

country, hopefully for educational rather than for economic reasons. In the meantime, studies like this will be important technical guides wherever the selection of materials for storage is necessary.—*J. Daniel Vann, CLR Management Intern, Stanford University Libraries, Stanford, California.*

- *Resources of South Carolina Libraries.* By Edward G. Holley, Johnnie E. Givens, Fred W. Roper, W. Christian Sizemore. Columbia, S.C.: South Carolina Commission on Higher Education, 1976. 126p.

Having moved to the Carolinas from Texas where he had conducted a somewhat similar survey, Dean Holley with his colleagues has coordinated an equally efficacious critique to assist libraries in "strengthening all the state's institutions of higher learning so that quality education will be available for every citizen who wants it and can profit from it," an ideal stated by the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education and the Postsecondary Education Planning Commission, whose objective is to include full consideration of the library function.

Although ACRL's recommendations for measuring the strengths of collections (checking standard bibliographies, etc.), staffs, and buildings were also evaluated components of the program, this was probably the first statewide survey to apply the measuring techniques adopted as ACRL's standards in 1975.

Two aspects of this survey are of particular interest: the surveyors' acknowledgment of the wide use of public library resources by college students (with good supporting data) and the division and integration of the surveyors' responsibilities. Holley took the "general purpose" universities and the public libraries; Givens, the senior colleges; Sizemore, the two-year institutions; and Roper, the health sciences libraries. In all, more than fifty institutions were included, with some overlaps of visitations. The sections of the survey are individual reports, but the whole book is well coordinated and interestingly presented, with all the necessary documentation, tables, and statistics.

The conclusions suggest that the four classes of libraries do not differ significantly

from their counterparts in most other states or regions. Cogent suggestions accompany the stimulating analyses and reviews of each type of library, with the most urgent needs for development seeming to be in the health sciences and public libraries. Throughout the survey the usual needs for increased financial and staff support, cooperative bibliographic (resource) activity, and service coordination among the libraries are emphasized.

It is a truism, perhaps, that the librarians who are concerned with the recommendations of other experts are already aware of most of the facts that a survey of this kind will reveal. Nevertheless, well-conducted surveys such as this give substantiated support to librarians everywhere and, in the special locale under study, guidance to educators, administrators, and legislators who may not have seen their local special needs in perspective. The problems that can only be solved with their understanding and support are adroitly pinpointed.—*Lee Ash, Library Consultant, Bethany, Connecticut.*

Lancaster, F. W., with the assistance of M. J. Joncich. *The Measurement and Evaluation of Library Services.* Washington, D. C.: Information Resources Press, 1977. 395p. \$27.50. LC 77-72081. ISBN 0-87815-017-X.

NATO Advanced Study Institute on the Evaluation and Scientific Management of Libraries and Information Centres, Bristol, 1975. *Evaluation and Scientific Management of Libraries and Information Centres.* Edited by F. W. Lancaster and C. W. Cleverdon. NATO Advanced Study Institute Series. Series E: Applied Science, no. 18. Leyden: Noordhoff, 1977. 184p. \$19.50. ISBN 0-286-0656-4.

It is rare to have the opportunity to review a book in the field of librarianship that is admirable in almost every respect. It is so rare, in fact, that one hesitates to announce such a judgment for fear of being taken as indiscriminating. With *The Measurement and Evaluation of Library Services*, F. W. Lancaster has indeed written a book that deserves enthusiastic praise, even to the point of overlooking the minor flaws that can always be found if one searches hard enough, if that would encourage the wider

acceptance of the work by the profession.

Lancaster's work is intended to be a textbook for library school courses relating to the measurement and evaluation of library services. It is not, however, written at an elementary or superficial level and will perhaps find its greatest usefulness as a standard reference for researchers and for practicing librarians who take an objective, evaluative approach to library services and programs.

The range of topics covered is comprehensive, including, among others, catalog use studies, evaluation of reference service, evaluation of literature searching and information retrieval, evaluation of the collection, evaluation of document delivery capabilities, library surveys, and cost-performance-benefits considerations. Chapters are also devoted to evaluation of technical services and automated systems, but these topics are not, unfortunately, treated as fully as others. Studies of catalog use, evaluation of reference service, and evaluation of collections are covered most thoroughly.

For the most part, Lancaster provides for each topic a brief discussion of his theoretical perspective on the issue, a discussion of approaches to research methodology and measurement, a rather extensive summary and analysis of the principal studies relating to each area, and a concluding statement on the cumulative findings of the research. Excellent bibliographies are appended to each chapter. The result of this consistent and organized treatment is a highly useful beginning point for in-depth study of measurement and evaluation in each area of concern.

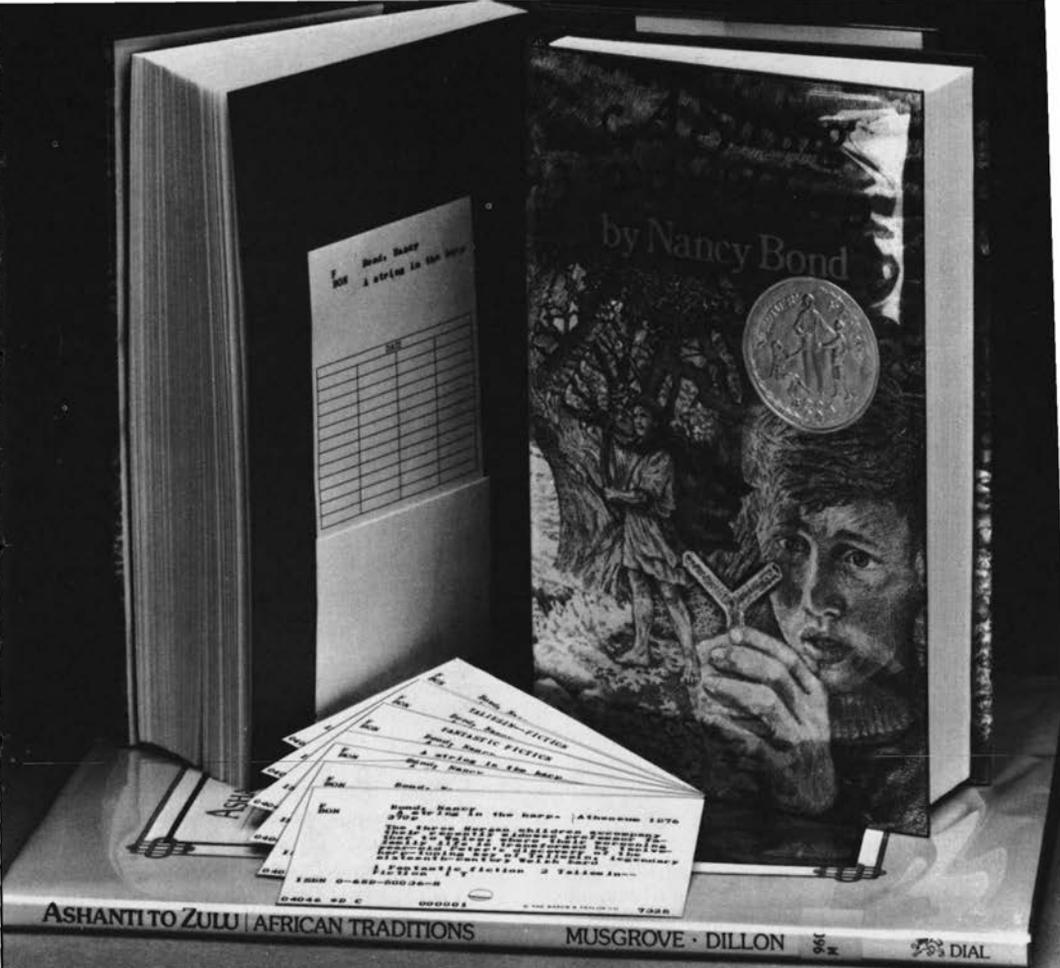
A consistent theme throughout Lancaster's work is his focus on evaluation of library services in terms of specific, measurable objectives derived from the immediate and tangible needs of library users. Lancaster excludes from his attention the evaluation of libraries in terms of their broader social roles or the philosophical goals frequently put forth as statements of objectives. Lancaster conscientiously maintains this emphasis throughout, with the result that he has written a highly concrete, information-packed book of considerable practical value.

Another important characteristic of Lancaster's treatment is his commentary on the research methodologies of the studies he surveys. All too frequently in the literature of librarianship, survey articles deal exclusively with findings and neglect the necessary assessment of the methodologies of the research surveyed. Lancaster rarely fails to point out the strengths and weaknesses of the various approaches to each measurement and evaluation problem, and he avoids the common fault of comparing the results of studies conducted by noncomparable methodologies. *The Measurement and Evaluation of Library Services* serves not only as a survey of the present state of knowledge on each topic but also as a state-of-the-art survey of the research methodologies appropriate to measurement and evaluation.

The evaluation of library services in terms of performance measures derived from explicit objectives is still an emerging discipline. The problems posed by measurement and evaluation are recognized to be difficult, and the practical utility of much research to date has been limited. On the other hand, the appearance of Lancaster's book is cause for optimism. The general impression left by his survey is one of a growing base of research and an increasingly refined methodology. This book in itself indicates the emerging maturity of measurement and evaluation in librarianship. It is a distinguished contribution to the literature that could not have been written except for a solid and considerable base of research by others.

Evaluation and Scientific Management of Libraries and Information Centres, edited by Lancaster and C. W. Cleverdon, appeared almost simultaneously with *The Measurement and Evaluation of Library Services*. Ordinarily, this work would receive a generally favorable review, but it suffers badly in comparison with the Lancaster monograph. This is a collection of lectures delivered at a NATO advanced study institute.

As with most such collections, the individual contributions vary greatly in quality and usefulness, and there is a lack of consistent organization and focus. With the exception of Ferdinand Leimkuhler's contribution



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on operations research and systems analysis, there is little in this book that is not presented better in *The Measurement and Evaluation of Library Services*.—Joe A. Hewitt, Associate University Librarian for Technical Services, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Wilson, Patrick. *Public Knowledge, Private Ignorance: Toward a Library and Information Policy*. Contributions in Librarianship and Information Science, no.10. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1977. 156p. \$13.50. LC 76-52327. ISBN 0-8371-9485-7.

Dr. Wilson's tripartite essay will thrill librarians who have wandered bewildered in this sterile world thinking that the library, their institution, the institution in which they believe, is doomed to be devoured by the computer, the information network, the automated data base. At least it will thrill that portion of the group which reads it all the way through and does not read it carefully—or does not think about what it says. Wilson, formerly dean of the library school at the University of California, Berkeley, is a witty conversationalist, and in this small book his way with words shows itself. His method of reasoning is often like a pride of cats after one small mouse. Each cat seals off an exit until there is just one direction the mouse can take. The conclusions seem inevitable, but most readers should look further.

Of the three sections in this book, "public knowledge" is the shortest and most consistently reasoned. It will surprise many readers to discover that public knowledge is not after all knowledge that has been made available to the public by being published. This book makes a very neat distinction between what is published and stored someplace and what is actually available to people to use in solving problems or making decisions. Librarians who have never considered this dichotomy will do well to read part one with great care.

Where the definition of public knowledge may surprise readers, the second part of the book will frighten them. The depth of "private ignorance," as Wilson relates it, is like the Mariana Trench, virtually unplumbable, and while we might quibble with some of

the suppositions, the weight of the arguments leaves little room for doubt. We may wish that rational people made use of information systems that gave them precisely measured doses of information tailored to their individual information needs, but we know better.

Wilson is very convincing in arguing that people do not even care if their information gathering system is totally incompetent, so long as this does not cause them to make decisions that negatively affect their lives in a noticeable way. The key word here is "noticeable," and it is to be noted that election of public officials is not an area to which we can point as being conducted at a high level of public knowledge. The public (and that means all of us), according to Wilson's logic, is incredibly ill-informed, and even those poor souls who might take it upon themselves to improve their information systems find that access to knowledge is either so time-consuming or so complicated that it takes a massive effort to make even insignificant gains. The world abounds with private ignorance. Most of us will agree.

Finally we come around to libraries, and here Wilson and I part. There is no convenient way to simplify his arguments, but the reader will see that Wilson makes an almost invincible case for information experts. He even points out and argues quite successfully that since the function of the accumulation of knowledge is to make decision making of all kinds and at all levels easier, then the medium for conveying that knowledge should be experts, not bibliographical experts (librarians) but subject experts. Not persons who will help the public find an answer as supplied by other experts (usually in written form), but persons who will assimilate the relevant information and make specific recommendations. In other words, not persons who will say that Emily Post says that the proper place setting is thus-and-so, but rather persons who (having consulted all the relevant sources of information including Emily) will declare what the proper place setting should be.

Having convinced this reader that he is right and having shown that these experts need not be attached in any way to a library, Wilson cops out. Just when we can confidently predict that he is about to call