

ments in a major union list project and, as such, is a proper part of the literature. The self-examination is honest in pointing to errors and will be of considerable interest and value to other projects. The text is a classic exposition of what happens in the merger of differing machine-readable files.

A few poorly produced charts and the soft paper format bound with plastic strips are all minor when compared with the intellectual content and the contributions this analysis makes to union-listing in general. No one will want to curl up with this in front of a fire, but any union lister will learn from this document and should treat this analysis as a benchmark of what to avoid.—*Neal L. Edgar, Kent State University, Kent, Ohio.*

Gabriel, Michael R., and Ladd, Dorothy P. *The Microform Revolution in Libraries*. Foundations in Library and Information Science. V.3. Greenwich, Conn.: JAI Press, 1980. 176p. \$24.50. LC 76-5646. ISBN 0-89232-008-7.

This informative book starts with a historical sketch of microphotography and an overview of microformats. These first two chapters are very readable and form a convenient setting for what is to follow.

The third chapter, on computer-output-microform (COM), is limited in scope. Prime attention is placed on the role of COM in production of library catalogs and other library activities. The role of COM as a print medium for non-library-generated publications is not discussed. With the diversity of COM applications, the potential for library resources generated by others through COM should have been mentioned.

Serials and monographs in microform compose the fourth and fifth chapters. The serials chapter provides some useful information for libraries converting or considering converting from hard copy to microform. The monograph chapter gets bogged down in a listing of large monographic collections available on microform. The listings are brief and highly selective and probably would have been best if eliminated.

The sixth chapter, "Micrographics and Government Publications," will be of great interest to document librarians. The num-

ber and diversity of government publications available in microform are discussed and examples cited. Again, this listing is not meant to be all-inclusive but representative. This chapter does not address some of the problems with document microforms, such as lack of quality control, which has caused at least some nonacceptance of this format by documents librarians.

Acquisition of microform and equipment for its use are the topic of Chapter 7. This chapter pulls together from several sources some guidelines for evaluation of microforms and equipment. The variety of sources for reviews of microforms and equipment are of prime interest to librarians and are well covered here. In addition, a select listing of micropublishers is included. This section could have been improved by the inclusion of some guidelines to use in considering the conversion from hard copy to microform or for selection of microform initially.

The eighth chapter reports some research findings on the comparison of hard copy and microform. Unfortunately, this interesting chapter is buried in the book. The readability of microforms has received so many derogatory comments that it is encouraging to see quoted readability studies favorable to microforms.

The last chapter deals with setting up a microform facility. This chapter would have been enhanced with a discussion of centralized versus decentralized facilities. Guidelines for either type of facilities and floor plans would also have been helpful.

Overall, this book represents a consolidation of material, possibly difficult to identify, and a helpful discussion of problems common to microforms. This book should be read by both practicing librarians and library school students. A useful glossary is included. Because of the specifics included, this volume will become obsolete quickly although it provides a good statement of the current status of microforms in libraries.—*Helen R. Citron, Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta.*

Maltby, Arthur, and Gill, Lindy. *The Case for Bliss: Modern Classification Practice and Principles in the Context of the Bibliographic Classification*. London: Clive

Bingley; New York: K.G. Saur, 1979. 142p. \$11. LC 79-40590. ISBN 0-85157-290-1.

The authors of this volume try "within some hundred pages, to look at all aspects of the case for Bliss" (p.8). They argue that they are not a "counsel for the defence," but instead strive to describe and assess objectively features of the Bliss Classification (BC). Yet they do love Bliss. The volume, actually 142 pages, is divided into two sections. The first, written by Maltby, is an appraisal of BC 1, the classification devised by Henry Evelyn Bliss (1940), and BC 2, the revision of this classification by J. Mills and V. Broughton that began emerging in 1977. The second section, most of which is written by Gill, is a guide to the use of BC 2, complemented by two chapters on its practical applications in libraries.

The presentation of BC 1, while objective and thorough (forty pages), adds little new to an already well-exposed literature. However, the twenty pages that introduce BC 2 are informative and good reading besides, incorporating personal observations as well as observations culled from current writing. BC 2 is noteworthy for being a faceted general classification, the English edifice corresponding to Colon. It is perceived as having an especially fine order of classes (gradation by speciality, built upon consensus), though the arguments used to establish this perception seem ambivalent as well as metaphysical. It has certain interesting notational features, the most remarkable (and academic?) of which is its retroactivity. It is seen, though not demonstrated, to be a classification that is at once suitable for shelf-ordering and for information retrieval. In weighing the evidence against BC 2, Maltby uses a gloved hand. Acknowledging some problems in the devising of facets for mathematics (there was similar trouble in Colon) and in notational matters, he focuses for the most part on difficulties besetting the administration of the classification, e.g., the continual postponements that have occurred in its publishing, diminished demand for it, and funding difficulties.

The first chapter in Section 2 is a practical guide, replete with exercises and answers, to the use of BC 2. What there is

of this chapter (28p.) is good, but it might well have been longer. A measure of the amount of material to be mastered can be got by looking at the introduction to BC 2, which consists of 113 pages that are more than twice the area of those in this little volume; thirty of them are devoted exclusively to "how-to-do-it."

Two further chapters in this section deal with how one library, Tavistock, reclassified its books using BC 2 and with a survey of thirty supposed BC users. An interesting feature of the reclassification was that books were represented in the classed catalog not only by their (main) class numbers but also by permutations of them. It would have been useful to know what the reclassification project cost. A surprising result of the survey was that not one of the libraries surveyed used BC in a fully orthodox way, but introduced some modification.

Although one of the stated objectives of this volume was to bring together the references to BC literature (p.7), this was done very inadequately; the bibliography contains only six items. The volume would have been further enhanced by the inclusion of a glossary.

In sum, this little volume is lovingly although quickly put together. The authors, as do other classification theorists, seem convinced that Bliss is best, yet sadly they lament its sure and eventual demise. Why, if Bliss is so good, will it not survive? In commenting on this, another author, A. C. Foskett, in his *Subject Approach to Information* (p.339), suggests that we live in a harsh world and success goes to the successful and not to the deserving.

What's in a point of view? It may be the world does not need an elaborately refined classification system. User appeal makes for the survival of one method of bibliographic organization over another, and if there is not much difference in the appeal made by different classifications (some research results suggest this), then is it not reasonable that the kudos should go to the classification that is most efficient, economically, to promulgate and maintain? Is it not specious to suggest that the laws of natural selection do not apply to classifications?—*Elaine Svenonius, University of Denver, Denver, Colorado.*