

‘Without Reserve’: Jesse Shera in the *Wilson Library Bulletin* and Elsewhere, 1961–1970

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Jesse Shera (1903–1982) was one of the foremost figures in librarianship of his time. From 1961 to 1968, he wrote a column in the *Wilson Library Bulletin*, a magazine aimed largely at public librarians. These columns, along with other articles of Shera’s, and correspondence between Shera, his editors, and others, provide a window into Shera’s thinking about librarianship. During the 1960s, Shera wrote about the need for a philosophy of the profession, and for collaboration between librarians and researchers in other disciplines. He argued for social epistemology as a theoretical foundation for librarianship, and for the embrace of the computer at a time when this was controversial. He also made a case for high standards in book selection and for the librarian as a scholar. Though his influence was limited, his breadth of vision and his willingness to question conventional thinking make him worth revisiting today.

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Introduction

Jesse Shera (1903–1982) achieved the unusual feat of being at once a dominant figure in librarianship — Kathleen Molz called him ‘the Gulliver of the library world’¹ — and a free-spirited, original voice. Over his long career, Shera worked as a library assistant at his college library, as a population librarian at the Scripps Foundation for Population Research, as an administrator at the Office of Strategic Services during World War II, as a library school professor at the University of Chicago, and as dean of the School of Library Science at Western Reserve University from 1952 to 1970.² In 1961, at the height of his prominence, he agreed to write a regular column for the *Wilson Library Bulletin* (*WLB*), then edited by John Wakeman. The *WLB* appeared ten times a year and was aimed mainly at public librarians. Wakeman left the *WLB* in 1963, to be replaced as editor by Kathleen Molz; Molz and Shera became good

friends. The *WLB* columns, eighty-two in all from 1961 to 1968, appeared under the heading 'Without Reserve'. Many of these columns were reprinted in 1971 in a volume called *'The Compleat Librarian' and Other Essays*.³ These columns provide a window into the ideas of this very prolific writer; Shera wrote about 500 articles and sixteen books over his career. The correspondence between Shera and Molz, along with other letters of Shera's, sheds additional light on his ideas and on how he hoped to influence the profession.

Shera hoped that librarianship would regain a lost age when the librarian was a scholar, esteemed by society. He argued that librarians should develop a professional philosophy to undergird the library techniques that had been developed from the late nineteenth century onwards. This philosophy would, Shera hoped, emerge from the study of how information moved throughout society and of the library's role in that process. He believed that the many kinds of libraries all shared a single purpose, to maximize the utility of humanity's graphic record. His ideals for librarianship were high, and his view of the profession unusually long. These ideals were in some important ways at odds with the spirit of the 1960s; it seems safe to say that the library world fell short of Shera's fondest hopes. Yet he tirelessly made his case, with unflinching wit and panache, both in scholarly circles and, in the *WLB*, to the ordinary librarian.

The profession

Almost from the start of his library career, Shera was troubled by what he saw as the mediocrity of much of the library profession. In 1931 he wrote a friend that far too many 'sweet young things' became cataloguers at academic libraries, 'with educational equipment utterly inadequate for their tasks'. If these young women, he wrote, 'have any genuine interest in the needs of the research worker, it does not go far beyond those of the young unmarried instructors'.⁴ In 1934 he took issue with a friend who thought that the main task facing librarians was to raise the public up to the level of awareness of the profession. On the contrary, Shera said, 'we could do considerable pulling upward on the boot-straps of our own standards before we need to concern ourselves very much with the attitude of the body politic'.⁵ Shera would spend much of the next four decades pointing out the sagging bootstraps, as he perceived them, and trying to persuade librarians to pull upwards.

Shera believed that the practical side of librarianship was fairly well advanced, with routines developed over time, by trial and error, that were adequate for maintaining the library as a functioning entity. What was lacking was a theory, an underlying philosophy, that would tell librarians not what to do and how, but why to do it. As early as 1942, this lack of theory was on his mind, but the time was too soon. Shera had looked into writing an overview of the philosophy of librarianship, but gave up the project when he saw that there were only one or two published papers of any value on the question. He wrote to a friend that 'before we can emerge with any well considered philosophy of librarianship we must know a great deal more about the scientific aspects of our work, and this knowledge must wait upon further research in the field'. To try to construct a philosophy now, he added, would be to engage in 'speculative shadow-boxing'.⁶

By 1952, Shera and his colleague, Margaret Egan, were ready to propose that, to become a true profession, librarianship needed the insight to be gained from a new field of study. Egan named this hoped-for discipline social epistemology, and Shera continued to argue for it after Egan's untimely death in 1959. He laid out the argument in the *WLB* in 1961, three months before the first of his 'Without Reserve' columns appeared.⁷ As individuals need mental stimulus to be fully human, so society also needs to create and transmit information, Shera said. But written information had grown in volume and complexity to the point that atomization was a danger, placing a strain on society's communication system. Thus there was a need for a new science of communication, Shera said. This new field of social epistemology would build 'an ordered and comprehensive body of knowledge about intellectual differentiation and the integration of knowledge within a complex social organization'. Its focus should be 'the production, flow, integration, and consumption of all forms of communicated thought throughout the entire social pattern'. No doubt aware of how theoretical all of this sounded, Shera made an effort to stress the practical benefit of social epistemology for librarianship. Librarians should work to maximize the social utility of man's graphic record, Shera said. To do this, they must understand how knowledge and society interact. In this effort, librarianship should ally itself with the field of general semantics, Shera argued, because both fields are interdisciplinary and 'fundamentally epistemological'. In this alliance, librarianship should contribute 'new insights into the structuring, organization, and availability of human knowledge', which were especially needful at a time when the proliferation of information 'threatens to become self-suffocating'. General semantics should contribute 'the fruits of social epistemology — the very foundations of the librarian's theoretical knowledge, lacking which librarianship degenerates from a profession to little more than a respectable trade'.⁸ Shera was reaching very high indeed.

Admirable though Shera's effort to undergird library practice with rigorous, outward-looking theory may be, one has the nagging sense that his reach may have exceeded his grasp. His assertion in the *WLB* that anthropology holds that pre-literate societies cannot have a culture seems doubtful. His statement that the ways in which scientific knowledge is passed on are well understood came only a year before Thomas Kuhn transformed our understanding of that process.⁹ His central goal of maximizing the social utility of the graphic record was akin to his urging that librarians cultivate taste in their readers, rather than fight for absolute intellectual freedom. Both were normative at heart, at a time when most librarians were more concerned to figure out what the reader wanted and to supply it, leaving the social utility of the process to take care of itself.

Shera's argument for social epistemology in the *WLB* provoked a lengthy, critical letter to the editor from a self-styled 'baloney-hating librarian' who felt that the piece was 'full of lofty baloney'.¹⁰ When John Wakeman asked Shera whether he wanted to reply in the magazine, Shera declined, saying 'Many thanks for the good laugh', but that he would not know how to reply.¹¹ The *WLB* did run three favourable letters in reaction to the article, but Shera never revisited social epistemology in the magazine again, although he continued to argue for the idea elsewhere.¹²

Shera did return in his *WLB* columns to the broader topic of the need for a rigorous and sustaining theory of librarianship. One avenue that he favoured in the search for a philosophy was the ideas of S. R. Ranganathan, the Indian librarian and author

of *The Five Laws of Library Science* and of *Colon Classification*. Shera cited Ranganathan's idea that libraries should grow organically to meet the intellectual needs of their users.¹³ Shera devoted a column in 1963 to what he felt was American librarians' unfortunate neglect of Ranganathan, a thinker who 'took all librarianship as his province'. Although he wrote 'excessively and repetitiously', sometimes about topics which he was 'ill prepared to interpret', and tended to lack humility, 'such faults are often concomitants of intellectual brilliance'. (The obvious reaction is that Shera saw a kindred spirit here, which is, to a large extent, true.) American librarians, Shera said, turned their backs on Ranganathan out of a distrust of his philosophical, even mystical, cast of mind, which consigned his ideas to the realm of the outlandish. American librarians, Shera said, 'are addicted to an uncompromising dichotomization of orthodoxy and heresy', and suffer from 'an absence of curiosity and an excess of timidity'. Ranganathan's *Five Laws* accord well with American notions of service, Shera argued, and with his own central idea that 'the function of the library is to maximize the utility of graphic records for the benefit of society'. If Americans recoiled when Ranganathan invoked Hindu scripture, at least he strove for a deep connection between librarianship and the larger culture in which he lived, something that American librarianship lacked, Shera said. In creating his colon classification system, based on fundamental ideas about the nature of thinking, Ranganathan 'at least has made some headway in formulating the bases of a science of epistemology of librarianship', a project that Shera found more interesting than the American approach, which placed 'more confidence in the alphabet than in logic'. Shera concluded that Americans may wind up treating Ranganathan in the way that the French Academy treated Molière, honoring him only long after his death.¹⁴

Shera and Ranganathan had been friends and mutual admirers for many years. In 1951, Shera wrote that Ranganathan had 'perhaps the most keenly penetrating and analytical mind operating in the field of librarianship today'.¹⁵ When Shera reviewed a new edition of Ranganathan's *Colon Classification* in the following year, he sent Ranganathan an advance copy of the review, which prompted an enthusiastic reply from India. Shera was the first to put his finger on 'the only true, though small, contribution of the Colon Classification [...] It has taken twenty years to find a sympathetic soul to resonate at that wave length, so to speak'.¹⁶ In 1967, after more than twenty years of formality, Shera suggested that they address one another by first name in their letters. From then on, the two wrote to each other as 'Jesse' and 'Ranga'.¹⁷ In late 1967, Shera delivered a series of taped lectures to Ranganathan, which the latter pronounced 'magnificent'.¹⁸ These were played as the 1967 Sarada Ranganathan Lectures in Bangalore, and appeared in print in 1970.¹⁹ Here Shera elaborated on his idea of social epistemology.

In addition to presenting his ideas about social epistemology in outline form in the *WLB* in 1961, and recommending Ranganathan to his readers in 1963, Shera also urged on librarians another means toward developing a professional philosophy or theory, collaboration with researchers in other disciplines. In a 1965 column, Shera contrasted the 'disillusion, disappointment, and dismay' of an associate who had attended that year's American Library Association (ALA) annual meeting, finding it self-involved and intellectually barren, with his own happy experience at an interdisciplinary conference on access to knowledge held in July of that year.²⁰ Hearing from scholars in political science, sociology, and psychology confirmed Shera in his

‘reiterated insistence that librarianship has much to learn from the scholarship of other disciplines’.²¹ Shera expanded this column considerably when it appeared in *The Compleat Librarian* in 1971, stressing that failure of the ALA to promote useful library research and also his observation that ‘the great strength and power’ of the 1965 conference came not from the librarians present, but from those in other fields, ‘men who obviously knew more about the underlying theories that comprise the intellectual foundations of librarianship than the librarians themselves’.²²

For Shera, collaboration was not only a way to inject intellectual vitality into the hidebound precincts of librarianship, but also a matter of some urgency, because the rise of the computer threatened to split librarianship and to overwhelm what should be its humanistic core. In a 1962 column, he asserted that the schism between librarians and documentalists, or information specialists, was a distraction from the real problem, which was that neither group possessed a sound theoretical foundation. This lack will ‘bring both librarianship and documentation down like a house of cards — whether they are produced by the Library of Congress or by IBM’.²³ Later in 1962, Shera reminded his readers that libraries are focused on the interaction between books and people, but ‘no one yet really knows the nature of the interaction’.²⁴ He hoped for new discoveries from neurologists, brain specialists, ophthalmologists, and biophysicists. When this column appeared in *The Compleat Librarian* in 1971, Shera added that, if we knew how reading truly works, ‘we could stop our worrying about what the librarian should be taught and how he should be doing his job’.²⁵ The list of other fields that Shera wanted librarians to interact with and learn from was open-ended, and seems to reflect both Shera’s confidence that he understood the humanistic core of librarianship and his yearning for a breath of intellectual fresh air in the too-stale confines of the profession. But it was the promise and challenge of the computer that, above all, prompted Shera to call for collaboration between librarians and others in search of a valid philosophy of librarianship.

Librarians and the computer

Shera discussed the need for the computer in 1956, in an article called ‘Librarianship in a High Key’.²⁶ He focused on special libraries, especially those serving researchers in scientific, technical, and business subjects. In these areas, the flow of information had increased to the point that existing bibliographical methods were no longer adequate to retrieve the latest pertinent material. To serve these users well was to practise librarianship under pressure, or librarianship in a high key. It was in this kind of setting that the computer offered a solution, he wrote. As Dean of the School of Library Science at Western Reserve University (WRU), Shera oversaw the establishment in 1955 of the Center for Documentation and Communication Research at the library school. This Documentation Center was Shera’s attempt to foster research into computer systems that could help librarians operate in this high key, by making advances in computerized information storage and retrieval. Over time, however, the Documentation Center proved a disappointment. Wright showed that the Documentation Center operated entrepreneurially, to promote a specific product, rather than academically, to foster many ways to solving a set of problems, which is the approach that Shera preferred.²⁷ By 1970, the Documentation Center’s efforts to sell computing services were wound up, a victim of advances made by commercial computer

companies. Shera never found a way to integrate the Center into the Library School. Instead, the Documentation Center came to overshadow other aspects of library education at WRU. His colleague, Margaret Kaltenbach, recalled that the Documentation Center had 'gone off too much on its own', and that prospective students came to think of WRU as all about computing. The imbalance worsened to the point that she said, 'It was time to demonstrate the unity of Information and Library Science'.²⁸ Shera was of the same mind. Asked on his retirement as dean, in 1970, what his greatest achievement was at WRU, he at first answered establishing the Documentation Center. Later in the interview, though, he withdrew this answer, and offered working for the unity of all librarianship as his most valuable effort.²⁹

This experience shaped his writings on computer and libraries. He tried to convince librarians to view the computer as a tool that could be used in furtherance of their central mission. He argued in the 1950s that bibliographic organization was 'central to the problem of librarianship, but few agreed with me'. As he saw it, by and large 'librarians began to worry that "machines would take over"'. This attitude did not dampen his spirits, though. As Shera recalled in 1971, in the 1950s 'Everything was automated information retrieval and the fights were hot and heavy. It was all great fun'.³⁰ Along with the fun, though, was a desire to make the profession see the computer as it really was and could be, and not as something to be feared. The problem of bibliographic organization and retrieval was bigger than the library profession; it could even have national security implications, as Shera told Senator Hubert Humphrey in 1961. Humphrey chaired the Subcommittee on Reorganization of the Senate Committee on Government Operations, and Shera suggested that Humphrey hold hearings about the development of computerized information retrieval in the sciences and the training of science librarians. Shera told Humphrey that there had been little progress in the four years since the Soviet Union had launched the Sputnik satellite: 'I think you may be rather surprised and even shocked that, despite the substantial appropriations that the Congress has made available [...] so little has been accomplished'. Humphrey's reply was concerned but non-committal, telling Shera that there was no time to hold hearings in the current session of the Senate, but that the Subcommittee staff was working on a study of the provision of scientific information to government agencies.³¹

Later in 1961, the Library School at Western Reserve received a visit from a study group working for the National Science Foundation (NSF) that was investigating the education of science librarians. Shera told Herman Fussler, dean of the Graduate Library School at the University of Chicago, that he was displeased with the group and its approach. The group was led by a physicist who admitted to an ignorance of library education, Shera said. This lead investigator had 'no qualifications or experience' for his task, and the investigation was 'not really trying to make a study of the need, but to formulate a program that, as they put it, "NSF will buy"'. Shera concluded, 'I resent it all, as a library school dean, as a taxpayer, and as a Democrat'.³² Shera sent a copy of this letter to Senator Humphrey, who promised to have a staff member look into the matter.³³

While Humphrey could be of some help in Congress, the deeper problem lay in the library schools. Shera wrote to his fellow dean, Herman Fussler, that he was discouraged that library schools had ignored the problem of access to scientific information

and 'let the responsibility for it fall into hands that are totally inexperienced. As you know too well, I have been warning librarians about this for many years'.³⁴ To retain their domain over information and fend off the challenge of documentalists or computer engineers, librarians needed to arrive at a sensible approach to the computer. In a 1962 *WLB* column entitled 'On the Permanence of the Invisible', Shera distanced himself from both an exclusive focus on technology and the fear of it. On one hand, 'The library is not a machine shop in which knowledge is fabricated by mechanical devices'. On the other hand, 'we regret the indifference, and even hostility, of many librarians to the advantages the new electronic devices, which are as yet only in their infancy, can give to improving the efficiency of man's access to recorded knowledge'. When thinking about the library of the future, he told his readers, the intellectual ferment that ought to take place is more important than the machines to be found there.³⁵

Shera approached the same topic from a different angle in the *WLB* in 1967, in 'The Computer and the Chancellor'. The chancellor was Robert M. Hutchins of the University of Chicago, where Shera had earned his doctorate twenty years earlier and taught until moving to Western Reserve in 1952. Hutchins wrote that the computer was unlike any previous invention in its importance, and that it could reduce the need for labour to vanishing point. It could also make distance education the norm, rendering physical schools and universities obsolete. But the computer posed the danger of supplanting reflection and judgement with training and accumulation of mere information. It was imperative for society to develop new social and political institutions to deal with both the danger and the potential, Hutchins concluded.³⁶ Shera heartily agreed, and took librarians to task for continuing to ask themselves what they thought about computers: 'We accept them as Margaret Fuller accepted the Universe [...] What we think, or like, or prefer, is quite beside the point'. Shera agreed with Hutchins that new social institutions were needed, and concluded that 'We have no doubt that one of these new institutions is a new kind of library'.³⁷

How can the permanence of the invisible be reconciled with a new kind of library? Shera's thinking provides two answers. First, librarians must share ideas with people in other disciplines, including computer science. Second, librarians must ground themselves in a professional philosophy, so as to understand where the computer ought to fit in. These pursuits would be a departure from the focus on technique that Shera believed had plagued librarianship since Melvil Dewey's time, and in that way would be something new. They would also turn librarians' attention to using the computer as one tool to foster learning, and in this way move the profession closer to his ideal of the scholar-librarian of the early nineteenth-century and before.

Before librarians could learn how best to use the computer, they had to accept it, as Margaret Fuller accepted the universe. Shera could swing back and forth about whether this was happening. In a May 1964 column called 'Of Librarians and Other Aborigines', he was unsure whether the profession would give up in the face of the computer and hope that the threat would disappear, or whether it would 'absorb the invaders and [...] adapt to their innovations'. He likened librarians to Margaret Mead's New Guinea tribespeople, who went from the stone age to modernity in the twenty-five years between her visits. Librarians could learn from the 'technologists' and leave their own stone age behind, he argued.³⁸ Shera's note of urgency in May

1964, was replaced with optimism in September, in a column entitled 'The Turning of the Worm'. Here Shera recounted a state library association meeting, where a majority voted in favour of an automated statewide catalogue, a project that Shera opposed as too expensive. What won the day and overcame Shera's objections was the comment of a librarian there that 'automation is here to stay'. For a moment at least, Shera believed that librarians had acknowledged 'the invaders' and may even have become too optimistic about their machinery.³⁹ Optimism about the computer could be almost as dangerous as hoping that it would go away, Shera believed. By early 1968, he could write that an excess of enthusiasm for technology was distracting library leaders from the need to serve the underserved in places such as Appalachia: '[T]he public library may be a doomed ship rolling aimlessly in a storm-tossed sea, while its crew is busy happily charting a course to the moon'.⁴⁰

The best way to avoid these swings in attitude toward the computer was to understand it, and Shera's preferred means of doing this was to bring library leaders, computer engineers, and others into close contact. The INTREX Conference sponsored by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in 1965, which Molz asked Shera to report on for the *WLB*, was the major example of this, and it was a heartening experience for Shera. Before the conference, Shera told Molz that 'I am completely at a loss as to what to expect there'.⁴¹ In the event, INTREX became a touchstone for Shera of interdisciplinary cooperation. MIT invited leaders from computer science, engineering, linguistics, publishing, and librarianship to meet to draw up goals for the automated library of the future (INTREX stood for 'information transfer experiments'). Shera was invited to only one of the five weeks of the conference. His report is something of a jumble, but then many of the concepts discussed at INTREX were novel, such as thinking in terms of databases rather than documents, and connecting libraries nationwide by means of computer. Apart from the specifics, Shera was pleased that the computer engineers learned that library problems went well beyond data processing. In private, he recalled his pleasure when he overheard an engineer say to a librarian, 'You know, there's a hell of a lot more to this library problem than I realized'.⁴² The other side of this interdisciplinary coin was that 'librarians perceived a new world of computer technology with almost unlimited potentialities'.⁴³

INTREX was invaluable, but also had its shortcomings, Shera told his readers. No reference librarians were invited, nor was anyone from cognitive psychology or neuroscience. The problem of using natural language to search a database, which Shera believed 'would have shaken the commitment of INTREX to its very foundations', went unexplored. He ended his article on INTREX on a note of optimism, writing of the computer's limitless potential. When a letter writer took issue with this conclusion, and described the state of automation as 'groping attempts, some honest, some bombastic, some uninformed', and some motivated by commercial gain, Shera backtracked a bit, but replied that the computer would bring fundamental changes to the library over the next 25 years, 'even though present fumbblings are now confusing the issues'.⁴⁴ This letter writer was the director of a medical library, and Shera may have felt less need to convince him of the computer's future importance than he did the mass of readers of the *WLB*.

His experience at INTREX so impressed Shera that in 1969 he proposed a similar but broader kind of conference, with librarians at the centre of things. The year before, Shera joined a task force of three librarians who reported to the Advisory Committee on Library Research and Training of the US Office of Education (USOE). The goal was to advise the USOE how best to spend money that Congress had authorized for programs in library and information science. The task force recommended four initiatives, (1) courses to inform librarians about advances in computing, (2) support for programmed instruction at library schools, (3) an annual 'high level meeting' of library leaders and scholars in other fields, and (4) support for internships in libraries. Shera wrote the section of the task force report proposing the high-level meeting. His idea was for a conference to which no more than twenty or thirty scholars would be invited to live together for two or three weeks. In addition to library leaders, there would be people from such fields as 'anthropology, linguistics, sociology, content analysis, psychology, neurosurgery, philosophy of science, public administration, economics, education, engineering, literature, and the arts'. Shera wrote that he would like to hear, for instance, a neurosurgeon talk about cognition and how the brain works, or a psychologist discuss learning theory. The quality of the conference moderator would be critical to success, Shera wrote, and above all 'It is the quality of the participants that is the primary consideration'. Shera included in his proposal a list of thirty-eight scholars in various fields who were of the type he had in mind as participants.⁴⁵ If the high-level meeting proved a success and became an annual event, Shera wrote, it might 'get librarianship out of its technological rut and broaden its perspective'. His ultimate hope was that the high-level meeting would 'revolutionize our notions of what librarianship is, and provide it with the intellectual substance it so desperately needs if it is to fulfill its proper role in the total process of human communication'. The high-level meeting never took place, and there is no record in Shera's papers of any follow-up to the idea. Perhaps it was too open-ended and theoretical for the USOE; the other task-force proposals are practical and employ existing ideas and techniques. Perhaps it was the victim of the end of an era of federal largesse in the library world, brought on by the costs of the Vietnam War and the coming to power of a Republican administration in Washington. Perhaps the idea was too quintessentially Shera. One feels that he envisioned himself as the moderator, and that he would have been an effective one.

Shera and the American Library Association

Shera was an active member of the American Library Association (ALA) from his days as a young librarian in the 1930s on, yet the ALA often rankled him. As he wrote in a letter in 1973, 'I could never understand how the ALA moves its wonders to perform'.⁴⁶ Shera felt that the ALA ought to be a learned society, but instead was 'a promotional society'.⁴⁷ This was nowhere more apparent than in April of each year, when the ALA sponsored National Library Week (NLW). NLW and 'all this stuff about reading'⁴⁸ always exasperated Shera. The first NLW was in 1958;⁴⁹ Shera did not write about it in the *WLB* until 1966, but when he got around to the subject he was scathing. NLW was 'not only a sterile formality; it is a lie'.⁵⁰ It is really about reading for its own sake, and not about libraries, Shera wrote. It presented a 'pseudo-cultural veneer' to the public, implying that libraries were 'a mere

cultural adornment', rather than a vital institution for transmitting society's cultural heritage. Shera's dismay at the tone of NLW ran deep, causing him to say that, 'We sometimes wonder whether librarians themselves know or understand what librarianship is all about'. At least some librarians shared Shera's dismay, because he wrote to Molz that he had received about a dozen letters congratulating him on the column, and only one criticism,⁵¹ from an ALA official who 'seem[s] to think that [...] if I would look over the extensive file of reports on NLW, I would change my views on the subject. Ha!'.⁵² In spite of this attitude, Shera agreed in 1967 to give a dinner speech for NLW to the Friends of the Cleveland Heights Public Library.⁵³ Critical as he was of librarians' attitudes, he never stopped trying to win them over to his way of thinking.

Shera criticized ALA conferences, as well as NLW, sarcastically proposing an ALA Committee on Comforts and Amenities, an official statement on The Freedom Not to Read, and an ALA clearinghouse for Rumor Evaluation and Dissemination (READ), as well as accusing the ALA of phronemophobia, a made-up word that he defined as fear of thinking.⁵⁴ Shera wrote to Molz in 1966 that an ALA conference panel on which they had both appeared was boring and platitudinous, except for Molz's contributions, and that library panels were often not worth the trouble. 'Somehow we aren't getting the right people, they don't spark, it's always the same old stuff. Maybe there aren't any right people in the profession — it's a sobering thought.' Molz's view was similar, but not as dark; she replied, 'I am inclined to your view that the profession does not sprout many bright twigs, and that's that'. She took some encouragement, though, from the thought that Shera and the *WLB* were informing librarians of developments in 'the wider terrains of the profession'.⁵⁵

Shera and his editors at the *WLB* saw their readers, mainly public librarians, as in need of educating. When he agreed to write his *WLB* column, Shera floated two titles for it⁵⁶ before settling on 'Without Reserve'. His editor, John Wakeman, liked 'Without Reserve', because 'it makes sense even if you don't get the pun. This is important, because many of my Dear and Faithful Readers are too Bloody Stupid to do this'.⁵⁷ Five years later, with Molz as his editor, Shera oversaw a special issue on bibliographic organization, which Molz distributed to academic librarians, telling Shera that 'maybe this issue will end, for once and for all, the concept of *WLB* as the journal for the little librarian. Here's hoping!'. Shera hoped so, too, replying that 'We'll put a stop to that "little librarian" yet'.⁵⁸

The 'little librarian' and her organization, the ALA, could exhibit a certain immaturity, Shera felt. This was his reaction in 1967 to the ALA's decision to hold its 1973 annual meeting in Las Vegas. His column, called 'You're Going on a Spree in 1973', attacked the way the ALA leadership pushed this decision through the Council, the presence of organized crime in the Las Vegas casino business and, most of all, the unseriousness of a gambling resort as the site of the meeting. He was all for rejecting the image of 'the librarian as mouse', but not in favour of 'the librarian as playmate of the month'. The choice of Las Vegas probably stemmed from librarians' 'inability to "stand prosperity"'. The basic problem was that librarianship was confronted by the problems of adulthood, but 'has not yet learned to put away childish things'. Shera ended by saying that he would probably be too old to romp in Las Vegas in six years' time, but that he was ready now to sneak out behind the barn for an illicit game of hearts and 'a couple of cornsilk cigarettes — aren't we devils!'.⁵⁹ Shera

echoed here his own childhood on an Ohio farm, and was dismayed at how far removed the ALA seemed to be from the learned society of his aspirations. Molz thought the column ‘great, especially the ending, which is delightful’.⁶⁰

Shera returned to his diagnosis of phronemophobia as the ALA’s malady in a reaction piece to the 1967 ALA annual meeting which, while a social success, was marked by ‘*malaise*, professional sterility, and intellectual poverty’.⁶¹ Shera said that there was no real leadership in the ALA, that the association was wasting much of the largesse that it received from government, foundations, and corporations, and that a conference on manpower held at the annual meeting was full of tired platitudes. Molz covered this manpower conference for the *WLB*, writing Shera that her article ‘will require on my part enormous tact and diplomacy, since the real problem of the manpower conference was the manpower who engaged in it’. Shera replied that, ‘Everyone here has greeted your bon mot about the Manpower Conference with yelps of sympathetic delight’.⁶² In spite of his disappointment, Shera wrote that, ‘We cannot believe, perhaps because we do not want to believe, that librarianship is as intellectually bankrupt as it appeared to be’ at the annual meeting.⁶³ Shera was often exasperated by the library profession, but he never let go of his ideals for it.

Freedom to read

The freedom to read was a lively issue throughout the 1960s, as the literary novel with erotic content seemed to push its way into a prominent place in the culture. For example, *Lolita* was published in the USA in 1958, *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* in 1959, and *Tropic of Cancer* in 1961. Books such as these raised problems for librarians, since they could not be dismissed as smut, yet their presence on library shelves often aroused fierce opposition. Shera addressed the issue in 1962, with tongue in cheek, in ‘Officer, Arrest That Book!’,⁶⁴ saying that ‘righteous indignation, breast-beating, and pious pronouncements about freedom to read will not save the book from the censor’, and that humour was the more effective weapon. In the following year, he conspicuously refused to get upset at an episode of *The Defenders*, a television courtroom drama, in which a fictional librarian testified in favour of banning a book as obscene.⁶⁵ Although ‘every jackass has his constitutional right to bray’, it does not follow that libraries ‘must amplify every insane bellow until it echoes and reverberates down the corridors of time’. He told his readers that *The Defenders* had ended in time for him to change the channel to his preferred viewing, *The Lawrence Welk Show*, to hear the Lennon Sisters’ rendition of ‘Bippity, Boppity, Boo’. This was not someone ready to rush to the barricades in defence of every book that came under attack.

For Shera, book selection was at the heart of librarianship, its *feste Burg* (mighty fortress). He liked to recall his college library, at Miami University of Ohio in the 1920s, as small but remarkably useful, because of the care that had gone into building its collection.⁶⁶ Defence of the *feste Burg* required the librarian to be a humanist, with clear, well-founded ideas of when a book ‘contributes to the dignity, beauty, and strength of the human endeavor’.⁶⁷ Shera refused to defend a book simply because it came under attack; by the same token, he opposed any attempt to encourage reading that did not hew to a standard of excellence. The act of reading, by itself, could

produce results either good or bad; it all depended on the content of what was read, he said. Moreover, just as 'no one stimulates drinking more than the orator on prohibition', so, too, 'one who reads about the pleasure of reading is likely to suffer acute revulsion'. Librarians, Shera said, should cultivate among their patrons taste in reading, which is 'the ability to recognize excellence', rather than claiming that reading in itself held any value. Shera thought it a shame that the demand theory of book selection seemed to have triumphed over the value theory, 'especially when the waters are as muddied as they are by "intellectual freedom", and the "right" of the individual to find in his public library whatever he wants to read'.⁶⁸ Given this outlook on book selection, any attempt to suppress a book that Shera believed fell short of excellence may have been of concern to him as a citizen (the jackass's right to bray), but not at all as a librarian.

What concerned Shera as a librarian was taste in book selection. In what seems a calculated provocation, he wrote in 1967 that librarians could be 'self-righteous about intellectual freedom' only because 'they know too well that the social effects of reading have not been identified or isolated', and that people usually read to confirm their preconceptions or for escapism, both of which are socially harmless. (It was long a desire of Shera's to see the library profession analyse the social effects of reading in a rigorous way.) The harm from bad books or 'cheap best sellers' comes from their tendency to ruin the reader's taste, his aesthetic values, 'in the most pernicious and subtle ways'.⁶⁹ It was the librarian's obligation, then, to exercise her best judgement and to exclude from the library those books that debase the reader's taste. Shera endorsed here an opinion that Molz had published the year before, that the public library had no place in the vanguard of freedom of expression, but should instead 'resist the banalities of a literature squalid in style, poor in effect'.⁷⁰ As Shera saw it, 'All too many librarians, as Miss Molz says, are so fearful of being accused of censorship that they put in their libraries vast quantities of junk, and this can only do harm to the library'. Moving beyond what Molz had argued, Shera added, 'One does not attract readers by offering them trash. So all too often, the serious reader, wherever he comes from, asks "What's in the library for me?" And all too often there isn't much'.⁷¹ To exclude books that lack sufficient literary merit, that debase the reader's taste, the librarian would need to know more than the typical reader. She would need a strong liberal education, so that she could distinguish with confidence the *Lolitas* of the world from the trash. How the less well-educated 'little librarian' would distinguish the shocking but worthy novel from the dross was something Shera did not discuss.

Other issues of the 1960s

One issue of the mid- and late 1960s that Shera avoided in the *WLB* was the wave of student unrest that swept many American universities and colleges. The issue did come up in a private exchange of letters in 1970, though. A library student in Tennessee wrote to Shera to ask whether he had changed his positive opinion of James A. Perkins, president of Cornell University during the 1969 student revolt there. Shera had praised a book of Perkins's on the university,⁷² but what had happened at Cornell under Perkins's administration was spectacular and disturbing. In April 1969, about 120 black students seized control of the student union building in the hours

before dawn, evicting some visiting parents staying in guest rooms there. The students managed to obtain some guns, and issued a series of demands to the Cornell administration. A general student uprising seemed imminent, and Perkins persuaded a majority of the faculty to accede to enough student demands to defuse the crisis. But a photograph of some black students waving guns as they left the student union building received nationwide attention. The image caused such outrage that Cornell's board of trustees forced Perkins to resign.⁷³ Shera's reply to the library student's implicit criticism of President Perkins showed concern, but not the panic or outrage that were widespread among older Americans in 1970. Perkins's actions had betrayed his principles, but his writings on the university were still of value, Shera said. At least some of the rebellious students had meant to attack the idea of the university: 'There have always been those who lack respect for "book larnin"'. But Shera showed more sympathy for the students than most administrators of the day would have. 'One must understand that the youth of today are living in a rough time, for the sins of our society are many and serious, but this country has lived through crises before and I am confident that the university will survive.'⁷⁴ Shera's experience of the crisis of the 1930s, when he entered the profession, must have helped here, along with an unusually long view of history.

The 1960s were a time of unprecedented federal financial aid to libraries, a state of affairs that Shera saw as both an opportunity and a danger. While money could certainly help, 'money that is misdirected into the wrong channels can probably be almost as damaging to a profession's well-being as no money at all'. Librarianship had more success in attracting money than in attracting brains, because the profession as it was had 'so little substance that the most highly qualified college graduates will not accept it at any price'.⁷⁵ A shortage of librarians was a problem at the time, but Shera favoured holding the line on intellectual standards nevertheless. In 1967 he said that lowering standards 'has already led to trouble and if we don't have enough of the right kind of people to operate the library sixty-two or seventy hours a week, all right let's cut it back and have it open only — but let's not compromise with quality in this thing'.⁷⁶ Shera was cautiously optimistic about President Johnson's creation in 1966 of a National Advisory Commission on Libraries, which he hoped would look at the profession as a whole, at its need for more talented people, and at the role of libraries in society.⁷⁷ Shera appeared before the Commission, headed by Douglas Knight, the president of Duke University, in the following year. Although he did not get to know Knight, Shera formed a jaundiced view of him and of the Commission, based on an interview that Molz did with Knight for the *WLB*. Shera wrote to Molz that he was 'distressed' over Knight's leadership, and that Knight 'really doesn't seem to have learned anything from most of us "witnesses" who paraded before him, e.g. his surprise over your statement that the public library is basically a middle-class institution'. Shera was also unhappy to learn that Knight never used the library, but bought all of his books instead. Shera told Molz, 'I'll bet, after you left, that he leaned back complacently and said to himself, "Well, I gave that pretty little librarian some insight into how a great mind works, didn't I?"'.⁷⁸

Molz took a more accepting view of Douglas Knight, telling Shera that 'I never laughed over anything as much as I laughed over your last letter. Trust you to read between the lines. In part you are right, in part you are wrong'. As a university

president, Knight 'has been bowing old ladies in and out of tea parties for years, and it is the way he bows them in and out that makes for millions for the university's treasuries'. He was 'the most charming individual I have ever met, and I am equally confident he knows it perfectly well'. Molz told Shera that 'You are right that he knows nothing about libraries really, but *entre nous* he admitted as much to me'. Molz saw, as Shera did not, that Knight chose to be guarded in his comments to her. 'No doubt that's how you get to be a president.' Molz told Shera that 'I treasured your letter, which is so priceless, so JHS, that were I a heartless, cruel editor, I would have printed it first off'. Shera was bemused by this, telling Molz that 'I can see right now that I'm not the right sex to appreciate a Knight in shining armor on a white horse. I think the real trouble is, though, that being myopic [*sic*] I have difficulty in determining where the horse ends and the Knight begins'.⁷⁹ Molz had a clearer understanding of the kind of politically adept, smooth personage who would tend to be chosen to head a presidential commission than Shera did.

Conclusion

In a 1967 interview, Shera longed for a golden past when the librarian was a scholar, esteemed in society, and lamented 'the deterioration of the librarian over the centuries'. Somewhere along the way, the librarian turned from a scholar into a technician, and often a low-level one. 'I think old St Melville [*sic*: Melvil Dewey] had a lot to do with it. But, we became to technique-ridden in the latter part of the nineteenth century, that we lost sight of the other thing, and I think that is a great shame, a great catastrophe'. At sixty-four, Shera still hoped to pull the profession back to its scholarly roots. 'I'd like, if I could live long enough, and exert some influence, to see librarianship brought back to some semblance of honest scholarship.' Even at the height of his prominence, though, Shera felt that 'what I've tried to do is unfortunately terribly small'.⁸⁰

What influence did Shera exert on librarianship? One can see how Shera's ideas were received at the time, in some quarters at least, in the *Library Journal's* review of *Sociological Foundations of Librarianship*.⁸¹ The book was dismissed as a rehash of old Shera ideas, none of which the review described as particularly useful. These included the role of the computer, the idea of social epistemology, and 'the pigheaded reductionist view of censorship which Shera should by this time have the good sense to stop repeating as it does him no credit'. Even the book's title came under attack, on the doubtful ground that Shera's real subject was epistemology, not sociology. The reviewer wondered if the title 'might be another bit of Ranganathan obfuscation or is it razzle-dazzle?'. In its aggressively negative tone, this review reminds one of the 'baloney-hating librarian' who wrote to the *WLB* in 1961 to dismiss social epistemology. It seems that Shera never ceased to provoke this kind of reaction from some librarians.

Another common response to Shera was silence, or praise followed by inaction. No one in the library profession stepped forward to build on social epistemology as a theoretical foundation for the profession. The practical, empirical strain in librarianship may have been too strong for that. Social epistemology as Shera described it may not have been sturdy enough to bear as much weight as he hoped. Perhaps if

Margaret Egan had lived, she and Shera could have found a way to reach more of the profession with a theory that was sound, of clear practical value, and appealing to librarians in general. Perhaps if Shera's high-level meeting had taken place, proved a success, and become a regular a regular and important event in the library world, the collaboration involved might have produced a professional philosophy that could take root and grow. But Egan died in 1959, and the high-level meeting never happened.

Some of the blame for the limits on Shera's influence must be laid at his own doorstep. Shera was too busy running the library school at Western Reserve, teaching, writing, and speaking to pursue interdisciplinary collaboration as a central goal. Active as he was in the profession, Shera was comfortable espousing minority views. Indeed, one gets the feeling that being in a lonely, high-minded minority was where Shera felt most at home. In the 1960s and 1970s, he seems almost to have been an intellectual one-man band, with admirers and critics, but no fellow players. It is notable that, much as he came to admire Kathleen Molz's intellect and to like her personally, he seems not to have engaged her in any deep debate over librarianship. He praised her work, but never related it to his own. This is striking when it comes to Molz's writings about how public libraries might change to serve young people and non-readers. Shera never tried to synthesize these with his own deeply-held elitism.

Shera's temperament may have been another factor limiting the reach of his ideas. His personality did not lend itself to coalition-building or to winning the average librarian over to his side. John S. Millis, the president of Western Reserve who recruited Shera to become dean of the library school in 1952, admired him greatly but noted that:

It was hard for him to suffer fools gladly. He was very bright, a well-informed person. The posturing of fools used to upset him more than was good for him. He would not lose his temper, but he would show his annoyance, his scorn.⁸²

Shera was aware of this, telling an interviewer, 'I remember my old friend, Ralph Beals, one time — of course, I know I've been a controversial figure — and we were walking across the quadrangle at Chicago and this came up somehow. And I said, "Ralph, how did I get to be — to have the reputation of being such a bastard?" And he said, "Well, Jesse, I don't know, but you sure got it!" Ha!'.⁸³ On the other hand, when he came to know someone of acute intelligence, who strove always to talk sensibly, his admiration could run very deep, as it did with Kathleen Molz. But Shera was not the man to change librarians' minds in large numbers.

One way in which he influenced librarianship was as a teacher. Millis thought Shera a master teacher, one who did more than impart knowledge, but also helped his students to surpass him. This echoes Shera's own definition of great teaching.⁸⁴ For most librarians, who never were his students, his written work performs some of the same functions, goading us to think about what we do and, above all, why we do it. Even if social epistemology failed to transform the library profession in Shera's lifetime, its call to think about information as a social phenomenon and libraries as social agencies, not self-contained units, is still useful and necessary. In recent years there have been signs that Shera's work in this area has helped provoke fresh thinking

about the social nature of information.⁸⁵ Perhaps this line of thought will yet lead to the philosophy of librarianship that Shera longed for. Shera's oft-stated goal that librarians maximize the utility of the graphic record also calls on us to maximize our own utility. His yearning for the days of the scholar-librarian, and for libraries that served the elite reader, may also be historical dead ends, but still call on us to stretch ourselves, because they require us to serve the most demanding of our users well. Because Shera had well-developed ideas about why we have libraries, his notions of how the profession should respond to new technologies are well worth revisiting today. His prose shines; he is a pleasure to read.

Kathleen Molz wrote that 'Jesse Shera is a phenomenon who, like Sherlock Holmes's brother Mycroft, specializes in "omniscience". Such a specialization is hardly imitable'.⁸⁶ Inimitable he may be, but librarianship needs more like him.

Acknowledgements

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Notes

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- ² M. Kaltenbach, 'Shera, Jesse H.', in *ALA World Encyclopedia of Library and Information Services*, ed. by Robert Wedgeworth, 2nd edn (Chicago: American Library Association, 1986).
- ³ J. Shera, *The Compleat Librarian and Other Essays* (Cleveland: Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1971).
- ⁴ Letter from Jesse Shera to Grace Osgood Kelley, 18 June 1931, deposited in the Jesse Shera Papers, Case Western Reserve University Archives, Cleveland, Ohio. All Shera correspondence and interviews cited herein are held in this collection. In spite of the tone of these comments, Shera can be largely absolved of the charge of sexism. He believed that the profession, starting with Melvil Dewey, had taken advantage of the subordination of women in society to use them in routinized, clerical roles. In addition, several of his most highly-esteemed colleagues were female. The list begins with Margeret Egan, his most important collaborator until her death in 1959. It includes Marian Manley of the Newark, New Jersey, Public Library in the 1930s and 1940s, Margaret Kaltenbach at Western Reserve in the 1950s and 1960s, and Kathleen Molz in the 1960s and 1970s.
- ⁵ Letter from Shera to Arthur Berthold, 11 January 1934.
- ⁶ Letter from Shera to Herbert B. Anstaett, 5 March 1942.
- ⁷ J. Shera, 'Social Epistemology, General Semantics, and Librarianship', *Wilson Library Bulletin*, 35.10 (June 1961), 767–70. Reprinted in J. Shera, *Libraries and the Organization of Knowledge* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1965), pp. 12–17.
- ⁸ Shera, 'Social Epistemology', p. 15.
- ⁹ T. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962).
- ¹⁰ D. Springs, letter to the editor, *Wilson Library Bulletin*, 36.2 (October 1961), 118.
- ¹¹ Letter from Shera to John Wakeman, 23 June 1961.
- ¹² J. Shera, *Sociological Foundations of Librarianship* (New York: Asia Publishing House, 1970); *The Foundations of Education for Librarianship* (New York: Becker and Hayes, 1972).
- ¹³ J. Shera, 'Libraries Are for Growing', *Wilson Library Bulletin*, 37.6 (February 1963), 498–99. Reprinted in Shera, *The Compleat Librarian and Other Essays*, pp. 29–31.
- ¹⁴ J. Shera, 'S.R. Ranganathan — One American View', *Wilson Library Bulletin*, 37.7 (March 1963), 581–82.
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- ¹⁶ Letter from S. R. Ranganathan to Shera, 26 January 1952.
- ¹⁷ Letter from Shera to Ranganathan, 25 September 1967.
- ¹⁸ Letter from Ranganathan to Shera, 11 December 1967.
- ¹⁹ Shera, *Sociological Foundations of Librarianship*.
- ²⁰ The proceedings, including a paper of Shera's entitled 'An Epistemological Foundation for Library Science', were published in *The Foundations of Access to Knowledge: A Symposium*, ed. by E.

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- ²¹ J. Shera, 'As You Wished You Were', *Wilson Library Bulletin*, 40.2 (October 1965), 179. A revised version appears in *The Compleat Librarian*, pp. 77–80.
- ²² Shera, *The Compleat Librarian*, p. 78.
- ²³ J. Shera, 'Cards Is Cards', *Wilson Library Bulletin*, 36.7 (March 1962), 586, 588 (p. 588).
- ²⁴ J. Shera, 'What Is a Book?', *Wilson Library Bulletin*, 37.2 (October 1962), 176.
- ²⁵ J. Shera, 'What Is a Book That a Man May Know It?', in *The Compleat Librarian*, pp. 20–22 (p. 22).
- ²⁶ J. Shera, 'Librarianship in a High Key', *ALA Bulletin*, 50.2 (1956), 103–05.
- ²⁷ H. Wright, *Jesse Shera, Librarianship, and Information Science* (Provo, Utah: School of Library and Information Sciences, Brigham Young University, 1988).
- ²⁸ M. Kaltenbach, interview by W. Cawley, 15 July 1983, transcript, Case Western University Archives.
- ²⁹ Memorandum from Shera to A. Rees, 31 May 1970.
- ³⁰ Letter from Shera to E. Moon, 24 May 1971.
- ³¹ Letter from Shera to H. Humphrey, 8 August 1961; letter from Humphrey to Shera, 10 August 1961.
- ³² Letter from Shera to H. Fussler, 20 December 1961.
- ³³ Letter from Shera to Humphrey, 20 December 1961; letter from Humphrey to Shera, 2 January 1962. Shera and Humphrey remained friends, with Humphrey writing a personal note in 1972 to thank Shera for his contribution to Humphrey's campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination. Letter from Humphrey to Shera, 18 February 1972.
- ³⁴ Letter from Shera to H. Fussler, 20 December 1961.
- ³⁵ J. Shera, 'On the Permanence of the Invisible', *Wilson Library Bulletin*, 36.9 (May 1962), 764. Revised and reprinted in *The Compleat Librarian*, pp. 17–19.
- ³⁶ R. Hutchins, 'New Computer Technology May Revolutionize Educational Process', *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 7 August 1966, section 6-AA.
- ³⁷ J. Shera, 'The Computer and the Chancellor', *Wilson Library Bulletin*, 41.8 (April 1967), 837, 856. Reprinted in *The Compleat Librarian*, pp. 117–19.
- ³⁸ J. Shera, 'Of Librarians and Other Aborigines', *Wilson Library Bulletin*, 38.9 (May 1964), 781.
- ³⁹ J. Shera, 'The Turning of the Worm', *Wilson Library Bulletin*, 39.1 (September 1964), 73, 84.
- ⁴⁰ J. Shera, 'The People, Yes', *Wilson Library Bulletin*, 42.7 (March 1968), 727, 754. Reprinted in *The Compleat Librarian*, pp. 139–41.
- ⁴¹ Letter from Shera to Molz, 3 August 1965.
- ⁴² Shera, interview by Mrs G. Ruderman, 1968, transcript, Case Western University Archives. The interview was actually conducted some time in early 1967, because Shera mentions his forthcoming article 'Librarians Against Machines', *Science*, 156.3776 (May 1967), 746–50.
- ⁴³ J. Shera, 'Librarians' Pugwash, or INTREX on the Cape', *Wilson Library Bulletin*, 40.4 (December 1965), 359–62 (p. 361). Reprinted in J. Shera, *Documentation and the Organization of Knowledge* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1966), pp. 115–21. Shera could be lighthearted about this central concern. In his papers at Case Western Reserve University, for example, is this poem:
- Oh, little tape of IBM,
How fast we see thee fly;
Encoded in thy mystic beads
The programmed thoughts go by.
Above thy cabinets shineth
An ever-lasting light.
The hopes and fears of countless years
Are coiled in thee tonight.
J.H.S.
- Composed after Phyllis Raymond's Christmas party for her class on The Computer and the Humanities, 19 December 1972.
- ⁴⁴ Letter from E. Meyerhoff to Shera, 27 December 1965; letter from Shera to Meyerhoff, 6 January 1966.
- ⁴⁵ Draft Report of Task Force to the USOE Advisory Committee on Library Research and Training, 24 February 1969. Appendix III, 'High Level Meeting'.
- ⁴⁶ Letter from Shera to P. Sullivan, 20 July 1973. This was a reaction to the ALA's rejection of Shera's application for a grant to do an oral history of American library education.
- ⁴⁷ As early as 1938, Shera wrote to a friend that 'I have always nursed the secret desire to snatch the editorship of [the *Library Journal*, the ALA's flagship publication] and make of it a truly progressive publication of professional thought'. Letter from Shera to M. Manley, 20 June 1938.
- ⁴⁸ Shera, interview by Mrs G. Ruderman, 1968.
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- ⁵⁰ J. Shera, 'NLW and the Cult of Reading', *Wilson Library Bulletin*, 40.8 (April 1966), 767. Reprinted in *The Compleat Librarian*, pp. 91–93.
- ⁵¹ Letter from P. Jennison to Shera, 26 April 1966.
- ⁵² Letter from Shera to Molz, 9 May 1966.
- ⁵³ Letter from Shera to Molz, 28 March 1967.
- ⁵⁴ J. Shera, 'Of Comforts, Amenities, and Cats', *Wilson Library Bulletin*, 40.9 (May 1966), 859. Reprinted in *The Compleat Librarian*, pp. 94–96.
- ⁵⁵ Letter from Shera to Molz, 6 June 1966; letter from Molz to Shera, 28 June 1966.
- ⁵⁶ "In Vacant or Pensive Mood", with a fine Wordsworthian flavor", letter from Shera to John Wakeman, 13 February 1961, and 'Off the Reserve', letter from Shera to Wakeman, 1 March 1961.

- ⁵⁷ Letter from Wakeman to Shera, 7 March 1961.
- ⁵⁸ Letter from Molz to Shera, 11 March 1966; letter from Shera to Molz, 14 March 1966.
- ⁵⁹ J. Shera, 'You're Going on a Spree in 1973', *Wilson Library Bulletin*, 41.7 (March 1967), 723, 738. Reprinted in *The Compleat Librarian*, pp. 112–16.
- ⁶⁰ Letter from Molz to Shera, 6 February 1967. In the event, Shera did attend the 1973 annual meeting, where he received the ALA Lippincott Award for Service to Librarianship. 'ALA Lippincott Award Recipients', <http://www.ala.org/ala/awardsgrants/awardsrecords/lippincottaward/lippincottawardrecipients.cfm>; letter from P. Sullivan to Shera, 4 July 1973.
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- ⁶² Letter from Molz to Shera, 11 July 1967; letter from Shera to Molz, 14 July 1967.
- ⁶³ Shera, 'The Phronemophobic ALA', p. 104.
- ⁶⁴ J. Shera, 'Officer, Arrest That Book!', *Wilson Library Bulletin*, 36.6 (February 1962), 488. Reprinted in *The Compleat Librarian*, pp. 11–13.
- ⁶⁵ J. Shera, 'A Book for Burning', *Wilson Library Bulletin*, 37.9 (May 1963), 790. Reprinted in *The Compleat Librarian*, pp. 32–34.
- ⁶⁶ J. Shera, 'The Librarian as Anthologist', *Wilson Library Bulletin*, 41.1 (September 1966), 89, 106. Reprinted in *The Compleat Librarian*, pp. 100–02.
- ⁶⁷ J. Shera, 'The Compleat Librarian', *Wilson Library Bulletin*, 38.10 (June 1964), 867, 878. Reprinted in *The Compleat Librarian*, pp. 56–59.
- ⁶⁸ J. Shera, 'On the Encouragement of Reading', *Wilson Library Bulletin*, 39.2 (October 1964), 169, 191. Reprinted in *The Compleat Librarian*, pp. 60–62.
- ⁶⁹ J. Shera, 'Intellectual Freedom — Intellectual? Free?', *Wilson Library Bulletin*, 42.3 (November 1967), 323, 344. Reprinted in *The Compleat Librarian*, pp. 127–30.
- ⁷⁰ K. Molz, 'The Public Custody of the High Pornography', *American Scholar*, 36.1 (Winter 1966–1967), 93–103 (p. 103).
- ⁷¹ Letter from Shera to G. Matthews, 29 November 1972.
- ⁷² J. Perkins, *The University in Transition* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1966).
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- ⁷⁴ Letter from F. Johns to Shera, 5 May 1970; letter from Shera to Johns, 15 May 1970.
- ⁷⁵ J. Shera, 'The Golden Egg of Federal Support', *Wilson Library Bulletin*, 41.3 (November 1966), 327, 348–49 (p. 327). Reprinted in *The Compleat Librarian*, pp. 103–05.
- ⁷⁶ J. Shera, interview by Mrs G. Ruderman, 1968 [sic: 1967].
- ⁷⁷ J. Shera, 'The Golden Egg of Federal Support'.
- ⁷⁸ Letter from Shera to Molz, 6 September 1967.
- ⁷⁹ Letter from Molz to Shera, 11 September 1967; letter from Shera to Molz, 25 September 1967.
- ⁸⁰ Shera, interview by Mrs G. Ruderman, 1968 [sic: 1967], pp. 5–6.
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