CHAPTER - 2

ANNOTATION IN BIBLIOGRAPHY
Annotation is an added explanation or note besides the formal bibliographical description or citation of the reference listed in catalogues, bibliographies and similar compilations. The earlier practice sought to acquaint the reader more with the writer tending to be any kind of an author-sketch. Johann Tritheim (1462-1516) and Conrad Gesner (1516-1565) were the first bibliographers who introduced the concept of annotation that contained information on the physical (bibliographic description) as well as intrinsic (content/matter) characteristics of the item. From then on, it became a general practice to insert annotation or descriptive notes particularly in trade catalogues. Gradually, annotations were extended to other compilations also. In a way, an abstract can also be equated with an annotation. It is generally a succinct explanation to present the character, and the individuality of the bibliographic item so as to guide the reader to the material worth his/her time. It is thus a straightforward or objective comment or assessment of the content matter, any kind of personal judgement excluded. There are however many variations. Annotations in bibliographies, catalogues etc., are not the same as the annotations (footnotes, appendices, interpretations, etc.,) presented in particular editions of
individual works. An annotated text or edition is intended to provide instruction and explanation in reading the text.\textsuperscript{1} Catalogue and bibliographic annotations, on the other hand, are meant to facilitate decisions in the choice of books and other materials for reading. A bibliography may be selective or comprehensive. In either case, the number of items listed are indeed many. The bibliography obviously is intended to serve the interests of not one but as many as possible. Therefore, there must be a means by which one can identify what may be of value to him and what may not be. As such whether it is a catalogue or a bibliography, annotation is needed to explain what may not be evident in the descriptive reference, so that it elucidates on the authority of the author, the subject not borne out by the title, the purpose that the item may meet, special features (references, glossories, appendices, difference from other editions etc.). The analytical variety of bibliography may have the annotation extended to such matters as the textual and printing history of the work also.\textsuperscript{2} A rare book often needs such an explanation. Annotations in bibliographies compiled to aid collection development in libraries have gradually changed into

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such forms as evaluations, criticisms and reviews. Annotation should be informative. It can also be persuasive. It can also be an abstract i.e. a zist of the subject matter. The difference between an annotation and an abstract is that the former is concerned with a macro publication such as a book while the latter applies to a micro document i.e. a journal article. The abstract, therefore, usually tends to be longer than the annotation. Annotation is on the other hand, a brief and matter of fact statement indicating the facets of the content.

Writing good annotation requires good practice. The language must be simple and clear. It should not have more than 150 words. Brevity and clarity are its soul. The purpose of the bibliography naturally must guide and fashion the annotation.

The annotation included in this bibliography combine the purpose of the abstract also. The subject matter obviously demands such a treatment. Particular emphasis is placed on concise explanation of the content in each case and explication of ideas also where needed. A simple literary style from the point of view of the prospective reader without any touch of subjective element has been followed. The content is thus presented in straight and simple words.