

that affects us all, from the small public library to the federal government.

Compared with this vexing problem, the question of censorship or suppression of information appears more amenable to compromise, although it can be difficult in practice to balance conflicting political and social "goods." *JIE's* writers come down on the liberal side of most of these issues. Contributors comfortably call for the publication of a Native American history of Little Big Horn, oppose the *Wilson Library Bulletin's* firing of Will Manley, and attack Pat Robertson, Dan Quayle, left-wing censors, and state terrorism around the world. They have not yet dealt with the thornier issues of pornography and hate speech.

Ethical discussions of computerized information often concern the integrity, privacy, and security of data encoded in this most fluid of formats. The computer can make information more widely accessible, as Senator Patrick Leahy proudly explains in a solicited piece. But it also makes information difficult to control: subject to damage, mishandling, hidden surveillance, and unauthorized reproduction and revision. Articles on this subject, such as Carol Tenopir's sensible "Ethics for Online Educators," tend to be recipes for the prevention of abuse rather than probings of ethical dilemmas.

Articles on ethical questions in academia cannot be said to share any particular problem or approach. Perhaps the theme of dishonesty would cover plagiarism, hackers, and book theft. Conflict of interest is addressed in a study of faculty textbook selection and in Adam Drozdek's warning about corporate and military sponsorship of university research ("Pecunia Non Olet"). Again, the underlying philosophical question is the possible danger to the public good of an instrumental approach to the generation and dissemination of information.

This theme of the public trust emerges once again in Fred Whitehead's column decrying the sale of the rare book collection of the Kansas City Public Library. Whitehead delivers an unusual argument against the conventional wisdom that librarians should manage their col-

lections without outside interference from the public.

An editorial in the Spring 1993 issue of *JIE* ends with this plea: "The point of all these warnings is to alert us to the dangers inherent in an increasingly technological society. Be wary! Individual freedoms require vigilance." The lesson contained within the journal's own pages is, I think, somewhat different. It points to the need for thoughtful exploration of the place of information (and of librarians) in the good ("ethical") life, both at the individual and the social levels.—*Jean Alexander, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois.*

**Gattégno, Jean.** *La Bibliothèque de France à mi-parcours: de la TGB à la BN bis?* Paris: Editions du Cercle de la Librairie, 1992. 259p. FF 125 (ISBN 27654-0512-3).

"J'en ai l'ambition et je le ferai": This is my ambition, and I will do it. This statement typifies the July 14, 1988, letter of François Mitterand to his prime minister, announcing, in his visionary manner, a new project in the series of "grands travaux" that includes the Grand Louvre and the Opéra de la Bastille. Mitterand's letter created the textual blueprint for what was to become the Bibliothèque de France (BdF), also known as the Très Grande Bibliothèque (TGB). Its few paragraphs contain a philosophical conception of a library that had yet to become a shared vision. This new library, according to Mitterand, would be a "very large library of a completely new type. . . . [I]t will cover all fields of knowledge, will be open to all, and will use the latest technical innovations to transmit information." The contrast with the venerated but traditional Bibliothèque Nationale (BN) could not have been stated more clearly: the BN in its cramped site on rue de Richelieu has one of the richest and most important collections in the humanities but covers the other branches of knowledge only from a historical perspective. The BN has also been dependent on the *dépôt légal*, and as a consequence is weak in foreign imprints. Furthermore, the library has restrictive access procedures

and is extremely cautious in adopting technical innovations.

Jean Gattégno traces the complicated history of this immense project in a book that does not hide the author's disappointment about how a revolutionary idea deteriorated into a fairly commonplace extension of the BN (the "BN bis" of the subtitle—which translates loosely as BN the Second). Gattégno, who worked closely with the BdF Group in a variety of leadership positions, is able to draw on his intimate knowledge of the project. His book covers in detail the prehistory of the BdF, starting with the Francis Beck report in 1987 evaluating the problematic situation at the BN, and continuing up to 1992, when Gattégno was asked to leave the project. He has organized his material into three major parts: a *historique* or chronology outlining very carefully and as objectively as possible the different reports and memoranda, documenting the changes in the ongoing project, and the reactions in the French and foreign press. For the uninitiated reader unfamiliar with the different ministerial agencies, the reporting structures, and the various shades of French bureaucratic language, this section might be quite tedious, but it is in fact a very rich historical source. In the second and third parts, *problématique* and *critique et autocritique*, Gattégno delves into issues such as the infighting within the bureaucracies, the turf wars between the BN and those creating the BdF, the petty personality issues, the financial restrictions the project ultimately had to accept, the mistakes made by the BdF team, and most importantly the different philosophical conceptions held by some of the powerful constituencies involved with the presidential project.

The book should be especially illuminating to those on this side of the Atlantic because North American librarians and scholars have mostly been hearing the voices of the critics. By now, we are all familiar with two hot buttons: the infamous break or *césure* of the print collection dividing pre/post 1945 imprints between the BN and the BdF, and the

conservation hazards of the four glass book towers. These problems, according to Gattégno, were recognized and resolved by the BdF team by transferring the whole print collection of the BN to the BdF and by redesigning the towers to protect the books from the impact of significant temperature differentiations. Nonetheless, the critics of the project used these flaws to discredit the broader purposes of the BdF. The debate on these broader purposes was never really aired, and Gattégno tries to set the record straight. The book also quite pointedly sketches a Parisian political and intellectual milieu in which media-savvy intellectual mandarins, eager to protect their interests, can wage a very effective media offensive. Dominique Jamet, the president of the BdF project, was never accepted in this milieu because of his status as a mere journalist, and especially because his appointment had been perceived as a slight against Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, world-famous historian and the administrateur-général of the BN. Gattégno, in very reasoned terms, illuminates the role Le Roy Ladurie has played in the media campaign and his gutting of the more unconventional aspects of the BdF.

Gattégno has a substantial background in the public library sector—for eight years he had been, within the Ministry of Culture, in charge of the public library system in France—and he understood the revolutionary nature of Mitterand's vision within the French library context. To start collecting aggressively in the social sciences and physical sciences, and to open these research collections to all, might not seem revolutionary in the United States, but to some in France it constitutes a reenactment of the storming of the Bastille. Furthermore, the plan to host conferences and lecture series in the BdF complex would increase even further its nonscholarly component. Le Roy Ladurie referred in this context to "l'effet Beaubourg" that would plague the BdF, a reference to the street entertainment outside the Centre Georges Pompidou, which houses the Bibliothèque d'Information (BPI), a very ac-

tive public library. The commitment of the BdF to collect other media, to start an aggressive effort to digitize texts and manuscripts and to serve as an information node for the wider distribution of these electronic documents to public and university libraries within France and to major research libraries abroad, led one critic (Jacques Julliard) to exclaim that the "BdF would become the Disneyland of reading."

In 1992 Gattégno was asked to leave his position, an indication that the direction of the project was about to change significantly after the failure of various attempts to compromise (e.g., establishing separate reading rooms for the general public and for researchers). In January 1994 Dominique Jamet was also replaced. More importantly, the BN and the BdF were merged into a single administrative entity: the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (BNdF). Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie was appointed president of the Conseil Scientifique, an announcement that will not have come as a surprise to Gattégno. In his estimation, the dismantlement of a "library of a completely new type" to a *BN bis* had been completed.—Kurt De Belder, *New York University, New York, New York*.

**Musmann, Klaus J.** *Technological Innovations in Libraries, 1860-1960: An Anecdotal History*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1993. 245p. \$55 (ISBN 0-313-28015-0).

Librarians assume too easily that today's technological challenges and promises represent something new for libraries. We look back nostalgically to the stability of the library world prior to the 1980s (the era of bibliographic utilities, online catalogs, CDs, CD-ROM), or the 1970s (when circulation systems, online searching, and videocassettes came into use), or the 1960s (when LPs and early automation were introduced). Klaus Musmann reminds us that technological change is not a phenomenon of the past thirty years: he argues that changes around the turn of the century were quite as revolutionary as anything in the present. He cites as examples the

impact of cheap, safe artificial light; proper ventilation for large library spaces; even the standardized 75-by-125 millimeter catalog card. Musmann points out that librarians have always faced technical difficulties, e.g., how to disinfect returned books, how to manage newspaper collections before microfilm or how to deal with the "library hand" before typewriters were widespread.

Nor is the feeling that the printed book is doomed anything new. In 1918 Homer Croy was convinced that print would be replaced by motion pictures. In 1926 Melvil Dewey had us outgrowing books within fifty years. In 1936 Stephen Gaselee "expressed some doubts whether the book would survive as a popular medium for the diffusion of knowledge during an age of broadcasting and television." In 1938 Alice Farquhar asserted that radio had decreased public library circulation, that people could not be expected to read books and magazines on current affairs when the radio offered "last minute information fascinatingly presented," and asked "Why read a mystery when you can get your hair to stand on end, just passively listening to 'Lights Out'?" Similarly, G. D. Richardson contended in 1951 that television would entirely replace recreational reading. Since the 1930s librarians have suggested that microform publications would or should replace books—and in 1935 Louis Hewitt Fox wrote that "the average reader prefers the film to the book."

Musmann begins his book with a discussion of technological innovations, revealing a somewhat downbeat attitude about the significance of libraries: surely it is an overstatement that public libraries are no longer "an important force in the leisure time activities of the public-at-large" in many cities and towns. Still, the book offers its own grounds for optimism. The second chapter, "Librarians in an Age of Technological Change," deals not with the present but with the period from 1887 through 1958. If librarians survived that age and used technological change to improve library holdings and services,