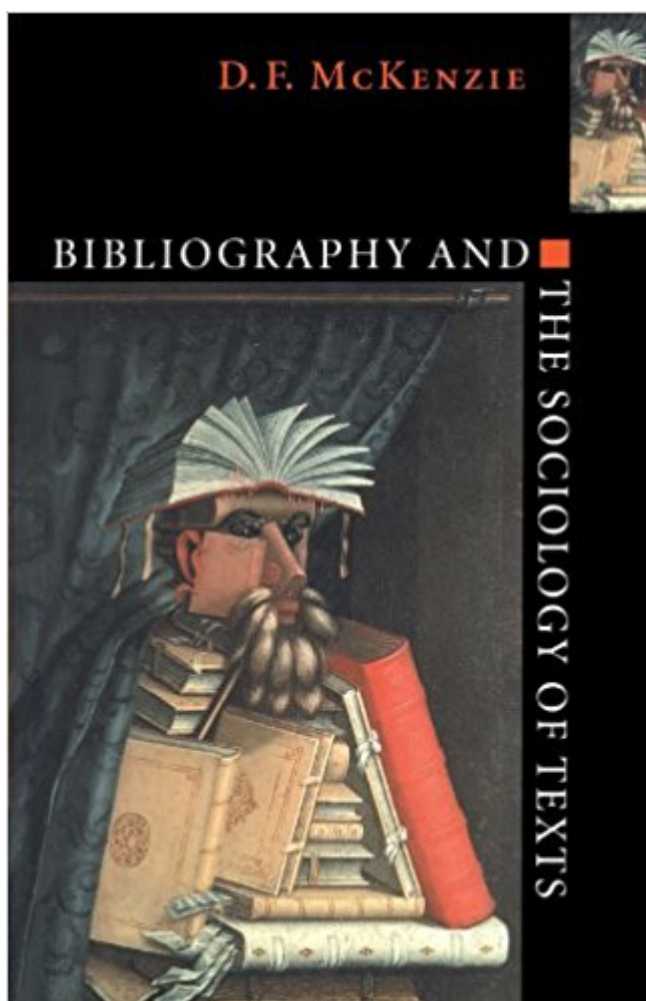


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# Bibliography And The Sociology Of Texts



## Synopsis

D.F. McKenzie shows how the material form of texts crucially determine their meanings. He demonstrates that as works are reproduced and reread, they take on different forms and meanings. This is true of all forms of recorded information, McKenzie claims, including sound, graphics, films, landscape and new electronic media. The bibliographical skills first developed for manuscripts and books can, he shows, be applied to a wide range of cultural documents. This book offers a unifying concept of texts that seeks to acknowledge their variety and the complexity of their relationships.

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This is an incredible text. I highly recommend it as it changes the way one reads texts - it makes us pay attention to all the things that surround words that make up a text. It's a must read for any composition/literature person.

Bibliography is not the subject of this book. If you are a teacher, don't assign it to students as a guide to citing sources. Sociology of text ('histoire du livre,' as the author says) is the subject. Do assign it to advanced undergraduate or graduate students who want a lucid explanation of this basic reciprocity: text is historically, socially, culturally produced and received; in turn, text creates or alters history, society, and culture. The author was a British bibliographer concerned with text in any medium, not only print. He was widely known for his work on orality and literacy in New Zealand. In this accessible book (based on a series of lectures), McKenzie lays out a critical theory of text as a cultural artifact that applies to any form of recorded information in any medium, and that is useful in any text-dependent discipline. His topic is how the material form of texts determines their potential meanings. His primary examples, the 1835 Declaration of Independence and 1840 Treaty of Waitangi by which sovereignty in New Zealand shifted from the Maori to the British, is a superb case study of textual authority as it is complicated by oral culture, literacies, technologies of rhetoric, and print culture. By itself, this chapter's material analysis and textual criticism of documentation in treaty-making between indigenous people and colonizers is worth the price of the book.

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