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