

BLUE BOOK

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A/4.0

2.

Fain's arguments concerning the work of Harrison and Harris, in my view, do not adequately meet the criteria of what constitutes good, valid historical research. I do not think it matters whether one uses Hottelchalk's or Sherd's criteria, since Fain fails to meet the standards for either.

The main focus of Fain's paper is to re-capitulate what Harris and Harrison have written. Basically, she argues that Harrison sees the feminization of the library as stemming from the fact that women have dominated the profession, while Harris argues that

the public library was formulated as it was because of outside forces, such as the social conditions of the time - an externalist perspective. Fain doesn't offer any original research of her own, but merely states that what Harris and Garrison have written are good starting points for more research. She also chastises Harris, in particular, for belittling the profession by criticizing it and by using "bits and pieces of information" from the past to make his points. I found it awfully self-righteous of her to criticize Harris's research, when

she had nothing valid
of her own to offer. The
only positive point of her
article was to suggest that
the profession needed
more historical research.
I found Harris's response
to Fain's article to be very
enlightening. In his response
he clarified the terms "internalist"
and "externalist," and offered
his views on the purposes ^{importance}
of library history. For him,
historical research ^{an librarianship} is of
prime significance because
such work enables one to
get to the roots of the myriad
of problems that librarians-
hip now faces, and it
enables librarians to come up with
a better, more consistent philosophy.

ical foundation ^{basis} for
obscure scholarship.

Finally, since I have not
as yet discussed what set of
historical criteria I have
used in assessing Fair's
article, I will now briefly
outline Hottel's criteria.
Consider to be good history,
Hottel argues that a
piece of work must have
some basis in historical
fact. - Fair's doesn't. She
neither uses original sources
nor does she cite any research.
Secondly Hottel says that
a good piece of research should
have a sound philosophic frame-
work. Fair's only framework
seems to be 'anti-Harris' and
pro-obscure. Hottel's

third point is that a piece should be readable and interesting. Here I will concede that Fair's style wasn't all that bad. Fourthly, Gottschalk states that historical research should be more than a mere re-telling of the facts. New ideas should spring from such work. Upon reading Fair, I didn't find anything very original or really new. Finally, Gottschalk says that the historian should be aware of the questions all men at all times are interested in. I think that Fair has merely pointed out the obvious, and that is that, yes, more research should be done. However, I don't think she has added anything substantive,

because anyone could have
come to the same conclusion
merely by reading Garrison
& Harris themselves.

It took a while, but you got them. *Sp*

4. I think that Shera's
criteria of what constitutes
good history is very similar
to Gottschalk's.

Shera argues that
good history must be
more than a mere re-
telling of events. To be
good history, he argues
that a work must also
be interpretive and that
it must be a synthesis
of the physical, social
and intellectual milieu
from which it emanates.

For Shrew, (as well as for
Harris), the purpose of history
is to help us gain an
understanding of where mankind
has been in order to know
what mankind is and what
mankind might become in the
future. In other words, history
can and should help one
understand the mistakes +
successes of the past - so that
at least the failures do not
get repeated + there must be repetition.

I think that Hitchcock's
view of what constitutes good
history is very similar to
that of Shrew's. However, I
think that Hitchcock elaborates
upon the specifics at greater
length. As was stated in the
previous essay, Hitchcock

gives five main criteria
for good history. Briefly
stated these are

1) good history must be
based on historical fact, usually
found in primary sources

2) the historian must
have a philosophical frame
of reference and should
say so up front.

3) a good piece of history
should be readable, in the
sense that it is good narrative

4) good history must not
be a mere re-telling of events
but must offer new insights
and ideas

5) good history should
be relevant to the present
and the future.

Finally, I think that

Herz and Gottschalk both agree that 'good history' must take into account what Gottschalk refers to as the 'zeitgeist' or the intellectual, physical and social climate of the time.

Herz work.

A/