

Carson. There is no point in quibbling with the author's selection of the titles or in proposing substitutions by the reviewer; Downs' list of books is as good as any, and his depiction of the impact of each work upon history is sound. The book is one for dipping and browsing, rather than for continuous reading. Experienced readers will find little that is new, but they will have at hand a reliable assessment of the books Downs considers to be epochal.

*In Search of New Horizons* performs the same function for explorers and travelers, arranged chronologically from Herodotus to the conquerors of Annapurna and Everest. Here the subject matter calls for a more vigorous treatment than that which Downs' rather sluggish prose gives it. The information is solid, but the spark of life is frequently missing. As the range of narratives of exploration is so great, one may properly question some of Downs' choices. When there is still so much doubt that Peary reached the North Pole, why describe his account of the supposed feat? One also wonders why this work was published by the American Library Association rather than a commercial publisher, considering that its subject matter appears to be more appropriate for trade publication.—Henry Miller Madden, California State University, Fresno.

National Research Council. Study Project on Social Research and Development.

*The Federal Investment in Knowledge of Social Problems*. Volume 1: Study Project Report. Washington, D.C.: National Academy of Sciences, 1978. 114p. \$7. LC 78-7928. ISBN 0-309-02747-0.

National Research Council. Study Project on Social Research and Development.

*Knowledge and Policy: The Uncertain Connection*. Laurence E. Lynn, Jr., editor. Study Project on Social Research and Development, Volume 5. Washington, D.C.: National Academy of Sciences, 1978. 183p. \$8.25. LC 78-1960. ISBN 0-309-02732-2.

The works cited above are the report and one of five volumes of background papers of the National Research Council's Study Project on Social Research and Development, commenced in 1974. This was the fourth

federally sponsored investigation since 1968 of the usefulness of social science to social policy and possibilities for improvement.

According to its chairman, Professor Donald Stokes of Princeton, the latest study differs from its predecessors in considering the limitations as well as the potentialities of social research for governmental purposes; in encompassing all aspects of "knowledge production and application" (including, for example, collection of social statistics) in addition to research and development as conventionally defined; and in including nonfederal users and uses in calculating the benefits of federal knowledge-promoting activities.

Among the study group's recommendations are that federal research sponsorship be more systematically planned, as well as increased; that research users outside government be involved in planning; that dissemination activities include periodic syntheses of the knowledge gained from research (a proposal that recalls the Weinberg Report of 1963); and that the role of knowledge brokers—officials whose job is to identify and elucidate for government and the scientific community their opportunities for mutual betterment—be enlarged.

The six background papers collected under the title *Knowledge and Policy: The Uncertain Connection* make for livelier reading than the study report, displaying an interesting range of opinion on such matters as the past usefulness of social science to policy formation and the extent to which society both can and should expect direct and immediate benefits from scientific endeavors.

To mention just a few examples in this small space, Carol H. Weiss reports that use of social science by federal decision makers has been shown to be greater than is generally assumed (p.26), while James Q. Wilson asserts that serious social science is given serious governmental attention only rarely, and perhaps never (p.82, 92). A system called PIPs (policy implication papers) established in HEW to systematize dissemination and use of research results is judged promising in one paper (Howard Davis and Susan Salasin, p.121-22), while another concludes "PIPs flopped" (Weiss, p.70).

Alone among the contributors, Weiss dis-

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cusses the mixed motives of social scientists in seeking to forge stronger links between research and policy (p.25, 33, 35, 55), and the mixed benefits to society of more scientific contributions (p.61, 73). The other writers seem inclined to assume an identity between research and progress and between the interests of the research profession and the public at large, although Wilson's short piece hints at skepticism on the latter point.

The forthcoming volumes of background papers will consider federal agency funding of research, issues in the management of social R&D, and case studies in the uses of basic research.—*Thelma Freides, State University of New York, College at Purchase.*

Southgate, Robert L. *Black Plots & Black Characters: A Handbook for Afro-American Literature.* Syracuse, New York: Gaylord Professional Publications, 1979. 456p. \$25. LC 78-14394. ISBN 0-915794-14-4.

This handbook helps to fill a long-standing void in the field of Afro-American

literature and will undoubtedly prove a handy source of information for librarians and interested readers. But it is unfortunate that this handbook was not undertaken as a collaborative effort by two or more scholars. Although Southgate's knowledge and abilities are obvious, his choice of entries for discussion leaves much to be desired and is certain to frustrate users.

The handbook is divided into four parts. Part I, plot summaries, comprises the largest portion. One hundred significant works of Afro-American literature, including fiction, plays, poems, speeches, and essays, are described and commented on. The format is similar to that used in *Masterplots*. The summaries are well written and average nearly a page in length.

But the problem here is that while the author has chosen a number of the familiar, standard works he has failed to include quite a few very important works that most readers would expect to find, e.g., Richard Wright's *Native Son* and *Black Boy*, Lorraine Hansberry's *Raisin in the Sun*, James

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