

discovery and constructive dialogue within the library and information communities that was characteristic of the conference itself." They succeeded most admirably.—*LeMoyne W. Anderson, Colorado State University.*

Lancaster, F. W. *Libraries and Librarians in an Age of Electronics.* Arlington, Va.: IRP, 1982. 229p. LC 82-081403. ISBN 0-87815-040-4.

"The book is laden . . . with all the defects of a first attempt, incomplete, and certainly not free from inconsistencies. Nevertheless I am convinced that it contains the incontrovertible formulation of an idea which, once enunciated clearly, will . . . be accepted without dispute." Thus does Oswald Spengler introduce *The Decline of the West*, which rests on the thesis that creative intellect is dead and that Spengler is the last philosopher whose task is to "sketch out this unphilosophical philosophy—the last that West Europe will know" (*The Decline of the West*, New York, Knopf, 1926, p.46-50).

Lancaster's book is not a first attempt. In stitching together several previously published papers, it comes dangerously close to being a textbookish cut-and-paste bibliographic review on the topic, "The Decline of the Library—maybe for sure."

The author hopes the book "will stimulate members of the library profession to reassess the role of the librarian as an information specialist in a time of extensive social and technological change" (p.vii). Not likely. Like Cassandra, Lancaster's curse may be in being right, but unheeded. If Cassandra had had a word processor and graduate students to help her would Troy have declined faster or slower? There is also the possibility that Lancaster does not have Apollo's gift of prophecy and is just plain wrong or misreading the data.

There is, for example, the statement that "development of ADONIS (Article Delivery over Network Information Systems) has been stimulated by the finding that photocopy requests made to the British Library Lending Division are dominated by requests for articles issued by commercial publishers and that 80% of all requests are

for articles 5 years old or less" (p.75). The source of this misinformation is not provided, but one need only think of the age spread of books circulated by libraries or ISI's citation data by date to get a different picture. Or, check the record. (A. Clarke, "The Use of Serials at the British Library Lending Division in 1980," *Interlending Review* 9: 111-17 1981.) There may be a paperless society and possibly even a project ADONIS in our near future, but not if a short information half-life is the critical factor.

Lancaster, finally looking back on more than 300 citations, years of thinking and teaching about librarians' electronic fate, consulting for the CIA, and massive exposure to the hard radiations of the University of Illinois Library administration, can only ask at the end of his unphilosophical philosophy, "Will the paperless society be in place by the end of the century? It seems highly likely that it will. But only time will tell" (p.206). This reviewer cannot recommend the work as being either particularly conclusive or stimulating as the basis for either that question or its answer.—*Larry X. Besant, Linda Hall Library, Kansas City, Missouri.*

McGarry, Kevin J. *The Changing Context of Information: An Introductory Analysis.* Hamden, Conn.: Shoe String, 1982. 189p. \$19.50. ISBN 0-85157-325-8.

Intended as a textbook in the foundations of information work, K. J. McGarry's survey is a ramble through the concepts and history of library and information science. McGarry has chosen a conversational style, presumably to make the material more accessible to a generation raised in the aural tradition. Loosely connected clauses, eccentric punctuation, and frequent changes of tense, number, and person give the work the informal tone often found in transcriptions of taped interviews. While McGarry's devices of casual discourse may ease the way for the modern student, they are obstacles for the old-fashioned reader of library literature who expects and prefers expository prose.

The word deals with four aspects of information science: epistemology, the history of writing and printing, scholarly

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communication, and social aspects of information exchange. Unifying these topics is McGarry's interest in the relationship of information to societal structure. The work is as much a manifesto as an analysis. The author believes that access to information will soon constitute the major basis for wealth. He assumes that information workers have as a major objective the lessening of social and economic inequities. He exhorts his readers to pursue the ideal of equal and open access to information in the interests of social justice. McGarry provides little in the way of justification for his views.

In a scant 188 pages, an author cannot, of course, treat any subject fully. McGarry rightly anticipated that specialists would fault him for omissions and simplifications at "a thousand points." While most of McGarry's lapses will not harm his readers, some omissions might lead to a misunderstanding of current trends. Conspicuously missing are references to the Research Library Information Network, Boolean logic, commercial databases, and selectivity in automated information systems.

More frustrating than McGarry's omission of factual information is his lack of reference to sources. Defending his method of providing only chapter-by-chapter bibliographies, McGarry explains that he "attempted to comply with the requirements of scholarly courtesy by listing sources of quotations and statistical matter and by encouraging readers to use the bibliographies provided." McGarry, who treats scholarly communication in this work, surely knows that the acknowledgment of sources is more than a social gesture. It is a necessity in scholarly writing in order to give credit where due, to build a scholarly literature, and to stimulate critical inquiry. Had McGarry tied his observations more closely to his excellent bibliography, he would have greatly strengthened his credibility.

One article that McGarry included, but seems not to have absorbed, deals with misogyny in library literature. McGarry sticks doggedly with the all-inclusive masculine pronoun until his final chapter when he unexpectedly introduces a single

"she." More significant is McGarry's consistent neglect of the role of women as readers, teachers, writers, and librarians.

Not all the flaws in this book are McGarry's fault. The author was not served well by his designer and editor. The typeface is small and the pages crowded. The scarcity of punctuation throughout, combined with the density of type, makes decipherment of the text difficult. Finally, there are too many typographical errors.

Despite inadequacies, the work is still useful as ancillary reading for students entering information work. The author introduces virtually all the acronyms, jargon, and institutions of the profession. He provides a carefully selected and current bibliography in a field in which it is difficult, to use the author's words, to keep "bang up to date." And he identifies topics appropriate to the study of information work. McGarry's most valuable contribution is his raising of ethical issues that he reasonably surmises information workers will face in the coming decades.—*Deirdre C. Stam, Bibliographical Society of America.*

Annual Review of Information Science and Technology, V.17. Ed. by Martha E. Williams, White Plains, N.Y.: Knowledge Industry Publications, 1982. 367p. \$45. LC 66-25096. ISBN 0-86729-032-3. ISSN 0066-4200. CODEN:ARISBC.

What can one say about a highly praised review series that has now published its seventeenth annual volume? More good things, mostly.

ARIST's first volume was published in 1966, to immediate and unceasing acclaim, through the intrepid leadership of Carlos A. Cuadra. Cuadra served as editor for ten years, forging and enforcing high standards for scope, content, format, and indexing; his name will not be found in the introductory pages of the current volume, but his imprint remains. His successor as editor, Martha E. Williams, intrepid in her own right, has to a large degree retained, maintained, and in some respects enhanced those standards. ARIST is owned by the American Society for Information Science (ASIS); but, starting with