teenth century, with Bude flanked by Mercury and Philology; a book on the rivers of Europe, written and printed by the young Louis XV, presented as a gift to his paramour, Mme. de Pompadour; Appolinaire's copy of Sonia Delaunay's striking refiguration of Blaise Cendrars's *La Prose du transsiberian* . . . from earlier in this century; and so on. If there is power in this catalogue, it surely resides in the artifacts it records. Whatever one thinks of the spin of the authors, the books, manuscripts, and commentary of *Creating French Culture* are well worth a tour.—*Michael Ryan, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia*

Hernon, Peter, and Ellen Altman. *Service Quality in Academic Libraries*. Norwood, N.J.: Ablex, 1996. 187p. $24.50, paper. ISBN 1-56750-210-5. LC 95-42989.

The original work in this book is included in chapters 4 through 7 and three appendices, a mere eighty pages or so. Based on focus group and personal interviews with librarians, and focus group interviews with students in library and information science, two questionnaires relating to quality of service were developed for use with patrons of academic libraries. After pretesting and modification, these instruments were applied in three academic libraries, with 220 participants (almost exclusively undergraduate or graduate students) completing one or another of the surveys. The development of the instruments and the results of the surveys are presented in chapter 4 (eighteen pages). The final instruments themselves are given in two appendices (four pages). Chapter 5, in eight pages, discusses how libraries can survey their customers, including the administering of survey instruments and sampling aspects.

The first questionnaire (appendix A) asks patrons, mostly through bipolar scales, for their opinions about the library they use. The second (appendix B) gives users twenty-five statements about the library and its services, to which they are to respond on a 1–5 scale of importance.

There is nothing really new in such customer satisfaction surveys and, frankly, this reviewer feels they have been done better elsewhere (Chapter 11 of Baker and Lancaster's 1991 *Measurement and Evaluation of Library Services* gives several examples). Moreover, how can one take too seriously a survey that ranges from the *content* of information obtained from the library to the cleanliness of the drinking fountains? It is also doubtful that library users can really respond meaningfully to some of the points (e.g., "The information you get from library books and periodicals is accurate") and at least one of the questions is completely ambiguous: "Library staff understand the information for which you are looking" presumably means "Library staff understand what you are looking for," which is quite different from the point as stated.

Chapters 1, 2, 3, 8, and 9 are mostly "fluff." Chapter 1 takes fourteen pages to tell us that evaluation should be customer oriented. Probably few librarians would disagree with this, although they may not put their agreement into practice. Chapter 2 is a general discussion of evaluation principles and performance measures. In this, the authors attempt to clarify terminology but, in the opinion of this reviewer, only muddy the waters. For example, they try to make a distinction between "outcomes" and "impacts" but fail to do so clearly (it is doubtful that a meaningful distinction exists), and they are completely wrong in their attempt to distinguish cost-effectiveness from cost-benefit approaches.

Chapter 3 is a discussion on service quality "as reflected in the literature." The authors draw examples from other fields, mostly government and busi-

ness, the implication being that these sectors are more service oriented than are libraries. Because this reviewer believes strongly that the service ethic has declined precipitously in *all* segments of society (including libraries) over the past forty years (try to reach *any* human being by telephone today; try to get a reply to *any* business correspondence), he finds this almost entirely platitudinous. A statement of commitment to excellence does not, in itself, guarantee even adequacy.

Chapter 8 gives us a few pages on what "leadership" means in libraries and chapter 9 tells us that service quality is a critical issue in academic libraries and in higher education in general. None of this is new or inspiring.

Chapter 7 presents a hodgepodge of methods that libraries could use to examine quality of service, everything from reshelving surveys to OPAC transaction logs; and chapter 6 (which seems out of place logically) discusses how data collected could form the basis for a Service Quality Information System.

Although not stated explicitly, the authors seem to draw their inspiration from Total Quality Management. They prefer the subjective impressions of library users to more objective and quantifiable measures of user success (e.g., shelf availability).

They also are prone to wild assertions that they fail to substantiate, such as "thinking of library users as customers is a new concept for many librarians." As someone who has worked in or around libraries for more than forty years, this reviewer believes that librarians once thought of users as customers (see, for example, S. L. Wallace's 1956 *Patrons Are People*) but forgot this important principle as they fell in love with technology and saw "automation" as an end in itself—compare the number of books written today about library users with the number written about library technology!

Finally, a book published in 1996 should surely give great emphasis to networked information and the digital library, because one can reasonably expect that users will exploit such resources in ways different from the ways they exploit print resources and, thus, criteria relating to "service quality" could be different. Although some rather oblique references occur in the text, the topic is never really addressed head-on and the terms *digital library, electronic information, Internet,* or even *network* do not appear in the index (which, in any case, is rather pathetic).

This is not a book I can recommend to either library managers or students of library science. Both the theoretical discussion and the survey instruments have been done better before. A hardbound version (ISBN 1-56750-209-1) is also available at an almost unbelievable price of $52.50 for fewer than 200 pages.—*F. W. Lancaster, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign*

Olson, Michael P. *The Odyssey of a German National Library: A Short History of the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, the Deutsche Buecherei, and the Deutsche Bibliothek.* Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz (Beitraege zum Buch- und Bibliothekswesen, Bd. 36), 1996. vii, 122p. DM78. ISBN 3-447-03648-6.

No previous book has been published addressing the subject treated in this volume. For a German reviewer, it is surprising to see that a book about the German library system was published in English in a well-known German publisher's series. At the outset, this reviewer should acknowledge his respect for the author for tackling this subject. It must be difficult for someone from outside Germany and its specific (library) history to understand that this idea is one that is influencing librarians' work today. Although Olson does not emphasize the fact that this discussion