

torians). They do inspire the reader to set aside the book and muse, although perhaps not come to any conclusions. If you find the content of *The Order of Books* elusive and its style opaque, you are not alone.—Elizabeth Swaim, Wesleyan University, Middletown, Conn.

**Graham, Gordon.** *As I Was Saying: Essays on the International Book Business.* London: Hans Zell, 1994 (distr. in the United States by Reed Reference Publishing). 255p. \$28 (ISBN 1-87383-601-1).

This volume gathers together the idiosyncratic essays of Gordon Graham, a prominent figure in the Anglo-American publishing community for over four decades, having played leading roles at McGraw-Hill and Butterworths. Although no bibliography is presented, the book cover describes the essays as the "distillation and updating" of Graham's "articles and speeches." The author reveals in his foreword only that "some of the source material" for the collection has been previously published in venues such as *Publishers Weekly* and *The Bookseller*. He suggests that what he has done here is to reconsider his earlier writings, to engage in an "exercise in distillation" and in "third thoughts" on previously visited themes. In an admission typical of Graham's blend of blunt honesty, irony, glibness, and often frustrating contradictions, he admits impishly that he has not sought permission to have these essays republished. Yet he never reveals whether it was necessary to seek such permission, and we are never sure if anything here had, in fact, been previously published. Given that much of this book focuses on questions of copyright and publishing practice, this minor point of confusion is a forewarning of slippery footing ahead.

The format of the collection is not conducive to a clear view into the world of publishing. The chapters are thematic, with no evident overarching organization or line of development. The themes range from broad topics such as "nationalism and publishing" and "the electronic manifestation" (electronic publishing) to elements of the book publishing system

such as "librarians," "booksellers," and "authors," and to practical matters such as "prices" and "missions and fairs." The diversity does not end there. The essays and mini-essays making up each chapter are not titled; rather, they are each preceded by a location and date, which the author tells us, curiously, are there to remind the reader that the topics are "timeless and placeless, but that there are occasions when one must attempt snapshots." Sometimes the places and dates fix an experience; sometimes they have little intrinsic relationship to what is being presented. And there is more. The chapters end with self-conscious "interludes"—set off in italics—that Graham inserts to "make sure that neither the author nor the readers take themselves or their work too seriously or too narrowly." These range from humorous to puffy, while on the whole adding another element of disruption to a generally disjointed set of texts.

Despite the many twists and turns in *As I Was Saying*, one theme seems continually to underpin the author's convictions, even if it is not always capable of linking up his essays: the notion that publishers, booksellers, librarians, and authors work in interdependent communities. A corollary that pops up in Graham's wry observations is that many of the problems separating these communities might be solved to some degree if they recognized their common causes and communicated more often in terms of their mutual interests. Readers of *College & Research Libraries* will be interested in seeing this theme presented most forcefully in the chapter devoted to librarians. Indeed, the theme of this chapter is really the interdependence of publishers, booksellers, librarians, and authors within the book world, rather than librarians or librarianship. Graham's remarks on topics such as bibliographies and bibliographic publishing in this chapter (in the essay under "Stockholm 1990") are superficial and misleading. Librarians are advised to resist the urge to read about themselves. A more useful strategy for reading the book is to search out the many stimulating re-

marks, scattered passim, on copyright and electronic publishing.

For the academic librarian, the strength of Graham's essays lies in the insight they offer into the rationales and practices that govern management of the publishing business. He approaches these subjects with a mixture of frankness, informality, and sagacity that pushes the reader in interesting directions. Still, *As I Was Saying* fails to lead beyond observations miscellaneously presented, and Graham neglects to link his ideas with arguments capable of clarifying and deepening our understanding of the dynamics of contemporary publishing.—Henry Lowood, *Stanford University, Stanford, California*.

**Vickery, Brian C., and Alina Vickery.** *Information Science in Theory and Practice*. 2d ed. New York: Bowker-Saur, 1992. 387p. \$95 (ISBN 0-408-10684-0).

Despite the promise of the title, this volume is concerned with a broad treatment of the essential scientific aspects of information science rather than its practice *per se*. In their preface the authors call it "an attempt to present and discuss a scientific understanding of the processes of information transfer . . . [as] a human, social activity. . . ." As such, it covers a wide range of topics in information science, but in the context of established research and not contemporary practice. Its ten chapters deal with three broad categories: information transfer in the wider societal context, information and the individual, and the nature of information systems. Rather than integrating disparate studies from fields such as anthropology, psychology, and computer science, the authors focus on more applied aspects of these fields in the formal study of information. This book can rightly claim to be a "core" text on information science as a distinct discipline, not an integration of information science with these disciplines.

Specifically, the authors address the nature of information from the fundamental exchange of information at the microbial level (including an amusingly digressive discussion of the reproduction of a bacteriophage that illustrates

communication in nature) to the nature of language, logic, basic forms of information, and the personal semantic experience of information retrieval. This presentation is quickly incorporated into the context of the information system, with the text as the fundamental type of information considered and traditional publication and libraries as the primary sites of dissemination. Some topics, such as the implications of linguistics, necessarily are dealt with superficially to allow larger themes to emerge. While the authors discuss electronic interfaces, systems, and databases, it is in the context of a much broader understanding of human information processing and systems.

The Vickerys artfully integrate the results of hundreds of studies into this broad sketch, providing the reader with both concise summaries of the core research in various areas as well as pointers for further reference and study. At the same time, the omission of the context of practice and of an integration of contemporary issues that are rapidly changing the nature of the field may limit the value of this otherwise excellent book. To a degree, the authors acknowledge this problem, but the work suffers nevertheless from its failure to incorporate the human experiences of recent innovations in technology and their implications for both theory and practice. They tend to rely on older examples of particular technologies, such as MYCIN, an expert system of the 1970s, rather than the many online, CD-ROM, and network-based resources that are now much more familiar.

This book is expertly written with a long-term perspective, encapsulating well-established research dating from the emergence of the modern discipline of information science in the postwar era to some developments up through the mid-80s. The erudition and experience of the Vickerys are manifest in both the selection of their topics and the formal, polished style with which they are presented. The book skillfully combines the subject areas of traditional library science