

LIBRARY SCIENCE ANNUAL

VOLUME 2

1986

**Bohdan S. Wynar
Heather Cameron**

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ARBA	American Reference Books Annual
BL	Booklist
BR	Book Report
C&RL	College & Research Libraries
CLJ	Canadian Library Journal
EL	Emergency Librarian
JAL	Journal of Academic Librarianship
LJ	Library Journal
RBB	Reference Books Bulletin
RQ	RQ
SLJ	School Library Journal
SLMQ	School Library Media Quarterly
TN	Top of the News
VOYA	Voice of Youth Advocates
WLB	Wilson Library Bulletin

Introduction

In their follow-up study to Chen and Galvin's landmark 1975 report, "Reviewing the Literature of Librarianship" (*ARBA* 75), Webreck and Weedman have concluded that the status of the professional library review literature had not changed much between 1975 and 1983 (see pp. 3-12). Specifically, their analysis of the reviewing mechanisms of the professional library literature for 1983 found that even though "more monographs are published each year ... a smaller percentage of the total are reviewed in the professional media. The reviews that do appear are concentrated on a minority of the titles published, and there are a core number of journals which tend to duplicate the coverage of these titles.... The recommendations for these titles are usually positive" (p. 12).

These findings parallel the assertions about the professional library review literature made by the editors of *Library Science Annual* in last year's inaugural volume. Accordingly, *LSA* volume 2 has retained the same broad objectives and scope of that first effort:

1. To review all English-language monographs and reference books in library science published in a year, not just selected or recommended titles. Volume 1 reviewed 253 titles, principally U.S., a few Canadian imprints, and some other imprints distributed in the United States. Volume 2, extending coverage to Canadian imprints, reviews 305 titles.
2. To evaluate systematically all English-language library science periodicals and indexing services. Each year, the editors of *LSA* will select titles for review. Forty-two periodicals published in the United States and Canada were

reviewed in volume 1, including some of national or regional interest and some that are subject-oriented. Volume 2 reviews 22 titles and begins coverage of library science databases with reviews of *LIBRARY LITERATURE (WILSONLINE)* and *LIBRARY & INFORMATION SCIENCE ABSTRACTS (LISA)*.

3. To highlight research trends in library science by providing abstracts of the most significant doctoral dissertations produced in a year. For volume 1, Gail A. Schlachter contributed abstracts of 32 dissertations. For volume 2, Schlachter has expanded coverage to 50 abstracts.
4. To report on the production and distribution of knowledge in library science through essays by prominent library educators, practitioners, and publishers. Specific areas will be emphasized in each volume. For example, volume 1 included several essays on library science publishing. Volume 2 features several important articles on reviewing. Sue Webreck and Judith Weedman's revealing analysis of the professional library review literature, cited earlier, is followed by thoughtful essays on reference book reviewing by Jim Rettig, on children's and young adult book reviewing by Claire England and Adele Fasick, and on book reviewing in Canada by Gwynneth Evans. Next come two interesting surveys: one on library ephemera by Norman Stevens and one on library science histories by Laurel Grotzinger.

Completing part 1 is Director of Publishing Services at ALA Gary Facente's tribute to ALA's publishing division. It is appropriate that ALA's substantial contribution to library science publishing be lauded in this, its 100th anniversary year.

Articles in volume 3 of *LSA* will focus on collection development, and several prominent library science publishers will be invited to contribute profiles of their firms.

5. To attempt, over time, a permanent record of the intellectual activity in librarianship and to impose bibliographic control over the literature.

Certain categories of materials are not covered in *LSA*. Those include specific periodical articles, publications of vanity presses, and certain inhouse publications which are institution-specific. For the time being, limited distribution research reports, audiovisual materials, and some continuing education "kits" produced by ALA divisions or affiliates will not be covered.

REVIEWING POLICY

The editors of *Library Science Annual* have applied the same rigorous reviewing standards that *American Reference Books Annual* is noted for. The *LSA* staff keeps an up-to-date list of well-qualified library educators and practitioners so that books may be assigned for review appropriately. This year *LSA* has used the services of over 154 librarians and scholars at libraries and universities throughout the United States and Canada; their names are listed following this introduction. Reviews in *LSA* are signed as a matter of editorial policy.

Standard instructions for *LSA* reviewers, prepared by the editorial staff, are briefly summarized here: Reviewers should discuss the work and then provide well-documented critical comments, positive or negative. Such things as the usefulness of the given work; organization, execution, and pertinence of contents; prose style; format; availability of supplementary materials (e.g., indexes, appendices); and similarity to other works and/or previous editions are normally discussed. Reviewers are

encouraged to note intended audience and/or level, but the review need not conclude with specific recommendations for purchase.

All the materials reviewed are given full bibliographic description, and citations to other review sources are given for books.

ARRANGEMENT

LSA is arranged in four parts. Part 1 contains 7 essays contributed by authors well known in Canada and the United States, treating various library science publishing areas. Part 2, comprising reviews of 305 books, is arranged into subjects, including such areas as acquisitions, cataloging, comparative and international librarianship, management, school library media centers, and special libraries and collections. Reviews of 22 periodicals, arranged under the headings National, Subject-oriented, Regional, and Databases, compose part 3. The fourth and final part has abstracts of 50 dissertations listed alphabetically by title.

AUDIENCE

We hope that all professional librarians will benefit from *Library Science Annual*. It has been created with the needs of students and researchers, practitioners and library educators in mind. We believe that publishers and other information professionals will also find much of interest. We urge librarians to contribute their suggestions for improvement, and to support our efforts to create an outstanding annual review for librarians in the United States and internationally.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

In closing, we wish to express our gratitude to the many contributors without whose support this second volume of *LSA* could not have been compiled. We would also like to thank the members of our staff who were instrumental in the preparation of *LSA*: assistant editors Hannah L. Kelminson and Anna Grace Patterson; as well as Judy Gay Matthews, Kay Minnis, and Gloria Powell. Special recognition should be given to Mary Ann Goff, who compiled the author/title index and proofread this volume, and to Debbie Burnham-Kidwell, who compiled the subject index.

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Part I ESSAYS

Professional Library Literature: An Analysis of the Review Literature*

Book reviews are a critical component in the professional and scholarly literature of a field. They perform a number of functions which are vital to the communication process. This study examines factors which influence how well these functions are performed by the review media for the professional and scholarly literature in the field of library science.

Reviews serve to alert readers of the journals in which they appear to the existence of new works. For many professionals, this may be the only systematic way of learning about newly published books in the field which might be of value to them. For individuals selecting books for library collections, reviews also serve as notification of materials which should be considered for purchase.

Book reviews are generally considered to be evaluative in purpose. They serve a gatekeeping function in the channels of formal, published communication; no reader or selector can—or probably should—acquire everything which is published, and reviews provide a tool for deciding which books are worth expenditure of time and money.

In addition, reviews add to the general knowledge of the individuals who read them. Reviews provide an awareness of what subjects are currently of professional concern to practitioners and scholars, some summary of the opinions and facts which constitute the books, and the reviewer's judgment of the value and accuracy of that content.

Reviews provide the first and in many cases the only public feedback to the author of a

book. Individual reactions may or may not be communicated by colleagues on a personal basis; an evaluative review provides a public statement of the reception of a work by the profession. While each review expresses only one reader's opinion, if a book receives multiple reviews, they collectively provide some assessment of the work's perceived value to the audience for which it was written. Since the communication of an author's ideas to others is the implicit purpose of publication, even one review holds significance for the author as an indication of the success of that communication. Although authors may feel for various reasons that reviews do not provide trustworthy information for them, the reviews still have significance as the public, formalized statement of response to the book.

Reviews may also contribute to (or detract from) an author's professional standing, as they assess both the contribution of the work and in some cases the reputation of the author.

Reviews thus serve as intermediaries between an author and other professionals and scholars in the field, providing information to each about the other. In 1975, Ching-Chih Chen and Thomas J. Galvin reported on the state of the art of reviewing in the profession of librarianship.¹ After an examination of the reviews of monographs published in 1971, they concluded that improvement was needed in the reviewing process. The object of this report is to assess the situation twelve years later, examining the reviewing of monographs published in 1983.

*The authors wish to acknowledge with thanks the assistance of Mark Patrick in collection of data.

Since 1971, there has been a 42 percent increase in the number of monographs published per year and a 45 percent increase in the average cost per book.^{2,3} This increase is reflected in the

professional literature of library science, with a 31 percent change from 1971 to 1983 (see table 1).

Table 1.

	1971	1983
New books published in U.S.	24,288	42,236
New library science books published in U.S.	222	321
Average cost per book	\$13.25	\$24.22

Those involved in collection development in library science or who wish to select monographs for their own reading are faced with difficult choices regarding which works to include and which to exclude. The results of a study such as this can be useful in assessing the value of reviews for this decision-making process.

The findings and conclusions of the Chen-Galvin study are summarized in the first section of this report in order to provide information which will be used for comparative analyses. The second section outlines the method used by the current investigators, and reports the findings of this study. Results of the Chen-Galvin study are highlighted in conjunction with the reporting of the current findings, to provide the perspective of change over time.

THE CHEN-GALVIN STUDY

Scope of the Study

The purpose of the Chen-Galvin study was "to describe the present state of reviewing of current English language monographs in the field of library science, as reflected in American and Canadian journals."⁴ The imprint year chosen for the investigation was 1971; works surveyed were English-language monographs in the field of library science published in North America or available in North America through normal distribution channels. The total number of such titles for 1971 was 222; 164 of those titles were reviewed in at least one professional periodical. A total of 372 reviews were located and examined; those reviews were found in twenty-two periodical publications. The following areas were addressed by the study:

1. The portion of the literature which could be identified through the primary announcement media.

2. The existence of reviews for this literature in selected American and Canadian professional library periodicals.
3. The works receiving the greatest number of reviews.
4. The relative comprehensiveness of the various review media.
5. The timeliness of the review media.
6. The depth of the reviews.
7. The extent to which the reviews evaluated rather than simply described the works.
8. The frequency of negative reviews.
9. The number of reviewers involved and their affiliations.

Methodology of the Chen-Galvin Study

As the first stage of the study, the investigators compiled a list of monographs meeting the selection criteria through a search of classes 020 through 029 in *Book Publishing Record*, *Publishers Weekly's* "Weekly Record," *Forthcoming Books*, and the actual review media. A thirty-month period was used, from January 1971 through June 1973.

The second stage of the study identified and examined a list of twenty-nine "high yield" professional periodicals published in the United States and Canada. These journals were the ones expected by the investigators to be the most

important review media for library science monographs. They were thought to review a significant number of professional titles, to provide more than simple descriptive information, to be addressed to a national audience, and to be published at least semiannually.⁵ Seven journals were subsequently omitted from the study because they did not meet these conditions during the time period in question, resulting in a total of twenty-two journals considered to be high-yield review media.

All issues of each journal were systematically searched for reviews, and those reviews were recorded. Short, unsigned, exclusively descriptive announcements were omitted. The following data were gathered: title of the work reviewed, author, source and date of the review, name of the reviewer, length of review, and the reviewer's evaluation of the work.

Results of the Chen-Galvin Study

Seventy-five percent of the monographs were announced through the standard media, and thus readily accessible to selectors in search of professional library science publications. Twenty-five percent of those titles, however, never appeared in the announcement media; for them, the only access was through the reviews which eventually appeared. This group included titles from North American trade publishers, university presses, and professional organizations; only thirteen (23.6 percent of the non-announced titles) were published outside North America.

Of the 222 new titles identified with 1971 imprints, 164 (74 percent) were reviewed in the twenty-two high-yield journals. The highest number of library science titles reviewed in any single medium was 87, 39 percent of all titles identified; the periodical was *Library Journal*. Second highest was 74, or 33 percent, in *Canadian Library Journal*. The percentage dropped steeply at that point to 14 percent in *College and Research Libraries*.

Significant duplication existed in review coverage of the titles. Forty-three percent of all titles identified were reviewed in more than one journal. Of these 95 titles, 76 percent were reviewed in *Library Journal*. Chen and Galvin estimate that using only the five highest-yield journals, selectors of library science monographs would have access to more than four-fifths of the new titles in the field being reviewed by the major journals.

Chen and Galvin also examined length of time between date of publication for a monograph and the appearance of a review. Precise publication dates could be determined for 109

of the monographs. The average time lag for these was found to be 8.46 months. When only those journals reviewing twenty or more of the monographs were considered, the average was 8.1 months. The lowest average time lag was for *Wilson Library Bulletin* (5.4 months); the highest was *College and Research Libraries* with a 12.1 month lag.

The most extensive reviews were found in *Library Quarterly* (an average of 875 words in length) and *Library Journal* (408 words).

By far the largest number of reviews were positive in character. Chen and Galvin found 70.9 percent of the reviews to be favorable. An additional 10.2 percent were not evaluative in character.

Chen and Galvin conclude that "the reviewing process is of limited value with regard to the 'selection' function, and that in the fields of library and information science, the 'peer appraisal' aspect of book reviewing might more correctly be termed 'peer congratulation.' The results of our study suggest a need for the professional journals to broaden review coverage of new works in library and information science, to strive to expedite the reviewing process, and to seek a higher critical level in appraising the output of the library press."⁶

SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

In the present study, the investigators sought to address those questions that were also examined in the Chen-Galvin project: What portion of the current monographic literature of library science that is published in North America or available through the normal distribution channels of the American book trade can be identified through primary announcement media and cumulative publication sources—*American Book Publishing Record (BPR)* and *Books in Print (BIP)*? What portion of this literature is reviewed in selected American and Canadian professional periodicals? Which of these periodicals are most comprehensive in their coverage of the monographic literature? Which publications are reviewed most extensively? What is the average length of these reviews? What is the frequency of negative reviews? In addition, this study examined the similarities and differences in the findings of the two projects and noted the changes that were evident since the earlier study.

This study was concerned with the quantity of English-language monographs in library science with 1983 imprint dates, and the ways in which these monographs were identified—through the announcement media, cumulated publication sources, or professional periodical