gued in the *Library Assistant:* "If *I* want a book I am justified in regarding *your* disapprobation, however reasonable in your own eyes, as irrelevant." But British librarians of opposite persuasion have allowed only married couples to borrow the *Kinsey Report,* and they have repeatedly justified their opposition to "inferior" children's books with a familiar refrain: "There is no ban on Enid Blyton, we just do not buy her books."

Thompson's book is a testament to the durability of that hearty British species, the writer of letters to the editor, but therein lies its not inconsiderable fault. It consists largely of quotations—from the daily press and library journals—whose mind-numbing repetitiousness makes the reader wish the author had chosen other, more readable means to document his case. The title is misleading; the book skips over the first four decades of the century in a scant ten pages.—*Roger L. Funk, Assistant Director, Office for Intellectual Freedom, American Library Association.*

Lewis, Felice Flanery. *Literature, Obscenity & Law.* Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois Univ. Pr., 1976. 297p. $12.50. .(LC 75-42094) (ISBN 0-8093-0749-9)

Academic librarians usually feel themselves above the continuing battle between the censor and the advocate of intellectual freedom. By definition, they say, the academic library is the place where no censor is either welcome or effective. But, upon consideration, it is easy to identify many ways in which the supposedly seamless web of academic librarianship could be— and frequently is—breached. Every type of librarian needs to know as much as possible about the past history and likely future trends of both the publication of and judicial restraints on literary works dealing with sex.

It is rather surprising that Dr. Lewis (Dean of Conolly College, The Brooklyn Center, Long Island University) has herein written the very *first* book to deal with *all* ". . . works of imaginative literature . . . known to have been the subject of obscenity litigation in the United States . . . ," as well as related judicial opinions. Despite what the popular belief seems to be, Dean Lewis stresses the well-documented fact that ". . . censors have not discriminated between outstanding cultural contributions and . . . worthless pornography," although judges usually have, especially at the Supreme Court level.

In highly readable fashion Dean Lewis reminds us that a great many of our leading litterateurs—including Whitman, Dreiser, Cabell, Faulkner, Sinclair, Farrell, Caldwell, Hellman, Edmund Wilson, and O'Hara—have faced the censor's censure. The record is not one to make freedom-loving Americans proud, but it is useful to have it available through this volume. Nearly one-third of the book's text (seventy-eight pages) is devoted to detailed descriptions and/or illustrative quotations from fiction, poetry, and drama involved in American obscenity cases since 1890 (which, the author claims, was the beginning of both a sexual revolution in American fiction and of the first really substantial effort to censor by law and legal action such fiction without regard to literary merit).

Her book is comprehensive and clear but could have profited from more attention to the efforts of those groups and individuals who led the anticensorship fight—the American Civil Liberties Union (one brief reference) and the American Library Association (unmentioned), for example. There is a great deal included on the efforts of the so-called "antivice" groups.

But, as a pioneering and thorough work in a highly significant field for librarians and others devoted to intellectual freedom, it deserves a place on the shelves of every academic librarian and library.—*Eli M. Oboler, University Librarian, Idaho State University, Pocatello.*

Kochen, Manfred, ed. *Information for Action: From Knowledge to Action.* (Library and Information Science Series) New York: Academic Pr., 1975. 248p. $12.50. (LC 75-3968) (ISBN 0-12-417950-9)

Among the fifteen papers in this collection there may be hidden a classic little essay that future information scientists will cite again and again. Unfortunately, such

distinction is not obvious to this reviewer. Applause must come from another quarter.

Despite its title (and the series within which Academic Press has decided to include it), this is a book more about politics and the environment than about information science; more about action and social consciousness than about the transmission of knowledge. Its thrust, as Kochen candidly admits in the preface and in his first essay ("Evolution of Brainlike Social Organs"), is to promote the concept of ". . . a movement, a social organ, a set of principles, called WISE (World Information Synthesis Encyclopedia)" (p.xi). This acronymic information monster might set us all free. It is a takeoff on one of H. G. Wells' least well-known ideas, that of a "world encyclopedia" Wells wrote about in a paper of that title which was published as one item in a 1938 collection of his essays titled *World Brain*.
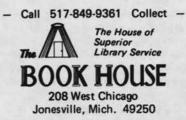
As I understand it, Kochen and his fellow essayists (E. B. Parker, C. W. Churchman, G. Feinberg, J. Platt, and K. W. Deutsch) in the first section of the present book see modern computer technology as having the ability to implement the world brain—a fantastically intricate interconnection of all data bases accessible to (by) anyone. But there is wide divergence in their ideas of its structure, a timetable for implementation, etc. For example, Kochen suggests that WISE is here now (or at least well under way), and that we have the capability for immediate implementation, while Churchman ("What is Information for Policy Making?" p.33–40) isn't even sure we know how to develop such a system. Churchman makes a distinction between "suggestive information systems" which merely provide raw data and "decisive" ones which cull out extraneous information. He says that WISE must be a decisive system then goes on to say (p.39), "I am not going to suggest here how we should design decisive . . . systems. They are not on the drawing boards now. We don't know enough to *even begin* to think how they should be designed most effectively." (Italics added.)

This divergence of belief runs to some extent throughout the book. One essayist proposes something, a later one (apparently without knowledge of the other author's statement) says quite the contrary. Perhaps only one theme in the book is constant: There are many things wrong with the world and its humans; most of them could be cured by more comprehensive information availability. Edwin B. Parker sets that theme in the second essay ("Who Should Control Society's Information Resources?" p.21–31) when he says (p.28), "But we would have a different kind of environment if every activist had as good information about what is going on in Washington as do the Standard Oil Lobbyists." And that concept is still obvious in the concluding chapter, which was apparently written by the editor, but is not attributed. It says (p.203):

> We conclude with a call to action on a note of hope. The enthusiastic effort to specify WISE, the intellectual pleasures of debating its pros and cons, and creating alternative conceptions, the commitment

to make pilot versions work may have the effect of changing our image of what is feasible and desirable. We must not see ourselves in a lifeboat that is already so overcrowded that accepting more drowning persons endangers the boat and all in it, because we can expand its capacity by expanding our capacity for more imaginative problem-representations and more creative ways of coping.

An appended essay brings us back to reality with some discussion of the economic problems involved in a world brain. How, for example, shall we adequately compensate creators of information? And then there are the much more complex problems of hardware and software design compatibility, the immense costs of data input, and such problems as coding for optimum retrieval of related information. This reviewer, perhaps too cynical, was reminded many times during his reading of the old, old joke about the *ultimate* computer and data base. Having designed and built the hardware, and having patiently fed it every scrap of information known, the information scientists gather round to ask the ultimate machine the ultimate question: "Is there a God?" The machine speaks back in a deep rumbling voice, "Now there is!" WISE may be wise, but I would judge it to be a step nearer to 1984.—*W. David Laird, University Librarian, University of Arizona, Tucson.*

Stecher, Elizabeth. *Catalogue Provision in Libraries of Colleges of Advanced Education.* Melbourne: Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, 1975. 1v. (var. pag.) $5.00 Australian plus freight. (ISBN 0-909099-00-6) (Available from Publishing Dept., Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology, 124 LaTrobe Street, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia 3000.)

A research project to investigate suitable methods of production of catalogs for colleges of advanced education libraries from computer-based data files was undertaken by the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology Library. This is the report of the detailed study directed by Elizabeth Stecher. The project appears to have been performed in a rather elaborate way, and the

report is written in a way that makes it basically unreadable.

The findings of the study indicate that computer-output-microform (COM) generated microfilm catalogs have advantages over computer-printed book catalogs. The cost figures presented in this report have no relationship to cost figures available in the U.S. In fact, in Australia, according to this report, more than twenty copies of a microfilm catalog cost more than the same number of book catalogs. This fact seems unusual even for Australian costs.

The superficial consideration of microfiche versus microfilm that this study reports is the only major area of the study that lacks extensive attention. The published literature on the kind of microform used for catalogs is extensive. The bibliography of the current reports cites many of the better-known articles, but the conflict of form has not been persued here.

This in-depth study and the elaborate manipulation of the data appears to be much more than is needed to arrive at the end result. The specific hypotheses that are presented and the testing and end results are obvious and have been previously studied elsewhere. There is little to be gained by every library doing or redoing other similar studies. This report does not provide any new information.—*Helen R. Citron, Head of Administrative Services, Georgia Tech Library, Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta.*

Ellsworth, Diane J., and Stevens, Norman D., eds. *Landmarks of Library Literature, 1876–1976.* Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow, 1976. 520p. $17.50. (LC 75-45139) (ISBN 0-8108-0899-4)

There are those among us who have long complained that as a profession we have lost our sense of history; that we dissipate our energies needlessly ricocheting from enthusiasm to enthusiasm, crying "Lo here," and "Lo there," making extravagant claims of salvation in the name of every cockamamie idea that comes to mind. If we can talk louder than anyone else, we can make people listen, and if we are persuasive enough we can get them to follow until they learn, as we all have to learn sooner or later, that if the idea is worth anything, it will be