

and practicing librarian or information specialist.—Audrey N. Grosch, *University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.*

Dewey, Melvil. *Melvil Dewey: His Enduring Presence in Librarianship.* Edited by Sarah K. Vann. The Heritage of Librarianship Series, no.4. Littleton, Colo.: Libraries Unlimited, 1978. 278p. \$17.50 U.S. and Canada; \$21 elsewhere. LC 77-21852. ISBN 0-87287-134-7.

Here is another worthwhile contribution to a growing body of works by and about the bearer of the best-known name in American library history. From Grosvenor Dawe's official eulogy, published under the Lake Placid Club imprint the year after Melvil Dewey's death, to this latest compilation, biographers have given as much attention to revealing the man through his writings as through their own narratives. Small wonder, for while the bulk of Dewey's publication during his lifetime is substantial, that of his unpublished correspondence, notes, and diaries is even greater and harder to access because of its dispersion and difficult shorthand.

The editors of this work, and of the series to which it belongs, disclaim having produced the definitive study "so badly needed." Yet Sarah Vann researched an impressive list of sources to give us a concise biography, a useful selection from Dewey's library writings, and a nearly definitive chronological bibliography. She mentions, but does not attempt to document, such other enthusiasms as simplified spelling, the metric system, and the Lake Placid Club.

This biobibliography adds nothing startling to our general acquaintance with a nineteenth-century titan. Ardent, industrious, high-principled, optimistic, hyperactive, and opinionated, Dewey deliberately chose librarianship as his primary sphere of action. He was not merely a joiner but also a founder of lyceums, societies, and clubs. He planned, organized, and administered at every opportunity, attracting loyal supporters and antagonizing other strong-willed associates throughout his long career. He was more an activist than a contemplative scholar or researcher. His writings tend toward exhortation, bolstered by fairly absolutist pronouncements based on shrewd

practical observation. Yet through the familiar idiosyncrasies of his nature and his milieu emerges a picture of a genial, just, dedicated, and effective man.

Following a short but revealing biography in part I, part II, which forms the bulk of the volume, groups selected professional papers of Dewey into fourteen subtopics, each prefaced by a brief critical commentary. They cover his views on the American Library Association, women in librarianship, education for librarianship, library cooperation, cataloging and classification, the Library of Congress, public and academic libraries, and glances toward the future and the past. The bibliography in part III first identifies extant Dewey manuscript collections. It next cites in chronological order his editorial achievements and his library-related publications. Finally it gives a useful survey of works about the man. The book closes with a general index.

Few readers will proceed straight through this book from cover to cover. It is more a source for reference and browsing. Its chief impact will be to remind us how little in library theory and practice is new. Terminology and modes of expression alter, but the issues are perennial, resulting in solutions that frequently become cyclic. That is, the issues transcend our temporal solutions. They must be faced and "solved" by each new generation. Historical perspective becomes, then, not an excuse for skepticism or irresponsibility, but an opportunity to learn from the experience of the past. Melvil Dewey packed into his eighty years a great deal of observation and common sense that can inform and guide us today.—*Jeanne Osborn, The University of Iowa, Iowa City.*

"Libraries and Society: Research and Thought." Phyllis Dain and Margaret F. Stieg, issue editors. *Library Trends* 27:221-417 (Winter 1979). \$5. ISSN 0024-2594. (Available from: Univ. of Illinois Pr., Urbana, IL 61801.)

The need for librarians to study their relationship to society in these changing times is of prime importance. The library's role in our sociocultural milieu is dependent on varied circumstances, technological advances, changing human thought and behavior, to name but a few factors. This issue

of *Library Trends* attempts to go beyond the usual summaries of what one can read in the field and attack the nagging problems that exist between librarians and society. It opens up an uncharted area for critical thinking and presents challenges unique to our times.

What our professional goals were is thoroughly discussed by Lester Asheim historically, and options presented as to where professional standards should lead. Beverly P. Lynch contrasts two aspects of management: its formal characteristics organized for administrative efficiency and the informal processes whereby personnel react antagonistically toward service goals.

How demographic trends and social structure will affect librarianship is foretold by Lowell A. Martin in sections dealing with population growth, an older population, women and the family, urban concentration and dispersion, minorities and the poor, class and libraries, and, finally, demand for continued social research in the library field. What implication certain issues of

governance (equalization of educational opportunity, research methodologies analyzing public policymaking, accountability for public funds) have for libraries is treated by R. Kathleen Molz. Much study still remains in these areas. To be read in conjunction with Asheim's article, Richard L. Darling's approach to intellectual freedom and access to material during the last forty years would seem to preview the future.

The history and current scene of American education in the schools depicted by Elaine Fain allows us to reexamine our past and to seek how libraries can be significant in the educational system. Lewis F. Stieg's insistence on the need for a theory in academic librarianship ties in beautifully with Martin's presentation. Academic library goals and objectives must relate to societal factors.

F. W. Lancaster and Linda C. Smith describe the current pattern of disseminating research results and predict that the present communication cycle will give way to the electronic mode, offering the librarian the role of an indispensable, respectable explorer of a tremendous electronic "library without walls." Robert D. Harlan and Bruce L. Johnson do not mince words as they lay it on the line for librarians in reporting the recent trends in American book publishing. Computer and communication technology with its effect on the library environment is addressed by Joseph Becker, who recognizes that technology alone cannot solve the problems of a pluralistic society. The challenge is before us.

In spite of the fact that the editors are aware of several other problems in our profession, particularly as they relate to broad areas of concern in society, all of us can read at least this material with open minds and allow research by pertinent disciplines to have its impact on librarianship, as long as we pick up the ball and run with it! Let us thank the editors and writers for compiling and organizing these topics into a worthwhile pattern for us to study.—*Jovian P. Lang, O.F.M., St. John's University, Jamaica, New York.*

Ash, Lee, comp. *Subject Collections: A Guide to Special Book Collections and Subject Emphases as Reported by Uni-*

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