

odicals "that received disproportionate use in their youth will continue to be more popular than their contemporaries as they age."

In addition to provoking us to re-examine our work in light of research findings, the authors provide us with ideas for research that needs to be done. Whitlatch advises, "There are no good studies that look at loss rates across many libraries and systematically identify variables influencing book loss rates." Metz urges that "local library use studies should focus more on the use of periodicals and especially on the surprisingly high use accorded current periodicals." These informed, specific suggestions are far more useful than the research agendas fashionably promulgated by committees.

The authors also identify research that merits replication. According to Osburn, the survey of cooperative collection development programs by Joe Hewitt and John Shipman is "thorough enough to permit inferences about the general status" of cooperative collection development, but it should be repeated with medium-sized and smaller academic libraries. George commends Margaret Steig's study of historians' use of information sources: "No other research on faculty library use approaches this article in scope and clarity. It should be undertaken in other disciplines without delay."

All authors but one identify problems already sufficiently investigated. For example, since we know the low number of subject access points in the catalog is probably inadequate, further inquiries into the number of access points relative to recorded use "do not appear likely to add much to our understanding." Or, unobtrusive studies of one measure of reference effectiveness, accuracy of answers, have provided enough information that there may be no need for additional research on that topic.

Unfortunately, small technical faults mar this exciting book. The lazy title is vague; the occasional weak editing tolerates jargon and, in some places, a lack of synthesis. The citation style for disserta-

tions is inconsistent, and uneven spacing within the notes slows reading. The subject index could integrate the chapters more thoroughly. And the paperback cover quickly kinks up like curly hair on a humid day. One wishes that the production had reached a standard as high as the book's intellectual content.

This book will be useful in library schools, to staff and administrators of academic libraries, and to people doing research. Although each chapter covers one function of librarianship, the readership of each chapter should not be limited to that specialty. Because the bibliographic record underlies all of our work, Svenonius on bibliographic control should be mandatory reading for everyone. Metz offers insights and information on the use of library materials valuable to us all. Potter's clear synthesis of the literature of the last five years on applications of advanced technology will enlighten anyone. The book deserves a wide audience, and, if it prods us to do better research and to apply its results, it will have a great effect in our profession.—*Marcia Pankake, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota.*

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**Becher, Tony.** *Academic Tribes and Territories: Intellectual Enquiry and the Cultures of Disciplines.* Milton Keynes [England] and Bristol, Pa.: Open University Pr., 1989. 197p. \$65 (ISBN 0-335-09221-7); paper, \$26 (0-335-09220-9) LC 89-34087.

During the past three decades, an increasingly useful and accessible body of data and theory on the sociology of academic disciplines has been published. Academic librarians should begin to devote closer attention to it. The latest addition to these investigations, written by Tony Becher, a professor of education at the University of Sussex, is clearly presented, neatly structured, well documented—and overpriced—but it is definitely worth reading, especially by those librarians, such as administrators, bibliographers, and public service staff, whose success depends directly upon their ability to comprehend and respond

to the diverse values which drive academic scholarship.

Becher distinguishes at the outset between academic disciplines and the faculty engaged in their pursuit; he then sets out to show how the activities, perceptions, and relationships of faculty in different disciplines are directly affected by a variety of qualities particular to those disciplines. In order to gather the information needed for the book, he interviewed 221 faculty members at eighteen universities in Great Britain and the United States who are engaged in work in twelve disciplines: biology (i.e., botany and zoology), chemistry, economics, geography, history, law, mathematics, mechanical engineering, modern languages (French, German, Italian, Spanish), pharmacy, physics, and sociology. The book does not provide specific, individual analyses of each of these disciplines, but rather uses them as examples of disciplinary types. Becher characterizes and contrasts academic disciplines and their communities primarily by defining and applying four dichotomies. The first two of these, presented at the beginning of the book, are the familiar *hard/soft* and *pure/applied*. In general, the hard-pure disciplines are the natural sciences, the hard-applied disciplines are those such as engineering and pharmacy, the soft-pure are usually the humanities and social sciences, and the soft-applied disciplines are mainly professional areas such as law (and, one assumes, library science).

The chapter on communication, which contains a well-reasoned and highly informative discussion of such topics as collaboration, competition, and the speed and length of publications in different disciplines and specialties, will no doubt be the section of the book of most interest to academic librarians. In this chapter, Becher introduces his third dichotomy of *urban/rural*. Urban specialties are those areas within disciplines in which there is a "high person-to-problem ratio," with all of the attendant fast-paced activity, secrecy, competition, high stakes, and rapid publication, often supported by sub-



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stantial grant subsidies. (A classic example, noted in passing by Becher, was the race to unlock the structure of DNA—the double helix.) The urban specialties are located mainly in the sciences. Rural specialties, on the other hand, are more relaxed, less competitive (but also less collaborative), and offer a sufficient number of research topics for every scholar to lay claim to his or her own area of expertise. Some specialties within the natural sciences are rural, as are presumably all areas of the humanities, social sciences, and the soft professions. Whether a specialty is urban or rural, of course, is reflected in the methods of communication used by the specialty to move around its constituent information.

It is only in the final chapter on "Implications for Theory and Practice" that Becher introduces his fourth major dichotomy, *convergent/divergent*. Convergent disciplinary communities are those with "a sense of collectivity and mutual identity," while divergent communities are "schismatic and ideologically fragmented." All of the energy which the reader has expended in grasping the arguments presented in the first 150 pages of the book is amply rewarded in this final, illuminating chapter, for it is here that Becher synthesizes his information, and artfully weaves together his four dichotomies to reveal some of the major social and conceptual distinctions among scholarly disciplines and communities.

Becher takes special care throughout his book never to oversimplify. He is continuously aware that he is describing individual perceptions and perspectives in general terms, and that variations and exceptions will necessarily occur in particular cases. He never presents his four dichotomies as absolutes but rather, in each instance, as the two end-points of a single continuum, along which different disciplines or disciplinary communities can be located. My only criticism of the study is that it tends to place perhaps too great an emphasis on the sciences. Becher covers all of the main sciences in his twelve representative disciplines, but

considers only a few disciplines in the humanities and social sciences. Some of his dichotomies, notably hard/soft, and especially urban/rural, tend to cluster the sciences on one side, and all other disciplines on the other. This limits somewhat the conclusions he is able to draw about the differences among the nonscientific disciplines. Still, one cannot fault this approach too heavily, given the unchallenged centrality and predominance of the sciences among academic disciplines today—and, in any case, it is difficult to say whether Becher's conclusions would in fact have been much different had he delved more deeply into the humanities and social sciences, and had he included such subjects as philosophy, religion, or political science among his sample disciplines.

Most of us in academic libraries have a true subject background in only one discipline; when we enter academic librarianship, we accept a few hackneyed distinctions (scientists use journals, humanists monographs), but then we tend, nevertheless, to generalize our own disciplinary experience, and to imagine that the same qualities characterizing the discipline with which we are most familiar are shared by all disciplines. A careful reading of *Academic Tribes and Territories* will serve as an effective antidote to that affliction, and will do much to broaden the academic librarian's appreciation of the starkly divergent aims and values which underlie the many academic disciplines the research library is called upon to support.—Ross W. Atkinson, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY.

**Technical Services Today and Tomorrow.** Ed. by Michael Gorman. Englewood, Colo.: Libraries Unlimited, 1990. 207p. (ISBN 0-87287-608-X). LC 90-34856.

Michael Gorman has brought together sixteen quality contributions "to examine the present state of each of the major areas of technical services in libraries, to provide individual views on the future of those areas and of technical services in general, and to furnish the reader with