

and Colleges. It contains eighteen essays by an international set of scholars focusing on the creation of "expert knowledge" through university research and on the social and economic role of that knowledge in the United States and European countries. The essays are of two kinds: (1) case studies of particular issues in specific countries (e.g., the *Historikerstreit* among West German scholars concerning the Nazi era; the impact of nineteenth-century student activism on the formation of Swedish research universities; the role of the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development in setting research agendas); and (2) concise general surveys of larger themes (e.g., the exceptionalism of American higher education; the growing fragmentation of research, teaching and study; the dominance of scientific discourse in modern higher education). The strength of the collection is in its international (and historical) view of higher education; its weakness is the random nature of its topics so typical of a *Festschrift*. (Robert Walther)

The Politics of Liberal Education. Ed. by Darryl J. Gless and Barbara Herrnstein Smith. Durham, N.C.: Duke Univ. Pr., 1992. 305 p. alk. paper, \$34.95 (ISBN 0-8223-1183-6); paper, \$14.95 (0-8223-1199-2). LC 91-29303.

The theme of this stimulating and thoroughly readable collection of fifteen papers is the democratization of higher education. All but two were originally published in the Winter 1990 issue of the *South Atlantic Quarterly*. The conference, described by one of the participants as "a rally of [the] cultural left," covered topics as varied as technology, pedagogy, homophobia and television, framed in discussions of "the canon" and the relationship between politics and learning. The contributors include scholars such as Stanley Fish, Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Richard Rorty, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, and Barbara Herrnstein Smith. They share the premise that the educational curriculum—any educational curriculum—is historically contingent, and they therefore embrace, with varying degrees of enthusi-

asm, the demand to open the curriculum to African Americans, gays, women and others who have been kept outside, a project that Gates describes as "the necessary work of canon deformation and reformation." (Stephen Lehmann)

Theodore Besterman, Bibliographer and Editor: A Selection of Representative Texts. Ed. by Francesco Cordasco. Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow, 1992. 479p. (ISBN 1-8108-2497-3). LC 91-45136.

Theodore Besterman, as every student in library school learns, was one of the preeminent systematic bibliographers of the twentieth century. Both his *World Bibliography of Bibliographies* and his 107-volume edition of Voltaire's letters are massive works of modern scholarship. This volume reprints four biographical essays on Besterman and a selection of his own scholarly writings, mostly on various aspects of bibliography and on Voltaire. The book ends, inevitably, with a bibliography of the "Great Cham of Bibliography's" own works (revealing his strong interest in theosophy and the paranormal) and a bibliography on him. (Robert Walther)

Rubin, Joan Shelley. *The Making of Middlebrow Culture.* Chapel Hill, N.C.: Univ. of North Carolina Pr., 1992. 416p. alk. paper. (ISBN 0-8078-2010-5). LC 91-22241.

Examining the popularization and commercialization of culture in the years between the two world wars, Rubin analyzes "middlebrow" institutions such as the *Herald Tribune's* weekly supplement *Books*, the Book of the Month Club, "great books" teaching and publishing programs, Will Durant's "outlines," and radio book-chat programs. The book focuses largely on the women and men who shaped these institutions—a strategy that is itself characteristically "middlebrow"—and on the tensions between elitist and democratic values they reflected and worked through. Although for the most part not an explicit theme of the book, relationships between the academy and the popularizing media are evident on virtually every page. Rubin's

book is gracelessly written and maddeningly condescending but sheds light on a fascinating dimension of American intellectual life. (*Stephen Lehmann*)

Wiener, Jon. *Professors, Politics and Pop.* London and New York: Verso, 1991. 366p. (ISBN 0-86091-356-2). LC 91-025645.

Jon Wiener, professor of history at the University of California, Irvine, covers the higher education beat for *The Nation*, where he is a contributing editor. *Professors, Politics and Pop* is a collection of short pieces from that weekly (October 1984 through September 1990), plus a sprinkling of items from other magazines of the center-left. A quartet of heftier considerations of recent radical history and historiography first appeared as review articles in scholarly journals. Wiener has a nose for con-

troversy and likes to seek out subjects—either persons or “cases”—that define the battle lines between the academic and cultural left and the center-right. Broadly speaking, he contends—and anecdotally demonstrates—that the entrenched establishment in academe is conservative (and not liberal or radical as one would conclude from the media of late) even though the left, at least historically, enjoys superior intellectual credentials. Wiener manages to engage in this polemical discussion without using the much abused Newspeak phrase “politically correct.” But that is definitely what he is talking about: the attempt of “the neocons . . . to persuade the center that it’s the left rather than the right that threatens the integrity of the university by injecting external political issues into academia.” (*Jeffry Larson*)