

Letters

To the Editor:

In view of Mr. Richard De Gennaro's statement that "Such potentially useful management information has never before been available to library administrators" (*CRL*, Sept. 1970, p.326) in reference to Harvard University's Widener Library analysis of circulation on the basis of machine records, I thought your readers might be interested in a short account of a more advanced project in the same area at the University of British Columbia, drawn from one of its publications.

UBC library's computerized circulation system has made it possible for borrowers to avoid filling out slips for their material, and has encouraged greater use of the library and its resources. Circulation has risen out of all proportion to either the enlargement of the book collection or the growth of the student body during the five years of its operation.

Despite this increase in loans, automation has reduced much of the clerical work previously done by the circulation staff. Borrowing transactions have been speeded up. Loan information is recorded more accurately, and routine sorting, filing, cancellation of records, and preparation of overdue notices have all been substantially reduced.

Perhaps the most important result of computerized circulation has been the ease with which months of loan records can be analyzed. The library staff now has an accurate source of information on the number of times each item has been borrowed, the status of the borrower, and the length of the loan period. With the demand for each book measured in this way, the library can do a much more efficient job of meeting readers' needs. The figures will indicate when a reserve book should be taken off short-term loan, and when a stack book should be put on reserve or duplicated.

Over the past two years, staff members have been working on a large-scale project aimed at improving access to needed books. A program was written which enabled the computer to analyze all the loans made between September 17, 1968, and January 8, 1969. Its main function was to identify heavily used books so that added copies could be purchased. Some basic criteria were the number and frequency of loans for each item, the length of each loan, and the number of holds placed on the book by other borrowers.

The program resulted in print-outs totaling 1,300 pages. Entries gave the author, title, and call number of each book that met the criteria; the number of individual borrowers; the total number of days the book had been in circulation during the four-month period; the status of each borrower (undergraduate, graduate, faculty, etc.); the loan category of the book (two hours, one day, one week, or two weeks); and the number of holds placed on it while it was on loan.

Once the program had been run and the lists printed, the manual work began. Print-outs were reviewed noting titles that should be ordered or duplicated. The total number of added copies purchased came to over 2,000.

This year a follow-up study is under way to gauge the effect of these duplicate copies on loan patterns. As before, most of the data will be gathered and analyzed by computer. The library hopes that sufficient funds will be available to run more programs on collection use.

A more detailed version of this account was carried by the library's publication *U.B.C. Library News* (Oct. 1970) edited by staff member Mrs. Elsie De Bruijn.

J. McRee Elrod

*Head of the Catalogue Divisions
Univ. of British Columbia*

To the Editor:

In testing 35 male library-school students for "femininity and job-satisfaction" at the University of Oklahoma (CRL, November 1970), Dr. Howard Clayton accomplished a good deal more than his article suggests. Not incidentally, it was shocking to note his uncritical and unqualified acceptance of such an outdated and eminently disposable testing device as the California Psychological Inventory. It is, of course, dangerously obsolete because it has directly contributed through wide usage to the tragic waste and misdirection in countless lives through sexist distortions in the formulation and interpretation of testing materials. To match any male anywhere in the world against 6,000-odd American males in certain thoroughly masculinized occupations is really to say: What is needed in America is more male supremacy, not equal opportunity and mutual respect among peers in a crucial educational field.

This study further exposes the peculiar male supremacy in Western society which relentlessly oppresses and exploits the rest of the population. Critical literature and studies in many fields, not to mention the increasing litigation and formal complaints filed with state and federal agencies—including one involving the University of Washington—continue to present abundant evidence of deeply entrenched and widespread patterns of sexist discrimination in all professional and administrative fields, including librarianship. One might pointedly ask, for example, how much the female element has been able to make its equal weight felt in psychological theorizing and testing—and what the sexual makeup is of the University of Oklahoma School of Library Science administration and faculty.

As many of us would bitterly complain, Dr. Clayton should have sent the questionnaire instead to 35 directors of random university research libraries around the country—who would be men, of course—and test *them* for sexuality and "job-satisfaction." The results would have been far more meaningful, relevant, and efficacious for progress in librarianship as well as the country at large. Even the ALA, through various resolutions and committees, has re-

cently moved to confront the fact of discrimination against women as professionals. Surely a field comprised of 75 percent professional women should be in the vanguard to eliminate sexist exploitation from the American scene. The administration of the University of Washington libraries locally, for example, has shown a forthright and conscientious approach to this situation, much to the credit and benefit of all concerned.

But let's allow some validity to this particular study, at least from the masculinist establishment's point of view, and consider the devastating implications for women in librarianship. For although Dr. Clayton has liberally sprinkled his report with appropriately qualifying and disqualifying remarks, one is justified in interpreting the testing and its results as more damning evidence of the contemptuous sexist oppression of career women librarians, and the thick-skinned role library schools have in its perpetuation.

In summarizing, Dr. Clayton covertly suggests that what is needed is more "masculine" male librarians. I would say on the contrary that what is needed is complete exposure of sexism, especially in educational and related fields, and equitable promotion and salaries for qualified and otherwise aspiring women librarians. Then a study of "femininity and job-satisfaction among male library students at one midwestern university" would fall into its proper, incidental place.

I cheer Dr. Clayton's assertions that innovative and creative personnel are sorely needed in libraries everywhere. I must equally condemn the male supremacist condescension which assumes these qualities are to be expected from "men" rather than women.

Gordon H. Meadows-Hills

Library Assistant III

University of Washington Libraries

Candidate for the School of Librarianship

To the Editor:

It is very distressing to see *College & Research Libraries* include Howard Clayton's "Femininity and Job Satisfaction" in

its November selection of articles. In a day when the U.S. Government is supporting equality of opportunity for both sexes and all races I would hope that the library profession might be more forward-looking and avoid gross cultural stereotypes such as the ones appearing in this article.

Adam Smith once wrote in his, *The Wealth of Nations*, . . . "the difference of natural talents in different men is, in reality much less than we are aware of . . . (it) seems to arise not so much from nature as from habit, custom, and education." So-called "masculine" and "feminine" behavior is also the result of long years of socialization reinforced by punishment and reward. The implication has been that sexual differences in personality are innate rather than cultural. I would urge Mr. Clayton to substitute a "black personality" for a "feminine personality" and check his results.

Many of the characteristics which he assigns to feminine are really a product of culture and education. I hope that liking poetry or liking being a garage mechanic are not questions contributing to feminine or masculine qualities. The article uses a composite of fourteen occupational groups as a comparison. I note that one of the groups included is machine operators, another military officers. Yet in his conclud-

ing remarks, the author states that librarians need to be "enterprising and ambitious as others who participate in the teaching-learning process." Why doesn't the author compare the teaching-learning group with the Library School students?

Howard Clayton does assure us that the concept of femininity is not used in the popular sense in that "sexual normality is ordinarily expected of the subject under study." But what a concept! Surely feminine as defined by *Webster's 3d.* ("suitable to or characteristic of a woman") is still applicable? I hope in the future that it will be possible to stick to concrete characteristics, *not* abstract concepts.

Cultural stereotypes such as feminine (i.e., passive, unambitious, weak *but* pleasant) contribute to sex discrimination. Often a more positive-minded, creative woman may be passed over for a less creative, positive "masculine" human being (i.e., man). In its concept of femininity, the California Psychological test reflects long-held cultural stereotypes. The world is changing. I suggest Mr. Clayton get with it and cease writing articles which imply that female librarians aren't desirable.

(Miss) Jo Bell,
Bibliographer,
Stanislaus State College,
Turlock, California