

lowed by a ninety-page bibliography.

As a survey and literature review, Klein's book fills a real need. A vast array of projects is described, from local history to biophysics, American Indian law, ecology, child development, archaeology, American studies, immunopharmacology, urban studies, holistic health care, and undergraduate liberal studies. The book does not, however, quite achieve its goal of synthesis. The material is very compressed; much of it remains only partially digested. Individual chapters adhere to the focus and emphasis of the existing literature on various branches of interdisciplinarity, which can range from recommendations on the best physical layout of office space for interdisciplinary teams to the structure of the universe. Nevertheless, this is a good introduction to an important subject. It answers questions we may not have had the wit to ask and challenges us with problems still unresolved.

The cumulative evidence compiled by Klein suggests a paradox at the heart of the idea of interdisciplinarity. It aims at a holistic, integrating synthesis, an alternative to the fragmenting specialization of modern knowledge. But it has consistently failed to achieve this ideal. One might even argue that, in practice, interdisciplinarity represents the deconstructive, disintegrating force of new perspectives, and that every interdisciplinary project is an ad hoc, temporary solution to a particular problem. As Klein and others openly admit, it may be that modern thought simply defies classification.—*Jean M. Alexander, Northwestern University, Evanston, Ill.*

**Veaner, Allen B.** *Academic Librarianship in a Transformational Age: Program, Politics, and Personnel.* Boston: G.K. Hall, 1990, 520p. \$40 (ISBN 0-8161-1866-3). LC 89-27335.

Allen Veaner's book is interesting, worthwhile, and at times exasperating. Although it is intended chiefly for "academic librarians holding or aspiring to administrative positions," Richard DeGennaro rightly observes in his brief

foreword that "anyone with a serious interest in the evolution and future of academic libraries" would profit from it.

The first chapter, "The Transformed World of Academic Librarianship," introduces the larger context. Particularly imaginative is the author's description of the traditional academic library as a "manor," a relatively self-sufficient and autonomous entity in which "on-site staff provided services almost entirely from local holdings, custom-tailoring their own bibliographic control systems." In less than a generation, Veaner finds, the academic library has shed its manorial trappings and become part of a community, transformed via "linkages to a vast . . . worldwide array of bibliographic resources and services." The academic library as one-time manor now transformed is an image at once provocative and deserving of further critical reflection.

In his second chapter, "The Academic Community as Institution and Workplace," Veaner correctly observes that "the academic workplace is highly political and strongly elitist, an island of exclusivity in an openly democratic society." But most academics, on most days at least, probably would not share his bleak views of "the viciousness of academic politics. In their relentless and egotistic competition for resources, the faculty manifest bad behavior toward each other that, although refined in execution, is no less savage than that prevailing in the outside world: extreme pettiness, backstabbing, treachery, malicious destruction of colleagues' careers, one-upmanship, and dark and mean-spirited power plays." If this was the environment with which Veaner had to cope during his twenty-six years of library experience at Harvard, Stanford, and the University of California at Santa Barbara, it is no wonder that he left the academy to establish his own consulting firm. The following chapter, "Administrative Theories, Business Paradigms, and Work," contains a number of insightful observations about the nature of library work, who and what librarians are, and the "duality of employment"

between professionals and support staff. Chapters on the administrative challenge and on the library's program are quite useful although here, as elsewhere, Veaner occasionally lapses into the hyperbolic: "Only the highest levels of stamina and stability enable administrators to cope with the work's demands and not lose either their health or their sanity."

Most of the remaining chapters are given over to various aspects of organizational structure and personnel administration. These include organizational communication, governance, duties and responsibilities of staff members, recruitment, performance appraisal, and staff development. Three additional chapters, "Managing Your Inheritances," "Entering and Departing the Administrative Suite," and "The Self: Time, Privacy, and Stress," resemble self-help books in both the content and tone of their advice to would-be academic library administrators; the first of these contains a section on "Building Your Own Professional Image," with subsections on "Voice," "Eye Contact," and "The Role of Touch." The final chapter provides a look at "2000 and Beyond." Throughout, Veaner draws repeatedly on the wider management literature as well as that of librarianship.

In the preface, Veaner warns his readers that they will find "comparatively little advice" about any single function in academic libraries, except for personnel. In this instance he is uncharacteristically guilty of understating the matter. Much more space (though only two pages) is devoted to "references" than to "reference work" and "cataloging" combined, and more space is devoted to "stress" than to "acquisitions" and "collection development" combined. "Circulation" (including all synonyms I could imagine) does not appear in the index; there is, however, an entry for "bull sessions" and another for "head-hunters." There is nothing here on bibliographic instruction. One scours the book in vain for details of the transformation identified in the title, or details about the environment which is being

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transformed. The library world one encounters in these pages is one without books or journals, and without buildings. There is some discussion, here and there, of faculty and a few references to students. There is certainly a staff. In fact, for the most part that is all there is. Although traditional views of libraries tended to place too much emphasis on inanimate objects—volumes, furniture, buildings, etc.—Veaner's description reverses the error and gives us the people without an environment. Either omission would be unfortunate in a book with such an encompassing title. Veaner's focus is on the *process* of administering, without much attention to the particulars of the environment that is being administered—one that is popular these days.

The virtues of Veaner's book are several. It is a useful Baedeker to the terrain of academic library personnel issues. The author also provides interesting information about developments and practices in British and Canadian librarianship. In addition, the writing is lively, and Veaner is provocative. I happen to agree generally with a number of his observations. A few of them: "Administration is the unequal allocation of insufficient resources in a consultative but undemocratic style"; "Because librarians are often socialized to a perfectionistic tradition, they are sometimes ill equipped to cope with situations that do not provide all of the desired answers"; "The work of librarians is governed by the professional paradox, 'everything is assigned and nothing is assigned'"; "The giving nature of librarianship may explain, in part, why librarians are not administration minded, have resisted quantification of their work, and have been slow to accept fiscal responsibility for their programs." Each chapter concludes with a list of references and a bibliography so extensive that altogether they consume some 125 pages—one quarter of the total. The index, compiled by Susan Klement, is very good.

As already noted, I occasionally found the book exasperating. Veaner contradicts himself from time to time, exempli-

fied by his difficulty deciding whether the "manorial period" for American academic libraries lasted until the 1930s, the 1950s, or the 1960s (p.3, 429) and by his statement that "since faculty do not generally have job descriptions, neither should librarians," six pages after his discussing, approvingly, the inclusion of certain duties and responsibilities "in each librarian's position description" (p.245, 239). At other times, Veaner is more than simply opinionated; he gives advice as though it were holy writ, and he is not always on target. For instance, he asserts that a "lack of regular, scheduled all-staff meetings simply indicates an uncaring administration unwilling to share information," without admitting the possibility that in some library environments other means of communication may be more effective. Other dubious pieces of unqualified advice: "it would be hard to operate even a small library" if cabinet meetings were not held at least weekly; "if employees are unmotivated it is generally the fault of management"; send a personal letter, not a form letter, to applicants who are no longer being considered for a position; if you want to maintain the status quo, hire a library assistant and don't waste your money on a professional. Moreover, the book would have profited from a stronger editorial hand. On five separate occasions Veaner praises Richard DeGennaro. Considering that it was DeGennaro who authored this book's foreword, such treatment seems excessive. And someone, beginning with the author himself, should have caught the gaffe which finds Veaner mistaking the contents of Hannelore Rader's annual essay on "library orientation" when he recommends it, and it alone, as a source of information for orienting new staff to the workplace. These caveats notwithstanding, the virtues of the book far outnumber its flaws.

Veaner concludes his preface by predicting that sometime between the years 2000 and 2020 "still another book" on academic library administration "will then be required." I would venture a guess, instead, that well before the end

of this century someone, perhaps Veaner himself, will produce such a book with the more inclusive focus of Rutherford D. Rogers and David C. Weber's *University Library Administration* or Guy Lyle's *The Administration of the College Library*. In the meantime, academic librarians will profit from this work, especially if they follow the author's advice selectively and if they balance his portrayal of the land of academic librarianship with the titles noted above and with other reading, including Beverly Lynch's recent *The Academic Library In Transition*.—Richard Hume Werking, *Trinity University, San Antonio, Texas*.

**Academic Libraries Research Perspectives.** Ed. by Mary Jo Lynch and Arthur Young. ACRL Publications in Librarianship no. 47. Chicago: American Library Assn., 1990. 271p. acid-free \$27.50 (ISBN 0-8389-0532-3). LC 90-32120.

This important book marks a stage in the development of librarianship as a science with an empirical base. The eight essays published here demonstrate that our profession, like other sciences, can build on research. We can cumulate it, replicate it, expand it where needed, and eschew pointless duplication. Moreover, we can apply the findings of empirical research to advance our practice.

What have we learned from research into the functions of academic libraries in the last twenty years? The eight writers here, in chapters on collection development and management (Charles Osburn), bibliographical control (Elaine Svenonius), access services (Jo Bell Whitlatch), instructional services (Mary W. George), bibliometrics (Paul Metz), the application of advanced technology (William Gray Potter), analysis and library management (Malcolm Getz), and management theory and organizational structure (Beverly P. Lynch), characterize, summarize, and direct our application of our research literature. They tell us what research has discovered and what remains to investigate. The bibliographic citations for each chapter, rang-

ing from seventeen (Getz) to 204 (George), also provide us with a map to the research literature.

Compared to other disciplines, the research base for librarianship is relatively new, not very deep, and often unused. Osburn characterizes the research in collection development and management as having started slowly and using diverse methods; as applied, not basic; as pieces of a puzzle; and perhaps ready to move to a new plateau. Lynch observes, "The literature on management of academic libraries is large and diverse, and is comprised, by and large, of expert opinion. Little of this literature has a research orientation. The research that does exist is reported, for the most part, in doctoral dissertations and master's theses. These reports, unless revised and published in the journal literature, have little impact on the field as it is practiced."

Can we incorporate research findings into our work? This book suggests we can and should. For example, Svenonius, summarizing research on the data elements in descriptive cataloging, writes that library patrons use only a few of the data elements in the bibliographic record. "Full-level cataloging, particularly as rendered in the MARC bibliographic formats, is probably wasteful and excessive; it is certainly redundant. The present demand is for simpler and cheaper cataloging." While that demand is justified, she cautions that standards for minimal level cataloging be developed in light of research on all users of the catalog, including serious scholars, and acquisitions and reference librarians, as well as students and casual users.

This book is full of information that we can apply on the job. For example, Whitlatch concludes that, in evaluating the job performance of reference staff, "expert librarian judgment can serve as a substitute for surveying users." Or, we learn that patrons in the reference service tend to "approach staff who [are] standing rather than sitting." Librarians thinking of weeding collections should know that older books and peri-