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BOOK REVIEWS

Knowing Books and Men: Knowing Computers, Too. JESSE H. SHERA. Libraries Unlimited, Inc., Littleton, Col., 1973. $12.50, pp. 363.

IN THE preface to this book, Shera asks, "Why does one publish a book; and once it is published, why does anyone review it?" Why indeed? The book is a collection of essays, of addresses or speeches, made to different audiences over a considerable period of time—from 1931 through 1972. Only one of these essays had not been published before, but the places of publication were diverse, and so it is highly unlikely that any one person either heard or read even a majority of these articles. So perhaps that explains why the book was written.

The explanation of why the book is being reviewed is simpler. It is being reviewed because it has been written; it exists, and it should be called to the attention of librarians, information scientists and all readers of this journal.

And now we come to the question that Shera did not ask—why should the book be read? Because Shera has something to say. Oh, perhaps the ideas are not new; but Shera says it all so well that the impact is fresh. In commenting on library education, he states, "A curriculum, then, despite its etymology, is not a race to be run, but a ladder to be climbed, a ladder in which the rungs are increasingly distant from each other as the learner ascends" (p. 22). Numerous other examples can be given. There are quotable quotes liberally sprinkled throughout the work.

The papers are arranged or classified under six topics: Toward a Philosophy of Librarianship; Of Library History; The Reference Function of the Library; Documentation; The Academic Library; and Of Library Education. As in all classification systems, there is overlap, and anyway Shera never restricts his comments to the selected topic. The quote about education was taken from a paper on philosophy. Thus there is a serious flaw in the book; *there is no index.* I find this disturbing and annoying, for I know that I will want to look things up, and it will be difficult to do so.

Having given an opinion on *why* the book should be read, further unsolicited advice is given on *how* the book should be read. Don't race through the chapters. Don't try to read it in one sitting or even in a few days. Pick up the book when you are in the mood to listen to a wise friend. Read an article or two, or three, and share the thoughts of one of the most pleasant and stimulating men in our field. These readings are the next best thing to enjoying a conversation with Jesse in a hotel room during a convention. It's a pleasant way to spend an evening.

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Literature and Bibliography of the Social Sciences. THELMA FREIDES. A Wiley–Becker & Hayes Series Book, Melville Publishing Co., Los Angeles, Calif., 1973. 284 pp. $12·95. ISBN 9-471-27790-8.

I FEEL the need of a demanding attention snaring device at the head of this review so that readers skipping the book—neither interested in nor concerned with the social sciences, or at least in another guide to the field—will be arrested. This is *not* simply a handbook or guide nor is it limited in importance to the social sciences. The author's province is an analysis of the nature of *a* literature: its history as a scholarly field, philosophical bases, scientific organization, publication patterns and bibliographical resources, and methodology for literature searching. That the interrelations of the social sciences with other fields emerges is one asset. That the approach suggests a methodology valuable for the interpretation of other literatures makes the book essential reading for librarian bibliographers and scholars who wish to understand and properly use the literature in their own fields.

The book's origins are pragmatic, from the lectures on basic principles for a course in the literature of the social sciences at Atlanta University School of Library Service, but the material has obviously been completely recast into this closely argued and logically ordered presentation. There is a sequence of four parts. The first, "Science, Scientific Literature, and Social Science," defines the social sciences in the context of science as learning organized for communication, as learning based on a systematized methodology, and learning dependent on professional and academic publications. Part II, "Structure and Components of the Social Science Literature," critically defines research reports (scholarly journals, technical reports,

books), cumulating publications (research reviews and handbooks, essay collections, textbooks, histories, encyclopedias, and dictionaries). Part III, "Literature Retrieval and the System of Bibliographical Records," defines comprehensive recurrent bibliographies, selective recurrent bibliographies, retrospective bibliographies, guides to the literature and directories of periodicals, and concludes with a summary of the organization of scholarly bibliography. Part IV, "Recapitulation and Some Conclusions," emphasizes the essential uses of literature and bibliography, once their nature is comprehended, in efficient and intelligent literature searching. Appendices B–K (Appendix A, "Selected Books on the Organization and Operations of Science," follows Part I) are inserted amongst the chapters of Parts II and III and are cogently annotated selective lists of the types of literature and bibliographies described in the narrative text. Within most of the appendices, there is a grouping by the basic disciplines of anthropology, economics, geography, history, political science, psychology and sociology, with education added as a substantive field drawing on all the others. There is ready access to the material on the individual fields through the analytical index.

The intent is not on an exhaustive introduction to the reference and literature sources for the social sciences (the author refers you to Hoselitz's *A Reader's Guide to the Social Sciences* and White's *Sources of Information in the Social Sciences* as general comprehensive bibliographic guides) but to so describe the materials the researcher, student or professional, must use that an understanding of their nature leads to optimum return. For the student of the social sciences, then, this is the illuminating adjunct to the handbooks and guides, and it is equally beneficial to students in other disciplines for the pattern of their literature and bibliographies will relate.

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Understanding Scientific Literatures: A Bibliometric Approach. JOSEPH C. DONOHUE. MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1973. 101 pp. $10.00. ISBN 0-262-04049-5.

A FURTHER subtitle might be "its application to library selection policies," the bibliometric theory and derived analytical methodology, presented in sometimes daunting complexity, never losing direction toward this purpose. The presentation is logically ordered, each step of the argument numbered in classed sequence which allows ready correlation with the many tables and figures (e.g. 3.1 The Main Literature, Table 3.1 M Corpus Articles) and the concluding application in each case to library practices is explicit.

Why is this elaborate statistical analysis necessary? The author considers the problem of access to, use and bibliographical control of scientific journals to be an urgent matter for both scientists and librarians. Three categories are to be considered: the nature of scientific literature, librarians' servicing/control of this literature, and the indexing and automated retrieval of the literature. A primary need derives from the now long obvious overwhelming supply of scientific publication, which needs no further comment. Subsidiary are the factors of time—the quick obsolescence of much publication; of permanence—the few statements emerging as classic; and of vehicle—there being no certain journal in which the appearance of information/research may be surely anticipated. (Although on this last point the author demonstrates that a certain few journals can be shown to carry the bulk of important material in a specific field.) The basic library problem is the impossibility for any library being complete, or even comprehensive, in its holdings of this overwhelming supply of scientific literature. (The the individual scientist is even aware of many of these journals or scans those he knows raises another spectre.) Cost of the materials and housing space are determinants of the methods librarians have devised to evade drowning: ILL and regional, national and international storage lending libraries; reprographic copying in lieu of supporting individual journal files; cooperative acquisition in specialized fields for sharing single copies, comprehensive union lists. Exhaustive indexing and data stores for computerized retrieval combined with sophisticated SDI are devised to ensure economic directness in service demand. (That this does not ensure Elysium without end is a critical caution.)

How then is the librarian to decide which materials are essential to make the best of this imperfect situation? By applying bibliometry: the "quantitative treatment of the properties of recorded discourse and behaviour appertaining to it." (The definition is Robert Fairthorne's.) Mr. Donohue critically describes four techniques of quantitative survey: the Bradford (S. C. Bradford) distribution provides for identification in ranked sequence of the journals of importance for a field; citation tracing and the research front (Derek J. De Solla Price) hypothesizes that over a period of years (*ca* 10) the "really important papers" which form the research front can be determined by the pattern in a citation index; bibliographic coupling (William Goffman) reduces the broad research front for any subject to smaller units by relating structural characteristics of publications; the epidemic theory (William Goffman and V. A. Newill) projects a curve for the literature growth in a field, the infective spread of ideas, which reaches a peak—may become too large a literature for efficient communication of ideas—and tapers off. The author's description is admirably concise. He then applies each technique to the analysis of the literature of information science (as a sample) with detailed statistics and graphs as well as a simple (relatively) summation in plain terms.

By applying one or all of these techniques, the librarian might derive a basic list of journals possessing the optimum quantity of important articles in any field and evaluate the continued utility of the literature in each journal. Essential