

Section I: Thesis

Citation:

Finkelstein, David, and Alistair McCleery. *The Book History Reader*. London: Routledge, 2002. Print.

Thesis: “Bibliography is the discipline that studies texts as recorded forms, and the processes of their transmission, including their production and reception” (29).

Restate the Thesis: The discipline of bibliography studies all texts as records with an attempt to understand the transfer, production, and reception of these documents. Bibliography furthermore focuses on not just a text but on the connection between the form, the function and the symbolism of the text as well.

Section II: Structure

Section I: The article begins with a series of definitions and assumptions about bibliography including that a bibliography should ignore the meaning of the text (27) and that their primary focus should be on the historical production and use of books (28). However, McKenzie argues that the study of bibliography cannot exist in a vacuum but must strive to understand how “forms affect meaning” (29). The thesis of this essay asserts that a bibliography is not just description and editing but the historical study of documents (27-29).

Section II: In this section McKenzie defines a series of important terms including texts as “verbal, visual, oral, and numeric data” (29). The section also includes a quick history lesson in the history of textual records (29-30). McKenzie introduces the phrase “a sociology of texts” in this section which refers to a new style of bibliography which includes consideration of “the human motives and interactions” with the creation of texts (29-30).

Section III: McKenzie compares and contrasts the traditional orthodox view of bibliography as “printed signs as arbitrary marks on parchment or paper” (31) with his new definition of bibliography (30-31).

Section IV: In this section McKenzie focuses on printed texts and “whether or not the material forms of books...have an expressive function in conveying meaning” (31). He chooses to conduct a case study on “The Intentional Fallacy” to further explore the relationship between the material form and the meaning of a book (31).

Section V: McKenzie asserts here that in regard to the “The Intentional Fallacy” it is important to note that symbolic forms can “falsify certain readings; and...demonstrate new ones” (34). McKenzie demonstrates how misquotations (32) and nuances with capital letters (33) can be used to manipulate or misinterpret a text. (32-35).

Section VI: McKenzie ties back his discussion of the muddy history of “The Intentional Fallacy” to his proposed new definition of bibliography by suggesting that “any history of the book...must be a history of misreadings” (35). He suggests that any book must be read with a critical eye toward the evolution of text from author to printer to publisher etc. (35-36).

Section VII: McKenzie ends the essay by advocating that the role of the bibliographer be to understand the social motives behind texts and can “show the human presence in any recorded text” (37).

Section III: Rhetorical Strategies

Strategy I: Phrases like “I am convinced” (27), “The problem is, I think” (28), and “as I see it” (30) give a firm but gentle refutation for arguments McKenzie disagrees with.

Strategy II: “A sociology of texts” (30) represents a phrase McKenzie coined. The use of a new phrase is effective because it sticks in the reader’s mind.

Strategy III: “In the pursuit of historical meanings, we move from the most minute feature of the material form of the book to questions of authorial, literary, and social context” (34). This section provided the “so what” or larger implications of bibliography which allowed me as a reader to be more invested in the text.

"On my honor I have neither given nor received unauthorized information regarding this work, I have followed and will continue to observe all regulations regarding it, and I am unaware of any violation of the Honor Code by others." Katherine Gomulkiewicz