

testify, explicitly or implicitly, . . . there are problems, questions for agenda papers . . . which are of common, if not universal significance."

In spite of the fact that the book is not prescriptive and does not offer solutions to the problems raised, still it does raise some interesting points for consideration in planning for library and information services on the national level.—*Ann Glascoff, Governors State University.*

Hyman, Richard Joseph. *Shelf Access in Libraries.* Chicago: American Library Assn., 1982. 189p. (ALA Studies in Librarianship, no.9) \$12.50. LC 81-22764. ISBN 0-8389-0357-6.

This book is about the past, present, and future of various shelf arrangements in different types of libraries and of direct access to library materials. The major thesis of the book is "that the special shelving schemes in various types of American libraries imply that traditional shelf classification has lost much, sometimes all, of its value." The major schemes, Dewey and LC classifications, are modified in most libraries when it comes to arranging items on the shelves. Typical modifications include shelving by type of book (reference works), by format (microforms and other media), by type of user (children's literature), or by size, among the myriad possibilities. Where there is direct access, shelf arrangement should present users "with worthy selections arranged in suggestive patterns." Since classification schemes are so universally modified in order to facilitate direct access, the author suggests that close classification for the shelves is not worth the time and expense it demands.

Hyman has treated these topics in earlier works; this treatment is long and detailed. The initial chapter traces the evolution of shelf classification and direct access from ancient times through the nineteenth century. Problems and ambiguities of shelf classification receive more elaborate attention in the second chapter. Three subsequent chapters deal with the various shelf arrangements adopted in public libraries, in school libraries and media cen-

ters, and in academic and research libraries. The final chapter looks at the future of direct access and includes observations on the future of shelf classification research. The appendix is a reprint of a shelf arrangement used in a public library. Although the arrangement was never fully implemented and was finally abandoned, it serves as an example of shelf arrangement not tied directly to a traditional classification system designed for a catalog.

An ALA press release says that this book aims to help librarians who must decide on when and how to classify for shelf access by readers. If so, it falls short of its mark. The book is really a compendium of relevant studies—many of them classics. The author provides critical commentary, though readers may not always agree with his analyses. The work is highly repetitive and presents no original conclusions. It will be quite useful for students of library science; others in the profession are likely to read it with a certain amount of *déjà vu*. Nevertheless, there are so many studies included here, that even the seasoned reader will find something new.

Hyman's view of the future of research into shelf classification is not hopeful. One fear he has for research using analysis of electronic access is the potential for invasion of privacy. This reviewer does not believe that analysis of users' reactions to and uses of information necessarily implies a regimented information society. In fact, transaction log analysis offers great potential in identifying patterns of user behavior. The political and social dangers alluded to by the author are avoidable. With the rise of online catalogs, there will be increased opportunities for research. As such catalogs become more sophisticated, we may be able to study more scientifically the phenomenon of browsing—an activity heretofore defended primarily on an intuitive basis. Otherwise, Hyman's assumption may hold up: "The future of direct access is most to be assured because of the human craving for browsing. More than any other factor, this promises the survival of book libraries and shelf-classified collections."—*Robert Allen Daugherty, University of Illinois at Chicago.*