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The Place of Books and Libraries in the Present World

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

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Scholars, particularly philosophers, often point to the inadequacy of language as a precise means of communication. We have been told by some poets and novelists that it is idle to hope for real dialogue with one's fellow man. I am inclined to think that instead of lament at its shortcomings, the more appropriate attitude to communication is one of astonishment that it is as effective as it is. When we consider the privateness of individual experience, we should not find it difficult to realize that it is unlikely this experience can be transferred in its totality to another. Rather, we should be impressed by the fact that enough can be transferred to insure, if nothing else, the relatively sophisticated degree of order in our everyday lives.

Certainly, the scientists have been successful in developing languages which make possible a fairly high degree of prediction of events with an accompanying measure of control. As for the language used in speaking of the world of feelings, there is generally a sufficient communication—even though this communication may not be precise by scientific standards. I would say that the experience of living itself, involving as it does a constant trial and error usage of the tools of communicating, develops a sense of

(continued overleaf)
understanding — "intuition," if you will — which manages to grasp the essential meaning of language.

Perhaps all forms of life possess the ability to communicate, at least within species. As far as we know, however, only Man has succeeded in comparing two experiences and abstracting the similarities into a separate notion. Each experience does not require totally novel means to express it. Man has developed a system of sounds and signs from which he can choose those most appropriate. Almost as extraordinary, he has manufactured sets of symbols which correspond to the sounds and signs. The appearance of written language marked the beginning of civilization as we know it.

To understand the importance of books and libraries, it is only necessary to imagine where we would be today if our sense of history had to rely on the verbal exchange of generation with generation. Instead of the perspective we now have — thousands of years of events and trends preceding us — we should have, perhaps, a dim idea of the times of our great-grandparents. In the broad sense, each unusual community problem would have to be solved anew. There would be no records of past error and success to guide us.

But a written language provides riches other than records of the past. A novel, a poem, or a biography permit us, in a short time, to share experiences and thoughts which, because of the limitations imposed on us by time and space, might never otherwise be accessible. Within a fairly short lifetime, we are able to telescope a vast number of lives. For a good novel or biography, read with absorption, is a life-in-miniature. The events and sensations we experience through literature greatly hasten that attainment of sophistication and maturity which brings a sense of balance and good judgment. However, it is the escape from limitations on one's direct experience that is important. The flight from monotony is one of Man's most fundamental motivations. Books are one of Civilized Man's most invaluable means of meeting this need.

I express nothing new when I note my concern over the effects of recently developed forms of communication on the growth of that inner life of the individual which is the most important and interesting thing about him. It is true that we can learn through any medium of communication. But there are distinctions between ways of learning. It may seem that reading and sitting before some kind of screen on which pictures are flashed are equal ways of gaining new experience or information. I don’t believe this is so. Reading involves a much greater effort of imagination. Scenes, people, and circumstances are suggested by
the words used, but the reader himself must meet the writer half-way and draw from his own direct experience the parallels which make the picture complete. I am doubtful that a mind nourished primarily by the completely supplied images of the television or movie screen can turn out to be an inventive one. Inventiveness is a quality our world today sorely needs. And, through the more pressing demands of immediate international crisis, we must maintain a perspective on the long-range problems of mankind. Poverty and ignorance are the two major evils with which we must contend. Ignorance is not only an evil in itself but a constant threat to world peace. Real knowledge implies sanity. Bits of knowledge, or one book, may be dangerous; but ignorance is more dangerous. I hope the time will come when a well-stocked and well-balanced library is easily accessible to every human being. There could be no greater insurance for peace.

**More Shelving Installed**

A span of new free-standing double faced stacks will soon be installed on the first stack deck. The additional space has already been committed to books now on hand or on order through next February.

The additional shelving will bring the total amount in the Library to approximately two miles. As has been the case with all shelving purchased since 1954, the units are free-standing and can be transferred with a minimum of expense to a new library building which is now in the planning stage.

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**From The Librarian**

Senator Mike Mansfield is not only the Senate Majority Leader. He is also an expert on the Far East and a former college teacher. Invariably, when I write to someone to do the lead article in each issue of *RLN* the busier he is the more likely he will sit down and do a piece. This was the case with Senator Mansfield. He prepared his article at the height of the activities ending the last session of Congress. We thank him very much.

The Library has received a copy of C. R. Rogan's doctoral dissertation. Entitled, "The Civil War in New Mexico," the dissertation earned Rogan the Ph.D. in History at the University of Utah. We receive many dissertations during the year but we particularly liked this one because it was researched almost entirely in Rodgers Library.

This issue of *RLN* marks the beginning of the third year with the Hertzog designed format. For those who need to fill in missing issues the Library still has a few copies of Vol. IX, No. 1 and 4, Vol. X, No. 2 and 3. All other issues are now out-of-print.

**Webster's New Third**

G. & C. Merriam Company has published its first new unabridged dictionary since 1934, "Webster's Third New International Dictionary." Prepared during a period when what Merriam calls "the greatest vocabulary explosion in history" has occurred, the new work has more than 450,000 entries, including 100,000 newly-added words and meanings.
In addition to new material, the dictionary embodies new editorial concepts of dictionary-making. There has been a conscious effort toward popularization. Contemporary spokesmen and publications have been used to supplement classic authors as the major sources of the 200,000 word usage examples. John F. Kennedy, Dwight D. Eisenhower, General Douglas MacArthur, Winston Churchill, Charles Goren, W. Somerset Maugham, Ernest Hemingway, Ethel Merman, Ted Williams, Dinah Shore and Mickey Spilane are among the 14,000 contemporary notables whose remarks are quoted, along with remarks from a wide variety of contemporary publications. The source material for these quotes is a unique Merriam citation file, which contains some ten million words in context and which is insured for more than 1,000,000 dollars.

A second new technique in the new unabridged dictionary is the use of precise single phrases to define entries. A third is the use of a simplified system of sound symbols to indicate the nuances of pronunciation.

The new book, the publisher emphasizes, represents the “living English language of today.” Archaic words and words and phrases not now in general use were culled in preparing the reference work. The new third edition actually contains 150,000 fewer entries than the second edition, which in its latest (1959) revision had some 600,000. Commenting on this fact, a Merriam spokesman told PW that the new work reverses the trend of making every new unabridged dictionary larger than any one that had gone before. “It was getting to the point,” he said, “that a book could not be bound in one volume. And no reader could handle it comfortably.” By “cutting out a great deal of dead wood,” he said, the editors of the book have come up with a representation of “working vocabulary.”

**Technical Services**

During the past several months much time has been devoted to acquiring and cataloging a vast array of books and periodicals in the field of Science. Purchased with funds provided by Highlands University’s Institute of Scientific Research, these books will considerably strengthen library support of research and graduate studies, particularly the doctoral program in Biophysical Chemistry.

Titles range from new translations of Galileo’s classics, *On Motion* and *On Mechanics*, through general surveys like Martin B. Peterson’s *Scientific Thinking and Scientific Writing* to such up-to-the-minute treatises as *Nuclear Radiation Detection*, by William J. Price. Highly technical multi-volume sets and the annual reports of learned societies are also well represented.

Some 300 volumes have reached the shelves, and 150 more are still to come. Over 75 new scientific periodical titles have also been added, many of foreign origin.

“An architect doesn’t have to put bookcases in a house today. But if he didn’t, where would the women put their china?”
Public Services

The school year 1961-62 promises to be the biggest yet in terms of circulation in view of a record enrollment of 1275. We are starting the year with the following fourteen student assistants: George Antonucci, Raton; Josephine Archuleta, Los Alamos; Jean Collins, Espanola; Bonnie Coppock, Springer; Edward Farmer, San Pedro, California; Ralph Garcia, Santa Fe; Nash Jaramillo, Anton Chico; Judy Lockhart, Capitan; Carolyn Moore, Lawton, Oklahoma; Robert Ralston, Ft. Lauderdale, Florida; Pauline Romo, Las Vegas; Roberta Sandoval, Wagon Mound; Irene Trujillo, Santa Fe; and Alice Wilmot, Chardon, Ohio.

On October 4, I visited Los Alamos and toured the Main Library and the Branch Medical Library. The day was well spent and considerable insight was gained into the scope, problems, and procedures of the library system. My thanks to Mrs. Helen Redman, Head Librarian, Miss Gretchen Riese, Medical Librarian, Mr. Charles Machovec, Assistant Head Librarian, and Mr. Arthur Freed, Librarian at the Main Library, for their time and efforts in making the day most enjoyable and informative.

Patrons who have been accustomed to finding particular bound journals in a certain spot will need to look a little ahead or behind that spot to find them now. During the summer some shifting was done to relieve congestion in some sections. This is a problem encountered quite frequently as back volumes are acquired, or new titles are bound.

C.F.C.

New Bib Center Director

Appointment of Miss Phoebe F. Hayes, 4955 South Inca Drive, Englewood, as director of the Bibliographical Center for Research, Rocky Mountain Region, has been announced by Mrs. Victoria Barker, Center president.

Miss Hayes, librarian for the National Farmers Union in Denver since 1950, assumed her new duties at the Bibliographical Center October 1.

Housed in the Main Denver Public Library, 1357 Broadway, the Center maintains a six-million card catalog, large collections of bibliographies and other resources aids which enable patrons to locate and obtain on loan virtually any book in the world.

Membership in the Bibliographical Center for Research includes libraries, organizations, institutions and individuals in twelve states of the Rocky Mountain region (Arizona, Colorado, Kansas, New Mexico, Oklahoma, North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Texas, Utah, Wyoming, Nevada). It also serves as a bureau of information for inter-library loans. Patrons of any library which is a member of the Center may utilize its resources.

Organized by Malcolm G. Wyer while he was librarian for the Denver Public Library, the Bibliographical Center was the first facility of its kind when opened in 1935. Rodgers Library has been a member of the Center for many years. Rodgers Library has participated in joint purchases with the Bib Center for bibliographies too expensive for any one college in the region to acquire.
A Few New Acquisitions Of General Or Special Interest

(For call numbers refer to public catalog)

Adams, Henry
Great Secession Winter of 1860-61

Baldwin, Ernest
Dynamic Aspects of Biochemistry

Breihan, Carl W.
Quantrill and His Civil War Guerrillas

Butterfield, Herbert
Origins of Modern Science

Cleveland, Harlan
The Overseas Americans

Duberman, Martin B.
Charles Francis Adams, 1807-1886

Emerson, Ralph Waldo
The Letters of R. W. Emerson

Fuentes, Carlos
Where the Air Is Clear

Garvin, John Wood, ed.
Canadian Poets

Glaser, Kurt
Czecho-slovakia; a Critical History

Gibbs, Josiah Willard
Scientific Papers

Gunther, John
Inside Europe Today

Hadley, Arthur T.
The Nation’s Safety and Arms Control

Horgan, Paul
Citizen of New Salem

Hunt, Aurora
Kirby Benedict; Frontier Federal Judge

Lea, Henry Charles
A History of the Inquisition of Spain

Long, Haniel
Spring Returns

McKown, Mrs. T. D.
The Devil’s Letters to Mary MacLane

Mao, Tse-Tung
The Selected Works

Palmer, Henry R.
This Was Air Travel

Parish, William J.
The Charles Ilfield Company

Possony, Stefan T.
A Century of Conflict

Potter, Elmer B.
Sea Power; a Naval History

Powell, Lawrence Clark
Act of Enchantment

Purdue University
Retrieval Guide to Thermophysical Properties Research Literature

Rose, Ernest
History of German Literature

Schilpp, Paul Arthur, ed.
Philosophy of C. D. Broad

Schmeckebier, Laurence F.
Government Publications and Their Use

Shirer, William L.
The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich

Spoehr, Louis
The Musical Journeys

Summerhayes, Martha
Vanished Arizona

Thomas, Hugh
The Spanish Civil War

Trump, J. Lloyd
Focus on Change; Guide to Better Schools

U. S. Dept. of Commerce
Future Development of the San Francisco Bay Area, 1960-2020

U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Wildlife Abstracts

Utechin, Sergej
Everyman’s Concise Encyclopedia of Russia