

Søren Brier: "Is the Library-Documentation and Information Area Science or Art?: A Philosophy of Science Perspective".

P. 5 - 14.

The relation between the idea of an universal information science (IS) raised on the Shannon-Weaver concept of information and the information science of computer-based subject searching and information retrieval (IR) is analysed. The idea set forth in Vickery & Vickery (1989): "Information Science: Theory and Practice" that IS and IR are a unity is rejected as reductionistic ideology, as is the idea of IS. The rejection is based on the acceptance of phenomenological knowledge as a fundamental kind of information, which cannot be reduced to laws of matter. The irreducible complexity of information and human intelligence are underlined. The theory that human cognition is the irreducible fountainhead of different types of knowledge, one of which is science, is set forth. Expertise is seen as a human capability, which draws on a unique mixture of personal experience and knowledge from the sciences, the humanities and the social sciences with every new task. That is also the art of the librarian. As in medicine the work of librarians is interdisciplinary, and we should not make the mistake of medicine, which while tending to reduce its art to natural science has lost parts of human knowledge, that are vital to its art.

Søren F. Lund "Rabbit Run" and "Manual Thinking and Information Resources Management". P. 17 - 31.

The two articles criticise the proposal, from the management of The Royal School of Librarianship, of a graduate education in Librarian - and Information Science. The proposal reduces the knowledge of librarianship into pure Information Science (IS), and it does it without trying to define the object field and the methods of research. The article demands that IS is a unified science, that hopes to organize and manage effectively all forms of communication and behavior. IS presupposes that any social space is a closed world, in which the exchange of informations can be organised in an rational/instrumental relationship to predefined (databased) system-premisses. One of the practical problems to be solved in order to make the project is to force the employed/-involved persons to behave according to the rules (and the rules of the rules) of the system, to make the system function. The methods of IS are bound to the function of the computer, and the aim of IS is 'ad hoc social engineering'.

The articles emphasize that the lack of knowledge of the concrete problems, which IS try to solve, including information retrieval, makes it impossible for IS to distinguish between relevant and irrelevant methods as well as informations. The version of the 'proposal' is itself an example of this problem. Collecting and quantifying data become an end in itself, giving an illusion of effective problem solving.

Information Science replaces the will of knowledge with the will to sell - regardless of the quality of the product. It is noted with interest that the language of Information Science (and Information Resources Management), is often childish, inadequate and unprecise.

Birger Hjørland: "Considerations about the typology and the forms of non-fiction literature". P. 35 - 50.

The first part of this article is a philosophic statement about the relation between form and content. It is argued that content is the most important and determining part of the relationship, but that form, once constructed, can have its own existence and also influence the content.

In scientific literature, the influence of the positivist theory of knowledge is being shown to have influenced human and social sciences not only in content, but also in form and types of literature. E.g. social sciences thesauri are constructed from the point of view of natural sciences.

The functions of the various forms of literature for the library and information profession is being described. The main message of this article is to argue that the many forms of literature could lead to some kind of fetishism, underestimating the role of content for the role of form. The typologies of documents should never be observed isolated from the subject-matter, the way they originated, and their history (Author abstracts).



Birger Hjørland

Niels Ole Pors: Døde bøger og tomme hylder [Dead Books and Empty Shelves]. - Copenhagen : The Danish Library Association, 1990. - ISBN 87-87244-46-2. P. 61 - 71.

This article is both a review of the first Danish book about evaluation of library collections, and a further discussion of three questions within this area:

The first question is the organisation of collection evaluation in libraries. Should it be part of the process of material selection done by the librarian responsible for this process, or should it be some kind of independent evaluation, a kind of consumer-protection?

The second question is about subjectivity and objectivity in evaluation methods. Is evaluation done by single persons considered to be more subjective than for instance bibliometric studies?

The third question is to what extent circulation figures should determine the optimal size of different parts of the collection. It is argued that no fixed mathematical relation between the circulation figures and the relative size of parts of the collection can be valid for all kinds of libraries and under all conditions (Author Abstracts).

Leif Emerék

Litteratursociologi : en antologi [Sociology of Literature : an Anthology] / Erland Munch-Petersen [ed]. - Copenhagen: The Library Bureau, 1989. - 205 s. - ISBN 87-552-1639-5. P. 53 - 59.

Asking what is sociology of literature, is still a very good question. Why it is so appears from the publishing of a Scandinavian anthology or reader on this subject. The book covers literary systems in the Scandinavian countries, theory of readers' reception of works, the international book market, the relations between visual media and print media, translated literature, mediation, promotion and materials selection in public libraries as well as some basic issues in the sociology of literature. The book was written by authors that are attached to universities and library schools.

The fundamental problems discussed in the reader include the absence of a central approach in the treatment of current work in the sociology of literature. Instead, there is a multiplicity of views of the current status of the sociology of literature. Also, there is a lack of methodological and theoretical approaches to the relation between the general sociology of literature and the sociology of libraries or library user studies which can be regarded as a specialized and more narrow discipline.