

in 1971-72 was estimated at 113,000, of whom 30,400 were professionals (p.234). That's about one-fourth of the estimated number of librarians Michael Cooper said we had in 1976 (*American Libraries* 7:327 [June 1976]). It would appear that museum professionals are about where librarians were fifty years ago. Like early librarians, many of them still learn on the job, though a formal program of museum studies is now present in about two dozen places and prepares the professional for entry into the field through a master's degree program. Curators in special departments, of course, find the Ph.D. highly desirable and sometimes essential. The other characteristics of a profession are discussed in terms with which most librarians are familiar, but one difference should be noted: the American Association of Museums now accredits museums, and not just their staff, that meet certain standards.

This book can certainly be recommended to academic librarians who would like either to know more about museums or to com-

pare notes on librarianship and its similarities to the emerging profession of museology. Indeed, one wishes that our field had a book on the history and functions of libraries that gave the layperson a panoramic view of the field in such a well-outlined and readable style. Unfortunately, the library community's attempts at informing the lay public have generally been poorly done, though Jean Key Gates' *Introduction to Librarianship* is very good and comes closest to what Alexander has done here.

Published by the American Association for State and Local History, *Museums in Motion* is attractive typographically and contains some interesting illustrations. My only complaint is that the boards have warped in the relatively short time the book has been in my possession. One might have expected better binding from such an association.—*Edward G. Holley, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.*

Bonham-Carter, Victor. *Authors by Profession*. Volume One: From the Introduction of Printing until the Copyright Act 1911. Los Altos, Calif.: Kaufmann, 1978. 252p. \$11.95. ISBN 0-913232-59-9.

Even as only the first volume of what is to be a two-volume work, *Authors by Profession's* 252 pages seem slight compared to the task: "to illustrate," from the invention of printing to—with the publication of the second volume—the present, "how certain poets, novelists, essayists, historians, biographers, dramatists, and other sorts of writers, made their way within the circumstances of their day." An intriguing and ambitious undertaking—and it succeeds in being useful despite some sacrifice of balance.

The significance of the transactions recorded in the Stationers' Company register; the financial losses and textual degradations due to pirated printings; Pope's entrepreneurial brilliance in promoting subscription editions of his works—none of these is news to the literary scholar or serious reader, and Bonham-Carter accordingly deals with them only briefly. Likewise brief, but less appropriately so, is the attention to the interplay and frequent conflict between the author as author and the author as an individual try-



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ing to raise a family, pay the greengrocer, and find some sort of continuing financial security.

The book primarily addresses two aspects of the writing profession: the difficulty of its achieving identity as a profession and the economic consequences of this difficulty. Walter Besant, on whose writings Bonham-Carter draws heavily, said of early efforts at organization by authors:

They began . . . with an impossible theory: that authorship is a profession as distinct as law or medicine; and that it is possible to unite its members, as those called to the Bar are united, into a guild or company governed by its own laws. At the most, authorship is a collection of professions. . . . There is one thing, and one thing only, for which those who write books and papers which are sold can possibly unite—viz., their material interests.

Within this economically oriented context, Bonham-Carter chronicles the long, frequently aimless, evolution from the period when authors, either as dependents of patrons or as frenzied hacks, producing and selling their writings like piecemeal, were virtually without an identity, on to the breakthrough of the 1700s when novelists like Richardson, Fielding, and Smollett found a readership so wide that the publisher was obliged to recognize at least the successful author as an economic coequal, ending with what occupies a full half of the book, the years between the founding of the Society of Authors in 1884 and the passage of the Copyright Act of 1911.

The prodigally documented details of this latter half may, as much as anything, make the reader wish for a more even treatment throughout the book. Up until 1884, Bonham-Carter's coverage is, as he promises, selective—in terms both of authors mentioned and of the attention they receive. While the varying fortunes of his writers as they tried to deal with their publishers are well worth the reading, the effect is almost more like a series of annual reports than literary history. This makes the book less interesting and broadly useful than it might have been. *Authors by Profession* still has considerable value, however, and should not be ignored by the academic librarian.—Charles Helzer, *University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois.*

Bernier, Charles L., and Yerkey, A. Neil. *Cogent Communication: Overcoming Reading Overload.* Contributions in Librarianship and Information Science, number 26. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Pr., 1979. 280p. \$19.95. LC 78-73794. ISBN 0-313-20893-X.

In deciding to write about lack of cogency and communication and reading overload, the authors have chosen a topic of great interest to all of us who struggle to "keep up" in the face of mounting piles of unread journals and unchecked SDI printouts. The authors, and in particular the first author, also write from an impressive background in the management of library and information systems, particularly in the scientific and technical areas, and Bernier is writing on a topic on which he was expressed himself in print a number of times. It is with reluctance, therefore, that the reviewer is forced to report that the expectations raised by the title, the expertise of the author, and the cogent introduction are not fully met.

The book starts promisingly by convincingly introducing its premise—that people read and view, but do nothing appropriate about it, even if it is in their own interest to do so. It goes on to state the book's subject and purpose in admirably simple terms; that it is about reading and then doing something appropriate about what has been read.

It is perhaps inevitable that, having raised such high expectations in the reader, the authors are not really able to solve the problem they have so well presented. The first half of the book is devoted to the explanation and advocacy of terse communication, sometimes also expressed as terse organization, terse literature, and terse conclusions. It is a topic on which Bernier has written before, and he states his case with emotion and urgency—that communication could be made more useful and used if much of the excess verbiage were removed.

The authors are protagonists and not observers, and they present nothing less. From the advocacy of terse communication, which is defined as reduction to 1 percent of the original, the authors proceed to ultraterse, which is even less than 1 percent. They argue that present techniques of surrogation, including abstracts, indexes, and skipping, have all failed. It is an unavoid-