

should give young librarians a few interesting insights into their futures.

Both these booklets should be in all library science collections.—*David Laird, University of Arizona, Tucson.*

**Collection Development in Libraries: A Treatise.** Edited by Robert D. Steuart and George B. Miller, Jr. Foundations in Library and Information Science, V.10 (Part A and Part B). Greenwich, Conn.: JAI Press, 1980. 2v. 602p. \$30 each volume. LC 79-93163. ISBN 0-89232-106-7 Part A; 0-89232-162-8 Part B.

As library budgets decline in real dollars and as both faculty interests and the range of potentially useful material continue to broaden, the art of collection development has come into its own. Any assiduous fool can add, in other words, but it takes real ability to prune skillfully and to realign—and reduce—collecting responsibilities. This collection of twenty-four essays is an attempt to instruct the unwashed (i.e., library school students and apprentice librarians) and to

provide the experienced collection development officer with some new perspectives. Whether it deserves to be called a treatise or, indeed, reduces an art to a science is another matter.

The essays group into five categories: (1) collection management, which includes organization, personnel, budgetary allocation, and other matters; (2) the selection processes themselves, including blanket orders, Latin American and European acquisitions, out-of-print buying, and preservation; (3) the use of quantitative methods such as citation and circulation analysis to guide development; (4) special problems arising from format (microforms, media) or sources (government documents); and (5) “new directions,” which includes such diverse subjects as “education for collection development” (Charles B. Osburn) and “creativity, collection management, and development.” Each essay—one wishes they had been numbered as chapters—contains a useful bibliography.

There are two principal difficulties in producing scientific collection policies. The first



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is that no one understands very well what happens from the time someone thinks of acting to when the results of these labors merge as books, lectures, or papers. The second problem is a more obvious one: even after a scheme for development (a "policy") is concocted, the items available for selection must be matched up with it. This is not intended as a justification for ignorance, but simply as a reminder that the most successful results are likely to be obtained by those whose claims to methodological sophistication are modest.

What then are the strengths and weaknesses of the present collection of essays? Those entering collection development who have the background judgment to make an eventual success of it will find the descriptive of this essays collection a helpful orientation to present practice. Experienced collection development officers, on the other hand, will probably get more out of articles on methodology. The articles on citation analysis in the social and natural sciences and technology by Shirley A. Fitzgibbons and Kris Subbranian represent, for example, one approach to dealing with the troublesome problem of journal selection, and William E. McGrath's interesting article (following from his earlier work) has sensible things to say about using circulation analysis in collection development. Paul H. Mosher provides two excellent essays on the problems with evaluating large collections and identifying candidates for discard, storage, and preservation. The strength of the foregoing articles is that they offer practical ways of determining what is used in and the strengths and weaknesses of the collections.

The weaknesses of the collection lie in the descriptive (as opposed to the methodological or analytic) articles. In the matter of money allocation, for example, one essay notes: "There are four basic approaches: the historical/political, the planned, the flexible response, and the organizational." The elaboration of these categories, unfortunately, provides little more in the way of specific guidance than the titles of the categories themselves. Too many of the papers share this lack of concreteness, which could perhaps have been remedied with illustrative examples. In contrast, the useful essays by Carl W. Deal and Erwin Welsch (the latter is always worth reading) set out the problems of Latin

American and European acquisitions and offer specific advice (with names, titles, and the rest) on how to solve them.

The collection as a whole, then, is a mixed bag, as such things usually are, and reflects many of the ambiguities within collection development itself. It is hardly exciting stuff, but it has enough merit to repay its perusal.—*John G. Williamson, St. Mary's College of Maryland Library, St. Mary's City, Maryland.*

Rowley, J. E. *Computers for Libraries*. Outlines of Modern Librarianship Series. New York and London: K.G. Saur/Clive Bingley, 1980. 159p. \$12. ISBN 0-85157-298-7. (Distributed in U.S. by the Shoe String Press, Inc.)

Smith, David. *Systems Thinking in Library and Information Management*. New York and London: K.G. Saur/Clive Bingley, 1980. 142p. \$16. ISBN 0-85157-333-9. (Distributed in U.S. by The Shoe String Press, Inc.)

These two books from the same publisher address entirely different readers. *Computers for Libraries* is intended as a survey course on library computer systems for "non-computer literate" librarians. *Systems Thinking in Libraries and Information Management* is an attempt to bring the body of knowledge called "systems theory" to bear on library problems. The author claims that this book is not for experts yet it is clearly far from a beginning text for anyone interested in library automation or library management.

*Computers for Libraries* spends a few chapters trying to acquaint the reader with some of the vocabulary of computers and computing. This is an extremely important foundation-laying activity but it falls somewhat short of its objective. Partly due to the author's style and organization of the presentation and partly to aspects of typography (poorly laid out diagrams, no use of boldface or italics, etc.) it will not always be clear to the novice reader what terms or concepts are being defined and how important they are. Some of the recognized standard texts on libraries and computing that the author refers to do a better job of laying a solid base of understanding.

The second half of the book presents a good survey of the ways that computers and