



# Recent Publications

## BOOK REVIEWS

*The Study of Information: Interdisciplinary Messages.* Ed. by Fritz Machlup and Una Mansfield. New York: Wiley, 1983. 767p. \$39.95. LC 83-12147. ISBN 0-471-88717-X.

The American scholarly community lost a distinguished member with the death of Fritz Machlup in January 1983. By discipline an economist, he became better known to librarians through his seminal 1962 work, published by Princeton University Press, *The Production and Distribution of Knowledge in the United States*. In the following decade Praeger published an even more imposing related work by Machlup, the four-volume *Information Through the Printed Word: The Dissemination of Scholarly, Scientific, and Intellectual Knowledge*. While preparing this work, Machlup surveyed academic librarians. He was so concerned at their seeming lack of knowledge about their own libraries' acquisitions that he chided them in an October 1976 AAUP *Bulletin* article. With that annoyance put aside, Machlup proved a gracious and perceptive speaker at the first ACRL national conference in Boston in 1978.

By that time Machlup had formally retired from his Princeton teaching position but was continuing his academic career at New York University. He also had a major plan under way to update his 1962 work with a series of ten volumes to be published by Princeton and to bear the overall title *Knowledge, Its Creation, Distribution, and Economic Significance*. Shortly before his death, he had completed work on volume 3. The first three volumes are *Knowledge and Knowledge Production*, *The Branches of Learning*, and *The Economics of Information and Human Capital*.

In this new work, volume 4 was to consider the information sciences and was originally intended as part of volume 2. To prepare the way for this volume, Machlup invited thirty-nine scholars in various branches of the information sciences to write essays on their fields of endeavor. These essays comprise the present volume, a work edited by Machlup and his research associate, Una Mansfield, and published following his death.

The essays here present a group of "interdisciplinary messages" in which the scholars describe their views of the relationships between their fields and other disciplines in the information sciences. Machlup, aware of the "forbidding array of disciplines, metadisciplines, interdisciplines, and specialties" included under the general heading of information sciences, selected only a few for consideration. They are covered in the nine major sections of the work: cognitive science, computer and information science, artificial intelligence, linguistics, library and information sciences, cybernetics, information theory, mathematical system theory, and general system theory.

The plan for each section is to present a lead article prepared by one scholar, followed by commentaries by other scholars in that field, and concluding with a statement by the lead author. For example, in the section on library and information sciences, W. Boyd Rayward is the lead author of a piece entitled "Library and Information Sciences: Disciplinary Differentiation, Competition, and Convergence." There are four responses: the first by David Batty and Toni Carbo Bearman and the other three by Manfred Kochen, Jesse H. Shera, and Patrick Wilson. In his

rejoinder, "Librarianship and Information Research: Together or Apart?" Rayward comments on each response. Unlike a standard symposium or anthology that includes a series of unrelated papers on a given subject, this plan works well for providing a form of dialogue among scholars in a given discipline. Altogether there are fifty-six articles in these principal sections.

A lengthy introduction to the volume, "Cultural Diversity in Studies of Information," provides a setting and context for the following principal sections. In an epilogue, "Semantic Quirks in Studies of Information," Machlup gives his own rejoinder to the previous papers, presenting his views on what the authors mean by information, by science, and by computing. Machlup died before he had completed writing this section, and Mansfield prepared the final text for publication, noting the missing parts and what they would have included.

A list of approximately one thousand references and a name index conclude the volume. The list of references, arranged alphabetically by author, does not, however, serve as a subject bibliography for the individual disciplines covered.

This is not a volume one will read from cover to cover. Instead, one will consult its individual sections to discover how present-day scholars view their subject disciplines and relationships with other fields. But as readers study one section, they may be led to others and may also benefit from Machlup and Mansfield's introductory and concluding essays.

This volume is but one part of the mammoth legacy Fritz Machlup has left to the world of scholarship. We hope that his colleagues and students will be able to continue and conclude the research that he began.—Richard D. Johnson, *State University of New York, College at Oneonta*.

**Richards, Pamela Spence.** *Scholars and Gentleman: The Library of the New-York Historical Society, 1804-1982*. Hamden, Conn.: Archon, 1984. 144p. \$17.50. LC 83-15876. ISBN 0-208-2039-X.

The New-York Historical Society, founded in 1804, is the second oldest historical society in the United States. A cultural institution of national significance,

the society maintains a library and a museum, the latter devoted to the fine arts and the decorative arts. The resources of the society include more than five hundred thousand volumes, several million transcripts, and an extensive collection of prints, photographs, drawings, and paintings with a particular emphasis on the history of New York City and New York state and the early colonial period.

In *Scholars and Gentlemen: The Library of the New-York Historical Society, 1804-1982*, Pamela Spence Richards traces the fortunes and misfortunes of the institution during its 178-year history. As the subtitle indicates, she places her emphasis on the library that played a dominant role in the development of the historical society: the collecting of historical materials was seen as the primary task of the society from its inception. Richards does, however, show how the museum collections grew, how they occasionally seemed to overwhelm the scholarly functions of the library, and how the museum eventually became a separate department that took on the general educational functions of the society.

Evident throughout Richards' narrative are the difficulties that the society faced as a result of its limited financial resources. Although it received an occasional grant from the state of New York early in its history, and some funds from private foundations and federal funding agencies in the twentieth century, the institution has survived primarily on an endowment built up by philanthropic New Yorkers. Financial constraints over the years nearly led to the sale of the library in 1825; caused delays and ultimately the suspension of the publishing activities of the society; affected its public services because of cramped quarters, insufficient staff, and inadequate cataloging; and resulted in a strike by some two dozen of the society's clerical, technical, and professional workers in 1979.

A problem of equal significance, as Richards presents it, was the conflict, particularly in the second half of the nineteenth century, over the focus of the institution. Related to this issue were the challenges the society faced at that time as a result of the social changes in the city and the professionalization of scholarship and librari-