

---

# The Function of Bibliography

FREDSON BOWERS

LIBRARIANS ARE COMMON USERS of enumerative bibliographies and check lists, but they are not so likely to take full advantage of descriptive bibliographies and of the more detailed and accurate information that these contain. The reason for this neglect is perhaps threefold: (1) many librarians have little or no acquaintance with analytical bibliography and thus do not understand the revolution that this method has caused in the techniques of differentiating, arranging, and describing books; (2) wanting this knowledge, they do not comprehend the relatively simple technical language in which descriptive bibliography (based on analytical) is written, and so do not try to cope with the valuable information offered in such works; (3) the result is to lead librarians to treat scholarly descriptive bibliographies as if they were only more diffusely written check lists and thus to ignore their full potential value in the normal identification and cataloging process by which books are prepared for scholarly users.

Since many scholars, these days, require more information about the characteristics and status of books they are working with than librarians may always have the training to provide, an increasingly serious split is developing between the very two groups that should be most closely joined in mutual concerns. Any divergence of interests here is wrong. Moreover, the practical effects may have serious consequences because of the non-bibliographical scholar's dependence upon the librarian to catalog books correctly and to provide the final authoritative word on the significance of the variant forms of books used as primary research sources, such as editions, issues, impressions. When the librarian's catalog entries conceal information, or provide positive misinformation, serious harm may follow.

The question of the librarian's understanding of modern analytical bibliography and its purposes goes much farther than catalog entries

Mr. Bowers is Professor of English, University of Virginia.

(important as it is that these should be full and accurate). Knowledgeable purchase of books and the building of collections, as well as knowledgeable preservation of books by retaining apparently similar copies or commonly disregarded variant forms, are all involved. Over and above these practical considerations, however, one may appeal to the anomaly that is created by indifference to a modern scholarly discipline that treats the very source of a librarian's vocation: the book and its contents.

This paper, then, attempts a rapid survey of the relation of analytical bibliography, and its derivative, descriptive bibliography, to librarians serving the general literary as well as the more specialized textual scholar.

Analytical bibliography concentrates on the examination of books as tangible objects in order to recover the details of the physical process of their manufacture. At its most general, this form of bibliography attempts to discover the principles of the production process as these may be determined from a close study of the exact details of the methods of printing in various periods. At its more particular, analytical bibliography attempts to apply this general knowledge to an analysis of the specific effects of the printing process on the physical characteristics of any given book considered as part of an edition, and of any of this edition's variant copies that compose impressions, issues, or states. The evidence utilized is circumstantial and physical, and the method, it may be said, is inductive.

Although in some respects analytical bibliography is at the root of all other forms, even of the historical and the enumerative branches, it provides in a more important manner the foundation for descriptive and for textual bibliography, both of particular concern to the librarian and to the scholar or critic. A book cannot be described correctly (except by accident) unless the method of its printing has first been determined by analysis. Moreover, the determination of the true primary (or substantive) editions of a text, and then of the details of the transmission of this text through various editions and impressions—a necessary prelude to the establishment of the most correct form of this text—is an operation inseparable from analytical bibliography.

In at least one important fundamental, a descriptive bibliography differs from an enumerative bibliography: a descriptive bibliography invariably concerns itself with the ordered arrangement, analysis, and description of primary documents, whereas an enumerative (or systematic) bibliography may treat primary, or secondary, or a mixture

### *The Function of Bibliography*

of both. For instance, *A Descriptive Bibliography of the English Restoration Printed Drama to 1700*, on which this writer is presently engaged, will list only the primary documents, the texts of the plays in their editions and variants. *The Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature* enumerates a large selection of Restoration dramas (though not the varied forms taken by issues and states within the editions), but adds a listing of the modern editions of the texts and of a number of secondary documents about the plays and their authors: the critical and historical studies that examine these plays, their significance and their history.

Such an enumerative bibliography in the bareness of its identification of the primary documents and the copiousness of reference to the secondary documents shows that it is aimed at the general scholar or student who wants to read about the plays as much as (or more than) he is concerned to study the primary texts, that is, the plays themselves in their original forms, with any particularity. On the contrary, a descriptive bibliography might be said to aim itself ultimately at the textual critic, who is charged with establishing the texts of the substantive cultural documents, although it will also be of particular interest to all scholars who need to examine the documents directly and thus must have the most authoritative forms isolated and identified, to those who wish to study the transmission of the text and therefore need to know all the documentary forms that the text has assumed in its contemporary publishing history, to students of analytical bibliography who need to be informed about the printing history of the documents, to students of publishing history, and to collectors and librarians who are concerned to acquire these documents in all their varied forms for the use of scholars.

In comparing an enumerative bibliography devoted to the same primary documents—or a catalog or a check list—with a descriptive bibliography like Sir Walter W. Greg's *English Printed Drama to the Restoration*, one thread runs throughout all the differences: the descriptive form is always contrived with a far greater rigor and precision. For example, a descriptive bibliography should be completely definitive in the number of primary documents listed. The personal, far-ranging research that goes into the investigation of the books, and the scrupulous comparison of multiple copies, in most cases will turn up previously unknown editions and issues, and sometimes even previously unknown titles. The items in this comprehensive listing are then identified and arranged in a definitive manner, false dates are

exposed, piracies are isolated and dated, the use of standing-type from one edition to another is analyzed and recorded, and a careful distinction is made between the impressions, issues, and states of each edition described. If the descriptive bibliographer has annotated his entries copiously with records of publishers' advertisements, identification of printers by their types and ornaments, lists of documents advertising the books, accounts of copyrighting, and so on, the notes to the description can hold information of much wider interest than that concerned merely with the identification.

The descriptive bibliographer differs from the cataloger or enumerator in that he is required to describe what is technically known as the "ideal copy" of any edition, a description that includes a full account of all variations from this ideal norm comprising the kind of copy of the book in its most complete and perfected state that the publisher intended to issue to the public.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, the cataloger ordinarily confines himself to a copy at hand, without inquiring very widely, if at all whether it is truly representative of the edition as a whole. Moreover, in the process of finding out just what is this "ideal" form of the copy, with all its variants (and how they were printed), a bibliographer must directly compare a large number of apparent duplicates, personally and in detail, in an effort to exhaust the possibility that any unknown forms will turn up in the future. In this investigation discoveries are often made that would forever remain concealed from the cataloger. Another consequence not commonly recognized is that the descriptive bibliographer writes a description by no means of one copy, but instead of the edition as a whole from the numerous copies that he has seen. The peculiarities of any single copy, therefore, are never given undue prominence, for the "ideal copy" as formulated from the analysis of multiple examples is that described, and all variation is listed from this definitive norm.

It may come as something of a shock to the cataloger, trained to record only the characteristics of the copy before him, to be faced with the paradox that in some occasional instances the bibliographer's "ideal copy" may very likely never have been issued in any concrete example by a publisher. On the one hand, therefore, the cataloger may be busy describing the single copy at hand, whereas the bibliographer may be concerned to analyze and describe, at the other end of the process, a copy that does not exist. Most commonly this odd split in theory and procedure occurs when parts of a book have been

### *The Function of Bibliography*

separately printed and are joined in random combinations by the binder.

The simplest example ordinarily met with is the nonce collection—such as those made from any available Dryden quartos between 1691 and 1695—in which a group of independent books designed for separate sale is formed for issue as a collection under a general title-page. Intermediate would be the 1611 to 1617 Spenser Folios described by F. R. Johnson in his Spenser bibliography, in which reprinted sheets complicate the changing combinations of editions collected. At the other extreme would be such a book as James I's *Basilicon Doron* (1603) printed in two different shops simultaneously, but in the binding-up these sheets were so mixed together at random that no extant copy is pure and hence the bibliographer must describe as "ideal" two non-existent synthetic examples composed of the separated sheets according to the printing. On occasion a bibliographer will need to hypothesize "ideal" blank leaves missing in all observed copies, although this is a tricky business too diverse in its details to be pursued here.

A librarian is the necessary intermediary between the book and the scholar. It is the librarian who in the first instance decides to buy a particular book to make it available. Of course, the librarian must have the tools of his trade and therefore must rely on various published guides such as *Short Title Catalogue*, Wing, Evans, and so on, to lead him to purchases and to identify what he has bought; or, the other way around sometimes, the guides by their identification may stimulate the purchase. For some years the effects of inverted values have been felt, in that bibliographies too often have been written for the collector and librarian purchaser, and not for the ultimate consumer, the scholar-critic and student. But of late the most advanced descriptive bibliographies have had the scholar chiefly in mind (since what is good for the scholar is certainly good for the librarian, though not necessarily vice versa), and therefore the librarian should be aware of what the scholar needs in a descriptive bibliography.<sup>2</sup>

Any critic needs to have a complete account of all editions within the scope of the bibliography, and he requires these to be arranged in correct order so that he can go to a primary edition for his text, and not to a corrupt derived edition. Moreover, once this primary edition is established, the critic wants to know whether the copy he holds in his hand is complete in every respect and whether it does or does not have all the physical variants that have been established by

careful examination of multiple copies as existing within this edition (including the order of printing or of issue of such variants). That is, he has a vital need to know what the bibliographer has been able to determine is the "ideal copy." But editions other than the primary are still of interest, for the bibliographer may not be able to tell the critic whether fresh authority has entered to alter or revise the text during its publishing and printing history, unless the fact were announced in such an edition. The transmission of a text is always a question of scholarly importance; and hence the need for the identification of piracies, of falsely dated editions, of copies that are really issues or impressions, or only partly reset, masquerading as true editions.

Yet a critic who is going to make a close use of this text, and therefore is concerned with its accuracy, wants to know more. He wants to know something of the odds whether the copy he holds in his hand will or will not be identical with the whole of the edition described. To this end the description in the bibliography must be full and detailed enough to identify his copy as an authentic member of the edition noted, in such and such an impression, issue, and variant state. Moreover, the critic wants to know that enough copies have been comparatively examined before the description was made up so that the odds will favor the definitiveness of the description. In other words, the critic wants to be assured that he is not consulting a copy in some unknown variant state that might affect his conclusions; and he also needs assurance, once the identification of his copy has been established, that variants that might affect these conclusions are unlikely to exist in some other unrecorded copy. From this question are necessarily excluded the usual internal press-variants in the text proper of early books, variants that can be noticed by a descriptive bibliographer only by accident unless he is writing a very narrowly limited bibliography and can put all the copies through the Hinman collating machine.

Reprinting of a few sheets to make up a short count in the last copies to be bound, as well as later sophistication of imperfect copies with sheets from other editions, are a serious problem, to say nothing of simultaneous impressions in whole or in part from duplicate typesettings and reprinted editions (especially in the eighteenth century) from standing or from reset type, (or a mixture of the two) that resemble the original so closely that they have not been distinguished and properly analyzed. Scholars do not want to be put in the position of calling each other liars, like the two unfortunates some years back

### *The Function of Bibliography*

who were in controversy over the text of a 1715 edition of Spenser because one was using a large-paper and the other a trade-edition copy, and the typesetting, and therefore the details of the text, differed between the two for a number of pages at the start.

Finally, if the scholar is so fortunate as to be consulting a copy of the book in a library recorded by a descriptive bibliographer, and therefore a copy personally handled, he can demand that no variation should exist, save the usual press-correction, between this copy and any other of the same state, issue, impression, and edition. This should be the guarantee that a descriptive bibliographer can give.

It is clear, perhaps, that various of these requirements are not always considered or valued by librarians—or sufficiently utilized—since, erroneously, they are thought to have small immediate application to the job at hand; nevertheless, it is these requirements that shape the form of modern descriptive bibliographies that are replacing more conventional library tools. Certainly, if one is accustomed only to catalogs, one does not always appreciate the essential difference. A catalog records either just any available copy, or else a copy in a specific collection, which only by chance can be an “ideal copy.” The catalog listing, even if a chance “ideal copy” is recorded, does not necessarily provide all the information needed by the scholar, certainly not what can be furnished by a full history of the edition in question drawn up on the basis of a wide-ranging examination and analysis of multiple copies.

Too many librarians have the unfortunate custom of accepting catalogs, check lists, and so on, as adequate sources of identification (which they are not), and hence of applying to descriptive bibliographies this habit of regarding all reference tools only as means of identification. The truth is, of course, that elementary tool-books do not actually identify with sufficient accuracy to serve a scholar, who needs to have precise information about different forms of a book, nor do they analyze the reasons for their listings; and in this deficiency, therefore, they do not serve the librarian-intermediary either. Despite the more than usual care that went into the admirable Woodward and McManaway *Check List of English Plays 1641-1700*, for example, the assignment of the terms *edition* and *issue* can be erratic, and the “issues” listed under the main editions (not always in correct order) can range from simple press-variant states to actual newly typeset separate editions. The standards of check lists simply cannot meet the analytical standards of bibliographies. Moreover, as one would expect, a wider

examination of Restoration plays for the purpose of making a descriptive bibliography has uncovered a not inconsiderable number of previously unrecorded editions and issues, unknown not only to the scholars who should be using them but also to the librarians who had them in their collections.

Just this past summer this writer's search for a copy of the 1691 edition of Dryden's *Sir Martin Mar-all* with the original title-page (all previously known copies had cancels) ended at a library that had cataloged its copy only a few weeks earlier. But no one there had identified the important variant and knew what a unique gem this book actually represented. The 1691 quarto is the earliest edition to have Dryden's name on the title-page, but the original title-page now shows that the book was first printed without the name. Thus the addition of the name was thought worth the expense of cancelling the title-leaf before publication. Whether this addition of the name was an unauthorized publisher's gambit or whether Dryden had a hand in it is at present unknown, but in view of the current debate about Dryden's authorship of this play the newly discovered fact cannot fail to have some interest for students of this author. It is a little dashing that such a unique and important variant<sup>3</sup> was not recognized by the staff of a major university's library; at the least, it shows a lack of librarian concern for the possible existence of variant forms of editions that are of scholarly significance.

Yet it cannot be too often repeated that even identification is not enough. Identification is something, of course, and that is one of the reasons for the full description of books in real bibliographies so that no rare book librarian will fail to recognize another example of the original 1691 *Sir Martin* title-leaf if one turns up, and if he bothers to check it against a bibliographical description, not just a check list, as he should be obligated to do. Yet identification, even if accurate, is not the sole purpose of descriptive bibliography. The analysis of the bibliographical facts is always of prime importance. When Sir Geoffrey Keynes, for instance, mistook the correct order of the first two editions of Sir Thomas Browne's *Religio Medici*, and described the actual second as the first edition, he did not afterwards take his error very seriously, no doubt because he felt no great harm had been done since the two were at least identified as different editions.

This may be a collector's point of view, but it is not a scholar's; and this writer trusts that it is not a librarian's either. The objection goes deeper than the first edition prices paid by libraries to secure copies



## *The Function of Bibliography*

of the second: in this case the librarian purchaser was forced by bad bibliography to become an unfaithful intermediary, since he acquiesced in the offer to the scholar of an incorrect text that was not what it purported to be. It is not enough—to take another familiar case—to list the two earliest editions of Dryden's *Wild Gallant* (1669) in reverse order in Macdonald because of insufficient bibliographical analysis. The descriptive bibliographer must guarantee to the scholar the correct order of the editions, or otherwise a corrupt reprint text will be studied as the original, and wrong scholarly assumptions will be based on the bad text. To be able to find and interpret the evidence in order to prove by analytical bibliography the actual relationship, and thus to be able to direct the scholar with confidence to the correct primary edition, requires capabilities beyond those needed by the mere compiler, content to copy what he sees before him in the book, without analysis, as in a catalog. Nevertheless, these trained capabilities are at the service of a librarian if he will use them.

The question then comes, how the librarian can utilize the information in descriptive bibliographies directed at him and, beyond him, at the scholarly ultimate consumer. The first step is to recognize that nothing can be done from ignorance, that if the librarian is to serve the scholar he must understand the scholar's requirements and something of his language, and must have a sympathetic respect for his standards. In terms of primary cultural and historical documents, this means that the librarian must understand the scholarly uses to which these books are put, and, thus, the language of descriptive bibliography that is devoted to their analysis.

Many librarians seem to feel that a great deal too much pother is made about correct bibliographical nomenclature, and they are likely to throw up their hands in despair, and disinterest, when the definitions of terms go beyond the vague usages taught in library schools, concepts so elastic as to be quite worthless to a scholar who must have the precision that alone is meaningful. What is generally taught is some simple nomenclature that will serve to catalog a book without any analysis of the book itself, and its particular form, that need be made by the cataloger. Thus to him it makes no difference, ordinarily, whether an altered title-page date was performed in press during the printing of a conjugate title-leaf, or by cancellation of the original title-leaf and the substitution of another. Or, in the latter case, whether analysis can show that the printing of the substitute was accomplished before publication, because a blank leaf in the final gathering, or else-

where, was used to print the cancel; or whether the lack of a place in the book to print a cancel leaf, and a completely new typesetting of the title, indicate that the substitute was not machined as part of the original printing.

To the scholar these distinctions are of serious importance, and it is not a light matter for accurate reference and for the interpretation of publishing history whether one is called a variant state and another a re-issue. A librarian who makes a virtue of ignorance and disclaims the ability to cope with such problems is failing his scholarly clients and is not a useful person to have as an intermediary. Such a one, indeed, will have little idea of what is contained in descriptive bibliographies, because he cannot read them. He can sit on his books like a hen on a clutch of eggs, but what he hatches will be less useful. China door-knobs, most likely.

It is not an injustice to the Henry E. Huntington Library to recall that some years ago a determined effort was made to dispose of Elizabethan duplicates. The officials in charge collated the text of some of the more important literary works and kept a list, not always complete, of textual variants before they sold off the extra copies. On the other hand, they carefully preserved duplicates with slight title-page variation made in press, since these were, presumably thought of as "bibliographical" variants. In this writer's view this was false bibliography, which did no service to later textual critics consulting this great library's collections in order to record and analyze the variants in text that are likely to appear in hand-printed books. If certain external variants, often of mere typographical interest, in a part of the book seldom written by the author are esteemed more highly by librarians than internal variants in the author's text, then there certainly is an inversion of values. To sell off copies that have evidence in them affecting the transmission of the author's own words in order to preserve copies with variants of minor interest to the publishing history of the book (and often not even to that) is, to this author, to mistake a library as only a collection of reference documents. It is certainly not the concept of a library as the great reservoir of materials by which scholars, including textual critics, can guard the purity of the transmission of our cultural heritage. This last is the admirable way of the Bodleian Library, of the British Museum or of the Folger Shakespeare Library; but it is not a concept as common in the United States as it should be.

The problem of duplicates is intimately connected with this biblio-

### *The Function of Bibliography*

graphical view but is definitely too large a subject to do justice to here even though it often serves as a test case of a librarian's understanding of and sympathy with scholarly requirements. If a library is thought of chiefly as a storehouse of reference material, and if uncommon books are preserved to be read only because there are no modern editions of the text, then it is true that one copy may seem to be as good as another, and even—in extreme cases—any edition. But if, instead, the living text is preserved in these books, then a scholar finds it very odd that a library selling its duplicates would prefer to keep a record in its files of textual variants, which a scholar could not trust because he had not himself made the collation, rather than a record of minor external variants of little consequence to the all-important contents, and then to dispose of the textually important copies instead of the textually unimportant. It is very probable that the emphasis placed on the collection of known and readily observable external variants like title-page alteration, correction of page numbers, and so on, has been fostered by the attention given to such features in collectors' lore and certainly in bibliographical description. But from the point of view of an analytical bibliographer it is this writer's observation that not many collectors know why they are collecting these immediately ascertainable variants, or why such matters are listed in detail in a descriptive bibliography. It is good that collectors and libraries do acquire them, for the variants constitute part of the printing history of the book and are therefore of bibliographical interest. Insofar as they sometimes reflect other alteration, they may be the outward signs of accompanying textual disruption. However, unless a textual tie-in can be established, of themselves they are interesting but not crucial in comparison to the concealed variance within the text.

It is too easy to wax satirical about the piling up of duplicates through ignorance, but the hard fact is that a scholar would prefer this enlightened confession of ignorance <sup>4</sup> to the misdirected sophistication that in the naughty past led the Huntington Library to dispose of some of its most interesting documents on the basis of a false sense of values. If an institution thinks of itself as a reading library chiefly, then it can be content with one copy of a selection of our cultural primary documents. If an institution has taken upon itself the responsibility for the preservation of our heritage (and this, one likes to think, is the function of the great university, public, and private libraries), then its custodians must come to a better understanding of the wide scholarly reasons for the preservation and use of old books. Otherwise,

these documents will not be preserved, as happened at the Huntington, or at the least will not be knowledgeably acquired throughout the years for scholarly use.

When this stage is reached it is clear that the librarian is ultimately as responsible in his collections for the accuracy of the texts on which our culture is based as he is for the accuracy of the reference material on his shelves, and to this end he must join forces with the analytical rather than with the enumerative bibliographer. It is quite false that bibliography sets itself apart from literary considerations. Although its method is not literary, in that it deals with tangible evidence instead of with value-judgments, analytical bibliography is as much concerned with the form of the contents of a book (textual bibliography) as it is with the form of its external dress (descriptive bibliography). It is only one part of bibliography's function to investigate the printing history of an edition of a book and to record the findings in a definitive technical description that is not subject to opinion and is internationally intelligible. This is merely the first step, for after this basic information has been gathered, analyzed, and recorded, bibliography turns to the contents to investigate their primary accuracy and the accuracy of the transmission through successive editions even to the present day. Since the first world war, with a particularly rapid advance after the second world war, bibliography has been enlarging its bounds as it has become the legitimate province of academic scholarship instead of the business of the book-trade. However, in the libraries, where these new functions of bibliography should be best understood, the officials (even those charged with the collection of rare books) have not invariably kept pace with postwar developments either in their training or in their interests, and various ones are still too likely to resign the challenge that this expanding new discipline presents them. When this happens, the demands of the most advanced new scholarship of today meet too often with no comprehension, to say nothing of sympathy, from the very persons who should be the scholars' most faithful allies against the philistines.

The attitude seems to be increasing that the training of a librarian is that of a mere custodian. The more widely this fallacy is accepted, the less incentive there is in the librarian's preparation to learn about books from the scholarly, which is to say the bibliographical, point of view.<sup>5</sup> If this trend continues, a dangerous split—already widening—will come permanently to separate the cooperative understanding that should exist between the librarian builders of the collections of the

## *The Function of Bibliography*

primary documents on which our civilization rests and the scholarly analysts and preservers of this culture, among whom descriptive and textual bibliographers of the new school play a role that is not necessarily humble.

### *Bibliographical Notes*

1. For a discussion of this bibliographically important concept of "ideal copy" see: Bowers, F. T.: *Principles of Bibliographical Description*. Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press, 1949, pp. 6-8, 113-123.

2. He should also be aware of the needs of the writers of descriptive bibliographies, for which see: Bowers, F. T.: Certain Basic Problems in Descriptive Bibliography. *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, 42:211-288, Third Quarter, 1949.

3. Since writing this, I have learned that the Bodleian Library also acquired a copy, so that at least two are now known.

4. I am thinking here of the great research libraries in this country and in England. One may certainly be sympathetic with a library of moderate size and means that gives two copies a searching page-by-page comparison—though short of textual collation—and then decides to sell off what appears to be a true duplicate. (Only collation on the Hinman machine, of course, could establish exact duplication and thus truly justify sale of extra copies.) These libraries are accepting the view that their function is to hold a copy of the book for reference and for general use, not for specific study as a text. However, even the greatest of the research libraries cannot carry the full load; and if libraries in the second and third ranges refuse to shoulder some responsibility in the matter of texts, scholars are going to suffer from a serious lacunae in preserved materials. That valuable independent contributions can be made by libraries of moderate size is shown by the experience of the University of Virginia Library, which holds some quantities of machine-printed duplicates in American literature. These collections have fostered vital bibliographical studies in modern printing of literary texts, such as concealed impressions, printing from duplicate plates, plate-damage, textual changes in plates made in impressions after the first, and other pioneer investigations impossible to carry on if a policy of selling apparent duplicates had been adopted. This library's "ignorance" has paid off handsomely in concrete research at no very great expense.

5. I am often impressed in England by the breadth of librarians' interests, as much in the college libraries of the universities as in the special collections and the great research libraries like the British Museum, the Bodleian, University Library Cambridge, and the National Library of Scotland. This catholicity contrasts with the narrowly specialized interests likely to be found in the United States whereby one person will know a great deal about general cataloging procedure but little about the acquisition and special problems of rare books. Unless I am mistaken, the general refusal in England to separate "rare books" as an isolated category with its own isolated staff is a good thing on the whole, since it leads to a wider dissemination of information about them and to a more normal treatment. In this country the rare book curator often talks a language incompre-

FREDSON BOWERS

hensible to his colleagues. And, even then, it is a hard fact that few rare book curators, so far as have been observed, in this country have had the proper training for their positions. They may become expert custodians, shrewd operators at auctions; but the scholars' language is too often as strange to them as theirs is to the catalogers and the delivery desk supervisors with whom they lunch.

This is not to say that in the United States, as in England, we are utterly wanting in scholar-librarians. In both countries there are men who not only keep pace with bibliographical developments but are intimately a cause and a part of bibliographical scholarship, men who indeed may be counted among our eminent bibliographers. Even though in too many cases there is a shocking divide between the ideals of scholars and the preconceptions of librarians, the gulf is occasionally bridged. When two scholars confer, the source of their immediate employment is of no consequence. On the other hand, when a scholar tries to talk to a technician-custodian of the modern school who is often in charge of rare book collections, he must shout across a chasm of no-sympathy and no-comprehension. If only there were more young men and women who would take a liberal arts M.A. or Ph.D. in literature and history as preparation for librarianship. They are badly needed to head the research collections. Here, those who do and those who keep should be one and the same. What librarians need (as has been remarked to this author) is love of knowledge, not love of books. I trust this is not heresy.