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## BOOK REVIEWS

*Books for College Libraries: A Core Collection of 40,000 Titles*. 2d ed. A Project of the Association of College and Research Libraries. Chicago: American Library Assn., 1975. 6v. \$65.00. (LC 74-13743) (ISBN 0-8389-0178-6)

While not the largest of the three college-library booklists published by ALA over some forty years,<sup>1</sup> the second edition of *Books for College Libraries (BCL II)* is in some respects the most sophisticated. It is more than a revision of *BCL I*. As explained in the admirably written introduction, it is also the product of a project un-

dertaken by ALA with a special grant from the Council on Library Resources to provide—both by selection of titles and by addition of cataloging data—"a highly selective retrospective tool [about 40,000 titles] as a counterpart to the current services of *Choice*" (Vol. I, p.vii; hereinafter this introduction is cited by page only from Vol. I).

Much of its interest lies in the methods followed and in the equipment used. Novel features of importance are a "sharp reduction in number of titles to a minimal 'core collection'; the expansion of individual entries to provide more complete cataloging and classification information; and the use

of automated techniques for the production of the list itself" by use of "regular MARC records issued by the Library of Congress, MARC records released by the Library of Congress especially for use in producing this publication, and records converted expressly for this collection from older Library of Congress catalog records"—this conversion being done "by contract and according to MARC standards" (p.vii). A by-product of the list, therefore, is an enlarged data base.

The first-mentioned of these departures is the striking reduction in number of titles. While nearly half again as expensive as *BCL I* and nearly twice as large in number of pages, the new edition presents a total of 38,651 titles in place of *BCL I*'s "selected list of approximately 53,400 titles." *BCL I* includes, for example, over sixty entries for James Joyce as author or as subject; *BCL II* has forty-seven. The emphasis is unchanged: the list excludes periodicals and, in general, classroom texts and readers; admittedly does little with science and technology; and concentrates on monographs in the humanities and the social sciences, with very little in any language but English. "The level emphasized is not only the undergraduate library, but primarily the undergraduate user of that library, although the necessary provision for independent study by the exceptional student requires the listing of some advanced and specialized works in each field" (p.viii).

The primary responsibility for selection rests with the corps of "contributors." "Teaching scholars, specialist librarians, and staff members of several professional associations were invited to check or compile lists of books for their specialized subject fields. Many of these subject experts are *Choice* consultants; some worked on sections of *BCL I*" (p.viii). "Editorial intervention was largely limited to holding the lists to size" (p.viii). During "Stage I" (1971) working lists were compiled from *BCL I*, *Choice* (1964-1970), and bibliographies and were checked by contributors. In "Stage II" (1972- ), with a change of editor and the establishment of a special office for the project in the Boston Public Library, additional contributors were recruited, gaps were filled in, and the work of

some of the earlier contributors was reviewed for balance. In music, for example, in addition to the contributions of a number of chosen specialists, the list had the advantage of ratings made by "an independently formed committee of the Music Library Association" for all *BCLI* music titles and for all *Choice* music reviews (Acknowledgments, Vol. I, p.xii). All contributors are named and thanked, and those whose work was limited to Stage I are identified "in case they may not wish to be identified with the final selection" (Acknowledgments, Vol. I, p.xi). It is difficult to see how, in a matter of judgment, the editors could have proceeded with greater intelligence or conscientiousness than is evidenced in this list. And since their product is admittedly incomplete—a "highly recommended" selection to be supplemented by each library according to its own educational requirements—they have largely disarmed faultfinders.

The most striking difference between *BCL II* and its predecessors is its thorough exploitation of the ready-made cataloging available from MARC and the Library of Congress. The primary role of the editorial staff was conceived as that of a clearinghouse "to turn lists of recommended titles into catalog entries without handling the books themselves" (p.viii). Editions selected by the staff (preferably in-print hardcover American editions at minimum prices) were checked against the MARC data base held by the computer contractor, and LC catalog cards for those not already included were converted to MARC standards and added to the base, all MARC data elements being tagged for retrievability even though certain of them were not printed in the present list. There was editorial revision for uniformity and consistency in details. For some entries original cataloging was necessary. The computer sorted the entries and generated indexes of "authors," covering "all main entries (except title) and all joint authors, editors, translators, and institutions associated with the authorship of the work—in short, all tracings (except title and series) numbered with Roman numerals on LC printed cards"; and "titles," covering "main-entry titles, all title-page titles whether traced or

not, and variant titles if traced" (p.ix). The subject index, on the other hand, is not derived mechanically from traced subject headings but is a selection of nonpersonal LC subject headings with references to class numbers, not to single works. It is explained that a complete printout of traced subject headings would have required an extra volume (p.ix).

This scale of indexing is one reason for the bulk of *BCL II* by comparison with the more comprehensive, yet more compact *BCL I*. Another factor is the full cataloging detail—complete except for bibliography and contents notes, prices, and citations of foreign bibliographies, these unprinted but tagged items being retrievable from the data base. The multivolume format (with items serially numbered within each volume) was adopted in order to keep physical volumes small; to permit continuous revision, one volume at a time; and to facilitate simultaneous use of the list by more than one reader (p.ix).

Unlike *BCL I*, which grouped entries loosely in subject blocks based on LC class numbers, *BCL II* is a "shelflist," with entries presented in strict LC call-number order. Topical headings are used to break up the pages, which are legible and attractive. Certain broad classes are moved out of alphabetical sequence for practical convenience.<sup>2</sup> Each of the five subject volumes contains the full introduction and the general acknowledgments, with the addition of the appropriate subject lists of contributors for the particular volume.

Since the classification scheme used was not devised for a college library, it is easy to pick out objectionable details. *Scientific and Technical Societies of the United States and Canada*, being classed in A with "General Works," falls into the "Humanities" volume. Especially unfortunate in a multivolume set is the separation of subject bibliographies in Z from the corresponding subject literatures in other classes. *The Chicorel Theater Index to Plays in Anthologies, Periodicals, Discs, and Tapes*, the *Short Story Index*, and the *Bibliography of Comparative Literature* (Baldensperger and Friederich) are classed in Z (Bibliography) and placed in Volume V with "Science" and escape the subject index. The

reader working on "History" (Vol. III) must look in Volume V for the *Harvard Guide to American History* (classed in "National Bibliography") and the American Historical Association's *Guide to Historical Literature* (classed in "Subject Bibliography"). The only "national bibliographies" listed for France are subject bibliographies of philology or history, which belong with the appropriate subject classes. It is fortunate that, since the Library of Congress has begun to provide alternate subject class numbers for subject bibliographies, a better arrangement of subject bibliographies can be looked for in future editions of *BCL*.

It is disheartening to find that the obsolescence that is inevitable in a list of this sort has already set in. The editions listed of *Cassell's Encyclopaedia of World Literature*, the *Columbia Encyclopedia*, the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, the *Harvard Guide to American History*, and *Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* have all been superseded by new editions. It is but a matter of time before much of this carefully drawn up list, representing the "necessary" four-fifths of a minimum-essentials college library (largely in terms of in-print American editions), will be out of date. In view of current financial pressures it would seem that an investment of this size can be justified only if it can be kept useful by conscientious, continuing revision in the light of current listings from *Choice*. It is encouraging to find that this requirement has been kept in mind in the work on *BCL II*. "Through the cooperation of *Choice* and the corps of *BCL II* contributors and through the use of computer technology, the organization, the subject and bibliographic skills, and the machinery exist to maintain a continuing and useful service to the undergraduate library" (p.ix).

*BCL II* is a credit to the sponsors, the contributors, and the editors: Richard Tetreau (Stage I) and Virginia Clark (Stage II).—Robert Woodman Wadsworth, *Bibliographer for English, Librarianship, and General Humanities, The University of Chicago Library*.

#### REFERENCES

1. Cf. Carnegie Corporation of New York, Advisory Group on Libraries, *A List of Books*

for College Libraries: Approximately 14,000 Titles Selected on the Recommendation of 200 College Teachers, Librarians and Other Advisers, prepared by Charles B. Shaw, 2d preliminary ed. (Chicago: American Library Association, 1931. 810p.) A supplement covering 1931-1938 material still in print appeared in 1940. *Books for College Libraries: A Selected List of Approximately 53,400 Titles Based on the Initial Selection Made for the University of California's New Campuses Program and Selected with the Assistance of College Teachers, Librarians, and Other Advisers*, prepared under the direction of Melvin J. Voigt and Joseph H. Treyz (Chicago: American Library Association, 1967. 1056p.).

2. The makeup of the set is as follows: Vol. I (Humanities: classes A-BD, BH-BX, M-N. 250 p.).—Vol. II (Language and Literature: classes P-PZ, 452p.).—Vol. III (History: classes C-F. 349p.).—Vol. IV (Social Sciences: classes G-L. 372p.).—Vol. V (Psychology. Science. Technology. Bibliography: classes BF, Q-Z. 257p.).—Vol. VI (Index: Author Index, p.1-144; Title Index, p.145-388; Subject Index, p.389-402). Fiction in English is classed, not in LC's PZ, but by national origin.

Myers, Margaret, and Scarborough, Mayra, eds. *Women in Librarianship: Melvil's Rib Symposium*. Proceedings of the Eleventh Annual Symposium Sponsored by the Alumni and the Faculty of the Rutgers University Graduate School of Library Service. (Issues in the Library and Information Sciences, no.2) New Brunswick, N.J.: Bureau of Library and Information Science Research, Rutgers University Graduate School of Library Service, 1975. 112p. \$4.95. (ISBN 0-8135-0807-X)

Sellen, Betty-Carol, and Marshall, Joan K., eds. *Women in a Woman's Profession: Strategies*. Proceedings of the Preconference on the Status of Women in Librarianship Sponsored by the American Library Association Social Responsibilities Round Table Task Force on the Status of Women, Douglass College, Rutgers University, July 1974. 90p. \$3.50. (Available from Betty-Carol Sellen, Brooklyn College Library, Brooklyn, NY 11210.)

The urgent need to develop specific strategies to end sex discrimination in librarianship is underscored by the concurrent pub-

lication of proceedings of two conferences concerning the status of women in the profession.

The Rutgers symposium, more traditional in format, included delivery of papers with audience discussion. Harold Wooster's fable, "How the Library Changed Its Spots—An Ain't So Story," is followed by Anita R. Schiller's "Sex and Library Careers," a historical and statistical review of occupational inequality between the sexes:

Whatever occupation we examine . . . very consistently . . . women earn lower salaries than men . . . are concentrated in the lower level jobs, and . . . tend to be segregated into those positions that are typed for the female sex. . . . It is not due simply to the willful discrimination of prejudiced males [but] . . . institutional conditions—social, economic and cultural (p.14).

Especially pertinent for academic librarians is her analysis of varying career patterns of men and women librarians:

Women librarians are more likely to work in school libraries, where about nine out of every ten librarians are women, than in libraries of other types, and least so in academic libraries, where the corresponding figure is just over six out of ten. However, if work in each type of library is ranked by the level of esteem it is accorded, the ranking is ordered precisely in reverse . . . academic libraries are at the top and school libraries at the bottom (p.15).

Psychologist Carol W. Sherif's "Dreams and Dilemmas of Being a Woman Today" pokes holes in sociological and psychological arguments about women's competence, sexuality, and mental health which are advanced to maintain the status quo. Herman Greenberg, personnel officer for The Free Library of Philadelphia, finds "Sex Discrimination Against Women in Libraries" to be largely non-existent. Lively rebuttal to his remarks is included in the text of the discussion.

Both this volume and *Women in a Woman's Profession* include the bibliography *Women in Librarianship, 1920-1973*, an excellent comprehensive chronological listing of English-language materials. (It should be noted that Ms. Myers has recently issued an updated edition.)

The appendix to *Women in Librarianship* also includes the useful reference chart,