminaries of the age. This acquisition of approximately 20,000 carefully selected and often expensively bound volumes was made possible through the attentiveness of university librarian Daniel Bonbright, who heard of the collection while in Europe, and a generous donation of land to the university by Luther L. Greenleaf specifically for the purpose. For this reason the Schulze library is called the "Greenleaf Library," with an appropriate bookplate identifying the books. There is a 5-volume catalog of the Greenleaf Library in Special Collections (*Bibliotheca Schulziana, sive, Catalogus librorum qui studiis inservierunt Joannis Schulze*), although from the beginning the books themselves have been completely integrated into Northwestern's collections. For more information on the Greenleaf Library, see Rolf H. Erickson's history of the early years of Northwestern's library, specifically his chapter "The Library in Old College."

B. Broad subject areas emphasized or de-emphasized

In keeping with the curricular emphasis in Northwestern's Department of German at least until recent decades, Northwestern collected heavily in canonical German writers for over 100 years. One of the last major purchases in support of this focus was in the early 70s the German Baroque Literature collection on microfiche, which reproduces the significant 17th and 18th century holdings of the Harold Jantz Collection at Yale. But Northwestern also owns the principal editions of most major German writers from the Enlightenment to the present, such as Herder's works in 60 volumes (Cotta, 1827–30), all commonly cited editions of Goethe and other German *Klassiker*, and 19th and early 20th century writers such as Heine, Fontane, Rilke, and Hofmannsthal. A special focus of the collection, begun under Jens Nyholm in the 1950s, has been the collection of German expressionism and, more generally, the documentation of German intellectual movements of the early 20th century. This was also the era of major German contributions to philosophy and literary criticism—Heidegger, Husserl, Benjamin, et al.—and these currents, too, have been foci of the collection over the last forty-five years.

Following the German Department program review in 1992 and its transformation into a program of literature and critical theory, the emphasis of collecting activity shifted to post-1750 German authors, and above all to the intersections of literature with philosophy, social theory, fine arts, and history. To these areas, Jewish-German culture and the history of German literature in exile were added in 1997.

The German literature collection is not a Germanic collection: We do not collect literature or criticism from the Netherlands or Scandinavia, other than at a very basic level in English translation.

C. Collection locations

Virtually all German literature holdings are in Main Library, with a few principal primary and secondary works (mainly in English/English-translation) duplicated in the Core Collection. Other than highly specialized works, all reference literature resides in the Reference Library.

II. Purpose or objectives

The German literature collections support not only the curricular and research needs and interests of German Department students and faculty, but those of the larger Northwestern community. Additionally, in some few areas, e.g. German expressionism, the library attempts to serve as a resource for our consortial partners as well.

III. Library unit or title of the selector responsible for this collection

Bibliographer, Western Languages and Literatures

IV. Scope of the subject coverage

A. Language

We collect primary (literary) texts first in German and, if available, in English translation. Criticism and theory is collected in German and English, with important critical works also acquired in other languages, especially French and Italian. As mentioned above, Scandinavian literature is collected only in English translation.

B. Geographical scope

Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and the German-language literatures of southeastern and eastern Europe.

C. Chronological scope

Emphasis on German literature after 1750, although a collection that can support undergraduate needs in medieval, Renaissance, and Baroque is maintained.

D. Publication dates collected

No restrictions.

E. Formats and genres

1. Inclusions

All genres and formats are collected. We are increasingly acquiring CD-ROMs, many of which circulate (e.g. works by or about Kafka, Mann, various compendia, et al.), others of which are available for use in the Media Development Lab (the Musil-Nachlass) or the Reference Library's Electronic Resource Center.

We have a number of important e-text collections available via the World Wide Web, especially Goethes Werke but also electronic versions of a number of German philosophers, e.g. Wittgenstein and Nietzsche

2. Exclusions

None.

II. Acquisitions procedures affecting collection policies

A. Standing Orders

Northwestern Library maintains numerous standing orders for series of relevance to students of German literature. Some of these are to supplements published by journals we subscribe to, e.g. the Monatshefte Occasional Volumes, while others are for independent irregular publications, e.g. the Archiv für die Geschichte des Buchwesens.

B. Approval plans and blanket orders

We have had, for five years, a belletristic approval plan. In 1999, this plan was expanded to include a broader coverage of critical literature.

C. Gifts and exchanges

Owing to the large immigrant population in the Chicago area, the Library receives many German books as gifts. These are mostly early 20th century editions, of which very few can be integrated into the collection.

III. Duplication with other NU library units

Other than the intended duplication at Core Library, none.

IV. Expensive purchases

Yes.

V. *Interdisciplinary collections*

Due to the inherent interdisciplinarity of aesthetic study and the emphasis of Northwestern's German Department on interdisciplinary studies, Special Collections, the Music Library, and the Art Library have holdings that are of considerable usefulness to students of German literature.

VI. *Purchases with endowed funds*

Yes.

VII. *Cooperation with other libraries*

A. *Other resources, including local, regional or national libraries*

We rely heavily on the Scandinavian collections of the University of Chicago.

B. *Consortia*

In addition to the Committee on Institutional Cooperation, the German Resources Project is becoming increasingly relevant as a resource-sharing consortium of research institutions with sizeable German collections. It is possible to obtain materials, from articles to monographs, from cooperating German partner institutions

VIII. *Policies for purchasing journal article reprints or electronic files on demand*

Not as part of our collection work.

IX. *Other factor of local importance*

None.

X. *Collection levels*

(Conspectus numbers + language codes)

<http://www.library.nwu.edu/collmgmt/humanities/>