Book Reviews

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A Schema for Unifying Human Science: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Culture by Rick Szostak
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Classifying science: Phenomena, Data, Theory, Method, Practice by Rick Szostak
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As an enthusiastic promoter and practitioner of interdisciplinary research, Rick Szostak believes that disciplinary boundaries artificially and unnecessarily create obstacles to interdisciplinary scholarship. Classification by phenomena rather than discipline would expose researchers to different methodologies and reduce scholarly duplication, thus advancing research more quickly (2003; 2004; 2008; 2010). Showing the causal links between theories would reveal formerly hidden connections, benefiting both students and scholars. In two volumes, one aimed toward the philosophy of science community (2003), and the other for information science (2004), Szostak partially lays out his own classification scheme that classifies by phenomena, data, method, theory, and practice, along with practical instructions for applying it, including a notational system. He intends the 2003 volume not to be a bibliographic classification, but rather a "map" of the types of human sciences, whereas the 2004 book is meant to be a reference work for use by scholars, in particular graduate students and interdisciplinarians, to assist them in seeing "full range of possibilities" of phenomena and "what uses particular theories and methods best serve" (2004, xiii). As a point of reference, Szostak (2004, ix) notes that, in his view, "'science' encompasses the natural and social sciences, plus the humanities." In the 2003 book, he provides a justification of his project and an outline of the categories of phenomena under the concept of "culture" and how they can be organized and linked. In his 2004 work, he specifically describes his 5W approach (Who, What, Where, When, Why), questions used to guide the classification of scientific documents by phenomena, data, methodology and practice.

Szostak picks up on a tradition that originated in the mid-1960's when the Classification Research Group (CRG) investigated the potential to create a universal faceted scheme, not arranged by discipline. The group believed that disciplines, as used in dominant schemes such as LCC and DDC, resulted in classificatory rigidity hostile to new concepts (Spiteri 1995). The result, though not ever fully realized, was the theory of integrative levels, introduced by Douglas Foskett (a copy of the draft schema can be viewed at http://www.iskoi.org/ilc/crgc.php). The system was partially operationalized by Derek Austin, forming the inspiration for his Preserved Context Index System (PRECIS) (Gnoli and Poli 2004, 154). Other KO researchers have advocated for or attempted to devise ontological classifications based on a similar structure, such as Dahlberg (2008, 163), who applies the integrated levels based on Aristotle's four levels to her Information Coding Classification (ICC). More recently, the efforts of the CRG has been continued by the advocates of the Integrated Levels Classification (ILC) structure, whose mission, as expressed in the León Manifesto are to be innovative, phenomena-centered, faceted, and reflect the "multidimentional nature of complex thought" (Gnoli and Szostak 2007). Although he is now a frequent collaborator with members of the CRG, particularly Gnoli, Szostak was not associated with the group until after his scheme was created, and the work of none of the CRG members was referenced in either volume.

The central idea behind integrated levels is that reality is divided into fundamental divisions to which all phenomena belong or have qualities; Hartmann's fun-