model for future experiments resulting in interesting journal articles.—*Michael J. Mc-Gill, School of Information Studies, Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York.*

McGarry, K. J. *Communication, Knowledge and the Librarian.* Hamden, Conn.: Linnet Books, 1975. 207p. $10.50. (LC 75-4864) (ISBN 0-208-01369-3)

K. J. McGarry has produced a primer for librarians in an area in which librarians urgently need a primer. He covers an enormous span of knowledge concisely and well. He structures a viable approach to a field of intellectual endeavor which, in common with several newly emerging fields of study, represents a confluence of several older disciplines and new concepts. Most remarkable of all, he recognizes and points out clearly that this new approach, while potentially extremely fruitful, provides only a partial view and leaves out of the discussion some very important aspects of librarianship and human knowledge.

McGarry's object is to discuss the library in terms of its place in the communication system of society. To do this he first treats the current state of knowledge of communication from the cybernetics, linguistics, sociological, psychological, and anthropological viewpoints. He surveys literature and concepts, discussing the use of models, information theory, entropy and redundancy, symbols, culture and the concept of self, social role theory, and other pertinent matters. He then examines the process of interpersonal communication and the necessities of that process.

Perhaps McGarry's gloomiest conclusion in relation to the human condition is that hierarchy is an omnipresent necessity of all life and interaction, including communications. One hopes that Warren Bennis and others of his school of thought have what will prove to be a more correct viewpoint in this regard. It would be very disturbing to many people and institutions if we were to discover that democratic processes of human interaction are inherently impossible.

McGarry proceeds, through a brief discussion of nonverbal communication, to an excellent analysis of the impact of the development of communications on society. In this context he discusses McLuhan's ideas, set forth in English and treated in a sane and productive manner. He rightly points out the fallacy of subscribing to yet another form of simplistic determinism while recognizing the seminal nature of the concepts McLuhan presents. This discussion is long and very valuable as a conceptual framework for the study of the history of books, media of other sorts, and libraries.

The attempt to make direct application of the theories so well discussed in this volume to the library scene is not entirely successful. This is usually the case when attempts at practical application are made early in the development of a new body of knowledge.

The attempts must, of course, be made because it is from them that a significant force and direction are given to further theoretical development. The importance of the process of theory building and practical application is underscored by a quotation from Eric de Grolier (p.123), "Now the death of a civilization can be interpreted as the death of its information mechanisms." We, whose civilization has developed and become dependent upon an information mechanism of unprecedented magnitude, complexity, and fragility must struggle successfully to preserve and improve that mechanism. The consequences of failure could be as cataclysmic as the consequences of failure to keep the peace.

This terse and literate book provides a carefully selected and structured guide to the study necessary to achieve understanding of the subject. Hopefully, the book will serve as a starting place for course work in many library schools.—*Ernest W. Toy, Jr., California State University, Fullerton.*

Überregionale Literaturversorgung von Wissenschaft und Forschung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Denkschrift. (Supra-Regional Provision of Literature in the Federal Republic of Germany: Memorandum.) Bibliotheksausschuss der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft. Boppard: Harald Boldt Verlag KG, 1975. 116p. (ISBN 3-7646-1621-0)

One of the major goals of the Library Committee of the German Research Society (GRS) has been the development of an ef-

fective cooperative acquisitions program which would insure that one copy of every publication of current or potential scholarly importance would find its way into some German research library and would become available to all users in the Federal Republic through efficient information and interlibrary loan services. A classified subject scheme was devised, and certain libraries with staffs capable of selecting and acquiring the materials and administrative officers willing to assume what became national responsibilities were assigned one or more subject categories. They were urged to collect creatively and comprehensively. In return, the GRS provided funds for acquisitions, salaries, and equipment in the participating libraries and served as the central coordinating organization.

This important "Memorandum" analyzes the program's strengths and weaknesses, describes the organizational changes and updating needed to make it more effective, and considers such issues as whether a national lending library on the British model should replace the decentralized system and whether additional central subject libraries should be created. Among the weaknesses are the problems of adequately defining responsibilities when traditional subject divisions are being eroded by new fields, such as environmental studies; the varying intensities of collection development among the participating libraries (evidently some were not being sufficiently comprehensive in their collecting); and a cumbersome interlibrary loan system. Judged against these deficiencies were the development and access for scholars of subject specialist librarians, the future of collections which have been developed through this program, and the inability to show that within the German context centralization would be more effective. On balance the GRS opted to continue the present program but recommended many changes to make it more responsive to current needs, among them provision of additional funds for certain technical services, for travel for specialist librarians, and for other costs unique to the subjects being covered. Discussions of the need for a central lending library are also to continue.

Several appendixes, including the list of subjects and the libraries responsible for them, conclude the volume. A brief English-language summary of main points accompanies the volume, but, for thorough understanding of the system and its working, one must have access to the German text.

This description of a fascinating plan to develop a national research collection is of intrinsic interest but also implicitly raises questions related to the general merit of a decentralized versus a centralized approach to national resource development. Contrast German federal spending, for example, with the aborted Farmington Plan, the approximate American equivalent of the GRS scheme, which relied solely on local means to satisfy what were defined as national needs. Although even generous support has not solved all problems, one does wonder, amid the general discussion of a national information system for the United States and the financial potential of revenue sharing, whether the GRS plan is not suggestive of a means to help maintain the unique collections in some research libraries foundering amid rising costs and diminished local financing.—*Erwin K. Welsch, Memorial Library, University of Wisconsin—Madison.*

Veit, Fritz. *The Community College Library.* Contributions in Librarianship and Information Science, Number 14. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1975. 221p. $13.95. (LC 72-843) (ISBN 0-8371-6412-5)

The literature of the community college library has been enriched by Dr. Veit's masterful presentation in this state-of-the-art volume. It is comprehensive, well documented, and readable. As the author indicates, it is intended not only for students in the field, but also for community college library staffs and the general reader. An index facilitates the location of references to specific aspects of library operation.

Dr. Veit defines his terms explaining that "community college" refers to all public postsecondary two-year institutions and that "library" includes both the traditional library and the learning resource center. The author points out that the community college library is similar in many respects to