Book Reviews

Buckland, Michael. *Redesigning Library Services: A Manifesto*. Chicago: ALA, 1992. 82p. alk. paper, $18. (ISBN 0-8389-0590-0).

One approaches a book subtitled "A Manifesto" with the expectation that it will contain an exhortation to embrace a radically new vision of the future. Unfortunately, this book, despite its heavily italicized, upbeat style, presents neither a very original vision nor particularly compelling arguments. Although the purpose of the book is "to suggest some general bases for planning or, at least, to provide a general framework for thinking about future library services," anyone who has thought at all about the future of libraries will probably have considered in much more depth and detail most of the issues presented in this "Manifesto."

The book begins by drawing a distinction between the paper library, the automated library, and the electronic library. In the chapter on the paper library, the standard drawbacks of paper as an information medium are reiterated: paper documents can be used by only one person in one place at a time, they require a lot of space and are housed in libraries that are closed some of the time; manual catalogs consisting of cards are problematic because a separate card is required for each entry, and because the catalog and the documents to which it refers are physically separated. On the other hand, the automated library—i.e. one in which the documents are on paper but "the Libraries' procedures have been computerized"—is an improvement, but it eliminates only a few of the impediments to access that characterize the paper library.

In a chapter entitled "Bibliographic Access Reconsidered," the author presents a modified version of an article he published in 1988, in which he compares the nature and uses of bibliographies and catalogs. He concludes that bibliographies and catalogs will eventually coalesce into a single synthetic source that will not only list publications but will also include information on their location or the process by which they can be accessed.

The chapter on the electronic library considers the advantages of electronic sources, the drawbacks of paper sources, and the potential for digitizing information now in paper form. The author does not envision the paper, automated, and electronic libraries as separate and distinct phases of library development, but rather he anticipates, no doubt correctly, that different libraries will combine different aspects of these three types over time, and that paper and electronic sources will exist side by side well into the future.

A chapter on collections in the online era compares the advantages of online sources to the disadvantages of building paper collections. The major challenges facing the future of library collections in the online era, such as the relationship between libraries and the publishing industry, and the need to redefine intellectual ownership are mentioned but are not discussed. A brief review of reference services stresses the shift from service to self-service. The section on reference assistance contains a description of standard reference operations, but with very little consideration of how such methods will be affected in an online environment. The same is true of the subsequent chapter on organization, which appears to have been included simply to round out the picture: it contains some standard statements on library management,

but it makes practically no effort to assess how the advent of online sources might alter organizational structures or management methods.

After having been presented with such simple fare throughout most of the book, one arrives at the final chapter, entitled "The Challenge," hungry for substance. Once again, however, very little substance is served up. Instead of an action agenda and some original conclusions, the reader receives yet another recitation of the drawbacks of paper publications, followed by a list of "major changes" that one can expect to characterize library services in the online age (e.g., "assembling local collections" will become "less important," and "local storage may be desirable but is no longer necessary."). And thus the book ends—noting in conclusion that "[computers], networks, and electronic documents" will provide library services in the future with "interesting possibilities."

This book is very disappointing for many reasons, not the least of which is that it gives the impression of having been written five or ten years ago, before many of the nation's research library catalogs were accessible on the Internet, before such systems as NOTIS MDAS permitted libraries to mount online bibliographies that link bibliographical citations to local holdings, and well before most of what is presented and re-presented in this book had been examined in much more developed form throughout the library literature. The book also gives the clear impression, to me at least, that it was written very quickly, as if the author simply sat down and wrote up what he knew, drawing heavily and primarily on his own previous publications, without taking the time to refine or update his views. There is in fact very little, if anything, in this book that one would not expect to hear in the first few lectures of any introductory library school course. One also encounters statements like "[research] . . . has shown that . . ." (p.36), or "studies have shown that . . . " (p.49), without any accompanying information as to where these studies were published or this research was conducted; it is as if the author did not want to take the time to look up the documentation.

Redesigning Library Services can certainly be read as a basic introduction to some of the key issues facing library services, and there can be no doubt that the book is sincerely written and well intentioned. However, it is also short-sighted, outdated, hyperbolic, and repetitive. It is especially regrettable that the American Library Association should have seen fit to publish such a book with such a title, giving as it does the impression that this is the profession's official view of itself. If this book is any indication of the wisdom and facility with which libraries are preparing for the advent of the online age, then the future of library services is indeed dim.—*Ross Atkinson, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York.*

Baum, Christina D. *Feminist Thought in American Librarianship.* Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 1992. 180p. alk. paper, $28.50 (ISBN 0-89950-724-7).

Over the past twenty-five years, feminism has made a significant impact on American librarianship, yet very little scholarly attention has been paid to this topic. It clearly merits research and investigation from a variety of perspectives, greater publishing activity, and focused attention in library school curricula. The reader thus approaches *Feminist Thought in American Librarianship* expectantly, hoping to find in the promise of the title answers to questions that scholars have not asked before. Indeed, Baum might be considered a pioneer for making one of the few attempts to date to "trace the impact of various kinds of feminism on the thought and political agenda of American library women." Unfortunately, her recognition of an area in need of careful and critical research isn't enough; the end result is disappointing on most counts.

The time frame of Baum's book, 1965–1985, spans the two decades that marked the emergence of the second wave of feminism in the United States and the increasing involvement of many, including librarians, in the women's move-