

evant to direct access, and presumably, through the insights of past writers, to bring a focus upon our problems today. Unfortunately, although a thorough and annotated literature search is provided, the lack of restraint or selectivity in assembling the material serves only to smother and diffuse the issues. (There are ninety bibliographical footnotes for the chapter "Sociology of Direct Access," Bliss is quoted or cited thirty-two times in the book, and a single quote from Matthews appears in three separate discussions.) Hyman perceptively notes:

. . . the problems related to direct access are peculiarly obdurate, and . . . one might through *any* representative sampling of past studies, reconfirm their pervasive and still largely unresolved nature.

It is in the definitions of browsing and browsability that we encounter Hyman's own contribution to the book: "Browsing is that activity, subsumed in the direct shelf approach, whereby materials arranged for use in a library are examined in the reasonable expectation that desired or valuable items or information might be found among those materials as arranged on the shelves," and "browsability" is "that characteristic of an open-shelf collection resulting from the arrangement of a library's materials" that permits browsing.

The first problem with Hyman's definitions is that they are neither based on nor lead to a solid theoretical discussion of browsing. Such characteristics of browsing as the type of collection involved and the motives and habits of the user, not specified in the definitions, are incompletely discussed in the text and are perfunctorily run through in the questionnaire. The failure to discuss what can be affirmed about the relationship between a user and an open-shelf collection, what could be supposed about such a relationship and what must be left, perhaps forever, unanswered is a fatal flaw in the book. For indeed this relationship varies with each user and collection; to discuss it in only the most generalized way is to forsake the question of browsing for the problems of library management.

For Hyman the key to browsing is the arrangement of the collection. Although he

states in the introduction that the direct shelf approach involves "every major concern, theoretical and practical, of librarianship," his emphasis is on such questions as "printed or card catalogs; broad or close classification; relative or fixed location; regional or union catalogs; classified or dictionary catalogs." Indeed, much of the book seems less an attempt to show that browsing involves all aspects of librarianship than to show that cataloging and classification do. This leads to the second main problem with Hyman's definitions: he has failed to challenge his own basic assumption that order is essential to browsing. Polling other librarians (via the questionnaire) on whether or not arrangement is essential to browsing does not provide that challenge, as most librarians operate on that same basic assumption. Since the hypotheses that Hyman is "testing" in the questionnaire are some of the very tenets of librarianship for most librarians, the general agreement with them does not show that these statements are accurate; it merely shows that they are generally accepted. Hyman offers no evidence to dispute an opposing theory (e.g., that arrangement serves no purpose in browsing), and therefore the verdict on whether or not arrangement (and therefore classification) is essential to browsing would have to be: Not Proven. Since the contention that arrangement is essential to browsing is both Hyman's greatest concern and the book's only substantive assertion, one could not recommend this book as a thoughtful or thought-provoking work on browsing.—*William Chase, Librarian, East Lyme High School, Connecticut.*

Zimmerman, Irene. *Current National Bibliographies of Latin America: A State of the Art Study*. Gainesville, Center for Latin American Studies, University of Florida, 1971. 139 p.

Perhaps the most striking thing about this book is that the subject of current national bibliographies of the countries of the entire continent of South America, Central America, Mexico, and the islands of the Caribbean can be competently presented in 139 pages.

Another very interesting feature of this work and one which is characteristic of

bibliographical activities in Latin America is that it gives one the feeling that Dr. Irene Zimmerman has first-hand acquaintance with the state of these bibliographies and the people who are producing them. And indeed she does in most cases. As the notes indicate a considerable amount of the necessary information was gained through personal correspondence. This is no finding list of national bibliographies by countries but includes an account of the bibliographical activities surrounding them.

The relative brevity of the book can be explained by the fact that of the twenty-five countries considered, as of 1969 ten of them had no current national bibliographies, and in several others, the bibliographies were of only recent origin or were issued at irregular intervals.

Much of Dr. Zimmerman's information is drawn from working papers presented by librarians from the respective countries at meetings of that truly remarkable institution known as the Seminar on the Acquisition of Latin American Library Materials (SALALM). For several years the annual meetings centered around the bibliographical activities of the various countries of Latin America and the working papers presented there often constitute the best description of current bibliographies of these countries available in any literature. Although the geographical area involved is immense, the relatively small group of Latin American bibliographers form a group which is almost unique in its cohesiveness and devotion to purpose.

An insight into the "state of the art" in several countries is provided by the author's statement that in some instances for the present at least, the best record of current publishing in some of the countries in Central America and the Caribbean exists in the published acquisitions lists of some of the institutions with Farmington plan responsibilities for certain countries. She urges that additional such lists be provided.

This statement, made as recently as 1969, by someone with as wide a knowledge of Latin American bibliography as has Miss Zimmerman, would seem to give those of us concerned with bibliographical control food for thought.

This is a valuable book. There are chapters on each of the countries of South and

Central America and Haiti and the Spanish-speaking countries of the Caribbean. The British West Indies are treated as a group. There is a very interesting section on the Caribbean as an emerging entity. This is Dr. Zimmerman's special field and it is not surprising that there is an excellent account of the efforts of the librarians of the Caribbean to support the Caribbean Regional Library in Puerto Rico and its Current Caribbean Bibliography. The aim of the library (which is based on the former Caribbean Commission Collection) would be to collect all publications of this diverse group of island countries and to record the acquisitions in a computer based bibliography. Both the library and bibliography have led troubled lives. They are, however, so important to the region that the reader cannot but hope that they will be placed on a sound footing. In fact, as one reviews this volume in his mind he becomes aware of the tenuousness of the national bibliographies in many of the countries. So much needs to be done and there are so few to do it.—Stanley I. West, *University of Hawaii, Honolulu.*

Dunlap, Leslie W. *Readings in Library History*. New York: Bowker, 1972. 137 p. 9 illus. \$10.95.

At first glance, this is a pleasing book: Instead of presenting assorted essays, the author has connected his selections with a running commentary that turns the anthology into one coherent text. The large type on heavily coated paper can be read by tired eyes, and the blue linen covers seem sturdy enough to last for centuries.

This, however, is all that is commendable. The title (and there is no subtitle) does not reveal the scope, which is limited to the preprinting period of librarianship, from the seventh century B.C. to the fifteenth century A.D. The selections, including the author's own essays, combine many familiar accounts from the general history of that period with some often repeated library lore. We read about "the imagined charms of Helen of ancient Troy, her hyacinth hair . . ." and are told that "Greek civilization flamed for a few centuries in Athens and distant Alexandria and Syracuse" but we learn hardly anything about