

able to read in themselves, quite apart from any relevance they may have for librarianship. Inspired by Jean-Paul Sartre's *The Words*, Régis Debray ("The Book As Symbolic Object") offers a poetic evocation of the book as fetish, as stone, as architecture, as religious object. Raffaele Simone ("The Body of the Text") shows how texts (not books) can be thought of as closed and autonomous, or open and permeable. And who could resist Umberto Eco's reassuring, grandfatherly, utterly lucid summing up? Why do we have to choose between visual and alphabetic cultures? he asks. Why not improve both? Fewer books would be a good thing; too many are published already. We can have both publishing and communicating, closed texts and open systems. Eco's sense of humor is a tonic. He jokes about a "culture in which there will be no books, and yet where people go around with tons and tons of unbound sheets of paper. This will be quite unwieldy, and will pose a new problem for libraries."

Although a few of the other pieces in this book are less original, none seems dated. This may be because they have been revised for publication, or perhaps semioticians perceive patterns that are only beginning to emerge. Those who crave an answer to the literal question What is the future of the book? will be disappointed that these authors have no answer (in fact, they warn against attempts at long-range predictions about changing technology). They seem to be defining a world in which two or more cultures exist simultaneously, the culture of the book and something else. This divided consciousness will be recognized immediately by librarians as the mental world they already inhabit.—*Jean Alexander, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois*

Issues in Collection Management: Librarians, Booksellers, Publishers. Ed. Murray S. Martin. Greenwich, Conn.: JAI Pr.

(Foundations in Library and Information Science, 31), 1995. 193p. \$78.50. ISBN 1-55938-608-8. LC 95-4503.

Most of the fourteen articles in this collection were first presented as papers at the 1991 Charleston Conference on Issues in Book and Serial Acquisitions. Although the focus of the volume is on academic libraries, issues such as shrinking budgets and new technologies are ones that all libraries face as they try to adapt to an ever-changing and complex environment. Volume editor and series coeditor Murray Martin states in his introduction that the purpose of this book is to provide all librarians with models that may help in dealing with today's problems.

The book is organized into four sections. The two lead articles comprising the first section approach long-standing library issues from a theoretical and philosophical perspective. In his provocative essay, Richard Abel, who has had many years of experience in library bookselling, explores the distinction between information and knowledge, and proposes changes for restoring their balance. He correlates information with the journal and knowledge with the book, and suggests that by restoring the ratio of materials budgets in favor of books, we will at least begin to solve some of the problems that have beset librarians for years.

Clifford Lynch, an expert in the area of library automation, explores the financial implications of shifting from printed to electronic reference sources. He suggests that improved reference services through the use of networked databases are likely to reduce individual purchases of both the print and electronic versions of these reference tools, and thus may create serious economic issues for not only libraries and publishers, but also the entire marketplace.

The remaining three sections consist of articles that identify a variety of issues related to collection management

in academic libraries, and present practical suggestions and strategies for handling these issues. Each section is preceded by a short overview essay. The thread that binds all three sections together is the need for communication and collaboration, whether among library functions or departments, between library and faculty, or among the library, the publisher, and the distributor.

The four articles comprising the section on acquisitions and collection development all relate to the selection process and how it permeates all other library functions. Martin looks at acquisitions and collection development as integral and equally important parts of an organic whole. Donna Cohen presents a strong case for using regular and systematic serials review as a collection management tool. Ron Ray emphasizes the necessity for expanding the vendor selection process as more responsibilities seem to be shifted from the library to the vendor. Cultural diversity as a collection development tool is the topic of the section's last essay. Rachelle Moore and Harry Lull remind us that building ethnic collections addresses only one cultural diversity issue, which is embedded primarily in the humanities and social sciences. Equally important are issues of scientific literacy, patron involvement, and level of materials.

The next section focuses on faculty involvement in the selection process as being essential for fostering understanding between the library and the faculty. Two successful faculty liaison models are described, one by Andrea Testi for a science and engineering library and the other by Sever Bordeianu for all teaching departments of a university. Connie Wu tells about an effective journal cancellation project that could not have taken place without close faculty involvement.

The need for ongoing communica-

tion is reinforced even further in the final group of articles, which deals with the relationship between libraries and the world of publishing. The library's need for accurate information from publishers through vendors is emphasized by Arlene Sievers, whereas Joe Hewitt suggests that both vendors and publishers can glean important insights into the needs of libraries by asking the right questions in surveys and questionnaires. Glen Secor suggests that areas of contention, such as that of preferential discounts, between university presses and vendors could be eliminated by brainstorming about mutual interests, rather than clinging to opposing positions. John Smith emphasizes the need for libraries to realize that vendors can only be expected to solve problems dealing with their area of expertise, namely, the distribution of materials. Julia Gammon describes how she brings her experience as a librarian to the publishing world.

The greatest value of this collection of articles lies in its practical nature. All of us who work in academic libraries are confronted with similar issues every day as boundaries between library functions become more blurred and the publishing world becomes more multifaceted and complex. The problems are not new, and the authors do not necessarily have answers or solutions. What they do contribute are fresh insights and alternative ways of looking at these problems. These are not isolated issues that relate only to individual libraries or library/vendor/publisher relationships but, rather, issues that affect all of us.

The information in this volume is well organized and clearly presented. Although the references are already somewhat dated, Martin does state that the original papers of the 1991 conference were updated for this book. My one criticism concerns the poor quality of graphics in one of the articles and insufficient proofreading, especially at

the beginning of the book, resulting in some garbled words and faulty sentence structure. These criticisms aside, the book is well worth reading by anyone involved in selecting, buying, supplying, or publishing library materials. As Martin summarizes so well: "all participants in the collection management process would benefit from having more information about the other players. They are not in a zero-sum game where someone must lose and someone win, but in a partnership where all can do better by knowing more about the other partners. By improving communication and taking a broader view, publishers, vendors, and librarians can improve the ways in which information and knowledge are packaged, distributed, and used. This is particularly desirable in what promises, for some time to come, to be a very tight financial setting for libraries."—*Maija M. Lutz, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts*

The Social Role of Higher Education: Comparative Perspectives. Eds. Ken Kempner and William G. Tierney. New York: Garland Pub. (Garland Reference Library of Social Science, 988; Garland Studies in Higher Education, 7), 1996. 215p. \$40 alk. paper. ISBN 0-8153-1765-4. LC 96-16423.

This is a book of case studies of higher education in different national contexts. The cases are taken from seven countries and one region (Central America), and many are written by scholars from the countries themselves. The editors begin with a chapter that outlines a theoretical perspective on what they define as the "organizational culture" of higher education. An ambitious description of the organizational culture is quickly provided on the very first page of the book: it consists of the missions, symbols and communication, strategy, environment, and knowledge production within universities. This framework leads one to

expect a strongly comparative volume, but the editors note that the articles are, for the most part, focused on the national political context of education, especially the way academic work interacts with different national histories and agendas.

Some of these histories and agendas are described as cultural themes or values, especially in the case of Japan and Thailand. Although they provide interesting reading, national and cultural themes are difficult to pin down, as scholars of "national character studies" during the Second World War found. For example, the intuitive insights of Japanese culture described by Ruth Benedict in *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword* (1946) enthralled readers during and after the war, yet such studies were soon abandoned. Characterizing the national character of any country was too often only a repetition of the values and ideals expressed by the upper classes and the ideal literary heritage of a country. Still, there is a temptation, given into in this book, to characterize Mexican, Finnish, or Japanese culture as having core values, even today in a world of nation-states that sometimes come apart at the seams. The editors foresaw criticisms of the cultural theme approach of many chapters, and so refer to the case studies as "interpretive" social science. Reading interpretive work is always fascinating, and this book is no exception. Each chapter is like a new journey to a distant land, though the itinerary to these different lands is not very clear.

The cases were chosen by opportunities of scholarship rather than by a theoretical logic because there is no common theme or structure that relates them together. Some cases are from Latin America (Mexico, Chile, Central America, and Costa Rica), and the others are from disparate countries around the globe, including Japan, Thailand, Australia, and Finland. Although each