

but on page 99. This was difficult to ascertain from the index; it was not found there under "collected acts" but only under "association agreements," for which two pages were cited. In general, however, the index is good.

This volume is important not only to European Communities depositories but to any research institution involved with studies of Western European political and economic affairs.—*Carolyn W. Kohler, University of Iowa, Iowa City.*

Williams, Patrick, and Pearce, Joan Thornton.

*The Vital Network: A Theory of Communication and Society.* Contributions in Librarianship and Information Science, number 25. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Pr., 1978. 111p. \$13.95. LC 77-94757. ISBN 0-313-20324-5. ISSN 0084-9243.

Since bibliographic and information networks are topics of consuming interest in the profession today, many librarians may acquire this title in the hopes that it will provide some insight into the elusive goal we all seek—a vital network. These hopes will be disappointed; the subtitle, *A Theory of Communication and Society*, is more descriptive of the book's contents.

Some librarians who acquire this work as a result of its misleading title may find that doing so is a rewarding mistake. The purpose of the work is to present a theory of macrocommunication systems that would provide librarians and other communication professionals a theoretical model from which to derive values and priorities.

Briefly, the theory is a simplified derivative from the works of George Herbert Mead and Lev Vygotsky. It starts with the position that human intelligence is the product of language; the "cultural biosystem," which encompasses science, literature, and social and political institutions, is essentially a communications system. The ability to communicate is the foundation of human existence, and communication is the ultimate human activity. Naturally, the theory reflects well on the significance of the role of "communication professionals."

After establishing and to some extent justifying this broad framework, the authors analyze three communication industries—entertainment, journalism, and education—in terms of their roles in American society. These chapters present a series of observations that at

times are interesting and provocative but provide little systematic evidence in support of the authors' theory. Basically, Williams and Pearce have succeeded in establishing a point of view and presenting a few examples. Although the point of view is held with some consistency, it is not developed systematically in sufficient depth to warrant the name of "theory."

The approach of this book must be considered somewhat oblique if it is aimed specifically at our librarians. Librarianship is treated in a brief postscript, but no attempt is made to establish the relevance of the theory to librarianship in the course of presenting the theory in the main text. In light of the series in which this title is published, it would have been appropriate to treat librarianship at least to the same degree as entertainment, journalism, and education. Had such an effort been made, the authors might have come closer to achieving their goal.

Nevertheless, Williams and Pearce have produced a book that is provocative enough that it may be of interest to librarians who have the time to indulge their reflective moods on the role of the profession in society.—*Joe A. Hewitt, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.*

Stern, Madeleine B. *Books and Book People in 19th-Century America.* New York: Bowker, 1978. 341p. \$25. LC 78-12197. ISBN 0-8352-1109-6.

For almost four decades Madeleine Stern's well-written essays and anecdotes have graced the pages of journals and monographs, reminding us of the rich heritage of our nation's book trade. Some twenty-three of those essays are now brought together in this volume, which is well designed in a manner appropriate to its subject. The resulting medley should provide several evenings of agreeable reading for anyone interested in the subject.

Virtually the entire contents of the book have appeared elsewhere. Readers who remember Stern's *Imprints on History* (Indiana University Press, 1956) might choose to think of this book as its second volume, so similar are the styles and contents of the two, were it not that fully fifty pages from the earlier title are reprinted here. The integrity of the subject of *Books and Book People*, however, and the fact that some of its pieces are reproduced from

sources not widely available are probably reason enough for publishing it here as a collection.

The author manages to find a remarkable diversity of anecdotes and events within the single theme of the volume. There are chapters on the early Franco-American bookseller Joseph Nancrede, Elizabeth Peabody's circulating library of foreign literature in Boston near mid-century, the murder of printer Samuel Adams by publisher John Caldwell Colt in New York in 1841, the pseudonymous Gothic novels of Louisa May Alcott, the first fifty years of *Publishers Weekly*, and many more.

There is, however, a kind of imbalance in the book that may prove bothersome to some—an imbalance not of quality but rather of intent. Some essays are complete in themselves, such as the excellent seventy-page biography of Nancrede and the several cameo lives of early upstate New York printers. Others, however, are not complete at all but seem to serve only as a reason for bringing out a very specific fact or circumstance; they represent beginnings, or middles, or ends, but not all three in sequence as required by Aristotle. Somehow they leave the reader with an unquenched thirst for the full tales.

Stern is a careful scholar, and her work is both thorough and well documented; yet she is more a good antiquarian storyteller than a historian. She seeks no great significance in the events she records. Significance, she seems to be saying, is in the eye of the beholder. Book people in twentieth-century America will like . . . *Book People in 19th-Century America*.—David Kaser, *Indiana University, Bloomington*.

Fjällbrant, Nancy, and Stevenson, Malcolm. *User Education in Libraries*. London: Clive Bingley; Hamden, Conn.: Linnet Books, 1978. 173p. \$10.50. LC 77-19192. ISBN 0-85157-251-0 Bingley; 0-208-01664-3 Linnet.

This book has a great deal to offer those interested in library instruction—especially those who might be setting up or reevaluating their own library instruction programs.

However, useful insights or approaches are sometimes lost in the midst of sections that are frankly tedious and repetitive. Much of the discussion of existing programs is centered on

those in Great Britain and Scandinavia, where the authors are librarians, with an overview of user education in the U.S. also included.

The authors provide a good discussion of library goals and objectives for library user education, questioning the premise that librarians actually recognize what students really need—or want—to know about the library. They stress the need for student input into the formation of instruction programs from the beginning. A fine overview of teaching methods and nonprint media for library user education is described in chapter 3, running the gamut from conventional tours to computer-assisted instruction.

Probably the most useful section for American readers is the excellent discussion of Great Britain's SCONUL (Standing Conference of National and University Libraries) scheme. This working group was formed to encourage cooperation in the production of slide/tape guides to different library tools to be used in libraries throughout the country.

Although there were necessarily some problems with the SCONUL arrangement, some thirty-five libraries were involved in the production of slide/tape programs ultimately used throughout Great Britain and beyond. Some thirty briefly annotated descriptions of slide/tape programs created by SCONUL are included. This type of cooperation might be used as a model for American libraries that often duplicate efforts as far as the production of costly and time-consuming slide/tape programs go.

A highlight of the book is the discussion of the evaluation of user education programs. The authors insist that evaluation is the key to rational decision making—a step that librarians still have a difficult time integrating into the total process of user education. Programs tend to be born and die without ever being evaluated, or evaluated on the wrong terms. What is often judged is, not whether the students learned something, but if they "liked" a particular slide/tape presentation, for example.

Probably the weakest sections of the book are those dealing with in-depth descriptions of existing instruction programs—at the University of Sussex (England), Chalmers University of Technology (Sweden), Roskilde University Centre (Denmark)—and a general overview of programs in the United Kingdom, Scan-