printed books, or even Foucault's apocryphal Nietzschean laundry-lists – is better for knowing.

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Sidney E. Berger. *The Design of Bibliographies: Observations, References and Examples*. London: Mansell, 1991. ix, [1], 198 pp.; £45 (paper boards). ISBN 0-7201-2077-2.

It is a curious, but obvious, fact that two books on a particular subject can convey the same amount of information with an equal degree of clarity, style, and wit, yet inevitably, one will be judged superior to the other. As readers, we bring a certain set of prejudices and assumptions when we read a book, and to that extent, reading involves discrimination and taste, and ultimately, some subjectivity. But the matter goes beyond that. How an author organizes his or her information is crucial to understanding itself and to critical appraisal. Furthermore, the physical design of a book can render it aesthetically pleasing or at the worst, unreadable or just plain ugly. Bibliographies, Sidney E. Berger rightly argues, are no exception to the general issues of the physical and intellectual design of books. A great bibliography must not only display learning and research, it must also be accessible, easy to use, and unobtrusively attractive.

Berger certainly has the qualifications to speak with authority on the design of bibliographies. As Head of Special Collections at the University of California, Riverside, he has an academic background in bibliography, textual criticism, and library science, and is currently the chair of the RBMS Exhibition Catalogue Awards Committee (see his recent article, 'The Design and Evaluation of Exhibition Catalogs,' *Rare Books & Manuscripts Librarianship*, 7, no. 1 (1992): 45–60). He has taught courses in bibliography, the history of the book, and the book arts. His practical experience as proprietor of the Doe Press and as a fine press printer is equally impressive. He also knows the difficulties in getting bibliographies published. For example, in compiling *Medieval English Drama: An Annotated Bibliography of Recent Criticism* (1990), he was requested by his publisher, Garland, to submit a typescript in camera-ready form. In an effort to keep costs down as much as possible, publishers of research tools have not always been overly concerned with questions of design.

The Design of Bibliographies consists of three major sections. The first section introduces the subject, and has chapters on the physical and intellectual aspects of designing bibliographies and on computers and desktop publishing. In the second section Berger has provided an annotated checklist of some 274 works which he has consulted. The third section (appendix 1) is perhaps the most interesting. Here one finds commentary with facsimiles of pages from more than thirty-five diverse bibliographies. In addition, Berger

has appended a summary (appendix II) on the legibility of printed matter taken from Donald G. Paterson and Miles A. Tinker's *How to Make Type Readable*. There is also a very useful index to all these sections.

By and large, Berger's book is filled with good advice. His style is uncomplicated, and the tone is undogmatic. Much of the book is indebted to D.W. Krummel's *Bibliographies: Their Aims and Methods*. In talking about design, Berger points out that one must take into account the different needs of scholars and their disciplines and the different methods of physical presentation. Often there is no single right way of doing things but several options, he maintains. A recurring theme is that common sense and the familiar should generally prevail in matters of design, that it is better to have a simple page where distinct elements can be identified rather than a cluttered page where bibliographical data cannot be readily distinguished.

In chapter 2 of the first section which discusses the physical aspects of book design (typography and layout), Berger openly admits that since so much has been written on the subject his own presentation and analysis may be called into question as plagiarism. However general the discussion, Berger consistently redirects his focus on bibliographical questions. In a full-length bibliography, he tells us, for example, that page numbers should be placed at the top outer margins, 'peculiar' colours of papers should be avoided, and so forth. These are the kinds of observations that are offered.

Chapter 3 of the first section is more concerned with the intellectual aspects of designing a bibliography: the compiler, the audience, types of bibliographies, subject matter, facsimiles, organization, punctuation, annotations, introductions, abbreviations, index, uniformity in entry, coding, spatial coding, page orientation, and binding. The discussion here is illuminating, but not always successful. In talking about the compiler of a bibliography, for example, Berger relates some of the frustrations he has personally encountered in verifying citations. Such discussion is interesting but tangential, and really does not relate to design in any way. There is also a tendency in this chapter to cross over from the intellectual aspects of design to the physical problems, and although the distinction between the two may be blurred at times, one would have hoped for a clearer separation of these two facets of design. The chief weakness of this chapter from a purely bibliographical perspective – a problem that runs through the entire book – is that the basic types of bibliography are not properly distinguished. When Berger talks about types of bibliography, he refers to author, subject, or title bibliographies and national, topical, and current bibliographies, and even though he states that types of bibliographies can be extended to mean dealers' catalogues and publishers' and printers' lists, the entire issue of types of bibliographies (enumerative, descriptive, historical, analytical, and textual) is not handled very well.

Berger's chapter on computers and desktop publishing does not list specific software programmes that can assist the bibliographer in producing camera-ready copy. His discussion is of a general nature about current technology and design possibilities. In fact he argues that 'state-of-the-art equipment does not

alter the fact that typewriters or primitive computers can still produce excellently designed bibliographies' (p. 48).

Readers will find Berger's annotated checklist useful and, at times, annoying. Some entries relate to design only; others touch on certain aspects of bibliography. The annotations are of an uneven character. Some run almost to two columns, while others are barely one line in length. For some entries (items 25, 43, 94, 110a, 136, and 163), Berger notes 'Not seen,' and one wonders why he bothered to include them. In certain cases, citations are made to classic works of bibliography, and the annotation states that the work in question 'has nothing on designing bibliographies' (see item 24, for example). Again, one wonders, what is the purpose of including these citations?

The facsimile section (appendix I) reproduces pages from a wide variety of bibliographies. Some of the bibliographies included are: Patricia Lockhart Fleming's *Upper Canadian Imprints, 1801-1841: A Bibliography; Catalogue of the John Carter Brown Library in Brown University, Rhode Island*; Marcus McCorison's *Vermont Imprints, 1778-1820; The Lawrence Lande Collection of Canadiana in the Redpath Library of McGill University: A Bibliography*; and William B. Todd and Ann Bowden's *Tauchnitz International Editions in English, 1841-1955: A Bibliographical History*. On the whole, Berger's selections of bibliographies has been made intelligently, although one would have wished for at least one choice from the Soho bibliographies, the Pittsburgh Series in Bibliography, or the St. Paul's Bibliographies. His comments are usually critical, sympathetic, and constructive.

One may not agree entirely with everything that Berger has to say on the subject of bibliographical design. His book is timely, however, and should be examined by both novice and experienced bibliographers and by all publishers of research tools. It is truly refreshing to find passages such as the following: 'Bibliographies are not only the doors to scholarship; they are works of scholarship themselves. The compiler is not a harmless drudge, but a contributor to the world's wealth of knowledge' (p. 48).

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