ingly, he concludes that they may have a continuing, if diminished, role to play in an informational environment that increasingly privileges systems for full-text retrieval such as Internet search engines. Because, in Warner's view, semantic labor is categorically not transferable to machines, any reduction in semantic description labor entails an increase in semantic search labor. Warner tends to view ongoing trends toward increased semantic search labor with equanimity: not all members of the library community will share this attitude.

All in all, *Human Information Retrieval* presents its readers with an interesting perspective on IR that well repays study. The emphasis on human labor as a central analytic category for understanding IR processes allows Warner to integrate a number of disparate themes that have long been objects of reflection for theorists of librarianship and information science into a single, fairly compact theoretical framework. Certainly, the labor-theoretic approach, as set out in the opening chapters of the book, is structurally elegant and has the potential to be a very useful model for "macroscopic" thinking about the design and evaluation of IR systems. One senses, though, that it is not yet complete and requires further development if it is to fulfill its author's ambitions: for example, it pays scant attention to the different types of (and motivations for) search—a factor that should certainly be taken into account in any theory intended to support the evaluation and design of IR systems.

Finally, it should be noted that the book is written in an idiom both erudite and abstract: for this reason, it is a demanding read. Laudably, Warner tries to ease the reader's way through the book by providing concrete examples, culled from a variety of sources, to illustrate the theoretical points he is making, employing diagrams and pictures to aid in the visualization of certain points, and constantly signposting and summarizing the key arguments: moreover, in addition

to a bibliography and a (rather indifferent) index, he helpfully provides a list of supplementary readings for those interested in exploring further the theoretical bases of his model. For some readers, such aids may not be enough to offset the difficult nature of the text; however, those who persevere will be rewarded with a genuinely illuminating account of IR as a human phenomenon.—*Thomas M. Dousa, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.*

Kimberly Black. *What Books by African American Women Were Acquired by American Academic Libraries? A Study of Institutional Legitimation, Exclusion and Implicit Censorship.* Lewiston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press, 2009. 211p. $109.95 (ISBN 9780773437920). LC2010-278113.
The author of this volume, an Assistant Professor in the School of Information Sciences at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, has produced a probing and thoughtful examination of the impact of power, and the lack of it, on two communities that she links through explication and analysis. The book-ended communities are (1) African American women writers and (2) acquisition librarians in academic institutions, groups who communicate and connect (or not) through filtering webs of publishers, journals, reviewers, and reviews. With clear prose, backed with statistical models, she lays out her arguments like a scientist, draws her conclusions and leaves very few openings for criticism. Despite its dry title, and somewhat forbidding-looking tables and appendices (but handsome cover), the book offers serious rewards for readers interested in a variety of topics that impact librarianship and our culture at large.

Dr. Black begins with a succinct summary of the distinctive traits of prose and mostly poetry produced by African American women in the late twentieth century, a discussion that can be of use to undergraduates researching that specific topic. She focuses her study specifically on the 233 titles produced by African American women and published by

large, intermediate, and small presses in the years 1980 through 1990, and posits various hypothesis to be borne out, or not, by the data. Once a section's conclusions are stated, Dr. Black commences another logical step in her argument in the following chapter.

After overcoming the odds, breaking the "first seal" and being published, these works by African American women have to be reviewed to find readers. Dr. Black abstracts the literature on the subject and analyzes the percentages of her sample that get reviewed. She also examines which journals are more likely to review such titles, and she demonstrates that some journals exert a stronger influence on acquisition librarians than others. She relates such variables as the size of the publisher to the number of reviews and compares the review ratios of books by African American women writers to other women writers. Particular journals, such as *Choice, Library Journal, Booklist,* and other more general ones, are examined in the process, and disturbing conclusions seem to suggest a bias in some. One must say "seem" for, despite her strong arguments, there is an uncharacteristic flaw in this particular chapter. No data are present on review *copies*: in other words, a vital question is neither posed nor answered: Do small publishers send review copies to these journals as uniformly as the larger publishers do?

This is one of the few slips in the book's marshalling of conclusions that otherwise are cogent and compelling. After discussing the types of literature produced by the various publishers and presenting her findings on the chances of being reviewed, Dr. Black introduces the subject of the canon and examines the holdings of "large, influential, academic libraries" on these titles, hypothesizing what variables may or may not impact the presence of these books on the shelves of ARL libraries. Among those factors she evaluates are the impact of reviews on purchasing, and to what degree do programs such as Women's Studies or African-American Studies at universities have on library acquisitions of the titles in question, all topics of interest to those whose aim is to have one's library reflect as broad a spectrum of world culture and experience as possible.

While many of the conclusions the author draws are not necessarily surprising, they are nevertheless sobering. A bibliography, appendices, and an index flesh out particulars of the study. The text concludes with recommendations worthy of consideration by all of those charged with acquiring library materials, a subset of a larger group of information professionals who will profit from a reading of this book. It will be a welcome addition, as well, to colleges and universities with Library and Information Sciences, Women's Studies, African-American Studies, and other related programs. Although the author does not discuss the changes in publishing that have revolutionized the industry since the end of her core sample in 1990, one suspects that some of the problems she addresses may not have radically altered. Paying serious attention to Dr. Black's arguments may actually help to change all that.—*Harlan Greene, College of Charleston*.

Robert Darnton. *The Case for Books: Past, Present, and Future.* New York: PublicAffairs, 2009. 218p. alk. paper, $23.95 (ISBN 9781586488260). LC2009-034693. When Robert Darnton took the reins as director of Harvard's libraries in 2007, he quickly discovered that Harvard was involved "in secret talks with Google about a project" that, as he said, "took my breath away." The project was Google's massive effort to digitize millions of books, known as Google Book Search, and Darnton spent a good deal of time working to finalize the arrangements for this now well-known project. He was, suddenly, a major player in an effort that many felt might usurp the traditional roles of print book publishers and academic libraries.

Darnton is a noted historian of the book, having published several important