



Fees for the use of the Harvard College Library

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Testament and of Meslier's notes on Fénelon has convinced me that a close study of these writings with regard to the role they may have played in the development of Diderot's thought would be very rewarding. There are many passages in Meslier's works that bear a striking resemblance to passages in the *Rêve de d'Alembert* and Dide-

rot's earlier philosophic writings. This resemblance is an expression of the similarity of the philosophic position of the two authors, a similarity certainly counterbalanced by many divergencies, but of such significance as to make further study imperative.

HERBERT DIECKMANN

Fees for the Use of the Harvard College Library

BY 1878, during Justin Winsor's first year as Librarian of Harvard College, a fee of five dollars per year was being charged for use of the Library by persons not connected with Harvard. This fee remained in effect until 1 July 1951, when, on the recommendation of the Library Committee of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences and of the Librarian, the Harvard Corporation voted to increase the charge from five to ten dollars a year. Before this change, the rules had read:

Graduates of the University and graduates of Radcliffe College resident in the vicinity of Cambridge, may have the use of the College Library and borrow books on the payment of five dollars annually.

Persons not members of the University are allowed to consult books within library buildings at the discretion of the Librarian. The privilege of borrowing books may be granted by the Librarian to a person whose application is endorsed by an officer of the University, and upon the payment of five dollars annually.

Any person who is known to be pursuing systematic investigation in any department of knowledge may be allowed, at the discretion of the Librarian, the use of the Library, without fee, for a period not to exceed three months.

The revised rules read:

Graduates of the University and graduates of Radcliffe College resident in the vicinity of Cambridge may have the use of the College Library and borrow books on the payment of \$10 annually. The number of books that may be borrowed for home use by those who have paid the fee may be limited.

Persons not members of the University are allowed to consult books within library buildings at the discretion of the Librarian. The privilege of borrowing books may be granted by the Librarian to a person whose application is endorsed by an officer of the University, upon the payment of \$10 annually, subject to the same restrictions that may be imposed on graduates who have paid the fee.

Any person who is known to be pursuing systematic investigation in any department of knowledge may be allowed at the discretion of the Librarian the use of the Library without fee for a period not to exceed three months, but must pay the \$10 fee for the use of the Library if he wishes to borrow books for home use.

But these changes in the wording of the rules do not tell the whole story. Two other points should be mentioned:

1. Since the change in the amount

of the fee, the rule has been enforced with a minimum number of exceptions. Donors of books or money still are exempt from the fee, but the effects of the new enforcement policy are evidenced by the fact that the new fee, during the academic year 1950-51, was paid by twice as many persons as had paid five dollars the year before.

2. The number of books that may be borrowed for home use by those who pay the fee is limited by action of the Corporation to fifty per year. Anyone who wishes to borrow more than that number must pay a second \$10 before he borrows his fifty-first book; the second fee entitles him to use the Library for a year from the date of payment, subject to the fifty-books-for-home-use limit.

Graduates of Harvard and Radcliffe do not need an introduction endorsed by an officer of the University, but, in other respects, are subject to the same rules as everyone else. Persons not connected with the University do, however, fall into two distinct groups.

The first consists of residents of metropolitan Boston — persons who can make regular use of the Library without a long journey by automobile or public transportation.

The second group consists of persons who live outside the metropolitan area. They of course must go to considerable trouble to get to the Library, and are unlikely to use it intensively for any long period of time. They are permitted to use the Library free of charge for a period of three months unless they wish to borrow books for home use. If a borrower desires to take books out, he is subject to the same rules as apply for a resident in the metropolitan area. Many of those

from outside the metropolitan area are faculty members from other institutions of learning who come to Harvard for a few days or weeks at a time, often during vacation periods, in order to carry out a limited piece of research. However, a considerable number of men and women from other institutions come during their sabbatical leaves to spend several months or even a full year in Cambridge; there are also many research scholars and recipients of fellowships who make use of the Library for long periods of time.

What is the total extent of this use of the Harvard College Library by outsiders? No definite answer can be given because no record is kept of visitors who use the catalogue or the reading room and its reference books and current periodicals. Their activities may be unknown unless they wish to draw books from the stack for use within the Library or at home. From a thousand to twelve hundred different individuals sign applications in the Widener Building for Library use during the course of a year, and this figure does not include a good many who come for a single day and who do not fill out the application form. In the Houghton Library between five and six hundred different individuals who have no connection with the University use the collection each year. No records are available for other libraries of the University, and the average length of time that these visitors make use of the Library is not known, but they account for a very perceptible percentage of the total use; ten or fifteen per cent seems to be a fair estimate.

Inter-library loan work is also a

service for persons not connected with Harvard. The Widener Building alone handles approximately 10,000 applications for inter-library loan annually and this work requires the time of three staff members; but this aspect of the problem will not be discussed here.¹

Do the other users—that is, the members of the University—pay fees for the use of the Library? They do so indirectly in most cases, but fairly directly in others. The Harvard College Library spends over a million dollars a year, and the other libraries of the University all together spend approximately a second million. Most of the funds supporting the libraries come from the income of endowments but a considerable amount, particularly in the departmental libraries, may be said to come directly from the students through tuition payments. Also the students who have completed their course requirements and are still at work on their dissertations pay \$100 per annum in place of the regular tuition fee. Its name has now been changed, but this \$100 was formerly called a library fee, although it entitled students to use the laboratories of the University and consult with members of the faculty as well as to have library privileges. Whatever its name, this fee, which is paid by students who are no longer taking courses, suggests a question as to whether it is entirely fair for Harvard to require its own students to pay such a sum if it admits students from other universities who have never paid any Harvard tuition to free use of the Library

¹An account of inter-library loans at Harvard by Robert H. Haynes appeared in the *HARVARD LIBRARY BULLETIN*, II (1948), 127-129.

for longer or shorter periods of time.

During the first year that the new \$10 fee was in effect it was rigidly enforced and receipts from it amounted to almost exactly \$4500, or something like two thirds of one per cent of the total Widener expenditures (leaving out the figures for Houghton and Lamont). It seems obvious that this \$4500 paid by 432 individuals, 18 of whom paid more than one \$10 fee because they borrowed more than fifty books, is not of first importance. This income was spent for books, and a librarian may realize all too well that \$4500 will not buy as many books as it did a generation ago. Yet an extra \$4500 per year available for book purchases is worthy of at least some consideration.

Most of the comparatively few complaints about the rule have been directed at two specific points—the fact that Harvard graduates are not exempt, and the provision that only fifty books may be taken from the building unless the borrower pays a second fee.

The first complaint might be answered by asking why Harvard should have any special obligations toward a graduate of the University when it is realized that the University spends considerably more on each student than it receives from him in tuition. The fifty-book limit has been denounced as putting a market price on scholarship, but there are good arguments in justification of it—the actual cost to the Library of lending fifty books to a reader for home use is at least \$10, and the \$10 that is spent for that purpose cannot be spent for service to faculty and students of the University or for the purchase of

books. Moreover, if any fee is to be charged, it seems somewhat unfair to make no distinction between a borrower who uses the Library very little and one who may withdraw several hundred books in the course of a year. It might be added that any book lent for home use to a person not connected with the University automatically becomes unavailable for the time being to a member of the University.

The basic objection to the fee system as a whole, or to any part of it, has been stated as follows: 'Such a policy can be a genuine impediment to qualified scholars and teachers who have hitherto depended on the principle of free availability of library resources for their research. It tends to place research on an ability-to-pay basis and may appreciably increase the cost of scholarship for young teachers, who are least able to afford it. It suggests, furthermore, a precedent for other research libraries—a precedent that might impose a general limitation on scholarship. It suggests a parochial use of great research libraries that have been endowed and enriched precisely because they can be of national, rather than institutional, status.'²

It might be further said that the fee system 'would seem to build tariff walls about the major research libraries and create a monopoly on research materials for those who are already affiliated with major research institutions.' It has also been said that it poses 'the question whether Har-

vard has the right to impose such fees while it solicits philanthropy by making pleas for "the maintenance of the Widener Library on its present status as the greatest university library in America. . . . Widener is pre-eminently a graduate-service institution, and deserves widespread support on this basis."³

Speaking strictly from a practical point of view, I believe that the crux of the matter is not the \$4500 that the Widener Library may expect to receive annually through the fees, not the fact that the actual cost of lending a volume for home use comes to more than the twenty cents that is charged, and not the consideration that Harvard, if it charged no fee, would be subsidizing 'outsiders' from its endowment and reducing the service that it can give to members of the University for whom it has primary responsibility. The crux of the matter, I believe, relates to the effect of fees on public relations and on inter-library cooperation. It has been asserted that many of the books and many of the funds that have been given to the Harvard Library have been given because the Library is a national institution with resources available to all scholars. It can be argued, however, that a very large percentage of the books and funds have come from persons interested in Harvard only. At least the Library's first responsibility is to members of the University and, if Harvard is not to maintain a public library for Cambridge and for the whole Boston area, there obviously must be some restrictions.

But the most important question of

²Letter circulated among the Greater Boston chapters of the American Association of University Professors, as quoted by Wylie Sypher in 'Fees for Research Library Use by "Outsiders": A Symposium,' *College and Research Libraries*, XIII (1952), 295.

³Wylie Sypher, *College and Research Libraries*, XIII, 296.

all would seem to be whether Harvard's fee will help or hinder inter-library cooperation in the long run.

The Harvard Library, in spite of the fact that it is the largest university library in the United States, realizes that it cannot have in its possession all the books that its scholars need; in future it must expect to depend more and more on other libraries for books that it has not acquired. It has supported and, I hope, will always support plans and programs for joint acquisition, for cooperative storage, for further extension of inter-library loan, and for the development of union lists and catalogues, in the belief that these will enable it to give better service to its readers than could be given with only those collections that it has been able to acquire. It realizes the dangers of restrictions on the use of its books. It hopes that scholars from other institutions who cannot find material they need in their own libraries will continue to visit Harvard and to borrow from it through inter-library loan. If the present fee system or any system that might be considered in the future were an obstacle to library cooperation, it would be unwise.

I believe, however, that there may well be another side to this question,

and that the best way of encouraging library cooperation may be for each institution to pay the other institutions on whom it calls for help the actual cost of the service it receives. Otherwise, when funds are short, there may be a greater temptation to restrict acquisitions and cease to buy material that is not in demand by members of the University but that may be a valuable addition to the nation's resources for scholarship. Library cooperation, particularly cooperative acquisition, may be promoted if each library continues to stand on its own feet financially as far as book purchases, cataloguing, and storage are concerned (except in the case of cooperative storage in local or regional libraries), but at the same time asks outsiders to pay for the actual cost of the services given to them, either as individuals or through their libraries.

Harvard's present fee system will be given a fair trial; it will be all to the good if the relatively minor change that has been made serves to call the problem to the attention of others, for the whole problem needs to be considered and studied by research libraries throughout the country.

KEYES D. METCALF

The Full Text of Rossetti's Sonnet on *Sordello*

LITERARY historians have always enjoyed tracing the relations between writers—how one man's admiration for a predecessor or a contemporary has affected his thought and style, and how he in turn has influenced other artists. Music and art historians indulge in the same sort

of detective work, to which, as in the work of their literary fellows, imagination sometimes adds its part. The results in all these fields are frequently worth while; occasionally they are merely entertaining; but all such proved cases of admiration, imitation, influence, and acknowledgment tend

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