

Book Reviews

Anthony M. Cummings and others.

University Libraries and Scholarly Communication: A Study Prepared for the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Washington, D.C.: Association of Research Libraries, 1992. 205p. \$8 (ISBN 9-918006-22-8). LC 92-44941.

This timely report on the present status of scholarly communication is a joint effort of the Mellon Foundation, which has demonstrated considerable interest in academic libraries for at least the past five years, and the Association of Research Libraries (ARL). The report is timely because, as any reader of this journal knows well, scholarly communication is now poised on the threshold of a new era. As a comprehensive yet succinct statement of the conditions surrounding scholarly communication and the evolving role of the academic research library, the Mellon study offers a welcome opportunity to take stock, reflect, and place very rapidly moving developments in a useful perspective.

The stated purpose of the book is to "describe the library landscape as it appears today, in its collecting, operating, financial, and electronic dimensions." The report addresses concepts such as those aptly labeled "ownership versus access" and "just in time versus just in case," and gives much space to publishing industry production and costs during the past few years. Clearly intended not for librarians, but rather for other parties with a stake in scholarly communication, it is nevertheless important for those of us within the profession to note the perception expressed by those outside the profession that "[t]he opportunity exists to rethink an entire set of relationships that, if reconstituted appropriately, can give libraries both new dimensions and an even more cen-

tral role in the educational process than they have enjoyed in the past."

The report is divided into two distinct parts, each with several chapters. The first, "Historical Trends: Collections, Expenditures, Publications," is illustrated with forty-one charts and graphs and nineteen tables. The second part, entitled "Information Needs and New Technologies," synthesizes models of scholarly communication and describes their principal elements. The authors do a clear, thorough, and thoughtful job here, also acknowledging that changes are coming about so rapidly that this material is likely to date quickly. They are correct to offer this caveat, of course, but this section is a fine contribution toward the clarification of a set of situations that is unusually complex.

Documentation is heavy throughout the book, with much reliance on the current literature and on the files of the ARL. Data about libraries are taken from twenty-four ARL member institutions, half public, half private. It is the second part of this study that will be of particular interest to academic librarians because of its perceptive synthesis of trends, issues, and opportunities related to information technology, and also because of the tentative conclusions proffered in answer to questions fundamental to the future of scholarly communication. The report is sometimes bold in that regard. For example, it is a premise of the second section "that printed scholarly literature will continue to exist for a long time and that adequate bibliographic control is essential to scholarship." Another informed assumption is that peer review will continue to be central to the scholarly process, but that it may be expedited and expanded. Readers of this journal will be gratified to know that the

book's authors are highly sensitive to the use of the word information throughout the text. Not surprisingly, the foundation has praise and great expectations for the value of the RLG Conspectus for the sharing of resources nationally; the foundation also considers the recent efforts of the Colorado Alliance of Research Libraries as a useful prototype for cooperation.

So, what, in the final analysis, will be the model for scholarly communication in the future? The authors word the answer to this question with such great care that it is worth citing verbatim: "It is extremely unlikely—we would say almost inconceivable—that any alternative model will completely supplant the existing one at any point in the foreseeable future. Rather, we envision a situation where incremental modifications to the current model will be made. We would also argue, however, that it is equally inconceivable that there will not eventually be a more-or-less complete transformation of scholarly communication." We were right all along.

This excellent study is accompanied by more than the usual scholarly apparatus, with foreword, introduction, bibliography, three appendixes, a glossary, and even a fifteen-page synopsis, contributed by Ann Okerson, director of the ARL Office of Scientific and Academic Publishing. Unfortunately, it has no index. It is quite evident that the Mellon Foundation has a genuine desire to help the scholarly communication system grow stronger, healthier, more effective. It has distributed many copies of its study to university presidents, academic vice presidents, and library directors free of charge and is making other copies available for wide distribution at nominal cost. The foundation sees that the future of scholarly communication is not a library issue, but an institutional issue; that it is not just an institutional issue, but a national issue. The Mellon Foundation has done much to advance scholarly communication and the cause of academic libraries by producing and disseminating this study.—Charles B. Osburn, *University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa.*

Glazier, Loss Pequeño. *Small Press: An Annotated Guide.* Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1992. 123p. \$49.95 (ISBN 0-313-28310-9). LC 92-15482.

Bibliographies are not usually recommended as entertainment. But then can there be any more charming annotator than Loss Glazier? As incisive and informative as one might wish, he never resists an opportunity to gloss, adding a bit of background or a reference, a passing opinion or an illuminating quote. The result is that this shortish list (174 items) may well be the elegy of the Mimeo Revolution, that Indian summer of literary Modernism. Glazier likes his subject too well ever to be dry, and has shown cleverness at a postmodern way of writing history. Self-confident, limited, not totalizing, not transcendental, thoroughly entertaining.

This is not a comprehensive book. It is restricted to the period since 1960, and to American materials only. It concerns itself not with single authors or presses, nor regional publishing, nor reviews, how-to-books, vanity or subsidy publishing, or fine presses. It is strictly literary—a significant limitation—and includes current information, coresources, and supplementary materials (catalogs, lists, bibliographies). The standard histories and other sources covering the period up to 1960 are concisely dealt with in the preface. While I can't think of anything missing, Glazier's purpose is not to be the last word, and he has not dug out obscure material (except for one master's thesis, and some letters to editors). Though not exhaustive, this is a well-done list. Its glory is all in the annotations.

Glazier begins with an introduction mostly devoted to characterizing the small press, where we learn that the "mimeo revolution" was actually made more on offset presses. I suspect Glazier would like to believe that the "spirit of mimeography, that of the small publisher, has produced an important legacy; it enters the nineties not only with a proven record of the production of literary texts but with an increasingly visible presence in the publishing industry." Yet, as with the term *hacker*, there has