

Doctoral Study in Librarianship In the United States

THIRTY YEARS AGO, in the 1928/29 academic year, the first program for doctoral study in librarianship was inaugurated in the United States. It seems fitting that this anniversary be the occasion for an examination of the current status of doctoral studies in the field, a review of present objectives and programs of the six schools now offering doctoral programs, and an inquiry into accomplishments to date. Since 1929, 129 degrees have been awarded by five of these schools; the sixth has yet to award the degree. A seventh school starts a doctoral program this fall.

For the first two decades of the thirty-year period, the field of doctoral studies in librarianship was the exclusive property of the Graduate Library School of the University of Chicago.¹ The history of its establishment, early development,

¹See Lester Asheim, "The Graduate Library School of the University of Chicago," *Illinois Libraries*, XL (1958), 177-85; Bernard R. Berelson, "Advanced Study and Research in Librarianship," in Berelson, ed., *Education for Librarianship* (Chicago: ALA, 1949), pp. 207-35; Harriet E. Howe, "Two Decades in Education for Librarianship," *Library Quarterly*, XII (1942), 557-70; Frederick P. Kappel, "The Carnegie Corporation and the Graduate Library School: A Historical Outline," *Library Quarterly*, I (1931), 22-25; William M. Randall, "Louis R. Wilson and the Graduate Library School," *Library Quarterly*, XII (1942), 645-50; Douglas Waples, "The Graduate Library School at Chicago," *Library Quarterly*, I (1931), 26-36; Louis R. Wilson, "Development of a Program of Research in Library Science in the Graduate School," *Library Journal*, LIX (1934), 742-46; Wilson, "The Objectives of the Graduate Library School in Extending the Frontiers of Librarianship," in *New Frontiers in Librarianship* (Chicago: University of Chicago, Graduate Library School, 1940), pp. 13-26.

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and—it may be said frankly—considerable difficulties of various kinds, has been fully described. It may be noted, however, that the Graduate Library School did not begin to come into its own and certainly did not win a measure of general professional support and recognition until after the appointment of Louis Round Wilson to the deanship in 1932. Doctoral programs were begun at the Universities of Illinois and Michigan in 1948, at Columbia University in 1952, at the University of California in 1955, and at Western Reserve University in 1956. A doctoral program has been approved at Rutgers University. Through June 1959, Chicago awarded eighty-nine degrees. This is more than twice as many as the forty degrees of all of the other schools combined. Consequently, the history and accomplishments of doctoral study in librarianship in this country are necessarily in large part the history of the Graduate Library School; the contributions and activities of the other schools begin to be of importance only during the last decade.

(A small number of doctoral dissertations on subjects in librarianship have been written under other departments, such as history and education; Sidney Ditzion's "Arsenals of a Democratic Culture" [Teachers College, Columbia University], Howard McGaw's "Marginal Punched Cards—Their Use in College and University Libraries" [Teachers College, Columbia University], and Eugene Wilson's "Pre-Professional Background of Students in the Library School" [Psychology and Education, University of Il-

Illinois] are well-known representative examples. As the over-all programs of the authors of such studies were in disciplines other than librarianship, they have not been included in the present paper.)

The study is divided into seven parts: (1) An analysis of dissertations thus far presented, by institution and subject, and by period; (2) The present objectives of the schools' doctoral programs; (3) The principal fields now embraced in these programs; (4) Factors preventing the schools from the fullest attainment of their objectives; (5) The withdrawal rate and the time factor; (6) Positions currently held by those who have received the doctorate at the several schools; and (7) A consideration of the general contribution which doctoral study has made to the profession, together with an estimate of the ways in which and extent to which such study has not achieved its fullest potential.

QUALITATIVE-QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF DISSERTATIONS

Table I classifies by institution and subject the 129 dissertations presented from 1930, when Chicago awarded its first degree, through June 1959. The classification used is, with one amplification, that presented and agreed upon for research studies in librarianship at the January 26, 1959 meeting of the Association of American Library Schools. This classification was, in turn, largely based upon that used in the October 1957 issue of *Library Trends*. (An alphabetical list, by author, of the 129 dissertations will be found at the end of this article.)

It must be recognized, of course, that the assignment to subjects in Table I is probably not absolutely accurate; even an examination of all of the dissertations would very likely not make possible assignments of this kind in every case, in view of the fact that some dissertations might, with almost equal justification,

be listed under two different subject headings. However, in the great majority of cases the dissertation title suggests quite clearly the subject and for our purposes the picture presented by Table I is sufficiently accurate.

The table presents some interesting contrasts. It may be noted, for example, that 47 (36 per cent) of the 129 dissertations were written in the two fields of library history and history of books and printing and publishing. If we add to this the dissertations on other media of public communication, censorship, content analysis, and controls, the total is 66 (51 per cent). At almost the other extreme of the quantitative analysis it is rather surprising to find the showing of two subjects: reference, information, and advisory services; and cataloging, classification, and subject headings. These two are among the most formalized—and surely most important and fundamental—of our library activities, yet only 9 dissertations, or 7 per cent of the total number, were written in each. Other areas which attracted dissertation writers less frequently than might, perhaps, have been expected, are organization and administration, with 13 dissertations or 10 per cent of the total; resources, with 14 dissertations or about 11 per cent; and personnel and education, with 9 dissertations or 7 per cent.

Table II groups the dissertations accepted in three-year periods. The most striking fact revealed by the table is the enormously accelerated output of the most recent years. In the period 1957-59 more dissertations were accepted (and degrees awarded) than in the first twelve years; more than 41 per cent of the total were produced during the past six years and one-quarter during the last three years. Should this order of increase continue, even at the present level, we might expect to have several hundred active graduates by the end of another ten years.

TABLE I: DOCTORAL DISSERTATIONS IN LIBRARIANSHIP, 1930-1959, BY SUBJECT AND SCHOOL

SUBJECT	Chicago	Columbia	Illinois	Michigan	W. Reserve	SUB-TOTAL	TOTAL
I. <i>Background</i>							
A. Philosophy, objectives, purposes	2			1		3	
B. History of libraries and librarians							
1. General and other countries	2					2	
2. United States	11	1		2		14	
C. History of books, printing, and publishing							
1. General and other countries	13	2	2	2		19	
2. United States	4		1	8		13	
D. Contemporary social setting: books and publishing; other media of public communication (communicator, content, audience or users, adult reading, effect, controls, censorship)	11		1	3		15	66
II. <i>Organization and Administration</i>							
A. External legal, policy, political, and financial controls and support	10					10	
B. Internal organization, administration, management analysis	2					2	
C. Interlibrary relations and organization	1					1	13
III. <i>Resources</i>							
A. Acquisitions, selection policies and practice	4			2		6	
B. Survey of resources	4		1			5	
C. Evaluation of books and other library materials	3			1		4	
D. Bibliographic and storage centers							15
E. Interlibrary lending; photoreproduction							
IV. <i>Reader Services</i>							
A. Reference and information services	2		1			3	
B. Reader guidance and advisory services	2		1		1	4	
C. (Other) adult education activities	1					1	
D. Circulation analysis	1					1	9
V. <i>Technical Processes; Documentation</i>							
A. Cataloging	3	1				4	
B. Classification	3					3	
C. Subject headings		2				2	
D. Centralized processing							
E. Indexing, abstracting, coding			1			1	
F. Machine methods of identification, storage, retrieval, distribution of materials							
G. Documentation	2	1				3	13
VI. <i>Personnel and Education</i>	2		1			3	
A. Organization and administration of personnel							
B. In-service training							
C. Education of librarians	3		2			5	8
VII. <i>International, Comparative, and Foreign Librarianship</i>	2		1			3	3
VIII. <i>Methods of Research and Evaluation; Standards, Surveys</i>	1		1			2	2
	89	7	13	19	1		129

As we have seen, a total of 129 degrees have been awarded during the thirty-year period of our doctoral programs. This is an average of 4.3 a year. To some, this number will seem pitifully small in relation to the money and effort—institutional and personal—expended. This may be so, but the fact is that the figure is not in unfavorable contrast with those for certain of the other newer professions, and even for some of the more specialized academic disciplines. In the thirty-year period 1926-1955 earned doctors degrees were awarded as follows: architecture, 17; forestry, 164; journalism, 38; meteorology, 85; public administration, 77; Russian, 57; social work, 86; and veterinary medicine, 59. In the same period, the figure for librarianship was 93.²

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the programs are, *mutatis mutandis*, the same as those of doctoral study in major American universities in other disciplines, especially, of course, the professional fields. This is not surprising—indeed, it is no doubt inevitable—in view of the fact that inauguration of the programs required approval of some kind of graduate council or committee having general jurisdiction over graduate studies in the several institutions. The one difference that may profitably be noted between the objectives of doctoral programs in librarianship on the one hand and those in such a purely “academic” field as history, for instance, on the other, is that the former are, in part at least, more oriented toward the practical. Thus, “The . . . program . . . and requirements for degrees [at Chicago] reflect the belief of its faculty that librarianship is a practical rather than a purely theoretic science; that is, that it aims, not at knowledge for its own sake, but at knowledge for

²Mary Irwin (ed.), *American Universities and Colleges* (7th ed.; Washington, D. C.: American Council on Education, 1956), Table 4, p. 69.

TABLE II
DOCTORAL DISSERTATIONS IN LIBRARIANSHIP,
1930-1959, BY THREE-YEAR PERIODS

PERIOD	NUMBER OF DISSERTATIONS	CUMULATIVE PER CENT (ROUNDED)
1930-1932	6	5
1933-1935	9	11
1936-1938	5	16
1939-1941	11	24
1942-1944	13	34
1945-1947	13	44
1948-1950	11	53
1951-1953*	7	58
1954-1956	21	75
1957-1959	33	100
TOTAL	129	

* First non-Chicago degree, 1951.

the sake of excellence in the functioning of libraries.”³

The objectives of the programs may be summarized as follows: (1) To furnish mature librarians, having scholarly ability and interest, with opportunity for advanced study and research in the library field; (2) To develop in the student (a) subject mastery and (b) competence in research and investigation; (3) To organize, conduct, and publish studies which will extend the bounds of knowledge in fields pertinent to the theory and practice of librarianship; and, through these means, (4) To provide for the profession qualified researchers and personnel for teaching and higher administrative positions.

MAJOR FIELDS OF STUDY FOR THE DOCTORATE

Although none of the schools has sponsored dissertations in all of the fields of Table I, it is probably safe to say that all are prepared to supervise dissertations in any of them. No school, at least, specifically excludes any area of professional study. At any given point in time a kind of natural limitation re-

³University of Chicago, Graduate Library School, *Announcement, 1959-1960*, p. 1.

sulting from the special interests and competence of members of a faculty and the resulting advice and stimulus which students receive will, as a practical matter, tend to cause more dissertations to be written in some fields than in others, and no dissertations at all to be written in certain fields. "However," as one library school administrator notes, "with a fairly broad area representation throughout the faculty and a collection of research materials which has been developing for some three-quarters of a century, we feel that with the assistance of the qualified subject specialists outside the Library School we can permit a student to go into any area of librarianship presently recognized."⁴ At California, the student "may specialize in college and university libraries, public libraries, bibliography, history of books and printing, history of libraries, or the library as a social institution." But, "although most dissertations written for the . . . degree will fall within one or another of these . . . fields, the designation of fields of specialization does not preclude the writing of a dissertation which does not obviously fall in one field or another."⁵

Among the special fields open to the student at Chicago are: public libraries, college and university libraries, library work with children and young people, bibliography and reference, bibliographical history, technical processes, and reading and other media of communication.⁶

An analysis of the dissertations thus far presented at Michigan reveals an equally broad range.

The major fields at Columbia "include the fields of specialization of our senior faculty members who conduct our seminars and serve as advisors to our doctoral students," and are: library re-

sources; organization of materials for retrieval and use; public and school library services and use; organization and administration of libraries; personnel and training; historical evolution of libraries and of publication; contemporary setting of libraries as one of the media of public communication" and, in prospect, "comparative librarianship."⁷ This, too, is about as comprehensive a list as one could ask for and very well covers all of the areas set forth in Table I.

It is clear, therefore, that the prospective doctoral student in librarianship does not lack for opportunity to pursue an investigation in virtually any field of our discipline.

OBSTACLES AND DETERRENTS

Without exception, the major problem cited is the inadequate number and amount of research grants, fellowships, and teaching assistantships for doctoral students; or its corollary, the difficulty of attracting sufficient numbers of very good students. "Corollary," because no one doubts that if the profession were able to offer fellowships of five thousand dollars a year for each of three years to fifty outstanding students a year, we should not lack for a sufficient number of able applicants. We should also, almost certainly, substantially reduce the present high attrition rate. A considerable number of students can probably finance their education at the doctoral level for a year or perhaps two years with some small financial assistance, often in the way of part-time employment. Beyond such a period, the problem tends to become an exceedingly difficult one, particularly for the most able and mature students, many of whom have family obligations. The large majority of students do not have the means and the schools do not have sufficient fellowships in sufficiently large amounts for the financial support of the latter part of the

⁴Harold Lancour, in a letter to the author dated January 12, 1959.

⁵University of California, School of Librarianship, *Announcement, 1959-60*, pp. 34, 36.

⁶University of Chicago, Graduate Library School, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

⁷Robert D. Leigh, in a letter to the author dated February 20, 1959.

program, especially the extra year or more of full-time work necessary to write the dissertation. Having completed the course work, the student leaves with every intention of doing his research in his spare time; but, as a library employee, he lacks the long summer vacation that doctoral students in academic posts have and his library position, often administrative in nature, is of a type and importance to take up all his time, thought, and energy.

Obviously, this situation adversely affects both the students and the schools. Equally obviously, it works to the serious disadvantage of the profession "in the field." "I have several faculty members here," one library school dean has written, "who need financial assistance . . . work on their doctorates has been delayed or continued in interrupted fashion. Although we now have an increasing number of scholarships for students working on their first professional degree, there isn't positive help for the faculty member who wants to go off for a year or two of study to work toward a doctorate. Indeed, as far as I know, there is no earmarked substantial grant for Ph.D. work in librarianship."⁸

The problem of financing the able doctoral student and the closely related problem, discussed hereafter, of reducing the average length of time required to earn the degree, appear to be virtually universal. At Columbia, for example, for graduate students in general, it is believed that one of the three major obstacles to a legitimate acceleration (i.e., one not gained at the expense of quality) is "The student's need to work for money during or immediately after residence."⁹ The Committee on Policies in Graduate Education of the Association of Graduate Schools canvassed thirty

⁸Louis Shores, in a letter to the author dated May 7, 1959.

⁹Jacques Barzun, *Graduate Study at Columbia; the Report of the Dean of the Graduate Faculties for 1958* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), p. 5.

member institutions on the question, "What factors tend to prolong the process of completing the degree requirements?" Summarizing the responses, the committee notes that, "the problem of financing is most frequently mentioned as the major obstacle to more rapid progress in the training of Ph.D.'s."¹⁰

Apparently there is not a single fellowship anywhere set up *exclusively* for the doctoral student in librarianship. A possible alternative to attempts, thus far unsuccessful, to secure such fellowships may be suggested here. The schools, singly or in combination, might develop substantial and important research projects, secure financial support for such projects from foundations, and then seek or assign students to assist in the prosecution of these projects. In addition to furnishing financial help for the student, this approach should have the additional value of providing a more systematic attack on needed areas of investigation.

Aside from the financial predicament, the general indifference of the practical, practicing librarian to problems of academic research is undoubtedly an additional factor in the matter of attracting first-rate people to doctoral study. It is almost as true today as it was a quarter of a century ago that librarianship offers little or no incentive or opportunity for the librarian to pursue research. The number of libraries employing researchers on *library problems* can probably be counted on the fingers of two hands. As one public librarian puts it, "We are still trying to help the research worker in other fields without trying to apply research methods in our solution of our own problems."¹¹ There is almost no demand for the doctor's degree from the public or special library and even less from the school library. And, while the college or university pres-

¹⁰Association of American Universities and Association of Graduate Schools, *Journal of Proceedings and Addresses*, LVII (October 1956), 9.

¹¹Louis M. Nourse, in a letter to the author dated April 14, 1959.

ident appears to be increasingly interested in head librarians with the doctorate, there is more than a little evidence to suggest that it is the presumed benefits of academic respectability and prestige, rather than either the content of the program leading to the degree or the research productivity which it should make possible, that underlie the interest. "The real pressure from the field," as one dean points out, "is for shorter and more practical *training* rather than for the carefully developed and integrated *education* at the doctoral level."¹² This judgment is inferentially borne out by the opinions expressed by a number of the writer's recent correspondents. For example, the librarian of a large public library suggests that, "from the point of view of librarians in the field . . . the doctoral programs in librarianship would be useful if subjects selected were of a more practical nature dealing with specific types of assignments such as registration procedure, loan desk work, statistics kept in libraries, simplification of routines, etc." The difficulty here, of course, is that very few dissertation topics could be developed at this level and in these areas which would pass muster with graduate faculties and councils. But we cannot argue with the public librarian who notes that "most [dissertation] topics are of interest mainly to students and research people," and who cites by title, "examples of theses limited in subject or . . . too theoretical to be of much value to practicing librarians."¹³

Nor can one suggest more than half a dozen "useful," or even reasonably pertinent, dissertations to him and to a colleague who writes, "I am aware that several . . . studies have been briefed or described in issues of the *Library Quarterly*, but I can honestly say that very

¹²Asheim, in a letter to the author dated January 20, 1959.

¹³Emerson Greenaway, in a letter to the author dated May 6, 1959.

few of them have had meaning for me as administrator of a large library system."¹⁴ The histories of single libraries, of minor publishing houses and booksellers; the development of school library legislation of a particular state; and early libraries and printing in countries of Asia—to cite actual cases—are representative of topics not likely to be pursued with much eagerness by the average "practitioner."

Neither of those just quoted nor most of the others who speak to this point suggest that the primary purpose of the dissertation is to make a direct, practical contribution to librarianship, but the fact is that the nature of and requirements for this exercise are such that the documents produced have, with some notable exceptions, little or no relevancy to the work of the average practicing librarian. As a result, his interest in doctoral study, of which the dissertation is the most tangible manifestation, is likely to be lukewarm at best.

We do not, however, have to turn to the public library to find indifference to the fundamental values and importance of research in librarianship. Carolyn Kay's study showed that, "In the selection of faculty members, directors appeared to place most emphasis on advanced degrees in library science, personality, and library experience. Demonstrated research ability was ranked sixth in a list of seven qualifications, followed only by publications. The most important factor in recommending faculty members for advancement in rank and/or salary, was the ability to work effectively with students. Interest in and ability to supervise research studies was ranked fifth, and number and quality of research publications was ranked seventh in a group of seven factors."¹⁵ The rank-

¹⁴Harold L. Hamill, in a letter to the author dated May 11, 1959.

¹⁵Carolyn Kay, "Research Training at the Master's Degree Level in ALA Accredited Schools, 1956," in Association of American Library Schools, *Report of Meeting, January 26, 1959*, p. 25.

ings Kay's data reveal would undoubtedly be much different for the doctoral schools alone, but her findings cast a sad illumination on the climate of opinion in library education generally. Elsewhere Kay notes that, "If the research 'climate' in the library schools was not as favorable as might be desired, it may be hypothesized that in the profession at large it is even less favorable for the development of research. The support for research on library problems has come almost altogether from the library schools themselves and from foundations, not from the profession. Not only does there appear to be lack of interest in the research process, but little attention is given or little value attached to the results of research. Beyond disinterest, there seems at times to be ill-concealed disrespect, distrust or even open hostility toward the process, the results and those engaged in research."¹⁶

THE WITHDRAWAL RATE AND THE TIME FACTOR

It seemed worthwhile to attempt to discover the ratio between the total number of students who have been in residence for the degree at the several schools and the number who have actually been awarded it. The point of this inquiry is to determine whether a useful answer can be suggested to the question, "About how many student individuals who actually embark upon the program result in one graduate a year?" The figures that resulted from this aspect of the study are illuminating, and tend to support the academic cliché that "The woods are full of people who have completed their course work but have never finished their dissertations." The ratio between total students and those awarded the degree varies from 8:1 at Chicago to nearly 12:1 at Illinois. At Columbia there was "a grand total of

sixty-three candidates for the degree from 1952-59 of whom four resigned from or were removed from candidacy; six who have been awarded the . . . degree; and fifty-three who are at various stages of progress toward the degree. . . ."¹⁷ If one includes all of the sixty-three individuals mentioned above, and one subsequent graduate, the Columbia ratio is 9.1:1. Similarly, at Illinois there were 153 student enrollments in the doctoral program in librarianship from 1948/49 through 1958/59, with thirteen degrees awarded, a ratio of 11.9:1. Again, at Chicago, in the years 1950/51 through 1957/58, a total of 152 students were registered in the Ph.D. program; during the same years nineteen students earned the degree, the resulting ratio being 8:1. The foregoing figures point to an unmistakably high attrition rate and suggest that unless the causal factors—e.g., the lack of substantial fellowship aid—should change we shall have to continue to expect a small proportion of doctoral graduates in relation to the total numbers who begin study at this level.

The situation in librarianship is, however, little if any different from that in other disciplines. While precise figures and comparative data are largely lacking, it is clear enough that the attrition rate at the doctoral level is, in most fields, inordinately high.¹⁸ It may be noted in this connection that a number of universities, prompted by the Sputniks and American shortages of personnel with academic training at the highest level, have recently instituted measures of various kinds which may have the indirect result of reducing present attrition rates. One of the commoner of these methods involves a drastic

¹⁷Leigh, in a letter to the author dated April 6, 1959.

¹⁸E.g., see Benjamin F. Wright, "The Ph.D. Stretch-Out and the Scholar-Teacher," in Arthur E. Traxler (ed.), *Vital Issues in Education* (Washington, D. C.: American Council on Education, 1957), pp. 140-51.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, p. 29.

reduction in the number of required courses and seminars. Another method is the setting of fixed time limits for certification for the degree and/or for the number of years allowed for completion of the dissertation after certification. As a result, the student who knows for certain that he must complete his work within a given time, will, by and large, be more likely to do so, than if, as has been pretty much the case in the past, he can continue to be a candidate almost indefinitely.¹⁹

The withdrawal rate obviously bears a close relationship to the length of time required to fulfill the requirements for the degree. That is, if this time averaged half of what it actually does more students would have the intellectual, financial, and physical stamina necessary to complete the program, including the dissertation. Precise figures on this point can never be determined, chiefly because of the great differences in the ways individual students pursue their doctoral studies. A very few are fortunate enough to be able, through fellowship aid or private financial means, to devote full time to their studies. The great majority, however, are obliged to seek gainful employment for at least some, and probably most, of the time. Such employment may be minimal—ten to fifteen hours a week—during the years in residence. At the other extreme is the student who, throughout his academic labors, is obliged to spend half to three-quarters of his time earning money. The variations of the study-employment combination are almost infinite. Nonetheless, some generalizations in the way of averages may be suggested. In our field, the length of time it takes a stu-

dent to get the degree appears to be around five or six years, the figures provided by Columbia, Illinois, and Michigan being 4.8, 6.0, and 5.7 respectively.

Here, again, the situation in librarianship is not notably different from that in most other fields. Figures for Columbia University covering the period 1940-56 show a departmental range, for the *average* number of years spent in earning the degree, of 5.3 for chemistry to 12.5 for Germanic languages. But for approximately two-thirds of the thirty-three departments for which data were computed the average number of years varies between 5.3 and 7.6.²⁰ For a group of ninety-five who took all of their graduate work at Ohio State University in 1928 and 1939, the median number of years between admission to the Graduate School and award of the doctorate was 6.4 and 6.5 respectively.²¹

It is reported for the field of sociology "that there elapse on the average about 7.6 years between a future sociologist's graduation from college and his receipt of the doctoral degree. . . . The average doctoral student in sociology, or in the social sciences in general, spends up to three years in graduate study and an additional four to five years in other activities such as teaching, before finally achieving the doctoral dissertation. For this and other reasons it is felt that there is a special need for more financial aid to students during the period before receipt of their doctoral degrees."²² One of the most thorough institutional studies covering this topic was conducted by Radcliffe. There it was found that the median number of years for the attainment of the Ph.D. in the decade 1946-55 was six. The report of the study notes that "The total period of postgraduate

¹⁹E.g., see the report of the Committee on Policies in Graduate Education of the Association of Graduate Schools for 1958, recommending, among other things, "a limit on the length of time within which a candidate must finish [his work for the Ph.D.]" Reported in Association of American Universities and Association of Graduate Schools. *Journal of Proceedings and Addresses*, LIX (October 1958), 33.

²⁰Barzun, *op. cit.*, pp. [22-23].

²¹S. L. Pressey, "Some Data on the Doctorate," *The Journal of Higher Education*, XV (1944), 193.

²²Bernard N. Meltzer and Jerome G. Manis, "The Teaching of Sociology," in *The Teaching of the Social Sciences in the United States* (Paris: UNESCO, 1954), p. 99.

study for the doctorate varies from three to seventeen years." As is the case elsewhere, "These years do not, of course, represent time actually spent in residence . . . they represent the span of time from entry in the graduate school to the final granting of the doctorate. They often include years spent elsewhere, frequently in working or teaching . . . it has been impossible to determine the time spent by the candidates in actual work for the degree."²³ Finally, and most comprehensive, are data compiled by the Committee on Policies in Graduate Education of the Association of Graduate Schools from thirty member institutions. The committee's figures show that "The average time in the humanities [and] in the social sciences [was] five and a half years. . . ."²⁴

The data reported in the preceding paragraphs are not put forward to "justify" the length of time generally required for completion of the requirements for the doctoral degree in librarianship, but simply to show that our situation in this regard is little, if any, different from that in most other (non-scientific) academic disciplines. In the writer's view, a reduction in the time factor is highly desirable.

POSITIONS CURRENTLY HELD BY DOCTORAL GRADUATES

Table III presents data on the positions held, as of June 1959, by those who have been awarded the degree. The table provides several striking contrasts and a general picture which should be of some professional interest. Omitting for present purposes the eighteen individuals included in the last three categories, it may be seen that 60 (54 per cent) of the remaining 111 are now head

librarians. Similarly, 56, or half the total, are associated with academic libraries, and 35 (31 per cent) have positions in library schools; altogether 91, or 82 per cent, have an academic affiliation of some kind. At the other end of the scale, only 4 (3.6 per cent) are employed in public libraries, 5 (4.5 per cent) in special libraries, and a single individual is in the school library field. These data substantiate our general impression that the great majority of those continuing for the doctor's degree are, for one reason or another, oriented toward an academic career of some kind. It is probably a safe inference also, that employment opportunities for holders of the doctorate are far greater in academic institutions than elsewhere. Whether this is good or bad it may be left to others to determine. It may be suggested, however, that it might be to the general advantage of the profession to attempt to recruit doctoral students from and for the school and public library fields, especially, in greater numbers than has been the case up to the present.

The data of Table III show that, for better or worse, the values and philosophy of doctoral study are affecting the highest administrative positions in forty-one academic libraries (including half of the forty largest), and in more than one-third of our library schools. What, precisely, the influences are we cannot say. However, in the light of the objectives of the doctoral schools and the general standing of the parent institutions among American universities, it would be difficult to argue that the influence was not a beneficial one. In the same way, it seems safe to suggest that the thirty-five doctoral graduates associated in some capacity with library schools—more than a quarter of the total full-time faculty of these schools—have influenced the work of the schools positively from the points of view of scholarship, research activity, and academic standards.

²³Radcliffe College, *The Radcliffe Committee on Graduate Education for Women: The Radcliffe Ph.D.* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1956), p. 21.

²⁴Association of American Universities and Association of Graduate Schools. *Journal of Proceedings and Addresses*, LVII (October 1956), 8.

TABLE III
POSITIONS HELD BY DOCTORAL GRADUATES, JUNE 1959

TYPE OF POSITION	SCHOOL					TOTAL
	Chicago	Columbia	Illinois	Michigan	Western Reserve	
<i>College and University Libraries</i>						
Head	28		5	8		41
Associate or Assistant Librarian; Administrative Assistant	1		4	1		6
Department Head	4	1	1	2		8
Staff Member	1					1
<i>Library Schools</i>						
Dean	9			1		10
Faculty Member	16	1	3	4	1	25
<i>Public Libraries</i>						
Head	2					2
Department Head	2					2
<i>Special Libraries</i>						
Head	2	3				5
<i>National Libraries</i>						
Department Head		1		1		2
<i>State Libraries</i>	1			1		2
<i>Government Libraries</i>						
Head	1					1
Staff Member	1			1		2
<i>School Libraries</i>						
Head	1					1
<i>Miscellaneous</i>	2	1*				3
<i>Non-Library Positions</i>	6					6
<i>Retired</i>	6					6
<i>Deceased</i>	6					6
Total	89	7	13	19	1	129

* Assistant Parliamentary Librarian, Iran.

These observations concern present positions only. It would presumably be possible to secure information on all of the positions of all doctoral graduates since they received their degrees. However, the labor involved in doing so seemed unjustified, chiefly because a random sampling of the *curriculum vitae* of a score of individuals suggested that the results would be substantially the same as those just presented. In other words, there is no evidence to indicate that the kinds of positions formerly held by the graduates vary substantially from those currently held. Indeed, some evidence to the contrary may be adduced. A tabulation made by the writer in 1953

showed that 19, or 29 per cent, of 65 (living) graduates were associated with schools of librarianship. This percentage is not greatly different from today's 31 per cent.

Quid Valet?

There remains the most important question, namely, that of the contribution which our doctoral studies have made to the profession. Obviously, no definitive answer is possible and very likely no two people would agree on an answer in any except the most general terms. However, in an attempt to secure judgments which might suggest at least the broad outlines of an answer, opinion

was solicited from two score library leaders—strictly a “non-scientific” sample!—in the country. The group included the Librarian of Congress, the executive director of ALA, the director of its International Relations Office, the executive secretary of its Library Education Division, who is also secretary of the Association’s Committee on Accreditation, the president of the Council on Library Resources, and six library school deans; the remainder was about equally divided between academic and public librarians. Intentionally, none of those queried was affiliated with one of the doctoral schools. The replies to this inquiry were noteworthy in three respects.

First, the spread of opinion was rather wide, ranging from high general praise of both the published product of doctoral studies and the other professional contributions of the graduates to a relatively cool regard for the entire contribution; what may be evaluated as generally positive and affirmative appraisal outranks the negative judgments in a ratio of about ten to one. Second, the general subject of the study seemed to be one of considerable and genuine interest, inasmuch as many of the replies ran to a full typewritten page or more. In the third place, and almost paradoxically, several of those queried confessed to having almost no knowledge whatever of any of the work accomplished including, specifically, the dissertations themselves. Thus one respondent, librarian of a large, rapidly growing university library, wrote, “I frankly know nothing about the current status of doctoral programs and nothing about the contribution they have made . . . I have asked myself whether in searching library literature, or in having it searched, in order to puzzle out a . . . problem, or in order to prepare a speech or paper, I have ever read or even scanned a doctoral thesis in librarianship; I must confess that I can’t remember ever doing

so. I have asked myself whether I know which of my colleagues running larger university libraries today possess such doctorates and whether those who do seem abler than those who don’t; . . . off the top of my head my answer would only be imprecise. I have asked myself whether I have any idea what kinds of positions are currently held by the recipients of doctorates . . . and whether they are held with distinction; it’s quite clear I know nothing at all about this . . . I have asked myself whether the articles or books I have read and found most compelling or influential have been written by people with doctorates or in pursuit of doctorates; I actually do not know.”

At the other extreme were a number of replies, chiefly from academic librarians, indicating that the writers had followed the development of doctoral study quite closely and were acquainted both with specific dissertations and with the careers and accomplishments of particular individuals.

The question as to the over-all contribution of our doctoral programs may be considered in at least two distinct ways: The direct contribution of the dissertations, and what those who have earned the doctorate have done for the profession after they have gone into the field.

Substantial difference of opinion as to what should be expected of the dissertation is apparent throughout our universities. On the one hand are those who believe that it can be only a preparation in methodology, scholarly attitudes, and the like, for *future* research productivity. On the other hand, are those who feel, no less strongly, that the dissertation itself can and should be a major and significant contribution to knowledge. Indeed the statements in graduate division announcements usually describe the standards for the dissertation in some such terms as these. A recent expression of

this viewpoint suggests that "If the dissertation is to have any value at all, there should be an all-out effort to make it a contribution to scholarship. The doctoral candidate should demonstrate a high order of ability to prosecute, with proper methodology, an intellectual problem in depth."²⁵ Even so, most of those closely associated with doctoral study in this country freely admit that many dissertations, perhaps the majority of them, no matter how sound methodologically, are not, in fact, genuinely significant contributions to knowledge. While the general requirements for the dissertation are quite similar among the major universities, and while these requirements remain highly constant, the actual nature of the individual documents produced depends to a large degree upon departmental attitudes and standards, and particularly upon those of the special doctoral committees appointed to pass on the dissertations.

The situation in librarianship is substantially the same as that in other fields. That is, we have produced a number of excellent dissertations and some less good; some have been genuinely important contributions to learning and some, even though solid pieces of investigation, have contributed little of significance in extending the bounds of knowledge. An objective over-all evaluation would require the reading of all of the dissertations by groups of experts and a synthesis of their opinions. Such an evaluation may be considered a practical impossibility. However, if one calls to mind the dissertations in librarianship which have won a general acceptance in the scholarly library world and in scholarly reviewing, one is inclined to hazard the judgment, however subjective, that the proportion which *does* constitute genuine contributions to knowledge is probably as high as in most fields. Among

such dissertations one would mention Anders' "The Development of Public Library Service in the Southeastern United States, 1895-1950"; Butler's "An Inquiry into the Statement of Motives by Readers"; Condit's "Studies in Roman Printing Types of the Fifteenth Century"; Dawson's "The Acquisitions and Cataloging of Research Libraries . . ."; Fussler's "Characteristics of Research Literature Used by Chemists and Physicists in the United States"; Joeckel's "The Government of the American Public Library"; Merritt's "The United States Government as Publisher"; Rothstein's "The Development of Reference Services in American Research Libraries . . ."; Shera's "Foundations of the Public Library"; Swank's "The Organization of Library Materials for Research in English Literature"; Willoughby's "The Printing of the First Folio of Shakespeare"; and Winger's "Regulations Relating to the Book Trade in London from 1357 to 1586." This is assuredly far from an inclusive list; indeed, it consists simply of some of the studies with which the writer happens to be familiar.

In another respect, our situation is not unlike that which obtains in other fields. Whatever the causes, it appears to be generally the fact that a large proportion, and possibly a majority, of those who earn the doctorate do not, thereafter, achieve a major scholarly work. At Radcliffe, for example, it was found that 29 per cent of 318 of its Ph.D.'s had no publication record whatever and an additional 21 per cent were classified as "occasional" with one or two articles only.²⁶ A graduate dean with almost twenty years of experience suggests "that the majority of Ph.D.'s do not produce a major piece of research after completing a doctoral thesis. . . ."²⁷

Whatever the facts elsewhere, it is cer-

²⁵Radcliffe College, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

²⁶William W. Brickman, "Speed-Up of the Ph.D. Degree," *School and Society*, LXXXVII (1959), 51-52.

²⁷Theodore C. Blegen, "How Can Graduate Schools Increase the Supply of College Teachers?" *Journal of Higher Education*, XXX (1959), 131.

tainly true that most of those who have earned the doctorate in librarianship have not subsequently produced *research*, though many have written useful and even important contributions of various other kinds. There are, of course, exceptions to this generalization; one thinks, among others, of the names of Asheim, Berelson, Carnovsky, Joeckel, L. Martin, Merritt, R. R. Shaw, Shera, and Tauber. Almost all of the exceptions are of men who, for relatively long periods in their careers, have been associated with library schools. Here, the atmosphere, the traditions, the general climate of activity and, perhaps, the "publish or perish" requirement have provided both the opportunity and the incentive for scholarly productivity.

In the opinion of a group of leaders in the profession, and in the writer's opinion also, the doctoral programs have made certain definite and direct contributions to the advancement of librarianship. These benefits and contributions may be briefly summarized as follows:

1. A respectable percentage of the dissertations constitutes genuine contributions to learning and has significantly increased our knowledge and understanding. Even library practice has apparently been affected. "We have borrowed copies [of dissertations] from time to time," one public librarian reports, "and have used some with considerable benefit . . . there were three or four specific points [in one dissertation] which we adopted and used with profit. . . ." ²⁸ Another public librarian writes, "I can say with some assurance that many of us have learned to look more deeply into our problems, basing decisions upon whatever . . . research may be open to us." ²⁹ And a university librarian offers this opinion: "When I think of the theses by Rothstein on ref-

erence history and by John Dawson on cataloging, I am sure that theses as a source can be overlooked only at considerable risk." ³⁰

Two more items of evidence on this point seem worth reporting. "One of our divisions suggested that the A. M. McNally dissertation, 'Characteristics of Materials Used in Research in United States History,' . . . and others which employ the same technique in other fields have proved useful. Irene Zimmerman's 'Latin American Periodicals of the Mid-Twentieth Century as Source Material for Research' . . . was helpful in preparing background material for Latin American seminars." ³¹ "One staff member said that he had borrowed three dissertations to seek an answer to a problem he had to deal with and that two out of the three had 'pay dirt.'" ³²

2. The knowledge of investigation and of research methodology acquired in the programs for the degree has made it possible for some of the graduates to produce additional significant studies later on.

3. The Ph.D.'s subject-matter mastery and knowledge of methods of inquiry have almost certainly beneficially affected the library schools, where, today, nearly one-third of all of the graduates hold positions. (Indirectly, also, the schools appear to have been benefited with respect to their status in the parent institution as a result of the increase in "academic respectability and prestige" of their faculties.) To be sure, as many friends and critics of American higher education have repeatedly pointed out, possession of the Ph.D. is no guarantee whatever of the graduate's teaching competence or ability to impart knowledge or to counsel and work harmoniously with students. ³³ The degree also, we may

²⁸John Hall Jacobs, in a letter to the author dated April 14, 1959.

²⁹Ralph Munn, in a letter to the author dated April 24, 1959.

³⁰Louis Kaplan, in a letter to the author dated March 31, 1959.

³¹Harald Ostvold, in a letter to the author dated May 12, 1959.

³²Greenaway, letter cited.

³³E.g., see John W. Dykstra, "The Ph.D. Fetish," *School and Society*, LXXXVI (1958), 237-39.

add, carries with it no assurance of the administrative ability and talents required in the top posts held by such a large proportion—54 per cent—of our own active doctoral graduates. Despite these truisms it seems hardly necessary to argue that the subject-matter mastery of which successful completion of the doctoral program is surely some evidence will bring definite plus values to both the teaching and the administrative position.

4. So far as the latter kind of post is concerned, whether in an academic library or in a library school, understanding of the approach, attitude of mind, and research needs of other members of the academic community cannot help but make more fruitful, easy, and effective the librarian's work with them. Lacking this understanding it is difficult for the librarian to deal with members of the faculty in terms that are wholly satisfactory to the faculty. (It goes without saying that this understanding has been gained and is possessed by a number of highly successful librarians whose doctoral study was in fields other than librarianship.) So much for an *apologia pro vita sua*.

On the negative side, it is no less clear that the total contribution has fallen considerably short of achieving its fullest potential. Among the reasons, the following appear to be paramount:

1. The relatively small number of graduates thus far produced. Although in this respect we appear to be no worse off, considering the length of the period involved and the total number of students admitted to our doctoral programs, than many other disciplines, the fact remains that 129 is a minute fraction of the more than 31,000 full-time professional librarians—or even of the 6,600 academic librarians—in the country.³⁴ (Of the 129, about a score have already

died, retired, or left the profession; nearly one-quarter received their degrees in 1957, 1958, or 1959—too recently to have produced much in the way of post-doctoral contribution.)

2. More than half of the graduates are currently employed as chief administrative librarians. The requirements of these posts and the climate of administrative activity provide little time, opportunity, or incentive for the production of scholarly research, regardless of the other kinds of contribution which the doctoral graduate may make as an administrative officer.

3. Many, and very likely most, dissertations, highly specialized and often theoretical in nature, are of a kind which hold no interest for the librarian "in the field" and have no direct impact upon the work-a-day library world. To say this is to criticize neither the dissertation nor the practicing librarian.

4. At the same time, it seems probable that the profession at large has not taken as full advantage as it might have of the results of doctoral research. Whether this is because the activity cannot be sufficiently popularized, or because of a distrust of the activity, or because of anti-intellectualism in the profession at large, or because of some other reason is far from clear.

5. The highly limited number of libraries able, or at least prepared, to employ personnel for research on *library* problems. Even the university, now generally more or less eager to have a doctoral graduate as head librarian, does not employ men and women trained in methodology to study and investigate library problems scientifically.

6. Programs for the doctorate and the resulting dissertations have possibly been insufficiently experimental. Because librarianship is a relatively new field for doctoral work the schools have tended to copy the older disciplines. Especially recently, there has been a pronounced

³⁴Wyllis E. Wright (ed.), *American Library Annual and Book Trade Almanac, 1959* (New York: R. R. Bowker Company, c1958), p. 12.

emphasis on historical and bibliographical study, to the general neglect of such areas as the bibliographic control of research materials, which might be less obviously "scholarly" to graduate councils and dissertation committees.

7. There has been insufficient accretion of the results of doctoral research. Each student looks for a comprehensible and usually relatively small topic which he can exhaust in the limited time at his disposal. Generally speaking, the re-

sult is that we have a number of largely uncoordinated studies on relatively small aspects of the profession. Many of our problems most needing attention are far too complex for prosecution by an individual. Time will, perhaps in part, take care of this difficulty; when we have had as long a history of research activity as, for example, English literature, the sum of a multitude of individual studies may provide us with a more nearly adequate research literature.

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(Continued on page 458)

Leadership begins with ideas. And ideas, if they are big enough, can unfreeze man and make him relevant and effective in turning back the largest threat he has ever known.

It is self-evident that neither education nor the library which is at its heart

can undertake the total function of leadership in our time. But the job will certainly not be done without education. In dedicating this library, therefore, we also dedicate ourselves to the need for great conversions, to the need for a seed-bed of change.

Doctoral Study for Librarianship

(Continued from page 453)

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