A LIBRARIAN LOOKS AT AMERICAN PUBLISHING

Edwin Castagna

How does, and how should, a librarian look at publishing in 1967? As a minor customer buying a small part of the output of a large industry? As a fellow member of the nation's communications apparatus? As one of the last of the Mohicans upon whom the tribe of McLuhanites is about to count coup? Is the librarian like one of a boatload of frantic voyagers in immediate danger of drowning in a roaring river of print loosed by publishers? Or may librarians and publishers be thought of as linked in a symbiotic relationship like that of the Egyptian plover and the crocodile? The plover helps the crocodile as lookout and oral hygienist. In return he gets the delicious leeches he finds along the crocodile's gums. Both partners benefit.

However one describes the publisher-librarian relationship it is obvious we each have important functions in the series of processes from the writing of a book to its publishing, and on to its selection, acquisition and presentation to the reader. We share in the crucial responsibilities of maintaining our country's information network.

In any successful partnership there must be assurance on the part of each member as to where the other stands. But the publisher is often more like a chameleon than like a crocodile. He appears to himself and to others in different colors at different times. In the pleasant book, Now Barabas by William Jovanovich, president of Harcourt, Brace and World, we find a number of those whimsical and self-doubting statements to which publishers are addicted:

> It is no doubt because the publisher can at once be regarded as a scoundrel by his authors and as an idealist by his bankers that he suffers a certain ambiguity over his own identity. . . . Millionaires have of late discovered that book publishing can be stimulating, especially if the mixture is at least four parts textbooks to one part literature. Articles on books now appear in Fortune and The Wall Street Journal.[1]

But after having said that, seeming to put publishing in the efficient camp of big business, Jovanovich writes:

> Of publishers it may be said like the English as a race they are incapable of philosophy. They deal in particulars and adhere

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Edwin Castagna is Director of the Enoch Pratt Free Library, Baltimore, Maryland.

easily to Sydney Smith's dictum that one should take short views, hope for the best, and trust God.[1]

Sir Stanley Unwin, in his preface to authors in The Truth About Publishing, classifies his calling in a matter-of-fact way as he writes:

> Publishers are not necessarily either philanthropists or rogues. Likewise they are usually neither lordly magnates nor cringing beggars. As a working hypothesis, regard them as ordinary human beings trying to earn their living at an unusually difficult occupation.[2]

A more skeptical view comes from Eugene Lichtenstein, reviewing, in the New York Times Book Review for October 8, 1967, The Making of a Publisher: A Life in the 20th Century Book Revolution, by Victor Weybright. Lichtenstein gives the back of his hand, not too sharply, in these words:

> Most editors and publishers like to think of themselves as professional men, their endeavors essential to the cultural life of the nation. These are harmless conceits with just enough truth in them to sustain illusion and permit a necessary self-deception. The fact is, of course, that publishing is primarily a business enterprise and that editors are rewarded for their commercial acumen and successes.[3]

In the last paragraph of his book, Jovanovich puts his occupation on a lofty plane:

> To publish is, of course, to make something known to the public. No part of publishing, whether its concern is with educational or general works, whether or not its financial support is wholly private, should be made safe from the common gaze or free from common criticism. One can hardly exaggerate the influence of books in the national history or their pertinence to the contemporary national experience. What one can do, and I suspect too many publishers are prone to it, is to be content that the importance of books is obvious, their continuance is assured, and their permanence is inevitable, when, actually, any work that relates to the public interest must be constantly reappraised. One needs to ask, currently and repeatedly, what the public interest is and what kind of publishing, among other forms of education and of the arts, will advance and enlighten it.[4]

Remembering then, that the publishers "are not necessarily either philanthropists or rogues," that what they do "is primarily a business enterprise" and that "common criticism" is justified and expected, with the continuance of books assumed to be "assured" and their permanence "inevitable," let us look at publishing from the point of view of the librarian, keeping in mind "the public interest" and our symbiotic bond.

Some of the more obviously significant trends in American publishing are the enormously increased output; the mergers and combinations of publishers and of publishers with communications businesses such as television, electronics, computer manufacture, etc.; the publication of material which represents the ultimate in frankness about sex; and the increase in prices. Less obvious trends, but still of major importance to libraries, are the tendency of books to go out of print quickly, and the proliferation of small publishers who seem to pop up like mushrooms as the older firms gather together in gigantic concentrations. Also of importance to librarians is physical quality of books, including binding, printing, and paper. I believe I would be remiss if I did not refer to the pricing practices of some publishers which have led to suits for the recovery of damages. This is a very tender area. Unless confidence can be reestablished between libraries and those publishers who have violated the laws and overcharged the customers, many of us are likely to see the publisher as rogue rather than public servant.

Another problem in publishing, if not a trend, which is of deep concern to librarians, is discussed in an article by David Wise entitled "Hidden Hands in Publishing."[5] Its substance is given in the first three paragraphs:

> It is rather remarkable that there was so relatively little public indignation when it came to be known earlier this year that for a decade, the United States Information Agency has secretly paid publishers and authors to produce books sold not only overseas but in this country as well, bearing no government label whatsoever. And it's more remarkable that it's still going on. First, a bit of history.
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> The government has poured more than a million dollars into clandestine literary endeavor since the USIA program was launched in 1956. Some of the $1,027,899 was spent on the production of simplified books in English confined to distribution overseas, but the bulk of the money—$570,850 of it—went for the subsidization of U.S. publishers through the purchase of books "that would not be written or published for the commercial market without Agency encouragement."
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> In all, 104 titles were subsidized this way. Another $183,905 was used directly to commission authors or publishers to produce 46 manuscripts much in the manner of a short order cook whipping up intellectual cheeseburgers. (USIA will reveal the titles of only seven of these tomes; why the names of some have been disclosed and others not is a mystery to which only USIA, presumably, holds the answer.) Although it is said that these books were produced primarily for distribution overseas, in virtually every instance they were also sold by their commercial publishers in bookstores in the U.S., without attribution as government merchandise.

Librarians feel a strong responsibility, not only for the content of the material they acquire for public use, but for its authoritativeness and the motives in publishing it. The practices described by Wise are a serious barrier to gaining information on these points. What better way to spread a miasmic fog of suspicion to poison and obscure a relationship that should be characterized by mutual trust and confidence? Unless the plover can be sure of the crocodile's motives, the partnership will not be worth a leech.

I do not know what defense, if any, publishers involved in the practices described, have to offer. Better than explanations would be assurance that the practice is irrevocably stopped and will not be continued. It may be said that publishers were just trying to do a patriotic duty for the government. I cannot accept that as an explanation. Whenever there is a sale there is a purchase. And it appears integrity has been bought and sold.

There are other areas in which one wonders whether there is a trend or not. For example, how is publishing responding to special needs? Where are the gaps? How well are publishers reaching marginal readers? Scholars? Students? And what about the other side of the coin? Is there overpublishing in some specialized areas? And what about intellectual quality? Are the publishers actually bringing out for public scrutiny the best and most creative contributions in all fields of knowledge? Or is the alleged business mentality that has been introduced into publishing a barrier for the dissenting, nonconformist thought people of a democracy need to lay against the "conventional wisdom" if they are to enjoy real freedom of choice?

During the three decades I have been reading the Publishers' Weekly, it has grown from a limp little piece you could slip into a good sized pocket until it is now often bigger than Time Magazine and gaining on Fortune. When it falls on the floor it is not with a whisper but with a thump. And no wonder. Because it now advertizes many and lists most of the titles published in the United States, and these have tripled since 1936 from 10,000 to around 30,000.

It is true library staffs and budgets have also grown. But analysis of 30,000 titles, and the prospect of far more than that number in the next few years, creates a serious problem for those who must in their book selection process carefully evaluate most of the material they acquire. When you add the increasing publishing output of the United Kingdom, the Commonwealth countries, and the rest of the world, it is clear the librarian's job becomes steadily more complicated and time-consuming. It is difficult for the smaller libraries, which are in the majority, and must be selective in their purchasing, to identify those books which are significant now and meaningful for the future.

The implications are obvious. The publishers are not likely to restrain themselves and cut back to a "manageable" volume. So the

librarians must increase their numbers and/or improve their methods for making intelligent selections.

As to the mergers in publishing and the growing big business involvement, this is reflected also in the swollen Publishers' Weekly's listings of the stock price quotations of publishers. One of my colleagues at the Pratt said:

> I believe the most important trend is the disappearance of the family publishing house and the amalgamation of publishers with electronic and industrial firms so that we are seeing the beginnings of the big combine in publishing as in other fields. The influence of this trend is bound to be far-reaching. Publishing is and has always been a business in which the profit motive has played a part, but publishers in the past have often published books they knew would have a limited appeal and probably lose money. With the trend toward bigger and bigger combines and greater emphasis on sales and wider markets in all parts of the country, the controversial or limited in appeal could easily be eliminated. For example, textbooks of American history for elementary and secondary schools designed to sell widely still virtually ignore the contribution of the Negro, in spite of the urgings of Negro leaders and some educators. Also, I wonder how much this trend is contributing to the slowness in meeting the need for adult easy reading materials. The market for textbooks for elementary school through college is assured with all the federal money pouring into elementary, secondary, and higher education, but that for adult basic literacy texts and supplementary reading is still not definitely defined, so publishing in this field is pitifully small.

Some years ago, as he was leaving the Presidency, General Eisenhower warned the nation of the danger of control by the industrial-military complex. Now big-time science and research are full partners in the complex. Are we witnessing a concentration of power in the information industry which threatens public access to knowledge? I hope not. But if, following these mergers, more effective computers are constructed, with the capacity to store and communicate the pertinent facts in some important area of inquiry, with storage in the computer taking the place of conventional publishing and access to the information through remote electronic consoles, what happens to the library's function and responsibilities? Do we plug into the network? And on what basis? Will the public pay a very high price, as it now does for many of its public utility services which are operated as monopolies? It seems to me this crucial question of access to knowledge and information must be resolved by librarians and publishers working together in their roles as public servants and vendors of public services.

Another trend in publishing which affects libraries, especially public libraries, but to some extent school libraries as well, is the publication of books which are explicit to the last detail about all matters pertaining to sex. In Roger Burlingame's Of Making Many Books: A Hundred Years of Reading, Writing and Publishing, a history of Charles Scribner's Sons, there is an amusing passage involving Maxwell Perkins, the famous editor. There is Perkins sitting "with a manuscript of Ernest Hemingway on his lap" in conference with Mr. Scribner:

> Perkins. . .explained that there were three probably unprintable words in the script of The Sun Also Rises.
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> "What are they?" Mr. Scribner asked.
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> Perkins, who never uses a stronger phrase than "My God," and that only in times of great emotion, found that he simply couldn't say them.
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> "Write them then," said Mr. Scribner.
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> In his chicken-hand track, Perkins scrawled two of them on a memo pad and handed it to him.
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> "What's the third word?" Mr. Scribner asked.
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> Perkins hesitated.
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> "What's the third word?" said Mr Scribner again, giving the pad back to him. Finally Perkins wrote it. Mr. Scribner glanced at the pad.
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> "Max," he said, shaking his white head, "What would Hemingway think of you if he heard that you couldn't even write that word?"

Obviously we have come a far piece since that surprisingly bashful editor could not bring himself even to write a four-letter word. In 1967 publishers, as the song from Oklahoma says, "have gone about as fur as they can go." When we have the complete works of Henry Miller; the Marquis de Sade; My Secret Life, than which there cannot possibly be anything more pornographic and which is referred to on its cover by Max Lerner as "a long-buried classic"; and the erotic manuals of India, China, Japan, and other sexy old civilizations (not to mention the flood of paperback pornography which steams up the thousands of racks in bus stations, drug stores, and book joints where furtive men look for juicy bits) have we not reached the end of this road? When you have repeated all the four-letter words, all the sexual epithets, and given step by step instructions on all possible variations of the sex act, where can the pendulum go but back in the other direction?

I am not complaining about the spate of erotic books. Frankness about sex has become part of our way of life and maybe it has made that way a lot healthier. And sex pays, whether sold in the flesh or in print. What we have now in sexually frank literature is

not only that which is indigenous to our own culture. We have the sum of all the pornography of all time available for acquisition. It is a tough practical and personal problem for librarians torn by the tensions caused by their own upbringing in a more repressed way of life and their wish not to be prudes or violators of The Library Bill of Rights. Their situation is not made easier by a practice of too many publishers, who try to make a book of questionable value acceptable by adding an introduction by a Ph.D. or M.D. Often these doctors turn out to be rather obscure, if not mythical. A recent cartoon pointed up the cynicism of some publishers. It showed two of them looking over a manuscript. One was saying, "The redeeming social value is o.k. But I'm not satisfied with the pornography."

Interesting as are these hot books which fascinate, stimulate, worry and sometimes sicken us, let us go to another important area of concern. Since libraries are somewhere in the middle of the cycle which begins with intellectual creation and ends with use, it seems appropriate to think of our basic objectives and responsibilities in relation to our crucial position in this process as we respond to the publishing output. Most libraries share several common objectives. They aim to find, identify and collect what is relevant for their users. Then they attempt to organize it for convenient use. And finally the more aggressive among them try to stimulate and encourage the use of their collections so their communities of scholars and citizens may be informed, enlightened, prodded, disturbed, inspired, and delighted. In this process the use of the library's collections stimulates further creativity on the part of the users.

If this is true it becomes appropriate for a librarian to inquire into the degree of excellence in the publishing output. The question of how well publishers respond to the needs of the library's public must be considered. And the question comes up of how well the publishing output expresses the spirit and genius of the time. Since librarians like to consider themselves as channels of information and custodians of reservoirs of knowledge, it is logical to look at the publishing output to determine whether it represents a channel for new thought, innovative ideas, useful syntheses, and summaries of important fields of knowledge. Or does it represent a roadblock across the path of the creative questing spirit?

For help in answering these questions and related ones I have consulted some of my associates at the Pratt Library. One of the most pointed responses came from two librarians with long experience in the fields of business, science, and technology. Their memorandum, labeled "The Library and Publishing: Trends That Cause Us Trouble," contains the following points:

1. Habit of publishers of "cashing in" on new "waves," crazes, fashions, for example: bonsai; ikebana; Japanese gardens; poodles; computer programming and data processing; weight

reducing diets; popular psychology and self-psychotherapy; hypnosis; attacking doctors, medicine, and medical care in general; auto safety; air and water pollution; old automobiles. This practice puts a great strain on library budgets, tries the patience of book selectors, and clutters up library shelves, especially since some of this stuff dates quickly.

2. Senseless duplication of basic texts, while other subjects cry out for updated texts—chemistry, physics, genetics, calculus, new mathematics, topology, set theory, college health texts, biology, electronic circuits, mechanics of materials, accounting. We end up with a plethora of new titles, all of which cover about the same ground.

Every assistant professor who can push a pencil feels compelled to write up his class notes into a text and publish, thereby easing his transition into an associate professorship.

What about possible agreement among publishers?

3. Many common, practical subjects are still overlooked by publishers in a hurry to "cash in." Examples: building book cases; laying floors and roofs; stair building; marble work; stone and marble cutting; garage building; putting in windows and doors (harder to find full details than one would think); practical concrete structural work—for the workers, not the foreman; how to manage an engineering office, a drafting room, a machine shop, in practical terms, and a number of other skills one must learn on the job or from the foreman. Telephone line jobs, gas and electric company field and line jobs, typewriter repair, blueprint making, telephone operator jobs.

4. Excessively expensive textbooks. They are handsome, but need they be so typographically beautiful and fancy? Costs to students and to libraries seem to have been forgotten. Students are not buying these books to keep forever, nor are libraries.

5. Proliferation and splitting up of journals. Three now exist where one was before. This is epidemic in the scientific and engineering fields. Prices are skyrocketing also. Too much overlapping, too little editorial scrutiny, perhaps too much freedom of publishing. Need every little thought be published? Even medical men are complaining aloud about the mass of trivial stuff, and duplication, that gets into print.

6. Extreme difficulty in getting replacements for missing issues of journals, as well as indexes. Long waits, lack of success. Would you not think the publishers could automatically send indexes to libraries? But they do not.

7. The vanity publisher who peddles the creation of some 10th rate specialist. Some examples: something "proving" Einstein and Freud were all wrong; new theories of the cosmos; the discoveries and life of "a famous specialist."

When such a book is the effusion of a local author, we are in for trouble.

8. Need for lower cost publications. However, in business, economic, and investment fields, it now appears as though every third title is published only in soft cover. Is the cost of issuing a hardback cover also too prohibitive? We hate spiral bindings.

9. Titles announced months ahead of publication and, after much delay, no further information as to definite date of publication. Bookkeeping for both publisher and purchaser is difficult in this situation.

After listing these nine troublesome areas it is not surprising that my associates concluded, "you can see that the book selector's life, like that of the policeman, is not always an easy one." Just for good measure, or maybe to rub it in a little more, they clipped to their comments a copy of an editorial from Medical Science for July, 1967, titled, "Lint-Gathering As An Academic Career."[7]

From the area of the social sciences and history come the comments of another veteran member of the staff:

> Over the years many subject areas have been fashionable. 12-15 years ago, quantities of books came out on the problems of aging. In the late 1930's and early 1940's, the experts predicted the population would be stabilized by 1975 and the profile would be heavily skewed on the side of the older group. So the sociologists, the economists, the physicians, and the philosophers jumped on the band wagon and we had a lot of books, pamphlets, magazine articles (not to mention whole magazines), documents, and serials. The predictions were not too long in being overturned and the age jump is now weighted in the favor of the young.
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> At present, duplication is found in material on the disadvantaged population. Where two years ago, there was a handful of titles, there are now over one hundred. Potential reorganization of Congress has brought out 10-12 books in the last few months, many of them repetitive. The assassination of President Kennedy produced dozens of titles, of which only a few are significant.
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> Another general problem found in most subject areas is the frequent revision syndrome. Comparisons show little change but the trend grows.

From the reference area come the comments of an experienced librarian and her staff. They are worth listening to:

> There are two publishing trends of concern to reference librarians. The first is the recent growth of reprint publishers. Reference materials are now available to libraries which only a few years ago would have been impossible to acquire. Prices are high, undoubtedly based on small printings. New library

collections, needs of established libraries, federal funds, etc., are all factors involved in pricing reprint books. There is also a surprising price variation among publishers offering the same material.

Another area of concern is the form in which advanced listings of books appear in Publishers' Weekly, Forthcoming Books, etc. These indexes are now compiled by computers, and because of cost, each entry is kept to a minimum. It is often impossible to tell whether the book is a new edition, a revision, has been enlarged, is a reprint, a reissue, etc.

I asked those I consulted not only to list their gripes but to comment on publishing services worthy of commendation. Singled out as an outstanding venture is the publication of the National Union Catalog, scheduled to begin in 1968. Plans call for 610 volumes. The British Museum Catalog, published between 1857 and 1966 in 263 volumes was mentioned also—"a unique accomplishment and a tremendous contribution to bibliography" providing us "with an unparalleled index to the literature of the western world." I know this is beyond the scope of our concern, which is American publishing, but it is possibly an incentive for us now and then to look over the fence and see what big eggs are being laid there.

From a knowledgeable librarian serving the general public with a popular collection come remarks on overpublishing for students:

> There are many paperback editions of classics and near classics with study guides and interpretations. These vary in quality. . . . I think this a field overpublished as several different publishers may issue the same book with different notes and short, not particularly scholarly, introductions.

This librarian also comments on the lack of publishing attention to the general reader when she writes:

> This seems to me one of the most neglected areas. It is true that writings of creative artists reflect the life of the times and all phases are to be expected and desired, but there are so few competent readable novels in a stratum between the experimental and the admittedly sensational.

A publishing development all librarians applaud is that of bringing out good books in large print. The 18-point type used by Keith Jennison, Franklin Watts, Harper, and other publishers makes readers again out of many people who have given up because they cannot deal with 12-point or smaller type. These publishers are issuing mostly adult titles in excellent format. I hope they are successful and continue to expand their output.

An art librarian makes these points, all of which seem pertinent:

1. Examples of duplication during the past year or so:
   "World of Art Series," 14 volumes, Praeger;
   "Art of the World Series," 18 volumes, Crown;
   "Great Art and Artists of the World Series," 10 volumes, Franklin Watts;
   "Landmarks of World Art Series," 10 volumes, McGraw-Hill.
2. Needed reference works:
   Who's Who in American Music; the last edition was 1951.
3. Publishers' commendable issuing of material:
   There are now paperback editions of excellent, scholarly works on the arts, both reprinted classics and recent writings. There were few such a decade ago. College and university demand is the probable cause.
4. Manufacture:
   American publishers now make use of the finest facilities in the world, offering volumes with text printed in Holland, plates in Germany, etc. The only decline in the quality of the physical product is in the bindings some of which, from Europe, fall apart after one or two circulations!

Since children's librarians still acquire a greater percentage of the output of the literature in their field than do adult librarians, comments from a perceptive children's librarian should be of interest. She writes about "the flood of publisher's library binding net price books," and says:

> The tendency of most publishers is to make titles available only in library binding after the first printing. Two very alarming effects are: the extreme limitations of available juvenile titles for book store trade, and for the library it means trade editions are not available (which in many instances are more desirable) and a disproportionate amount of book funds is burned up in net price library bindings.
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> An interesting trend is the publication of children's books originally published in other countries. Margaret McElderry, juvenile book editor for Harcourt, Brace, was a leader in this.
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> The whole field of the American picture book for children has developed since 1928 when Wanda Gág's Millions of Cats marked the beginning of a trend that has blossomed into a very important part of juvenile book publishing. The art encompasses a wide range—traditional, realistic, modern, stylized, woodcuts, collage and abstraction, the latter being the least successful so far.

As with adult books, children's books reflect the times. For example, there are books on economic and social problems affecting children. The first "problem" book was Doris Gates' Blue Willow published in 1940. Since then the trend developed disproportionately, but within the past ten years it has leveled off. "Problem" stories have appeared for children of all ages and from the majority of publishers; romance for the adolescent and young teenager. The first such title was Seventeenth Summer by Maureen Daly in 1942. The trend has grown and continues. There is expansion of the "problem" book to include the emotional; accelerated emphasis on science fiction and science; and a more recent trend to include grim realism.

Limited vocabulary books for beginning readers commonly known as "easy-to-read" are coming out. Basically this trend started with the nearly simultaneous publication of Little Bear by Else H. Minarik and The Cat in the Hat by Dr. Seuss in 1957. Again the majority of publishers of children's books have gotten into the "easy-to-read" swing. This trend came about through an expressed need for books with some originality in story and artistic worth in illustrations. Some have been successful, others not.

As you know, along with the great work children's librarians are doing in expanding the reading public, young adult librarians have also been busy with excellent results. Here are the observations of one of the best in the country. After listing books by James Baldwin, Claude Brown, Sammy Davis Jr., Lorraine Hansbury, and Gordon Parks, this librarian writes:

Youth do read about the Negro and not just Negro youth. However, the book about the Negro does much to stimulate reading among a large segment of the public who formerly read very little. They like the strength of the authors just mentioned. The books stimulate, inspire, and develop compassion among white readers.

In 1952 Scribner's stuck out their neck when they published Two and The Town by Henry Felsen. Libraries walked on eggs when it came to frank presentation of pregnancy out of wedlock. I remember a big argument about it at the 1952 New York ALA Convention. Most libraries rejected it or put it "behind the scenes." Even the first Pratt staff review said: "Obviously a problem such as this does exist, but Letters to Jane and Toward Manhood offer more to teenagers than a story of this type." Fortunately, the Y Coordinator overrode the original decision and the title was bought for all agencies. I remember a phone call which came to a branch library concerning Two and The Town. The Y librarian had given the book to a 9th grader and had visions of the irate mother or father's complaint about this story, now considered very tame. The parent had a few words to say, but in a different

tone than was anticipated: "How wonderful that such a book was available for my son."—and she commended the librarian on her book selection and common sense. Sometimes librarians are too timid and parents more progressive. But the publishers shied from this subject for years and even now tread with care.

My Sweet Charlie by David Westheimer could classify under books about the American Negro because it deals with the relationship between a Southern white girl (pregnant by a white man and cast out of her home) and an intelligent, educated Negro (on the run after killing a man during racial violence) who are thrown together in extreme circumstances and develop compassion for each other's situation. This book is readable, a little corny, and very human. Our good readers like it as well as the reluctant ones. Westheimer deserves an award for this book which I am sure has contributed to racial understanding.

Factual books on sex education are of great importance for young people. We buy any which appear honest and clearly written. Love and Sex in Plain Language by Eric W. Johnson is the best we have reviewed in recent years. Still, the original reviewer was a little put off by the utter frankness and clarity of a book which was written for 6th graders and up. I believe we convinced her that it was just these points which made the book valuable. It has a lot to say to adults who possibly do not know all they think they know about sex.

Among teenage girls sympathy is prevalent for polio, cancer, and cerebral palsy victims, brain damaged children, lepers, the blind, the deaf, the deformed, and most recently, the psychologically disturbed. The publishers have obliged with many such titles, both fiction and nonfiction, too many to name. But the outstanding one is John Gunther's Death Be Not Proud, and a recent star is Hannah Green's I Never Promised You a Rose Garden (a teenage girl, a schizophrenic, in a mental institution).

Books of high interest and low reading level appear all the time. So far Pratt YA collections have bought very few because our regular trade titles run a wide gamut in difficulty—say 4th grade and up—and generally are less condescending than most special series for readers with reading difficulties. However, this is a trend and we follow it with interest. My chief criticism is the dullness of most of these. I am still not convinced that a public library should stock them unless the demand for them is more obvious.

In addition, this young adult librarian found teenagers responding with varying intensity to long or short-range trends in the publication of "psuedo Gothic novels," science fiction, fantasy, man's inhumanity to man as exemplified in The Fixer by Malamud and The Diary of Anne Frank, spies and intrigues, and man against nature as in Kon Tiki and Piccard's Seven Miles Down.

I have placed before you my thoughts and those of some of the ablest librarians I know. Our responses to trends in American publishing are probably not surprising. There are undoubtedly significant trends we have not commented on or even recognized. But what has been said, I believe, does show that we publishers and librarians have a big budget of common problems on which frank discussions are needed. Children's librarians have set an example others might follow and profit from. The children's librarians are in a close and friendly relationship with children's editors. There is an ongoing fruitful exchange of ideas which, over the years, has helped make the publication of children's literature and the profession of children's librarian two admirable aspects of American culture.

Since we are in a symbiotic association with each other, we should make the most of our common purposes. These are the identification of the significant intellectual contributions of our time, their careful preparation for use, and the organization of a distribution system assuring broad and easy access to knowledge and information. This will make possible the further enrichment of life through the creative stimulation that comes from the printed word and will come from any improvements on print that are developed. If we do those things we will have a long and happy association before us. Our species will not become extinct and we need not fear replacement by others better adapted to survive in a world of potentially disruptive change. Let us be instructed by the cooperative example of the Egyptian plover and the crocodile without being too particular about which is the plover and which the crocodile.

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