

quite a different manner. For instance, a diaeresis over an "o" in an English language title would be dropped out of the sort control, but when the computer detected a diaeresis and on checking the language indication field found that the title was in German, it would then place an "e" after the character over which the diaeresis occurred. With relatively few exceptions—perhaps one half of one per cent of entries—a computer can arrange bibliographic entries according to present library filing systems without human intervention.

In part, the proposed code does not succeed because it is not viewed as a segment in a comprehensive library system. It is only with the design of a machine-readable cataloging record to serve throughout libraries that work should be undertaken on a machineable filing code. Even then characteristics of the machine must not be allowed to impose themselves on the code; rather, the objectives of the code should be firmly established and then the machine invoked to meet those objectives. Of course, the biggest obstacle to constructing an effective new filing code—either machineable or manual—is that there are no adequate data to define the objectives of a filing arrangement. Much research needs to be done to attain understanding of how users use catalogs and indexes before thought should be given to construction, much less acceptance, of a new filing code.

The sum total of the book, however, is to propose a new filing code differing from existing codes. The differences are not great, and no evidence is presented to justify changes made from the present code. It seems unwise to invoke such a change without a clear demonstration of its benefit. Indeed, the proposed change involves greater human intervention in filing than would the computerization of present filing practices. Any increase in human intervention, such as manually preparing an entry for filing, diminishes the advantage of the machine. The code proposed in this book has been needlessly subjected to unnecessary machine restriction, and can be considered only as a departure from the old position; it is not a start in the right direction.—*Frederick G. Kilgour, Yale University.*

**A Plan for Indexing the Periodical Literature of Nursing.** By Vern Pings. With an introductory chapter by Ellwynne M. Vreeland. New York: The American Nurses' Foundation Inc. 1966. xii, 202p. (66-29223).

The proclaimed need for serious research in the library field together with the criticism now leveled at the superficial studies which have been dignified by that title are symptoms of our growing professional sophistication. A research report such as this done in 1964 by Vern Pings for the American Nurses' Foundation proves that the "working" librarian is capable of analytic examination of his field. The papers which make up the bulk of this report begin with a study of the growth of nursing as a profession in terms of its formal communication needs, continuing to a detailed study of the characteristics of the articles on nursing and their present bibliographical control, culminating in a formal series of plans for an index to this subject field.

Despite the specificity of the subject investigated, Dr. Pings' volume is of general interest to reference librarians; library educators can use it as a teaching model, and it will serve other librarians contemplating similar studies as a planning guide.

Each paper is formally organized, beginning with statements of hypotheses, description of study methods, findings, conclusions, and summary; extensive tables and appendices reinforce or demonstrate the points made. Chapters 3 and 4 which contain the analysis of the MEDLARS (Medical Literature Analysis and Retrieval System) coverage of nursing give a clear account of MeSH (Medical Subject Headings) and the problems and inconsistencies which can frustrate the unwary user of *Index Medicus*. Conventionally, each chapter is accompanied by a good bibliography; the extensive one on nursing libraries in Chapter 9 of over three hundred items covering the years 1903-1963 is especially impressive.

The plans proposed by Dr. Pings for an index with broad geographic coverage and special subject headings but based on the already available MEDLARS foundation were closely followed in the new *Internation-*

*tional Nursing Index* (v. 1, 1967) prepared by the National Library of Medicine and published by the American Journal of Nursing Company. When *INI* is studied by the historians of the future, Dr. Pings' *Plan* will be often blessed for the information it contains on the personal and administrative interactions between the several nursing associations and the National Library of Medicine.

To criticize Dr. Pings' prose as structurally involved and barren of lightness is valid, but hardly fair; the papers were written to be used as working tools by a committee, not for publication in monographic form.—*Joan Titley, University of Louisville.*

***Librarianship in the Developing Countries.*** By Lester Asheim. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1966. 95p. (66-29774).

Here are ninety-five pages of sage counsel, born of great experience, for the American librarian who is called upon to advise the library industries in developing nations. Constituting the 1966 Windsor Lectures in Librarianship at the University of Illinois, these three brief essays are entitled "Some Parallels and Contrasts," "Some Overarching Problems," and "The Role of Librarianship." They of course draw heavily upon the author's wisdom and the store of understanding of his subject which Dr. Asheim has built up during his five busy years as director of ALA's International Relations Office.

In his first lecture Dr. Asheim warns of the Culture Shock often experienced by extroverted, reader-oriented American librarians when they meet their first case in another society of "the philosophy of primacy of the book over the reader." Seek first within the setting where it is found the reasons for such a philosophy before condemning it out of hand, he urges. Must our rightness, he wonders, be assumed in all situations? Must the way we do things apply universally? Perhaps; but he admonishes that we reply affirmatively only after much searching contemplation of a complex of historical, social, physical, and cultural factors which are often overlooked.

In his second essay, the author points

specifically to some such factors. These include the aristocratic tradition that exists in many developing lands; it often makes untenable such an ideal as universal education. Another influence which is often more important elsewhere than it is in our own society is "deference to age, authority, and the past." Out of these two factors alone comes a range of special problems for library management which are related to colonialism and class privilege, civil service, red tape, and strong attachment to the status quo. There are, of course, economic and psychological factors which must be pondered, including problems of illiteracy and neo-literacy, outmoded teaching method, manpower shortages, and the prestige or the lack of prestige of librarianship, and there are such physical problems as climate, undernourishment, and geography. Again we must ask if *our* answers are valid in view of *these* problems?

The concluding lecture asks how we can help, as well as such harder questions as whether or not anyone really wants the help we offer. What of the strings and implications for the recipient that so often accompany our help? How can we help to educate without encouraging the great "brain drain" from developing countries? Also, he observes, the very existence of United States and other national information libraries in developing countries reinforces "the suspicion that a public library . . . is a special-interest, brain-washing agency rather than an institution of disinterested education." The basic question to which Dr. Asheim's deliberations lead him, however, is "what exactly do we in America have to offer the developing nations that will help them to generate the kinds of libraries, librarians, and library services best suited to their needs and their aspirations?" This is a tough question, but he does well at approaching a whole congeries of provocative answers before he concludes, and his answers have far-reaching significance and implication.

Every librarian heading for an overseas assignment should be denied his visa until he memorizes this little book *verbatim ac litteratim*; it is that important. It will also be darned good reading for those of us who stay home.—*D.K.*