Recent Publications

BOOK REVIEWS

Lipsman, Claire K. ***The Disadvantaged and Library Effectiveness.*** American Library Assn., 1972. 208p.

Claire Lipsman has given public librarians a valuable study in an area of librarianship filled with rhetoric and little data. Using a combination case study and survey approach, Dr. Lipsman analyzed fifteen cities with library programs serving the economically disadvantaged. Five basic program factors deemed critical to program effectiveness in serving the disadvantaged are "competency and effectiveness of staff; degree of community involvement and understanding of community dynamics evidenced by project; degree of autonomy exercised by project director in decision making; quality of materials used; and effectiveness of publicity, or project visibility." Each of these areas is explored by case study and survey data. Three major policy recommendations are made involving improvement of existing programs; utilization of systems approaches and data collection for program budgeting; and adoption of new roles.

There was difficulty in determining who was a user or nonuser. Physical identification with a library within a six-month period was the deciding factor. It was found that in areas with the economically disadvantaged the predominant clientele are grade school children using the library for school-related purposes and that sometimes fewer than 10 percent of the adults are identified with libraries. This data leads to one of the recommendations calling for more effective integration of libraries with schools. Public librarians will approach this with caution, having experienced several decades of unsatisfactory integration which, among other things, did little to reach the nonuser.

It is interesting to note that Dr. Lipsman suggests "training for those holding leadership potential in low income communities" and "meeting more sophisticated needs for technical assistance to community groups." She also notes that success may be easier if a program does not set out to serve just the poor, but to provide services that attract a broad spectrum of users. Indications are that substantial economic investment must be made to serve the disadvantaged; that unit costs may be high; that system planning and data gathering are necessary (also expensive); and that interagency planning and cooperation are essential. A question still remains unanswered: Can such action advocated by Dr. Lipsman reach a significant portion of the target group to gain and maintain the budget viability necessary for success, or will the public library still have to justify its existence upon significant use by its middle class public? Dr. Lipsman claims that . . . "unless libraries in ghetto areas can be perceived as important, prestigious, and useful by more than this relatively tiny book-oriented minority, it is doubtful that they can survive as institutions."

This book is must reading for all librarians wishing to work with the disadvantaged. Its message is articulate and clear. While some of the new directions are debatable, the analysis of successful and failing library programs with the disadvantaged should serve as a useful tool for the profession.—*John F. Anderson, Library Director, Tucson Public Library, Tucson, Arizona.*

Neal, Kenneth William, et al. ***British Academic Libraries.*** Wilmslow, Cheshire, England: The Author, 1973. 193p.

This is a bad book. Its fifteen chapters are a mishmash. Some read as though they originated in off-the-cuff lectures on administration, others appear to be problem situations invented to serve as student exercises, and still others—the best—are pedestrian descriptions of libraries. Although at least ten different people are among the authors, some two-thirds of the contents are written by Neal, senior lecturer, Department of Librarianship, Manchester Polytechnic, who is also compiler and publisher of the volume. The libraries described serve institutions that, at least in name, are different from those in the United States, such as colleges of further education, colleges of

art, colleges of technology, technological universities, and polytechnics. Consequently, the descriptions may be helpful to those interested in British higher education and its libraries, and a library seeking exhaustive coverage of British librarianship may wish to acquire the book despite its mediocrity.—*W. L. Williamson, The Library School, University of Wisconsin at Madison.*

Danton, J. Periam. ***The Dimensions of Comparative Librarianship.*** Chicago: American Library Assn., 1973. 184p.

This is a landmark book which will be cited for many years to come. Troubled by the confusion in thinking over the past two decades as to the meaning of "comparative librarianship," Professor Danton here sets out on a rigorous exercise in logic and argument to determine its proper definition and nature, and he succeeds admirably. He groups the main body of his comments into five parts:

1. He points out the benefits enjoyed by other social sciences (law, sociology, education, linguistics) from the application of the comparative method.

2. He finds variety, unclarity, and contradiction in the library community as to the meaning of comparative librarianship, and he proposes a definition.

3. He reviews the several purposes and values to society which can result from the study of comparative librarianship.

4. He examines the present state of education, research, and publication in comparative librarianship and finds it wanting.

5. He discusses the comparative method as it can and should be applied to librarianship.

He concludes with seven recommendations for gaining greater attention to comparative librarianship, and he appends a fine outline for a seminar on the subject, a brief bibliography, and an index.

This book accomplishes in large measure its primary implicit intent of clarifying a previously muddled area of our discussion and doubtless also of our thinking, and it should go far toward bringing greater commonality of direction to this meaningful but inadequately developed aspect of librarianship.

Yet it is also in some ways a painful book to read. Seemingly as though he did not wholly trust his very considerable powers of logic and dispassionate persuasion, Professor Danton frequently resorts for emphasis to the use of italics, emotion-laden adjectives, and broad generalities, which will to some readers make his book seem more hortatory than reasoned. He finds statements of other authors "absurd," "at best misleading and at worst self-contradictory," "completely counter to accepted definitions," and having "no logical justification." He condemns much existing literature for not having been comparative when it was neither intended nor claimed by its authors to be comparative. He discounts by name Munthe's *American Librarianship from a European Angle,* Bostwick's *Popular Libraries of the World,* Asheim's *Librarianship in Developing Countries,* Esdaile's *National Libraries of the World,* and others of similar authority and significance as not being "useful . . . in the sense of advancing the profession in fundamental ways" because they were not comparative in accord with his definition.

That is pretty sweeping stuff, and although this reviewer for one does not think Professor Danton means it in quite the way it sounds, it could lose him some friends as well as, more importantly, fail to gain adherents to his cause, and that would be a pity because his cause deserves adherents. Comparative librarianship, he proposes, "may be defined as the analysis of libraries, library systems, some aspect of librarianship, or library problems in two or more national, cultural, or societal environments, in terms of socio-political, economic, cultural, ideological, and historical contexts. This analysis is for the purpose of understanding the underlying similarities and differences, and for determining explanations of the differences, with the ultimate aim of trying to arrive at valid generalizations and principles" (p.52). With the possible exception of substituting "or" for "and" as the antepenultimate word in the first sentence, most will doubtless feel that this is a pretty good definition.—*David Kaser, Graduate Library School, Indiana University, Bloomington.*

Lee, Sul H., ed. ***Planning-Programming-***