The Dialectic of Defeat: Antimonies in Research in Library and Information Science

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Introduction

SOMETHING APPEARS TO BE dramatically wrong with research in library science. Some would argue that there is simply too little of it. Others, like Herbert Goldhor, would insist that what little research is done is methodically primitive; all that is needed is more sophistication. Yet others, like Lloyd Houser, would claim that what is needed is a quantum leap to some sort of paradigm science that would focus or accelerate research in the field. Still others complain that what is needed is better coordination of research via institutes and centers. Then there are those who point the finger of blame at a research community that appears to be unable to communicate its findings effectively to practicing librarians. Finally, there is the evidence that suggests that practicing librarians, always relentlessly pragmatic, don't pay any attention to the quality research that is available.[1]

While I feel that each of these variables contributes some to the general malaise of research in library and information science, taken separately or in any number of permutations, they not only fail to explain the problem but actually tend to mask its real nature. In short, the conclusion from the beginning is that none of the earlier analysts of research in library and information science have gotten it right.[2]

In the pages that follow it is hoped that these claims are substantiated by tracing the emergence and development of research in library

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science. It will be argued that the prevailing ideology posits the desirability of the adoption of a positivist epistemology for research in the field. Then, using recent work in the social sciences, it shall be argued that such a positivist science is neither possible nor desirable. Finally, drawing on work in critical theory and hermeneutics, it shall be proposed that there be a rethinking of the epistemological foundations of research in library and information science.

The Emergence of Research in Library Science

As early as 1853, when some few librarians began to think about the nature of their new "profession," there was a growing concern centering on the nature of training for work in libraries. Throughout the nineteenth century there was a consensus that librarians would best be trained in a sort of apprentice system. Melvil Dewey began to change all of that by the end of the century, but the conception of librarianship as a mechanical art best assimilated through precept and practice has retained its appeal to this very day. This practical (critics called it "empirical"), intuitive, and experiential approach to education began to draw some fire by the first decade of the twentieth century. By the twenties, strong voices were calling for the creation of a new awareness of science as the key to unlocking the mysteries of library management and—it must be added—as a necessary prerequisite to the improvement of the status of the librarian.

These critics, always a minority of the profession, decried the librarians' mindless attention to technical detail. Pierce Butler[3] stated his view in searing prose:

> Unlike his colleagues in other fields of social activity the librarian is strangely uninterested in the theoretical aspects of his profession. He seems to possess a unique immunity to that curiosity which elsewhere drives modern man to attempt, somehow, an orientation of his particular labors with the main stream of human life. The librarian apparently stands alone in the simplicity of his pragmatism.

What was needed—Butler and others would insist—was attention to the role of the scientific method in the investigation of library problems, and especially that method as evidenced in the social sciences.

One can only conjecture whether the views of the "new breed" would have had any significant impact on librarianship had it not been for the decision of the Carnegie Corporation to establish an entirely new type of library school—the Graduate Library School (GLS)—at the University of Chicago. This new program was to be a true graduate

school "in the sense that its primary objective was the extension of the boundaries of knowledge relating to libraries and librarianship." The new school, endowed by $1 million gift, opened its doors with four faculty members and a small group of students in 1928.[4]

From the outset the school and its project were controversial. Librarians, and even outsiders like Abraham Flexner, heaped criticism and ridicule on the effort. The battle lines were quickly drawn with defenders of the new approach being ably represented by Douglas Waples and Butler, with the opposition view being most fiercely championed by Seymour Thompson who asked, "Do we want a library science?" and then, at great length, answered with a monumental "NO!"[5]

While some have argued that the pressure from the forces of darkness eventually won the day and led to the abandonment of the initial thrust of the program, it is this author's contention that the GLS not only succeeded in its mission to establish a "psychosociological" research program for the school, but it further succeeded in forming the conception of research in library science for several generations of scholars.[6] The justification for this conclusion will emerge, but first it is necessary to examine in some depth what it was that faculty at Chicago were attempting.

Louis Round Wilson, the school's most influential dean, put it succinctly when he wrote that "its early faculty, drawn largely from fields other than librarianship, and experienced in graduate study and research, introduced new ideas from nonlibrary fields, and related librarianship to other enriching disciplines."[7] The most enriching of disciplines proved to be sociology, and while all of the early faculty insisted that the "school's sociological point of view rested on a humanistic base" it was soon clear that the faculty and students were losing their sense of balance.[8]

Indeed, as early as 1936, Wilhelm Munthe, a prominent European librarian, was charging that the school was "too heavily weighted on the psychological and sociological side."[9] This early warning was conclusively confirmed when Butler, among the first faculty of the school and author of its manifesto, called foul and argued in a 1951 essay that librarians had apparently succumbed to a "scientistic delusion." "This is," Butler noted, "a mistaken assumption that librarianship is a profession only in so far as it is a science." Butler was quick to point out that this problem was not "peculiar to librarians but is characteristic of our period."[10] In the later remark Butler saw what many recent commentators on research in library science have generally overlooked. Librarians and especially the research community in library science, had fallen

prey to the siren called "positivism," the prevaling orthodoxy in the social sciences from the thirties through the sixties.[11]

Before proceeding further, it is essential to define the community of scholars that is under discussion. It must be made clear that the segment of the profession that adopted this new positivism from the thirties onward represented a highly select elite. Made up of the graduates of the GLS and the dozen doctoral programs in library science that were cloned off of the GLS model, this group has never numbered much over a thousand. Nevertheless, they have proven of great significance due to the fact that they staff most of the graduate library schools in the country today, and that they are the producers of most of the research being conducted in the field. In the main, members of this group are holders of the doctorate in library and information science.[12]

Positivism and Paradigms in Library Research

What are the characteristics of the positivism that has become so prevalent among this group? It is my contention that this approach can be characterized as follows:

1. Library science is a genuine, albeit young, natural science. It follows then that the methodological procedures of natural science are applicable to library science; that quantitative measurement and numeration are intrinsic to the scientific method; that epistemological issues are best treated with respect to specific research questions; and that complex phenomena can best be understood by reducing them to their essential elements and examining the ways in which they interact.
2. The library (broadly defined) must be viewed as a complex of facts governed by general laws. The discovery of these laws and theories is the principal objective of research.
3. The relation of these laws and theories to practice is essentially instrumental. That is, once the laws and theories are in place, we will be able to explain, predict, and control—i.e., produce a desired state of affairs by simply applying theoretical knowledge.
4. The library scientist can and should maintain a strict "value-neutrality" in his or her work.

This positivist perspective now governs the thinking of most serious researchers in library science (and probably all who refer to themselves as "information scientists").[13] How did it come to pass that such a foreign perspective could hold such sway in the profession once characterized by its intuitive, almost mystical, approach to its work? A

detailed analysis of this development would require an extensive essay in itself, but my conclusions are briefly outlined here.

When the original faculty of the GLS was organized in the late twenties and early thirties, the emphasis was on individuals "drawn largely from fields other than librarianship." Thus the first faculty came to Chicago with varied and recent exposure to new developments in the social sciences and research in general. The same could be said of many of the students. It is clear that faculty and students were generally committed to the interdisciplinary approach to research being proposed on the Midway. Given the time and place, this meant that the faculty and students would be aware of recent developments in the social sciences, especially sociology, and that they should be drawn to the positivism then emerging as the dominant model for research in the social sciences.[14]

There is little to criticize about these earliest attempts at Chicago. However, before long the plan began to unravel. First, the original faculty departed and was replaced by graduates of the GLS. The idea of a faculty, "drawn largely from fields other than librarianship" was abandoned. Concomitantly, other graduates of the GLS joined the faculties of library schools throughout the country and soon came to dominate them—especially the doctoral programs. Soon the GLS vision of research in library science gained hegemony in the field.

Second—mainly as a result of the drive to define library science as a distinct discipline—the schools, including the GLS, became increasingly jealous of their right to offer a complete graduate program in what was an ever more proscribed subject matter. The result was that contact with the enriching disciplines stopped for all practical purposes in the mid-1940s. By 1956 this situation had advanced to the point where as distant an observer as Arthur Bestor could explicitly accuse librarians of "substituting clock-hours of pseudo-vocational credit for sound learning." Library schools found ways of "expanding their courses in the mere techniques of librarianship and thus prevented the 'leakage' of potential students to genuine graduate departments." This rigid isolation meant that the research community (all library school students for that matter) would be educated in near complete ignorance of new trends and breakthroughs in the social sciences. It has even become commonplace to find this insular trajectory endorsed by leaders in the library and information science field. For instance, in 1979 Ellen Altman forcefully hailed our myopia when she wrote, "let's leave history to historians, sociology to sociologists, psychology to psychologists and concentrate our research efforts on topics central to librarianship." The fact that so many members of the library and information science

research community seem to agree with Altman's admonition suggests to me that it has deliberately committed a collective act of intellectual impoverishment.[15]

Paradigm Lost: Social Scientists and the Rejection of Positivism

The timing of the emergent intellectual isolation was particularly unfortunate, for it was in the sixties that social scientists began to revise their conception of the nature and role of research. At this point, a brief discussion of the intellectual trajectory that led to the widespread rejection of positivism by social scientists would appear to be in order. Richard Bernstein notes that in the early 1960s, just at the moment "when there was a widely shared self-confidence among mainstream social scientists that their disciplines had finally been placed upon the firm empirical foundation where we could expect the steady progressive growth of scientific knowledge of society—troubling issues broke out."[16] These issues led to a prolonged controversy that still rages through the social sciences.

Particularly troubling to social scientists, especially in light of the publication of T.S. Kuhn's highly influential *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962, rev. ed. 1970), was the evidence suggesting that the social sciences had been incapable of generating a "paradigm" which could govern research such as that found in the sciences. While many social scientists misread Kuhn and attempted to use his concept of the paradigm to prove that their respective social sciences were indeed sciences (or near sciences), it became all too clear that no single paradigm in the social sciences could boast the allegiance of even a minority of the social scientists at work in the country.[17] Equally distressing was the awareness that the only paradigm candidate to even come close—structural functionalism—was generally deemed flawed beyond repair.[18]

How could the social sciences qualify as sciences if they could not generate paradigms that would govern "normal science" similar to that in the natural sciences? And how long could social scientists, after the expenditure of countless hours, continue to insist that the problem lay in the relative immaturity of the social sciences? Ever larger numbers of scholars began to insist that the problem was much more serious than the "relative immaturity" thesis would suggest.

Equally disconcerting was the vigorous and ultimately successful attack on the idea that the social sciences could emulate the *wertfrei* methods of investigation that prevailed in the sciences generally. This attack converged on positivism from a number of directions. First there

was the startling proof that the natural sciences themselves were consid-
erably less than value-free endeavors. A whole range of historians of
science, following Kuhn's lead, were demonstrating that the scientific
community was more a political arena where "authority is imposed,
and novelty and deviance suppressed" than a forum for the encourage-
ment of an "impartial interest in the quest for truth."[19]

In the light of this work, social scientists began to examine their
own houses only to find widespread evidence of bias and prejudgment
in social scientific research. Indeed, by the late 1970s most social scien-
tists seemed amazed at the degree to which they had subscribed to the
value-free proposition in the first place. Most now agreed that while
objectivity should always remain a topic of concern, it was not possible
to continue to assume that scholars in the social sciences could hope to
exclude subjective preunderstandings from their pursuit of knowledge.
Many even came to insist that such an attempt was both impossible and
undesirable.[20]

In a related controversy, social scientists debated the subject/object
dichotomy so central to positivism. Comte had insisted that people and
society's institutions must be viewed as neutral objects which could be
investigated in essentially the same way that one would investigate a
thing. But, by 1960, it was becoming all too clear than an essential
difference between the sciences and the social (or human) sciences was
that in the latter it was impossible to separate the subject (the researcher)
from the object (those being studied). Quite simply, the inability to
define a closed system within which to study the human objects means
that they cannot be studied independent of the influence of the subject
conducting the study.

These varied attacks on positivism in the social sciences led to a
growing chorus of eulogies. Typical of the new view is the following
assessment:

> Now the time seems ripe, even overdue, to announce that there is not
> going to be an age of paradigm in the social sciences. We contend that
> the failure to achieve paradigm takeoff is not merely the result of
> methodological immaturity, but reflects something fundamental
> about the human world.[21]

Another example is Anthony Gidden's insistence that "social science
must surely be reckoned a failure" in its effort to bring into being a
"science of society." He points out that many still yearn for the "arrival
of a social-scientific Newton" but is quick to note that they "are not only
waiting for a train that won't arrive, they're in the wrong station
altogether."[22]

It now seems clear that the social physics is not about to begin, and further that a positivist approach has proven of little value as a means of producing knowledge of social reality. It seems equally clear that the library physics is not about to begin, and yet many students of library and information science continue to dream of a science of librarianship, a fact that suggests that the crisis has not been deeply enough registered or is being actively evaded.

Toward a Reorientation of Research in Library and Information Science

It would now appear to be the time to open a debate on both epistemological and normative issues surrounding the research endeavor in library science. It is tempting at this point to turn to a discussion of the large, essentially unfinished, research agenda for library and information science. And indeed this author intends such an attempt in a forthcoming volume of *Advances in Librarianship*.[23] But since the emphasis here has been on epistemological issues, the intention is to adhere to that focus and to conclude with a discussion of what are in the main methodological questions. I would insist at the outset that what we don't need is a surrender and return to the old subjectivism that prevailed in this field prior to the advent of the GLS. What is needed is an attempt to transcend the dialectic of defeat and move beyond positivism and subjectivism.[24]

In addressing this matter I am encouraged by recently published essays by Elfreda Chatman, Jack Glazier, Mary Niles Maack, Joseph P. Natoli, and Amusi Odi, all of which demonstrate an awareness of methodological advances in the social sciences and argue for a reorientation of our own work in accord with these new developments.[25] I would like to add my voice to theirs in the general project of building a new conception of what good research might look like while at the same time encouraging us all to look beyond positivism for heroes. It seems to me that we might make a beginning by attending to three critical methodological imperatives.

First, research should be holistic. Carl Shorske notes that the serious student of human society must seek the intersection of two imaginary lines: "One line is vertical, or diachronic," and here the scholar is concerned with the relation of the institution in question to previous expressions of institutional ideas and goals; the other is "horizontal, or synchronic," and here the scholar is concerned with the institution's interrelationship with contemporaneous referents situated in other "fields of the social totality" (e.g., socioeconomic, political).[26] He

thus stands against the unproductive attempt to formulate laws of human society that are intended to apply to collectivities independent of their historical and cultural location. Instead, we must attempt an understanding of human society that integrates fact and theory from history and social science and resists the dissipation of central problems through an ever finer fragmentation around which professional experts cluster with their vested interests.[27]

Research in library science stands doubly in need of such a corrective perspective. Increasingly, research in this field is ahistorical and deterministic; an attempt to develop general laws intended to apply to objects independent of their historical or cultural location. Such an approach is clearly bankrupt. What is needed is historically informed scholarship that focuses attention on libraries in terms of their "foundation in specific historical developments and in a particular historical situation."[28] At the same time, any attempt to view the library in isolation from other contemporaneous social activity is inherently distorting and ultimately fruitless.

A holistic approach would also force the recognition that "library science" is not a separate discipline, but rather a mediating profession concerned with knowledge derived from all other disciplines, and researchers in this profession must be alert to, and prepared to draw upon, developments in the social sciences generally which promise to contribute to the solution of problems specific to libraries.[29] "The skilled problem-solver," Barry Barnes points out, "sees the themes of solved problems in those he seeks to solve." Research in library science would be enhanced if scholars would broaden their knowledge of the social sciences so that they might proceed analogically from concrete problem solutions in the social sciences to unsolved problems in library science. This can only be done if the community of scholars in library science cultivates an awareness of what Barnes refers to as the "repertoire of paradigms" in the social sciences.[30]

Second, our research should be reflexive and empirical. This view is aligned against the positivist conception of science as a suprahistoric, neutral enterprise. As Josef Bleicher points out, students of the human sciences have been forced to realize that the "subject shares the world with his objects, and has a pre-understanding of them which guides his subsequent methodological enquiry," and that "however much we objectify our object, as socio-historically situated observers we cannot but approach it with some pre-understanding."[31]

The sociocultural embeddedness of the scholar must be recognized, for only this awareness will allow us to rise above the mystifying confusion of an invisible predilection. Alvin Gouldner argues that two

insights are necessary to grasp this concept productively. First, the scholar "must recognize that what is at issue here is not only what is in the world but also what is in himself; he must have a capacity to hear his own voice, not simply those of others." Second, Gouldner argues that the scholar must have the "courage of his convictions, or at least courage enough to acknowledge his beliefs as his"; he must struggle to bring his domain assumptions from the "dim realm of subsidiary awareness into the clearer realm of focal awareness."[32] Such self-reflection is, of course, the first step. Once initiated the scholar must struggle to constantly test his consciousness against the best evidence available, and make the necessary adjustments in his world view when it is contradicted by the evidence.

This point leads naturally into a brief consideration of the empirical nature of critical scholarship. This approach emerged in opposition to the positivist attempt to "reconstruct social reality as consisting of brute data alone."[33] The intent is not to replace empiricism with reflection but rather it is to bring the two approaches under one roof; to find some sort of higher synthesis in which both have a place.

The implications of the reflexive/empirical approach for research in library and information science are self-evident. It would suggest that the all too common denial of preunderstanding in our research is misleading and ultimately dishonest and cowardly. It suggests that the reluctance on the part of the library research community to examine its own domain assumptions is both deliberate and unconscious. For instance, it is apparent that much of the research in library science is defined by, and conducted for, elites determined to gain instrumental control over libraries. It is hard to believe that the researcher's partnership with those in authority is not self-consciously made, and that these same researchers are indifferent to what is to be controlled for what purpose.

It would also appear true, however, that large numbers of researchers in this field have been able to effectively repress any awareness of their own values and genuinely believe in the value-neutrality of their approach. It is all too common for scholars in this field to affect a sort of willful methodological naïveté. This profession seems persuaded that it possesses a neutrality that gives the work an almost autonomous and self-authenticating stature. I now believe that one of the most essential tasks is to expose the "historically conditioned character" of our work, to preside, if you will, over the unmasking of our claim to autonomy founded on a nonexistent neutrality.[34]

Mary Hesse[35] recently summed up the matter when she noted:

> The fact that the view of the social sciences presented here is more often associated with the particular choice of value goals of the revolutionary left does not in the least invalidate the general argument, nor reduce—rather it increases—the need for the moderate centre and right to look to its own value choices. Neither liberal denial that there are such value choices nor cynical right-wing suppression of them from consciousness will meet the case.

Finally, I feel that our work should be dialectical. An emphasis on the dialectic should replace our positivist tendencies to highlight surface appearances. Drawing on Marx, I would argue that there is an essential difference between the "level of appearances" and the underlying social conditions which generate these appearances. As Erik Olin Wright points out, "the central claim is that the vast array of empirical phenomena immediately observable in social life can only be explained if we analyze the social reality hidden behind those appearances."[36] The positivist tendency to remain on the surface of appearances allows them to describe these phenomena, but not to explain them.

Explanation requires a "theory of the underlying structures of social relations, of the contradictions embedded in those structures, of the ways in which those underlying structures generate the appearances people encounter in everyday life."[37] As a result the dialectical mode of analysis stresses change, conflict, and tension as the foundations of reality rather than stability and consensus. This dialectical emphasis on contradiction, it is suggested, enables "the analyst to be far more sensitive to social potentialities than the more conventional" positivist approaches that dominated the social sciences in the postwar era.[38]

Sadly, nearly all of our research is policy-oriented, designed for immediate professional consumption, and this only reinforces the desire to find reductionist answers of "relevance." All too frequently the emphasis is on professionally palatable findings. Most of this work is quite expert, but it is also unwilling to challenge conventional wisdom. We need to place this complacently descriptive approach to research in question and begin to explore the contradictions inherent in the delivery of "free library service" in a capitalist society.

Conclusion

I have covered rather an extensive terrain, and I fear I have not explored any of it in enough detail to completely satisfy my readers. I

have contended that the basic shortcomings of research in library and information science can be traced to our belated, but nearly complete, conversion to the positivist definition of epistemological rectitude. And that this epistemological self-righteousness has led library and information science researchers to make a fetish of certain methodological approaches to their work and has blinded researchers to the right questions. I have maintained that our research, and ultimately the practice of librarianship itself, requires a radical reorientation if we are to gain any significant understanding of the social reality within which librarians pursue their goals in modern America. To do so it will be necessary to relinquish the rigid commitment to positivism as the only legitimate path to knowledge and to question the concomitant allegiance to "instrumental reason" as the surest guide to professional praxis.

Editor's Note: This paper was presented in preliminary form at a joint meeting of the American Library Association's Library History Round Table and Library Research Round Table in Chicago on 6 July 1985.

References

1. There is substantial literature relating to research in library science. A good example of the state of the art with extensive bibliographies will be found in Busha, Charles H., and Harter, Stephen P. *Research Methods in Librarianship: Techniques and Interpretation.* New York: Academic Press, 1980. Short, but pivotal, essays which provide general assessments of research in library and information science, and which rehearse many of the arguments listed in this paragraph are Williamson, C.C. "The Place of Research in Library Science." *Library Quarterly* 1(Jan. 1931):1-17; Shera, Jesse H. "Darwin, Bacon, and Research in Librarianship." *Library Trends* 13(July 1964):141-49; Ennis, Phillip. "Commitment to Research." *Wilson Library Bulletin* 41(May 1967):899-901; Fry, Bernard. "Research Conducted in Library Schools." *Information Storage and Retrieval* 9(1973):249-55; Jackson, Sidney L. "Research." In *A Century of Service,* edited by Sidney L. Jackson et al., pp. 341-54. Chicago: ALA, 1976; and Childers, Thomas. "Will the Cycle be Unbroken: Research and Schools of Library and Information Science." *Library Trends* 32(Spring 1984):521-36. The Spring 1984 issue of *Library Trends* is devoted to "Research." Taken collectively the papers therein provide a detailed description of the state of the art with detailed bibliography.

2. I haven't encountered anyone who has advanced anything quite like my interpretation. However, a number of scholars provided me with some useful clues. Most important are two works by Shera. See Shera, Jesse H. *The Foundations of Education for Librarianship.* New York: Wiley, 1972, wherein he explicitly indicts "positivism" as the culprit, but seems unable to credit Chicago with sending us down this blind alley; and ————— . "Librarianship and Information Science." In *The Study of Information: Interdisciplinary Messages,* edited by Fritz Machlup and Una Mansfield, pp. 379-88. New York: Wiley, 1983, where Shera briefly notes the extent to which librarians have come to worship "instrumental reason" and find themselves unable to make the distinction between "data systems and idea systems" (p.384). To the best of my knowledge Shera's student Curtis Wright was the first to suggest to librarians that "positivism is dead" in his

"Inquiry in Science and Librarianship." *Journal of Library History* 13(Summer 1978):250-64. Some few scholars (beyond Shera) have argued at length that the problem lies in our failure to attend to promising work in other disciplines, and their work seems to have been generally ignored. Examples would be Bergen, Daniel. "Librarians and the Bipolarization of the Academic Enterprise." *College & Research Libraries* 24(Nov. 1963):467-80; Rawski, Conrad. "The Interdisciplinarity of Librarianship." In *Towards a Theory of Librarianship: Essays in Honor of Jesse Hauk Shera*, edited by Conrad Rawski, pp. 116-46. Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow, 1973; and Shaughnessy, Thomas. "Theory Building in Librarianship." *Journal of Library History* 11(April 1976):167-77. Finally, two wonderfully iconoclastic papers helped me understand research in library and information science without ever explicitly touching my theme. See, Wilkinson, John. "The Legitimation of Librarianship." *Libri* 33(1983):37-44; and Wilson, Patrick. "Bibliographical R&D." In *The Study of Information: Interdisciplinary Messages*, pp. 389-97.

3. Butler, Pierce. *An Introduction to Library Science.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1933, pp. xi-xii.

4. Works, George A. "The Graduate Library School of the University of Chicago." *Libraries* 34(1929):310-14. The GLS has been the subject of extensive treatment. Two studies which treat the years of importance here are: Churchwell, Charles D. *The Shaping of American Library Education.* Chicago: ALA, 1975; and Carroll, C. Edward. *The Professionalization of Education for Librarianship.* Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow, 1970. Both of these works misunderstand the role of the GLS in the definition of research for librarians. A much more detailed and thorough study is now available in Richardson, John, Jr. *The Spirit of Inquiry: The Graduate Library School at Chicago, 1921-51.* Chicago: ALA, 1982. A book that documents the positivist direction at Chicago without ever drawing the obvious conclusion is Karetzky, Stephen. *Reading Research and Librarianship: A History and Analysis.* Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1982. Perhaps the most insightful treatment of the GLS remains Shera's *Foundations of Education for Librarianship.*

5. The debate is nicely packaged in Ellsworth, Diane, and Stevens, Norman D., eds. *Landmarks of Library Literature, 1876-1976.* Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow, 1976, which reprints the papers of Waples, Williamson, and Thompson.

6. Lloyd Houser and Alvin M. Schrader argue that Wilson caved into the critics and severely diluted the "paradigmatic" thrust of the school. I don't believe the evidence will support their conclusions as outlined in their book, *The Search for a Scientific Profession: Library Science Education in the United States and Canada.* Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow, 1978. Indeed, as my argument will attempt to show, I contend that Houser and Schrader completely misunderstood the impact of the GLS's research program on library education. Richardson, *Spirit of Inquiry* provides a detailed analysis of the evidence surrounding the Wilson matter, and Jesse Shera, "Education for Librarianship: An Assessment and a Perspective." *Library Quarterly* 49(July 1979):310-16, sharply dissects and ultimately dismembers Houser and Schrader's argument.

7. Wilson, Louis Round. *Education and Libraries.* Hamilton, Conn.: Shoe String, 1966, p. 29.

8. Shera, *The Foundations of Education for Librarianship*, p. 247. In the late 1920s the University of Chicago's Sociology Department was the largest and most influential in the country. However, it was on the brink of decline. See, Matthews, Fred H. *Quest for an American Sociology: Robert E. Park and the Chicago School.* Montreal: McGill/Queen's University Press, 1977. He argues that sociology was the most "empirical" of the Chicago social sciences (p. 221).

9. Munthe, Wilhelm. *American Librarianship from a European Angle.* Chicago: ALA, 1939, p. 193. White, Carl M. *A Historical Introduction in Library Education: Problems and Progress to 1951.* Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow, 1976, has a good summary of this issue (pp. 231+).

10. Butler, Pierce. "Librarianship as a Profession." In *Landmarks of Library Literature*, p. 29.

11. The trendline is unmistakable, but rarely remarked upon. The evidence is now all in and is clearly written between the lines in the following works: Kajberg, Leif. "Research Methods for Librarianship in Retrospect. Some Observations on American Achievements." *Libri* 23(1973):52-57; Peritz, Bluma C. "The Methods of Library Science Research: Some Results from a Bibliometric Survey." *Library Research* 2(Fall 1980):251-60; and Schlachter, Gail, and Thomison, Dennis. "The Library Science Doctorate: A Quantitative Analysis of Dissertations and Recipients." *Journal of Education for Librarianship* 15(Fall 1974):95-120. Jesse Shera was quite explicit when he noted that since "research had for so long been foreign to librarianship, when librarians did take the plunge they became over-enthusiastic converts" to the positivism so dominant in the social sciences. Surveys and "skill in statistical manipulation" became the norm. See his "Darwin, Bacon and Research in Librarianship," p. 146. For an acknowledgment of the extent to which surveys have come to dominate our research, and an assessment of this method's weaknesses, see, Bookstein, Abraham. "Questionnaire Research in a Library Setting." *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 11(March 1985):24-28.

12. The demography of this community has been carefully charted. In addition to Schlachter and Thomison previously cited, see: Carpenter, Roy L., and Carpenter, Patricia A. "The Doctorate in Librarianship: An Assessment of Graduate Library Education." *Journal of Education for Librarianship* 11(Summer 1970):3-45; Danton, J. Periam. "Doctoral Study in Librarianship in the United States." *College & Research Libraries* 20(Nov. 1959):435-58; Hayes, Robert M. "Citation Statistics as a Measure of Faculty Research Productivity." *Journal of Education for Librarianship* 23(Winter 1983):151-72; Kilpela, Raymond. "Library School Faculty Doctorates: A Statistical Review." *Journal of Education for Librarianship* 22(Spring 1982):239-59; and Lane, Nancy D. "Characteristics Related to Productivity Among Doctoral Graduates in Librarianship." Ph.D. diss., University of California at Berkeley, 1975.

13. It would probably require a book to persuade the widespread adoption of this model among researchers in library science. The consensus among the research community is perhaps best illustrated by the content of the methods texts in the field. Two short quotes will have to suffice. Busha, and Harter, *Research Methods in Librarianship*, p. 6 note: "librarians, like other behavioral and social scientists, can be optimistic about the field's potential to evolve into an empirical science in which broad principles can be generalized from particular instances." Herbert Goldhor put it this way: "Librarianship today is particularly in need of the generalized truths which scientific research is designed to uncover....Until we can state universal generalizations or laws,...librarianship will remain an art or a field of practice and will not be a science or a discipline." Goldhor, Herbert. *An Introduction to Scientific Research in Librarianship*. Urbana: University of Illinois, Graduate School of Library Science, 1972, p. 2. The belief that a science of librarianship is both desirable and possible, if not yet firmly in place, represents a mirror image of the situation in the social sciences in the 1950s.

14. Richardson, *Spirit of Inquiry*, deals briefly with the interrelationship between the various disciplines at Chicago and the GLS. However, his work would have been improved if he would have more thoroughly investigated the intellectual influences flowing into the school from the many "enriching disciplines."

15. Bestor, Arthur. *The Restoration of Learning*. New York: Knopf, 1956, pp. 71-72; and Altman, Ellen. "Editorial." *Library Research* 1(Winter 1979):293-94. Occasionally, someone will suggest that the library research community has been quite open to interdisciplinary developments. A recent example is Mary Jo Lynch, who argues for this position in the introduction to the Spring 1984 issue of *Library Trends* entitled "Research in Librarianship." Ironically, the rest of the papers (each dealing with a discipline in the social sciences) appear to prove just the opposite, although few of the authors of those essays seem to be able to bring themselves to actually say so. See, for example, Estabrook, Leigh. "Sociology and Library Research." *Library Trends* 32(Spring 1984):471. Estabrook notes that doctoral students in library science have virtually no exposure to theory and research in sociology and that sociology has had "not much" influence on our field.

Then after documenting that argument via detailed citation analysis, she curiously concludes that "library research is incorporating both the methodology of sociology and its research findings." I consider this whole issue of *Library Trends* as a huge, and very timely, footnote to my principal argument.

16. Bernstein, Richard J. *The Restructuring of Political and Social Theory*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1978, p. xi. Bernstein's book provides an incisive analysis of the chaos and confusion in the social sciences, summarizes the principal contending schools of thought, and posits a new direction. Several other works cover the same ground in highly original ways. See: Giddens, Anthony. *New Rules of Sociological Method: A Positive Critique of Interpretive Sociologies*. New York: Basic Books, 1976; Rabinow, Paul, and Sullivan, William M., eds. *Interpretive Social Science: A Reader*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979; and Dallmayr, Fred R., and McCarthy, Thomas A., eds. *Understandings and Social Inquiry*. South Bend, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1977. The editors of the last book provide commentary and readings which trace the history of the controversy.

17. Bernstein, *The Restructuring of Social and Political Theory*, pp. 93-104, presents a vivid analysis of the extent and nature of this misreading. Gary Gutting has also examined the matter and concludes that many used Kuhnian paradigm analysis in order to give "Kuhnian accounts of the history and current status of their disciplines." "Although such accounts have not been entirely fruitless," Gutting says, "they are entirely misdirected as efforts to exhibit the scientific status of the social sciences or to discover how to put them on the 'sure path of a science.' " Gutting also presents a number of representative essays on the paradigm concept in the social sciences, and concludes that there simply is no social scientific paradigm concept in the Kuhnian sense. See: Gutting, Gary. *Paradigms and Revolutions: Applications and Appraisals of Thomas Kuhn's Philosophy of Science*. South Bend, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1980. It must be noted that Houser and Schrader misused Kuhn's paradigm construct in exactly this way so as to put us on the "sure path to a science." See: Houser, and Schrader, *The Search for a Scientific Profession*.

18. There are many works on this topic, but the most influential is probably Gouldner, Alvin. *The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology*. New York: Basic Books, 1970.

19. Bernstein, *The Restructuring of Social and Political Theory*, p. 88+, nicely covers this issue. See also the material cited in reference 16.

20. This theme is central to the new critical and interpretive social science. The issue and the nature of the project envisioned by these new schools will be discussed in the last part of this essay.

21. Rabinow, and Sullivan, eds., *Interpretive Social Science*, p. 4.

22. Giddens, *New Rules of Sociological Method*, p. 13.

23. My paper, entitled "State, Class, and Cultural Reproduction: Toward a Theory of Library Service in the United States," will appear in *Advances in Librarianship* (forthcoming). In that paper I focus on ontological, or paradigmatic, issues and devote only passing attention to the epistemological issues analyzed here. Taken together, the two essays constitute my attempt to restructure the way we define the "right" questions and the nature of "correct" answers.

24. This phrase is drawn from the title of Richard Bernstein's new book, *Beyond Objectivism and Subjectivism: Science, Hermeneutics and Praxis*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983. The either/or dichotomy is frequently carried to the heights of absurdity by scholars in library and information science. A good recent example is: Houser, Lloyd. "The Ph.D. Dissertation in Library Science." *Library Research* 4(Spring 1982):102. Houser argues, after presenting a confused definition of knowledge, that "the choices are science or nonscience." The whole point of my essay is that this view is nonsense, and at the very least is uninformed by the recent epistemological debates in the social sciences. While Houser, and probably the majority of the library research community, would insist that we must follow a positivist path, Daniel Bergen's "Issues of Access in the New Information Age," a paper delivered at the conference on "Everyman's Access

to Information in the New Information Age," School of Library and Information Studies, University of Wisconsin, 19 Oct. 1984, presents a much more reasoned, and dangerous, argument for relativism.

25. See, Chatman, Elfreda A. "Field Research: Methodological Themes." *Library and Information Science Research* 6(Oct./Dec. 1984):425-38; Maack, Mary Niles. "Comparative Methodology as a Means for Assessing the Impact of Feminization and Professionalism in Librarianship." *International Library Review* 17(Jan. 1985):5-16; Glazier, Jack. "Structured Observation: How it Works." *College & Research Library News* 46(March 1985):105-08; Natoli, Joseph P. "Librarianship as a Human Science: Theory, Method and Application." *Library Research* 4(Summer 1982):163-74; and Odi, Amusi. "Creative Research and Theory Building in Library and Information Science." *College & Research Libraries* 43(July 1982):312-19.

26. Shorske, Carl E. *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture*. New York: Vintage Books, 1981, p. xviii. See also, Chartier, Roger. "Intellectual History or Sociocultural History?" In *Modern European Intellectual History: Reappraisals and New Perspectives*, edited by Dominick LaCapra and Steven L. Kaplan, pp. 13-36, and esp. p. 43. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1982; Abrams, Philip. *Historical Sociology*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1982; and Skocpol, Theda, ed. *Vision and Method in Historical Sociology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.

27. One of America's most influential social scientists makes this point nicely when he writes, "Grand Rubrics like 'Natural Science,' 'Biological Science,' 'Social Science,' and 'the Humanities' have their uses in organizing curricula, in sorting scholars into cliques and professional communities, and in distinguishing broad traditions of intellectual style....But when the rubrics are taken to be a borders-and-territories map of intellectual life, or worse a Linnaean catalogue into which to classify scholarly species, they merely block what is really going on out there." He goes on to note that we are currently witnessing a ferment of "blurred genres" that is leading to a considerable realignment "in scholarly affinities" and that the lines "grouping scholars together into intellectual communities...are these days running at some highly eccentric angles." See: Geertz, Clifford. *Local Knowledge*. New York: Basic Books, 1983, pp. 1, 7-8, 24.

28. Flacks, Richard. "Marxism and Sociology." In *The Left Academy: Marxist Scholarship and American Campuses*, edited by Bertell Ollman and Edward Vernoff, p. 16. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1982. A highly imaginative application of this framework will be found in, Hearn, Francis. *Domination, Legitimation, and Resistance: The Incorporation of the Nineteenth-Century English Working Class*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1978. See especially the first chapter, "Critical Theory and Social Incorporation."

29. For an interesting discussion of this point see, Runciman, W.G. *Sociology in its Place and Other Essays*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970, p. 11.

30. Barnes, *T.S. Kuhn and Social Science*, p. 50.

31. Bleicher, Josef. *The Hermeneutic Imagination: Outline of a Positive Critique of Scientism and Sociology*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982, p. 11. Also see: Jameson, Frederic. *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1981, p. 59.

32. Gouldner, *The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology*, p. 35. This issue and the related moral and ethical questions have been the focus of a great deal of attention recently. Two very useful collections of essays have recently appeared, and they amply represent the intensity and conflict surrounding the issues: Haan, Norma, et al., eds. *Social Science as Moral Inquiry*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1983; and Hollis, Martin, and Lukes, Steven, eds. *Rationality and Relativism*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1982.

33. Taylor, Charles. "Interpretation and the Sciences of Man." In *Interpretative Social Science*, p. 53.

34. See: White, Hayden. *Tropics of Discourse*. Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978, p. 29.

35. Hesse, Mary. "Theory and Value in the Social Sciences." In *Action and Interpretation: Studies in the Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, edited by Christopher Hookway and Philip Pettit, p. 16. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978.

36. Wright, Erik Olin. *Class, Crisis and the State*. London: Verso Editions, 1978, p. 12.

37. Heilbroner, Robert L. *Marxism: For and Against*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1980, p. 35.

38. Flacks, "Marxism and Sociology," p. 19.