

Symposium Discussion*

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The first discussion concerned ways to compensate both for the time spent in writing a review and for the time lost from the author's own work. One possibility being considered by physicists is a system of "Review Scholarships." A scientist's application for such a scholarship would be reviewed, and the scholarship awarded, by a committee of the highest prestige. Such a scholarship would allow for a "sabbatical" semester or year, and the scientist would work at his own or another institution, as he chose. The scholarship would provide for documentary and secretarial support. The comment was made that such a system is now used by the Atomic Energy Commission and by the American Cancer Society and is being considered by the American Institute of Physics. Actually, there is more such support available than is being used. The problem is that scientists are reluctant to take time away from their own work. They must be made to realize that benefits will accrue to their own work and that they will come back refreshed by the break in their normal routine. Another possible stimulus to attract scientists to write reviews is to assign a co-author, junior in standing perhaps, to help in collecting and organizing the necessary documentation. Such an arrangement would not only be helpful to the senior scientists in writing a review, but also to the younger scientists in becoming familiar with the literature of a particular area.

Another question was asked as to whether a critical review should be published only when it constitutes part of an account of original work. The feeling was that reviews by themselves are useful information sources and should not be so restricted. As Dr. Herring had pointed out, there is originality in the act of creating simplicity.

The short review versus the long, the critical versus the comprehensive, were also discussed. According to Dr. Herring's figures, short reviews are more frequently cited in proportion to their length, but they may be sketchy. That is, the ratio of citations to pages is higher for moderately short reviews in accessible places than for long articles in books. A critical review, if incomplete, may not be as permanently useful as a comprehensive review. But reviews appearing in *Accounts of Chemical Research* discuss the author's own work in context of at least some other pertinent work, while reviews published in *Chemical Reviews* should include references to all work in the given area. These two types of reviews work together. The comprehensive is especially useful for a new man in the field; the shorter review is useful for those in other fields. One recommendation was that shorter reviews should be as comprehensive as possible in their referencing, particularly to longer reviews.

A plea was made for more favorable consideration of

publication in "Advances in..." and "Progress in..." series. The wider audience for reviews in scientific review journals, as reported by Dr. Herring, may be misleading. The smaller sales of "Advances in..." or "Progress in..." volumes might represent a higher percentage of potential readers. As for the timeliness of such publications, the publishers or editors can do little about the slowest author whose late contribution determines the date of publication. This is a problem shared with editors of journals, however. But Professor Hart reminded the audience that most periodicals come out on schedule whether a desired article is available or not. There should be provisions for the inclusion of an addendum to a review article at the galley proof stage. This feature would increase the current aspect of the review article by at least six months. This addendum should be less than one page, with references included and added at the very end of the article. Dr. Herring then pointed out that his figures show that standard review series or progress series are comparably used, according to figures on citations. He deplored any friction between the two and continued rather to criticize the appearance of review articles in non-review journals and non-review publications, such as proceedings or compilations of papers. In these instances, the review article is often lost to its audience. Timeliness is important but not as important as publication in the more accessible sources. It depends on the audience for which the review is written and the purpose for which it is written. A rapidly developing field has more need for rapid publication.

One person asked if writing guides would be of use in helping authors write good reviews. The answer given was that such guides are helpful, but the ability to write is the crux of the matter, and this requires teaching early in school.

One discussion centered on format of references. An alphabetized list at the end of a long review with references to where in the review the paper is cited was recommended. On the other hand, *Chemical Reviews* is changing to the use of references at the foot of the page as cited. This was a subject of wide differences of opinion, not to be settled or argued in the present discussion period. Dr. Hart said that the question was considered at some length, and that the new format will more nearly match that used in other ACS journals.

Moving on to the subject of references to previous reviews, the question was raised as to the utility for the reader as contrasted to reference to the original work. The observation was made that references to previous reviews are fine if the reviewer "approved" of the previous review. If such an older review is out of print, the careful reviewer must consider this fact and perhaps cite the original work.

The last subject mentioned was the amount of critical reviews produced, which Dr. Herring estimated to be about 16 pages per man per year for the population of highly qualified research workers.

* Discussion following the Symposium on "Critical Reviews" presented before the Division of Chemical Literature, 155th National Meeting, ACS, San Francisco, Calif., April 1968.