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**THE INTERRELATEDNESS OF BOOK SELECTION AND  
CENSORSHIP IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO  
THE POSITION IN THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**DIGBY ALEXANDER WOLLASTON SALES**

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under the supervision of  
**Professor J.G. Kesting**

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## SUMMARY

The thesis approached the investigation as to whether or not there is any interrelatedness between book selection and censorship in public libraries, in two ways : viz.

- (a) a review of the literature, and
- (b) an exploratory empirical investigation of the position in South Africa.

The literature survey was the major part of the study in which the attention was focused on the current position in the United Kingdom, the United States of America and the Republic of South Africa. As a means of introduction to the public library, a brief outline of the rise of libraries in the West was given, with special mention being made of the growth of literacy.

The modern public library's aims and objectives in the three countries concerned were covered separately as these determine the formulation of a specific book selection policy. This in turn depends on two main factors, viz. the nature of the community being served and the theoretical principles of book selection.

The possible negative effects of literary censorship on public libraries, realising their aims and objectives, is discussed by first giving an outline of literary censorship in the West. This is preceded by a discussion of the pros and cons of censorship which served as an introduction to the issue as to whether or not censorship occurs in public libraries by examining such aspects as their assumptions, the response to complaints, and the reserve shelf.

The empirical study served as a corollary to the above. It covered all the public libraries in South Africa which determine selection policy to any large extent, viz. the four provincial library services and the ten autonomous municipal libraries. The rudimentary nature of the study resulted in no definitive statements being made. Nevertheless, it appeared that as their overseas counterparts, South African librarians did sometimes censor.

It was concluded that all librarians sometimes censor so that there is an interrelatedness between book selection and censorship.

## PREFACE

It is hoped that this thesis will not give offence to anyone of any sex, race, creed or colour.

In choosing between the masculine or feminine form of the personal pronoun, the former has been used in the text throughout for the purposes of uniformity. The choice was largely determined by the general convention of associating the masculine form with the neuter.

Reference to racial and colour differences was unavoidable in the discussion of contemporary librarianship in South Africa. An explanation of the terms employed is found in 4.1.

When reference has been made to censorship undertaken by religious groups (cf. 6.3.3), it is hoped that this has not resulted in a disparagement of those religions or religious sects mentioned. If any such inference is assumed by the reader, it is necessary to state that it was unintentional.

The capitalisation and italicisation (viz. by underlining) used in the text follows the style employed by the Collins dictionary of the English language (1979).

Finally, there are certain individuals the researcher would like to thank for their assistance towards this finished product.

My special thanks go to my supervisor, Professor J. G. Kesting, for his encouragement and guidance, and also to Mrs J.A. Albert, Ms G. Finchilescu, Mr D.H. Foster and Mrs J.G. Smith for their advice regarding the questionnaire, (although the responsibility for any defects in this regard rests wholly with the researcher), to all the respondents to the questionnaire for their co-operation, and to Ms E.M. Carlos for the typing of the thesis.

## CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING

There seems to be no doubt as to the primary significance of book selection as an activity undertaken by all libraries (cf. 5.2 & 5.3.1). It may be expected, consequently, that such an activity would be based on sound theoretical considerations (cf. 5.1 & 5.5). However, the impression gained from general observation and a cursory examination of the literature was that, in practice, it is carried out on the whole in a somewhat haphazard fashion, particularly in public librarianship. Thus, more often than not it results in librarians, on largely random, subjective and untested assumptions, providing what they consider is needed for their libraries, rather than attempting to gauge needs assessed more methodically.

Such a state would then presuppose that there are always some books which are being selected or rejected by public libraries for reasons other than the intrinsic merits of each book or its relation to a cautiously devised policy of collection development (cf. 7.5 & 7.7).

It also appeared that social attitudes might serve as a decisive factor affecting the selection of especially 'controversial' material, as both librarians and their public seemed at times to prevent that such works be displayed on the open shelves, thereby limiting their accessibility (cf. 7.4). Thus it seemed that book selection was often advertently or inadvertently extended to forms of censorship.

These assumptions seemed to be supported by a more purposeful scanning of the literature, especially of articles on British and American public librarianship. It was not possible, however, to ascertain whether or not this position was equally true of public library selection in South Africa, as the relationship between book selection and censorship, as far as could be established, had not been examined in depth at any stage in the past by local librarians.

This deficiency appeared to be an aspect demanding urgent attention, from the standpoint of both the requirements of a comprehensive programme of research into South African librarianship, and the current consensus

among Western countries that the very topic of censorship in South Africa (which is generally regarded as being comparatively repressive in terms of political governance in international circles (cf.6.3.3.2)), constitutes a field in need of incisive study.

This research is designed to investigate whether or not there is a relationship between book selection and censorship in public libraries in general, and in South Africa in particular. The focus has fallen on public libraries, as it is in this type of library that the rejection or selection of books on grounds other than the standards governed in terms of the aims and objectives of a particular institution has its greatest potential impact (cf. Chs.3 & 4). When public libraries restrict access to the record for considerations other than those that concern the quality of their services, it may be justly claimed that they are unfaithful to their innate vocation of attempting to meet the needs of all the members of the uncircumscribed public they profess to serve in terms of their stated objectives (cf.2.2.1 & 2.2.2).

As a result, it is proposed that these problems have given rise to a main hypothesis, viz. that book selection and censorship of necessity are indivisible activities in public libraries, thus reinforcing the supposition that there is an inherent interrelatedness between the two, and two sub-hypotheses, viz. (a) that the aims and objectives of the public library determine the framework within which book selection takes place and (b) that libraries have been and will continue to be one of the major targets of censors, because literary censorship is as old as the written word (cf. end of Ch.10).

Four other related hypotheses are implied in the aims of the proposed empirical study to be undertaken among South African public librarians concerned with the conception and execution of book selection policy, viz.:

- (a) to identify the objectives within which book selection operates ;
- (b) to determine how the libraries selected for the sample deal with complaints generated by the availability of books assumed to be 'controversial' by some ;
- (c) to examine certain book selection practices, especially those concerning 'controversial' books ; and

(d) to ascertain whether the censorship of books is exercised as a result of factors within or without the library.

## 1.2 PROPOSED METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

These hypotheses will be tested in two ways, viz. by methodically examining the relevant literature covering the public libraries in the U.K., the U.S.A. and the R.S.A. ,(this investigation is to comprise the main body of the thesis),and by undertaking an exploratory empirical study of those South African public libraries which select most of their own books.

The literature survey is confined to the three countries mentioned above chiefly because the modern public library, as it is known in general terms today, emerged concurrently in the U.K., and the U.S.A. in the 19th century (cf.3.1). The past and present cultural links (with special reference to the principles that govern the formation and continued growth of libraries) that South Africa has had with these two countries has resulted in their theories and practices of librarianship having a material influence on library developments in South Africa (cf.4.1).

In the review of the literature the current position will be emphasised, but as a means of placing the study in its historical context, it will commence with a brief outline of the rise of libraries and their part in Western culture, stressing in particular the implications of the growth of literacy for the development of public librarianship (cf. Ch.2).

In considering the modern public library in the three countries concerned (cf. Chs.3 & 4), the development of their aims and objectives will be emphasised, as these of necessity determine book selection policy (cf.5.3.1). The formulation of a specific book selection policy (cf.5.3.1 & 7.5), it would appear, is dependent on two main factors, viz. the nature of the community being served (cf.5.3.4) and the theoretical principles of book selection (cf.5.5).

In order to maintain freedom of access it seems self-evident that public libraries would, as a matter of course, be opposed to literary censorship in principle. Accordingly, a brief outline of literary censorship

in the West will be given (cf. 4.3.3). This will be preceded by a discussion of the pros and cons of censorship (cf. 4.3.2) which is to serve as an introduction to the issues as to whether or not censorship occurs in public libraries, and if so, in what manner it manifests itself (cf. 4.4 ff.). The logically ensuing matter of the relationship between book selection and censorship will then be analysed (cf. Ch. 7).

An exploratory empirical investigation of the position in South African public libraries seems called for as a corollary to the focal aspect of the literature survey. It is proposed as part of its methodology (cf. Ch. 8) that it would be desirable to send a questionnaire to the inclusive group of those individuals who determine selection policy in South African public libraries in their professional capacity.

The degree of correspondence (or lack of it), between the literature survey and the data collected empirically (cf. Ch. 9) will be considered by way of a conclusion (cf. Ch. 10).

## CHAPTER 2. PUBLIC LIBRARIES

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

As this study deals with book selection (cf. 5.2 for definition) in one type of library (i.e. the modern public library (cf. Ch.3)), two main aspects of relevance to the major topic will be examined in the next three chapters, viz.:

- (a) In order to determine the nature of the evolution of this type of library, the history of libraries in the West will be briefly outlined (cf.2.3.3).
- (b) Since book selection does not take place in a vacuum, but is determined by the aims and objectives of the institution in which it occurs, the present aims and objectives of public libraries can only be understood within their historical context.

The history of the modern public library in the United Kingdom (U.K.), the United States of America (U.S.A.) and the Republic of South Africa (R.S.A.) will be briefly discussed in terms of ~~those~~ aims and objectives (cf.3.2;3.3; Ch.4 respectively).

Before any examination of these two aspects can take place, it is necessary to define the key terms used.

### 2.2 DEFINITION OF TERMS

#### 2.2.1 PUBLIC LIBRARY

First, it is necessary to take the two elements separately. A library, in its modern sense, is "a collection of books and literary material kept for reading, study and consultation" (Harrod, 1971:378) which is properly housed and scientifically built up and supplemented by professional staff trained for the purpose" (Malan,1978:44) of providing a service to a predetermined clientele.

A library is also a "place, building, room or rooms set apart for the keeping and use of a collection of books" (Harrod, 1971:378) by a pre-determined clientele.

In the following discussion a library will usually include the collection, the building and the mode of service, but there will be times when it will mean any one of these three components.

'Public', according to the Concise Oxford dictionary, means "of, concerning the people as a whole", and therefore, when used adjectivally, it embodies the idea that something is open to all or shared by all of the population of a given geographical area or political unit of authority.

The concept of the public library incorporates more than the idea of providing access to all of the population. As will be seen later (cf. 3.1), access to all is not a prerequisite for calling a library public (Malan, 1978 : 6-7). Used here in its prenominal sense it is an institution "maintained at the expense of, serving, or for the use of a community." (Collins dictionary of the English language).

In countries which have followed the Anglo-American tradition, a public library is seen as "a democratic institution for education, culture, and information [which] should be established under the clear mandate of law ... [and] should be maintained wholly from public funds... To fulfill its purposes, the public library must be readily accessible, and its doors open for free and equal use by all members of the community regardless of race, colour, nationality, age, sex, religion, language, status or educational attainment." (Unesco public library manifesto, 1972 : 129-30).

The commonly accepted features of the public library, therefore, centre on its general accessibility to all able users to whom it makes available through worldwide co-operation any library material, (subject, as a rule, to the proviso that the laws of the land are not contravened in the process), usually free, or at a nominal fee, as it is supported partly or wholly by public funds controlled by a public authority (Jones, 1971 : 76; McClellan, 1973 : 130).

### 2.2.2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Aim and objective, along with role, purpose, goal, and function, are in many respects terms which are broadly synonymous and interchangeable. They tend to be used arbitrarily and inconsistently in the literature, to such an extent that a discussion of the terminology, as such, can easily lead to an esoteric debate on semantics. Such a debate, as a matter of course, would be a diversion from the major issues which are to follow (Totterdell, 1978 : 13-4), viz. why public libraries in their modern sense

have been established, and why the reasons for their existence have changed.

In this study the discussion of these terms will be based on the usage of the document prepared by the Public Library Research Group (PLRG) of the London and Home Counties Branch of the [British] Library Association, Public library aims and objectives (Library Association, 1971: 233-4), as it has been applied widely as a basis for management systems both in the U.K. and elsewhere (Brown, 1979: 382), and may therefore serve as a consensus model for our purpose. Further implications of this document will be dealt with later (cf. 3.2.4.3), whereas at this stage our concern is with the document's structure and terminology.

In the document the following terms are given, viz. aim, objectives, sub-objectives, principal activities, elements (materials), and elements (methods). These terms are related in a hierarchical sequence, as given above, from the general to the specific.

Structurally, the relationship of the more specific aspects - sub-objectives to elements (methods) - are presented in chart form. This is shown by placing the sub-objectives to elements (methods) as headings along a horizontal line while the different facets of the sub-objectives, and the corresponding means of achieving them, are given in perpendicular columns. The following example will serve as an illustration:

<u>Sub-objectives</u>	<u>Principal activities</u>	<u>Elements(materials)</u>	<u>Elements(methods)</u>
1.1 To promote the use of public libraries as educational agencies for the individual	1.1.2 Leading functions	Books, play sets, large print books and Braille, films, and film strips, transparencies, video tapes and cassettes, painting and sculpture, maps	Staff, bibliographies, catalogues, classifications, book lists and bulletins, assistance to readers. Photocopying, microfilm readers, etc. Appropriate storage and accommodation. "

(Library Association, 1971: 233)

The aim and objectives which precede these more specific sub-divisions are the points of departure for the succeeding historical analysis of the public library.

The aim refers to the broad societal intent of the public library, and

will therefore be used to include the public library's overall purpose, its ultimate goal, and its role in society. The document employs such general phrases as "sustaining the quality of life ... promoting the concept of a democratic society" which would be "effected through the public library as a multi-purpose information-education-culture agency" (Library Association, 1971:233).

The objectives, on the other hand, are concerned with four delimited aspects of society to which the public library wishes to direct its energies. The objectives given are defined as:-

"Education. To foster and provide means for self-development of the individual/group at whatever stage of education, closing the gap between the individual and recorded knowledge.

"Information. To bring to the individual/group accurate information quickly and in depth, particularly on topics of current concern.

"Culture. To be one of the principal centres of cultural life and promote a keener participation, enjoyment and appreciation of all the arts.

"Leisure. To play a part in encouraging the positive use of leisure and providing material for change and relaxation." (Library Association, 1971:233).

A hierarchical structure, proposed by Malan, concerning the nature and application of these terms to all types of libraries is not as clear as the one proposed. It also has an unresolved conflict in that the aim (called "central object") is given as "information" (Malan, 1978:23), whereas the "provision and/or transmission of information" is seen by Malan as one of the primary objectives (called "aims") together with education. The subsidiary objectives are leisure (called "recreation") and culture (called "aesthetic appreciation and enculturation"). Culture he sees as being inseparable from education (Malan, 1978:26). Activities (called "functions") are also divided into primary and subsidiary activities (Malan, 1978:27).

Totterdell, in his introduction to Public library purpose, states that a generally acceptable hierarchy is "purpose" as the most general term, synonymous with "role"; "aims" or "goals" represent a long term ambition, while "objectives" or "targets" are short term aims (Totterdell, 1978:13). However, as there is no consensus among authors in the use

of these terms, resulting in inconsistency, this hierarchy was also rejected as a model.

A clear division between the concepts underlying these terms is essential in order to ensure that they are not interchangeable in an undisciplined sense. In examining the aims and objectives of public libraries these terms will be used, in the sense given them by the Library Association, i.e. of the ultimate purpose and the means of achieving this purpose by concentrating on certain specified facets of society. The other terms which are synonymous with these will not be used within the framework of the specific discussion of the aims and objectives of libraries. However, all these terms may be used in the thesis in other contexts in which they do not have this given connotation with regard to the aims and objectives.

### 2.2.3 LITERACY

If a public library is to realise its aims and objectives an adequate collective level of literacy needs to be presupposed among the people it serves. As will be seen later in the review of the evolution of libraries in the West (cf. 2.3.3), the term literacy has been used as an antithesis to illiteracy because "the raison d'être of libraries is the function of institutionalizing the record, [which is the register of man's memory in retrievable form], giving it order and discipline and making its content optimally available." (Kesting, 1980:151).

Literacy, in a broad sense, refers "to the degree of dissemination among a society's population of the dual skills of reading and writing." (Golden, 1968:412). As the ability to read and write varies greatly among individuals within a society, such variation has a bearing on the quality and nature of library use.

Kesting identifies two major poles in literacy, viz. receptive\* (or passive) and creative (or active). It is the latter type which, in a collective sense, usually results in library use. If a library is to provide a

\*In a discussion with the author, it emerged that this term is now preferred to 'functional', (the usage in the cited source), as the latter term is used in too many diverse senses in the literature, while the former provides a more precise polar antithesis to 'creative'.

quality service, there needs to be a population educated to, what he calls, the intermediate creative literacy level which he equates with the 12th year of formal schooling, (collective equation of levels of literacy to levels of formal education being a feature of his scale) (Kesting, 1980 : 150,156,166).

He suggests a six-point literacy scale in which he equates each proposed level of literacy with a corresponding level of formal education, viz.:

" Elementary Receptive Literacy (ERL): The ability to master the alphabet of a person's primary language to the extent that signs and posters can be understood and that simple sign language can be produced - the successful completion of the fourth year of formal education.

" Intermediate Receptive Literacy (IRL): The ability to read simple texts and to write simple messages in purely functional situations - the successful completion of the sixth year of formal education.

" Advanced Receptive Literacy (ARL): The ability to read and write more complex, but still mainly functional situations - the successful completion of the eighth year of formal education.

" Elementary Creative Literacy (ECL): The ability to begin reading more complex texts, and to write such texts with a marked degree of independent thought - the successful completion of the tenth year of formal education.

" Intermediate Creative Literacy (ICL): The ability to read complex texts in one's primary and secondary languages with some critical insight and to write texts displaying original thinking of advanced degree - the successful completion of the twelfth year of formal education.

" Advanced Creative Literacy (ACL): This level of literacy implies a sophisticated ability to read texts in more than one language with critical insight and to write texts considered worthy of scholars - the successful completion of a first degree at a university. " (Kesting, 1980 : 155-6).

He considers this collective generalisation to be an oversimplification, as a high level of literacy can be achieved by individuals without formal education, while, conversely, a level of formal education cannot be assumed to guarantee the attainment and maintenance of a given level of literacy. None the less, he argues that the growth of literacy and the

history of progress in Western civilization go very much hand in hand (Kesting, 1980:151).

## 2.3 THE HISTORY OF LIBRARIES IN THE WEST

### 2.3.1 INTRODUCTION

Any examination of public libraries must be executed within the wider context of libraries as a whole, as it may be postulated with some confidence that the development of libraries is a result of the growth of knowledge through the ages manifested in the transcribed record (Meijer, 1977). Meijer's system of periodisation has been chosen as a model for our purpose here, because he had examined and rejected in a convincing fashion the five main approaches to periodisation, viz. geographic; by library type; by the form of the record; cultural historic; and by the intent of the librarian, as they did not comply with the three rules of periodisation postulated by Meijer. His proposed rules are as follows:

" (a) each designated epoch shall reflect its principal characteristic consistently;

(b) the commencement of an epoch shall be pinpointed precisely by date, signifying a moment in time when something characteristically new and of 'universal' significance has emerged; and

(c) an aspectual history shall be periodised in such a manner that both its principal characteristic and its involvement with general history will be reflected in the designated epochs." (Meijer, 1977:iv).

Libraries and the record, in this approach to periodisation, must be viewed against the wider background of the development of Western culture and the growth of literacy, which has been an integral part of this development. The library emerged to meet a need of a civilisation by preserving and making available the written record, or, as Shera has put it: "[the library is] a bibliographic system brought into being to meet man's need for access to the social transcript." (Shera, 1972:117).

A library is therefore, as it were, created by a civilisation and it in turn helps to promote and preserve that civilisation (de Vleeschauer, 1963:10). This results in the library serving as an inextricable part of the society within which it finds itself. If in its constitution and service

it fails to reflect the principal socio-cultural characteristics of that society, it would cease to exist as a meaningful agency (Caldwell, 1968 : 226).

As social institutions libraries have always been affected by the changes that have taken place in society (Immelman, 1966 : 57). However in another sense the library has been affected with equal force by changes in the record in terms of its content and form.

### 2.3.2 PHYSICAL FORM OF THE RECORD

Before examining the content of the record, it is necessary to look at briefly the form of the record, because it has influenced the library as defined. Through the ages the library has had to adjust itself to the different forms the record has assumed, as this governed the methods of organisation within the library and also affected the design of the building.

The first attempts at writing in preliterate societies were crude graphic systems carved on stone, wood, clay, or whatever suitable material was in general supply and relatively inexpensive. This writing was of three kinds, viz. pictographic, ideographic, or phonographic (Gates, 1969 : 3). It was with the invention of the first form of stylised writing, cuneiform, in Sumeria around 3500 BC (Mallowan, 1961, cited in Gates, 1976 : 7) that it can be said that true civilisation in the West began (Kesting, 1980 : 151).

#### 2.3.2.1 MATERIAL ON WHICH THE RECORD HAS BEEN PRODUCED

The material on which the record has been produced has varied through the ages. The earliest surviving records from Sumeria were made of clay. Around 3000 BC the ancient Egyptians invented papyrus which remained the accepted writing material throughout antiquity and it was even used as late as 1022 AD (Gates, 1969 : 6). The ancient Greeks had written on leaves and the bark of trees ; stone or bronze for inscriptions, and wax-coated tablets. Hellenistic Greece also used parchment and vellum (Gates, 1969 : 9).

Vellum, and particularly parchment, remained the main writing materials until the introduction of paper from China in the late Middle

Ages (Gates, 1969:16). Since the invention of the printed book in the mid-15th century, the book, as codex, has not changed in a substantive sense, although it is good to remember that from the 19th century paper was no longer made from linen rags but from wood pulp (Gates, 1962:21). Today the record in its deviation from the codex format can be produced on cellulose film or on electromagnetic tape

### 2.3.2.2 FORMAT OF THE RECORD

As writing materials changed, so did the form of the record, viz. large and small tablets, the roll, the diptych, the codex and large and small manuscript books (Gates, 1969:5-13). After the invention of printing the book became more compact, ranging from the leather-bound book to the modern paperback. From the 17th century onwards the journal made its appearance, firstly, as a means of disseminating scientific ideas, but, later, also as the popular magazine (Gates, 1976:49).

Recorded knowledge is no longer stored only in codex form, but is preserved in microfilm, in computer discs and tapes and on phonographic records and tapes (Bekker, 1976b:109).

All these changes resulted in different methods of organisation being devised for the preservation, storage and retrieval of the record. Meanwhile, libraries are continually growing (Thompson, 1977:210) in accordance with Ranganathan's fifth law of library science (Ranganathan, 1966:73), thereby prompting changes in format to more compact forms.

The attitude to the record has moved from attempted permanence (writing on stone), to recognising the ephemerality of some forms of the record, much as computerised data bases and transaction records, and of more immediate concern to public library use, the mass media.

Although it is acknowledged by librarians that every publication has its use (Thompson, 1977:213), it is felt in some circles (cf. A mission statement for public libraries, cf. 3.3.6.4) that portions of the record should be destroyed " [which are] deemed to be insignificant, irrelevant, and unrepresentative, in order that the useful and pertinent be accessible." (American Library Association (1977):616).

### 2.3.3 LIBRARIES AND WESTERN CULTURE

#### 2.3.3.1 INTRODUCTION

Meijer, in his proposed system of periodisation, saw the idea of the 'progress of knowledge' in the West as the basis of examining the evolution of the record and of libraries. The history of libraries in the West is intertwined with Western culture. He identifies three epochs in the history of the West, viz. "de westerse bibliotheek op het beperkte kennisgebied 3200 v. Chr - 1520 n. Chr. ; de westerse bibliotheek op het verbrede kennisgebied 1520-1789; de westerse bibliotheek op het gespecialiseerde kennisgebied 1789-heden." (Meijer, 1977:iv, 93).

Libraries in their aims and objectives have reflected the changes that were taking place in Western culture. The evolution of different types of libraries manifested itself in the shift in the aims and objectives of the predominant type of library at the time which required it to meet new social needs. Although different types of libraries have emerged, thereby resulting in increased differentiation by type of library, it should be realised that there is an underlying continuity, in that elements of earlier types are perpetuated in those following (de Vleeschauwer, 1963:9).

#### 2.3.3.2 3500 BC<sup>\*</sup> - 1520 AD

Two main factors limited the growth of knowledge in this period:

(a) It was some time (around 1000 BC (Sullivan, 1933:513)) before a form of writing was developed that was easy to manipulate. Thus it was only after the general acceptance of the Phoenician alphabet that qualitative literature was produced in any quantity, as in Hellenistic Greece (Gates, 1976:11). The Romans built on and refined the knowledge and the literary genres they had acquired from the Greeks (Gates, 1976:13);

(b) Relatively few people were literate in this period. Although receptive, and to a certain extent creative, literacy did increase during the period of the Roman Empire and again in the late Middle Ages, however, the numbers remained small, especially as the production of the record was dependent on scribes, resulting in relatively few copies from a limited title range being produced, which probably implied their

\*This date rather than 3200 BC is chosen (cf. 2.3.2)

use by relatively small reading circles (Sullivan, 1933 :513-4).

As the record was not produced in great numbers, the libraries of antiquity, especially the larger ones at Nineveh, Alexandria, Pergamum and the Ulpian library at Rome, were concerned with collecting all available copies of the record and preserving them (Gates, 1976 : Ch.1).

In Athens and Rome there were many small temple libraries, as well as private and 'public' libraries (Gates, 1969 :11). Although there was general accessibility to the different libraries, access was limited to an elite, owing to the social structure, but determined also by the collective level of literacy at the time (Malan, 1978 :6).

It has been realised from the earliest times of antiquity that knowledge is "power", so that literacy, and creative literacy in particular remained for most of this period in the hands of small influential groups (Thompson, 1977 :208).

Literacy was the prerogative of the priestly classes in Babylonia, Assyria and Egypt, although receptive literacy was soon extended to the trading classes as an economic necessity for commercial intercourse. Throughout antiquity a degree of receptive literacy was common among those involved in business (Sullivan, 1933 :513). De Vleeschauwer (1966 :9) endorses this assumption.

Receptive literacy became common among the urban people from the Hellenistic period onwards and it extended to levels of creative literacy among the more cultured citizens. Particularly in the period of the Roman Empire receptive literacy was a practical requirement of everyday life, because many laws, notices, instructions and decrees were written (Sullivan, 1933 :514).

As a result of the fall of the Roman Empire in the West in the 5th century AD, the growth of knowledge declined, largely as many libraries were destroyed by the Barbarians. Literacy became controlled once more by a priestly class, viz. monks of the early Christian Church (Gates, 1969 :14).

A strongly hierarchical Christian Church held sway over the monasteries, which were the only repositories of culture and learning in the early Middle Ages, as it was here, in the monastic scriptoria, where secular, but mainly religious, works were copied (Gates, 1969 :14).

Economic trade declined at this time, resulting in the unordained man, including the nobility, becoming illiterate (Sullivan, 1933 : 514).

The Carolingian renaissance of the 8th century gave the growth of knowledge some impetus, which, however, soon waned (Gates, 1976 : 23-5). It was only in the 12th century that the growth of knowledge once more progressed, owing to social, economic and cultural changes.

As a result of a closer relationship between Church and State, the nobility generally became receptively literate once more, as were those who were involved in trade which was operating again, arising from the links forged during the Crusades (Sullivan, 1933 : 515). As business relations became more complex, the importance of receptive literacy among the lower stratas of society became apparent. During the 13th century the Hanseatic merchants were among the early eroders of the Church's authority by establishing secular schools for their workers (Sullivan, 1933 : 515).

There was also a revival of creative literacy which followed in the wake of the founding of universities. These universities had libraries with works in the vernacular, as many of the scholars and students did not know Latin (Gates, 1976 : 31-2).

The Renaissance of the 14th century, saw the emergence, particularly in Italy, of a cultural life to match that of Hellenistic Greece (Gates, 1976 : 37). This period was also called the age of Humanism, as there was a revival of learning with the emphasis on the writings of the Greek and Latin authors. They were studied instead of the theological writers resulting in a further erosion of the influence of the Church, and paved the way for more widespread secularisation. Libraries once more became important as centres of education (Gates, 1976 : 37). Books were also at this time being collected for prestige by the rich (Malan, 1978 : 8).

Prior to the 15th century reading could never have become a common activity of the general public because of the time and the cost involved in producing a book. The invention of printing with moveable type on cheap paper changed this. Mechanical duplication lowered the unit cost per volume, and it also made possible the widespread promotion of books in the vernacular. Although the incunabula were aimed at the "learned and leisured classes, [printing] furnished the technical prerequisites for

the genesis of an unlimited reading public, once conditions should impel the masses to learn to read." (Sullivan, 1933 : 515).

Printing was able to meet the demand for books which had been stimulated by the Renaissance and Humanism (Gates, 1969 : 15). The critical approach to learning, a feature of Humanism, was carried over into the theological sphere. The ensuing disputes contributed towards the Reformation which split Christianity from 1517 onwards and further weakened the power of the Roman Catholic Church. (Gates, 1976 : 45; Sullivan, 1933 : 515).

### 2.3.3.3 1520 - 1789

This period was one of tremendous growth in the scope and diversity of rational knowledge, with an accompanying increase in libraries.

The importance of the Reformation was that Luther "popularized the conception of the direct communication of all men with the divine through the written word." (Sullivan, 1933 : 515). As the "written word" was in the vernacular, it led to the printing of "literature significant to the general public" (Sullivan, 1933 : 516). This showed "the previous existence of a wider sphere of literacy in the native [rather] than the Latin tongue." (Sullivan, 1933 : 516).

In those countries which remained Roman Catholic (excluding France) "the medieval attitude towards literacy underwent relatively slight modification." (Sullivan, 1933 : 516).

During the 17th and 18th centuries new Protestant sects arose which helped in the propagation of at least receptive literacy (e.g. the work of Sunday Schools) (Sullivan, 1933 : 516; Altick, 1958 : 25-6).

In areas where Protestantism was strong, town libraries appeared which were often donated by benefactors and administered by the municipalities. They were first established in Germany in the 15th and 16th centuries, and the example was followed, inter alia in Switzerland, Norway and Britain. Many of these developed into scholarly libraries or disappeared (McColvin, 1966 : 366) (cf. 3.2.1.1).

The 17th century witnessed the beginnings of a new scientific era, as a result of the influences of the Renaissance, Humanism and the Reformation. The spirit of enquiry and research which typified it "was

dependent upon access to all kinds of materials [and so] stimulated the formation of libraries." (Gates, 1976 : 45).

These libraries were the antecedents of the special libraries, as well as once more making the universities the centres of study and research on which the bases of the modern university is founded.

This was also a time of emergent nationalism which stimulated the founding of national libraries as research centres. The national library is a return to the large libraries of antiquity in terms of attempted universality (Thompson, 1977 : 212-3). It is now applied to a particular country or language where the national record, helped by copyright laws, is preserved.

By the 18th century the advances made by science had led to "mechanical inventions and technological achievements which had resulted in the industrial revolution" (Gates 1976 : 47), and the rise of literacy among, at first, the middle class in the 18th century, and, in the following century, among the working class (Altick, 1958 : 46). Initially during the 18th century the acquisition of literacy was denied the workers as "the mercantilistic state was thought to depend largely upon the supply of cheap labour." (Sullivan, 1933 : 517).

In the U.K. where this view also prevailed, it was countered to a certain extent by the evangelical churches which placed great emphasis on the reading of the Bible. Nevertheless, it was only to be in the 19th century that the lower classes regained the literacy they had had prior to the Civil War (Altick, 1958 : 30).

This was also the period of the Enlightenment, which, while it stressed rational knowledge, also questioned existing ideas and institutions (Collins dictionary of the English language). This movement gave rise to liberalism and the idea of the natural rights of all men, which would include literacy for all people (Malan, 1978 : 9). It was only in the following century that this came to fruition in universal education, i.e. formal compulsory schooling from ages 6/7 to 16 or the attainment of the tenth year of study for all able people.

By the end of this period the notions of intellectual freedom and equal opportunity for all were widespread, but it was only in the 19th century, when liberalism had become widely accepted, that these ideas

materialised (Malan, 1978 :9). As the replacement of entrenched ideas and customs is difficult, it took a revolution to bring about a new social dispensation known as modern democracy (Sullivan, 1933 :517).

#### 2.3.3.4 1789 - 1980

This period is characterised by an accelerated growth in rational knowledge, resulting in far-reaching scientific and technological advances which expanded not only man's physical capabilities, but also his mental capabilities (Shera, 1976 :80). This led by the 20th century to a vast increase in the production of the record, the content of which became more and more specialised.

Libraries adapted to these changes with the appearance of a new type of library - the subject specialised library - which laid emphasis on the dissemination of information, often using the new media of technology such as computers (Gates, 1976 :216). Such specialisation, as well as other types of libraries which emerged in this period, viz. the school library, the public library, the modern university library, and the national library, meant that libraries could no longer be self-sufficient, but had to cooperate in the form of networks of resource-sharing library systems, often based on technology (Shera, 1976 :186) (cf.3.3.5.1).

These technological advances increased the need for commerce and industry in the industrialised countries to have workers who, in a collective sense, were initially receptively literate, but later also creatively literate (Bekker, 1976b :12). This need in turn gave rise to universal education (Kesting, 1980 :151) of which the establishing of public libraries was part.

The impetus for universal education (and for the public library) came from liberalism, humanitarianism and utilitarianism during the 19th century, culminating in the U.K. being the first Western country to pass an act on compulsory elementary education in 1870. This was after the liberal-democratic community in Britain had convinced the middle and upper classes of the advantages of universal education for political stability (Sullivan, 1933 :518-9) (cf.3.2.2.3). An added reason for the introduction of universal education was the challenge to the capitalist system emanating from socialism, communism and Marxism.

Today in the industrialised countries of the West over 90 per cent of the population have attained a level of receptive literacy as a result of universal education (Wellisch, 1978 :233-4). However, creative illiteracy could be as high as 30, or even 50 per cent in these countries (Katz, 1980 : 38). Consequently, the relatively few users of the public library (20-30 per cent (cf.3.2.4.4 and 3.3.6.3)) are a much larger percentage than the figure suggests, when it is remembered that potential library users tend to be limited to those who have attained a level of creative literacy (cf.2.2.3).

At the time literacy was increasing, major technological advances were being made which gave the common man more leisure (cf.3.2.4.7), which in turn made it necessary for political and social reasons to provide mass entertainment, particularly for the urban population (Malan, 1978 :11; Sullivan, 1933 :515). One of the means of entertainment was communication through the mass media, which included ephemeral reading matter. The complexity of modern life also meant that the common man needed more information to cope with his day-to-day problems.

The effects of these changes in society on the emergence and development of the public library will be analysed in the following two chapters.

## CHAPTER 3. THE MODERN PUBLIC LIBRARY

### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter defined the terms relating to the public library and its aims and objectives (cf. 2.2.1 & 2.2.2). It also gave a brief account of the place of the library in Western culture, especially in relation to the growth of literacy. This Chapter deals more specifically with the history of the aims and objectives of the modern public library in the U.K. and the U.S.A.. The position in the R.S.A. is covered in Chapter 4.

The modern public library rests on two cornerstones, viz.:

- (a) that a certain collective level of literacy among the potential users is to be presupposed; and
- (b) that access to it should be free, being supported directly from public funds.

The combination of these two factors results in the principle on which the public library is based - free access to all (cf. 2.2.1).

The modern public library has its origins in the U.K. and the U.S.A. where, according to de Vleeschauwer, it developed almost concurrently, yet independently (de Vleeschauwer, 1963:220). In the U.K. Canterbury became the first rate-supported library in 1847 (according to Murison (1971:23), it was Warrington in 1847) and in 1850 the Public Library Act was passed by the British Parliament (Kelly, 1977:11). In the U.S.A. Boston was given the right to establish and maintain a public library by the state legislature in 1848 (Shera, 1976:39), and a state law was passed in New Hampshire in 1849, enabling its towns to levy taxes for the support of libraries (Gates, 1976:68).

It was only with the rise of socialism in the 20th century, constituting "an equalizing process by which services regardless of social, cultural, national, religious or race differences, must be equally open to all," (Malan, 1978:15) that the public library, as it is known today, emerged. It first achieved "its full vigour and stature in American hands," (Thompson, 1977:84) and although the initiative for changes has usually come from the U.S.A., there has always been a close exchange of ideas

between the U.S.A. and the U.K. (McColvin, 1956:72).

An example of this was the introduction of open access, which was introduced in the U.S.A. by William Howard Brett at the Cleveland Public Library in 1890 (Gates, 1976:149), and in the U.K., by James Duff Brown at Clerkenwell in 1894 (Thompson, 1977:78).

Access to the record has been a feature of libraries since the time of Ashurbanipal in the 7th century B.C. (Thompson, 1977:209). This feature, per se, does not make a public library, because, until the 19th century, access was limited to "the learned, the literate and the well-to-do citizens of the country... and in general the higher strata of the population." (Malan, 1978:6).

There were also libraries before 1850 that were supported by public funds, as the British Museum Library has been since 1753 (Kelly, 1977:4). The term 'public library' had been used before the mid-19th century with regard to the endowed libraries of the 17th century and the proprietary subscription libraries of the late 18th and early 19th centuries (Kelly, 1977:4).

The modern public library is distinguished from other types of libraries first and foremost by its aims and objectives, which are related to the social conditions prevailing in the countries concerned (cf.2.2.2).

## 3.2 THE UNITED KINGDOM

### 3.2.1 BEFORE 1850

#### 3.2.1.1 ROLE OF CHRISTIANITY

Christianity was instrumental in effecting the emergence of public libraries, and Allred, among others, has proposed that "the ideas of the public library are ... founded in [the] Christian ethics [of the 17th century]" (Allred, 1972:186).

This is particularly true of Protestantism, which, from the time of Luther, has been concerned with the dissemination of the written word in the form of the Bible (Sullivan, 1933:516) (cf.2.3.3.3). The town libraries of the 17th century, such as those at Norwich and Leicester, were centres

of Puritanism (Kelly, 1966 : 70) (cf. 2.3.3.3).

By the 17th century in Britain the Reformation had resulted in a large measure of freedom of thought and tolerance towards the seeking of truth in whatever means of communication people chose. In this regard libraries formed perhaps the most significant institutional part (Davies, 1974 : 2). Such freedom of thought with regard to religion was later incorporated within the public library (Midbon, 1980 : 195) (cf. 3.2.2.5).

### 3.2.1.2 RURAL LIBRARIES

The 18th-century attempts by the Rev. James Kirkwood and Dr. Thomas Bray to provide rural libraries using parish priests as depots (Murison, 1971 : 19-21), were a perpetuation of the initial association of public libraries with Christianity. These attempts also suggest that the rural population had attained an adequate level of literacy, collectively speaking (Thomas, 1978 : 23).

Provost Samuel Browns 'itinerating libraries', launched from East Lothian in 1817, also had a religious purpose (Murison, 1971 : 21). His system was particularly important in that, when the County Library Service was started in the early 1920s, it showed many similarities to Browns' system of providing a small basic stock to a village, supervised by a caretaker, and changing the composition of the collection every two years (Murison, 1971 : 21). (The influence of this system, was discernable in the professional approach of A.J. Jardine, the second librarian at the South African Public Library (Immelman 1970b : XV) (cf. 4.3.2.2).

Although there were other endeavours at providing the rural inhabitants with books (Thomas, 1978 : 23-4) it was in the urban areas that the public library began, by virtue of the influences of such powerful movements as the Industrial Revolution and the French Revolution (cf. 2.3.3.4).

### 3.2.1.3 URBAN LIBRARIES

Since 1725 in Edinburgh and 1740 in London there has been lending

libraries for the upper classes (Davies, 1974:3),<sup>1</sup> where the emphasis was on reading for leisure (Gates, 1976:49). These were either subscription or circulating libraries. The commercial circulating libraries were based on the principle of payment for the use of books (Harrod, 1971:193). The most famous among these was Mudie's which was founded in 1842 (Kelly, 1977:343-4).

The subscription library was either a private or a commercial lending library, both financed by means of members' subscriptions which "entitled them to borrow books during the period of validity of the subscription." (Harrod, 1971:180).

These two types of libraries arose because the middle-class reading public had expanded, and the novel had made its appearance as a literary form (Altick, 1958:61).

There were also proprietary subscription libraries where subscribers were effectively the shareholders of the enterprise. This type of library laid greater stress on the more serious literature especially non-fiction, than was the case with the commercial circulating libraries (Altick, 1958:60-1).

For the workers there were apprentices' libraries and mechanics' institutes. The latter type was started by George Birkbeck in Glasgow in 1800 to improve the technical knowledge of workers (Gates, 1976:49). By 1849 there were 400 of them (McColvin, 1956:22). Even though they provided more and more fiction proportionately as they grew, they continued to be "largely patronized by the clerical and merchant type" (Murison, 1971:38), rather than the lower classes (Davies, 1974:11), as they were dependent on the enthusiasm of the members and their small financial contributions (McColvin, 1956:22).

These workers' libraries were often supported by wealthy benefactors (Gates, 1976:49) who, with other industrialists during the first quarter of the 19th century, came to realise that if there was to be industrial progress, the educational development of the lower classes was imperative (Allred, 1972:187; Murison, 1971:47-8) (cf.2.3.3.3).

By 1850 conditions in Britain were propitious for the appearance of the modern public library because of such factors as the following, viz.:

(a) books were freely and cheaply available (Gates, 1976:49; Murison,

1971: 27);

(b) many of the populace were aware of libraries, owing to the different types that were already in existence (cf. above);

(c) 50 to 75 per cent of the population were being taught 'basic literacy' in the different schools and institutes (Allred, 1972: 190; Kelly, 1977: 18); and

(d) there was the realisation that the lower classes had to be educated (Allred, 1972: 187).

### 3.2.2 1850 - 1919

#### 3.2.2.1 THE 1850 PUBLIC LIBRARY ACT

" The Public Libraries Act of 1850 was one of a whole series of reforming measures passed [by Parliament] at a time when the country was emerging from the worst horrors of the Industrial Revolution. [These acts] were successive milestones along the road to a more humane and democratic society, and in every case the initiative came from above. " (Kelly, 1977: 3).

The instigation for this act had come from two parliamentarians, viz. William Ewart and Joseph Brotherton, who had been converted to the idea of rate-supported public libraries by Edward Edwards, an assistant at the British Museum at the time (Murison, 1971: 22-3).

This act was, in a sense, modelled on an act passed five years earlier, in which these two members of Parliament had been active, viz. the Museum Act (Kelly, 1977: 10). As a result of the Museum Act, Canterbury (1847), Warrington (1848) and Salford (1850) opened the first municipal rate-supported free libraries in the U.K. as part of their museum buildings (Kelly, 1977: 11) (cf. 3.1).

The report of the select committee, (of which Ewart was the chairman) was the basis of the act passed the following year, "empowering municipal authorities with a population of 10,000 or more to spend a halfpenny on the provision of accommodation [and upkeep] of a museum and/or library, but did not permit any expenditure on books or specimens." (Kelly, 1977: 15).

This restriction was removed and the rate increased to a penny in 1855 (Sessa, 1978 : 270-1). The population limit was removed in 1866 (Kelly, 1977 : 21).

Edwards and Ewart had hoped that the Public Library Act would contribute significantly to the eradication of the class system, as it emphasised the fundamental principle of the need for equal opportunities for all (Allred, 1972 : 189-90). During the Parliamentary debate, however, it became obvious to them that the desired effect would not be achieved, as the public library was, from the outset, seen to be an institution for the working class (Murison, 1971 : 30), and reflected in Allred's observation that "it is rare to find a mention of any other class of people in proposals for library services during the 19th century." (Allred, 1972 : 195).

The aims of the public library were regarded as moral, political and/or social reform (Thompson, 1977 : 90). These were to be achieved by means of the objectives of education and leisure, although, as Murison states, from the beginning its supporters were more "concerned with its effect as a counter-agent to evils rather than a positive force for educational or recreational [i.e. leisure] benefit." (Murison, 1971 : 30).

### 3.2.2.2 MORAL AIM

The socio-moralistic aim, (which reappears in the guise of the social-commitment idea of the 1970s (Thompson, 1974 : 97) (cf. 3.2.4.2 & 3.3.6.1), prevailed throughout most of the 19th century (Thompson, 1979 : 91). Kelly demonstrated that this was still the case in 1891, by quoting from Thomas Greenwood's Public libraries (4th edition) (Kelly, 1977 : 112). The first edition of this book (1886) had as its frontispiece the cartoon, The rivals ; which shall it be ?, showing the Red Lion public-house on one side, and the free library on the other (Kelly, 1977 : 29). The public library was seen by many to be an alternative to drunkenness, dissipation, vice and crime (Murison, 1971 : 30, 51-2; Allred, 1972 : 190-2). The strongest proponents of the socio-moralistic aim were those connected with the churches and with religion in general (Murison, 1971 : 51) (cf. 3.2.1.1).

### 3.2.2.3 POLITICAL AIM

The upper classes, who were the initiators of the Act, wished to control the reading of the lower classes, (especially the reading of socialist literature (Kelly, 1977:112)), in order to mould these people in accordance with their own political ideologies (Murison, 1971:62) (cf.2.3.3.4).

Murison observes that "it was strange that many supporting the libraries for this reason failed to see their opposing value of social equalisation." (Murison, 1971:53). Conversely, however, there were still those among the upper classes who feared that reading would convert the lower classes into rebellious workers (Luckham, 1971:4) (cf.2.3.3.4).

### 3.2.2.4 SOCIAL REFORM AIM

The utilitarians and liberals hoped that the public library would result in advancement of the lower classes, but, because of their upper-class backgrounds, they failed to understand their potential users' needs (Murison, 1971:54). This resulted in the creation of public libraries which were designed for the lower classes, but were paradoxically dominated by upper-class municipal councils. Added to this, these libraries were staffed by middle-class people spreading middle-class culture (Luckham, 1971:4-5).

### 3.2.2.5 THE NATURE OF THE BOOKSTOCK

Related to the socio-moralistic and political aims was the question of the range and quality of literature that was to be provided. Here the influence of the evangelicals and utilitarians can be discerned, as they wished to arrest the spread of works circulating at that time which were regarded "as being of a doubtful social and licentious character..." (Murison, 1971:53). Both groups considered that reading was not for amusement, but for spiritual and material self-improvement (Altick, 1958:132). The literature to be stocked, as was made clear in the 1850

Parliamentary debate, would help promote "public order and morals" (Allred, 1972:194), and by its use the people would become "more settled, sober and law abiding..." (Altick, 1958:230).

Even though the literature that was acquired was similar to that which was held by the mechanics' institutes, the public libraries, right from the beginning, made available books on a wide range of ideas and subjects which were non-sectarian (Allred, 1972:194).

The provision of fiction generated much debate from the outset (Murison, 1971:53; Kelly, 1977:84-6). However, there was a gradual realisation that fiction had a place, following the example of the mechanics' institutes (Murison, 1971:53), although it was seen to subsume the objective of culture rather than leisure (Allred, 1972:194). During the 19th century the proportionately high circulation figures for fiction caused much concern among librarians and library committees (Kelly, 1977:85), especially as the educational objective became more pronounced towards the end of the century (Kelly, 1977:86).

This emphasis was as a result of the passing of the Education Act of 1870 and succeeding ones which introduced free universal education, although their effect on public libraries was to be felt somewhat later (Murison, 1971:62).

A greater emphasis on the educational objective gave rise, as a matter of course, to extension activities, which were, in part, a carry-over from the mechanics' institutes (Kelly, 1977:95). These educational and cultural activities took the form of public lectures, science, art and adult education classes, and other cultural activities (Kelly, 1977:95).

### 3.2.2.6 BENEFACTORS

At the time of the 1870 Education Act there were only 48 public libraries. Their numbers had increased tremendously to 215 by 1890 (McColvin 1966:367). This increase was not due to any great extent to the growth of literacy (Murison, 1971:62-64), nor to the influence of the Library Association (L.A.) (founded 1877) (Murison, 1971:65-6), but primarily to the generosity of benefactors (Murison, 1971:66).

The greatest benefactor of all was Andrew Carnegie, who provided the money for 380 library buildings in the U.K. (and more than 2800 worldwide). His first donation was for the building of a library in his native Scottish town, Dunfermline, when it adopted the Public Library Act in 1883 (Kelly, 1977: 116-7).

The Cornishman, John Passmore Edwards, was another generous contributor to libraries, having donated 15 library buildings in London, Cornwall and Devon, as well as many books (Kelly, 1977: 121). These two men, as well as many minor benefactors in the U.K., contributed immensely to the number of public libraries which had increased to 393 by 1899 (Murison, 1971: 67).

Even after this increase in the number of library buildings, growth was slow because of the "non-democratic origin of the public library movement ..." (Murison, 1971: 68). They were not demanded by the lower classes who, along with the other classes, did not appreciate their value because of "the Victorian attitude to charity..." (Murison, 1971: 68). By 1890 only between 3 and 8 per cent of the population were using the public library (Altick, 1958: 236). This position was aggravated by the competition from the subscription and circulating libraries, and the mechanics' institutes (Murison, 1971: 44).

Harrison (1963) has claimed that the public library would have evolved despite the efforts of Ewart, Edwards and the other library pioneers as the social conditions had created a climate in which the public library would have appeared to meet the aspiring need for universal education and literacy. Consequently the initiative would have come from other leaders from the upper classes (Harrison, 1963: 2-5). Nevertheless, Sykes (1979: 70) reaffirms Murison's point made above.

The early years of the 20th century were ones of general neglect of library services, a time when the initial pride in the new library buildings had subsided (Murison, 1971: 75-6). The taxable rate of only a penny per inhabitant also limited expansion, as the extent of a library service was regarded as being a twenty-mile radius emanating from the main building (de Vleeschauwer, 1966: 144).

### 3.2.3 1919 - 1964

#### 3.2.3.1 THE ADAMS REPORT AND THE 1919 ACT

The 1919 Public Library Act, applying to England and Wales, removed the penny rate and enabled a rural library service to come into operation under the control of the local education authorities, which would be financed by taxes on fixed property (Thomas, 1978 :26).

The 1919 Act was based on the Adams Report<sup>\*</sup> which was commissioned by the Carnegie U.K. Trustees to look into rural library services. Adams had found that less than 2½ per cent of the rural population (compared to 79 per cent of the urban population) had access to library services at the time, even though they comprised 37 per cent of the total population, demonstrating thereby that public library services had hardly reached the rural community (Kelly, 1977 :124; Thomas, 1978 :26).

Allred claims that the Adams Report "heralded a 20th-century role for the public library." (Allred, 1972 : 197), as the public library is "a service essential to its [the community's] well being and one which ... should be freely available to the whole community as part of its civic rights." (Adams Report, cited in Allred, 1972 :198). The library is a civic right, because :

"it creates a love of literature, adding to happiness, diffusion of knowledge and direction of thought, and influences the further progress of the community... We shall not have a real democracy until we have a well educated people...and while the more recreative literature should not be neglected, the first call should rather be to provide the best materials of study for those who are becoming leaders of thought among their fellows."

(Adams Report, cited in Allred, 1972 :198) (cf. 3.3.2.1).

The Ministry of Reconstruction's Third Interim Report of the Adult Education Committee (1919) also emphasised the educational objective of the public library (Murison, 1971 :81). The public library was regarded as

\*Adams, W.G.S. A report on library provision and policy to the Carnegie U.K. Trustees (1915.)

supplementary to formal education, and the link between these two continued until the 1964 Public Library and Museum Act. However, this was short lived as many libraries were once more regrouped with formal education by the 1972 Local Authorities Act (Allred, 1972 : 199-200).

### 3.2.3.2 THE KENYON REPORT

The Kenyon Report<sup>\*</sup> of 1927 is regarded by Murison as "the turning-point towards the obvious significance of the British public library..." (Murison, 1971 : 86).

The Report expressed the view that :

"the public library should be the centre of the intellectual life of the area which it serves. This service exists for the training of the good citizen. It must aim at providing all that printed literature can provide to develop his intellectual, moral, and spiritual capabilities."

The Report defined the objectives as being related to education, information, culture, leisure and research (Great Britain, 1927 : 39-40), thus anticipating in essence the later American (cf. Post-war standards..., 1943, mentioned in 3.3.4.2) and British (cf. PLRG, 1971, discussed in 3.2.4.3) identification of public library objectives.

The last-mentioned research objective is a characteristic of the scientific and academic library rather than the public library, but, because of historical reasons, the public library has had a close link with the scientific library in terms of the research objective (Malan, 1978 : 13).

The Report also made the point that all standards of literature have their place (Great Britain, 1927 : 39). This view did not necessarily reflect the opinions held by librarians at the time (Allred, 1972 : 200).

In the chapter of the Report on county libraries, Allred asserts that the attitude towards the country inhabitants "smacks very much of [that]... adopted by the 19th-century reformers, even when this attitude was justified to some extent by the facts." (Allred, 1972 : 200).

\*Great Britain. Board of Education, Public Libraries Committee, Report on public libraries in England and Wales (Cmd. 2868, 1927)

By 1930 98 per cent of the population had access to a library service within reasonable reach, so that Edwards' dream of a service for all had become a reality (Allred, 1972:202). Nevertheless, the standard of service varied greatly because of the decentralised nature of the local library authorities (Murison, 1971:86).

### 3.2.3.3 McCOLVIN'S REPORT

McColvin set out proposals to improve this unequal service in his report of 1942 (Kelly, 1977:337-8). His report is important because until the Second World War "many librarians had not...been able to determine very clearly what they were trying to do, what they were seeking to provide, [and] what were their aims and functions." (Murison, 1971:80-7).

McColvin considered the public library to embrace three main objectives, viz.:

- "(a) to afford an opportunity for reading those books which foster a full and good life;
- (b) to provide a source of information; and
- (c) to enable a person to develop to the fullest extent any abilities which he may possess that will be of benefit [to himself and] to society in so far as they can be developed by books." (McColvin, 1942:5).

McColvin explained that, although books, in their broadest sense, were indispensable for civilisation, public libraries must not regard them as substitutes for experience. This was because "there is no value in reading as such" (McColvin, 1942:6), but rather as a means to allow users to come into contact with their civilisation (McColvin, 1942:1).

The public library achieves this by means of its service "[which must be] given without question, favour or limitations[;] ...it must be catholic and all-embracing [;] ...it must choose between types of provision, choosing user-orientated rather than supplier-orientated[;] ...[and] it should be free in every sense" (McColvin, 1942:4-5). He also hoped that it would be a "bulwark of democracy" without its serving as an agency propagating that or any other point of view in any exclusivist sense (McColvin, 1942:5).

The educational objective he regarded as complementing, supplementing, and expanding on the opportunities provided by formal education, because the public library, in contrast, is concerned with life-long education, "from the cradle to the grave" (McColvin, 1942:6-8). Because of this difference the public library must always be independent of formal education (McColvin, 1942:9).

The Library Association's proposals of the following year accepted in principle McColvin's report, including his recommendation that the local government structure should be overhauled (Kelly, 1972:341). It was many years before this became a reality (cf.3.2.4.4.).

#### 3.2.3.4 LIBRARY USE AND ITS USERS

After the First World War users were no longer limited to those who had patronised the mechanics' institutes (Allred, 1972:194), as this war had largely broken down class barriers (Allred, 1972:202). The public library was used more and more by all classes, especially during the period of economic hardships and unemployment of the late 1920s and early 1930s (Murison, 1971:185). Proportionately the numbers remained small (Totterdell, 1978:12), as the public library continued to be mainly passive in its service, although it did try to cater for all types of users (Luckham, 1971:6).

The Second World War stimulated library use (Kelly, 1977:327), resulting in the public library becoming more active in the provision of its service after this war (Sykes, 1979:97). It attempted to popularise the library through the provision of light fiction, but this only overemphasised the leisure objective without substantially increasing membership (Sykes, 1977:97). The emphasis on light fiction was attributable to the motive of increasing circulation on which the book vote, salaries and number of staff often depended (Harrison, 1963:9).

By this time the public library had become the servant of mainly the book-reading middle-class (Kelly, 1977:383) (who still continue to be its principal users (Totterdell, 1978:10)) within what Jones calls the "grand tradition" of a liberal, but passive service of trying "to put its readers on

the road to 'high culture',' (Jones, 1971:76-7).

### 3.2.3.5 ROBERTS REPORT

The Roberts Report<sup>\*</sup> of 1959 was a renewed attempt to improve the standards of service. It led to the 1964 Public Library and Museum Act and also to the Bourdillon Report<sup>\*\*</sup> of 1962 (Murison, 1971:105).

The Roberts Report stressed the importance of the public library in helping to meet the social changes that had taken (and are taking) place. The public library was seen as the focal point in the community for education, information, culture and leisure (Murison, 1971:105-6). These objectives would be promoted through inter-library cooperation and active publicity (Murison, 1971:126), and by being the centre of extension activities, such as exhibitions, lectures, and adult education (Murison, 1971:203). The educational objective was stressed, (owing to "the stimulation of television, better education, and research" (Allred, 1972:203)), by supplementing the formal educational requirements of children, students, scholars, and adult education groups (Murison, 1971:106).

## 3.2.4 1964 - 1980

### 3.2.4.1 THE 1964 ACT

The 1964 Act stimulated local and county authorities to improve library services, especially as there were now standards by which services could be measured, although Westacott (1970:51) criticised the Bourdillon set of standards as being unhelpful with regard to formulating aims and objectives. Similar standards for Scotland were formulated by the Robertson Report<sup>\*\*\*</sup> of 1969.

\* Ministry of Education, The structure of the public library service in England and Wales (Comd.660, 1959)

\*\* Ministry of Education, Standards of public library service in England and Wales (1962)

\*\*\* Scottish Education Department, Standards for public library service in Scotland (1969)

In this period the reduction in the number of local authorities had begun (i.e. from 506 to 460 in the whole of the U.K.) (Kelly, 1977:447) (cf. McColvin, 1942 at 3.2.3.3). More money became available, including government grants for the first time, which resulted in an increase in the number of new buildings, books and other materials, service points, and staff, as well as modernisation of the technical and administrative role of the library (Kimmel, 1978:456; Kelly, 1977:427-8).

#### 3.2.4.2 EXTENSION SERVICES

During this period public library services became more active, many libraries becoming involved in different types of extension activities within their communities (Kelly, 1977:439-41). The term 'outreach' began to be used in the early 1970s, first in connection with adult education, but later to include all forms of activities "reaching the unfortunate and the disadvantaged ..." (Kelly, 1977:440).

Halliwell regards the middle-class bias (cf.3.2.3.4) as being especially prevalent in the public library's extension activities, which he claims "ignore those who, for physical, mental, or social reasons cannot make use of... [library] services..." (Halliwell, 1975:25-6).

The emphasis on extension services reflected a departure from the past trend of the public library which had tended to be mainly preoccupied with books rather than with users (Sharr, 1974:90; Sykes, 1979:77).

A concentration on people was considered by some librarians as part of their social responsibility (Jordan, 1975:67; Luckham, 1971:14; Martin, 1975:9). The adherents to this idea wanted the public library to be actively involved in its community in helping to alleviate some of the social and educational inequalities that were apparent, particularly among the lower classes (Jordan, 1975:64; Halliwell, 1975:25-6). Jones went even further to claim that the societal aim was the creation of a "classless society" (Jones, 1971:78). Jordan (1975:62), Dawes (1973:108) and Stokes (1978:131) have asserted recently that the "disadvantaged" regard the public library as "irrelevant", because public librarians, they claimed, ignore the unserved, and identify too much with the "status quo".

The professional leaders, on the other hand, "believe that public librarians are ill-cast to perform the role of reformer..." (Sykes, 1977:77).

### 3.2.4.3 THE PUBLIC LIBRARY RESEARCH GROUP DOCUMENT

Public library aims and objectives was published by the P.L.R.G. in 1971 (cf.2.2.2). Brown, the chairman of the PLRG, explained that the intention of the document was that "it should be followed by a model set of performance measures for evaluation of services." (Brown, 1979:382). This statement implied measuring the quality of service (Gardner, 1973:212), an aim which, as Malan noted, "is...extremely difficult to effect." (Malan, 1978:33). Brown continued by admitting that this model did not materialise, but that "the new approach would be a set of objectives, management targets, performance measures and decision options for each well defined area of service, to be prefaced by a value statement of general application to the whole service." (Brown, 1979:382).

The revised aim of 1979 is given in full, viz.:

"It is beneficial to society for all and any of its members to have easy access to knowledge and ideas. Such access contributes to the quality of life in all its aspects and is essential to a democratic society.

"The public library exists to provide this access, either directly or through other resources and agencies. Because the benefits are general to society as much as specific to the individual, it is legitimate for this service to be publically financed. A publicly provided service also helps to ensure that minority interests will be protected.

"The public library will provide and promote the use of services that are relevant to the expressed and unexpressed needs of the community. The functions of the public library are to collect, store, organize and communicate information and ideas in whatever medium is most appropriate for their presentation.

"Public libraries, with reference to local communities,

will develop their own order of priority for the services offered and the groups and individuals served."

(Brown, 1979 : 382).

This aim and the one previously given by the PLRG (Library Association, 1971 : 233) reflected in essence the earlier sentiments of the UNESCO public library manifesto of 1949, as revised in 1972 (Unesco public library manifesto, 1972 : 129-30) (cf. 2.2.1).

The concept of democracy was mentioned in these two documents, as well as in the American Library Association's (A.L.A.) Library Bill of Rights (cf. Appendix II), which states that the library is "an institution for democratic living". It should be noted, however, that there are attempts at present to have this phrase removed, as it compromises the public library in its fundamental goal of serving as an ideologically neutral institution (Berry, 1979 : 1397) (cf. 3.3.1; 4.3.3.3; 6.4.3.5).

The idea of the public library as a promoter of political democracy became acceptable in the U.K. from the time of the McColvin's report (Allred, 1972 : 202) (cf. 3.2.3.3). In the U.S.A. the idea was coherent on the origins of the public library (Gates, 1976 : 67) (cf. 3.3.1). The public library in these two countries is therefore "an agency for the improvement of a specific way of life." (Malan, 1978 : 32).

The UNESCO document, on the other hand, in its mention of democracy, refers to social democracy, (which is "equal treatment and equal respect for everyman," (Sartori, 1968 : 113)) rather than political democracy, as many members of UNESCO do not have democratically elected governments which "secure political freedom, personal security, and impartial justice" (Sartori, 1968 : 118).

#### 3.2.4.4 THE NEED FOR PRIORITIES

The need to set priorities, especially in terms of local requirements, has become a recurring theme in the literature. (Worsley, 1967 : 260; Jones, 1970 : 10; Westacott, 1970 : 52; Sharr, 1974 : 89; Paulin, 1976 : 37-8; Totterdell, 1978 : 10, 12; Brown, 1979 : 382). Events outside the control of public libraries had largely necessitated this.

By 1973 the activities of the 1960s had slowed down as a result of the inflationary situation created by the oil crisis of that year (Kelly, 1977:428). Book prices had already doubled between 1965 and 1971, and continued to increase in price at an alarming rate (Kelly, 1977:428-9). (It is interesting to note in passing that in the R.S.A. book prices have increased by 500 per cent in the last ten years (Argus 11.8.80)).

The advantages of the reorganisation created by the Local Authorities Acts of 1972 and 1973 (effective in the U.K. 1974) was offset by the increasing tempo of inflation, resulting in drastic cuts being made in public spending (Kelly, 1977:428).

The Local Authorities Acts had reduced their number in the U.K. from 460 to 161 (Kelly, 1977:447) (cf.3.2.4.1). This rectified the defect of the 1850 Act which had resulted in local-authority legislation causing the emergence of different types of services, often badly administered (Harrison, 1963:10). By 1975 60 per cent of the public libraries had become part of recreational, leisure, or amenities services (Kelly, 1977:447). The previous stress of being too closely linked with formal education was removed (Harrison, 1963:10). However, Taylor (1970:57) has warned that the public library should not be identified too closely with one or other specific agency, because, as the PLRG noted, the public library is a multi-purpose agency, the record being used for a range of different purposes (Library Association, 1971:233).

The arbitrary alignment of public libraries to educational, leisure, or cultural agencies may be ascribed primarily to the vagueness of the aims and objectives which public libraries have had in the past of trying to be "all things to all men" (Sykes, 1979:89; Taylor, 1970:56), while it cannot, and does not, serve everybody (Worsley, 1967:260). Any attempt to do so is impossible (Davies, 1974:125) causing the public library to determine its priorities circumspectly (Paulin, 1976:35) (cf.3.3.6.3; 3.3.6.1; 4.3.4.3; 4.3.4.2; 4.4.4.5; & 5.3.4.4).

The motive for setting priorities is to administer a more effective public library service (Totterdell, 1976), which, many writers urge, should be directed at the needs of both users and non-users within the community (Luckham, 1971:7; Murison, 1971:237; Sharr, 1974:90; Totterdell, 1978:13). One of the means of ascertaining the library requirements of the

community is by conducting appropriate user studies (cf. 3.4.3.4; 3.3.6.3; & 5.3.4.2). The importance of such studies has been realised by the library profession since Luckham's study, The library in society (1971). The feedback from these studies can help public librarians to be more sensitive to the community's wants, rather than imposing their own ideas of what the service should be. McColvin (1942:2) had emphasised this point almost 40 years ago, one which has recently been reiterated by Stokes (1978:135) and Totterdell (1978:11).

Gardiner disagrees with this view, noting that "there is a great deal of nonsense talked about the right of the user to choose, when it can be readily observed that the unlimited exercise of such a right leads only into a featureless desert", and concludes that it is "the minority who are uncatered for." (Gardiner, 1973:211).

User studies (cf. above) have highlighted the apathy towards the public library, as only 20 to 30 per cent of the adult population are registered members (Sykes, 1979:116) (cf. 3.3.6.3 & 4.3.4.1). The position is aggravated by the social and economic position in which the public library finds itself at present (Sykes, 1979:161-2). As a social institution, (which implies both permanence and flexibility (Immelman, 1966:57)), it must adapt to the changes taking place around it (Paulin, 1976:34).

There are some authors who warn that the public library might even cease to exist unless it evolves to meet the demands of a changing society as other institutions could arise to fill the resultant gap. (Caldwell, 1968:226; Sharr, 1974:94,101; Totterdell, 1978:10).

A current decline in status can already be observed, as some local and national authorities are giving less support to the public library in relation to other social agencies (Sharr, 1974:89-91; Totterdell (1978:12) (cf. 3.3.6.1 & 4.3.4.3) aggravated by the fact that social institutions are looked at a lot more critically during times of financial stringencies (Sykes, 1979:87). This is a development that appears to be indefensible from a financial point of view if one considers that the closing of libraries would have a minimal effect on rates (Paulin, 1976:39).

However, librarians are finding it difficult to prevent cuts being made as the public library does not have clearly defined aims and objectives. Also, no effective means of gauging the service, either qualitatively or

quantatively, has yet been devised.

The result of this attitude has been that the public library has been looked upon as a social amenity service whose social impact is often measured purely in terms of circulation (Jones, 1969 : 27-8). This has made it even more difficult for librarians to be able to defend the raison d'être of the public library when cuts in expenditure are made (Jones, 1969 : 27).

The PLRG does not indicate priorities with regard to the objectives, "apart from the relatively light weight given to the provision of entertainment reading..." (Library Association, 1971 : 233).

#### 3.2.4.5 INFORMATION AND EDUCATION

During the last few decades the stress in library circles has been on the information objective, but this was merely "a shift in emphasis..." (Malan, 1978 : 17). With the tremendous growth in knowledge since the Second World War (cf. 2.3.3.4) society has become more dependent on information (Bekker, 1976b : 116), but the actualisation of the notion that the individual should have access to every part of the record has become more difficult (Jones, 1969 : 31). To facilitate access libraries have realised the need to co-operate with each other and with other agencies so as to provide as wide a range of services as possible (Paulin, 1976 : 37-8) (cf. 3.3.5.1).

The public library has become important as an information and reference centre, but its potential in this context is not always appreciated by the public or by many librarians, except as offering a quick reference service (Thompson, 1974 : 49; Paulin, 1976 : 36).

There has been a growing demand on the public library to supplement the formal education of children and students, especially after the opening of the British Open University (Kelly 1977 : 434). The public library also has to meet the everyday information needs of the community to help the inhabitants deal with the complexities of modern life (Sharr, 1974 : 93; Stokes, 1978 : 133). Sykes regards the public library as being "in a unique position to provide a focus for community information" (Sykes, 1979 : 89). Paulin (1978 : 147) would like to see as the priority of public libraries the information objective of bringing "to the individual/group accurate

information quickly and in depth, particularly on topics of current concern." (cf. also Library Association, 1977:233) (cf. 3.3.6.1).

#### 3.2.4.6 LEISURE AND CULTURE

Of the four objectives suggested by the PLRG (cf. 3.2.4.3), leisure particularly should be viewed in terms of Coetzee's reasons why people read, i.e. either for pleasure ("leisure-related") or as a duty ("work-related") (Coetzee, 1977:xiii).

The commonly held view on leisure-reading among public librarians is that "[when it is an] activity with no other object than to amuse, it is an idle pastime beyond the scope of a publicly financed agency if this is not achieved by reading of an approved standard." (Bekker, 1976b:122). As a result, the provision of popular literature is questioned, particularly as the idea that reading ephemeral literature will eventually lead to 'better' literature being read is no longer acceptable (Taylor, 1970:58) (cf. 5.5.2).

However, the problem with this criticism of leisure reading is that people have differing cultural experiences, making it difficult to determine what is worthwhile (Worsley, 1967:267). If librarians wish to attract more people into public libraries they must offer a more culturally specific service related to their community (Dawes, 1973:108; Stevenson, 1977).

In dealing with underprivileged groups, librarians will be confronted with semi-literacy and even sheer illiteracy. In these circumstances the provision of reading matter, for the sake of reading as such, has its place (Thompson, 1974:47-8) (cf. 4.4.4.5).

Sykes (1979:90-9) has outlined the fiction problem. The essence of the case is that public libraries have become too preoccupied in meeting the demand for leisure-reading (cf. 3.2.3.4), especially in the form of light fiction, as fiction consists about two-thirds of public library loans (Sykes, 1979:116). This has meant that the public library has neglected its other objectives without this policy attracting the majority of the population (cf. 3.2.4.4).

The dichotomy between theory and practice has caused some librarians to propose that public libraries should charge a fee for the use of ephemeral literature (Taylor, 1970:58). Sykes has suggested that because many public

libraries are associated with leisure service departments, light reading should be transferred to popular pastime centres (Sykes, 1979:99).

Charging for services and payment to authors, i.e. 'public lending right', are in conflict with the concept of the public library as a free institution designed to meet the needs of the entire community (Murison, 1971:190), and therefore the idea is generally unacceptable to librarians at present.

The Public Lending Right Bill was first presented to the British parliament in 1960, but as a result of much opposition from librarians, it was eventually passed only in 1979. It compensated authors from the central government funds for the use of their books in public libraries.

Owing to an increase in leisure time, resulting from shorter working hours and labour-saving devices, more people have time for leisure than ever before (Thompson, 1977:98; Murison, 1971:170) (cf. 2.3.3.4). The public library has a part to play in this respect, not by competing with other agencies, such as the book exchange, but by providing a variety of leisure and cultural facilities at the local level of the branch library (Sykes, 1979:89), as it has been found that people are reluctant to travel far to use the public library (Worsley, 1967:263) (cf. also Fouche (1970:20) regarding the R.S.A. & 3.3.6.1).

In terms of the objectives, the public library is particularly important as an agency which can provide opportunities for exercising freedom of thought and freedom from conformity inherent in the mass media, as it is able to provide depth on a diversity of topics (Taylor, 1970:61; Stokes, 1978:132) (cf. 4.3.4.2; 6.4.1; & 5.1).

Book selection, therefore, takes place in British public libraries within the framework of not only the aims and objectives, but also the social and institutional influences recounted above.

### 3.3 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

#### 3.3.1 BEFORE 1848

The public library in the U.S.A. was a product of the 19th century,

but, as Shera has observed, "[it] was rooted in the classical tradition, nourished by the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, and it came to full flower in the democratic ethic - the faith in universal popular education and the perfectability of man." (Shera, 1976:33) (cf.2.3.3). He claims that "the foundation of the modern public library system was characteristically American, but the antecedents...were derived from European sources" (Shera, 1976:33). This influence can be seen directly in the establishment of similar types of libraries to those in the U.K. (cf.3.2.1).

The early colonial libraries were town libraries. The first one was in Boston and it was donated by Robert Keanye in 1655/6 (Shera, 1949:19-24). The association between philanthropists and libraries continued until the 20th century (Shera, 1949:201) (cf.3.3.2.3).

The Rev. Thomas Bray (cf.3.2.1.2) was also active in British North America, where he instigated the establishment of 39 parish libraries from 1700 onwards (Gates, 1976:54-5). Here already religion, and also morality, as factors in the origins of the public library can be discerned (Shera, 1949:101, 237-40) (cf.3.2.1.1).

The subscription and proprietary lending libraries (cf.3.2.1.3 & 4.3.1.1) (called social libraries) were concerned with serious literature, which was often moralistic or theological in content (Gates, 1976:61), but Shera had argued some years ago that already during the 18th century libraries had become "more general and secular in content" (Shera, 1949:101). The first social library was Benjamin Franklin's Philadelphia Library Company (1731) (Shera, 1972:102).

Early in the 19th century there appeared, as in the U.K. (cf.3.2.1.3), social libraries to meet the educational requirements of special groups, viz. mechanics' institute, mercantile, apprentices', Young Men's Christian Association and professional libraries (Davies, 1974:12-3; Gates, 1976:59-61). The moralistic aim was especially prevalent in the libraries for young men (Gates, 1976:59-61). Thompson claims "this moral view persisted well into the era of tax-supported...libraries" and was evident in reasons for founding the Boston Public Library (Thompson, 1977:94) (cf.3.2.2.2).

By the middle of the 19th century most social libraries were struggling financially because of the nature of voluntary associations. A factor affecting

their survival was the competition from commercial circulating libraries which provided mostly fiction (Sessa, 1978 : 278). The fortunes of this type of library also fluctuated as a result of the low esteem in which fiction was held, particularly among the clergy (Shera, 1976 : 36).

Another factor in the decline of the social library was the emergence of the public library movement manifest in the establishment of publically supported libraries in Salisbury, Connecticut in 1810 and in Peterborough, New Hampshire. The latter was established from public funds in 1833 and became tax-supported in 1846 (Thomas, 1978 : 36). As these two libraries were small, it was the opening of the Boston Public Library in 1854 which "all but sealed the doom of the social library..." (Shera, 1972 : 104). Harris has asserted that because Boston was the leading intellectual city in the U.S.A., the other cities would follow its example (Harris, 1973 : 2509). Dain questioned this assertion, as only 7 out of the 16 largest cities had public libraries by 1890 (Dain, 1975 : 263).

Although the social libraries were primarily concerned with promoting self-education and vocational and technical studies, they did not have popular support (Shera, 1949 : 217) (cf. 3.2.2.6). It was only with the increase in literacy, as a corollary of the movement towards free universal elementary education from the 1830s onwards, that the idea of the public library as an extension of the free school system was proposed (Shera, 1949 : 220-2). This approach became acceptable, but, as in the U.K. (cf. 3.2.3.3), there were clear lines of demarcation between the role of the public school and that of the public library (Shera, 1949 : 226). Shera has shown that George Ticknor (who with Edward Everett had been the main compilers of the report on which the establishment of the Boston Public Library was based (Shera, 1976 : 39)) envisaged " [the public library] as being primarily an agency of self-education." (Shera, 1949 : 226).

Unlike the position in the U.K. (cf. 3.2.2), the public library in the U.S.A. was never thought of for a particular class, as there was no clear class demarcation (Wellard, 1935 : 24), although the same social and moral aims were present (Wellard, 1935 : 55). Also, literacy was more widespread prior to 1850 than was the case in the U.K. (Wellard, 1937 : 21).

Part of the educational objective was to promote the public library as an agency of democracy, presupposing, therefore, that it must be for all

people (Shera, 1949:218-9). (The democratic idea was slower coming to fruition in the U.K. (cf.3.2.4.3) and even more so in South Africa (cf. 4.3.3.3)). Franklin's library and many of the other social libraries had had the objective of education for democracy (Thompson, 1977:95). Wellard (1937:74) even regarded democracy as a separate objective. More recently there has been a decline in the "democratic dogma" (Harris, 1976) so that, presently, some librarians in the U.S.A. feel that the promotion of education for democracy is tantamount to propaganda (Berry, 1979:1397) (cf.3.2.4.3 & 4.3.3.2).

Whatever their aims and objectives might have been, the social libraries were always voluntary associations. Shera has pointed out the importance of "voluntary associations in the emergence of the public library..." (Shera, 1972:102).

### 3.3.2 1848 - 1898

#### 3.3.2.1 BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY AND THE AIM OF LIBRARIES AT THAT TIME

As Britain is a unitary state, only one piece of legislation was necessary in the U.K. to empower local authorities with the right to raise money for the purpose of establishing public libraries. However, the position in the U.S.A. is different because it has a federal system so that each state had to pass its own library legislation (cf.also 6.4.4).

Boston was the first large urban area to be given this right to establish a public library when the Massachusetts legislature gave their permission for Boston to do so in 1848. This permission was extended by law to the whole state in 1851. The first state library legislation in the U.S.A. was passed by the New Hampshire legislature in 1849. Other states slowly followed this example (Gates, 1976:68).

Harris questions "the public library myth [that] the Boston Public Library was established by an intelligent middle-class led by a group of enlightened civic leaders [who were] dedicated to the continuing education of the 'common man'..." (Harris, 1973:2509). He argues that the founders and the early members of library boards were from the conservative upper

classes, and that the librarians were middle-class and authoritarian (Harris, 1973:2510-3) (cf.3.2.2.4). Therefore, the attitudes which prevailed were similar to those in the U.K. (cf.3.2.2). Another similarity was the idea that the public library would help educate future leaders (Harris, 1973:2570), and this attitude was still held in 1950 (Leigh, 1950:19) (cf.3.2.3.1).

Dain, however, points out that the men and the institutions rather reflected the social position of the 19th century. She mentions that, although the supporters of the public library movement might have been conservative, they had "the 18th century rationalists' faith that the lower classes could be integrated into society through education." (Dain, 1975:262).

With regard to the librarians, she claims that they were middle-class, because these were "the bookish people." The lower classes did not have the money, education or leisure time to be able to challenge this position (Dain, 1975:263).

She contends that the authoritarian attitude of providing what was best for the library's users was common at the time among other professional groups "who had a commitment to high moral and social goals." (Dain, 1975:264). She continues that librarians on the whole were sympathetic towards the needs of the lower classes. However, the socio-economic factors, as much as the atmosphere of libraries, militated against their use except by a small proportion of the population (Dain, 1975:264) (cf.3.2.2.6). Despite these obstacles to use, it was in this period that the genesis of the modern public library took shape with the introduction of such services as longer hours, open stacks, children's rooms, branch systems, extension programmes to the blind and other groups, and inter-library loan (Dain, 1975:264-5).

One of Harris's criticisms is that librarians, since the late 19th century, have become too involved in administrative and technical details (Harris, 1975:2512-3), and this is supported by Shera (1972:106). This criticism also applies to the U.K. (Dawes, 1973:107).

Dain responded to this criticism by pointing out that this trend was a natural phenomenon not unique to libraries, as it was a reaction to the challenge of the growth in staff and stock (Dain, 1975:265).

### 3.3.2.2 THE INFLUENCE OF THE IMMIGRANTS

The educational objective was more strongly stressed from 1880 onwards, as a result of the waves of immigrants from Europe. The public library was regarded as an educational agency "to facilitate the assimilation of the European immigrants into the urban, middle-class American style of life..." (Banfield, 1972:91). The public libraries were fairly successful in their task, however, Harris asserts that this was due to the immigrants' own efforts rather than to the action of librarians (Harris, 1973:2512).

### 3.3.2.3 BENEFACTORS

Public libraries were able to accommodate the influx of European immigrants because of the help they received from philanthropists who gave donations and bequests at this time for buildings and books (Harris, 1973:2512). De Vleeschauer (1966:158) considers that the gifts were given not for liberal, but for socio-economic reasons. Harris supports this assumption, stating that "these men considered the library a wise investment in order, stability and sound economic growth." (Harris, 1973:2512).

Referring to the role of the benefactors, Shera wonders "what the future of even the tax-supported public library might have been without the tremendous stimulus given to it by philanthropy." (Shera, 1972:104). Davies goes even further, by suggesting that library authorities were rarely able to continue without the support of donations (Davies, 1974:53-4).

Carnegie was the greatest benefactor in the U.S.A. where he provided 1412 library buildings compared to 380 in the U.K. (cf.3.2.2.6). 37 per cent of the communities which received Carnegie libraries had not had a library previously which showed the value to public libraries of his donations (Dain, 1975:262).

### 3.3.3 1898 - 1943

### 3.3.3.1 RURAL SERVICES

Until this time public libraries had been urban-based, as had been the situation in the U.K. before 1919 (cf. 3.2.3). At first, tax-supported rural libraries were county systems emanating from urban centres, the first was from Van Wert, Ohio, in 1898 (Thomas, 1978:36).

In the 1890s Melvil Dewey had agitated for a tax-supported rural service for New York State. However, the system introduced was limited to depots consisting of small collections of books changed every six months, resulting in the development of rural services being gradual. The inadequate system initiated in New York State was followed by other states and in 1907 the first travelling libraries were introduced (Thomas, 1978:36-7).

Most states had some sort of rural service, usually sub-standard, by 1940 (de Gruyter, 1980:518). The co-ordination of services was inferior to that in the U.K. (cf. 3.2.3.1), as it was hampered by a sparser population in a larger area, and by a shortage of funds. (These incidentally were also factors affecting the extension of library services in R. S. A. (Thomas, 1978:39) (cf. 4.3.2.1)).

### 3.3.3.2 THE DEPRESSION YEARS

In the urban areas the expansion of library services was also slow. It was only with the large number of unemployed during the Depression years (1929-1939) that the use of the public library for education, culture and leisure increased, as the workless wished to improve themselves in the hope of finding work (Murison, 1971:185). (cf. 3.2.3.4). In this way the concept of the public library as peoples' university was greatly stimulated (Shera, 1968:315). From this time adult education activities became regarded as part of the services to adults (Gates, 1976:150) and this continues to be an important activity of the public library in the U.S.A. (Monroe, 1979) (cf. 3.2.4.2).

Also dating from the late 1930s, the public library service to public schools was expanded, a trend which encouraged its use by children for both leisure and culture and to supplement their formal education (Gates, 1976:151).

The demand on the public library's services by children continued to grow until they had become its principal users by the 1970s (Banfield, 1972:93). Adult users have at times been unable to use the public library's reference services after school hours as a result of children (and students) taking up all the seating space (Murison, 1971:152). (It should be noted in passing that in the R.S.A. this is a problem confronting many urban public libraries.\*)

### 3.3.4 1943 - 1956

#### 3.3.4.1 THE PUBLIC LIBRARY AND CENSORSHIP

After the Depression years, Ennis has claimed, the public library movement lost direction. Books had become easily and cheaply available and the number of users dropped (Ennis, 1965:29).

However, world events gave "the public library a new, and viable justification for existence." (Harris, 1973:2514). The repression of information and the destruction of books in Hitler's Germany, Stalin's Soviet Russia and Mussolini's Italy awakened American librarians to the importance of the library's role as a guardian of the people's right to know and particularly promoting and preserving democracy in the U.S.A. (Harris, 1973:2514). (This topic will be elaborated on in the forthcoming Chapter on censorship.) Harris further asserts that this approach did not result in any fundamental changes in public libraries as they remained passive, book centred and attracting the same small proportion of middle-class users as before (Harris, 1973:2513) (cf.3.2.3.4).

The post-war competition between the U.S.A. and Soviet Russia continued this trend, as public libraries were put under some pressure, especially as a result of the extremes of McCarthyism, to promote the prevailing 'American way of life' as a counter-measure to a supposed socio-cultural threat of communist propaganda.

\* Oral source: L. Kennedy, 1978 & A. Hooper, Feb. 1981.

### 3.3.4.2 THE PUBLIC LIBRARY INQUIRY

While McColvin was engaged in outlining aims and objectives for public libraries in the U.K. (cf.3.2.3.3), the American Library Association (A.L.A.) was likewise concerned with formulating policies. The basic policy statement was its Bill of Rights (1948). (cf. Appendix II). Three other documents were issued in the 1940s, viz. The post-war standards for public libraries (1943), Four year goals (1948) and Jockel and Winslow's A national plan for public library service. (1948). They formed the basis of the report of Leigh (1950) and others involved in the Public Library Inquiry (Murison, 1971:88). The broad objectives of the public library, as formulated by Leigh, were seen to encompass the following:

- " (a) to assemble, preserve, and administer books and related educational materials in organized collections, in order to promote through guidance and stimulation, an enlightened citizenship and enrich personal lives;
- (b) to serve the community as a general centre of reliable information; [and]
- (c) to provide opportunity and encouragement for children, young people, men, and women to educate themselves continuously. "
- (Leigh, 1950:16-7).

Leigh also included "fields of knowledge and interest to which the public library should devote its resources...". These were "public affairs; citizenship; vocations; aesthetic appreciation [similar to culture] recreation [similar to leisure] ; information; and research." (Leigh, 1950:17-8).

The Public Library Inquiry was the basis for public library planning in the 1950s and 1960s, and it even continued to have an influence in the 1970s (Gates, 1976:153) (cf.3.3.6.3).

### 3.3.5 1956 - 1970

#### 3.3.5.1 RURAL SERVICES AND NETWORKS

The neglected rural services were improved by the passing by Congress in 1956 of the Library Service Act which allocated funds annually for rural

services (Weech, 1980 : 602). A more comprehensive act was passed in 1964, and amended in 1966, the Library Services and Construction Act, which made provision for interlibrary co-operation. The emphasis on co-operation had been an important aspect of the revision of the standards - Public library service : a guide to evaluation with minimum standards (A.L.A., 1956).

The 1966 act also made provision for the funding of services to state institutions and the physically handicapped. The latter aspect, however, was incorporated among the provisions for general services in a 1970 amendment. This act was instrumental in improving library services to all and in setting up networks (Sessa, 1978 : 286) (cf. 3.2.4.5). Networks have been defined as :

"a co-operative system established by libraries and information centers which are brought together by a common subject, geographic proximity, or other common grounds, to share information resources, human resources, equipment, technologies, and all other elements essential for providing effective information service." (Miller, 1973 : 498).

Shera has discussed the question of library and information networks, suggesting that "library networks [are] a subset of information networks handling a particular kind of information transmitted for, or by, librarians." (Shera, 1976 : 178) (cf. 2.3.3.4).

The setting up of networks was related to the growth in importance of scientific and technical information since the Second World War, and particularly the interdisciplinary nature of such information. (Shera, 1968 : 316). The interest in this type of information was further stimulated by the launching of Sputnik in 1957 and the subsequent 'space race'. This was reflected in the use of the public library by both laymen and specialists (Gates, 1976 : 151). The public libraries were able to meet this increased use as funds were available to expand their services (Martin, 1972b : 172). However, this period of growth was short-lived. Martin saw the mid-1960s as "a watershed" for public libraries as it marked the beginnings of "first, decreased use, and then, by 1970, in such severe restrictions of funds that vital components of service had to be curtailed, [further decreasing use]." (Martin 1972b : 173).

### 3.3.5.2 THE 1966 STANDARDS

The revised, instead of reformulated, standards of 1966 (A.L.A.1967) were, according to Martin (1972b:168), a "mistake" in the light of future developments, because "[it] was a virtual reissue of the previous [1956] standards [and] had little effect on public libraries, as they had exhausted it for both planning and budget purposes." (Martin, 1972b:173-4). The objectives given did not differ markedly from those given earlier by Leigh (1950) (cf.3.3.4.2). These 1966 objectives were:

"to facilitate informal self-education of all people in the community;  
to enrich and further develop the subjects on which individuals are undertaking formal education;  
to meet the informational needs of all;  
to support the educational, civic, and cultural activities of groups and organizations; [and]  
to encourage wholesome recreation and constructive use of leisure time." (A.L.A. 1967:9).

A growing number of writers began calling for a reformation of aims and objectives in a new situation which would be more specific than past generalisations (Bone, 1975:1286; Rayward, 1978:387; Rebenack, 1978:294).

### 3.3.6 1967 - 1980

#### 3.3.6.1 THE NEED FOR PRIORITIES

By the late 1960s public libraries were finding it difficult to adapt to the changes that were taking place in the different facets of society. Among others these changes were "sociological, technological, institutional, organizational, and educational." (Rebenack, 1978:292). The attempts to meet these problems in the 1970s were hampered by financial shortages as a result of the 1973 oil crisis, high inflation, and a low tax revenue.

As a result of these changes the importance of determining priorities was also realised in the U.S.A. (cf.3.2.4.4 & 4.3.4.3) where Ennis was one of the first to question the multi-purpose activities of the public library. He calls such an approach "wasteful of energy and resulting in dissatisfaction..."

(Ennis, 1965:31) (cf. Taylor (1970:56) for a similar criticism with regard the U.K.(cf.3.2.4.4)). Shera (1972:108-9) agrees with this point, as he sees the library's role as one of focussing on the serious reader and, therefore, of providing quality material. This is an attitude echoed by Banfield (1972:95).

The question of whether a public library should be, what Gans (1965:67) calls, supplier-orientated or user-orientated, affects the planning of priorities. He supports a user-orientated-approach, as he claims that the provision of only quality materials (a supplier-orientated approach) is not wanted by the public due to the fact that they use the public library mainly for leisure. (cf.the similar position in the R.S.A. among whites (cf.4.3.3.2)). This fact had been earlier established by Leigh (1950:22). Gans (1965:68-9) also questions the public library's educational objective, as librarians are not trained educators, therefore, they should not try to improve reading as part of their job.

A user-orientated approach, on the other hand, would be directed at the needs of those not served by other means, (commercial and educational agencies), and be adapted to those living in the immediate vicinity of the library (Gans, 1965:69-72). Research has shown that users will not travel far to use the public library (Berelson, 1949:43; Bundy, 1967:955) (cf.3.2.4.4 & 3.2.4.6).

Gans stresses that the public library should be primarily book-orientated, so as not to compete with other agencies involved with communication (Gans, 1965:72). This point has also been expressed by Banfield (1972:94-5) and Garrison (1978:12), as well as by authors in the U.K.(cf.3.2.4.4 & 3.2.4.6).

Garrison (1978:16) mentions this in relation to the public library as a community information agency, actively going out to the people who need it. The idea of an active community information agency is also put forward by Baker (1979) (cf.3.2.4.5 & 4.3.4.2).

Although these neighbourhood information centres, as they are known, are dealing with the information needs of their traditional middle class and student users, they are also directed at the underprivileged (Bundy, 1972; Rebenack, 1978:310).

The services to the underprivileged originated in the 1960s, (earlier than in the U.K. cf.3.2.4.2). These services developed into an important priority in the 1970s (Rebenack, 1978 :310-7) for those public libraries in the inner areas of the large cities of the Northeast (such as Boston and New York) and the Midwest (such as Detroit and Cleveland) where there was urban decay and demographic relocation resulting in mainly the low income groups remaining (Moltz, 1972 :11). Even though outreach programmes were not a new idea (cf.3.3.3.2), the emphasis on them did result in "a more conscious effort to develop services that are user-orientated." (Rebenack, 1978 :329).

In order to assign priorities it was necessary to have a clear conception of the aims and the objectives in each area of library service to be provided. In the 1970s three important documents were published in this regard.

#### 3.3.6.2 NATIONAL COMMISSION ON LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE

The report of the National Commission on Library and Information Science (NCLIS) in 1975 identifies eight priorities, which includes such ideas as adequate minimum services at the local level for users and potential users, assisted by means of nation-wide networks (Rebenack, 1978 :330-1).

#### 3.3.6.3 FEASIBILITY STUDY ON PUBLIC LIBRARY GOALS

The A.L.A.'s Public Library Association undertook an exploratory study in 1972 to determine whether there should be another Public Library Inquiry (cf.3.3.4.2). It reported that many of Leigh's recommendations, as a result of the Inquiry, had been adopted, but that there were still problems relating to the provision of quality material and meeting demand. Also, information and educational material was being preferred over recreational.

One recommendation which was not adopted by nearly all public libraries, was that services should be directed towards those already using the library. It was found that most public libraries try to give a service to all arguing that every user and potential user is a taxpayer (A.L.A., 1972 :15-8).

The facts do not support this last point in practice as this study showed that the adult users are middle-class and these users do not make up more than 30 per cent of the adult population of any community (A.L.A., 1972:21). (Zweizig & Dervia (1977:222) give 20 per cent and Carpenter (1979:347) gives 24 per cent of the adult population (cf.3.2.4.4 & 4.3.4.1)). Those who did use this service were mainly children and students (A.L.A., 1972:22-4).

The study cites six forms of activity in which public libraries should be active, viz.:

- (a) to support education at all levels formal and informal;
- (b) to initiate cooperation with other agencies and institutions in order to help people adapt;
- (c) to serve the "dispossessed" and the "disorganized";
- (d) to support the information requirements of government, science and business;
- (e) to provide adult and continuing education, working with and through other agencies; [and]
- (f) to accept the individual as an individual and to promote spiritual nourishment, intellectual stimulation, cultural enrichment and information alternatives to him at the neighbourhood or community level. (A.L.A., 1972:47).

#### 3.3.6.4 A MISSION STATEMENT FOR PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Another document produced by the Public Library Association was A mission statement for public libraries (A.L.A., 1977:615-20), which was slightly revised and reissued in 1979. The purpose of this statement was for it to serve as a guideline until the 1966 standards had been revised.(cf.3.3.5.2)

The statement concentrates on measures of library output rather than input (A.L.A., 1977:616). It stresses that the service should be user-orientated (cf.3.3.6.1), and that the standards, which would be based on these guidelines, would enable each library to individualise its services for its particular clientele (A.L.A., 1977:615).

The motivation for the project was that "public libraries are in serious trouble [as they are] still geared to the social needs of the 19th century [rather than] the needs of society at the close of the 20th century." (A.L.A., 1977:616). It gave four areas of change to which the public library should respond:

- (a)" Runaway social change." This has resulted in "the majority of individuals and institutions suffer [ing] future shock." It particularly mentions the affects of the mass media (cf.3.2.4.6).
- (b)" Exponential increase in the volume and complexity of the record of human experience." It puts forward the "controversial "idea (Berninghausen, 1979:14) that "decisions are, and must be, made to erase portions of the record deemed to be insignificant, irrelevant, and unrepresentative in order that the useful and pertinent be accessible..."
- (c)" Total egalitarianism." This involves both the right of everyone "to determine his or her own destiny, and the obligation of every individual to contribute to [society]..."
- (d)" Depletion of natural resources "has, and will, change the whole nature of society, however, also offering the opportunity to explore alternatives." (A.L.A., 1977:615-6).

The statement regards the required response "to these changes as an information agency " which would need to be accountable to the total community,... a public agency, publically supported and publically controlled... and a flexible agency." (their emphasis throughout) (A.L.A., 1977:620).

Although the mission statement was not accepted unreservedly by librarians (cf.letters to American libraries, 1977, vol.8, no.11,618-9), it is likely to provide guidelines and topics for debate in the 1980s, such as the emphasis on the objective of information, and the deletion of data.

## CHAPTER 4. THE PUBLIC LIBRARY IN SOUTH AFRICA

### 4.1

#### INTRODUCTION

The previous Chapter outlined the evolution of the public library in the U.K. and the U.S.A., and so provided a background to the position in South Africa. As well as having inherited the Western culture, South Africa has been equally strongly influenced by the developments in librarianship in those two countries, (and to a lesser extent by the Dutch and German scholarly traditions). Many of the early professional librarians in South Africa were trained in either the U.K. or the U.S.A. (Kesting, 1980:229-3). This influence has been continued through personal contacts and the receipt of a wide range of current professional material from these two countries.

These influences resulted in a South African librarianship, which is new in synthesis, affected also to a large extent by the heterogeneous nature of South African society. As this heterogeneity is complicated by the fact that there are not only racial differences, but also ones of colour, it is necessary to define the terminology used in referring to the various population groups in South Africa.

The terminology used in this thesis is based on that used by Slabbert and Welsh (1979), who state that "the use of correct or acceptable names for the different population groups in the R.S.A. poses difficult problems for authors who wish to be both accurate and to avoid giving offence. In the case of the white groups there is no problem, but in the case of the other groups the terminological issue is a minefield." (Slabbert & Welsh, 1979: viii).

In this thesis the term 'black' has been used to refer to those people formerly called 'Bantu', and sometimes also 'African'. The term 'black' has also been used in a more inclusive sense to include Asian and coloured people as well. However, this latter sense has not been generally used, except where it refers to groups other than white in a collective sense and the context should make this clear (Slabbert & Welsh, 1979: viii).

#### 4.2 FACTORS DELAYING THE INTRODUCTION OF PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICES

Several factors have hampered the evolution of a free public library service open to all (cf. 2.2) in South Africa. Library services, past and present, have reflected the segregated nature of South African society so that the services to blacks and to whites will be dealt with separately (cf. 4.3 & 4.4).

During the 19th century "in the Transvaal, Natal and the Orange Free State, public library services were always established by white people for the use of whites only." (Taylor, 1967:39) Only in the Cape Province were the public library services open to other population groups, particularly the coloured people (Taylor, 1967:39). When services were extended to the other groups, it was done on a segregated basis (Pitt, 1929:19). This separation of services continued to be supported by the library profession, (seen by the motion passed at the 1962 National Library Conference (Kruger, 1973:30)), until 1974 when coloured people could be readmitted as members of the South African Library Association (S.A.L.A.). (S.A.L.A., 1975:22). It was only in 1979 when the South African Institute for Librarianship and Information Science (S.A.I.L.I.S.) was formed that there has been a body open to all professionals and paraprofessionals (associate members) working in libraries.

A true public library service is not yet a reality because, at present, only whites have direct political representation to those bodies that control library funds. Because of the political power, which the other groups do not have, the whites are able to determine the type of service they receive.

There has been a trend towards the desegregation of libraries (Shillinglaw, 1978:149) which would then give equal access to all in those urban areas where it has occurred. Since 1973 seven urban public libraries have removed racial restrictions on the use of their central main library (Kesting, 1980:161 & 190), and the Cape Provincial Council has recommended that libraries under its control be open to all (Argus, 13.6.80). However, this process has not always gone smoothly, as seen in the refusal by the Department of Community Development to give permission to Grahamstown (Argus, 23.6.78) and Port Elizabeth (Cape Herald, 11.10.80)

to open their libraries to all. Recently, on legal advice, Port Elizabeth has opened their 10 municipal libraries to all races without obtaining a permit (Cape Times, 22.1.81).

Another factor retarding the development of free public libraries was the dominant part played by proprietary subscription libraries right up to the mid-20th century (McColvin, 1956:172) (cf. 4.3.1.1). (This was not the case in the U.K. (cf. 3.2.1.3) or in the U.S.A. (cf. 3.3.1).)

Firstly, they were not really free, as the grants-in-aid, i.e. £-for-£ received in terms of the Molteno Regulations only gave the public access to the reading-room and reference facilities and not to the lending section (cf. 4.3.1.1).

Secondly, they were only open to other population groups in the Cape Province, and, as Ferguson noted, the main reason for maintaining subscription libraries was that "it was feared that if the subscription method of support is not kept all these inferior races will be entitled to the use of the books on the same terms as those of European origin ." (Ferguson, 1929:10).

Thirdly, they were small collections supported by the intellectual elite of a town, resulting in the collections being static, as these libraries repeatedly suffered from a shortage of funds (Immelman, 1970 c:82).

Effective library co-operation was hampered by each of these libraries guarding their autonomy jealously, and compounded by the sparse white population being scattered over a large area (Taylor, 1967:38).

Many of these problems were solved by the introduction of the provincial library services from the 1940s onwards (cf. 4.3.3.2).

It was the library services to whites which developed along similar lines to the Anglo-American public libraries discussed in the previous Chapter. The subsequent growth of services to black, Asian and coloured people will also be briefly discussed, as they have been influenced by the services to whites.

#### 4.3 PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICES FOR THE WHITE POPULATION

The public library services in South Africa can be divided into four eras, viz. from 1761 to 1927, from 1928 to 1937; from 1938 to 1961; and from 1962 to 1980 (Kesting, 1980:167).

#### 4.3.1 1761 - 1927

The first recorded case of a town library (cf. 2.3.3.3; 3.2.1 & 3.3.1) was the collection of books bequeathed by Joachim van Dessin in 1761 to the Grootte Kerk in Cape Town. This collection was to be open to the public and supported by interest from the estate (Friis, 1962:69).

##### 4.3.1.1 SUBSCRIPTION LIBRARIES

Neither the Dessinian collection nor the subsequent subscription libraries were true public libraries, but the importance of the latter type, (already mentioned in 3.4.2), is that many of them eventually became free, tax-supported institutions.

The first subscription library was the South African Public Library in Cape Town, which assumed that form in 1829. It had been established in 1818, as far as is known, as the first free tax-supported library in the world (Kesting, 1980:168), and it had a definite educational objective (Asher, 1941:110). Because of financial difficulties in the Cape Colony after the departure of the Governor of the Cape, Lord Charles Somerset, it had to revert to a subscription library. It continued as Cape Town's main lending library until this activity was taken over by the Cape Town City Council in 1954 (Malan, 1978:49). Although now a national library, it remains the main reference library for Cape Town (Immelman, 1970b:xv).

By 1874 there were 34 other subscription libraries in the Cape Colony and three had been formed in Natal (Friis, 1962:72).

During this year Government Notice no. 442 was issued by the Cape Prime Minister and Colonial Secretary (Immelman, 1970a:46), J. C. Molteno, who, as a young man, had worked in the South African Public Library for a short time (Kesting, 1980:170). Molteno's memorandum (cf. 4.2) gave recognition and financial assistance to public libraries by means of an annual grant-in-aid. This stimulated many towns and villages to set up 'free' subscription libraries (Kesting, 1980:170) so that there were 89 by 1894 (Friis, 1962:75). The term 'free' meant that the use of the reading room and reference collection (i.e. what is meant by quick or

ready reference (Kesting, 1980:170)) would be open to all, but that only subscribers were entitled to borrow books (Taylor, 1967:39-40).

The pound-for-pound system, as the grant-in-aid was known, was adopted by the other provinces and it was only phased out with the introduction of the provincial library services (Friis, 1962:91) (cf.4.3.3.2).

The initiative for these libraries usually came from leading members of the English-speaking community (Kesting, 1980:188-9) in order to maintain a link with their cultural heritage (Immelman, 1970 c:82). Although the Dutch-(and later Afrikaans-) speaking members of the community did use them, and found them useful (Immelman, 1970 c:84), it was only with the rise of Afrikaans that they were used to any great extent by Afrikaans-speakers (Varley, 1952:107-8). Ehlers accounts for this by the fact that most Afrikaans-speakers had difficulty reading English, and Dutch had become to them a dead language. Also by 1910 only 92 Afrikaans books had been published, many of which were out of print, and they were only being published at the rate of about five a year (Ehlers, 1952:112).

Immelman saw the subscription libraries as having a certain social welfare objective (cf.3.2.2.2), as it offered the young men of the towns an alternative to their frequenting the bars (Immelman, 1970 c:84).

For all the shortcomings of the subscription libraries, their significance for the development of public librarianship should not be underestimated. As Immelman has stated in his tribute to "the founders, pioneers and builders of subscription libraries they did succeed in planting the seed and keeping the library idea in South Africa alive." (Immelman, 1970 c:85).

#### 4.3.1.2 OTHER TYPES OF LIBRARIES

Other types of libraries also appeared initially in Cape Town, as it was the administrative centre of the Cape Colony. During the early 19th century attempts were made to start commercial circulating libraries (cf.3.2.1 & 3.3.1), but they lacked support and soon closed (Immelman, 1970 a:36-7).

However, there were other subscription libraries, viz. the library belonging to the Commercial Exchange, opened in 1822, and the Popular Library (1834-1867) which provided fiction and less serious works compared

to the eclectic bookstock of the South African Public Library. Even with cheaper subscriptions, the latter suffered the financial problems of so many other subscription libraries and ceased operation after the initial enthusiasm had waned (Immelman, 1970 a : 40-4).

Mechanics' institutes were started in Port Elizabeth (1843), Cape Town (1853) and Durban (1853) to provide facilities for adult education, but they were less successful than in the U.K. (cf. 3.2.1.3). This was because there was not a white working class which had arisen as a result of industrialisation, but rather a class stratification based on colour, with the whites regarding themselves as "homogeneously aristocratic" (Malherbe, 1946 : 54; Varley, 1952 : 106-7). The black people on the whole were in no position to use the mechanics' institutes, (or any other type of library for that matter), owing to their illiteracy and socio-economic condition (Varley, 1952 : 110).

In 1891 black people made up only 24,72 per cent of the literate population, (i.e. those who could read and write) of greater Cape Town (Cape of Good Hope (Colony), 1891). The number of library subscribers was small, and even if all of them were white, they did not comprise more than 25 per cent of the literate white population of greater Cape Town (Friis, 1962 : Table 3, 76-8; Cape of Good Hope (Colony), 1891).

#### 4.3.1.3 BENEFACTORS

Public libraries in South Africa may not have had local benefactors as wealthy as Carnegie (cf. 3.2.2.6 & 3.2.3), but they did receive donations of valuable books and money from such people as George Gray, Charles Fairbridge and William Porter (Varley, 1952 : 109). Carnegie's presence was even felt in South Africa, because between 1908 and 1923 libraries were erected in twelve towns with the aid of Carnegie money (Kesting, 1980 : 171).

It was Porter who had said in the mid-19th century: " For my part I wish we [the South African Public Library] could circulate our books for nothing." (cited in Varley, 1952 : 106). The idea of a free public library was therefore expressed early on. At the turn of the century Perceval Laurence, chairman of the Kimberley Public Library, repeated this call. He saw the subscription system as a temporary compromise until it was

possible for the municipalities to take over the running of public libraries. He felt that if any one municipality had initiated this, others would have followed. He claimed that Durban and Port Elizabeth even had plans to do so (Laurence (1897) 1970:242; Pellisner, 1965:36). Immelman (1970 c:78) states that "Laurence was the first voice on the South African scene to advocate free tax-supported public libraries...".

#### 4.3.1.4 TAX-SUPPORTED LIBRARIES

Harrismith became the first tax-supported library in 1908. However, a deposit had to be made before a book could be borrowed (Thomas, 1978:69) (the Boston Public Library (cf.3.3.2.1) was also a deposit library at first (Sessa, 1978:280)). The few municipalities that followed the Harrismith example also required a deposit from all borrowers except children (Chronology of public libraries..., 1954:791). The Johannesburg Public Library, the leader in so many other fields of South African public librarianship (Kesting, 1980:198-9), was the first to drop the deposit system in 1939 (Kennedy, 1970:295-7).

By the 1920s the time was ripe for the end of the subscription system. Increased industrialisation had led to a corresponding urbanisation. The education of the white population (which had also grown), had improved, resulting in increased collective literacy. Consequently, in 1924 Johannesburg became the first city to have a rate-supported public library (Kesting, 1980:198).

#### 4.3.2 1928 - 1937

##### 4.3.2.1 BLOEMFONTEIN CONFERENCE

It was with the help of the Carnegie Corporation of New York that South Africa followed the path of the Anglo-American public libraries. As a result of a Carnegie grant, an American, M. Ferguson, and a British librarian, S.A. Pitt, toured South African libraries. In November 1928

they convened a conference in Bloemfontein for all interested in libraries. The recommendation concerning public libraries was that it should be a free system serving all communities on a segregated basis (Pitt, 1929:19). An amount of R150 000 was donated by the Carnegie Corporation to implement all the recommendations (Kesting, 1980:172).

Pitt regarded the public library as an institution for continuing self-education, the people's university idea which was dominant particularly in the U.S.A. at the time (Pitt, 1929:19-20) (cf.3.3.3.2).

#### 4.3.2.2 RURAL SERVICES

The Bloemfontein conference gave the impetus to the embryonic rural service that had been operating from the Germiston Carnegie Public Library as a result of the efforts of the librarian, M.M. Stirling (Thomas, 1978:356). From 1915 he had allowed country subscribers to belong to the Germiston library (Robinson, 1972:2). In 1929 he established, with the help of the Transvaal Women's Agricultural Union (T.W.A.U.), the Transvaal Farmers' (later Rural) Free Library Service which was subsidised by the Transvaal Provincial Administration and was operated from the Germiston Library (Thomas, 1978:73, 96-8).

Stirling had not been the first to promote rural services. A.J.Jardine, librarian of the South African Public Library from 1824 to 1845, had been concerned about the lack of reading matter in the rural areas and he had considered the itinerating libraries (cf.3.2.1.2) as an answer to this problem (Immelman, 1979:37-8). He encouraged the establishment of book clubs to which he supplied, at his own expense, books "for the promotion of reading and the wider dissemination of our language..." (Immelman, 1970a:39).

A later, unsuccessful, attempt at a rural service had been the 'Markham Libraries' of the early 20th century. The importance of these was that they were based on the box system used in the U.K. and the U.S.A. and later adopted by the Germiston library (Thomas, 1978:68). The system involved providing boxes of books to local institutions, such as schools and churches and then exchanging them roughly every six months (Peters, 1975:45).

### 4.3.3 1938 - 1961

#### 4.3.3.1 INTERDEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON LIBRARIES

Another consequence of the 1928 conference was the setting up of an interdepartmental committee on the libraries of the Union of South Africa in 1936. Its Report (1937) was the blueprint for library development for many years (Kesting, 1980:172).

The Report regarded the conversion of the subscription libraries to free tax-supported libraries to be of utmost importance. It felt that this was particularly needed in the rural areas. In the urban areas it regarded this to be the responsibility of the municipalities (South Africa (Union), 1937:23).

For the first time an aim was given to the public library, as the Report stated "the belief that books...not only enrich life, but may be made to play an important part in producing good citizens." (South Africa (Union) 1937:11).

#### 4.3.3.2 PROVINCIAL LIBRARY SERVICE

The Second World War delayed the implementation of these recommendations, but, at the instigation of the local branches of the South African Library Association (S.A.L.A.) (formed in 1930), the establishment of provincial library services was put in motion by the appointment of provincial advisory library committees. As a result of their reports, provincial library services were set up in each province (Kesting, 1980:172-3).

Although each province has developed its own organisation, the system on which the services are based is broadly identical. Each province is divided into regions with regional headquarters in a main town. Within each region there are a number of small towns affiliated to the provincial library service. (A condition of affiliation was the abolition of the subscription system, and in the Cape Province, between 1955 and 1963, adherence to standards for staff and accommodation). The local authorities of these towns are responsible for staff and for the library building which is subsidised (Kesting, 1980:194).

The provincial headquarters, from which regional librarians receive

their stock, is where the selection, acquisition and accessioning of material takes place. This material is regularly circulated (Kesting, 1980: 194).

Prior to the 1949 amendment to the Financial Relations Act (1918), the provinces had been unable to establish public libraries, only administer them (Taylor, 1967:17). Each province, except the Orange Free State, has a specific library ordinance which includes regulations on the size of the town eligible for affiliation. In the Transvaal a town with a white population of over 50 000, in Natal and the Orange Free State of 10 000 and in the Cape of 25 000, may be proclaimed urban public library areas (Taylor, 1967: 43).

The urban public libraries were slower in abolishing subscriptions, the last doing so only in 1967 (Ehlers, 1978:135). Most towns, which had a choice, chose provincial affiliation for such reasons as financial security and the advantages of centralised ordering, purchasing and processing (Kesting, 1980:198).

Only the largest towns have remained autonomous. There are ten at present, viz. Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban, Pretoria, Port Elizabeth, Pietermaritzburg, East London, Germiston, Roodepoort and Springs.

With the introduction of the provincial library services, their objectives were seen as education and information (as defined in 2.2.2). However, many librarians were concerned about the predominant use of the public libraries for leisure (Asher, 1942:118). Mews called the provision of mainly light fiction and light biography "the subscription library hangover" (Mews, 1946:63). Ferguson had commented that in South Africa "reading is a recreation and nothing more..." (Ferguson, 1929:9). This emphasis on leisure by the public libraries has continued until the present (Malan, 1978:34).

#### 4.3.3.3 THE 1958 STANDARDS

The first standards for public libraries adopted by S.A.L.A. as guidelines to local authorities reaffirmed the professional importance attributed to the objectives of education and information (S.A.L.A., 1958:10-11).

Friis (1954) regarded the ultimate aim of the public library as educational:

i.e. "the production of well-educated individuals" (Friis, 1962:13).

The standards also took into account the special needs of the physically and socially underprivileged. As previously mentioned (cf. 3.2.4.3 & 3.3.1) this was a period when the democratic concept was given prominence within library circles, and it is reflected in these standards as well (S.A.L.A., 1958:11-2).

#### 4.3.4 1962 - 1980

##### 4.3.4.1 NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF LIBRARY AUTHORITIES

The 1962 National Conference of Library Authorities was a milestone in South African librarianship, but, with regard to public libraries, it did not change their direction or administration as it was mainly concerned with research and co-operation (Kesting, 1980:173). However, the Conference did praise the advances free public libraries had made generally, and also their part in "improving the nation's cultural life" (S.A.L.A., 1962:18). In 1960 public libraries were reacting just under 30 per cent of the white population (S.A.L.A., 1962:18), and this had increased to over 40 per cent in some provinces by the end of the 1970s (Kesting, 1980:200-1).

The user studies undertaken by Fouche, (1970) and Fourie, (1973 a ; b ) have shown similar user patterns among whites to those in the U.K. (cf. 3.2.4.4) and in the U.S.A. (cf. 3.3.6.3) (cf. also 5.3.4.1).

##### 4.3.4.2 ENCULTURATION

In the 1960s Coetzee questioned whether the public library should attempt to meet the objectives of education and information, claiming that the latter was the concern of the information scientist, and not the librarian (Coetzee, 1966b:11-2; 1968:37-9). Malan, however, regards the distinction between the information scientist and the librarian as artificial, because he sees them "as mere facets of a greater whole." (Malan, 1978:16).

Coetzee regards the public library as a social institution concerned

with service to the community. As he considers it impossible for the public library to be universal in its provision (cf. 3.2.4.4 & 3.3.6.1), he would like to see its energies being directed at enculturation (Coetzee, 1968 : 38). This idea originated with Herskovits (Malan, 1978 : 25-6). Enculturation envisages books helping an individual "[to] explore the culture of his own social group, but also to supplement and inform his own dreams." (Coetzee, 1966 a : 32).

In his discussion on culture, Coetzee criticises the tendency for librarians to promote only their kind and quality of culture, because even inferior fiction, if more advanced than previous works read, has a place if it meets the needs of individuals in a local community (Coetzee, 1966 a : 13-4). Fouche (1979 : 9) supports this view.

Immelman, although he did not put forward the idea of enculturation when discussing the public library as a social institution (cf. 2.3.1), does regard it as preserving and promoting values, and also helping to socialise individuals (Immelman, 1966 : 59).

Fourie (1972) also supports Coetzee's notion of enculturation on the grounds that the transfer of culture has become complex. The public library, as he sees it, can be the appropriate agency for this purpose, as well as one capable of countering the uniform effect of the mass media (cf. 3.2.4.6). He would like the public library to actually mould the culture of the communities served.

Lindsay (1974) was wary of this motive, as he thought it could lead to the indoctrination of individuals to a certain culture, i.e. that of the librarian, especially as Fourie (and Coetzee (1966 a)) saw enculturation as the overriding aim of public libraries. Lindsay rather argued for the free flow of ideas where librarians can play their part in expanding human experience, rather than limiting it, by trying to preserve a certain culture (Lindsay, 1974 : 272-3).

In the U.S.A. Ennis has, in fact, called enculturation "cultural imperialism" (Ennis, 1965 : 29). The mission statement (cf. 3.3.6.4) claims that enculturation is essentially a 19th-century view of the public library, whereas it states that the public library should rather be "an agency which recognizes cultural and ethnic differences and encourages pride in one's own, and appreciation of different cultural heritages..." (A.L.A., 1977 : 617-8). This approach does not differ much from the

policy in South Africa, except that in the U.S.A. the service would not be given on a racially segregated basis.

Fourie (1979), in a more recent paper, does not mention enculturation at all as a major objective of the public library. He proposes that the public library should be the centre of cultural activities in every community, of which a community information service would be part (cf. 3.2.4.5. & 3.3.6.1). Any other type of information, he argues should be dealt with by special libraries (Fourie, 1979:11-3).

Earlier in his paper he outlines the tremendous growth in the quality and quantity of the public library services to whites (Fourie, 1979:8). (Public libraries had increased from 249 in 1937 to 625 by 1977 (Kesting, 1980:191)). Fouche (1979:10-1) criticised this rate of expansion as, he claims, it was done without a corresponding improvement in quality.

#### 4.3.4.3 PRIORITIES

Fouche, (1979:9) identifies three priority areas for the public library, viz.:

- (a) to act as a cultural centre which would help the individual to become assimilated into a community;
- (b) to serve as an information centre to help the individual to deal with everyday problems; and
- (c) to be an educational centre assisting the independent learner.

In 1968 a second edition, the latest to date, of the S.A.L.A. standards was issued. It mentions the objectives of information, education, culture and leisure in a manner hardly differing from the definitions given in 2.2.2. "Preservation" is also included as an objective. The requirements of a capitalist society is given more emphasis than previously, whereas the earlier democratic aim is not included (S.A.L.A., 1968:15).

In spite of having aims and objectives in the standards public libraries have rarely set them out, especially in written form. When this has been done they have been vague pronouncements, whereas they should have been specific and well publicised (Epstein, 1973:96; Broeze, 1976:21).

Zaaiman has stressed the point of librarians having clearly defined aims and objectives so as to be able to determine "whom they want to serve, what services they want to give, and in what depth..." (Zaaiman, 1970:148). He berates the largely passive nature of public libraries which serve a minority who have similar interests to those of librarians. They, therefore, ignore to a large extent the needs of the majority and the more sophisticated needs of the decision-makers (Zaaiman, 1970:148). As there are no measures of performance libraries are in a weak position, both in terms of status and of justifying funds (Zaaiman, 1970:149-50) (cf.3.2.4.4 & 3.3.6.1).

Fouche expresses doubts about the position of public libraries improving until they have established clear policies. He also stresses the importance of co-operation if the public library is to meet the needs of a changing society" (Fouche, 1979:12) (cf.3.2.4.4 & 3.3.6.1).

Shillinglaw (1978) identifies certain external factors which are likely to affect the future of public libraries in South Africa, viz.:

- (a) " [a]relatively high rate of population growth, that will probably nearly double the 26 million people [in] South Africa (including the homelands and... independent republics)...;
- (b) " [the]present rate of change...in a social, political and technological sense...;
- (c) " an economic growth rate that will be minimal because of high inflation and little foreign investment as a result of political insecurity"; and
- (d) less public money will be available, even though there is a high gold price, as money will be needed in at least three areas:
  - (i) to pay for petroleum;
  - (ii) to help bridge the gap between the haves and the have-nots who are demanding a greater share of the country's wealth; and
  - (iii) to pay for defence as external pressure increases (Shillinglaw, 1978: 141-2).

Shillinglaw contends that any attempt to achieve the ideals, proposed by Smith (1968:112-3), of serving all within the community, (which Collison (1975:72) regards as unrealistic), would require that the service be relevant to the diffuse needs of specific communities (cf.5.3.4.1). He hopes that this will result in an active user-orientated service (cf.3.2.6.1) which will promote both specific and differentiated cultural, informational,

educational and leisure services (Shillinglaw, 1978 :146).

#### 4.4 PUBLIC LIBRARY SERVICES FOR THE BLACK POPULATION GROUPS

##### 4.4.1 1761 - 1927

Illiteracy and semi-literacy among the black population groups has probably been the biggest factor hampering their public library use. As already noted (cf. 4.4.2), the black community of Cape Town, the most sophisticated town in South Africa in 1891, had only attained a 24 per cent rate of literacy which had been tested as receptive literacy (cf. 4.4.2).

Therefore, before 1928 there were few library services for black people and these were usually attached to educational institutions, the majority of them being in the Eastern Cape. There is no mention of any libraries in the Transvaal (Manaka, 1972 :22) and the idea of establishing libraries for blacks (the largest population group in the Transvaal) was actively opposed by whites (Thomas, 1978 :351,391).

There were only two public libraries for black people before 1928. The one for blacks was at Alice, set up by the Lovedale Mission Institute in 1879. The other for Asians was the M.K. Gandhi Library in Durban (Peters, 1970 :xxvii).

The educational objective has remained the priority of the public library services to the black groups until the present (Fouche, 1974 :237; Peters, 1975 :1). Robinson (1970 :66), reported that in 1968 23 per cent of the books borrowed by blacks from the Transvaal Provincial Library Service were non-fiction, whereas the corresponding figure for whites was only 11,1 per cent.

##### 4.4.2 1928 - 1937

###### 4.4.2.1 BLOEMFONTEIN CONFERENCE

For the black population groups the 1928 conference recommended a

separate free library service (cf. 4.3.4.1) for which the Carnegie Corporation of New York made about R26 000 available for the development of black library services, including various specific projects (Peters, 1975 :303).

#### 4.4.2.2 THE CARNEGIE COMMITTEES

These grants were to be administered in each province by Carnegie committees, but only the Transvaal committee was not taken over by another library body. This was because the committees received little co-operation from local, provincial and national authorities and also owing to a lack of funds, which was aggravated by the position during the Depression years (Peters, 1975 :39-44).

The continued existence of the Transvaal committee, which constituted itself into the Carnegie Non-European Library, Transvaal in 1932, can be attributed to the Germiston Carnegie Public Library being prepared to undertake the provision of the library service to the centres established by the Carnegie Non-European Library, Transvaal (Thomas, 1978 :352). This service was based on the box system (cf. 4.3.2.1).

Another factor that can account for the Transvaal committee's success was that the non-librarian committee members were liberal men dedicated to the advancement of the black groups. This can be seen in the other activities of men such as C. T. Loram and J. D. Rheinallt Jones who were members of the Transvaal Committee (Peters, 1975 :37-44).

The Cape Carnegie Committee instituted a free lending library in the Cape Peninsula primarily for the coloured people. In 1935 it was taken over by the Hyman Liberman Institute (South Africa (Union), 1937 :6), and it was eventually absorbed by the Cape Town City Library Service in 1952 (Peters, 1970 :xxviii).

In Natal the Durban Municipal Library was entrusted with the Carnegie Committee's work. In 1931 it set up a rural box service for blacks, and subsequently, branches were established for all population groups in the Durban area (White, 1978 :3).

In the Orange Free State (O.F.S.) between 1933 and 1958 the Bloemfontein Public Library operated a limited service to eight depots around

Bloemfontein. It ceased functioning because the O.F.S. Education Department withdrew its grant (White, 1978 : 4) and because of an unsatisfactory administration. Added to this it never broadened its contact with blacks to outside the Bloemfontein area (Peters, 1978 : 103).

#### 4.4.3 1938 - 1961

##### 4.4.3.1 INTERDEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON LIBRARIES

The 1937 interdepartmental Report (cf. 4.3.3.1) in its mention of groups other than white concentrated on the necessity of improving a service to the coloured people, the responsibility for which was entrusted to the Cape Provincial Administration. The service to blacks was seen to be still in an experimental stage, but "deserving encouragement from the Provincial Administrations" (South Africa (Union), 1937 : 17).

##### 4.4.3.2 THE (CARNEGIE) NON-EUROPEAN LIBRARY SERVICE, TRANSVAAL

The Carnegie Non-European Library, Transvaal was changed to the (Carnegie) Non-European Library Service, Transvaal, when the headquarters for the provision of books was moved in 1946 to the Native Education Section of the Transvaal Education Department in Pretoria. This arrangement only lasted until 1956, as the Bantu Education Act of 1953 obliged the committee to seek its own accommodation. By 1961 it was unable to continue financially so that it handed over the study and reference material to the State Library. The remaining materials were donated to local libraries. Since then it has functioned as a promoter of library services among the black groups (Peters, 1975 : 99).

In her evaluation of the (Carnegie) Non-European Library Service, Transvaal, Peters (1975) made the following points:

(a) Its establishment was not a response to a need, but helped to create one (Peters, 1975 : 191). (This was, therefore, similar to the motives behind the founding of the public library in the U.K. (cf. 3.2.2.6) and in the

U.S.A. (cf. 3.3.2.1)).

(b) The part it played in the promotion of adult education by providing study material was in advance of its time (Peters, 1975:171).

(c) It did much to change the attitudes of local authorities to accept that it was their responsibility to provide a free library service to the black groups (Peters, 1975:172).

Although the above were positive aspects, on the whole, the service it gave over the thirty years was inadequate, because it depended largely on voluntary help. This was aggravated by transport and communication difficulties, but the most pressing problem was a chronic insufficiency of money (Peters, 1975:175).

#### 4.4.3.3 PROVINCIAL LIBRARY SERVICES

In 1945 the coloured and Asian people of the Cape were the first black groups to receive a rural service from the provincial library services (cf. 4.3.3.2). In Natal that provincial service incorporated the Carnegie centres in 1953. The Transvaal extended its rural library service to coloured and Asian people in 1958 and to blacks in 1964 (Peters, 1975:100-2). The O.F.S. opened its first public library for blacks in 1976 (Prophet, 1976:4). At present it has three public libraries for blacks and one depot. The position in the other provinces is that the Transvaal has 51 public libraries for blacks and 38 depots, in the Cape Province there are 12,8 of which are in the 'national states', and in Natal there are 3 libraries and 14 depots (Frylinck, 1980:56).

In the urban areas branches for the different black groups were established in the Transvaal. Johannesburg was the first to do so opening a branch for blacks in 1940 and for coloured people in 1950 (Malan, 1978:61). From 1950 onwards other autonomous public libraries in the Cape and Natal opened branches for the different black groups (Peters, 1970:xxviii).

The services for blacks were provided through the non-European departments of the municipalities until 1970, when they were transferred to the Bantu Administration Boards. These libraries are provided with books on a contractual basis by the provincial library services (White, 1978:5).

#### 4.4.4 1962 - 1980

##### 4.4.4.1 NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF LIBRARY AUTHORITIES

The 1962 National Conference (cf. 4.3.4.1) noted that "only a very small percentage of the non-white population...has access to public library services..." (S.A.L.A., 1962:18), and it recommended that the services for the black groups should be the responsibility of the local authorities concerned, with the assistance, where necessary, of the provincial administrations." (S.A.L.A., 1962:19). This position was officially sanctioned with the publication of the de Vaal Report (cf. South Africa (Rep.) 1965).

##### 4.4.4.2 DE VAAL REPORT

Prior to this period attempts at providing library services for the black groups had been separate and unco-ordinated. This problem was aired at the 1963 Conference of Provincial Administrators. As a result of the proposal made by the Administrator of Natal, an interdepartmental committee was set up to investigate all aspects of library services to the black groups (South Africa (Rep.), 1965:1). This committee, with Dr. J.B. de Vaal in the chair, reported in 1965.

During its investigation it found that of the 122 local authorities to whom questionnaires were sent (81 replied), only 47 per cent indicated that they provided some sort of service to the different black groups (South Africa (Rep.), 1965:2).

One of the most important recommendations of the Report was "the retention of the status quo, namely that the provinces should be regarded as the state bodies responsible for making the governments contribution to public library services for all population groups in co-operation with local authorities..." (South Africa (Rep.), 1965:3). The exception was the self-governing 'national states' who would be served by the provincial library services on a contractual basis until they were in a position to administer their own libraries independently (South Africa (Rep.), 1965:13).

The Government eventually accepted the recommendations in 1970.

A Co-ordinating Committee was constituted which has been meeting every year since 1971 to oversee uniform development of the services to the black groups (Frylinck, 1980 : 53). However, development has been slow because of inadequate funding (Malan, 1978 : 63; Frylinck, 1980 : 56-7).

Insufficient funding has constituted a continual problem facing public library services to the black groups resulting in, according to the Administrator of the Cape, G. Louw, "inadequate" services to the coloured people (Cape Times, 24.7.80) and "unsatisfactory" facilities for blacks (Frylinck, 1980 : 57). In contrast to this situation, the services for whites have, on the whole, had adequate finances to develop public libraries regarded as being on a par with the best in the world (Kesting, 1980 : 189).

#### 4.4.4.3 ILLITERACY

As already mentioned the biggest obstacle to the provision of adequate library services has been the low level of collective literacy (cf. 2.2.3) among the black groups (cf. 4.4.1). The 1965 Report stated that literacy (defined as the ability to read and write any one of the languages used within South Africa.) was approximately 51 per cent among blacks, 80 per cent among coloured people, and 88 per cent among Asians (South Africa (Rep.), 1965 : 10). As a result, it was found that only 22 library workers (8 in the Transvaal and 14 in the Cape), had any type of library qualification.

Kesting (1980) has shown that both quantitatively and qualitatively collective literacy among all black population groups increased enormously between 1955 and 1975, and this will continue owing to their high birth rate of between 25 and 31 per cent per 20 years. This growth rate presents possibly the biggest challenge to the education system because it is unable at present to cope adequately with these demands manifest in the unrests of 1976-1977 and 1980.

#### 4.4.4.4 NATURE OF THE SERVICE

Because of the segregated nature of the library service, even within the black group, certain groups have received better services than others.

In the Cape the emphasis has been on services to the coloured people, whereas in Natal priority has been given to the needs of the Asian and coloured people (Frylinck, 1980:56).

In the O.F.S. the recent reintroduction of library services for those groups other than white, has been directed only at blacks. (There are no Asians in the O.F.S.). All the black groups in the Transvaal receive a library service which is provided on a separate basis for each of them, as is also the case in Natal\*.

There are no cultural reasons why the Asian and coloured library services should differ from the white service as their cultures are all part of the Indo-European literacy tradition. Du Preez (1974) identified the use of books by white and coloured children as being nearly identical. However, by adulthood, the use of books by the coloured group dropped off dramatically owing largely, on the face of it, to socio-economic factors.

Kruger (1973), in tracing the history of separate facilities for the different groups, has claimed that whites have always wanted segregated services. Although in a few places in Cape Town it was only the combined forces of the 1955 provincial ordinance, and the 1967 Group Areas and Separate Amenities Acts that ended the sharing of libraries by whites and coloured people (Kruger, 1973:35-6).

With regard to the services to blacks, the de Vaal Report recommended "that the approach to, and eventual structure of, public library services must differ from the approach to the [other two groups]." (South Africa (Rep.), 1965:9). This is necessary, because the blacks do not have a literary tradition of their own, but have instead the Western one introduced initially by the missionaries in the 19th century. Further limiting factors have been the low literacy level (cf. 4.4.4.3) which is tied to their socio-economic position, and the lack of suitable books in the vernacular (Frylinck, 1980:57).

\*Personal communication from F.C. Eloff, Deputy-Director Natal Provincial Library Service, Dec. 1979.

#### 4.4.4.5 PRIORITIES

Fouche (1974 & 1977) has made the point that the services to blacks should not be a duplication of the Anglo-American system, but a library service directed at the needs of a particular community. This could result in the public libraries becoming involved in new directions such as literacy work, community information, and perhaps even publishing. (Fouche, 1974: 237). This type of involvement "[would be] cultivating those very conditions that are considered prerequisites for the use of conventional public library services." (Fouche, 1974:237).

This approach was also put forward by Shillinglaw (1978), one which is not dissimilar from the types of services envisaged for the underprivileged in the U.K. and U.S.A. (cf. 3.2.4.4 & 3.3.6.1). He saw the success of a community library service resting on two factors, viz.: firstly, an effective library service is only possible if library policy is determined by locally recognised members of the local community; and secondly, it must actively support programmes devised by, and for, the community such as adult education and literacy classes. Otherwise, "if the public library services do not seem to relate to the pressing needs and aspirations of the people, it could be regarded with indifference, or with hostility, or even with violence by the masses." (Shillinglaw, 1978:149). In 1974 Fouche had expressed the opinion that it is up to the library profession to take the lead in making available effective and relevant library services.

Many years ago, when McColvin (1956) was discussing South African librarianship and the part librarians could play, he made the following point, in the language of another era, that "backward races are so because they have never had the opportunity to become otherwise..., and they will remain so until they are progressively given the means to self-development." (McColvin, 1956:174).

#### 4.4.5 CONCLUSION

The above and the preceding two chapters are a background to the position in which book selection takes place in public libraries. There is no

doubt that public libraries face many challenges in the future, but the future is regarded with optimism by most authors (Martin, 1972b: 46-7; Rebenack 1978: 293). The call is for a clearer conception of what the public is doing and who it is trying to serve in order to justify its existence (Bone, 1975: 128b; Harris, 1973: 2514; 1976: 2230; Jones, 1977: 77; Banfield, 1972: 99).

The public library has much to offer the community in helping people to meet the future and understand the past, but it must actively publicise its services as user-orientated. It is a unique institution which was the result of the merging of three types of 19th-century libraries, viz. "the intellectual detachment of the scholarly library, the studious practical concern of the Mechanics' Institutes, and the carefree hedonism of the subscription circulating libraries." (S.A.L.A., 1968: 14). As a result of this amalgamation it has become an institution for the promotion of education, information, culture and leisure.

## CHAPTER 5. BOOK SELECTION

### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

The principles and the related theoretical issues, rather than the actual practice of book selection, are the subject of this chapter. The principles of book selection in the U.K. and the U.S.A. will be discussed jointly because, as has been shown in Chapter 3, the cultural background within which book selection takes place in these two countries has more common than disparate elements, if viewed in an international perspective.

Although the issue of common ground largely applies as well to South Africa, the opinions of South African authors on some aspects of book selection, in so far as these opinions have been recorded, will be examined separately. This will be done at the end of the discussion of each section when applicable.

The decision for making such a division rests on the following considerations, viz.:

- (a) The writings on this subject in South Africa have not yet been brought together, as far as can be ascertained, except in university lecture notes.
- (b) The population of South Africa has less homogeneity than that of either the U.K. or the U.S.A., particularly with regard to its collective cultural manifestations and literacy levels.
- (c) As was argued in Chapter 4, South African public libraries deviate from those in the U.K. and the U.S.A. in certain fundamental respects.

This chapter will only touch upon the principles of selection when related to adult materials because the principles for the selection of material differ substantially for children and young adults, depending on the policy of an individual library. Although there are also various principles and procedures for the selection of periodicals and non-book materials, these, likewise, will not be differentiated.

The reasons for the above exclusions is that it is in the context of adult fiction and non-fiction that the controversy over the censorship of books is most prevalent, as adult free choice is a more potent and sensitive issue in this regard than that of children, as reflected in the literature. Also, most user complaints relate to adult material.

## 5.2 DEFINITION OF TERMS

Book selection has been defined as "the process of choosing books for inclusion in a library with a view to providing a balanced increase to the stock." (Harrod, 1971:129).

As had already been mentioned, it is the principles underlying the selection process, rather than the activities themselves that will be investigated. Also, the cognant question of what is meant by a 'balanced' increase will be examined later (cf. 5.5.4).

For convenience the term 'book', rather than one for an all-encompassing concept for recorded material, (such as 'media'), will be used, as most of the material bought by public libraries at present is still in the traditional book form (Cabeceiras, 1978:198). However, it is well to remember that book selection involves choosing materials in many formats. The term 'materials' "embraces all forms of the printed and written word found in libraries, as well as non-book material, such as microfilm." (Saul, 1980:97). Therefore, material selection would be a more accurate term than book selection (Boyer & Eaton, 1971:iv).

None the less, the latter term, i.e. book selection, has been preferred for the purposes of this thesis, as the problem of censorship in public libraries usually centres around books, (55 per cent of the cases according to Katz (1980:322)).

Finally, it will be presumed that the principles of selection do not differ in the fundamental sense in which they will be examined in this study. Accordingly, it will be argued that, by analogy, book selection criteria may in essence be extended legitimately to embrace the principles underlying the selection of other media without necessarily posing problems in the endeavour to resolve any conflicts arising from Marshall McLuhan's famous doctrine of "the medium in the message".

Book selection is not to be confused with acquisitions. "Selection of library materials is only one phase of the total acquisitions process..." (Beck, 1979:205). Boyer and Eaton likewise draw a distinction between the two, as they are motivated by the desire that libraries should have independent policy statements on selection and acquisitions (Boyer & Eaton, 1971:iv) (cf. 5.6).

Acquisitions embraces the ordering and receiving of materials inclusive of gifts and exchange items. Selection is not limited to the acquisition of new material, it is equally concerned with the filling of gaps in the collection of older titles and the replacement of worn-out or missing items. Book selection policy is, therefore, based on both the intrinsic merits of an individual book and its value within the context of the general development of the collection as a whole (Broadus, 1973:26).

Further aspects of collection development, such as weeding, which should be included in any book selection policy, will be discussed later (cf.5.6.3).

### 5.3 BOOK SELECTION

#### 5.3.1 INTRODUCTION

Of the many activities which make up the service provided by a public library, book selection is regarded as the most important around which all other activities hinge (Bonny, 1939:1). McColvin stated the position thus: "Book Selection is the first task of librarianship... . No matter how thorough and efficient the rest of the work may be, the ultimate value of a library depends upon the way in which the stock has been selected." (McColvin, 1925:9).

Selection does not occur in a vacuum, but is dependent primarily on the demands placed on a public library by its users (also referred to as readers) (Haines, 1950:41). The conversion of demand into supply rests on the aims and objectives of any given library (Gill, 1979:4). What is selected helps in turn to further those aims and objectives. The implementation of any of the principles is dependent on librarians' perception of the aims and objectives of public libraries (Carter, Bonk & Magrill, 1974:2). These were examined at some length in Chapters 3 and 4.(cf.also 2.2.2). Consequently, only a brief mention will be made here of the issue.

There is general agreement that the aim of the public library is broadly concerned with the "enlightenment and improvement of the community..." (Asheim, 1959, in van Orden & Phillips, 1979:14) (cf.3.2.4.3). Harrison

has emphasised the societal element in this aim more forcibly by stating that "our [i.e. librarians'] vision is of a more enlightened, more humane and more caring society than exists today." (Harrison, 1978:33). This view reflects the idea of social responsibility already covered in Chapter 3 (cf. 3.2.4.2 & 3.3.6.1).

The objectives of the public library, on the other hand, have been less well defined (Shera, 1976:52). For this reason Foskett (1968:306), among others, regards book selection in public libraries as being more complex than in other types of libraries. The relative emphasis on one or more of the objectives (viz. culture, education, information or leisure) would fluctuate, depending on the community and the librarian's perception of a particular community's demands and needs (Martin, 1975:434). These two concepts are not identical within the setting of the library's relationship to its community. As one of Fiske's respondents remarked: "Demands are what people want; needs are what exist as a result of their condition of life." (Fiske, 1959:13).

As selection is adapted to local conditions (cf. 5.3.4), the bookstock of each library has its own specific composition, reflecting the decisions taken by a series of librarians (Broadus, 1973:3). Whether selection is a haphazard or purposeful activity, all librarians involved in collection development have no option but to be selective (McClellan, 1973:125). Freeman maintains that this is not a right of the librarian, but a practical necessity delegated to him by his community (Freeman, 1968, in Gaver, 1969:204).

Asheim (1959) had earlier stated that selection is a professional activity because decisions are made either to accept or reject given titles considered for selection. Still earlier (1954) he had argued that the reason why a book is accepted or rejected makes the difference between whether selection or censorship has occurred (cf. 7.7). Any choice should, therefore, be supported by good reasons in order to enable a librarian to defend any action taken in regard to a potential purchase. He had also noted that most people tend to read what is available, so that "the librarian defines the field from which the average reader will make his choice....," concluding that "... it is here with selection that we librarians exert, however indirectly, our greatest influence on the public we serve and the total society of which that public is part." (Asheim, 1959, in van Orden Phillips, 1979:9-10).

However, there is concern among librarians that selection has to be exercised for various reasons. The major considerations are the following:

(a) Physical limitations of the size of building and of staff necessitate placing a restriction on the intake of books. The choice is vast because of the amount which is published every year (Noyce, 1977: 5). In the U.S.A. 33292 new books were published in 1977 (Bowker annual, 1980: 447). In the U.K. in 1979 32854 books were published, more than twice as many as the 15168 published twenty years earlier (Bowker annual, 1980: 517). These figures, it should be noted, exclude new editions and reprints. Retrospective selection should also be occurring, so that the mere quantity published complicates the task of selection irrespective of the principle to be applied.

(b) The biggest factor forcing librarians to select among the available titles is the budget. The financial difficulties faced by librarians in the 1970s, (constraints still being experienced at present), were raised in Chapters 3 and 4 (cf. 3.2.4.4; 3.3.5.1 & 4.3.4.3). There was a stage in the 1960s in the U.S.A. when the time spent on selection seemed to be wasteful, as the book budgets at the time were generally more than adequate to meet most needs (Broadus, 1973: 3). In the U.K. there was never the same degree of affluence in this respect during the 1960s. It was, nevertheless, also a period of growth in the U.K. (Kelly, 1977: 428).

### 5.3.2 IS BOOK SELECTION AN ART OR A SCIENCE?

Many librarians have argued that book selection is an art rather than a science (Bonny, 1939: 11, 181; Drury, 1930: 344; Haines, 1950). Spiller criticises this view as being "misleading", because it has encouraged vagueness in selection. He does not deny that experience and book knowledge are important, but claims that book selection is nearer a dictionary definition of science, which he has formulated as "knowledge ascertained by observation and experiment". He concludes by recognising that "the strong element of subjectivity makes it too complex a matter to achieve exact, (his emphasis) results, book selection is primarily a matter of organisation." (Spiller, 1974: 10).

Lunati has expressed similar sentiments, stating that "selection is neither an art nor a science, but rather a scientific activity undertaken for the purpose of bringing about a degree of organization and achieving increased rationality." (Lunati, 1975:119). He adds that, even if the results are relative, it must be borne in mind that so-called 'absolute facts' are non-existent, even in the exact sciences (cf. also Capra, 1975:303). He states finally that "book selection implies...the study of the human condition and we must endeavour to grasp the significance of the research carried out in related fields of knowledge..." (Lunati, 1975:22) such as psychology and sociology.

### 5.3.3 AIM OF BOOK SELECTION

In essence book selection is epitomised in Drury's slogan: "The high purpose of book selection is to provide the right book to the right reader at the right time" (Drury, 1930:1), a claim which would also encompass the principles inherent in Melvil Dewey's statement, viz. "the best reading for the largest number at the least cost."

These cliches, however, are not particularly helpful to selectors, and, as Lunati has noted, "[they are] more ingenious than useful since it leads us back into a maze of investigations that are easier to suggest than to carry out." (Lunati, 1975:25).

To achieve the aim of appropriately matching books and people it involves, according to Haines three factors, "knowledge of the extent and character of the readers' demands, knowledge of books, and satisfaction of those demands in terms of the highest book values." (Haines, 1950:38).

### 5.3.4 THE COMMUNITY

Before any consideration of the abstract principles can take place, it must be remembered that the public library is a social institution (cf. 2.3.1; 3.2.4.4 & 4.3.4.3). It is, therefore, necessary to consider the people the library is trying to reach. These are the actual and potential users within

the community served by the library. These users have both individual and communal interests which should be met. The trend has been for librarians to concentrate on the former and to ignore the latter (Collison, 1975:78). However, the use by these people justify the library's existence. Any principle of book selection clearly cannot be applied without having a knowledge of a particular community (Carter et al., 1974:13).

Many authors have emphasised the importance of knowing a specific community's needs and wants if a library is to provide an effective service (Bonny, 1939:2; Carter et al, 1974:172; Harrison, 1978:33; Cabeceiras, 1978:13). Carter et al have suggested that there are two ways of acquiring such knowledge, viz. by means of :-

- (a) "a general study of the community which will reveal its broad outlines - educational level, occupations, distributions by age, sex, etc. ...; [and]
- (b) a study of the actual users of the library, which will reveal their particular reading interests and relevant sociological data." (Carter et al, 1974:14).

Useful background knowledge can be acquired from scrutinising readership studies and user surveys of other libraries (Carter et al, 1974:14).

Before examining the use of user studies (cf.5.3.4.2), brief mention will be made of the position in South Africa.

#### 5.3.4.1 SOUTH AFRICA

The communities served by South African public libraries are diverse and varied, in respect of differing cultures, languages and levels of literacy (cf.4.4.4.3). The traditional, obligatory separation of services (cf.4.2.4.2 & 4.4.4.4) to each population group does make the task of selection somewhat easier. Here again the public libraries are trying to serve the 'average' reader in the global sense (cf.5.3.4.4) which, as a matter of course, results in the better educated, particularly among the blacks, being relatively poorly catered for in segregated libraries of all kinds. These people are now benefiting from the move towards integrating public libraries (cf.4.2). However, this movement has complicated selection even more,

inter alia placing an added social responsibility on librarians to know their heterogeneously composed communities well. An awareness of McColvin's theory dealing with the variety of demand may be of some help in this regard (cf. 5.4).

Like their overseas counterparts, many South African librarians have stressed the need to know the community being served by the public library (Holdsworth, 1948:57-8; Albert, 1962:21; Friis, 1962:47; Galgut, 1973:121; Gertz, 1975:10; Strauss, 1980:38). However, this has been done in general terms without spelling out the specifics (cf. also 5.3.3).

The limited degree of application of the findings of user studies will be examined in a later section (cf. 5.3.4.2.1).

#### 5.3.4.2 USER STUDIES

User studies, concerned with general reading habits and interests, originated in the early 1920s with the work of Walter Hofmann at Leipzig, Germany. Pioneers of this interest in the U.S.A. were Grey and Monroe (1929) and Warples and Tyler (1931). In the period between the First and Second World Wars the Graduate Library School of the University of Chicago was particularly active in this field.

The deficiencies of these studies lay in their inadequate theoretical grounding in the methods of the social sciences on which they were based. The result was a tendency to amass data which, for the librarian, provided meagre insight into the user in order for it to be of sufficient practical use in both book selection and user guidance (Fouche, 1977:6-8).

Since the late 1950s there has been a renewed interest in studying the use that is made of public libraries in particular communities. These have included both towns and cities. The most comprehensive user study before this period was Berelson's The library's public (1949). Some of the more recent studies of importance have been those of Groombridge (1964) and Luckham (1971) in the U.K., and Bundy (1967) and Carpenter (1979) in the U.S.A. A comprehensive annotated list of the work done in the U.K. is included in Ward (1977).

Apart from these empirical studies there have been attempts to establish appropriate theoretical foundations for user studies in such works as the textbook by Hatt (1976).

Fouche (1971 :2-3) concludes his overview of user studies by stressing the need for a sound theoretical framework which must be solidly based in the social sciences, thereby recognising its interdisciplinary nature. Only after this has been achieved, he claims, will user studies be of sufficient practical value to librarians in assisting them to cope adequately with the problems of book selection and user guidance.

#### 5.3.4.2.1 SOUTH AFRICA

Murray (1938 ; 1939) was the first South African to take an interest in user studies in the late 1930s when he published articles on the work of Hofmann.

P. C. Coetzee revived this interest after 1960 when he was trying to formulate a theoretical framework for user studies, culminating in the publication of Lees en lesers (1977).

User studies are likely to remain a major field of research in South Africa, especially in respect of the continual increase in the level of literacy among the black groups (Kesting, 1980 : 153-5), resulting in a widening of their reading needs and interests. Use of the public library by blacks, particularly adults, is minimal (Fouche, 1977 : 17) which has caused Fouche (1977 : 4, 17) to propose that the public library needs to adapt itself radically in form and function to rapidly changing circumstances, if it is to have relevance for a developing community (cf. 4.4.4.5).

In Chapter 4 (cf. 4.3.4.1) mention was made of other user studies undertaken in South Africa, and Fouche included a fairly comprehensive bibliography of the work done and in progress in his Aspects of readership (1977).

Further analytical discussion of this topic is, however, not deemed necessary, as its concerns are somewhat peripheral to this thesis.

#### 5.3.4.3 THE SURVEY

A survey for library purposes is "a selective investigation of the population within a given area, including but not restricted to members of public libraries." (Spiller, 1974:32). More specifically, it has been defined as:

"an organized, thoughtfully planned attempt to determine the factors...that relate to the library. These factors, and many others, create the environment within which the theory of selection, the philosophy of a library, and the evaluation process for materials operate, forming a matrix on which actual selection decisions are made." (van Orden & Phillips, 1979:109).

A survey can be employed to determine both the general social, historical, geographical and political traits of a community (Cabeceiras, 1978:199), and the specific characteristics, needs and wants of actual users. It is recognised as one of the best ways of knowing the community (van Orden & Phillips, 1979:109), especially the need to cater for the greatest possible number of minorities (McClellan, 1973:22). Nevertheless, as Carter et al, (1974:172) have observed, "[it] has been widely praised, but so infrequently practiced."

Wellard (1937: Chs. 11&12) placed particular stress on the social and psychological characteristics of the community out of which the conflicts of the different objectives, as reflected in the different groups he had characterised, were considered for the purposes of book selection. In consequence, he tended to ignore the need for librarians also to have a knowledge of books (Haines, 1950:33).

Martin, who is supported by Zweizig & Dervin (1977:252), claims that present circumstances are such that surveys should elicit more than basic facts, so as to enable "an accurate picture... [to] be drawn to serve as a basis for decisions on goals and objectives. Available funds can then be allocated within a framework of priorities undergirded by substantive information." (Martin, 1975:434).

Too much importance, as Line (1967) cautions, should not be attached to surveys, as they have inherent shortcomings. Intelligent use has to be

made of the information acquired, because "surveys cannot tell you what to do; they can only give you some information which may help in the formation of a policy decision." (Line, 1967:127). It must also be remembered that the composition and interests of the community, (inclusive of both real and potential public library users), are continually changing (Cabeceiras, 1978: 13), thus soon rendering the findings and conclusions of any survey obsolete.

#### 5.3.4.4 ACTUAL USERS

It is also necessary for the librarian of a public library to study its actual users, as they constitute the corpus of people who are placing the present demand on the library (Carter et al, 1974:14). Although a community survey may have scientific validity, there are non-scientific ways of obtaining details of users' needs and wants. By being observant and having personal contact with users much can be learned about them (Spiller, 1974:35). Other methods which could assist in selection would entail studying and comparing various records of library use. These methods would include inspecting such things as issue statistics, user requests, reservations and the examination of date stamps in books (Haines, 1950;40; Spiller, 1974:34-5).

Whatever methods are employed to know the community, they only yield information relating to an 'average' user or potential user who is little more than a statistical abstraction. It is impossible to know the whole range of the community's tastes and their shades of opinion, as these are wide and varied (Broadus, 1973:6).

This focus on users, especially as one of the areas of priority to which the public library should direct its attention, has already been investigated in Chapters 2 and 3 (cf.3.2.4.4; 3.3.6.1; 3.3.6.3; 4.3.4.3 & 4.4.4.5). The question often faced is whether the public library should serve only those who use it, or should design its services to cater for the needs of all within the community. Although unduly idealistic there is general agreement (Carter et al, 1974:5-6,27) (cf.4.3.4.3) that " [the librarian should] provide for both actual and potential users. Satisfy the former's general and specific demands as far as possible; anticipate somewhat the demands

which might or could come from the latter." (Drury, 1930:245).

The argument for attempting to provide for all is that the public library is a public institution supported by public funds (Carter et al, 1974:5). Among the proponents of this idea there is disagreement as to the degree to which the library should be active or passive (Carter et al, 1974:6). The current trend in the U.K. and the U.S.A. is for the public library to actively promote and publicise its collection and services. The past practice of providing a service only to those who made a point of using it has been criticised (cf.3.2.3.4).

Whatever the approach, (to which librarians have been quick to give labels, such as 'adult education', 'outreach', 'extension', or 'social responsibility'), public librarians have been imbued with a "mission" "to make the advantages of books and other materials available to all." (Collison, 1975:74).

History has shown that librarians have failed in this mission, as only a small proportion of the adult population have, and still continue to use the public library (cf.3.2.4.4; 3.3.6.1; 4.3.4.1 & 5.3.4.2). Even though the majority do not want direct access to public libraries, librarians have continued to assume that there is a need; and that those who do not use it are acting against this need (Collison, 1975:74).

Collison has asserted that these propositions have never been proved, and he further argues that this view is based on a misunderstanding of modern society, even though it might have applied to the early days of the public library. Instead, he asserts, "what has happened is that we have been given many new ways in which to organize new kinds of communities, without regard to spatial limits." (Collison, 1975:75). He continues that neighbourhood communities of the past do not exist, or only in a very loose form. Instead, "communities organize themselves on the base of people in communication about common interests. If they have the opportunity to develop, communities will also establish and maintain institutions appropriate to their needs." (Collison, 1975:76).

This latter aspect adds another factor as to who constitute the library's community, and, therefore, has to be considered because this would have a bearing on the principles of selection (cf.5.3.6).

Any principles of book selection are thus not only dependent on the objectives of the library: they must also be orientated towards whatever the needs and demands a local community might have.

#### 5.4 McCOLVIN'S THEORY

The importance of McColvin's ideas expressed in The theory of book selection for public libraries (1925) was immediately recognised by librarians (Lunati, 1975:15). This is discussed by such librarians as Drury (1930:237-43), Bonny (1939:12-3) and Haines (1950:39-40). It will only be briefly mentioned here, as it is impractical to apply (Lunati, 1975:11) in the modern-day context of inadequately qualified staff (i.e. librarians who are, on the whole, not educated and trained in depth at the basic professional level); of insufficient funds; and of the number of publications appearing per annum (cf.5.3.1). His theory, however, does provide a useful background to some of the principles of book selection.

The priority given to the objectives of reform and education in the 19th century saw book selection of that time emphasising the literary and educational qualities of books (cf.3.2.2.5). The 20th century has witnessed a shift away from the book itself towards the users and the community (Lunati, 1975:11) (cf.5.3.4).

Prior to McColvin authors had produced pragmatic accounts of individual experiences of selection which had relied on common sense based on experience and personal convictions (Lunati, 1975:12,16). McColvin was the first in Britain to attempt to put a scientific method on book selection (cf.5.3.4.2). He focused primarily on man and not the book (cf.5.3.2).

McColvin's premise was that book selection is a question of demand and supply, with demand being dependent on its volume, value and variety. The solution to this question involved "firstly, the discovery and assessment (by value and by volume) of needs, and secondly, . . . the choice and provision of such books as will satisfy these needs." (McColvin, 1925:17).

In considering the needs of the whole community, he stated that the collection must be such that "representation must be comprehensive of and in proportion to demand and not subject." (McColvin, 1925:20).

In order to attain representativeness, he wanted demand to be evaluated not only in terms of its volume, but also in terms of its value. These two criteria cannot be applied separately, otherwise the library would either have a collection of high-quality books which would be used relatively infrequently, or a heavily used collection of popular literature which would have little intrinsic value.

In an attempt to resolve the difficulty, he devised a mathematical formula to evaluate volume and value. However, as this formula is not easy to apply in practice, and does not materially affect the main argument of the thesis, it will only be briefly outlined, quoting McColvin:

"the method...is to give to each of the subjects dealt with an index number representing its relative value. The volume of demand is represented by a similar [proportionate] number, and the two are multiplied, the resulting figures being the representation number. Thus if A is a subject valued at 10 and B at 1, if the volume of demand for both is the same, say 6, the representation numbers are 60 and 6 respectively. If the volume of demand for A is 6 and for B 72, the representation numbers are 60 and 72, and so on."  
(McColvin, 1925:21).

Representation is not expressed in terms of a specific number of books (e.g. 60 or 72), but rather of the extent to which a library can supply material on a subject to interested users, determined by such factors as income and space (McColvin, 1925:22).

In assessing the value of the demand he admits the subjective nature of the process, by stating that "we do not have sufficient knowledge...to assert that one subject is of greater value than another [but] this does not in any way vitiate the general principle that subjects of greater value call for greater representation." (McColvin, 1925:57).

This evaluation applies equally to the variety of each type of demand so that all levels of the demand should be met, i.e. "whenever the demand for a subject is twofold in nature, the representation must be twofold. (McColvin, 1925:25).

The volume of demand is also difficult to gauge (McColvin, 1925:81).

The librarian must try to anticipate demand, but when there is a choice between expressed and unexpressed demands, the former should receive precedence (McColvin, 1925:62).

The same principles apply to value and volume when choosing what to buy for the library. To meet the demand the librarian needs a thorough knowledge of the publishing world and of bibliographic aids so as to ensure an adequate appreciation of the range of selection (McColvin, 1925:Ch.6).

McColvin (1925:82) recognised the shortcomings of his attempt to approach book selection scientifically. However, because his theory took into account the volume of demand, it helped librarians to be sensitive to the needs of every specific local community.

His theory also made librarians aware that there is a difference in the value of various publications, and so to evaluate demand when considering a book for selection (Broadus, 1973:14).

Although Lunati (1975:15-6) has praised McColvin's work for its "penetrating observations, an excellent structure and a wealth of ideas that converge, in an orderly way, on a few fundamental principles...", he, nevertheless, criticises this work along with the later texts on book selection by Drury (1930), Bonny (1939) and Haines (1950) as being too "empirical", as they dealt with the sociological nature of research (Lunati, 1975:23).

Lunati, in contrast to the above authors, wants "cultural" selection to take place. However he never sets out clearly what he means by this (Mario, in Lunati, 1975:v), but makes rather vague statements such as:

"cultural selection is founded on precise factors [which is the integration of] the need to meet socio-educational requirements; the quest for scientific principles; the recourse to more appropriate techniques; the utilization of psychological analyses, and last but not least, the emerging need to take cultural considerations into account. "

(Lunati, 1975:12,25)

He continues that selection based on these criteria is directed towards the user "[who] lives in society and his motives for learning are derived from that society, which is characterized by its culture." (Lunati, 1975:25).

Not dissimilar is Fouche's criticism regarding user studies (cf.3.3.4.2) where he argues that any theoretical framework for selection must be based on an interdisciplinary approach to the social sciences (cf.also 5.3.2).

## 5.5 SOME PRINCIPLES OF BOOK SELECTION

### 5.5.1 INTRODUCTION

McColvin's theory highlighted both some of the major principles and the practical problems of book selection, particularly in regard to the unresolved conflict between providing quality materials against meeting demand, viz. whether a library adheres to the value (or quality) principle or the demand principle.

A lucid presentation of the two positions concerned has been given by Merritt, viz.:

" The value theory posits the public library as an educational institution containing books that provide inspiration, information, and recreation, with insistence that even the last-mentioned should embody some measure of creative imagination. The collection should include only those books which one way or another tend toward the development and enrichment of life...

The demand theory, on the other hand, sees the public library as a democratic institution, supported by taxes paid by the whole community, each member of which has an equal right to find what he wishes to read in the library collection. " (Merritt, 1970:11).

In reality no library finds itself purely and simply at either end of the pole, but will rather tend to fluctuate towards one or other end at different times. As Fiske has put it: " 'Quality' and 'demand'...can be construed as the extremes of a continuum on which most librarians may be found, but they are likely to hold other concepts which conflict with their attitudes towards these two values." (Fiske, 1959:8).

There are essentially three principles of book selection which are not mutually exclusive as has been suggested above, viz.:

- (a) a library should provide quality materials;
- (b) a library should provide what users want; and
- (c) a library should have a well-rounded, balanced collection.

### 5.5.2 QUALITY

The librarians who accentuate the provision of quality material in the collection are continuing the 19th-century tradition of only providing books of the highest standard (cf. 3.2.2.5). Inherent in this approach is the assumption that librarians know the social and cultural needs of their communities (Cabeceiras, 1971:200-1). A corollary to this is the impression that these librarians are less sensitive to demand as they consider, without adequate substantiation, non-fiction to be superior to fiction (and especially light-fiction) (Carter et al, 1974:8).

Much of the 'quality' versus 'demand' debate centres around the question of fiction. Shera (1972:107) and Banfield (1972:95-6) have expressed themselves against the provision of light fiction per se, asking whether the public library can justify spending the tax-payers' money on 'trivia'. Insofar as it may do so, they argue, the public library operates at the level of a supermarket, abdicating, as a result, its responsibility to improve reading tastes. The proponents of this view are, therefore, giving priority to the educational objective of the public library above all others (cf. 3.3.6.1).

The librarians who are opposed to the provision of 'trivia' do so on the grounds that the public library's aims and objectives differ substantially from those of the commercial or specialist agencies (cf. 3.2.1.3; 3.2.4.3 & 3.2.4.6). Concomitantly, the public library is committed to the imposition of certain standards, including those applying to book selection, which are governed by those aims and objectives (Broadus, 1973:19).

These librarians contend that the lowering of standards results in merely the most vocal section of the population being looked after while disregarding the minorities in the community (McClellan, 1973:113,132) (cf. 5.7).

It is also doubtful whether this policy will ever increase the proportion of the population who use the public library (Coetzee, 1977:xix). In practice, the provision of light fiction has not resulted in such a development if a comparison is made of the user studies undertaken over the years (cf.5.3.4.2).

Some librarians, even though they are upholders of library standards, have argued for the generous provision of light fiction, based on the belief that users would progress to more quality works once they have been attracted to the library as a primary step (Maidment, 1975:89) (cf.3.2.3.4).

These librarians then argue that once users are utilizing the public library there should be good professional reader guidance to help to improve reading tastes (Bendix in Gaver, 1969:171-2). Monroe supported this view and saw the readers' advisers playing a decisive role in assisting the users to adapt to changing local and national environments (Monroe, 1962:374) (cf.3.3.6.4). She also claimed that these advisers could stimulate demand, and in doing so, improve the quality of the material wanted (Monroe, 1963).

The notion that librarians can improve reading tastes has been dismissed by many authors as lacking validity (cf.3.2.3.4 & 3.2.4.6), particularly in regard to adult reading behaviour, as it is generally held that reading patterns become fixed during childhood (Maidment, 1975:89).

Also librarians have been somewhat ambivalent in dealing with the implications of this problem. It has been found that science fiction and detective novels are generally bought in preference to westerns and romances (Freeman, 1965, in Gaver, 1969:208). Feiwel (1966:303) supported the 'permissive' approach, claiming that if the public library is to provide opportunities for leisure reading in terms of its legitimate objectives, it follows that it should make available escapist literature to the unsophisticated reader, who, according to Gans, might gain "facts and insights...just as enlightening and relevant to his social and cultural situation as those the high-brow reader gets from a novel chosen by the literary critics." (Gans (1968) in Totterdell, 1978:77). Worsley (1968:267) also focused on the different cultural experiences people gain from reading (cf.3.2.4.6).

The existence of these different cultural levels makes it possible for certain librarians to provide light fiction and still claim that it is not 'trivia',

but rather that it fulfills an educational objective, depending on the users served.

The question of light fiction is not whether or not public libraries should stock fiction as such, but rather whether or not it should provide 'trivia' (Spiller, 1974:121-2). Even though, for many librarians, the educational objective may have priority, the point of difference is whether 'quality' incorporates the purist stance, (such as Shera's), or whether it includes the multi-stratified cultural approach mentioned above.

### 5.5.3 DEMAND

Those librarians who are primarily governed by demand as the factor in selection would concentrate on actual users and their present wants. This would apply even when adding those materials essential to a collection, such as dictionaries and encyclopaedias. Even these materials then would have to be considered in terms of any other demands (Carter et al, 1974: 7-8).

These librarians advocate the meeting of demand on the grounds that the public library is tax-supported, and as a consequence, the library should give the public precisely what it wants in terms of manifest preference (Broadus, 1973:17). Such librarians are in the majority, as Fiske demonstrated in her empirical study (Fiske, 1959:11-3). This would largely account for the fact that public libraries since the 1930s have been used by adults for mainly leisure-reading (cf. 3.2.3.4; 3.2.4.6; 3.3.3.2; 3.3.6.1 & 4.3.4.2).

A recent attempt to relate selection directly to user demands was made by the Baltimore County Public Library in the U.S.A. Because studies have indicated that about 20 per cent of a collection accounted for about 70 per cent of book use (cf. also Knight, 1969), it decided that from 1976 it would base its selection on a formula determined by prediction, experience and actual use as reflected by circulation figures. The result has been that, to meet requests, the library has had to buy more copies of given titles rather than having to widen its title range (Maryland, 1977, in van Orden & Phillips, 1979:175).

Although there is no concensus on the topic of 'quality' or 'demand', successive authors have supported McColvin's view on the importance of demand (cf. 5.4), which, by definition, is generally assumed to include unexpressed demands, as a factor in the selection process (Drury, 1930:245; Bonny, 1939:14; Haines, 1950:41). Any assessment of McColvin's theory would presuppose a consideration of other factors such as quality. Most librarians are at neither extreme mentioned above, but try to reconcile the two and use the term 'balance'.

#### 5.5.4 BALANCE

The development of balanced collections for every public library system is a professionally acceptable ideal, but, as Fiske observed, "[it is] a semantic convenience embracing a great variety of rationales for book selection." (Fiske, 1959:15).

It is most frequently used to indicate a well-rounded collection, in which the different classes of the classification scheme are proportionately represented, without taking into account the community's needs (Fiske, 1959:15). Harrison (1978:33-4) criticises this approach, blaming its weaknesses partly on the influence the Dewey Decimal Classification has on librarians' perception, whereas he wants librarians to be selecting for the needs of their community.

The well-rounded collection could lead some librarians to attempt to build complete collections, a goal which is neither advisable (Drury, 1930:245), nor feasible because of insufficient money, except in the case of those libraries which had developed special collections (Broadus, 1973:25), as a result, the need for co-operation once more becomes imperative (Malan, 1978:87-8) (cf. 3.2.4.5 & 3.3.5.1).

'Balance' as a term has also been used to refer to the provision of works on all sides of a contentious issue, thereby dictating the representation of many points of view (Fiske, 1959:15). This aspect, as a matter of course, will be examined more closely in the forthcoming chapter on censorship and its relationship to book selection.

Demand-orientated librarians regard the principle of 'balance' as a

means of trying to reconcile, on an equitable basis, the demands of the majority with those of minorities (Broadus, 1973:25). Those on the other end of the scale, who place particular emphasis on the inclusion of quality materials, may be expected to endorse the view expressed by Haines that "while demand is primarily the basis and reason for supply, remember that the great works of literature are foundation stones in the library's own structure, and therefore select some books of permanent value regardless of whether or not they will be widely used." (Haines, 1950:41).

McColvin's theory (cf.5.4), in terms of which the claims of demand would be tempered by the requirements of the collection, could be a method of considering a balanced collection. Accordingly, the provision of quality material would be related to the objectives and the needs of the community (Carter et al, 1974:10). In this event the public library would be selecting the 'best' books, where this term does not necessarily relate to a book's literary or educational worth, but rather refers to what would be 'best' for a particular community (i.e. selecting what would be meeting the needs of a library and its community) (Bonny, 1939:12).

#### 5.5.5 SOUTH AFRICA

The arguments put forward in this section will naturally result in some duplication of those already mentioned in 5.5.2, 5.5.3 and 5.5.4, as South African authors have assimilated many of the ideas postulated in the U.K. and the U.S.A. (cf.4.1).

Over the years such librarians as Holdsworth (1941:102; 1948:54), Speight (1953:8) and Broeze (1976:20) have supported the notion of the provision of mainly quality material. In contrast there have been others, such as Borland (1948:70-1), Smith (1968:112) and Aremband (1972:207-14), who have expressed the need to meet the varied and many demands of the library's public.

The case for the provision of quality material has been put clearly by Broeze (1976). She considers the objectives of education and culture as being paramount. The leisure objective, in her view, is an extension of the cultural one and not separate from it. Because of this, she claims, the

public library must be considered on a par with other cultural amenities such as the city orchestra and the public art gallery which are also supported by public funds, but do not necessarily give the public what it wants. Thus the public library has certain standards irrespective of demand (cf. 5.5.2).

This view may be held by some South African librarians, however, the reality of the situation is that "in the R.S.A. the social [public] library is generally accepted as a purely recreational facility..." (Malan, 1978:34), and, therefore, demand plays a large part in the selection of materials for adults, particularly in the white libraries.

With regard to the reading needs of blacks, Makhanya (1978:23) identified the public library's role as not being concerned with demand and supply, especially with only a limited range of books being available in the vernacular, but rather to provide for the new literates and to promote literacy.

The emphasis on 'demand' creates problems for South African librarians who wish to supply 'quality' materials as well as just meeting demand. Albert (1962:22), as a former practising book selector in public libraries, stressed at the time that standards must not be lowered to the extent that the public library would be competing with the corner cafe (cf. 5.5.2), but she was in agreement with Rowland (1935:16-7) that, in order to attract users, light fiction can be used as "bait" to "better" literature (Albert, 1962:25) (cf. 5.5.2 & 5.5.4). However, Roux (1964:12) makes the point that librarians do not know enough about reading to be dogmatic about light fiction, and in their relative ignorance should, therefore, meet all demands (cf. 5.5.2).

The reaction by librarians to the criticism by a Cape Town journalist, Amanda Botha, that the provincial library services provide only a minimal amount of quality Afrikaans literature, but large quantities of light Afrikaans fiction, was based on the claim that the reading tastes of the Afrikaans-speaking public, vis-a-vis the English-speaking counterparts, are relatively underdeveloped, resulting in most of the Afrikaans literary novels not being read (Openbare biblioteek..., 1979:101; Pienaar, 1974:4). In response to Botha's attack, Pienaar (1979:4) has proposed that the answer to this problem is to raise the reading tastes of the public through the active participation of teachers, cultural leaders and publishers. Broeze (1976:21)

considers this as being part of the librarian's role by undertaking active reader guidance (cf. 5.5.2).

In contrast to the approach of the Baltimore County Library System (cf. 5.5.3), the librarians of the Cape Provincial Library Service (C.P.L.S.) considered the provision of variety more important than duplication (Controversy renewed... , 1979:8-11).

South African librarians, such as Albert (1962:22), Gertz (1972:11) and Strauss (1980:2), have also considered a balanced collection as a compromise between the need to meet the demands of the majority, on the one hand, and that of accommodating the requirements of minorities on the other. This compromise would necessarily entail seeing to the collections needs which would include quality materials (cf. 5.5.4).

#### 5.5.6 CONCLUSION

From the above it would seem that book selection principles should be such that they veer to neither extreme for any significant length of time. The development of a balanced collection would constitute a reconciliation of extremes (Merritt, 1970:12), resulting, as a matter of course, in a specific collection " [that] is inclusive and contains whatever materials contribute to the purposes of the library." (Carter et al, 1974:10).

The principles, thus, form part of the theoretical foundations for the difficult task of selection. In trying to resolve the conflicting principles, the selector, as "matchmaker in a continual marriage of diversity and disparity" (Fiske, 1959:7), has at his disposal the support of bibliographic tools and his own professional impartial qualities to put into practice. This last point will be looked at in Chapter 7 as a factor in considering whether the librarian is essentially a selector or a censor (cf. 7.7).

Principles also help to lend consistency to the decisions taken, so that the public will have the means of knowing what to expect from a particular library (Gill, 1979:5). One way of ensuring that the principles will be applied in a consistent manner is to formulate them into a written policy.

## 5.6 BOOK SELECTION POLICY

### 5.6.1 INTRODUCTION

Whatever principles may prevail in a particular public library, they must be transformed into a formally articulated policy before they can be put into practice. This policy in turn will be governed by the more general notions underlying the public library's overall aims and objectives.

Authors are in general agreement that both the overall and the book selection policy should be recorded (Emerson, 1961 : 270 ; Krug, 1968 : 662 ; Boyer & Eaton, 1971 : iii ; Carter et al, 1974 : 15 ; Bender, 1979 : 48). Such compatibility will ensure that decisions cannot be taken on an ad hoc basis which may lead to haphazard planning and practice, but would instead follow some standard procedures (Cabeceiras, 1978 : 205).

Merritt (1970 : 26) has observed that most public libraries do not have a written book selection policy, a neglect which he attributes to "procrastination". Agler (1964) and later Futas (1977) have confirmed Merritt's observation empirically. Futas concluded from her investigation that the reasons for not writing a policy can be attributed to such factors as insufficient time or the inability to meet the challenge of the exercise (Futas, 1977 : xii). The latter point was made in the Intellectual freedom manual which also included as a factor, "lack of confidence in one's abilities to do so..." (A.L.A., 1974, in van Orden & Phillips, 1979 : 73). The manual, in addition to the works of Merritt (1970), Boyer & Eaton (1971) and Futas (1977), all provide guidelines for the compilation of book selection policies.

Bendix, rather cynically, attributes the reluctance of producing such statements on the part of librarians to the fact that "[it] would force them to face the hypocrisy of what is said from what is done." (Bendix, in Gaver 1969 : 173).

Because a policy is often used for public relations purposes, Futas makes the point that "[it] often represent[s] the ideal... Even though the reality differs from the ideal, the latter may be exactly what the policy should say." (Futas, 1977 : xiv).

Even if most librarians seem to agree that they should have a written policy, their hesitation to write one may in the final analysis be attributed

to the sheer complexity of the task, as well as to the daunting prospect of having to undertake periodic revisions of the initial statements which would be required in order to meet the changing circumstances of the particular community served by the public library concerned (Carter et al, 1974:16).

Although the formulation of a written policy clearly requires a great deal of effort, it has many indisputable advantages, as Merritt has pointed out.

"The writing of a selection policy, if done seriously and deliberately, should produce other benefits besides the end product of a useful and workable policy statement. Among these is the intellectual stimulation afforded the staff in the process of thinking through an a priori statement of precisely of what is to be in the library. Another is the public relations value of drawing the whole community into observing and participating in the process. "

(Merritt, 1970:26).

(The importance of a written policy with regard to the treatment of complaints, and especially those relating to formal or informal manifestations of censorship will be investigated in Chapter 7 (cf. 7.3 & 7.5)).

Some of the other benefits of a written policy may be designated as follows :

- (a) it clarifies the position of those involved in book selection, as it provides a frame of reference;
- (b) it can serve as an educational tool for new staff, being an introduction to the aims and objectives of the library thus ensuring a measure of continuity;
- (c) it is a point of departure for discussion with users as to whether or not the standards for selection are appropriate (i.e. too high or too low) (Bendix, in Gaver , 1969:175);
- (d) it makes the library accountable for its decisions, as the public are able to evaluate them (Futas, 1977:xi);
- (e) it indicates the priorities and nature of the service, which, in turn, is designed to result in greater efficiency (Krug,1968:659);
- (f) it helps to pinpoint the strengths and weaknesses of a collection

(Beck, 1979 : 207) as well as the depth and scope of the acquisitions (Feng, 1979 : 43);

(g) it ensures a measure of control over the budget and the influx of material (Bender, 1979 : 43); and

(h) "[it] assist[s] in planning with other libraries such co-operative programmes as interlibrary loans and networks." (Katz, 1980 : 19).

Other factors that should be taken into account are that any policy must be flexible, and it needs to be continually updated as a means of enabling the library to adapt to the demands made on it (Feng, 1979 : 43). Futas agrees that there must be flexibility, but advises realistically, that, since most policies are not updated in practice, absolute statements are to be avoided (Futas, 1977 : xiv).

Although regarded as indispensable by many librarians, a written policy is not the solution to selection, and its importance should not be overemphasised. As Merritt has insisted, "[there is] no substitute for knowing the collection or for knowing the clientele and the daily demands on the collection, but [it is]... a useful guideline." (Merritt, 1970 : 30). Such a guideline follows in 5.6.3.

#### 5.6.2 SOUTH AFRICA

South African librarians have likewise addressed themselves to the question of a formulated book selection policy. Gertz (1972 : 11) has rated a book selection policy as being important for balancing demands and needs. Ahrends considered it a weakness of the C.P.L.S. that it does not have a written policy and blames the absence of such a statement on inconsistencies in book selection (Some thoughts on selecting..., 1978 : 17).

Epstein (1973 : 102), in reporting the results of a survey, showed that only three of the medium-sized public libraries in South Africa had written book selection policies at the time of the investigation (i.e. 1972), viz. Bloemfontein, East London and Roodepoort.

Gertz, in an unpublished talk given to the Western Cape Branch of the former S.A.L.A. in 1975, reported that, of 12 out of the 13 autonomous urban public libraries and provincial library systems (excluding Roodepoort

incidentally), looked at in this thesis (cf. Chs. 8 & 9), only the Johannesburg Public Library and the Natal and Orange Free State provincial library services indicated that they had any formulated policy regarding selection. However, not one of these policies has been published.

### 5.6.3 COMPONENTS OF A WRITTEN BOOK SELECTION POLICY

According to Boyer and Eaton a written policy should have reference to the following elements :

- (a) " community description and analysis ;
- (b) responsibility for selection, legal and delegated ;
- (c) intellectual freedom and procedures for complaints ;
- (d) policies by clients served [e.g. children, the blind, students, etc.] ;
- (e) policies by format of material [e.g. books, recorded sound, pictures, etc.] ;
- (f) policies by subject of material [e.g. fiction, foreign language, law, etc.] ;
- (g) gifts policy ;
- (h) weeding, discarding, replacement, duplication policies ; [and]
- (i) relationships to other libraries and library systems in collection development. " (Boyer & Eaton (1971 :iv).

Futas (1977 :xiii-v) included all the above elements in her nine-point list, but she did begin with an introduction in which the public library's aims and objectives were to be set out in relation to the community. Boyer and Eaton have not specifically indicated whether they would include the aims and objectives, but, within their description of the community in (a) above, the aims and objectives could be included as they do not explain what they mean by " community description and analysis ".

A brief examination will now be made of some of these elements in order to indicate their direct relevance to this study, viz.:

- (a) The importance of the relationship between the public library and its community to book selection has already been mentioned (cf. 5.3.4). The composition of a community will have a direct effect on elements (d) and (f).

They, therefore, do not need to be discussed further.

(b) With regard to element (b), the ultimate responsibility for book selection rests with the chief librarian, who usually delegates this activity in all but the smallest public library (Fiske, 1959 :26; Spiller, 1974:31). Likewise, Ranganathan, as a leading theorist, is opposed to outside committees being responsible for book selection, as it was his view that "the responsibility for book selection should be vested in the library staff alone who have the experience to see that books reach the right readers." (Ranganathan, 1966 :224).

Such responsibility vested in the chief librarian is, as a rule, given by the municipal authorities in the case of autonomous urban public libraries, and of county (U.K. and U.S.A.), state (U.S.A.) or provincial (R.S.A.) libraries by their respective authorities.

(c) Aspect (c) viz., "intellectual freedom and the procedure for complaints" is of central concern to one of the main issues of this thesis and will be examined in 6.2; 6.4 & 7.3.

(d) Element (e) viz., "policies by format of material", recognises that there are different criteria for evaluating non-book material, but as this aspect is somewhat peripheral to the topic of this thesis which focuses its attention on books (cf.5.1 & 5.2), it does not warrant further attention here.

(e) In the context of this thesis, gifts and exchanges, (element (g)), should be dealt with in the same manner as material which is purchased. As Carter et al suggest: "if [a gift] does not meet the standards of objectivity, utility and general interest, it should be rejected." (Carter et al, 1974:79). The problem of gifts which proselytise a certain religious or political view will be dealt with in the chapter on censorship and book selection (cf.7.5).

(f) In order that the collection may develop in a way that it will be fully utilised, it is also necessary to weed out or discard material which is no longer of use. Weeding enables a librarian to determine what areas in the collection are well used and where there are gaps. By doing this the librarian hopes to develop "a core collection able to satisfy 90 per cent or more of user demands." (Saul, 1980 :98). The knowledge obtained from weeding can assist in selection. Gill emphasises its importance by stating that "continual editing, withdrawing and replacing of existing stock is at least as important as consideration of new titles." (Gill, 1979 :3).

Weeding is part of the process of evaluating the collection in terms of its quality and its quantity. Methods of evaluation are discussed by such authors as Carter et al, (1974:163-7), Bonn (1974:267-96) and du Mon (1979:104-12), all of whom agree that the quantity of a collection is a lot easier to evaluate than its quality. Nevertheless, the standard of the collection is dependent on what is selected. Evaluation procedures only assist in keeping the collection up to date and in eliminating errors in selection (Bonn, 1974:265).

Haines (1950:42), Douglas (1973:274) and Harrison (1978:25) all stress the importance of an up to date collection which should reflect current ideas in a representative manner. In order to be up to date a library should be prompt in the supply of new titles in sufficient quantity (Haines, 1950:42) (The decisions on duplication will naturally depend on demand (McColvin, 1925:23-4)).

The practice, particularly in the U.S.A., of ordering mainly on the strength of review articles, has resulted in public libraries not necessarily receiving what they wanted. (A.L.A., 1972:34). Feiweles insists that "the examination of the actual book is the best method..." (Feiweles, 1966:313), but it does lead to a delay in supply. The advantages and disadvantages of these methods will be discussed in Chapter 7 (cf.7.3).

It is realised that it is impossible to have a book on the shelves at all times a user may need it (Feiweles, 1966:312). There must therefore be efficient and effective co-operation among libraries on the local, national, and international level, as self-sufficiency is merely an ideal situation (Beck, 1979:208). However, many libraries have been reluctant to engage in joint acquisition ventures, as they generally prefer as much of the material they think they need for domestic purposes to be on their own shelves (A.L.A., 1972:34). Decreasing budgets make co-operation imperative if public libraries wish to give an adequate service (cf.3.2.4.5 & 3.3.5.1). Beck suggests that "[t]he user will be happy if the library has access to what is needed - patrons could not care less if the library owns it. We as librarians must adopt the same attitude!" (Beck, 1979:208).

This stress on co-operation presupposes an active and positive approach to library service where the emphasis would be, in McClellan's (1973:113) terms, on "book provision", rather than on book selection because the term

'selection' has connotations of limiting what is available to users.

Selection is then the bringing of books and people together, and the decisions taken by the librarian on what to give the public can obstruct this process. The rejection of books on the grounds of principles can be justified, but when this is done as a result of the personal prejudices of the librarian, a form of censorship is being practised. The reasons why some and not other books are provided in contravention of the principles will be examined in Chapter 7.

## CHAPTER 6. CENSORSHIP

### 6.1

#### INTRODUCTION

Social control, of which censorship is part, is closely linked to the society in which it operates (de Vleeschauwer, 1959 : 2). As has been demonstrated in Chapter 3, the emergence of the public library in the U.K. and the U.S.A. in the 19th century was a result of the prevailing social conditions in those two countries. South Africa, with its past and present association with these two countries, has followed the developments there relatively closely, viewed in a global perspective (cf. 4.1).

The early public library as a social institution (cf. 2.3.1) reflected those social forces which brought about its birth, one of which was the growth of civil liberties. At the same time attempts at censorship did not cease, because society has continually tried to find a balance between individual freedom and social responsibility (Bekker, 1976 a : 3).

Since earliest times most societies have used forms of social control, usually in the form of taboos, to ensure harmony and conformity, and to avoid chaos and anarchy (Kirk, 1964 : 631). In contrast, civil liberties, in its modern sense of applying to the individual freedom of all the inhabitants of a country, is a more recent phenomenon dating back to the 17th and 18th centuries which "were the transition years in the development of the freedoms and the rights of men..." (Abraham, 1968 : 357) (cf. 2.3.3.4). Civil liberties (of which intellectual freedom is one of many such freedoms (cf. 6.2)) have not been universally accepted, having been limited so far to the Western democracies. As Bengé has stated "intellectual freedom was and is an essential development of liberal capitalist democracy and must be defended by those who believe that such societies represent the good life in its most developed form." (Benge, 1970 : 86).

As agencies instrumental in shaping such a society, the libraries in the U.K. and the U.S.A. - particularly in the 20th century - have defended intellectual freedom where it is regarded as the professional norm in those countries (cf. 6.4.1). Librarians in these two countries have considered that any restrictions inhibiting its consummation (such as those manifesting themselves in the form of censorship) lessen their ability to fulfil their aim

of disseminating knowledge. South Africa nominally espouses the values of liberal democracy, but, because of the peculiar nature of its heterogeneous society with its wide range of literacy levels (cf. 4.4.4.3), one may argue that it cannot be criticised along the same lines as the U.K. and the U.S.A., when freedom is jeopardised or effectively restricted in either of those countries.

Along with Asheim (1966) and Ramachandran (1975), Bengé endorses the view of a differentiated judgment with regard to dissimilar socio-cultural conditions, suggesting that "in areas of the world where different traditions exist, if we object to control of expression, we cannot be content with the same arguments or the same analysis. It is to be doubted whether intellectual freedom should be absolute in all circumstances." (Bengé, 1970: 86). He rather sees it as a goal to be achieved and points out "always we must ask freedom for whom, and for whose benefit." (Bengé, 1970: 146). He emphasises the fact that for most people economic freedom takes precedence over all other freedoms, especially when applied to societies which are not Western democracies. The freedom to starve, for example, does not constitute a freedom (Bengé, 1979: 135). He contends that, although there are different kinds and degrees of liberty, he believes "freedom of expression is not only desirable, but essential for human progress." (Bengé, 1979: 145).

It would seem that it has been through dissidence, criticism, opposition and non-conformity, rather than conformity, that there has been human progress and new ideas (de Vleeschauwer, 1959: 6; Castagna, 1971: 220).

The ensuing discussion, then, has, as its starting point the values held by the Western democracies where most forms of censorship are regarded as "repugnant" (Abraham, 1968: 359). However, before examining the development of the idea that libraries should be upholders of intellectual freedom, and to the extent that this is carried out in practice (cf. 6.4 ff. & Ch. 7), it is desirable to define censorship and intellectual freedom, and to examine cursorily the history of literacy censorship in the West and in South Africa, so as to relate the past to the present.

## 6.2

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Censorship has many meanings, depending on the context in which the term is being used. This study, for example, is confined to the censorship of literature and then, more specifically, censorship as applied in libraries.

In its broadest sense censorship may be described as "any action by officials of government, church or other organizations, or by private individuals, which by legal action, coercion, threat or persuasion prevents expression or communication." (Castagna, 1971:216).

Lasswell's often quoted definition is also relevant in the comprehensive sense. He states that "[censorship is, essentially,] a policy of restricting the public expression of ideas and opinions which are believed to have the capacity to undermine the governing authority or the social and moral order which that authority considers itself bound to protect." (Lasswell, 1930:290).

Most societies have experienced some form of censorship, as, in the course of events, every society normally feels it has a right to protect itself against political and cultural forces which threaten its major value systems. Kirk argues that societal censorship must be seen as a social device that has been and will continue within societies. It must be regarded as neither good nor bad, "but as a social policy and phenomenon of very ancient and widespread origins, sometimes resulting in a beneficial conservation of human character and society, sometimes resulting in a leaden repression which provokes a disastrous reaction." (Kirk, 1964:632).

Censorship, in its specific application to librarianship, may be described in general terms as "the rejection by a library...of a book (or other material), which the librarian, the library board or some person (or persons) bringing pressure on them holds to be obscene, dangerously radical, subversive, or too critical of the existing mores." (Leigh, 1950:117).

The antithesis of censorship is generally known as 'intellectual freedom'. This is a term used particularly in the U.S.A., and it encompasses such ideas as freedom of expression, freedom of thought, freedom of speech and of the press, freedom of communication and academic freedom. Freedom, of course, is a relative state, related to the given society in which it operates (Krug & Harvey, 1974:170). For this reason it cannot be defined in absolute terms.

Allain suggests that the notion of intellectual freedom embraces such rights and conditions as the following, viz.:

"The right to seek answers to the questions that the mind propounds and to be stimulated to ask more questions...; the right to be challenged by encountering alien, even offensive, ideologies...; the duty to seek such challenge, for only a belief which has been challenged is held with any kind of certainty... (cf. Mill, (1859) 1974:76); the right to encounter not only the great minds of the past and the great minds of the present, but also the second rate, the third rate, the mediocre, and even the inferior minds...; the right to read what they have produced, to be stimulated, moved, repelled by their ideas, their portrayal of life, and their reaction to the human situation...; the right of access to a rich and varied collection in public libraries... . The public library, accordingly, must be the bastion of intellectual freedom." (Allain, 1970:47).

Librarians use the term to denote "the freedom claimed by persons to have access to books and information without restraint from public or private interests." (Busha, 1972:84). Busha elaborates by stating that:

"intellectual freedom...usually means the library user's right to read, to watch, or to listen to what he wants to read, to see, or to hear, respectively, without supervision or restraint from public officials, public opinion, institutional repression, or private groups or individuals." (Busha, 1972:84).

Freedom, apart from being relative, is also not static. It either expands or contracts, depending on the social tensions created by the forces emanating from the prevailing claims for individual freedom within a given society at a given time and its concomitant group values and power structures (Castagna, 1971:216).

The types of censorship of direct concern to the issues raised in this Chapter are those exercised formally by public authorities (such as the agencies of Church or State), or informally by pressure groups. The former manifests itself as legal censorship, which is based on law or

administrative regulations, and the latter as unofficial censorship, which uses persuasion or even economic or political pressure (Gellhorn, 1956, in Downs, 1960:21).

The formal manner in which censorship is applied often entails the appointment of official censors charged with the responsibility of deciding on the desirability of publications for a given community or a conglomerate of communities. South Africa, for example, is presently adopting this system, whereas formal state censorship is handled differently in the U.K. and the U.S.A.. In most Western countries the issue of determining the desirability or non-desirability of a publication constitutes a value judgment determined by the courts in relation to the applicable laws. In these instances, therefore, post-publication censorship is the norm. Pre- (also called prior-) publication censorship per se is not officially exercised in any Western country, or for that matter, in South Africa. However, it has been argued that a certain political or moral climate can indirectly or unofficially lead to pre-censorship by publishers and writers, as is the case in South Africa (van Heerden, 1971; Welsh, 1976; Alvarez, 1978) (cf. 6.3.3.2).

Abraham (1968:356) has identified four areas to which censorship may be directed, viz.:

- (a) political censorship, which is exercised as a means of maintaining political orthodoxy;
- (b) religious censorship, which concerns itself with the suppression of heresy;
- (c) censorship of morals, which is usually aimed at the eradication of obscenity; and
- (d) censorship affecting academic freedom, which tries to restrict what may be taught and by whom.

(The last-named form of censorship in Abraham's classification, incidentally, is not usually the concern of the public library, but note Shera's argument in 7.7).

Since it may be assumed that there is a dynamic interplay between morals, religion, truth and political security in the sociodynamics of community life, censorship often embraces more than one of these categories simultaneously. It is suggested that the censoring of one field of application is often used as a pretext for the restrictions intended to be imposed on one or more of the others (McKeon, Merton & Gellhorn, 1957:24).

### 6.3 LITERARY CENSORSHIP

#### 6.3.1 INTRODUCTION

Censorship in Western civilisation is as old as the written word (cf. 2.3.3.2), whose "power" was realised from early on, resulting in the fact that libraries have traditionally been associated closely with seats of power whether manifested in the authorities of monarchs, the church, or democratic assemblies (Thompson, 1977:209). As a general rule those in power are naturally disposed towards controlling the written word, because literary censorship rests on the assumption that reading influences people individually and collectively. This is a view generally held by librarians, who, however, rather than agreeing that reading corrupts and undermines people, see reading as a means of improving people (Carter et al, 1974:2). Holbrook (1971:184) logically argues that if reading exercises good influences, it must also have bad ones. This view is endorsed by, among others, Swan (1968:276) and Flanagan (1975:1889). The influences of reading are further discussed in 7.6.

#### 6.3.2 PROS AND CONS OF CENSORSHIP

As will be seen later (cf. 7.7) in the context of whether book selection or censorship takes place, the aims of both sides engaged in the debate over censorship are similar, because both have as their assumption the wish to protect freedom and to uphold values. However, the two sides differ in the way this aim is to be achieved.

Those favouring censorship usually claim that they are able to achieve their aim by means of an 'enlightened' form of it (Clor, 1968:Ch.8; Leighton, 1976:42). Those opposed to censorship pose the counterclaim that 'enlightened' censorship is a contradiction in terms (Gordimer, 1975:44), because it has negative repercussions (i.e. that the ends do not justify the means), particularly as censorship's effectiveness is bound to be limited, especially so in a democracy (Gellhorn, 1956, in Downs, 1960:21; Coetzee, 1977:xx).

McKeon et al considers the conflict of approaches in the West as being between those, on the one hand, who wish to censor in order "to prevent [the] degradation of individual liberties, common security of democracy and cultural values [because there is] subversion by conspiracy under the cloak of freedom, immorality by licence masked as liberty, and greed operating as free enterprise....[As a result,unchecked freedom] removes the protections from the imposition of authoritarian control and [allows] the emergence of relativistic permissive morality, indistinguishable from immorality." (McKeon et al, 1957:5-7).

On the other hand, those who are opposed to censorship regard it as a threat to the freedoms on which democratic values, security and action are based, because they see free competition testing values and ideas. The effects of censorship, of necessity, lead to passive acceptance and conformity, they argue, resulting in the debasement of values and increased authoritarianism (McKeon et al, 1957:5-6). The destructiveness of the authoritarian nature of censorship is emphasised by Fromm (1965), Oboler (1974) and Watson (in Daniels, 1954).

McKeon et al reiterate the important point already made in 6.1 that "philosophical arguments need a social and political framework where they can be debated, and this debate has legal and moral consequences that are practical rather than theoretical." (McKeon et al, 1957:9).

Bearing the above in mind, a brief mention will be made of some of the other arguments which have been made for and against censorship. However, as they are largely opinions based on values, there are invariably counter-arguments to any point made.

Some of the other arguments advanced in the debate for censorship have been stated as follows:

- (a) " Those who are qualified to identify evil should be empowered to prevent its dissemination." (Abraham, 1968:356). This is based on the belief that many of the population (and this applies particularly to South Africa (cf.6.3.3.2) are not able "to judge for themselves what is, or is not, worthwhile reading matter", and therefore, are open to the influences of propaganda (Leighton, 1976:41-2).
- (b) " Ideas presented, or about to be presented, are 'false' and/or 'dangerous' by the standards of the authorities in power, and that they must

hence be suppressed or punished." (Abraham, 1968:359).

(c) It is a means of promoting morality and of providing standards (Clor, 1969:194).

(d) " [L]imitations of freedom are at times as essential for the attainment of the common good as are extensions of freedom." (Gardiner, 1967:391). As it is one of the functions of law to protect the community censorship laws are just one of many laws that limit freedom (Gardiner, 1967:391; Katz, 1980:318).

(e) Censorship tries to attain "the proper balance between authority and freedom because if the principle of the right and duty of authority to censor is not respected, the logical result is an unbridled license of expression that of its very nature would be a menace to the common good of society." (Gardiner, 1967:392).

(f) It protects minorities from the abuse of the majority (Katz, 1980:317-8).

(g) Pornography is specifically singled out for attention by censors for reasons such as the following:

(i) Pornography has a harmful effect, causing "a breakdown in morals, the family and hence society." (Katz, 1980:317).

(ii) Pornography hastens and can even cause unacceptable sexual behaviour, including sexual crimes (Holbrook, 1971; Johnson, in Gaver, 1969:359).

(iii) Even if the effects of pornography were to be proved unarmful, censors believe it still should be banned because it is offensive; coarsens life; trivialises sex in particular; and leads to the "exploitation and brutalisation of women and, to a lesser extent men." (Katz, 1980:317; Longford, 1972:194; Miller, 1971:7; van den Haag, in Hart, 1971:156).

For those who are against censorship some of the arguments in the debate have been expressed along the following lines:

(a) Censors as subjective evaluators are not infallible (Gaines, 1967:3377), especially in regard to their ability to recognise works of literary merit (Brown, 1971:261), as they tend to be concerned with the parts of individual works rather than works in their entirety (Fellman, 1957:32) (cf. 6.3.3.2).

(b) It has been contended that censorship tends to be anti-intellectual (Downs,

1960:311; Tribe, 1974:301) and that it constitutes a mob reaction (Lawrence, 1930, in Downs, 1960:171) to those things not understood by the mob (O'Flaherty, 1977:287), thus being tantamount to mankind being brought down to the lowest common denominator (Fellman, 1957:31; Broom, 1956:189),

(c) Morality (and similarly political views) which change with the times (Boyer, 1968:xx), cannot be legislated artificially into existence in the process of formal censorship (Daily, 1973:339; St John-Stevas, 1956, in Downs, 1960:71). Terms such as 'obscenity', 'pornography' and 'subversive', they have argued, defy definition (Broom, 1956:189; Brown, 1971:262). Also, in their view, the law must not moralise, as it then becomes open to contempt (Murray, 1956, in Downs, 1960:219; McWilliams, in Hart 1971:66).

(d) "[M]an is only free as long as he is empowered to make his own choices." (Abraham, 1968:356), with its corollary that these choices will be the 'right' ones i.e. that truth will prevail over error (Katz, 1980:320; van den Haag, in Chandos, 1962:113-4).

(e) Censorship is based on a sense of fear and insecurity (de Vleeschauer, 1959:3), representing an attempt to maintain the status quo (Daily, 1970:352) (cf.6.3.3.2).

Van den Haag explains censorship in Freudian terms as :

"a compromise...between the original wish to indulge infantile, anal, oral, and ultimately all sexual desires, and the latter wish to control them. The difficulties the ego experiences in attempting to settle the conflict between id and superego are resolved...in the ineffectual but anxiety-reducing control of symbols that we call censorship. "

(van den Haag, in Chandos, 1962:122).

If this premise is correct, it could account for the apparent hypocrisy among censors, in so far as they concentrate much of their attention on pornography and largely ignore many other social evils (Jackson, 1932:61) such as poverty, and racial and sexual discrimination. Also, it should be noted, commercial exploitation is not limited to pornography, as all commercial ventures tend to exploit human feelings, such as, for example,

advertising (Benge, 1970:92).

As far as the effects of reading are concerned, it should be realised that reading has good and bad influences (van den Haag, in Chandos, 1962: 112). However, there does not seem to be any irrefutable evidence that the reading of a 'good' or 'bad' book results in a correspondingly direct positive or negative action (Jackson, 1932:45-67).

More specifically, with regard to the reading of pornographic and erotic literature, (which, as Daily (1970:346-7) has asserted, are not the same, although the line between the two is not always that easy to draw), there is no doubt, according to Daily (1970:341-51), that the reading of such literature often leads to sexual arousal, which, in turn, could lead to self-stimulation. But, he believes, it is precisely the abhorrence of masturbation (often related to sin) which serves as a cause to censor pornographic and erotic literature.

Conversely, there are sociologists and others who believe that this sort of literature enables people to act out their inclinations in fantasy, an effect, they contend, that is generally beneficial as a safety valve (E. & P. Kronhausen, 1959; Benge, 1970:90-1; Daily, 1970:347). Wertheimer (1980:24) claims that the attraction of such literature is the very fact that it is forbidden.

Clor (1969) has doubts about these arguments after having given them careful study. The reason for this is that the effects of reading remain obscure. Because of the strong degree of uncertainty, it would seem to fall beyond the scope of this thesis to attempt to resolve the inconclusive debate on the effects of reading. What remains necessary, however, is to stress the point that reading is acknowledged by consensus to have both good and bad influences. This issue will be further discussed in connection with book selection (cf. 7.6 & 7.7).

As with the debate on the effects of reading, the larger one on the pros and cons of censorship can also be protracted ad infinitum. It would seem that moral, political and religious ideas will always be controversial because they depend on values, so that until such time that there is general agreement on values, the questions concerning the nature of society and the meaning of existence are bound to be eternally debated.

In the past heresy and sedition were the main concern of censors,

(although only in the Western democracies is there a large measure of political freedom), the more recent focus of attention of censors in the U.K. and the U.S.A. has been particularly on obscenity and pornography. Bengé ascribes this to "mainly a result of the extension of literacy and the development of the mass media of communication." (Bengé, 1970:72) (cf.2.3.3.4).

However, before the 19th century pornography and erotic literature did exist (cf.also Thomas, 1969), but, as it was expensive, society experienced "censorship by the purse" (Bengé, 1970:137).

With the rise of a growing middle class a new code of conduct appeared which disliked such literature. The reason for this was that this new class still had some of the values inherited from their humbler origins. These were "an assertive prudishness - part of the paraphernalia of respectability - a worship of industry for its own sake, a suspicion of pleasure as being a trap of the devil and complete lack of all aesthetic taste or tradition." (Chandos, 1962:21). Also the concern about the licentious books is explained by Lasswell (1930:293) by the fact that "the middle-class position can be maintained...only by thrift, prudence and self-control..." which, it is believed, these books undermine.

Moore (1964:171) regards the obsession with obscenity as a passing phase of the censors' attention as was the case with action taken against witches. This is borne out to a certain extent by the fact that since the 1950s the climate in this regard has become more liberal (cf.6.3.3), particularly in making pornographic and erotic literature available to adults. Nevertheless, most authors agree that there should be laws protecting the young from obscenity (Daily, 1970:344; Wartheimer, 1980:24).

It is interesting to note here that a more liberal availability of such literature applies even to South Africa. The chairman of the Publications Appeal Board gave permission in June 1980 for a book banned in 1979, Sophie's choice by William Styron, to be lent in public libraries to people over the age of 18. He said it was an attempt to find a solution to the problem that arose when a book of literary value was found to be generally undesirable. He explained that this exemption would be extended to other books if it worked (cf.6.4.4.4). However, it would seem that it causes unnecessary administrative problems for librarians, who have tended to avoid buying the book (Sunday Times, 8.6.80) (cf.also 7.2.1).

In conclusion, it would appear that the current concensus in Western democracies tend to view censorship as a negative measure, and although it is conceded that censorship may contribute to preventing 'bad' reading, the notion that it does not promote 'good' reading either is generally emphasised (Gellhorn, 1956, in Downs, 1960:40). Freedom, it is believed, is positive and, thereby, essential for a democratic society (Boaz, 1970:337).

History has demonstrated the futility of censorship in the long term, as many books now regarded as classics were once forbidden, but Clor (1969:116) emphasises that each case of censorship must be seen within the social context of the times in which it occurred, as one would need to know such factors as the extent of the censorship employed, by whom and directed at what audience, and for how long, in order to see such a statement in perspective. Nevertheless, censorship remains a short-term expedient, because, as W. Griswold of Yale University once said, "Books won't stay banned. They won't burn. Ideas won't go to jail. In the long run of history, the censor and the inquisitor have always lost. The only sure weapon against bad ideas is better ideas." (Griswold, 1954, cited by Fellman, 1957:34). This is a sentiment most librarians would subscribe to (Murrison, 1971:171; Oboler, 1974:182).

### 6.3.3 HISTORY OF LITERARY CENSORSHIP

#### 6.3.3.1 IN THE WEST

During the course of history the focus of censors' attention has varied according to the values of the society concerned (Brown, 1971:257), but the main areas of application have been in the fields of religion, politics or morals (cf.6.2). Depending on the social conditions at a given time censorship has embraced one or more of these categories. Literary censorship will therefore always be a reflection of a particular social order.

The most extreme form of literary censorship is the destruction of books and libraries. In 48BC much of the Alexandrian Library was destroyed by fire during Julius Caesar's Alexandrian War; nearly all its books were set alight by Caliph Omar in 640A.D. owing to his fanaticism, as he consi-

considered that only the Koran was worth preserving (Thompson, 1977:56). Owing to their illiterate state the Barbarians in 5th-century Italy, and later the Danes in Anglo-Saxon Britain, destroyed many libraries during the Dark Ages (Thompson, 1977:56-7). The religious fanaticism of the Reformation (cf. 2.3.3.3) again resulted in the destruction of many books by both Protestants and Roman Catholics (Thompson, 1977:57). In more recent times there was the burning of books in Hitler's Germany in order to purge it of Jewish and communist writings (Thompson, 1977:58).

The word 'censor' is Roman in origin, but literary censorship, as such, has its origins in the Roman Catholic Church, as the censorship that did take place during antiquity was directed against authors rather than particular books (de Vleeschauwer, 1959:25).

In 499 A.D. the Council of Carthage placed a prohibition on pagan works, marking an early attempt at formal censorship by the Roman Catholic Church (Abraham, 1968:357). However, before the invention of printing when books circulated only in manuscript form and among a small literate group (cf. 2.3.3.2), it was often easy to control the spread of heretical works or even simply to tolerate them if they did not effectively challenge the security of established society (Kirk, 1964:632).

The printed book, on the other hand, posed a far less controllable threat to the hegemony of the Roman Catholic Church, especially so after the rise of Protestantism. To counter its effects Pope Paul IV drew up the Index librorum prohibitorum, a list of books and authors which were not to be read by Roman Catholics. The list was issued in 1664 at the Council of Trent, and, in its updated version, was only finally abolished in 1967 (Abraham, 1968:357).

Once the Roman Catholic Church had ceded its temporal power (cf. 2.3.3.3), the Index represented an example of voluntary censorship which, in Gaines' (1970:39) view, was quite acceptable, because it implied the exercise of a free choice (i.e. self-censorship by the faithful). The communist-capitalist division of the 20th century mirrors to a certain extent the intensity of difference that there was during the period of the Reformation and the corresponding imposition of censorship in order to perpetuate a certain world-view (de Vleeschauwer, 1959:110; Kirk, 1964:633).

Such intensity, in turn, may said to be evident in the present South

African government's intolerance of anything promoting a semblance of communist doctrine.

After the Reformation and with the rise of the nation state from the 17th century onwards (cf. 2.3.3.3), Church and State were no longer so closely aligned. Censorship, accordingly, became concerned with questions of political belief and social morality (Kirk, 1964:633).

Britain led the struggle during the 17th and 18th centuries for the attainment of the different freedoms (cf. Allain's list in 4.2) (cf. 2.3.3.4), but it was a slow and difficult process.

During the 16th century prior-censorship (cf. 6.2) was introduced into Britain by Henry VIII. Apart from being responsible for the destruction of many books when he dissolved the monasteries, he also introduced the licensing of books. He delegated this authority to the Court of Star Chamber. Licensing was administered first by the Privy Council, until, in 1556, Mary transferred the licensing of books to the Stationers' Company who were by law a monopoly. Elizabeth I continued this system of prior-censorship (Thomas, 1969:8-9).

Under the Stuarts censorship was even more severe. However, there was a brief period of no prior-censorship just before the Civil War when the Long Parliament abolished the Court of Star Chamber in 1640. However, it was reintroduced in 1643. The return of licensing spurred Milton to write his classic on free speech, Areopagitica (1644), "which exposed for all time the anomalies, absurdities and tyrannies inherent in literary censorship." (Craig, 1962:21) (cf. also Hugo, 1971).

Benge (1970:74), however, reminds us soberly that neither Milton (nor Locke in Letter concerning toleration (1689)) advocated complete freedom of expression in practice, as they only urged toleration for varieties of Protestant opinion, not for those of Roman Catholics.

Milton did not achieve his aim of preventing the reintroduction of licensing, as the new act was not repealed. This and subsequent licensing acts remained in force until 1695 when it lapsed (Thomas, 1969:33; Craig, 1962:22). Since then punitive censorship has replaced the prior censorship of the preceding two centuries, and prior-censorship has only been reintroduced for short periods when Britain has been waging war, for example, during the Second World War (Craig, 1962:22).

Although the 18th century began with no censorship, this was soon to change. In 1725 a bookseller, Edmund Curll, was successfully prosecuted for distributing an obscene publication. As this was the first case, it remained the basis of the English law of obscene libel until the 1959 Obscene Publications Act (Thomas, 1969 : 78-83) (cf. later on in this section). However, by the end of the century the persecution of obscenity had begun. The concern with morals was a result of the rise of the middle class, many of whom were Puritans (cf. end of 4.3.2). These guardians of public morality formed watchdog groups both in Britain (the Society for the Suppression of Vice) and in the U.S.A. (Anthony Comstock's New York Society for the Suppression of Vice and the New England Watch and Ward Society) (Craig, 1962 : 138-9). Examples of such groups currently in existence are the National Office for Decent Literature in the U.S.A., the Festival of Light in the U.K. and Action Moral Standards in South Africa.

Such voluntary pressure groups often have disproportionate significance and influence, (although it should be noted that censorship is often undertaken by authority not in defence of itself, but in the form of service to some influential members of society (Abraham, 1968 : 358)), because their views are not necessarily those of the silent majority. This point is especially relevant in the present South African context, as the publication committees' 'average' man, by definition equated to a consensus among the numerical majority, in fact tends to reflect the numerical minority value system of the white, often Afrikaans-speaking, dominant group's values (Silver, 1980).

Censorship by pressure groups in the West has been exercised both on the public level where their influence has led to the passing of anti-obscenity laws, and on the private level where their pressure has seen the removal of material from bookshops and library shelves (cf. 6.4.1).

In the U.S.A. such moralistic legislation began with the Tariff Act of 1842 in terms of which the importation of obscene literature was banned. It included the Comstock Act of 1873, and the peak of prohibition was reached between the 1920s and the 1940s (Abraham, 1968 : 358).

On the whole the American judges followed British legal opinion which was based on the Hicklin case of 1868, a prosecution under the Obscene Publications Act of 1857. In his judgment, Lord Cockburn defined obscenity as " whether the tendency of the matter charged as obscenity is to deprave

and corrupt those whose minds are open to such immoral influences, and into whose hands a publication of this sort may fall." (cited in Abraham, 1968 : 358). Fordham claims that it can be paraphrased thus : "A book will be obscene if it is such that it could corrupt persons prone to corruption and if it is at all possible that such persons can get access to the book." (Fordham, in Astbury, 1968 : 123).

Cockburn's criteria remained the norm in both the U.K. and the U.S.A. until the mid-20th century (Abraham, 1968 : 357). Although later more liberally interpreted, the words 'to deprave and corrupt' are in the "more liberal and reasonable" definition included in the British Obscene Publications Act of 1959 (Birkett, in Chandos, 1962 : 73).

However, from the 1930s changes did occur in the interpretation of Cockburn's definition because 'acceptable' literature had suffered as a result of judges adopting a narrow interpretation of his definition (Abraham, 1968 : 358). In the U.S.A. this change began with Judge Woolsey clearing James Joyce's Ulysses of obscenity in 1933. He declared in his verdict that a book's effect on normal adults must be the yardstick. The British counterparts to the Ulysses case were the judgment concerning The philanderer in 1954 (cf. 6.4.2.3), and, later the jury decision clearing Lady Chatterley's lover in 1960 (cf. Rolph, 1961).

Woolsey's view, in conjunction with the principle that a work must be assessed as a whole (implying that, should there be literary, artistic or scientific merit, it should not be banned), became fully entrenched in court decisions in the U.S.A. in the 1950s and 1960s, beginning in 1957 with the Roth case (Clor, 1969 : Ch.1). In the U.K. this approach was apparent in the 1959 Obscene Publications Act.

In both the U.K. and the U.S.A. there was a reaction against the more permissive climate of the 1960s (cf. 6.4.2.5 & 6.4.3.5). In 1972 the report of the British official investigation into pornography under Lord Longford was published. Although the report reflects a rejection of pornography, it did not recommend more legislation, but rather wished to increase the penalties under the 1959 Act (Longford, 1972 : 428).

In the U.S.A. the backlash against permissiveness prompted President Johnson in 1968 to constitute the Commission on Obscenity and Pornography, which was charged with the function of studying the effects of pornography on

the public and on anti-social behaviour. Despite extensive research, its report in 1970 was inconclusive, although its findings tended to favour the view that pornography did not have an effect on crime nor resulted in anti-social behaviour (Carter et al, 1974:181; Katz, 1980:320).

In 1973 the Supreme Court of California in the Miller case handed down a decision that has altered the liberal trend in the U.S.A., The court stated that it should be the local community standard by which a work is to be judged and not a more general national one (Carter et al, 1974:182). This decision modified the necessity of proving that "a book cannot be proscribed unless it is found without redeeming social value", as stated by Justice Brennan in the Fanny Hill case of 1966. In 1977 the Supreme Court re-affirmed that local standards would determine desirability. As a result, all 50 states have introduced laws to control obscenity (Katz, 1980:315-6), which, according to Carter et al (1974:181-2), is likely to lead to more prosecutions in which the courts would probably apply the Cockburn definition.

The liberal viewpoint, such as that expressed by J.S. Mill, which was ascendent in the 19th century, seemed at the time to be correct in its prediction that censorship would disappear, resulting in absolute freedom of expression. However, it should be remembered that in Mill's time, there may have been a large measure of freedom of thought, but sexual taboos were strongly enforced (Thomas, 1969:11) (cf.6.3.2). The 20th century showed that this was not to be the case with the reappearance of a censorship "of a malignant nature...employing the power of the modern state for its enforcement, [and] unrestrained by moral considerations..." Kirk, 1964:634).

There is also a different kind of censorship in action in the modern nation state through control of the media, (even when privately owned), by a relatively small group of people (Kirk, 1964:634-5; Thomas, 1969:318). But Broadus claims that publishers are less afraid than the disseminators of the mass media to deal with controversial issues, as they do not generally view publications to be a direct reflection on themselves (Broadus, 1973:37).

This brief summary of the history of literary censorship has shown that from the time that ideas were first transcribed, the authorities have tried to control the dissemination of records. Before the invention of printing it was fairly easy to do so, because there were relatively few literate people,

and both temporal and spiritual authority was concentrated in the hands of the Church (cf. 2.3.3.2). However, since the invention of printing authorities have found the task a lot harder, especially since the spread of literacy (cf. 2.3.3.4). Prior to the 20th century censorship had been inefficient and not sufficiently ruthless to suppress criticism, resulting in particularly the last four centuries being a remarkable period of human achievement in the works of philosophy and imaginative literature. The censorship in operation during this time was such that "politicians of the opposition and dissenting authors had their wits sharpened...by this disapproval - which, however, was not...enough to cow them." (Kirk, 1964:634).

The continued importance of nationalism in the 20th century, compounded by the competing ideologies of communism and capitalism, appears to ensure that literary censorship will remain an issue for a long time.

#### 6.3.3.2 SOUTH AFRICA

Although South Africa is similar to Britain constitutionally, the sovereign South African parliament, unlike its counterpart in Britain, has passed laws limiting the freedom of expression without there being recourse to the courts. The U.S.A. is different from these two countries constitutionally, as it has an entrenched Bill of Rights which protects freedom of expression by means of an independent judiciary.

The principal censorship legislation in South Africa is codified in the Publications Act of 1974. However, there are another 25 different acts which restrict free expression in some form or other (Morris, 1978:59-69). Gordimer (1974:3) lists 28. Some of the latter which are of importance to librarians are the Internal Security Act of 1976. This act replaced the Suppression of Communism Act of 1950 (and subsequent amendments) and it empowers the Minister of Justice to ban publications and individuals. As a result the writings of banned people automatically become prohibited. The Minister's powers also include the right to prohibit the possession of these publications. Other acts of relevance to librarians are the Riotous Assemblies Act of 1956, the Post Office Act of 1958, the Customs and Excise Act of 1964 and the Indecent or Obscene Photographic Act of 1967.

As in other countries blasphemy, indecency, obscenity, treason and defamation are covered by the common law, irrespective of any legislation that might have been passed to cover these transgressions.

Before 1931 the authorities were mainly concerned with controlling the press, (a state of affairs which has prevailed to this day). Accounts of this history have been given by Hepple (1960), Morris (1978) and Druker (1979). The 1913 Customs Management Act, however, had prohibited the importation of indecent, obscene or objectionable articles. A board of censors was set up by the Entertainments (Censorship) Act of 1931 which initially confined their attention to films, but the act was extended to include publications in 1934 when its frame of reference included both obscenity and socio-political content (Varley, 1970 : 142).

The control of publications before 1948 was limited (Morris, 1978 : 49), and it was aimed mainly at obscene works (Varley, 1970 : 144). Approximately 100 books had been banned between 1944 and 1948, whereas 700 were prohibited between 1948 and 1952 (Cope, 1955 : 25 ; Munger, 1956 : 8). Even then this activity had been directed at imported works, little attention being devoted to locally produced publications.

This all changed, when in 1954, a commission "to enquire into the evil of indecent, offensive or harmful literature" under the chairmanship of G. Cronje was established, and it published its report in 1957 (cf. South Africa (Union), 1957). (For the reaction of the S.A.L.A. and of librarians to this report cf. 6.4.4.2).

Kahn (1966 : 287) referred to the Report as "a hyperbolic condemnation of current social trends and an illiberal attitude to libertarians, go[ing] hand in hand with an appreciation of literary standards and the desirability and possibility of improving them." According to Varley (1970 : 145), its weakness was that it saw obscenity as a sin rather than a crime. As a result, in Druker's view, it strayed into moralising and argued its case poorly (Druker, 1979 : 79).

The 1960 parliamentary bill was based on this Report. It was very stringent, resulting in much opposition. After it had been watered down by a select committee, it was passed as the Publications and Entertainment Act of 1963. A Publications Control Board was set up in terms of the act to consider 'undesirable' publications.

The act had 97 definitions of undesirability (Gordimer, 1974:5) (whereas the 1974 act has only six), and these definitions extended beyond morals, (the original purpose of the act), to include sociological, religious and political matters. The act also ignored literary and artistic merit, a book's total impact and the author's intent. Nor was a book to be judged as a whole. All these decisions were (and still are) taken within the perspective of a Christian view of life (Druker, 1979 :83; also S.A.(Union), 1957 : 148-9). These criteria were carried over into the 1974 act (van Rooyen, 1978 :94)). An aspect that has not been continued was that appeal could be made to the courts if any prohibition was considered unjustified in the view of an interested party.

Between 1963 and 1974 the Publications Control Board banned 8768 publications (House of Assembly debates, vol.53, cols.64-5 (13 August 1974)), including the first Afrikaans novel to have been treated thus, viz. Andre Brink's Kennis van die aand.

Owing to dissatisfaction from both the courts and the public (du Toit, 1975 :11; Louw, 1975 : 45), the present act was passed in 1974 on the recommendations of a Parliamentary Select Committee of Inquiry.

This act is examined in detail by Druker (1979 : Chs.4 & 5). The important changes were that the right of appeal to the Supreme Court was no longer available, but only to the Publications Appeal Board appointed by the State President, and the Board would have as its chairman a person with legal experience. The Publications Control Board disappeared and was replaced by an administrative body, the Directorate of Publications. The actual decisions on desirability are made by committees of not fewer than three members. Such committees are constituted by the Directorate from a panel appointed by the Minister of the Interior. (As yet there are no blacks on this list). Their powers of prohibition now also included the right to ban a publication for possession, however, unlike previously, the committees have to give written reasons for a banning. The act does not cover newspapers whose desirability is covered by the Newspaper Press Union (Horrel, 1978 : 458-9). A diagrammatic representation of how the system works is appended as Annexure III.

The effect of the censorship system has been severe on indigenous writers, especially blacks (Gordimer, 1973 :51; Rive, 1978 :12-3; Sole,

1978:8). The repercussions of censorship on the writer - the "censored imagination" (Manganyi, 1978:23-32) - and the writer's positive and/or negative role in society have been mentioned by such Afrikaans writers as Brink (1976), W.A. de Klerk (1975), W.J. de Klerk (1975), W.E.G. Louw (1975); E. van Heerden (1971). The inhibiting effect of censorship on scholars and academics has been discussed by Garson (1973), Kuper (1974) Welsh (1976) and Wilson (1975) (cf. 6.2).

As a result of the Supreme Court decision in the Moroney case of 1978 in favour of the appellant, Parliament amended the Publications Act in 1979, making it an offence to write or publish a work which might subsequently be found undesirable (Dugard, 1980:69). A form of pre-censorship comes into play here; as the only way to avoid this is to submit a manuscript to the Directorate prior to publication (cf. 6.2).

The system of censorship in South Africa attempts, therefore, to ensure social stability at a time of rapid and fundamental change, by protecting and maintaining religion and morality as social cohesives. The censorship system in operation is based on the belief that the free circulation of ideas and knowledge poses a serious threat to social stability. Such a view sees South African society as basically unstable and that the average man is incapable of making decisions in his own interest (Druker, 1979:45). (The 'average man' referred to here is the numerical average of the total population, although the minority average man's view (cf. 6.3.3.1) would also be important.)

The censorship system, in addition, tries to achieve social stability by controlling the dissemination of political ideas which are considered likely to be disruptive of the existing political order. Many authors see it as an integral part of maintaining separate development (Alvarez, 1978; Brink, 1976:60; Gordimer, 1974:61; Hepple, 1960:77; Shapiro, 1974:297).

Finally, the censorship system tries to control the dissemination of information, including that relating to government and its activities. Matthews (1978) is particularly concerned about this type of censorship, as it prevents the dissemination of information, and leads to an uninformed voting public, this being detrimental for a democracy.

It is also in this area that libraries are most affected, because, if the free flow of information is impeded, the public library's task of implementing

the objectives of information and education (cf. 2.2.2) becomes much more difficult (cf. 6.1).

Further implications of censorship on libraries both in South Africa and in the U.K. and the U.S.A., will be examined in the next section.

## 6.4 CENSORSHIP AND PUBLIC LIBRARIES

### 6.4.1 INTRODUCTION

This section will examine the position of censorship in libraries, and where possible, public libraries in the U.K., the U.S.A. and South Africa. This division by country is necessary as the library profession is less committed to the ideal of intellectual freedom in the U.K., (and even less so in South Africa), than in the U.S.A. (Thompson, 1975:218; Noyce, 1977:12). Since American librarians have written a vast amount about the subject, the subsequent section (i.e. 6.4.3) will only be briefly outlined.

It will also be obvious from the following that censorship in libraries reflects the social climate already discussed earlier in this Chapter and in Chapters 3 and 4.

The form of censorship referred to here is not that imposed by law, but that which attempts to restrict access to books already published, and which have not been found legally undesirable (cf. 6.2).

Few users of public libraries can buy every book they wish to add to their private collections. However, the public library is one of the few places in which they can be supplied with a relatively wide range of titles of concern to them, usually at no cost. Nevertheless, librarians can make it difficult for users to obtain the books they want, as a result of the selectors' choice for a particular library and by creating obstacles to access (Thompson, 1975:208).

As has been discussed in Chapter 5, selection is a professional activity (cf. 5.3.1) in which librarians try to apply scientific norms, so as to be as objective as possible. They should therefore take into account user studies (cf. 5.3.4.2) and the actual and potential users (cf. 5.3.4.4) because selection is orientated towards the community being served (cf. 5.3.4) as well as

the intrinsic worth of the book (5.3.3).

The worth of books is only related to the community, so that the balancing of the principles of 'demand' against those of 'quality' becomes necessary (cf. 5.5), if librarians are to reach decisions on selection which will satisfy most of the culturally heterogeneous community being served.

Selectors, through training and experience, try to anticipate what is likely to be needed and so attempt

"to build up a reasonably comprehensive collection of books on all subjects and of all types likely to be of interest to [users], and...selection is non-political, non-sectarian and representative of all shades of opinion so that [users] may feel assured that any book of reasonable literary or other quality will be represented in the stock or will be borrowed...from elsewhere" (Thompson, 1975:217).

The above definition of selection is an ideal, whereas in practice librarians can (and often do) impose their own standards, and books are rejected for reasons other than quality or demand (Benge, 1970:84), because of their own biases and weaknesses. The important point to be made here is that it must be recognised that the objectivity of librarians is being constantly affected by their own personal views, thus necessitating repeated questioning of the motives for selection or rejection should be taking place (Katz, 1980:110). This aspect will be further discussed in Chapter 7 (i.e. 7.7).

Also, there are other barriers which librarians, consciously or unconsciously, place in the way of access to material already acquired, owing to their infallibility or to their belief in the rightness of their actions (Katz, 1980:110; Thompson, 1975:210). These obstacles assume different forms: (a) Some books are not put on the open shelves, (the reasons for which are discussed in 7.4). This can limit access to those users who may be diffident about asking for them or even may be unaware that a library has them (Thompson, 1975:208). The extent that this action may affect users is shown by the empirical studies done in both the U.K., where Luckham (1971:68) found that 43 per cent of the users, and in the U.S.A., where Bundy (1967:956) found that nearly 80 per cent of them did not have a specific book or author in mind when entering the library.

"political or religious dogma" (Benge, 1970:248). He also claims that "the public library is, or should be, a liberal institution, and liberal minded librarians naturally object to the exclusion of material..." (Benge, 1970:84). He acknowledges his bias by stating that "liberalism, by emphasising the unique value of the individual ignores other ways of looking at the human condition." (Benge, 1979:284). The real problem, as he sees it, arises when the liberal is faced with racist, fascist or other ideas abhorrent to him. These would normally be rejected, making it less easy for librarians to claim "that under no circumstances should a book be rejected because it is objectionable..." He concludes, therefore, that "liberal institutions cannot easily survive in an illiberal community." (Benge, 1970:84).

#### 6.4.2 THE UNITED KINGDOM

##### 6.4.2.1 BEFORE 1939

Before the public library had become truly public during the 1920s (cf.3.2.3.1), censoring was regarded as part of a librarian's job (cf. the 19th century objectives of the public library examined in 3.3.2.2). More accurately, the initiative for censorship came from the library committees who exercised vigorous control over librarians, stocks and services. Only with the growth of the library profession was this stranglehold slowly broken (Thompson, 1975:10).

In 1928 Sydney Snaith made an eloquent appeal in the Library Assistant for intellectual freedom in public libraries. He made the following points which are still relevant, and they may be considered as being unchallenged by his colleagues of the time.

- (a) The personal disapproval or dislike of a book by a librarian does not justify denying it to users (cf.6.4.3.3).
- (b) The removal of a book from the open shelves denies access to the reticent and shy users (cf.6.4.1).
- (c) A complaint should not result in removal, as there are probably many who approve.

(d) Librarians have no right to be arbiters of public morals.

(e) The censored book becomes more subversive, as the interest and influence of a book becomes greater than it might, if left to stand on its own merits or demerits (Snaith, 1928, cited by Thompson, 1975:7-8).

#### 6.4.2.2 1939 - 1949

The period of the Second World War saw a certain amount of political censorship in libraries other than the official censorship in operation during wartime (cf.6.3.3.1). The most active censorship was against the works of P.G. Wodehouse as a result of his broadcasts on German radio (Thompson, 1975: Ch.3). This censoring of an author on the grounds of his personal views, rather than solely on his writings, parallels the approach of the Roman Catholic Church when it issued its Index (cf.6.3.3.1). It is also reflected in South Africa where anyone banned under the Internal Security Act automatically has his writings declared undesirable, irrespective of their subject (Dugard, 1980:67) (cf.6.3.3.2).

During the latter years of the decade works of fiction, such as Norman Mailer's Naked and the dead, were excluded from some libraries because they were regarded as 'obscene'. These and other removals of books were brought to the attention of the profession by such librarians as S.A.Horrocks and J.F.W. Bryon (Thompson, 1975:28-31).

#### 6.4.2.3 1950 - 1959

The early fifties witnessed censorship being applied mainly to political works, owing to the spread of communism (cf.2.3.3.4). Thompson records that the censoring by libraries was directed mainly at newspapers (Thompson, 1975:56).

When it came to books which dealt with sex, such as Alfred Kinsey's works on sexual behaviour, the press was active in ascertaining the public libraries' policies to these works as libraries did often censor such literature (Thompson, 1975:61). Although press interest was often instituted for

the reason that the subject is a known stimulant of readership, there were also newspapers who defended the freedom to read (Thompson, 1975 : Ch. 4).

The profession continued to remain fairly mute. The President of the North-west Branch of the L.A., E.H. Mason, expressed the hope in 1954 that the L.A. would protest against those who ban and burn books, as the A.L.A. was doing in the U.S.A. (cited by Thompson, 1975 : 67) (cf. 6.4.3). H. Jolliffe criticised the L.A. for not taking a stand against censorship at the 1954 L.A. conference (cited by Thompson, 1975 : 77).

E.T. Bryant prepared a report for the North-west Branch of the L.A. on book selection and censorship in 1954 based on questionnaire regarding 12 'controversial' books. He quoted from Justice Staples judgment, in the case which included The philanderer of Stanley Kauffman, in which he said that there is certain literature suitable only for adults, but that does not mean that it should be banned. Bryant, nevertheless, recognised that "the line between honest and sincere writing and obscenity is not easy to draw." (cited by Thompson, 1975 : 78).

In his discussion of means of dealing with complaints in libraries (cf. 7.3 later for a fuller discussion), Bryant made the following two main points, viz.:

- (a) The complainant is concerned about the potential harm to people other than himself, but, as he insists, using Carnovsky's argument that "the freedom to read includes the freedom to desist from reading. But many of us will not desist, and that is what the censor truly fears : not that we will be offended but that we will be pleased." (Carnovsky, 1950 : 30).
- (b) If the complaint is unjustified, after considering the book again, the librarian must have the courage to return it to the shelves. However, if the complaint has some justification, but that the book has merit, he recommends putting it in a reserve collection. Finally, if the book has no particular merit, withdraw it (cited by Thompson, 1975 : 77-9). (The latter point was later stressed by Merritt (1970 : 30-1)).

Basing his evidence on the response to his questionnaire, Bryant claimed that the reluctance on the part of librarians to buy controversial books suggested a passive form of censorship (cited by Thompson, 1975 : 79). Collison (1956) and Broom (1956), in articles on censorship in the Assistant librarian, argued strongly against censorship per se, and particularly the negative effect it has on books in libraries.

6.4.2.4 1960 - 1969

The Obscene Publications Act (1959), which was a result of the reform generated by Justice Staple's clearance of The philanderer of obscene libel, and then a similar decision by a jury of D.H. Lawrence's Lady Chatterley's lover in 1960 (cf. 6.3.3.1), resulted in increased attempts to censor books by both the public and librarians and their committees, as there were those who objected to this increased literary freedom (Thompson, 1975: Ch.7 & 9).

Thompson records a brief period between 1960 and 1963 when 'controversial' books in some public libraries were labelled with white spots (Thompson, 1975:121).

In May 1963 the L.A. issued its statement on censorship already mentioned (cf. 6.4.1 & Appendix II). Librarians found it a useful document in clarifying and strengthening their position with regard to censorship attempts (Thompson, 1975:126).

The Hawnt Report<sup>\*</sup> (1966) on the public library service in Northern Ireland, unlike the Roberts Report (cf. 3.2.3.5), did give brief mention to 'offensive books' in which it "commended the efforts of librarians and committees to spend public money with discretion and restrict the circulation of such books." (Section xii, paragraph 78).

There was much correspondence in the Belfast telegraph on this topic, including a letter from a librarian, Philip Whiteman, who made the point that deciding what is offensive is a subjective assessment and that the 1963 L.A. statement (cf. 6.4.1 & Appendix I) should be the librarians' guideline (cited by Thompson, 1975:171-2).

The article by Peter Swan (1968) in the Library Association record resulted in correspondence appearing in subsequent issues on the topic of censorship, and, in the opinion of Bengé (1970:84), much of it was debated on a low level. Swan criticised librarians for having become morally neutral in buying "pornography", whereas they should be promoting education and personal enlightenment in their selection. (de Vleeschauwer (1959:117), a South African academic librarian, claimed that pornography is not a

\*Northern Ireland. Public library service in Northern Ireland. Cmd. 494 1966.

problem for libraries, as they would not purchase it, but more recently Wertheimer (1980:25) has argued for its inclusion (cf. 7.1).

The letters in response to Swan's article reflected the usual arguments for and against censorship and pornography already mentioned (cf. 6.3.2). Although it was (and will remain) inconclusive as it involves values, Fay Marshall possibly captured the essence of the controversy by stating that the difference between the two sides was "between those who discriminate in their choice of books and admit it, and those who also discriminate, but do not admit it." (Letter to Library Association record 71(3) March, 1969: 91).

A forewarning system was instituted in the Brighton Public Libraries by J.N. Allen in 1969 and extended to the East Sussex County Libraries when he became county librarian. This system put the responsibility on the reader, as those books which could cause offence had the following statement stamped on the date label: "Readers are warned that there are some passages in this book which may be disturbing." (cited by Thompson, 1975:179-80).

#### 6.4.2.5 1970 - 1980

The activities of censors did not abate, but rather there was an upswing, especially after the publication of the Longford Report (1972). (Thompson, 1975:213) (cf. 6.3.3.1). At this time there were librarians, such as Brown (1971) and Usherwood (1971) (cf. also Wertheimer (1980) above), who expressed themselves against the censorship of pornography. Both were aware of the difficulty in defining obscenity, since 'one man's meat is another man's poison' (Merritt, 1970:12; Carter et al, 1974:79). They also feared the dangers that censorship poses for democratic societies.

Thompson's (1975) study ended in 1974, but Noyce (1977) has recounted further censorship activities in public libraries.

An interesting feature of Thompson's thesis was that censorship has remained a lively issue at the local level, where it has received prominence in the local press, but seldom has the discussion been carried over into the professional literature, except for the more 'fringe' publication, Librarians for social change.

In concluding his work, Thompson argues for librarians to have a firmer commitment to intellectual freedom. He finds favour with the forewarning system used by Allen (cf. 6.4.2.4), because those people who are shocked by 'controversial' books are in a position to exercise self-censorship, and as the system can, if required, be used to control the loan of these books to children. (The question of censorship and children is an important issue, but, as mentioned in 5.1, this thesis focuses on book selection and censorship of adult material). He regards one of the advantages of the reorganisation of local authorities (cf. 3.2.4.2) will be that the control will be lessened by local councillors who have been by far the largest initiators of censorship attempts (Thompson, 1975: 210, 218-20).

### 6.4.3 THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

#### 6.4.3.1 BEFORE 1939

The situation in the U.S.A. was fairly similar to that in the U.K. (cf. 6.4.2.1) in the pre-Second World War years. The little mention censorship received in the professional literature before this date was such that it usually supported library censorship (Moore, 1964:9; Berninghausen, 1970:19; Krug & Harvey, 1974:171). Authors such as Berninghausen (1953), Molz (1967:3374), Broderick (1971:3817), Castagna (1971:222-30) and Geller (1974:1365) have given accounts of this period.

Earlier librarians were not upholders of intellectual freedom but rather, as Geller states:

"the idea...was an unanticipated consequence of library practices intended to embody older and very different views of library selection and service.... the library, conceived originally as an agency of social control, came only gradually to perceive itself as a seat of ideological conflict in the community." (Geller, 1974:1367).

This change can be attributed to the transition of the public library from an elitist institution to a democratic one (at least in theory) (cf. 3.3.2.1), and also according to Broderick (1971) and Harris (1973), to the fact that

librarians had become passively neutral, having abdicated from active social involvement (cf. 3.3.3.2). The incompatibility of these two views has not been resolved. Furthermore, the more recent idea of active social responsibility (cf. 3.3.6.1) has created tensions within the American library profession which in many ways are false, in that social responsibility is not in conflict with intellectual freedom (Geller, 1974:1364).

#### 6.4.3.2 1939 - 1949

The growing commitment to intellectual freedom came with the publication and acceptance of the Library Bill of Rights in 1939 which, plus subsequent amendments, makes up the present document (cf. Appendix II). "It is a definition of various aspects of intellectual freedom as it relates to libraries, library materials and library service." (Krug & Harvey, 1974: 172). The following year the Intellectual Freedom Committee was formed which was instrumental in promoting the Library Bill of Rights (Castagna, 1971:232). The principle behind this document is that "the users of libraries must have the opportunity to examine all information on all sides (his emphasis) of all controversial issues." (Berninghausen, 1970:22).

The public library inquiry undertaken in the late 1940s found that most libraries received complaints from pressure groups, but that few libraries gave in to censorship (Leigh, 1950:118-26).

#### 6.4.3.3 1950 - 1959

Many librarians rose to the challenge posed by McCarthy's attacks on intellectual freedom (cf. 3.3.4.1). Two of the classic statements on intellectual freedom and libraries, viz., those of Carnovsky (1950) and Asheim (1954), were written at this time.

Conferences on intellectual freedom were held in 1953 (proceedings edited by Dix and Bixler (1953)) and 1954 (proceedings edited by Mosher (1954)) at which librarians spoke out strongly against censorship. They even received support from President Eisenhower (1953 letter to A.L.A.,

cited in Downs, 1960 :340-1).

Although librarians did give in to pressure, (as reported by the Newsletter on intellectual freedom started at this time (Castagna, 1971 :253)), the librarians' opposition to censorship is evident from the adoption by the A.L.A. of the Statement on labelling (1951) " which explained that designating materials subversive is subtle censorship because it predisposes readers toward the materials." (Krug and Harvey, 1974 :173). Also adopted in 1953 was the Declaration of the freedom to read, which was jointly sponsored with the American Book Publishers' Council (Berninghausen, 1970 :39). It is an important document, as it spells out, in much more detail than the Library Bill of Rights (cf. Appendix II), the librarians' stand on intellectual freedom. Its seven propositions endorsed inter alia the following two major points of affirmation, viz.:

- (a) It is in the public interest for publishers and librarians to make available the widest diversity of views and expressions, including those which are unorthodox or unpopular with the majority.
- (b) " Publishers and librarians do not need to endorse every idea or presentation contained in the books they make available." (cf. 6.4.2.1). Other points made were that the author's history and political affiliations are irrelevant in determining a book's acceptability (cf. comment on Wodehouse at 6.4.2.2); that extralegal efforts to coerce the taste of others were disapproved; that opposition to labelling was acknowledged; that librarians were to regard themselves as "guardians of the people's freedom to read" so that they would contest any attempts at censorship; and that librarians had a responsibility to provide books which enrich "the quality of thought and expression" by countering 'bad' books with 'good' ones (cited in Downs, 1960 :337-9).

In 1959 Fiske's "classic study of the librarian as censor" (Katz, 1980 :330) was published. Her findings provided proof that there was a large amount of intramural censorship taking place in libraries. She found that nearly two-thirds of those questioned avoided buying 'controversial' material (p.64), whereas nearly half (47 per cent) expressed themselves in favour of the provision of all materials (Table 12, p.124).

Over and above this cautious approach to selection, 82 per cent of the librarians placed restrictions on the circulation or distribution of controversial

books (p.69). Most objections to materials (46 per cent) were on the grounds of sex/obscenity, the next important being politics (19 per cent) (Table 26, p.132). 65 per cent of the objections in public libraries were initiated by the librarians themselves (Table 9, p.123). However, she did find that once an item had been selected, librarians were more likely to defend it from outside pressure groups and individuals (p.70).

This was a decade in which much was written on intellectual freedom and censorship. Many of these writings and those of earlier times were brought together by Downs in The first freedom (1960).

#### 6.4.3.4 1960 - 1969

Moon (1969), in his collection of Library journal articles, indicated that censorship continued to be a crucial topic for librarians, but that there were many who were resisting censorship with words and action.

The A.L.A. public library standards of 1967 opposed the censoring of materials when it included the following statement: "Library collections should contain opposing views on controversial topics..." In addition, "materials of the required quality...will not be removed...nor will materials lacking these qualities be added because of pressure by groups or individuals" (ALA, 1967:38).

An Intellectual Freedom Office was opened in 1967 at the A.L.A. headquarters in Chicago. It served as tangible evidence of the continuing importance of this issue (Gains, in Moon, 1969:247).

In contrast to these developments in promoting intellectual freedom, an opposing movement to this idea, the Conservative Library Association, was formed in 1965 "to cleanse libraries of tasteless, socialistic, subversive and pornographic materials." (Busha, 1972:80) (cf. also a letter from its president in Wilson library bulletin, 39(8), April 1965:636).

In 1967 amendments were made to the Library Bill of Rights in order to improve access to public libraries by ensuring that meetings in library rooms would be open to the public and that rooms would be made available to all on equal terms. It also ensured that access should not be denied to the library on the grounds of "social view" or "age" (cf. 4.4.2.5), which were

added to those of "race, religion, national origins or political views".

#### 6.4.3.5 1970 - 1980

There was a growing tide of censorship in the early 1970s with the publication of the report of the President's Commission on Obscenity and Pornography which, although unable to prove the harmful effects of this type of literature, created a climate for censorship activities (cf.6.3.3.1).

Woods (1978), in his study of the censorship cases reported in the Newsletter on intellectual freedom between 1966 and 1975, showed that censorship in libraries was on the increase, especially in the number of items censored, and that pressure groups were becoming better organised (p.1566). He also found that 55 per cent of the cases were aimed at books (p.1565), but that only 12 per cent of the censorship attempts occurred in public libraries (p.1562). He noticed that only 2,5 per cent of these censorship attempts were initiated by librarians, but he qualified this by stating that "it may be possible to assume that librarians do not necessarily report self-censorship to a profession that does not condone censorship..." (Woods, 1978 : 1565).

Busha (1972) undertook a study in 1970-1 of the attitudes of librarians in the mid-west of the U.S.A. to censorship. He confirmed Fiske's findings that most librarians approve of the statements of intellectual freedom, but that they are somewhat neutral towards censorship (64 per cent of his respondents). Only 22 per cent were strongly opposed to censorship (Busha, 1972 : 147).

A further advancement of intellectual freedom was the issuing by the A.L.A. of its Policy on confidentiality of library records (1970). The reason for it was to protect users, other than through the due process of law, from the "fear of persecution or prosecution... when borrowing... controversial materials for whatever purpose." (Krug & Harvey, 1974 : 175).

The A.L.A. conferences of the early 1970s accepted interpretations of the Library Bill of Rights, which further strengthened the A.L.A.'s stand on intellectual freedom (Berninghausen, 1979). One of these was the resolution against Restricted access to library materials in 1973.

The use of the reserve shelf (cf. 6.4.1 & 7.4) was attacked by Krug and Harvey (1971 : 755) and a later informal study by Austin (1978) found that its use was a widespread practice. She showed that out of 57 libraries, (of which 42 replied),<sup>26</sup> had reserve shelves as a protective device against theft, motor-car manuals being the kind of item most often stolen. She postulates in her conclusions that the introduction of security systems would minimise thefts and make the reserve shelf unnecessary (Austin, 1978 : 565).

The issue of intellectual freedom continued to receive attention in the literature. In 1974 the Intellectual Freedom Office published its Intellectual freedom manual which brought together the many A.L.A. pronouncements on the subject.

Anderson's (1974) approach in his book of case studies represented an interesting change, as it placed the abstract problem on a practical level, which is much harder to apply, and as it also was an effective way of preparing librarians for the censorship confrontation.

Berninghausen's (1972) article Social responsibility vs the Library Bill of Rights, brought both these subjects to the fore again, but also another inconclusive debate (cf. 6.4.2.4). He claims that the growth of the social responsibility idea (cf. 3.3.6.1) has undermined intellectual freedom (Berninghausen, 1979 : 26). Bendix (1972) disagrees with this, but rather regards intellectual freedom as a social responsibility.

Berninghausen is critical of the supporters of the social responsibility viewpoint, as it has led to a growing politicisation of the A.L.A., involving librarians in issues extraneous to professional ones (Berninghausen, 1972 : 3675). He sees this outside involvement as going against the ethic that the librarian should be impartial and neutral (Berninghausen, 1972 : 3670) (cf. 4.2.4.3), but, as de Vleeschauwer notes, this does not imply that librarians are indifferent, rather that they show "tolerance to all ideas, people and books..." (de Vleeschauwer, 1959 : 155-6).

There are those who criticise the Intellectual Freedom Committee for also concerning themselves with issues not directly related to the profession (Berry, 1978 ; Swan, 1979 : 2042). The motivation for this wider concern is prompted by the need for co-operation and support, when librarians are faced with attempted censorship (Merritt, 1970 : 75-81) (cf. 7.5). Fielding (1976) stresses that such assistance should be particularly cultivated at the local level.

The professional stand then is a purist one which is based on a strict reading of the First Amendment of the American constitution. This states that: "Congress shall make no law...abridging freedom of speech or the press." (Krug & Harvey 1974:173). Berninghausen holds that "freedom of expression is primary, on a higher level than substantive principle, and that the principle is indivisible." (his emphasis) (Berninghausen, 1979:4). This indivisability had been stressed earlier by Larabee (1953, in Mosher, 1953:40) because any exceptions entitle those with illiberal ideas to also censor (cf.6.4.1).

There are naturally those who disagree with this approach. Flanagan (1975) is one of the dissenters who sees it as firstly impractical as there are always limitations on freedom which also have legal and social implications. In the second place, he regards the approach to intellectual freedom as an oversimplification, as it does not take into account the effects of the different types of media, and ignores the standards for various types of libraries. Thirdly, in his view, freedom of thought includes freedom of expression, which implies that thought and action cannot be divided, as actions have both positive and negative results. He regards it as the librarian's professional responsibility to make decisions to improve the human condition.

Flanagan's third point has been echoed to a large extent by Bekker (1976 a), a South African librarian (cf.6.4.4.4).

Williams and Pearce (1976) agree that there are always limitations on freedom as a social necessity. Because of the negative connotation of censorship, they prefer the word "control". They see the controversy in libraries as not about censorship, but about the library's objectives and the "scope" of the library (cf. Chs. 3 & 4). The "scope" differs with the objective, so that they define censorship as limiting access by not buying, accepting as gifts or removing from the shelves "materials which are in-scope and not redundant, which do not create imbalance and which meet quality standards." (Williams & Pearce, 1976:1496).

The issue of library censorship will remain unresolved, as it is part of the larger social issues and of social values. Intellectual freedom in the U.S.A. seems likely to continue to expand, and librarians can be expected to be in the forefront of the battle because of their concern with access to the record, but at the same time attempts at censorship show no signs of

abating, and may continue to achieve some successes at the local level, especially since the 1973 Supreme Court decision laying stress on local community standards (cf. 6.3.3.1).

#### 6.4.4 SOUTH AFRICA

##### 6.4.4.1 BEFORE 1954

Legal censorship is the only aspect of the censorship problem to which South African librarians have given any attention. There has been no mention of intramural censorship in libraries.

In the years after the formation of the South African Library Association (S.A.L.A.), the profession was concerned with the development of library services. Little attention was paid to intellectual freedom, which was natural to expect from a newly-formed professional body with a small membership.

When the government was intending to amend the Entertainment (Censorship) Act in 1938 (cf. 6.4.3.2), the Administrative Council of the S.A.L.A. in July 1938 passed a resolution expressing their fears of more censorship. It read as follows :

"that the Administrative Council of S.A.L.A. views with apprehension the present method of censorship of books and periodicals in South Africa and would recommend that in any amending legislation about to be introduced the principle of censorship, in so far as it is applied at all, should be applied through the Courts of Law." (S.A.L.A., 1938:92).

The 1946 S.A.L.A. conference discussed the question of censorship. E.A. Borland asked whether librarians favoured censorship. The replies he received were that censorship was a reality, so that all librarians could do, was try to make the censorship system function without too many restrictions on 'good' literature. No resolution was passed after the debate (S.A.L.A., 1946:9-10). Already at this stage there was a large enough group of librarians who were not opposed to censorship as such.

6.4.4.2 1954 - 1963

These ten years witnessed the most active protest ever undertaken against censorship by South African librarians. This was seen particularly in their opposition to the recommendations of the Cronje Commission (cf. 6.3.3.2), including the decision that the S.A.L.A. would not sit on the Commission, as such action would be tantamount to giving approval to the principle of censorship (S.A.L.A., 1954:126).

The concern about the 'undesirable' literature, which had prompted the constituting of the Cronje Commission, was also reflected by those who dealt with children's reading, such as Groenewald (1954), van der Walt (1954) and Kritzinger (1955). Kritzinger disagreed with the arguments raised by Stirling (1954:280) and Ehlers (1954:40) that the harmful effects of reading were overrated, whereas he endorsed the Commission's stress on F. Wertham's Seduction of the innocent (1954) (Kritzinger, 1955:47). The Commission placed much emphasis on the idea put forward by Wertham, of a trigger-mechanism taking place as a result of the stimuli received from the written page, while it ignored the cathartic aspect of draining aggression and frustration already mentioned (cf. 6.3.2).

As a consequence of the motion passed at the 1953 S.A.L.A. conference, which instructed the Administrative Council to investigate literary censorship "in all its aspects" (Hood, 1954:39), a symposium on censorship was held in May 1954. One of the speakers, D.H. Varley, noted that South African librarians as a group had not clarified their attitude to censorship, "while some have even been prepared to compromise on the point of principle." (Varley, 1954:45).

At the 1954 S.A.L.A. conference M.M. Stirling (1954) presented a paper opposing the idea of introducing internal censorship.

In 1956 the S.A.L.A. issued a statement, Literary censorship in South Africa, which did not come out against censorship because, although it recognised the importance of the free flow of "opinions, knowledge and information", it also acknowledged "the need for strengthening and enforcing the laws..." It called for more support for libraries as it is "by the plentiful and powerful supply of good books on all subjects, representing a wide diversity of views, that the librarian can make his most effective

contribution to this problem [of undesirable literature]." (S.A.L.A., 1956: 77).

After the publication of the Cronje Commission Report, the Council of the S.A.L.A. took a stronger stand against censorship with the publication of a memorandum which was sent to the Minister of the Interior. This document "approved the positive measures recommended by the Commission for the promotion of good reading" (p.113) (cf. South Africa (Union), 1957: 246-8), but expressed itself against the introduction of additional legislation. The memorandum was critical of the Commission's figures, as these did not take into account the books borrowed from public libraries. It only examined a little more than a quarter of the publication output for the years 1947-1954 (p.113-4). A point made by Ehlers (1958), regarding this criticism, was that the number of Afrikaans titles found undesirable constituted only 1,9 per cent of those works which the Commission had considered.

The Memorandum was also critical of the Commission giving "too much weight to the thesis that 'undesirable' reading matter necessarily leads to increased crime, and not enough to an authoritative body of opinion which is not convinced by this thesis." (p.114). The Memorandum considered the norms of 'undesirability' as being far too wide and, therefore, would seriously harm literature in South Africa. The proposed administrative structure would have a similar effect (p.114).

The Memorandum concluded by stating that:

"we are of opinion that the dangers of a system of censorship in which...no provision is made for appeal to the courts of law, outweigh the dangers inherent even in the circulation of 'undesirable' literature, and that the provision of the nominated Publications Appeal Board would in no way compensate for the loss of a civil right conferred by the rule of law in this as in other civilised communities." (S.A.L.A., 1958:115).

The content of this Memorandum was quoted extensively by Varley in an international issue on intellectual freedom in Library trends of July 1970. He claimed in his article that the Memorandum was "probably the last published statement of [the S.A.L.A.] in defence of this aspect of the rule of law in South Africa." (Varley, 1970:146).

However, de Vleeschauwer devoted an issue of Mousaion in 1959 to the topic of censorship and libraries in which he came out strongly against literary censorship and the recommendations of the Cronje Commission, as it did not take into account the individual and needs of science (p.6). He gives three reasons for his opposition to it, viz.:

- (a) " Firstly, because the report (cf.6.3.3.2) reflects the attitude of proud, dogmatic, sanctimonious community which is at pains to ascribe all evils to aberrations of the individual whereas it is clear...that [these] are to a much greater degree the result of an ill-advised social policy;
- (b) " secondly, because censorship applied by a community which does not admit its own culpability will lead to nothing but a mass of more or less useless and puerile restraints on freedom, and remain basically ineffectual ; and
- (c) " finally, because my calling...is the pursuit of truth - I...love freedom of thought and knowledge above all else." (de Vleeschauwer, 1959 :3-4).

When amendments were proposed for the draft censorship bill, it was welcomed by Ehlers except for the fact that literary merit was not to be taken into account. He hoped that the government would heed the recommendations proposed by the S.A.L.A. (Ehlers, 1961 :2). This was not to be, however, and the Publication and Entertainment Act came into force in 1963 (cf.6.3.3.2).

#### 6.4.4.3 1964 - 1973

Lunn claims that once the 1963 Act had been passed there has been no protest by librarians since (Lunn, 1970 :132). Although this and the following section will show that her statement was not correct, of the little that has been written in the professional literature, few of the librarians have considered the direct implications of censorship on librarians and libraries.

1970 was the next time that there was any criticism of censorship by librarians (viz. Lunn and Varley) and their criticism appeared in articles in overseas journals. Lunn was probably too critical of the South African librarians for not having protested against censorship, but she did note that literary figures and academics had done so (Lunn, 1970:133). The Afrikaanse Skrywersgilde and the Pasquino Society were two such bodies which did protest.

Varley seems more restrained and realistic in his criticism, as he has realised the difficulties in speaking out and has recognised that those librarians who did care have rather done what they could through actions rather than words (Varley, 1970:149).

As already mentioned (cf. 6.3.3.2), the administration of the Act came under attack and this criticism was also reflected in the library literature Grobbelaar, in discussing children's literature, was critical of the way the system was working as he regarded true pornography to be those works of poor quality, instead of the emphasis being on "'n bietjie seks en sonde..." (Grobbelaar, 1970:197).

The January 1971 issue of South African libraries was devoted to this topic, but only two of the eight articles were written by librarians. Kesting (1971) in his editorial mentioned that censorship limited the librarian's ability to give readers access to literature, particularly in the context of the prevailing South African conditions.

Green discussed the administrative problems librarians face of checking the weekly Government gazettes and Jacobsen's Objectionable literature index, which is a loose-leaf binder made up of an alphabetical list of banned titles sent to subscribers every week. Once this is done, it often means checking the catalogue and then removing a work to a safe place or even destroying it (cf. Die Burger (5.10.55) report of hundreds of books burnt by Cape Town and Durban public libraries). Articles in journals by banned people are a particular problem as they are difficult to trace and when found, it usually means the removal of a whole issue (Green, 1971:224). She concluded by claiming that librarians in South Africa are concerned with the freedom to read, but "this concern is only for books and journals of a reputable nature." (Green, 1971:226). By this she means writers of

literary merit as there is no consensus among South African librarians about the freedom to read political literature so that "for librarians the professional facade of disinterested impartiality (cf. 6.4.3.5) must be maintained." (Green, 1971:227).

Although Ehlers supports censorship in principle because of the threat of communism (Ehlers, 1971:219-20), he would like to see the libraries' task as being one of an improver of reading tastes (cf. 5.5.2 & 5.5.5). He feels the public library can do this, as it is free from ideology and serves the community. Because censorship hinders the provision of a variety of views he wanted libraries to be largely exempted from censorship (Ehlers, 1971:221-2).

Musiker (1972), as a university librarian, is critical of the stringent system in operation in South Africa, but he does concede that some sort of censorship is needed in the modern world.

The new act of 1974 (cf. 6.3.3.2) had been preceded by a Parliamentary Select Committee to investigate the censorship system. To this Committee the S.A.L.A. submitted evidence as well as sending it a letter requesting:

- (a) the retention of statutory appeal for banned publications (the 1974 S.A.L.A. conference also passed a motion to this effect (S.A.L.A., 1975:24));
- (b) the introduction of subject specialists to assist the courts when there are differences in approach; and
- (c) the inclusion of librarians as specialists when a case affects the aims and objectives of libraries (cf. 2.2.2 & 3.2.4.3) (S.A.L.A. newsletter 25(1) July 1973:14-5).

#### 6.4.4.4 1974 - 1980

This Act and its implications for writers received coverage in South African libraries of July 1975, but these were articles by non-librarians.

In 1978 the S.A.L.A. set up a committee "to negotiate in order to gain clarity as to the possession and use of banned publications in university and other libraries." (S.A.L.A., 1980:21). Since 1963 there had been provision for exemptions from the Publications Control Board for certain

categories of readers for the purpose of study and research (Ehlers, 1971 : 221), but it was not given at all easily by the Minister of Justice for the writings of banned persons (Welsh, 1976 : 24). This system was cumbersome and an irritant to those who wished to apply.

From January 1980 a blanket exemption has been given to some libraries to hold banned publications, the dissemination of which is covered by strict regulations. Permission to have and to disseminate undesirable publications, (i.e. those not banned for possession), has been given to 27 libraries in South Africa, but only 3 of these are public libraries viz., the East London Public Library, the Natal Society Library, and Bloemfontein Public Library. The last two are copyright libraries which also have an open exemption to have publications banned for possession. Other than the copyright libraries, nine other libraries (mainly university libraries) have been given permission to hold publications banned for possession, but it is dependent on the discretion of the Directorate as an application has to be made for each title. None of the universities that serve the different black population groups has this dispensation.\*

The position has not changed concerning those banned works which fall under the Minister of Justice. Here the researcher, and not the library, must make application to the Minister.

The same prescribed controls apply to inter-library loans between these exempted libraries\* .

These exemptions have made the task of the researcher easier, but the man in the street, unless he travels to, or lives in Cape Town, Pretoria, Bloemfontein, Pietermaritzburg or East London (the last one only for undesirable material) cannot have access to banned material, (although it should be remembered that permission has been given to public libraries to lend a banned book to those over 18 (cf. 6.3.2)). Even here access is at the discretion of the librarian whose personal biases could come into play. P. Westra's remarks at the censorship conference held at the University of Cape Town in May 1980 in this regard that anyone can walk into these libraries and consult banned works, has still to be tested in practice.\*\*

\* Letter from P.J.de Jager, 19.9.80.

\*\* Personal transcript of unpublished proceedings of above conference to be published by David Philip in July 1981.

The position facing South African librarians with regard to censorship is that they must obey the law (Schauder, 1978 :343; Bekker, 1980 :9; Strauss, 1980 : 37). This makes the task of the South African librarian easier than those of his counterparts in more liberal countries (cf.6.1). Especially as the law is so wide in its interpretation of what is undesirable it would seem that is not necessary for South African librarians to apply censorship as well.

Bekker (1980) in looking at the relationship between the library and the state sees two possible stances that the library can take, viz.:

- (a) It can be ideologically neutral, providing material on a variety of views, thereby stressing the individual's rights. This view also emphasises the librarian's responsibility as custodian for the future.
- (b) It can be "ideologised" - "verideologiseerd" - where, as a social institution (cf.2.2.1), it should provide what the majority want and, therefore, meet current needs. This viewpoint ignores the future and the fact that ideologies change.

As he had discussed earlier in an inaugural lecture (Bekker, 1976 a), the ideal is to balance individual freedom with social responsibility (cf.6.4.3.5). Here the librarian tries to be as unbiased as possible in providing wide ranges of material and, simultaneously, these should be "what is good for mankind", obliging the librarian to withhold what may be detrimental or confidential.

In considering these two diametrically opposed approaches, Bekker is more in support of the former. A similar view is held by other librarians such as Varley (1954:42) and Green (1971:225). However, Bekker does argue that there are situations in which a librarian is compelled to take an ideological stand. However, these must be exceptions if the professional credibility of librarians is not to be jeopardised in attempting to realise libraries' aims and objectives (Bekker, 1980 :10).

A similar opinion was expressed by Schauder when he viewed the librarian's duty in South Africa as striking "a balance between impartiality and moral commitment." (Schauder, 1978 :343). This situation is, of course, not peculiar to South Africa but applies equally to the U.K. and the U.S.A. as has been shown in this and preceding chapters. The difference is that the dilemma is more acute for those who regard the present situation

in South Africa as reprehensible.

Varley, as far back as 1954, gave this answer to librarians in South Africa :

"Be true to the tenets of the profession, seek and encourage excellence, attempt to develop human personalities through the positive means at every librarian's disposal, and finally, resist at every turn all attempts to curb the freedom of the individual to think and act for himself." (Varley, 1954:45).

## CHAPTER 7. BOOK SELECTION AND CENSORSHIP

### 7.1

#### INTRODUCTION

The preceding chapters have covered the emergence of the public library and the development of its aims and objectives (cf. Chs. 2, 3 & 4). It is within the framework of these aims and objectives that selection takes place, as its principles are based on these objectives. The principles of selection were considered in Chapter 5 (cf. 5.5), in which it is argued that the guiding principle in selection is a presupposition of the librarian's knowledge of the community (cf. 5.3.4) as a prerequisite for meeting its needs and demands.

Since, as a matter of course, types of library material will be acquired with which everyone in the community, including some librarians, will not agree (Mosher, 1954:113), attempts at censorship are likely to follow. The question of censorship and its effects on public libraries were examined in Chapter 6.

It was apparent from the literature surveyed in Chapter 6 that neither side in the arguments for and against censorship have an irrefutable case, and, therefore, the stand taken by either side depends very much on pre-conditioned values. As actual censorship practices are seldom clear-cut, the protagonists on both sides are more concerned with convincing potential supporters, (who as a rule are the uncertain majority) by rhetoric, rather than by objective argument, resulting in an apparent simplification of a more complex issue (Katz, 1980:313).

An examination of the literature has shown (cf. 6.4.1 and 6.4.4.4) that the British and American library associations, and also many librarians in those two countries and in South Africa, regard intellectual freedom as part of the professional ethic, even if in practice many librarians do restrict access in one form or another (cf. 6.4.1; 6.4.2.5; 6.4.3.5 & 6.4.4). This dichotomy, according to Shields (1977:1823-4), can be attributed to the relative newness of the term, which could account for its lack of a precise definition, and also to haziness about the underlying philosophy. However, Swan (1979:2043) rather accounts for the attitude of uncertainty to intellectual freedom to the fact that it is an unattainable ideal. He, nevertheless, urges in an absolute sense that librarians should oppose attempted censor-

ship; even though they are de facto censors. (This paradox will be examined in 7.7).

This Chapter will bring together some of the aspects already mentioned, and it will also attempt to show that censorship in public libraries often begins with selection (cf. 6.4.1). For this reason it is submitted that there is a fundamental interrelatedness between book selection and censorship. This conclusion should be apparent from the discussion in 6.4.

## 7.2

### SELECTION OF CONTROVERSIAL MATERIAL

It is in the selection of material which is considered controversial that the possibility of library censorship is most likely to occur (cf. 6.4.1). (The difference between rejection and censorship will be examined later (cf. 7.7)). However, the problem about 'controversial' material, as Sherman (1962:479) has noted, is that there is no debatable issue which is not controversial to someone, and, therefore, librarians should not exclude books for this reason, especially as public librarians do not endorse or condemn the views propounded in the books on their shelves (cf. 6.4.2.1 & 6.4.3.3).

The guideline for librarians in dealing with 'controversial' works should be for American librarians articles I, II and III of the Library Bill of Rights (cf. Appendix II) and for British librarians the L.A. statement of 1963 (cf. Appendix I) (cf. 6.4.1). These documents, according to Carter (1968:144), should be included in book selection policies of libraries in their respective countries. However, having such a statement of principles, (as many libraries in the U.S.A. do have), does not make the task of selecting 'controversial' material necessarily any easier, as selection remains an intricate activity with or without policy documents (cf. 7.5).

In his theory of book selection (cf. 5.4), McColvin suggests that when selecting books of a contentious nature, the librarian needs to:

"evaluate controversial subjects as though they were in no way different from other matters, . . . give preference to the non-controversial basis and then devote such part of the representation as remains to controversial works

provided in proportion to the volume of demand for the different sides of the controversy." (his emphasis) (McColvin, 1925:177).

McColvin is therefore not suggesting equal representation on all sides of an issue per se (cf.5.5.4), but representation only of those aspects of concern to the local community. He also poses the moral question referred to (cf.6.4.3.5), viz.: "Should we, as men working for the good of humanity, go out of our way to be impartial when in our hearts we know that we should not (his emphasis) be impartial?" (McColvin, 1925:177) (cf. also 7.7).

Other authors have also addressed themselves to the selection of 'controversial' material, including the eminent theorists Drury (1930), Bonny (1939), Haines (1935,1950) and Ranganathan (1966). There is agreement among these authors that it is not the task of librarians to censor, but, instead, to include books conveying "values..., strengths, and ...virtues ..." (Asheim, 1954:96) (cf.7.6). Nevertheless, they tacitly acknowledge that in practice censorship does occur among librarians (cf.6.4.2.4).

Drury, in summarising the process of choosing the 'best' books (cf.5.5.4), states :

" [librarians should] be broad-minded. Hearken not to the few over-conservative people who may think a book is harmful; avoid without censoring the ethically dubious; refrain from bias-personal, literary, economic, political, religious - selecting with tolerance and without prejudice, and including all sides with fairness; represent the sectarian and propogandic type of book only so far as use demands it." (Drury, 1930:238-9).

Drury's approach, along with that of many other authors on the topic, however, tends to be too idealistic, because, as de Vleeschauwer has noted :

"no one can be completely objective in judging the value and suitability of a book...he may make a one-sided use of his position, but as long as this does not exceed certain limits he may readily be forgiven that degree of cultural or scientific egotism." (de Vleeschauwer, 1959:142) (cf.6.4.1).

More recently even the provision of the 'best' books has been questioned. Busha claims that:

"librarians must awaken to the reality that some readers want to read works incorporating the sordid and the trivial as well as the noble and dramatic aspects of the human condition, and that the library user... ought to find representative works of all these in the local public library." (Busha, 1972:31).

This would imply that the librarian would even go as far as to include hard-core pornography, as Wertheimer (1980:25) has argued, because it depicts the reality of an aspect of the human condition. Wertheimer even questions the value of so-called decent literature (such as romances (cf.5.4.3.4)), claiming that even these may cause social harm because they fantasise the real world, thereby distorting man's perception of reality.

Bendix, on the basis of a survey, suggests that there are double standards for selection, one for 'controversial' works, and another for 'non-controversial' ones, resulting in the rejection of the 'sordid' mentioned by Busha above, and the inclusion of the 'trivial'. Bendix quotes one of her respondents as saying in practice "a book with a harmless theme designed principally to entertain...is judged less vigorously than a book addressed to a serious, challenging or controversial theme." (Bendix, 1962:489).

Moon (1968:8) agrees that there are two standards for selection, and proposes that, rather than filling the shelves with inoffensive books, the librarian should pack them with controversial ones. His proposal is an extension of Asheim's (1954:98) point that librarians have a commitment towards stimulating controversy and introducing innovative thought into their libraries through selection. Thus, the librarian will be performing a leader's role in his community - of one who is a little ahead of his public (Bowerman, 1931:40). However, as Fiske (1959:10) found in her study, librarians tend not to exercise such leadership, largely because of a low opinion of themselves and of the profession.

In selecting material on topics which are generally held to be controversial, Merritt (1970:14-20) proposes the following guiding principles for book selectors who want to provide as wide a spectrum of views as possible:

- (a) The merit of the book itself must be considered, regardless of the author, theme or content (cf. 6.4.2.2).
- (b) Loss by theft or mutilation must be regarded as part of the cost of supplying information in sensitive areas (cf. 7.4).
- (c) Librarians should not provide books requested by users for propaganda purposes (i.e. making them available for others to use), as it is better to borrow such works, when a specific user wants to read them, on inter-library loan from a library which would keep them for research purposes.
- (d) Librarians cannot have an equal number of titles on both or all sides of every issue because books are not published in statistical equilibrium (cf. 5.5.4).
- (e) There are bound to be some books, although falling short of normal selection criteria, which still need to be acquired by public libraries because they have generated large public interest.
- (f) There will always be some books which are unfit for a public library, such as medical works. (There are those medical books which are regarded by the medical profession as unauthentic or unreliable, and even if not so, some books could be open to misinterpretation by the layman, and therefore be dangerous).

Therefore, librarians who are upholders of intellectual freedom justify the exclusion of certain books on the grounds that the information contained therein may result in physical harm to some users. However, this same argument is used by those supporting censorship to exclude those works they believe cause spiritual and moral harm (cf. 7.7). Both views reflect Bekker's (1976 a) point about librarians having a social responsibility to their public (cf. 6.4.4.4).

Merritt expresses particular disapproval of the argument by some librarians that they do not buy because there is no demand. He counters this claim by stating :

"the librarian has an obligation to provide the good and important books of our time so that his clientele may have the opportunity of finding them while browsing (cf. 6.4.1). Thus the argument of demand or lack of demand is equally specious." (Merritt, 1970 : 22).

He is equally critical of another reason cited in support of a policy for not purchasing, viz. that a library has inadequate funds. This reason is given to reject both the expensive and the 'controversial' book. However, Merritt (1970 : 21-2) argues that there is always money for at least a single copy of a book considered essential to the collection, especially as there will be some or other book in the collection which has been or could be 'controversial'. The dubious nature of this argument of insufficient funds had been expressed as far back as 1931 by Bowerman (1931 : 26), and has subsequently been supported by Bendix (1962 : 490), among others.

The essence of the debate, accordingly, is that 'controversial' material is not to be differentiated from 'non-controversial' material when being considered for selection. This Section is therefore concluded with a statement by Busha, citing the following criteria, in order of priority, as guidelines for selecting 'controversial' (and thereby also 'non-controversial') material which a need is felt or anticipated in a community, viz.:

- (a) " Is the work honest?
- (b) If the work is indeed factual, is the information accurate and has it been verified? If the work is fictional, does it contribute to human understanding or happiness?
- (c) If the work contains more opinion than fact, are the thoughts and ideas contained therein rational and logically deduced?
- (d) Does the author or producer of the work in question achieve what he hoped to accomplish with the material?
- (e) Does the work contribute to existing information, offer new insights, or present new perspectives?
- (f) If the work meets any (his emphasis) of the above criteria, it should be selected for inclusion in the library's collection; and
- (g) Even then, if it will be of some use to library users and is not illegal, it should be included (Busha, 1972 : 80-1).

### 7.2.1 SOUTH AFRICA

The tight censorship system in South Africa, rather than making a task of selection easier for the librarian, seems to create a climate which

encourages censorship in public libraries (cf. 6.4.4.4). There appears to be an interaction between self-censorship and legal censorship (Allain, 1970:56). Such intramural censorship seems to be a common practice although little has been written about this aspect of selection.

Book selectors and book selection committees are wary about buying books which might be banned (Aremband, 1972:213; *Some thoughts...*, 1978; Transvaal Provincial Library Service, annual report, 1978; Botha, 1979:6; Pienaar, 1979:2; Driver, 1980:10). This caution is understandable, owing to the risk of financial loss that libraries may suffer as a result of a banning, but it does lead to diluted collections compared to what could be offered, and to delays in the service to the public resulting from their waiting to see if a work is banned.

Some South African librarians have expressed their support for the provision of 'controversial' material. Albert (1962:22-6), for example, saw selection as a positive process whereby the books chosen would be useful to some users, and, in doing so, tried to provide a variety of books with differing views on 'controversial' issues (cf. 7.2). Roux (1963:13) supported the latter view, and Gertz (1972:11) has even asserted that a library should consider itself as having failed if every individual approved of all the books on the shelves. More specifically, views unacceptable to the majority should also be provided (Bekker, 1976a:6). Reyneke (1964:21) argues that this approach should also include erotic literature (cf. 6.3.1), (using Etienne Leroux's Sewe dae by die Silbersteins as her example), because public library users who disapprove of such literature can exercise self-censorship (cf. 7.5).

Other South African librarians, however, disagree, particularly to a 'permissive' approach to erotic literature. They declare that they exclude books which contain swear words or describe sexual activity (Bee, 1971:7), even if such books receive good reviews (*Some thoughts...*, 1978:12).

The selectors of the C.P.L.S. will in theory recommend 'controversial' books which have not been banned, but refrain from doing so because such books might offend and generate complaints. These selectors agree that there is less chance of a 'controversial' book being bought than a 'non-controversial' one (cf. 7.2). However, one of them, Edna Stern, did

express the view that the C.P.L.S. selectors should not impose additional censorship to that already there by law (Some thoughts..., 1978).

Botha (1979), on the basis of her investigation into the selection done by the provincial library services (cf. 5.5.5), claims that they select in such a manner as to try to avoid complaints (cf. 7.3). The result of such a policy, she contends, is that books which have already been cleared by the official censorship machinery, are considered a second time, not on their merits, but whether they will offend. (The C.P.L.S., according to her, even having their own definition of decency in the context of selection).

As in other countries there are South African librarians who endorse the one or the others view, mentioned above, depending on their system of values. Using Bekker's (1976 a) terms (cf. 6.4.4.4), those librarians who are "ideologically neutral" would wish to provide 'controversial' material so as to meet the needs of as many users as possible. The other librarians who are "ideologised" feel it is their responsibility to provide what the majority want, to avoid dissatisfaction, and therefore, to reflect the dominant ideology of their community.

These are two extremes to which most librarians would not adhere to, rather incorporating both in practice. Nevertheless, as few librarians would admit to censorship, rather explaining that selection is taking place, it would seem that intramural censorship does occur in South African public libraries from the few examples cited above. Chapter 9 will examine empirically if there is any further evidence of this.

### 7.3

#### COMPLAINTS

Most, if not all, public libraries receive complaints (Castagna, 1964: 187), but their extent is minimised, as Garceau (1949: 133) has shown, by the caution exercised in selection. Fiske's (1959: 69) study once more supported Garceau's findings empirically.

Castagna (1964: 187) stresses the importance of librarians being prepared with ways of dealing with complaints, particularly as it is so easy to submit to pressure. However, as Carnovsky (1950: 31) has observed, this pressure is often exaggerated, as rejection often occurs as a result of a

fear of complaints which never materialise (cf. 7.2.1). Sherman (1962 : 482) is critical of librarians who capitulate under pressure, especially if they are upholders, in principle, of 'the freedom to read' (cf. Fiske's findings 6.4.3.3).

Sherman's criticism ignores the reality of the situation in which librarians find themselves, because in any community there are conflicting value systems. This is the reason for complaints and why people wish to censor literary materials. These and other reasons were earlier discussed in 6.3.2 and 6.3.3, and again by Bryant in connection with libraries in 6.4.2.3. The manner in which complaints are handled is a matter of principle to which only the individual can make a decision by weighing up such factors as public opinion and economic pressures, and even the loss of a job (Katz, 1980 : 336).

Complaints about books are often raised by librarians themselves, rather than by the public (Fiske, 1959 : 70-79). Fiske also found that complaints by the public are, on the whole, dealt with more positively than those which are received internally (Fiske, 1959 : 79). It should be noted, however, that Fiske found no consistency among librarians in their handling of complaints, (although acknowledging that "it is doubtful many librarians would agree that consistency is always a virtue..." (Fiske, 1959 : 65)). She attributes such inconsistency to the constant use of a previously successful method of dealing with complaints, whereas a variety of approaches would be more effective (Fiske, 1959 : 80-5).

One of the means of justifying rejection is to cite book reviews (Moon, 1969 : Chs. 6-15), but they are also used as a counter to complaints and to justify the selection of a particular book (Fiske, 1959 : 78-9). One problem with reviews is that they are not always reliable as regards local requirements, resulting in the addition of books which do not meet all the standards for selection in that library (Futas, 1977 : 83). This situation stresses once again the need for librarians to read or scan as many books as possible (cf. 5.6.3). However, all librarians have to rely to some extent on reviews, thus resulting in inadvertent errors in selection (Merritt, 1970 : 30-1) (cf. 6.4.2.3). Accordingly, there needs to be rational ways in which the public can bring objections and possible mistakes to the attention of librarians (Katz, 1980 : 334).

### 7.3.1 PROCEDURES FOR COMPLAINTS

The most common method of making librarians aware of complaints, and the one most often advised, is having a form on which a formal request for the reconsideration of a book can be submitted, but, it is suggested that this should only be done after there has been a personal interview with the complainant (Katz, 1980:334). Merritt (1970:81), as an advocate of intellectual freedom, favours this method as he sees it as a means of discouraging complaints, as complainants have to set out specifically their objection in writing. Even if it is not a deterrent, the librarian will know exactly what is regarded as objectionable in a particular book and who is objecting, so that he can respond to a specific charge.

The procedure on receipt of the written complaint should be such that the previous decision be consulted and that the book selectors re-evaluate the work. As all librarians make selection errors (Moon, 1969:8), the final decision to remove the book or not rests with the head of the library (cf. 5.6.3) who should give a prompt written reply to the complainant, giving the reasons for the decision taken (Futas, 1977:12,59).

Fiske, on the other hand, considers the formal referral of complaints as being evasive, because she found that "direct action, without recourse to written or 'complaint procedure', not only saves time, but is less likely to result in restrictive measures." (Fiske, 1959:78).

Whatever method is chosen to reconsider the rejection or retention of a book, ultimately it is based on a matter of principle. As Fiske (1959:84), among others, has stressed, when dealing with complaints, those librarians who believe in 'the freedom to read' are defending a principle, and when doing so, they should avoid becoming embroiled in the defence of specific titles.

The outcome of attempts at censorship are rarely decisive, often ending in compromise and even capitulation by librarians, because librarians' values are not necessarily superior to some of their public. However, it may be suggested all those who do not support censorship can be alerted to ways of countering attempts at censorship by following the guidelines set out by the A.L.A.. Such procedures are contained in How libraries can resist censorship (1962, rev.1972), which proposes that each library should

do the following, viz.:

- (a)" Maintain a clearly defined materials selection policy (cf. 7.5).
- (b) Maintain a clearly defined method for handling complaints.
- (c) Maintain lines of communication with civic, religious, educational and political bodies of the community (cf. 7.5). (Fiske (1959 : 41) found that these potential allies were not often thought of by librarians).
- (d) Maintain a vigorous public relations program on behalf of intellectual freedom." (cited in Carter et al, 1974 : 335-6).

#### 7.4

#### RESERVE SHELF

As has been pointed out (cf. 6.4.1), one of the ways to avoid complaints is to prevent a 'controversial' book arriving on the open shelves by putting it where it has to be requested, and particularly so when it is remembered that a large percentage of users choose a book from what is available from the open shelves (cf. 5.3.1 & 6.4.1).

For this reason the A.L.A. regards the restricted accessibility to books as a form of censorship (cf. 6.4.3.5), but, as Bendix (1962 : 295) has found, the reserve shelf is only the second stage in the censorship of 'controversial' material by librarians. The first step has taken place in selection. 54 out of her 113 respondents put all books acquired on the open shelves, but many of those who did so, had not bought many of the 'controversial' titles on her list (cf. also Bryant's findings in the U.K. (cf. 6.4.2.3)).

Haines (1950 : 554) and Feiweles (1966 : 311) have expressed the view that the restriction on the circulation of some books is a necessary expedient. Gertz (1972 : 13), as a South African librarian, justifies the reserve shelf as a protective device against the theft and mutilation of books, but adds that she would also include books with a sexual theme there.

There are those librarians, such as Krug and Harvey (1971 : 755), who are critical of the reserve shelf. They see its only vindication to be the threat of theft or mutilation. However, they pose the question as to whether there might not be higher theft or mutilation rates among other works in the open-access collection. Merritt (1970 : 19-20) regards theft and mutilation as a consequence of supplying information in sensitive areas (cf. 7.2), and

he claims that these losses must be evaluated in the same way as any other by depreciation or obsolescence.

Despite this criticism, there does appear to be a valid case for the use of the reserve shelf as a means of protecting a book from user abuse. This seems indeed necessary, as certain types of books, such as books on art and photography, motor-car and home appliance manuals are prone to theft and defacement. Although this inevitably constitutes a form of censorship, in the broadest sense of the definition, it is done to safeguard public property and to ensure the continuance of a good service, i.e. for non-ideological or non-moralistic, but functional reasons. It should not be undertaken because a book is 'controversial'. Nevertheless, this might happen where 'controversial' books are defaced (Thompson, 1975 : 209).

Therefore, in practice, many librarians find the reserve shelf a convenient protective device, and they would agree with Leigh's (1950 : 120) finding that many regard it as "a prudent compromise".

## 7.5

### BOOK SELECTION POLICY AND CENSORSHIP

The importance of a book selection policy for selection has already been examined in Chapter 5 (cf. 5.6). In this section it will be discussed as a tool for countering censorship, as it is regarded as one of the most effective aids in dealing with the problem of controversiality (Fiske, 1959 : 74), even though two-thirds of Fiske's respondents had doubts about its usefulness (Fiske, 1959 : 76).

Bender (1979 : 48) made the point that a book selection policy is a definite asset, even a crucial necessity, in preventing or combatting censorship attempts in a community.

Merritt (1970 : 25) emphasised the advisability of having a document to show a would-be censor. He sees it as having a role of both minimising the possibility of complaints and limiting the extent of them.

For those librarians who believe in its usefulness for this purpose, such a policy statement should include the following :

(a) a statement about censorship (Allain, 1970 : 48), intellectual freedom

- and the users' right to confidentiality (Futas, 1977:xv; cf. also 5.6.3);
- (b) an indication of what will be excluded as well as what will be included (Castagna, 1962:2300);
- (c) an affirmation of the users' right to read and freedom from censorship by others, including the library, because the only 'acceptable' form of censorship is self-censorship (Katz, 1980:315) (cf. 7.2.1);
- (d) that selection is not determined by whether users will approve or disapprove of material acquired, "but solely on the merits of the material in relation to the building of the collection and to serving the interests of the readers." (Futas, 1977:6);
- (e) that it state the methods to be used in dealing with complaints (cf. 7.3);
- (f) that gifts will be treated in the same way as other materials without giving preference, prominence, or even retaining the right to dispose of them (cf. 5.6.3);
- (g) that library materials will not be marked or identified, viz. that labelling will not occur to show approval or disapproval of the library's contents (cf. 6.4.3.3 & 7.2); and
- (h) that books will not be removed from the open shelves except for their protection (cf. 6.4.1 & 7.4).

If selection were carried out, based on the above, it would imply that there would most likely be few restrictions on the acquisition of adult material. This poses the problem that adult material might inadvertently come into the possession of children. However, the sensitive issue of what children read, and whether the library should be responsible in loco parentis for what is read, will not be examined in this thesis (cf. 5.1).

While Fiske (1959:76) found that of her respondents who favoured written policies, most wished them to contain generalities; the policies cited by Futas (1977) opt rather for more specific statements, as these seem to improve selection, especially when they adopt a positive approach to selection and intellectual freedom. Merritt proposes that librarians have two documents:

- (a) "a general statement of policy for the information of the public and for use in controversy; [and]
- (b) "...a more detailed document for the day-to-day guidance of the library staff." (Merritt, 1970:26).

However useful a written policy may be regarded, it will not necessarily protect a library against attempts at censorship, as censors tend to be more concerned with specifics than with principles (cf. 7.3.1). As a result of this fact, Berry suggests that "the labour and thought devoted to developing a written policy would be much more effectively used to establish alliances with groups of all persuasions in the community, and to publicize and provide a good responsive library service." (Berry, 1977:433) (cf. 7.3.1).

## 7.6 ASSUMPTIONS OF BOOK SELECTION AND CENSORSHIP

The assumptions discussed below will, as a matter of course, be largely based, and therefore, repeat, some of the arguments for and against censorship already examined (cf. particularly 6.3.1 & 6.3.2).

Reading, it would appear, may cause changes in readers, especially in the transmission of ideas. Therefore, in the hyperbolic words of Bengé, "all ideas are dangerous and all important literature is 'subversive'." (Bengé, 1970:87). (The term 'subversive', as de Vleeschauwer (1959:45-7) points out, can only be applied to a given social and historical context, because no book can be subversive as such. Oscar Wilde's epigram is also of relevance here: "There is no such thing as a moral or an immoral book. Books are well written, or badly written. That is all." (The preface to The picture of Dorian Gray)). However, it is only in this social context that any change in a reader may be regarded as positive or negative. As Glenn has claimed: "Books have proved beyond doubt the most powerful force for good or ill that the mind of man has yet invented." (Glenn, 1958:1977).

The selector and the censor, therefore, have the same assumption regarding readers, viz. that reading does influence people for better or for worse, and because of this assumption, they both reject books considered to be potentially harmful. As a result, there would seem to be no dissimilarity between the two. However, librarians claim that there is one

because their approach and attitude towards readers is different from that of censors.

On the one hand, as was shown in 6.3.2, the censor regards the members of society as corruptible, resulting in a need to protect them from evils which would threaten them and the whole fabric of society (Katz, 1980:317). Such an approach presupposes that the members of society are unable to determine for themselves the difference between good and bad. However, the censor, through experience and qualifications, feels more confident in his knowledge of what a society should not read. In order to ensure that all are protected from the possible detrimental effects of a 'bad' book, the censor has to enforce his judgment on that society, legally or extra-legally, for their own good by refusing its members access to 'undesirable' books (Katz, 1980:314).

On the other hand, the selector, (when sympathetic to intellectual freedom), thinks users will choose most often in their own self-interest. Nevertheless, the selector recognises that some members of society will make wrong choices, but the selector feels they must be free to do so (Carter et al, 1974:184) in order to learn how to deal with evil (Katz, 1980:319), especially as freedom of choice is inherent to a democratic system (cf.6.4.1). The selector concentrates on the benefits of reading, selecting material which will enlighten and improve the community in line with a library's specific aims and objectives (Asheim, 1959, in van Orden & Phillips:14). The selector does not necessarily reject the fact that reading may have a negative effect, (although he is unlikely to take a deterministic approach, rather seeing the case as inconclusive), but instead stresses the advantages of reading by carrying out judicious selection.

The ultimate aim of the selector and the censor, then, are diametrically opposed, as the censor wishes to prevent the reading of certain books, whereas the selector wants to encourage the reading of the books in the library's collection.

As Asheim has stated, book selection is positive in the sense that "[it] looks for values, for strengths, for virtues which will overshadow minor objections", whereas censorship is negative in so far as the censor is by definition preoccupied with finding something bad in a book, and as there is seldom a flawless book, it is easy for the censor to reject any work

which he personally does not approve (Asheim, 1954:96).

## 7.7

### REJECTION OR CENSORSHIP?

The responsibility of the librarian, according to Drury (1930:297) and Haines (1950:555), is to practise discriminating selection rather than censorship. Therefore rejection, as such, does not amount to censorship (cf. 7.6), unless it is exercised for political or moral reasons (Moore, 1968:310).

From the literature surveyed already, it would appear that in selection factors other than those of finance or physical space come into play (cf. 5.3.1). One of the most important is the standards on which selection is based (Asheim, 1954:93). These standards are embodied in the principles of selection (cf. 5.5), which have their foundation in the aims and objectives (cf. 2.2.2) of a particular library within a community (cf. 5.3.4). Many librarians agree that all these should be incorporated more precisely in a written book selection policy, as such a document has undoubted benefits (cf. 5.6 & 7.5).

The problem with book selection policies is that they are usually vague, and their interpretation subjective, as for example such pronouncements as: "all sides of controversial issues will be represented as far as budget, space and availability of material allow." (Futas, 1977:89-90,156). This applies equally to the A.L.A. Library Bill of Rights (cf. Appendix II).

The inclusion of such statements in book selection policies provide enough scope for any librarian to be able to reject views and ideas which he does not respect (Asheim, 1954:93-4). Because of the professional disapproval of formal censorship, this mode of censorship has often been couched in words and phrases such as 'suitable', 'good taste' or 'appropriate'. Fiske (1959:63) found that the use of these semantic conveniences were used to justify avoiding the 'controversial'.

At the other extreme, Shera (1976:56) has warned that the fear of being called a censor must not lead to a lowering of standards, which, he claims, has happened in some libraries. Because he regards the librarian as an educator (cf. 5.5.2), he sees the librarian having the right to reject the

unworthy like any other educator involved with academic freedom (cf. 6.2).

Another area where censorship takes place is with those librarians who are socially committed to alleviating the perceived disadvantages of the underprivileged, usually minorities in countries like the U.K. and the U.S.A. (cf. 3.2.4.2 & 3.3.6.1). To these librarians intellectual freedom with regard to politics, religion and even sexual expression is easier to uphold than those ideas promoting sexism and racism. But even in the case of the latter, a degree of tolerance is required as "toleration is meaningless without toleration of the detestable." (Futas, 1977:156-7) (cf. 6.4.3.5).

This is a crucial point for those who are opposed to censorship, because, as Katz (1980:324) notes, there cannot be any exceptions. There must be toleration for all points of view, which, therefore, implies neutrality on the part of the librarian (Katz, 1980:315) (cf. 7.2 & 6.4.3.5). However, it is here that some librarians, who are libertarians, are inconsistent in that they wish to censor selectively (i.e. racist and sexist material, and not pornography). The result of their actions is the same as that of those 'conservative' librarians who feel just as strongly about certain political and moral issues (Katz, 1980:324) (cf. 7.2).

Most librarians would like to provide material which would satisfy all within their community (cf. 5.3.4) so that when the policy is to actively involve the underprivileged, it must be remembered that minorities have no more rights than the majority in dictating what may or may not be read (Carnovsky, 1950:31) (cf. 5.5.2), an opinion that was reiterated by Bekker (1976a:8-9).

However, as Moore (1968:13) has observed, the bias in selection is towards the status quo which does result in some of the community being ignored (cf. 3.2.4.4). This is reflected particularly in the 'balanced' collection of 'controversial' works (Moon, 1969:7-8) (cf. 5.5.4).

Carnovsky has expressed the professional disapprobation of censorship by stating that "by censoring the librarian is false to the highest obligations of his profession, and by resisting it retains his self-respect and reaffirms his faith in the dignity of man." (Carnovsky, 1950:32).

As selection is a professional decision (cf. 5.3.1), the librarian's task is not "to indulge every vagary of human taste." (Moore, 1968:311), because the collection otherwise becomes, according to Molz (1967:3376),

a "hodgepodge". Molz continued by stating that the public library must not try and meet every demand because intellectual freedom also protects the right of choice in that the material which the public library rejects can still be bought from bookshops (Molz, 1967:3376).

Because of this fact there is some consolation for libertarian librarians as the librarian can never be the ultimate censor. That role always rests with the law. Also, the censorship by a librarian only limits the availability of a book in a library to a given area (Thompson, 1977:208).

Mention has already been made of the amount that is published yearly (cf. 5.3.1), but the publisher also has an effect on selection, because, as Drury (1930:299) has noted, before a book is considered by a librarian, it has already had three judges, viz. the author, the publisher, and the bookseller so that, provided they are reputable by normal standards, they are likely to meet the standards of the librarian.

The reason for this is that 'reputable' publishers insist that they are concerned with other values than just making a profit (Benge, 1970:108). Their reputations are based on their upholding standards, resulting in few of them being likely "to publish a title of really questionable quality..." (Katz, 1980:92). Many publishers, like librarians, realise that books do have good and bad effects, therefore, publishers, in their assessment of the quality and the possible contribution of a work to mankind (Bailey, 1970, in van Orden & Phillips, 1979:288), have already placed the first barrier to access by deciding not to publish some works (Melcher, 1970, in van Orden & Phillips, 1979:374). As the publisher's decisions are out of the librarian's control, this aspect will not be examined further. However, the tendency of librarians to favour 'reputable' publishers (Spiller, 1974:12) does mean at this level a form of censorship is already operating.

However much librarians may be careful in their selection and follow such criteria as set out by Busha (cf. 7.2), selection will remain subjective and rest on individual decisions. Because of this fact Swan (1979:2043) has claimed that all librarians are always censors, even when some are strongly opposed to censorship. He bases his claim on the fact that, despite all good intentions, the representation of material in any public library "is the result of selective acquisition and rejection, of following priorities that reflect the values of the particular society which supports the library..."

(Swan, 1979 : 2042). Because of this he calls all librarians censors, but qualifies this statement by adding that they must be aware of this fact rather than take the purist stance on intellectual freedom. He claims that once this is acknowledged by a librarian, "[he] must wage war against censorship in his role as censor" (his emphasis) so that, while promoting 'the freedom to read' and 'the freedom of access', librarians would also be aware of the implications of censorship (Swan, 1979 : 2043).

Oboler (1979 : 2598-9) strongly disagrees with this generalisation of equating book selection with censorship. While acknowledging that "all librarians sometimes (his emphasis) act as censors" (Oboler, 1979 : 2598), he draws attention to the points made by Carnovsky (1950) and Asheim (1954) mentioned above about the differences between censorship and rejection/selection.

As selection is a personal decision, the selector, according to Moore (1968 : 310), should not exercise moral judgments, but he must be determined in his selection by the social and literary merits of a book in relation to the collection, the library's objectives, and the expressed and unexpressed needs and interests of the community (Futas, 1977 : 114, 129).

As admirable as this idealistic point of view may be, the reality is possibly reflected in the opinion expressed above by Swan (1979), viz. that the librarian does act as a censor (although probably not always, as he suggests). The librarian acts this way, according to Niell (1975 : 348), because neither library associations nor library committees have the right to resolve moral issues for their members. He adds that censorship may be wrong in principle, but in a particular case the individual has the right, in a society committed to freedom of thought and expression, to make a considered moral judgment. Broderick (1971 : 3818) is a supporter of this view, as she had earlier expressed the fact that value judgments are made in an attempt to offer individuals experiences that broaden, not limit, possibilities for growth (cf. 7.2).

Because of these factors the personal characteristics of the selector are of paramount importance for good selection (cf. 5.5.6). Strauss regards the following factors as being necessary in a selector, (nevertheless realizing that they are an ideal).

A selector must have good judgment; be well read and have an

appreciation of literature ; be unbiased and objective ; be observant ; have an interest in people ; have a sense of responsibility towards his public ; and an interest in his work ; be methodical and accurate ; have bibliographic expertise ; be conversant with selection principles ; and be prepared to cooperate with other libraries (Strauss, 1980 : 38-40).

These characteristics, in conjunction with convictions, honesty and courage will help librarians firstly, to select impartially, and secondly, to assist them in resisting attempted censorship from the public (Carter et al, 1974 : 190).

From the above, therefore, the relationship between book selection and censorship would seem to be close. Even if censorship does not occur often during selection, it would appear that it always occurs sometimes, so that it can be said with some certainty that there is an interrelatedness between the two.

Chapter 10 will look to see if, or to what extent, it is possible to determine an interrelatedness in South African public libraries.

## CHAPTER 8. METHODOLOGY OF THE EMPIRICAL STUDY

### 8.1 INTRODUCTION

As part of the study of book selection and censorship it was decided that, even though it would largely be exploratory, an empirical study of the South African position would be useful. The method of empirical social research chosen was the survey. (The use of the survey to ascertain more specifically the needs of a community were discussed in 5.3.4.3). The type of survey employed was closer to the descriptive rather than the analytical survey (Line, 1967; Leedy, 1974: Ch.8).

A questionnaire under the general title Book selection in public libraries was sent in May 1980 to the chief librarian and the person in charge of book selection in the ten autonomous public libraries, (viz., those in Cape Town, Durban, East London, Germiston, Johannesburg, Pietermaritzburg (Natal Society Library), Port Elizabeth, Pretoria, Roodepoort and Springs) (cf.8.5), and the four provincial library services in South Africa in order to obtain data for the following reasons:

- (a) to identify the objectives within which book selection operates;
- (b) to determine how the librarians selected for the sample deal with complaints generated by the availability of books assumed to be 'controversial' by some;
- (c) to examine certain book selection practices, especially those concerning 'controversial' books; and
- (d) to ascertain whether the censorship of books is exercised as a result of factors within and without the library.

Having narrowed the scope and purpose of the study to those mentioned above, the research methodology used was determined:

- (a) after identifying the population;
- (b) after choosing the independent variables;
- (c) after developing the questionnaire, including its format and its distribution;
- (d) after deciding on the method of analysing the collected data (Busha, 1972:95). The following divisions are based on Lee (1979).

## 8.2 DELIMITATIONS

The methods used were inadequate to show a relationship between book selection and censorship. Nevertheless, it was hoped that it would be possible to see if any of the findings of the Fiske (1959) study were applicable to South Africa, i.e. whether intramural censorship and, in South Africa, legal censorship have a significant influence on book selection policies and practices.

As only opinions were obtained, no attempt was made to measure attitudes or to determine authoritarian personality traits, as was done by Busha (1972).

## 8.3 DEFINITION OF TERMS

Some of the more important terms used in describing the methodology are defined below, viz.:

- 8.3.1 Data: "any set of phenomena which is a focus of study." (Hoult, 1969:98).
- 8.3.2 Element: that unit of the population about whom data is collected, providing the basis for analysis (Babbie, 1973:79).
- 8.3.3 Population: "a collection of distinct elements" (Reading, 1977:156), or more fully "the aggregate of all the cases that conform to some designated set of specifications." (Selltiz, Jahoda, Deutsch & Cook, 1959:509).
- 8.3.4 Pretest: see Study, pilot (cf.8.3.1.2).
- 8.3.5 Question, closed (multiple-choice): "question with fixed alternative answers." (Reading, 1977:167).
- 8.3.6 Question, dichotomous: "question with two fixed alternative answers." (Reading, 1977:167).
- 8.3.7 Question, open-ended: "question to which any answer can be given." (Reading, 1977:167).
- 8.3.8 Questionnaire: "a set of questions on a form that a respondent is expected to fill out himself." (Hoult, 1969:260).

- 8.3.9 Questionnaire, structured: "[a] questionnaire where both the questions and the order in which they are presented are predetermined." (Selltiz et al, 1959:257).
- 8.3.10 Respondent: "an individual who answers a questionnaire." (Hoult, 1969:273).
- 8.3.11 Sample: "a selection of some of the elements with the intention of finding out something about the population from which they are taken..." (Selltiz et al, 1959:510). This group should be "roughly representative of the universe of data from which the elements are chosen." (Hoult, 1969:281).
- 8.3.12 Study, pilot: "final testing of schedule [i.e. questionnaire] before [a] survey is undertaken." (Reading, 1977:204), whereas Pretesting usually designates probes into parts of the plan. However, as Moser and Kalton (1971:48) note, it is difficult to state definitely "which functions belong to the pretest and which to the pilot [study]... since much will depend on the circumstances of the enquiry."
- 8.3.13 Survey: "direct systematic collection of representative data from a population or sample of a population." (Reading, 1977:207).
- 8.3.14 Survey, analytical: a survey "[which] relate[s] one piece of data to another [in order] to probe beneath the figures to underlying factors and patterns." (Line, 1967:14).
- 8.3.15 Survey, descriptive: a survey which enumerates and describes the data (Line, 1967:13).
- 8.3.16 Variable, independent: a quantity which varies and that is manipulated independently of any other variable by the experimenter (Reading, 1977:227).

#### 8.4 POPULATION

One of the first steps in a social survey is to define the population which will be investigated. The population chosen is not only affected by geographic boundaries, but also by the type and size of an institution, and

by particular individual attributes, such as qualifications, position, age and sex.

#### 8.4.1 CHOICE OF POPULATION AND THE SAMPLE

At first it had been hoped to obtain information on the opinions and actions of all people involved in the process of book selection in the public libraries of South Africa. However, after careful consideration, it was decided to limit the population to each head of the library or library service selected for the purpose of the study (cf.8.1), and then to the person other than the head who was responsible for book selection.

The reasons for this choice, rather than one based on a sample from all public librarians who are involved with book selection were that :

- (a) Time and cost did not make it feasible to extend the collection of data beyond the two chief officials responsible for the selection of library material in each of the libraries or library services included in the survey.
- (b) There was a possibility of antagonising the heads of the libraries or library services, on whose goodwill the study depended, to such an extent that the response would be adversely affected.
- (c) It would have been impossible to maintain anonymity when trying to establish an exhaustive list of the persons involved to a greater or lesser extent in the process of book selection, especially, as Line (1967:61) notes, anonymity is so important to many respondents.
- (d) There was a risk of inducing bias, if the researcher knew some, but not other, of the respondents while trying to find out all involved in book selection. Consequently, this might affect the final study.

As 615 out of 625 public libraries in South Africa are affiliated to one or other of the four provincial library services (adaptation of Kesting, 1980 : Table 7, p.175, 198)<sup>\*</sup>, most of the book selection for these libraries is done at the four central administrative headquarters (cf. 4.3.3.2). The remaining 10 libraries are autonomous municipal ones who do their own book selection, thereby determining the institutional population at 14 and the individual population to be studied at 28.

An alternative population to that chosen could have been those people

\*Also a personal letter dated 24 April 1980 from H.E. Prinsloo of the Transvaal Provincial Library Service.

involved in one institution or the total number of institutions in one area. However, this would have entailed an in-depth study, whereas it was felt an exploratory study was needed first (cf.8.1).

## 8.5 VARIABLES

Although a common element among all the librarians who were sent the questionnaire was that they worked in public libraries, there were certain independent variables that could be identified.

The institutions at which they were employed may be stratified into three categories, viz.:

- (a) the four provincial library services in the Cape Province, Natal, the Orange Free State and the Transvaal;
- (b) the five large municipal libraries in Cape Town, Durban, Johannesburg, Port Elizabeth and Pretoria: these libraries fell into this division because they had a total staff of just under a hundred or more (cf. Question A5 of questionnaire Appendix VI); and
- (c) the five small municipal libraries in East London, Germiston, Pietermaritzburg (i.e. Natal Society), Roodepoort and Springs (cf.8.1).

Other variables were qualifications and active professional membership.

The variables of age, sex and home language were not included in order not to jeopardise the number of returns by possibly causing offence to the population who might consider a connection between any of these variables and biases in book selection an invasion of their privacy. Also, as Selltitz et al, 1959:574 have stated, respondents are sensitive about giving personal details. Therefore, questions relating to these variables were avoided and replaced by others of a more controversial nature, but which related directly to the study.

## 8.6 DATA COLLECTION

There are different methods of obtaining data in a social survey. Some of these methods are documentary sources; projective and other indirect

techniques; observation; personal interviews; and the postal questionnaire (Moser & Kalton, 1971:238; Selltitz et al, 1959:342). As each of these have inherent deficiencies in isolation, a combination of the above methods is advisable in order to make use of their various strengths (Moser & Kalton, 1971:239).

All methods except the postal questionnaire technique were rejected as unsuitable or inappropriate because :

- (a) the nature of the study was exploratory rather than in-depth (cf.8.1);
- (b) it did not try to ascertain attitudes (cf.8.1); and
- (c) it was limited by distance, time and expense (cf.8.5).

However, at one stage, serious consideration was given to combining the personal interview, (thereby incorporating an element of observation), with the questionnaire, but was rejected for the above reasons.

The postal questionnaire technique constitutes one of the most widely used methods of social research because it is an easy way of obtaining information cheaply and fairly quickly from a population scattered over large distances, as is the case in South Africa.

It also has disadvantages, many of which, however, do not affect this study. Parten (1950:95) draws attention to four such disadvantages, viz.:

- (a) The questionnaires returned are not always representative of the population surveyed.
- (b) The response rate is usually very low.

(It is submitted that these disadvantages (a) and (b) were not factors of crucial importance to the findings in this study, as there was a 89,3 per cent return which may be seen as being fairly representative of the population, even though this was small).

- (c) The questions or instructions in a questionnaire can be misinterpreted by a respondent, thus resulting in unreliable responses. (This is a common difficulty with questionnaires, but by giving full and detailed instructions wherever possible, and by exercising care in drawing up the questionnaire, this problem can be minimised, especially if the researcher guards against an overinterpretation of data. Such was the approach adopted in this study. Moreover, the questionnaire was directed at a highly educated professional group).

(d) A reasonable period of time must be allotted for the return of questionnaires, since they are usually delayed, and often require an additional period in the event of reminders having to be issued. (Questionnaires were sent out early on in the study, thus allowing time for late returns. Because of the small population it was easier to follow up non-response with reminders).

Other disadvantages of the postal questionnaire, identified by Moser and Kalton (1971 : 260-1) are that :

(e) The information supplied in a questionnaire needs to be treated as being final ; therefore, what is given may not necessarily reflect the views of the respondent accurately. (The counter-argument is the same as that for (c) above).

(f) The questionnaire may not be completed in the order given. (In this study this aspect was not particularly important, as it was unlikely to affect the subsequent responses).

(g) There is usually no irrefutable proof that the questionnaire has been completed by the right person. (For the purposes of this research, it was only important that the questionnaire be completed by an official within the institution selected who was competent to do so. The impression that this problem had not presented serious difficulty was reinforced while analysing the returns, but it must, of course be conceded that this impression is not beyond dispute).

Conversely, the postal questionnaire had clear advantages in this study, viz.:

(a) The impersonal nature of the questionnaire could be assumed to ensure a certain degree of uniformity in the answers, since the personality of the researcher could not influence the respondent, as would be the case in an interview (Selltiz et al, 1959 : 239).

(b) In view of the sensitive nature of some of the questions, the respondents were assured absolute anonymity, as no names of people or institutions were used at any time. The questionnaire appears to guarantee a better chance of anonymity and also, as Moser and Kalton (1971 : 258) claim, it leads to a better response to controversial issues.

(c) Respondents are possibly more truthful and willing to give opinions in a postal questionnaire than in an interview (Moser & Kalton, 1971 : 258).

Therefore, for the above reasons, a postal questionnaire seemed best suited to the needs of the study.

#### 8.6.1 QUESTIONNAIRE

The design of the questionnaire was a structured one, which was divided into three sections. The majority of the questions were of a multiple choice nature. These were supplemented by a few open-ended and dichotomous ones (cf. Appendix VI).

The head of the library or library service (or his deputy) was asked to complete Sections A and C, whereas the book selector was to complete Sections B and C.

In Section A questions relating to policy statements and practices, as well as administrative details of the library or library service concerned, were posed.

In Section B details and some opinions about book selection policy and practice were sought.

In Section C it was hoped to elicit some opinions on aspects of reading and censorship. Also included in this section were the classification questions (i.e. about personal details), and comments were requested in the spaces provided (cf. Appendix VI).

Each questionnaire had a set of instructions and an outline of the study in general terms. When a specific question appeared to be in conflict with the instructions, this was usually stressed by underlining the relevant part (e.g. when a personal opinion was wanted rather than a statement on the official policy (cf. Question B5)).

A carefully worded covering letter (cf. Appendix IV) was sent to the head of the library or library service in which his co-operation was solicited. Once more the objectives of the study were stated in neutral terms, as the avoidance of emotive words is strongly advised (Parten, 1950:206; Duverger, 1964:154). For this reason any explicit references to censorship were avoided.

Confidentiality for both the individual and the institution was stressed in the instructions and in the covering letter, in the hope of improving the

quality of the response, although, as Moser and Kalton (1971 : 266) note, there is no evidence to prove that such an approach will ensure the desired result. Individual anonymity was maintained in most cases as well (cf. 8.6), because the questionnaires contained only a two-letter alphabetical code (X for the head, Y for the book selector) as identification (Oppenheim, 1966 : 37). However, institutional anonymity was not possible to effect, because, for administrative reasons the researcher needed to identify the institutions in order to follow up any non-response. (This accounted for the first letter of the two-letter alphabetical code mentioned above). In spite of this at no stage were the specific institutions identified, although the identity of the institutions made it possible to classify the respondents in terms of the stratification mentioned in 8.5.

There is perhaps a little reason for concern that a certain element of bias may have entered the questionnaire, mainly as a result of the researcher's inability to pretest it adequately. The difficulty of pretesting the questionnaire, because of the problem of finding suitable substitutes from the highly specialised respondents chosen for this study, are further discussed in 8.6.1.3. Consequently, questions were included which ultimately appeared to have been less to the point than had been envisaged, and it also led to possible omissions. It may be assumed, however, that this did not influence the findings in any significant manner, although the extent of such influence may become apparent in the analysis of the data in Chapter 9 (cf. 9.1).

#### 8.6.1.1 WORDING OF QUESTIONNAIRE

The phrasing of questions is of the utmost importance in a questionnaire, because an inappropriately worded question could be misleading, ambiguous, or even cause antagonism (Moser & Kalton, 1971 : 322-8).

In an attempt to avoid such difficulties the phraseology was kept as simple as possible, even though the questionnaire was aimed at professionals (cf. 8.6). Terms were defined where it was thought necessary, (as in the instructions), and where a certain model was used in a question, the reference was given.

### 8.6.1.2 SEQUENCE OF QUESTIONS

The order of the questions are generally acknowledged to affect the nature of a response, as preceding questions tend to influence later answers (Selltiz et al, 1959 :572). In each section the questions proceeded from the general to the specific in accordance with standard procedure (Moser & Kalton, 1971 :346), the more sensitive questions being relegated to a position at the end of a section (Duverger, 1964:149).

The personal questions, as advised by authorities, were placed right at the end of the questionnaire, thereby reducing the likelihood of a full response (Selltiz et al, 1959 :574; Oppenheim, 1966 :57; Moser & Kalton, 1971 :316). This was done as, in terms of the study, a non-response to these questions were considered to be less important than if the earlier questions were not answered (cf.8.5).

### 8.6.1.3 FORMAT AND PHYSICAL LAYOUT

The design and structure of the questionnaire (i.e. with reference to the way the questions are put as well as the overall appearance) are important in facilitating a good response and accurate results (Line, 1967 :57-8).

The three types of questions that were used have already been defined (cf.8.3). The decision to use mainly multiple-choice questions in this study was based on the fact that it deals with contentions and sensitive issues. If open-ended questions are used, many of the responses could be unpredictable and irrelevant which would make them difficult to code or classify (Busha, 1972 :102). This would have applied particularly to Section C, which dealt with opinions.

It was realised that responses to Section C could force people into a choice between dichotomous categories at variance with their true positions, although the "don't know" category was thought to provide an opportunity for non-committal responses from anyone not wishing to commit himself to the rigid choice between two antithetical opinions.

In retrospect, it must be acknowledged that there was possibly a weakness in design here, in that there might have been a fourth option such as

"other (please specify)", as the answers to Section C were not necessarily reducible to the three options provided for. Another alternative might have been the use of open-ended questions which would have made allowance for a qualified, elucidated or otherwise nuanced reply to the typical bold statement provided in Section C. If, therefore, the responses were not to have been subjected to any specific test or scale, they may well have resulted in responses that could have been useful.

In defence of such deficiencies, it is submitted that the instructions for Section C did specify that there was space for comments in Question C13. The nature of the questions, rather than the design, is likely to have accounted for the non-response to some questions in this Section, as only 5 of the 25 respondents did not answer any questions in this Section at all. However, the generally poor response to Questions C1-11 was of such a nature that the researcher decided not to take them into account in his analysis (cf. 9.1).

Other than Questions C1-11, all the multiple-choice questions had a category for "others (please specify)", to compensate for inadvertent omissions. It should be borne in mind, however, that this type of question has the danger of suggesting possible responses to respondents of which they might not have thought otherwise (Parten, 1950:184-5). The advantage of using multiple-choice, as opposed to open-ended, questions is that it avoids personal bias in codification (Duverger, 1964:145). Paradoxically, however, it seems likely to have contributed to an increase in the number of non-responses to questions in Section C of the questionnaire in this study.

A few open-ended questions were used to elicit opinions (e.g. Question B2.2) or to gather facts about individual institutions. These were used sparingly, as the classification of responses for the final analysis is difficult to manipulate statistically and their analysis is time-consuming (Parten, 1950:182).

Dichotomous questions were used when the issues being investigated lent themselves to eliciting clear positive or negative responses (Selltiz et al, 1959:268). This usually covered an aspect of a library service common to all respondents, although the special nature of the provincial library services (cf. 4.3.3.2 & 5.5.5) made it impossible for respondents to answer a question such as A10. ("Does your library have a 'Friends of

the Library' society? "). A note to this effect would not have been inappropriate in the relevant questions. Although an alternative to the "yes/no" answer was given in Section C, the prominence of the dichotomous question appeared, by inference, to have exerted pressure on the respondent to commit himself to a standpoint he did not wish to take.

The multiple-choice questions assumed two structural forms, viz. horizontal and vertical. The horizontal was constructed along a five-point scale, which gave the respondents a wider variety of options in expressing their opinions. The perpendicular afforded the option of an "others (please specify)" category.

The five-point scale is based on the usage employed by Lee (1979 : Ch.5 p.14). All the scales were numbered 1-5, whereas only the words conveying the two extremes on the scale were used. Although this was intended to give the respondents more manoeuvring scope, in so far as they did not have to fit preconceived categories into the middle areas, it seems likely that the frame of reference could have varied from respondent to respondent.

In order to try to make the respondent think out each question, the numbering of the direction of the scale was alternated (Lee, 1979 : Ch.5 p.14), and so were the extremes (e.g. by positioning the positive pole at the right hand end in one question and transposing it to the left end of the scale in the following question).

The positive and negative poles were also alternated in the dichotomous questions. By doing this, it was hoped to counter, what Oppenheim (1966 : 85) calls the "halo-effect" of a respondent (i.e. one who scans a list, marking only one column without reading the questions).

As respondents have different frames of reference, weighting can never be assumed to be equal from one respondent to another. Therefore, a researcher needs to exercise caution, in so far as no firm assumptions can be made as to the extent of the intervals between the steps as they are unequal (Parten, 1950 : 188 ; Oppenheim, 1966 : 87). The numbers given do not have a numerical value (Oppenheim, 1966 : 87), but are provided to help the respondents. Despite these reservations, however, they can give a very rough assessment of weighting when analysing the data.

When a five-point scale was not used in the case of multiple-choice questions, an attempt was always made to avoid bias by covering all possible realistic alternatives (Parten, 1950:209) which were as mutually exclusive as possible (Young, 1956:190). At the same time, however, the alternatives were never given in a fixed order (Selltiz et al, 1959:569), such as the order in which an action is done or ranging the actions from the most desirable to the most undesirable. This method was employed because it was possible that the sequence of the alternatives could affect the respondent's choice, in so far as there is a tendency among respondents to give preference to either the first or the last item (Selltiz et al, 1959:570).

Too many alternatives were not given as respondents tend to favour a moderate course and to avoid extremes (Parten, 1950:189,211). To avoid bias by possible omissions (Selltiz et al, 1959:261) a category for "others (please specify)" was always provided to allow for unanticipated responses.

When seeking information about certain actions, a "filter" dichotomous question was posed (Moser, 1971:325), with instructions to proceed to a question following those concerned with this activity, if the activity did not occur in that particular institution (e.g. Question A.7).

The appearance of the questionnaire and the possible effect of its layout can have on a respondent is discussed by Parten (1950:158) and Line (1967:56-7), both of whom argue that a form which appears short is more likely to be answered than its opposite extreme. In order to make this study's questionnaire appear as short as possible, the text of the questionnaire was printed on both sides of the pages. The one sent to the head of the library or library service had six sheets on 12 pages, comprising 39 questions, and the one sent to the book selector also has six sheets, but on 11 pages, containing 34 questions. Other authors stress that length should not be the overriding factor, as a more important consideration is that the questionnaire should cover the subject adequately and that the techniques used would meet the needs of the study (Young, 1956:189; Moser & Kalton, 1971:263).

To facilitate coding, but also to improve the appearance and to help respondents, blocks along the right-hand side of the page were provided in which respondents were asked to place a cross in the box alongside the word, phrase or sentence which reflected their answer. (cf. Appendix VI).

#### 8.6.1.4 TESTING OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

A questionnaire is usually pretested before it is sent out to the chosen population by means of a pilot study. This is done, amongst other reasons, to see :

- (a) what the non-response is likely to be;
- (b) whether or not the method used in collecting the data will be suitable;
- and
- (c) whether or not the questionnaire was adequate (Moser & Kalton, 1971 : 48-50).

As it is necessary to use a similar, but non-identical, population in order to be aware of any undue antagonism to the proposed study (Parten, 1950 : 58), it was not possible to do a pilot study without inducing bias in the final response. The reason for this is that this study covered all the South African public libraries in which book selection is done on any large scale (cf. 8.1).

In order to obtain valuable comments on the questionnaire before sending it out, the draft questionnaire was given to a librarian who had been in charge of book selection in a public library or library service. As a result of the comments and criticisms received on the structure, wording and content, appropriate improvements to the questionnaire were made before posting it to the population.

The main changes effected were the following :

- (a) the conversion of open-ended questions into multiple-choice ones;
- (b) the provision of more five-point scales, giving more opportunity for weighting answers; and
- (c) the substitution of "which of" for "which one of" in the case of a series of actions to be taken, because the alternatives were not necessarily mutually exclusive, but instead represented a progression of actions.

• Despite these changes there is no doubt that the questionnaire was adversely affected by not having been pretested, as there is no substitute for a pilot study (Selltiz et al, 1959 : 550-1; Moser & Kalton, 1971 : 47-51).

#### 8.6.1.5 COMPLETION RATE

The problem which usually works against the use of a postal questionnaire is that the rate of non-response is high (Moser & Kalton, 1971:262) (cf.8.6). Line (1967:61) claims that a response of "over 80 per cent is very good" (incidentally the response was 89,3 per cent). There are factors which help increase the response rate. Some of which, taken from Moser and Kalton (1971:262-9), apply to this study, viz.:

- (a) the higher the education level of the population, the greater the likelihood of response (cf.8.6 & 8.6.2);
- (b) sending a covering letter (cf. reference to the letter and the use of instructions in 8.6.1) to take the place of an interview opening; and
- (c) the use of a follow-up letter (cf. Appendix V).

(Such a reminder was sent out three weeks (Line, 1967:60) after the initial questionnaire had been posted. This letter was again polite, urging non-respondents to cooperate. The initial covering letter and another copy of the questionnaire were also sent.)

Because there was such a small population, it was important to have a high response rate if the figures were to be at all meaningful.

#### 8.7 DATA PROCESSING

As the population surveyed was small, and the questionnaire not unduly lengthy, it was possible to process the data manually.

Provision had already been made in the questionnaire design for coding blocks which facilitated the reading of data (cf.8.6.1.3). When the data was transferred to a master sheet, it was verified by a second person.

When tabulating the data the total response to each question from the head of the library or library service and the book selector is given, as well as the response relating to the three variables of the provincial library services, large municipal autonomous public libraries and small municipal autonomous public libraries (cf. Appendix VI).

#### 8.8 ANALYSIS OF DATA

The analysis of data will be discussed in the following chapter, Chapter 9.

## CHAPTER 9. ANALYSIS OF DATA

### 9.1 TREATMENT OF DATA

This Chapter will concentrate on the interpretation of the data collected from the questionnaire (cf.8.6.1 & Appendix VI)\*sent to the 28 public librarians who made up the population of this study (cf.8.4.1). As mentioned in 8.5 the 14 public libraries and library systems in South Africa were divided into three categories, viz.:

- (a) the four provincial library services (PLS) of the Cape Province, Natal, the Orange Free State and the Transvaal;
- (b) the five autonomous large public libraries (LPL) of Cape Town, Durban, Johannesburg, Port Elizabeth and Pretoria; and
- (c) the five small autonomous public libraries (SPL) of East London, Germiston, Pietermaritzburg (i.e. Natal Society), Roodepoort and Springs.

One of the last five libraries failed to reply, resulting in a response rate per institutional category of 4,5 and 4 respectively. It should be added, though, that a selector from one of the provincial library services did not submit a reply. Therefore, the total response was 25 out of a possible 28 comprising 13 who answered Section A and 12 who answered Section B.

In view of the small population used for the investigation (cf.8.4.1), sophisticated methods of statistical manipulation were clearly not called for. For this reason, for example, percentages were not used in analysing the data, because these would tend to distort rather than elaborate or elucidate any statement. The population size, likewise, did not justify the use of significance tests (Line, 1967:93). Another reason why the data are presented in straight numerical form is that there was not always a one hundred per cent response to every question from the respondents. Furthermore, the size of the population militated against the validation of universalistic conclusions, making it possible to determine only general trends which might emerge from the data obtained in each section.

Most of the 25 librarians who did answer the questionnaire responded positively, many of these providing useful comments. 13 of the replies were received within the three weeks stipulated in the covering letter

\*Appendix VI includes the raw data as well as the data broken down into the three categories mentioned above.

(cf. Appendix IV), while the other 12 questionnaires were returned by the respondents during the course of the next four weeks, partly owing to their having received the first reminder letters (cf. 8.6.1.5 & Appendix V). It was, therefore, unnecessary to send second letters in these cases.

An important aspect with regard to the treatment of the data was the necessity, already mentioned in 8.6.2, of having to exclude Questions C1-11 from the analysis, because of the sparse response to most questions in this Section. For this reason it has been decided to use only the personal details and some of the comments given in this Section.

In retrospect, it would appear that a major weakness in the handling of Section C by the respondents could be attributed to a neglect on the part of the researcher of pretesting the relevant division of the questionnaire (cf. 8.6.1). However, as will be shown later, a similar weakness also affected the quality of the responses to questions in the other two Sections, although not nearly to the same extent.

## 9.2 PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

### 9.2.1 HEAD OF THE LIBRARY

Of the 11 (out of a possible 13) who had answered Section A, all but two occupied the top position in their library or library system (cf. Question C17). Of these two, one was a deputy librarian and one was a chief selector.

Only one of the 11 respondents was not a member of S.A.I.L.I.S. (cf. Question C18), and of these, eight out of nine head librarians were active members, in terms of having attended three or more meetings during 1979 (Question C19). Using this criterion the other two librarians were less active professionally.

Owing to the deficiencies in Section C, it was not possible to determine to any meaningful extent the attitudes of the respondents (cf. 8.2). Therefore, the findings of Fiske (1959: Table 35, p. 136), viz. that those librarians who were active members of their professional association were less likely to avoid purchasing controversial material, could not be

substantiated within the South African context.

Of the nine respondents who answered the question about their qualifications (Question C20), eight had B.A. degrees, English (3) and German (3) being the most common disciplines in which they had majored. Two of these respondents had honours degrees in the human sciences.

All nine who answered this Question were professionally qualified in terms of the S.A.I.L.I.S. definition<sup>\*</sup>. One had a B.Bibl. degree, two had B.Bibl. (Hons.) degrees, four had post-graduate diplomas in library and information science or librarianship, two the final diploma of the S.A.L.A., and one had an M.A. degree in librarianship. Four of them had received their professional education at the University of Pretoria. Another four had received their basic professional education at the universities of Cape Town, the Orange Free State, Stellenbosch and Potchefstroom respectively.

Seven of these nine had received these qualifications between 1960 and 1968. The other two had qualified prior to this.

### 9.2.2 BOOK SELECTOR

Of the nine (out of a possible 12) who answered Section C, eight were in charge of selection (Question C17).

Two (1 PLS and 1 SPL) out of the nine were not members of S.A.I.L.I.S. (Question C18), and these other seven were less active members than those who answered Section A (cf. 9.2.1), as only three (1 PLS, 1 LPL and 1 SPL) out of eight of the respondents to Question C19 had attended three or more meetings during 1979.

Eight out of the ten had B.A. degrees, English (5) and Afrikaans (4) being the most common major subjects. One respondent had a B.A.(Hons.) degree.

One of the respondents from a SPL had no professional qualifications in librarianship, but had a postgraduate teachers' diploma. (In total three out

<sup>\*</sup>Either the 4-year degree Baccalaureus Bibliothecologiae (B.Bibl.) or the postgraduate Higher Diploma in Library Science or Librarianship (S.A.L.A., 1979:13).

of 25 were in possession of this qualification). Among the other nine, two had B.Bibl. degrees, two B.Bibl.(Hons.), and seven had postgraduate diplomas in librarianship.

Three out of nine obtained their basic professional qualifications from the University of South Africa, two of them from the University of Cape Town, and the other four from the universities of Natal, the Orange Free State, Potchefstroom and Pretoria respectively.

The responding book selectors had less experience than those who had answered Section A, (i.e. chief librarians or their deputies), as eight of them had been awarded their basic professional qualifications since 1965, and five of these only since 1970. In this regard both Fiske (1959 : Table 21, p.129) and Busha (1972 : 148) found that the longer a librarian had been working in a library, the more likely he was to practise both intramural censorship and to succumb to external pressure, i.e. that a correlation had been established between duration of experience and a tendency to develop more conservative and compromising attitudes to constraints operating against the exercise of intellectual freedom in libraries, with the corollary that the opposite was manifest among librarians with limited experience.

No such inference can be drawn from the South African situation on the bases of this investigation, as age as such was not an isolated variable (cf. 8.5). Moreover, most respondents were assumed to be members of staff with many years' experience in view of their senior ranks in large libraries or library systems. This assumption proved to be correct, as only five of the 25 respondents had obtained their basic professional qualifications less than 10 years before the investigation (Question C20).

The small sample also precluded the possibility of determining any significant comparison between age, qualifications and active professional membership, except that the more experienced librarians were found to be more active professionally. This, however, could be attributed to role expectations relating to their position.

### 9.3 OBJECTIVES

In the earlier coverage of the literature it was argued that the objectives should in theory determine both the policy of the public library

(cf. 2.2.2; Chs. 3 & 4) and the principles of selection (cf. Ch. 5). The model chosen for use in the questionnaire was one which has found a wide measure of support from the library profession (cf. 3.2.4.3), and, therefore, was regarded as suitable for inclusion without explanation. This assumption seemed to have been reasonable, as only one respondent objected to its inclusion without definitions on the grounds of a special burden being placed on him/her to look up the reference given before being able to respond to the set of questions concerned. However, it needs to be conceded that this did not necessarily mean that there were some who did not care to comment, but were nevertheless critical of the model.

Questions A1, B4 and B5 were concerned with the overall objectives of every specific library or library service included in the investigation on the grounds that, as already mentioned, they provide the framework within which book selection is founded.

The response to Question A1 regarding the PLRG objectives (cf. 3.2.4.3) was such that culture, information and leisure were considered roughly equal in importance, whereas education appeared to have been thought of as less important, except in the case of the large public libraries (LPLs). Here, four out of the five institutions concerned regarded education as very important, whereas only one provincial library service (PLS) and one small public library (SPL) indicated so (cf. questionnaire in Appendix VI). This finding does not necessarily have any significance, however, because of the relatively unstandardised manner in which respondents reflect their relative weighting within a continuum of antithetical values along the given five-point scale (cf. 8.6.1.3).

The book selectors reflected a very similar pattern of relative importance in their response to Question B4 as was taken by the respondents to Section A and in their consideration of their library's objectives. In Question B5, where their own opinion was asked about the importance of the objectives, none of these was given special prominence by the respondents, as all four objectives were placed by most of the respondents (i.e. 9 out of 12) in the "very important" category. It was mainly the 5 PLSs which placed less emphasis on the importance of the objectives, and even here it could just be due to a relative perception of their interpretation of the five-point scale.

It would seem that the book selectors in general would like their libraries, in pursuance of the objectives, to give as much emphasis to education as they do to the other three (cf. Question A1). On the whole, their views reflected official policy fairly closely, suggesting that they do not differ in outlook from their chief librarians, except for their wish that all four objectives should be equally important in their public libraries.

In the South African context a possible implication of public libraries placing relatively less emphasis on the objective of education is that political works, (including less-favoured ideologies), would be excluded. This assumption appears to be substantiated to a certain extent by the fact that only four out of 11 respondents indicated that they received any complaints about the political content of books in the library or library system (cf. A12).

One reason that only a relatively few complaints about works of a political nature were reported, could be attributed to the fact that such works were not available for selection as a result of the imposition of legal censorship. However, there are still available in South Africa many un-banned political works covering the spectrum of political opinion which could be provided, thus suggesting some evidence in support of the assumption that book selection tends to extend into the realm of censorship in the case of politically sensitive material.

Objectives other than the four listed in Questions A1, B4 and B5 which were identified by the respondents, were research (three (2 PLS and 1 LPL) out of 25), bibliotherapy and preservation (1 LPL and 1 SPL respectively). Owing to the fact that these questions were multiple-choice ones (cf. 8.6.1.3 for its weaknesses), and that the question followed a specific model (cf. 3.2.4.3 & above), options other than these were not included, and therefore, it is probable that this could account for so few respondents not including any objectives other than the four given.

#### 9.4 POLICY

##### 9.4.1 GENERAL LIBRARY POLICY

This Section deals with the general policies in the libraries and library

systems investigated. (The specifics of book selection and the policies pertaining to selection are covered in 9.4.2 and 9.7).

As was shown in the literature, by having a written policy for both the general objectives of the service (Question A2) and those for book selection in particular (Question B1) (cf.5.6.1 & 7.5), libraries can facilitate and standardise decisions on 'controversial' materials, and a written policy can also serve as a means of dealing with complaints in a consistent fashion (cf.7.3).

It emerged from the investigation that six out of the 13 libraries (3 PLSs 1 LPL and 2 SPLs) had a written policy, each of which included a statement of its general objectives. Three of these provided a copy as requested. As a general conclusion it seems that the larger the organisation, the more likely there is to be a written policy on overall objectives, as respondents representing three out of four of the PLSs reported to have one, while only one LPL claimed to have compiled such a policy statement (cf. Question A2).

Another question dealing with policy was whether the library had one for weeding (Question A9). As already mentioned, this question is likely to have been eliminated in a pretest (cf.8.6.1), as it showed that 12 out of 13 libraries or library systems did have such a policy. Although weeding is an integral part of collection development (cf.5.6.3), it is not an activity which normally manifests itself as a form of censorship in public libraries. However, it seems that it could nevertheless be used as a surreptitious means of removing books from the open shelves to a reserve shelf (9.6), or even from the collection completely.

The usefulness to a public library of groups and individuals which would support it when extramural censorship attempts do take place has already been mentioned in 7.5. Question A10 was designed to determine whether public libraries had such an ally in their community in the form of a 'Friends of the Library'. (This, of course, did not apply to the PLSs). It was found that only one autonomous municipal public library, (a SPL), had such a support organisation.

#### 9.4.2 GENERAL BOOK SELECTION POLICY

In order to avoid ad hoc decisions in selection a policy is advisable,

especially a written one, for the sake of consistency. All but one of the 12 libraries or library systems gave some indication of a formal or informal book selection policy (Question B1). However, only four of these had a written policy, two of whom provided copies. Again, it was two out of the three PLSs which had a written policy, the other two being a LPL and a SPL respectively. Nevertheless, when asked their opinion regarding a written book selection policy for their library or library system, eight of the respondents considered it desirable that their library or library system should have one. It was mainly the SPLs (three out of four) who did not rate a written policy as being essential (Question B3).

One librarian among the latter group of respondents defended the absence of a written policy in the following words :

"our professional staff have fairly compatible ideas on the books needed to be purchased. I feel a written policy might be at times a hindrance - there is always an exception to a rule - and it would be unable to cover the unique problems that might occur because it would need to be too general. Besides which, it would need constant revision as social, educational and even political attitudes change."

These problems were examined in 5.6.1, and the consensus of opinion was that the advantages of having a written book selection policy outweigh the disadvantages.

Another selector from a PLS explained that there was "no policy, [as the head] alone selects books and seems to favour borrower demand and limits titles [to] large quantities of popular titles."

Respondents to Question B2.1 included such statements as the following when giving the book selection policy of their library or library service: "to meet the learning and reading needs of the community" or "to build a balanced bookstock". These were the two most common explanations of policy. Another more detailed one was "to keep an up-to-date selection of new publications; balancing demand against quality; to provide an adequate coverage of subject literature; and to replace old stock of lasting value or popularity, all within the limitations of the book vote". Three libraries did not state their library's policy, but its procedure for

selection instead. Most of those (six out of 11) who did express opinions about their policy, were content with it, two LPLs mentioning its flexibility. (Question B2.2).

## 9.5 COMPLAINTS

As was found in the literature there is general agreement among authors that the selection of certain books could generate complaints (cf. 7.3). Questions A11-16 tried to determine how the libraries and library systems investigated dealt with complaints, and, as a result, what possible effect their procedures had on selection.

11 out of 13 libraries reported that they had received complaints (Question A11). Of the two which did not receive complaints, one was a PLS in which complaints were handled at the local level and were, therefore, not the concern of this particular chief librarian, while the other was a SPL.

The number of complaints reported ranged from a few to scores, but most libraries, other than the PLSs, (who, naturally, because of their size would receive more), cited a figure of fewer than 10 per annum. This applied to the complaints received by the library as a whole, as well as by the librarian personally (Questions 11.2.1 & 11.2.2). As in Questions A1, B4 and B5, here again with Question A12, because no direct order of prominence was asked for, it cannot be concluded with any confidence in which 'controversial' areas the libraries receive most of their complaints.

The "sex and obscenity" category was the only one in which all libraries received some complaints. 10 out of 11 libraries indicated more weight for this category by placing their replies in columns 3 (1 PLS, 2 LPLs and 2 SPLs) and 4 (2 LPLs, 1 LPL and 2 SPLs).

"Profanity, blasphemy and swearing" was the next category in which the largest number of complaints were received, as eight out of 11 libraries recorded their replies in columns 3 (1 PLS, 2 LPLs and 2 SPLs) and 4 (2 PLSs and 1 SPL).

The fields in which the libraries reported having received relatively few complaints, (7 out of 11 in all three categories received none), viz.

politics, race, and religion, are usually dealt with in non-fictional works. The observation made about political works in 9.3 applies with equal force to race and religion. From the relatively few complaints received in these areas, it would seem that they did not feature prominently as 'controversial' topics in South Africa at the time of the inquiry. (It should be noted in passing that the model used in the questionnaire for Question A12 was based on one used by Fiske (1959) in an American study.)

One other aspect of complaints reported was related to the depiction of violence, but only by one library. It is probable that more librarians might have mentioned it if it had been included as a multiple-choice option (cf.8.6.1.3). However, as has been argued (cf.8.6.1.3), the value of the multiple-choice question outweighed its disadvantages. Also in this case, any weakness arising from the absence of proper pretesting (cf.8.6.1), may be countered by the submission that the Fiske model used may be regarded as a consensus one in a universal context.

Question A14 did not show any particular identifiable group in the community from whom complaints had been received. It was only among the three PLSs, (who answered this question), that any indication was given that the library staff were instigators of complaints about the books bought by their library service. Apart from a SPL who is reported to have received occasional complaints about the books bought for the library, the other six reported that their staff did not complain.

Complaints seem to be dealt with on an ad hoc basis, as only one (a LPL) out of 13 libraries and library systems had a written procedure to deal with this issue (Question A15).

All but one out of a possible 12, a librarian from a LPL, were opposed to the suggestion of S.A.I.L.I.S., as the organised professional body in South Africa, laying down guidelines for complaints (analogous to a Library Bill of Rights (cf. Appendix II for the A.L.A. document)). Two of them (a LPL and a SPL) even objected strongly to the idea of any professional autonomy being taken away from them.

## 9.6

RESTRICTIONS

The reactions by the respondents to complaints were in no way uniform. Six out of 11 respondents who answered Question A13 reported that they would remove books from the open shelves because of a complaint, although usually only after careful consideration.

It must be conceded, however, that this type of question poses a theoretical problem, whereas in practice a librarian may be confronted with a specific 'controversial' book to which, for complex reasons, he may react in a manner seemingly at variance with his general theoretical frame of reference. This was reflected to a certain extent in the replies as these included such statements as "remove when warranted"; "assess in terms of the book selection policy"; "depends on the book and the complaint". None of the three different types of public libraries was strongly for or against defending or removing a book.

It would seem, as a rule, that when a book is removed from the open shelves, it is put out of circulation, as only two out of 13 librarians indicated that they had 'controversial' books which were not on the open shelves (Question A17.1). Both these libraries attributed such restriction to the fact that these books had generated complaints (Question A17.2), and justified their action by pointing out that such books were still available for loan in their libraries (Question A17.3).

The loan of all materials in a library or library service seems to be limited to adults only, as seven out of 11 libraries restricted children from borrowing certain books (Question A18).

In response to the question as to what happens once a book which a library has on its shelves becomes banned for possession (Question A19), seven out of 13 libraries reported that they remove the book concerned to a safe place beyond the reach of users, while five libraries, (1 PLS, 2 LPLs and 2 SPLs), stated that they destroyed the book. One librarian from a SPL indicated that the legal position in South Africa dictated policy in this regard.

## 9.7 BOOK SELECTION

In 10 out of 13 libraries the final responsibility for book selection rested with the head of the library (Question A8) (cf. 5.6.3). In two of the others (1 PLS and 1 LPL), this responsibility was vested in the library committee, and in one (1 SPL) the responsibility was given to the librarian in charge of buying.

The task of selection was nearly always in the hands of professionals in the PLSs and LPLs (seven out of nine) doing the job full-time. The SPLs rely more on the professional librarians doing book selection on a part-time basis and they also make greater use of non-professionals (Question A6). Two out of 12 libraries (these were LPLs) used people other than those working in the library in the selection of books (Question A7).

As was shown in previous chapters, it is generally agreed that selection should reflect the reading needs of a particular community. The extent to which it meets this requirement depends on the library's attempts to determine such needs.

It was found (Question A3) that most libraries based their selection policy on requests submitted by staff and users (category A3.1), as 12 out of 13 libraries indicated their choice in the "always" column. The next most important category was A3.3 "from your knowledge of the community derived from your association with it". Here six out of 12 stated "always" (2 out of 3 PLSs, 3 LPLs and 1 SPL). Another five respondents recorded their answers in the column next to "always", a library from the LPL group was the only one not included among these five.

One of the chief factors affecting selection is the funds available (cf. 5.3.1). During times of economic recession, as is the case in the U.K. (cf. 3.2.4.4) and the U.S.A. (cf. 3.3.6.1) at present, funds are often cut, but as was discussed in 3.2.3.4, increased circulation figures have been used traditionally in pleas for more money. This practice, however, does not seem to be common in South Africa, as only one PLS and one LPL reported that their book budgets were determined to any significant extent by their circulation figures (Question A4).

Investigating the degree to which libraries were concerned with the issue of the provision of quality material as opposed to meeting manifest demand or providing a balance (cf. 5.5), it was found that there was no noticeable preference for any one principle in approach (Question B6), although six out of 12 did weight the provision of quality materials as "very important" (2 PLSs, 2 LPLs and 2 SPLs). These were the largest number of responses in the "very important" category as only four (2 PLSs and 2 LPLs) indicated their response against "demand" in this category, and three (1 PLS and 2 LPLs) against "balance". However, it should be noted that one PLS gave equal emphasis to all three principles, and one LPL regarded "quality" and "balance" as being equally important. The inability to determine the degree of emphasis more accurately may be ascribed to the fact that a weighting, rather than a rating, system was used in this instance (cf. 8.6.1.3).

The desire to provide quality material by many librarians seems to be balanced by their obligation to meet demand. This dichotomy was reflected in Question B7 to which seven out of 12 librarians replied that they tried to represent as many viewpoints as possible in the books they provided. The seven respondents were all five LPLs and two SPLs. The three PLSs fell into the other category of providing books with views acceptable to their communities. The latter approach would of necessity result in fewer 'controversial' books being bought.

Question B8 proved to be another example of those questions likely to have been eliminated by a pretest (cf. 8.6.1.4), as a result of its relating to a self-evident issue, since 11 out of 12 respondents recorded that they always took into account gaps in the collection. However, it is postulated that the one respondent from a LPL was possibly more honest by qualifying his/her reply and placing it in the "nearly always" category.

The actual selection of material, according to the survey, (Question B9), is done mainly on the basis of books received on approval. Nine out of 12 respondents regarded this method of selection as being "very important". This method was supplemented by formal or informal discussion among the staff (Category 9.4). Nine out of 11 respondents indicated that 80 per cent or more of their books were selected as a result

of a combination of these two methods (Question B10). Three libraries (2 LPLs and 1 PLS) identified "borrowers' requests" as a method of selection.

The response to Question B11 supported to a certain extent the findings that South African public librarians rely to a large measure on books on approval before selecting. This was shown by the respondents' reaction to 'controversial' materials being such that 11 out of 12 indicated that they would ask for such a book on approval first before purchasing it, even though it had received favourable reviews.

Caution about buying 'controversial' books was reflected again in Question B12 to which nine out of 10 respondents reported that they would wait and see if a book, considered potentially 'controversial' was banned before buying it. As a result, they are inevitably playing the role of censors, as their decisions in such cases become dependent on what they think might be viewed as grounds for banning by the Publications Committees.

The financial repercussions that a library suffers as a result of a book being banned were expressed by one of the respondents who echoed what many others may have thought, viz.:

"Such censorship as is practised by the professional staff in the library is directly related to the budget - one is reluctant to spend money on a book which is likely to be banned - the money, never enough, is better spent on something safer, so - wait and see."

This wariness appeared once more in the response to Question B14. After indicating that 11 out of 12 of them were always aware of a banning that has been removed from a book (Question B13), all 10 who had answered this question (i.e. B14) were prepared to buy such a book, although four of them expressed some reservations, such as "only if outstanding quality" (cf. the issue of double standards regarding different types of literature in 7.2), and "take into account author and subject as well as demand", i.e. a book is considered on its merits. However, this statement is contradictory, as taking into account the author and subject may override the merit of the book (cf. 5.2).

SOME OF THE COMMENTS ON CENSORSHIP

This Section will include some of the comments on censorship made by both those who answered Section A and those who answered Section B. In all, only eight out of 25 made any comments at all.

"Politics should not enter into a discussion on censorship" is a statement made by a respondent to Section A. However, this is a view which is refuted by the examination of literature on censorship in Chapter 6, in which it was argued that censorship is essentially a political tool to maintain the status quo (cf. 4.3.3.2). This respondent probably saw censorship only in terms of morals when he/she made this statement, thus seemingly disregarding the generally acknowledged belief that the purpose of censorship, especially in its South African application, is to control political ideas as well as moral standards (cf. 4.3.3.2). Green's comments about South African librarians and intellectual freedom are also of relevance here (cf. 4.4.4.3).

Only one respondent was explicitly critical of censorship in his/her comments, stating that "it is used to impose certain norms on the whole population. [Also,] it is based on the idea that the entire adult population is gullible and easily corrupted". (cf. 6.3.3.2 for a discussion of these points).

One librarian put forward the argument for censorship in the following terms, viz.:

"if violent, pornographic and inflammatory material is seen as a form of pollution the idea of censorship becomes more acceptable and what is being defended by anti-censors is not so much the citizen's right to choose as the pedlar's right to make a fast buck."

These arguments and their counter-claims were raised in 6.3.2, with special reference to the premise that commercial exploitation is not limited to pornographers, but is part of the capitalist system (e.g. the role of advertisers).

Another respondent wished to improve the system of censorship already in operation in South Africa at present by having experts make the

decisions on censorship.

It is interesting to note that the question as to whether or not public libraries should be exempted from the censorship laws (asked in Question C11) has become a practical reality since the questionnaire was completed. As mentioned in 5.6.1, the Directorate of Publications has given permission for public libraries to lend to users above the age of 18 a book which would normally have been banned, but has been exempted from absolute censorship because of its literary merit. Only four (1 head of a PLS, 1 head of a LPL, 1 book selector from a PLS, and 1 book selector from a SPL) out of 20 who replied to this question, expressed themselves in favour of the suggestion, while three respondents to Section B indicated that they were undecided on the issue (2 SPLs and 1 LPL).

If the newly introduced policy by the Directorate is continued it will be interesting, in the light of these findings, to see whether or not public libraries will tend to buy such books.\*

As far as 'controversial' subjects are concerned, two respondents (out of the eight) supported the principle of representing all sides of a subject, but within limits, as one of them stated that in his/her view "blatant and hysterical proselytising and propaganda have no place in the library."

## 9.9 CONCLUSION

The rationale for the empirical investigation as set out in Chapters 1 (cf.1.1) and 8 (cf.8.1) needs to be examined afresh to judge if it has been substantiated by the findings of the questionnaire after the data had been analysed as done above. The four purposes are the following :

(a) To identify the objectives within which book selection operates.

From the data collected it was found that the objectives given in the questionnaire were favourably received, as few alternative objectives were offered to those in the PLRG document. Of the 25 respondents 18 considered culture very important, 15 education, 19 information, and 17 leisure.

\*With regard to Sophie's choice, the manager of the distributing company told the researcher in December 1980 that only three libraries had ordered copies of this book.

A high proportion of the respondents, therefore, appeared to be in general agreement with the range of objectives cited. However, there was no clear indication of the relative importance of the four objectives, as this was not asked.

- (b) To determine how the librarians selected for the sample deal with complaints generated by the availability of books assumed to be 'controversial' by some.

Although most of the libraries received complaints, only one library had drawn up a written policy in this regard. Nevertheless, informal procedures would be in operation, which, one may expect, will inevitably result in inconsistencies. The lack of written policies, the apparent tendency to avoid politically sensitive material, and the caution with regard the purchasing of 'controversial' books all seem to imply attempts at rejecting books which may cause complaints. It would, therefore, appear that the possibility of complaints may be a major factor which is taken into account when libraries are selecting books.

- (c) To examine certain book selection practices, especially those concerning 'controversial' books.

Many 'controversial' books are filtered out by the suppliers even before they reach the library for selection, as most libraries select a high proportion of their books from those they receive on approval. 'Controversial' books are further avoided in order to minimise complaints. As most of the reading pertains to fiction, it is understandable that most of the complaints result from material which has sexual themes and uses profanities. The 'controversial' book also seems to be treated differently from the 'non-controversial' one during the selection process.

- (d) To ascertain whether the censorship of books is exercised as a result of factors within or without the library.

It seems that a certain amount of censorship is taking place both intramurally and extramurally, partly as a result of the effects of legal censorship. Statutory censorship appears to create a climate for library censorship (cf. Allain's comments to this effect in 7.2.1), and it could account also for the generally cautious approach of the respondents. Such a supposition, however, is difficult to prove beyond all doubt on the basis of the findings

of this study, as extraneous factors, such as librarians' self-image, as mentioned by Fiske (1959), could also play a part.

It should be noted, however, that the questionnaire was not constructed in such a way as to identify these factors precisely, thus limiting the scope of the findings in this respect.

From the above it would appear that it has not been possible to state categorically whether or not South African public librarians undertake censorship when selecting books. Nevertheless, in the concluding chapter (Chapter 10), the evidence gleaned jointly from the literature and from the data above will be brought together to see if any conclusions can be drawn regarding book selection and the role censorship plays in this process.

## CHAPTER 10. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This Chapter will attempt to assimilate, consolidate and synthesise some of the findings that have emerged from both the literature (covered in Chapters 2-7) and the analysis of the data gleaned from the questionnaire (Ch.9 & Appendix VI). This Chapter will also determine whether or not the hypotheses have been largely proved.

The purpose of the thesis was to ascertain whether or not there was a relationship between censorship and book selection, with particular reference to the situation in the public libraries of the U.K., the U.S.A. and the R.S.A. (cf. Ch.1 & end of this Chapter). In an attempt to discover whether or not there is such a relationship and, if so, to determine its extent, it was necessary to trace the background within which book selection takes place.

The emergence of the public library as a social institution (cf.2.2.1) was concurrent with the growth of civil liberties in the U.K. and the U.S.A. (cf.6.1). Therefore, with time, there emerged, as the professional norm, a commitment to intellectual freedom (as a relative rather than an absolute quality), and a concomitant opposition to censorship (likewise used in its relative sense) (cf.6.4.1). Because the latter placed barriers in the way of access to the record (cf.2.2.1), this was at variance with the desire of public libraries to realise fully their objectives of education and information.

There was general consensus that these two objectives, in addition to those of culture and leisure, are regarded as encompassing the overall aims of the public library in the U.K., the U.S.A. and the R.S.A. Book selection, as a matter of course, is governed by these objectives as well as the broader aims of the institution in which it occurs (cf.5.3.1). These four are regarded as the major current objectives, although all have been present in essence in public library aims from their inception. It should be acknowledged, however, that the relative emphasis on these objectives has varied, resulting in much debate as to which should take precedence. It is doubtful whether equal emphasis on all four objectives at all times is feasible in practice, because, as has been shown in 3.2.4.4; 3.3.6.1;

4.3.4.2 and 4.4.4.5, there need to be priorities among the objectives, unless the public library is to become the "hodgepodge" referred to by Molz (cf. 7.7).

The South African public librarians who answered the questionnaire seemed to regard the objective of education as being of somewhat lesser importance in relation to the other three. However, when expressing their own opinion, the responses recorded to Question B5 appeared to suggest a desire for an equal emphasis on all four objectives (cf. 9.3).

It follows that, if Malan's observation, among other similar statements in 4.3.4.2, is valid, the use by South Africans, (especially those in the white group), of the public libraries for mainly leisure-reading could account for education being regarded as relatively less important as an objective. There appears to be a measure of support for this supposition, even though it is to be noted that the evidence is based on the overt attitude of only one respondent - but representing a large provincial library service - who stated bluntly that his/her library service favours borrower demand, the consequence of which are manifest in the preference given to the acquisition of large quantities of popular titles (cf. Botha's accusation in this regard in 5.5.5 and 7.2.1). This supposition appears to be further strengthened by the fact that the majority of the complaints received by the sample were in the "sex and obscenity" and the "profanity, blasphemy and swearing" categories (cf. 9.5, relating to Question A12). The latter have been assumed throughout this thesis as being features, in particular, of modern fiction in which they are used as a means of conveying a more potent realism to readers than that of more 'innocuous' types of material.

It was argued in Chapter 5 that book selection, as the most important activity in a library, and particularly so of a public library (cf. 5.3.1), as well as being determined by the aims and objectives, is based on certain principles, viz. quality, demand or balance (cf. 5.5.1), which, it is submitted, are not necessarily mutually exclusive. It was found (cf. 5.5.6) that most libraries are genuinely concerned with intrinsic standards, while selecting in such a manner that they try to reconcile the dictates of public demand with the imperative of providing 'quality' material. The actual choice of principle and its mode of execution will depend on a librarian's

knowledge of his local community (cf. 5.3.4 & 5.3.4.1), as the crux of selection is to meet, by judicious means, as many of the expressed and unexpressed needs and demands of a given community a library is serving.

One of the ways of determining the needs of a community more accurately other than by observing it, is to make periodic surveys of the whole or a part of the community served (cf. 5.3.4.3). This method, regarded as generally effective in identifying both manifest and hidden user behaviour patterns, appears to have been employed sparingly by South African public librarians if cognisance is taken of the fact that as many as four out of the 13 responding librarians reported that they had never attempted such investigations in any form (Question A3.2). Their knowledge of their communities at this stage can, therefore, only be assumed to be based largely on unsubstantiated personal impressions of what their public wants. The stress on the demand principle inferred from the literature (cf. 5.5.5) appears to be substantiated to a certain extent from the response to the questionnaire, as there seems to be an emphasis on overt demand at the expense of devising and implementing policies for collection development (cf. 9.7).

It would seem that further evidence of lack of policy manifested itself in the finding that only four out of 12 libraries or library services have written book selection policies (cf. 9.4.2). The importance of such a document has been repeatedly stressed by authorities in the literature (cf. 5.6.1), especially as a tool for the in-service training of staff, and as a protective device against unwarranted censorship (cf. 7.5).

It was particularly in the area of censorship that the assumption that librarians, as collectors and disseminators of various forms of the media, would be unlikely to condone or practice the censorship of books, was exposed by such studies as those by Fiske (1959), Busha (1972), Thompson (1975) and Woods (1978).

Although librarians do not endorse or condemn the views expressed in the works they hold in their libraries (cf. 6.4.2.1) & 7.2), it was found that many authors expressed the belief that this was indeed the de facto position. Empirical studies in the U.K. and the U.S.A. had confirmed that public librarians tend to treat 'controversial' and 'non-controversial'

material in different ways (cf.7.2), i.e. displaying an inclination to avoid 'contentious' works despite their officially acknowledged responsibility to their public (cf.6.4.4.4 & 7.2), and as leaders in their community (cf.7.2), which, by implication, demands that they should be stimulating controversy and innovative thought as a primary goal (cf.7.2).

This differentiated treatment of 'controversial' material seems to be apparent as well in South Africa, as the responses to Questions B11, 12 and 14 showed a tendency for the librarians approached in the survey to be cautious in their handling of books on sensitive topics (cf.9.7).

This trend appears to support the findings from the literature that the legal climate, a fear of financial loss (cf.7.2.1), and the large measure of conservatism among the white population in South Africa contribute towards a wariness among many librarians to buy 'controversial' material.

This caution also seemed to be reflected in an apparent tendency to anticipate complaints by not selecting 'controversial' works (cf.7.3). The American studies by Fiske (1959) (cf.6.4.3.3) and Woods (1978) (cf.6.4.3.5) both indicated the extent of complaints received in the categories given in Question A12. Fiske (1959 : Table 10, p.123) found that by far the largest number of complaints received by public librarians was in the "sex/obscenity" category (44 per cent), followed by "politics" (16 per cent), "profanity" (12 per cent) and "race, religion" (8 per cent). Woods (1978 : Table VI, p.1563) recorded a similar pattern in regard to reasons cited by librarians for censorship attempts by either their public or themselves. Of the 15 categories (i.e. the reasons for applying censorship) given in his study, the first six, in order of priority, were "obscenity" (15,7 per cent), "political" (13,4 per cent), "sex and nudity" (12,9 per cent), "language" (12,7 per cent), "racism" (8,6 per cent) and "religious" (5,9 per cent).

Although, as a result of the necessarily limited population of librarians responsible for book selection policy in South African public libraries, the pattern of complaints received by these librarians cannot be meaningfully expressed in terms of percentages (cf.9.5), it was found that the order of priority for the different categories, although slightly different, coincided largely with Fiske's and Wood's findings. In the South African empirical survey the order was "sex and obscenity", "profanity, blasphemy and

swearing", (these two categories being the main areas of complaints (cf.9.5)), "political ideologies and viewpoints", "religion" and "race and race relations" respectively.

The relative unimportance of the last three seems somewhat surprising, as these three facets of life possibly receive more prominence in the everyday experiences of, particularly, the white people in South Africa than of the peoples of other Western countries. However, apart from the probable tendency to avoid such topics in selection, it may also be accounted for by the fact - as mentioned before - that there is a large measure of conservatism among the white population group, who at present benefit most from the public library services in relative and pure numerical terms (cf.4.3.4.1). Between 30 and 40 per cent of the white population uses the public libraries (cf.4.3.4.2), whereas the corresponding figure among the black groups is most likely very much lower, because of a lack of facilities and because their level of collective literacy remains very low (cf.4.4.4.3).

The relatively few complaints South African public libraries receive per annum, (usually fewer than 10 per library or library system), has resulted in only one library or library system having a form to record complaints (cf.9.5). The usefulness of such a document was pointed out in 7.3.1. The limited number of complaints is in itself likely to reflect an apparent cautious approach to the selection of material in sensitive areas (cf.9.7).

It would seem that the public librarians in South Africa tend to be guided in their book selection by the implicit and explicit dictates of the political and moral status quo, as more than half of the responding selectors chose to provide views acceptable to the majority of their community (cf.9.7). This was irrespective of the fact that circulation figures did not affect the book budget in most cases (cf.9.4.2). These library services or libraries were given a large measure of autonomy by their governing authorities, as, in all but three of them, the responsibility for what is selected rested with the head librarian (cf.5.6.3 & 9.7).

An aspect which may be regarded as a particular cause for concern, is the role that booksellers and publishers have in determining book selection patterns in South African public libraries through the provision of

books on approval, the most common method of selection by far (cf.9.7). It would seem that by these means the book trade dictate to a large extent what is eventually selected. It follows, therefore, that in so far as the book trade is aware of the fact that libraries and library services tend to be wary of 'controversial' material, it may be assumed to be reluctant to supply such works as a means of avoiding financial risk, and, concomitantly, of guaranteeing an optimum measure of commercial effectiveness in their dealings with public libraries in South Africa. (This inference was endorsed by a representative of a British publishing house in Cape Town in a private communication with the researcher in December 1980 (cf. also footnote in 9.8)).

Although the procedure of relegating books to the reserve shelf, as a mechanism designed to provide a compromise in dealing with complaints (cf.7.5), did not seem to be applied widely in South African public libraries, an inference based on the overall evidence could well suggest that 'contentious' works are, as a rule, sifted out during selection, thereby preventing potential complaints (cf.7.3).

South African librarians are forced by law to remove banned works from their shelves (cf.6.3.3.2 & 6.4.4.3). Although two of the libraries or library systems had the right to hold banned works, (one of these being a copyright library), which means that, if even when they had works which were banned for possession, more than half of the respondents found the idea of destroying such books abhorrent. Instead of destroying a book in question, they compromised by putting it in a safe place (cf.9.4.2).

With regard to the question of censorship, it was argued in 6.1 that such procedures constitutes a social phenomenon instituted as a means of maintaining social stability. In Western democratic countries adult censorship is regarded by many as an anathema, being in essence undemocratic (Katz, 1980:319). The emphasis in these countries is on individual freedom, but even here some sort of control manifests itself, as the idea of absolute freedom is merely an abstraction.

Society tries to balance freedom and control in such a manner that individuals may have the freedom to express themselves, but at the same time such freedom must not endanger society as a whole. The public

library as a social institution (cf.2.2.1) will reflect these social tensions in its aims and objectives (cf.2.2.2), and, in particular, in its attitude to intellectual freedom (cf.6.4). The tensions within the public library, as a matter of course, cannot be resolved until this has become a feature of society at large. As Bekker (1976 a) has observed, the librarian has to balance intellectual freedom with a sense of social responsibility. However, as a social institution concerned with the dissemination of literature of certain intrinsic standards, the public library, as the literature has shown (cf.4.4 ff. & 7.2), should be an upholder of intellectual freedom, always realising, as suggested before, that this is a relative term related to the society to which it is being applied. This idea has been corroborated by Carter et al, who suggest that it is the librarian's "moral responsibility to use the force of the institution to help preserve free access to reliable and unbiased information." (Carter et al, 1974:187).

The ideal of librarians is to be impartial and neutral (cf.6.4.3.5), although this has even been questioned (cf.7.2). Consequently, in any concrete situation, ideals are tempered by the consideration that selection of necessity has to be geared to the perceived needs of a specific community. In the process the librarian will, in terms of his professional imperative, try to perform his duties, unshackled by any ideology, as objectively and impartially as possible. However, any selection involves personal decisions (cf.7.3) which, as a result of individual predispositions or prejudices, could result in abject censorship. None the less, as Swan (1979) has argued, although librarians might be censors de facto, the first imperative is that they need to be aware of this reality, always being consciously prepared to oppose censorship in its wider implications (cf.7.7).

The question of intellectual freedom in libraries remains an unresolved dilemma on both the personal and the professional level (cf.6.4.4.4). The professional response in the three countries covered in this thesis has varied because of their respective cultural and social differences. These differences, as a natural consequence of relative degrees of socio-cultural complexities, are much less marked between the U.K. and the U.S.A. on the one hand, than between the R.S.A. and the other two on the other. The A.L.A., since 1939, has been unequivocal in its stand on intellectual

freedom, while in the U.K. the L.A. has taken a less firm stand (cf. 6.4.1), and in the R.S.A. the S.A.L.A. (now the S.A.I.L.I.S.) has generally either vacillated or compromised, except for a short period in the 1950s (cf. 6.4.4.2).

Allan Pratt, in his introduction to Busha (1972), has seen a scientific justification for librarians upholding the idea of intellectual freedom in Abraham Maslow's theory of humanistic psychology. (Maslow's hierarchy of needs was used by Totterdell (1978:10) as a basis for explaining the emergence of the public library in the 19th century). Maslow, according to Pratt, stresses "[the] humanistic arguments from Plato to the present day, which emphasize the importance of spontaneity, liberty and the uniqueness of each individual; ...". As a result of psychological investigations Maslow demonstrated that "given the opportunity to choose freely, people will choose wisely, becoming better persons - and furthermore... when denied these choices, people become neurotic and unwell... Some people may make poor choices, but the ability to choose, rightly or wrongly, is essential for human growth." (Pratt, in Busha, 1972:17).

This does not necessarily represent a consensus opinion, but possibly reflects the view held by many who support the concept of intellectual freedom. It also, once more (cf. 5.3.4.2), emphasises the interdisciplinary role of the social sciences, of which librarianship may be considered part. However, the social sciences at present still have shaky foundations, thus resulting in a lack of general agreement as to how a library can best serve its public, i.e. what priorities to follow and by what means to achieve them (Bekker, 1976a:11-2). This is reflected in the divergent views on the public library's aims and objectives (cf. Chs. 3 & 4).

It would appear that there are strong indications that South African public librarians are no more immune from censorship while undertaking selection than their counterparts in the U.K. and the U.S.A. It was not possible to prove this beyond doubt, however, because of the exploratory nature of the study.

It is suggested in passing that much more research is required to determine South African librarians' current attitudes to censorship and intellectual freedom in a definitive manner. A study of such a nature could be conducted effectively along the lines of Busha's (1972) investigation. More importantly, there seems to be an urgent need for an inquiry

based on the same objectives as Fiske's (1959) study in California (U.S.A.). An investigation of this kind could well be conducted by means of interviewing techniques in an attempt at testing the presumed interrelatedness between book selection and censorship on a sound empirical basis.

Finally, it is necessary to assess to what extent the accuracy of the hypotheses have been proved. From the synthesis, as presented above and in the previous chapters, it would appear that subhypothesis (a), viz. that the aims and objectives of the public library determine the framework within which book selection takes place, seems to have been verified, as selection was acknowledged implicitly as an activity that cannot be undertaken in a vacuum, being dependent on a particular public library's aims and objectives.

Similarly, subhypothesis (b), viz. that libraries have been and will continue to be one of the major targets of censors because literary censorship is as old as the written word, can be considered to have been established beyond doubt, as official literary censorship on a legal basis is in operation at present in South Africa, thereby exercising a concomitant effect on public libraries, and, furthermore, that extralegal censorship occurs both intramurally (i.e. by librarians) and extramurally (i.e. by the public, either as individuals or as representatives of groups) in the public libraries of the U.K., the U.S.A. and South Africa.

With regard to the main hypothesis, viz. that book selection and censorship of necessity are indivisible activities in public libraries, thus reinforcing the supposition that there is an inherent interrelatedness between the two, it has been argued that the assumptions of book selection and censorship are different, in that selectors select or reject books as a means of positively fulfilling the needs of a particular community, whereas censors reject books first and foremost because they are believed to contain something 'bad'. However, it appears that since selection or rejection constitutes a subjective process, (i.e. presupposing that librarians are essentially unable to release themselves from the general dictates of their peculiar social and cultural backgrounds), their unavoidably biased decisions of necessity culminate in forms of censorship.

Censorship in public libraries, therefore, often begins during selection. However, such forms of censorship are not limited to selection, but

are continued in other actions by librarians, such as removing books from the open shelves in response to complaints. All selectors, it is argued, may censor at some time during their normal activities, but this does not necessarily mean that all selectors support censorship in principle. (This paradox was discussed in 7.7).

In conclusion, then, it can be claimed with some certainty that there is an interrelatedness between book selection and censorship.

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## APPENDIX I

### CENSORSHIP : LIBRARY ASSOCIATION STATEMENT

The function of a library service is to provide, so far as resources allow, all books, periodicals, etc., other than the trivial, in which its readers claim legitimate interest. In determining what is a legitimate interest the librarian can safely rely upon one guide only - the law of the land. If the publication of such material has not incurred penalties under the law it should not be excluded from libraries on any moral, political, religious or racial ground alone, to satisfy any sectional interest. The public are entitled to rely upon libraries for access to information and enlightenment upon every field of human experience and activity. Those who provide library services should not restrict this access except by standards which are endorsed by law.

Adopted by the Council of the L.A., May 1963.

## APPENDIX II

### LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS

The Council of the American Library Association reaffirms its belief in the following basic policies which should govern the services of all libraries.

1. As a responsibility of library service, books and other library materials selected should be chosen for values of interest, information and enlightenment of all the people of the community. In no case should library materials be excluded because of the race or nationality or the social, political, or religious views of the authors.

2. Libraries should provide books and other materials presenting all points of view concerning the problems and issues of our times; no library materials should be proscribed or removed from libraries because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.

3. Censorship should be challenged by libraries in the maintenance of their responsibility to provide public information and enlightenment.

4. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgment of free expression and free access to ideas.

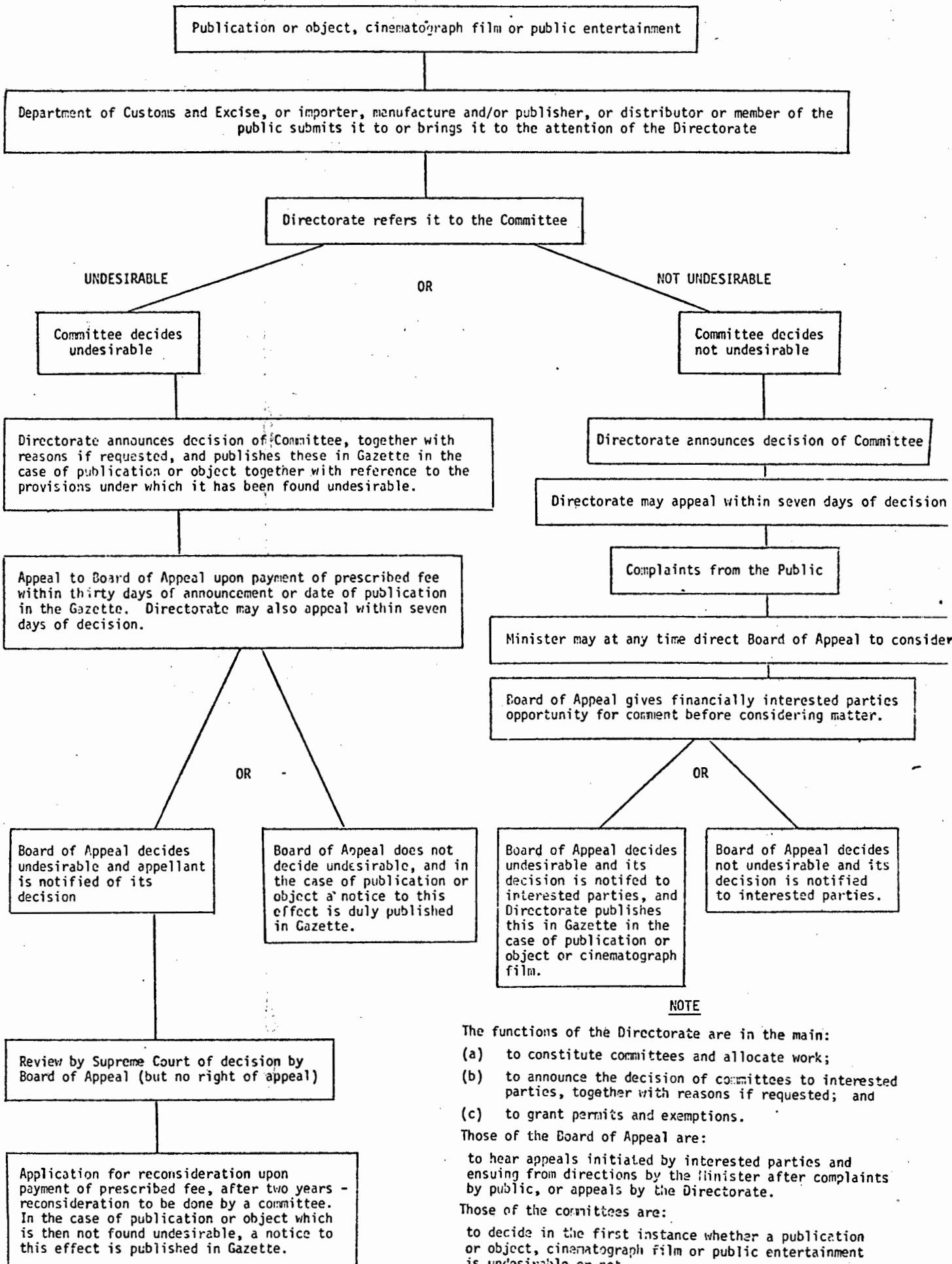
5. The rights of an individual to the use of a library should not be denied or abridged because of his age, race, religion, national origins or social or political views.

6. As an institution of education for democratic living, the library should welcome the use of its meeting rooms for socially useful and cultural activities and discussion of current public questions. Such meeting places should be available on equal terms to all groups in the community regardless of the beliefs and affiliations of their members, provided that the meetings be open to the public.

Adopted 18 June 1948. Amended 2 February 1961, and 27 June 1967, by the A.L.A. Council.

### APPENDIX III

Set out hereunder is a diagram which shows how the system of control operates:



**NOTE**

The functions of the Directorate are in the main:

- (a) to constitute committees and allocate work;
- (b) to announce the decision of committees to interested parties, together with reasons if requested; and
- (c) to grant permits and exemptions.

Those of the Board of Appeal are:

- to hear appeals initiated by interested parties and ensuing from directions by the Minister after complaints by public, or appeals by the Directorate.

Those of the committees are:

- to decide in the first instance whether a publication or object, cinematograph film or public entertainment is undesirable or not.

APPENDIX IV

6 Riebeeck  
Acton Road  
Rondebosch  
7700  
1 May, 1980.

Dear

Confidential

As you know our profession in South Africa is still very young therefore research is so important in enabling us to improve the day to day running of our libraries.

The book selection process in our public libraries has received comparatively little attention in terms of research and publication. I am doing research in this area under the supervision of Professor J.G. Kesting at the University of Cape Town.

Your knowledge and experience in libraries will be of great value in assisting us to understand better the book selection process.

As you will know the reliability of the research findings is dependent on the degree of your co-operation. It would be much appreciated if you would complete the attached questionnaire, which should not occupy too much of your time. All replies will be treated in the strictest confidence and the anonymity of both the individual and their institutions will be safeguarded. Your honest response to the questions would be greatly valued.

Please give sections B and C of the questionnaire and also convey the contents of this letter to the person next in seniority responsible for book selection.

For your convenience there is attached two self-addressed stamped envelopes in which to return each set of questionnaires as soon as you have been able to complete it. However in order to allow enough time for the processing of responses an early return of the questionnaires i.e. before 23 May 1980 will be very helpful.

Thank you for the courtesy of your assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Digby Sales

SECTION A : HEAD OF THE LIBRARY

Code:

1. Please indicate the importance of the following objectives\* to your library:

very important of no importance

- 1.1 Culture
- 1.2 Education
- 1.3 Information
- 1.4 Leisure
- 1.5 Others (please specify)

	1	2	3	4	5
P 4 } L 4 } S 2 } 10	P 07 } L 1 } S 05 } 1	P 07 } L 0 } S 13 } 1	P 07 } L 0 } S 13 } 1	P 07 } L 0 } S 13 } 1	P 07 } L 0 } S 13 } 1
P 17 } L 4 } S 18 } 6	P 17 } L 1 } S 15 } 3	P 2 } L 0 } S 2 } 4	P 07 } L 0 } S 13 } 1	P 07 } L 0 } S 13 } 1	P 07 } L 0 } S 13 } 1
P 3 } L 5 } S 3 } 9	P 17 } L 0 } S 23 } 3	P 07 } L 0 } S 13 } 1	P 07 } L 0 } S 13 } 1	P 07 } L 0 } S 13 } 1	P 07 } L 0 } S 13 } 1
P 3 } L 4 } S 15 } 8	P 17 } L 1 } S 24 } 4	P 07 } L 0 } S 13 } 1	P 07 } L 0 } S 13 } 1	P 07 } L 0 } S 13 } 1	P 07 } L 0 } S 13 } 1
P 07 } L 1 } S 03 } 1	P 07 } L 0 } S 13 } 1	P 07 } L 0 } S 13 } 1	P 07 } L 0 } S 13 } 1	P 07 } L 0 } S 13 } 1	P 07 } L 0 } S 13 } 1
P 07 } L 1 } S 03 } 1	P 07 } L 0 } S 13 } 1	P 07 } L 0 } S 13 } 1	P 07 } L 0 } S 13 } 1	P 07 } L 0 } S 13 } 1	P 07 } L 0 } S 13 } 1

- 1.5.1 Research
- 1.5.2 Bibliotherapy
- 1.5.3

\*cf. LIBRARY ASSOCIATION. Public library aims and objectives. Library Association Record, Vol.73, no. 12, December 1971, p. 233-4.

2. Has your library specific written objectives?

NO	YES
P 1 } L 5 } S 2 } 8	P 3 } L 3 } S 2 } 5

- 2.1
- 2.2 If yes, it would be appreciated if a copy could be enclosed with your reply.

3. Please indicate from the following, the methods your library uses to determine the needs of its community:

always never

- 3.1 By analysing requests submitted by staff and users
- 3.2 By doing surveys of the community
- 3.3 From your knowledge of the community derived from your association with it
- 3.4 By checking how many times a book has been issued
- 3.5 Other methods (please specify)
  - 3.5.1 Conversation with borrowers
  - 3.5.2 Knowledge of bookstock related to community.
  - 3.5.3

	1	2	3	4	5
P 4 } L 5 } S 3 } 12	P 07 } L 0 } S 13 } 1	P 07 } L 0 } S 13 } 1	P 07 } L 0 } S 13 } 1	P 07 } L 0 } S 13 } 1	P 07 } L 0 } S 13 } 1
P 07 } L 0 } S 13 } 1	P 07 } L 0 } S 13 } 1	P 2 } L 1 } S 03 } 3	P 2 } L 1 } S 03 } 3	P 2 } L 1 } S 03 } 3	P 2 } L 1 } S 03 } 3
P 2 } L 3 } S 15 } 6	P 17 } L 1 } S 35 } 5	P 07 } L 1 } S 03 } 1	P 07 } L 0 } S 13 } 1	P 07 } L 0 } S 13 } 1	P 07 } L 0 } S 13 } 1
P 07 } L 1 } S 03 } 1	P 17 } L 2 } S 13 } 4	P 17 } L 2 } S 13 } 4	P 17 } L 0 } S 2 } 3	P 17 } L 0 } S 2 } 3	P 17 } L 0 } S 2 } 3
P 07 } L 0 } S 13 } 1	P 07 } L 1 } S 03 } 1	P 07 } L 0 } S 13 } 1	P 07 } L 0 } S 13 } 1	P 07 } L 0 } S 13 } 1	P 07 } L 0 } S 13 } 1
P 07 } L 0 } S 13 } 1	P 07 } L 0 } S 13 } 1	P 07 } L 0 } S 13 } 1	P 07 } L 0 } S 13 } 1	P 07 } L 0 } S 13 } 1	P 07 } L 0 } S 13 } 1

4. Does the controlling authority of the library require an increase in the circulation of books as a prerequisite for increasing the amount of money allocated for buying books?

Never			Always		
1	2	3	4	5	
P 37	P 0	P 17	P 0	P 0	
L 4	L 0	L 12	L 0	L 0	
S 4	S 0	S 0	S 0	S 0	

4.1

5. Please indicate the number of staff employed full time in your library:

5.1 Total number of staff

5.2 Professionally qualified librarians\*

\*i.e. a minimum qualification of a four year degree or a postgraduate diploma in library and information science or its recognised equivalent.

* P 467	} 1684
L 1008	
S 209	
* P 131	} 325
L 162	
S 32	

\* One PLS did not answer

6. How many members of your staff are involved in the selection of books:

6.1 Professionals full-time

6.2 Professionals part-time

6.3 Non-professionals full-time

6.4 Non-professionals part-time

+ P 26	} 41
L 5	
S 10	
+ P 23	} 78
L 49	
S 6	
+ P 2	} 7
L 0	
S 5	
+ P 0	} 9
L 1	
S 8	

7. Are any people other than staff involved in the selection of books?

+ One LPL did not answer

7.1

7.2 If no, please do question 8; if yes, please indicate which of the following:

7.2.1 A committee of laymen drawn from the community

7.2.2 A committee of language and subject specialists drawn from the community

7.2.3 A committee made up of laymen and specialists

7.2.4 A committee consisting of members of the controlling body

7.2.5 Others (please specify)

7.2.5.1 Language specialist (ex staff)

7.2.5.2

7.2.5.3

YES	NO
P 0	P 4
L 0	L 3
S 2	S 11

P	} 0
L	
S	
P	} 0
L	
S	
P 0	} 1
L 1	
S 0	
P	} 0
L	
S	
P 0	} 1
L 1	
S 0	

8. Who has the final responsibility for what is bought by the library?

	<u>Head librarian</u>	<u>Others</u>
8.1	P 3 L 4 S 3 } 10	1 1 1 } 3

9. Do you have a general policy for the regular weeding of your collection?

9.1

NO	YES
P 0 L 1 S 1 } 1	P 4 L 4 S 3 } 12

10. Does your library have a 'Friends of the Library' society?

10.1

YES	NO
L 0 S 1 } 1	L 5 S 3 } 8

\* N/A to PLSS

11. Do you receive complaints about books in the library?

11.1

NO	YES
L 0 S 2 } 2	L 3 S 3 } 11

11.2 If no, please do question 17; if yes, please indicate roughly how many complaints are received annually:

11.2.1 By you

11.2.2 By the library as a whole

3 - 15 usually < 10
< 10 - ± 00

12. Please indicate from which of the following broad categories\* you receive complaints during the course of a year:

12.1 Political ideologies and viewpoints

12.2 Profanity, blasphemy and swearing

12.3 Race and race relations

12.4 Religion

12.5 Sex and obscenity

12.6 Others (please specify)

12.6.1 Violence

12.6.2

12.6.3

	None				
	1	2	3	4	All 5
12.1	P 3 L 3 S 7 } 13	P 0 L 1 S 1 } 2	P 2 L 2 S 3 } 5	P 0 L 0 S 0 } 0	P 0 L 0 S 0 } 0
12.2	P 0 L 1 S 0 } 1	P 0 L 2 S 0 } 2	P 1 L 2 S 3 } 5	P 2 L 1 S 3 } 5	P 0 L 0 S 0 } 0
12.3	P 2 L 1 S 7 } 10	P 1 L 2 S 2 } 3	P 0 L 1 S 0 } 1	P 0 L 0 S 0 } 0	P 0 L 0 S 0 } 0
12.4	P 1 L 2 S 7 } 10	P 0 L 1 S 2 } 3	P 1 L 2 S 0 } 3	P 0 L 0 S 0 } 0	P 0 L 0 S 0 } 0
12.5	P 4 L 2 S 7 } 13	P 0 L 1 S 2 } 3	P 1 L 2 S 0 } 3	P 0 L 0 S 0 } 0	P 0 L 0 S 0 } 0
12.6	P 0 L 0 S 0 } 0	P 0 L 0 S 1 } 1	P 1 L 3 S 5 } 9	P 2 L 3 S 5 } 10	P 0 L 0 S 0 } 0
12.6.1	P 0 L 0 S 0 } 0	P 0 L 0 S 0 } 0	P 0 L 1 S 1 } 2	P 0 L 0 S 0 } 0	P 0 L 0 S 0 } 0
12.6.2					
12.6.3					

\*Adapted from FISKE, Majorie Book selection and censorship. Berkley: University of California Press, 1960, p. 123.

13. When a complaint about a book is referred to you, which one of the following actions do you take?

- 13.1 You defend why it was bought, but remove it to a reserve collection to avoid further complaints
- 13.2 You defend why it was bought and why it should be kept on the open shelves
- 13.3 You satisfy the complainant by removing the book from the open shelves to a reserve collection
- 13.4 Others (please specify)
  - 13.4.1 Depends on the book in relation to the
  - 13.4.2 complaint and the book selection policy
  - 13.4.3

P0 } L1 } 1 S0 }
P3 } L2 } 6 S1 }
P0 } L2 } 4 S2 }

14. Please indicate the extent of the complaints you receive from the following groups of people:

- 14.1 Church people
- 14.2 Library staff
- 14.3 Local politicians
- 14.4 Parents/Grandparents
- 14.5 Teachers
- 14.6 Users who find books they consider objectionable
- 14.7 Others (please specify)
  - 14.7.1 Others
  - 14.7.2
  - 14.7.3

	All				
	1	2	3	4	5
14.1 Church people	P0 } L1 } 0	P0 } L1 } 1	P0 } L1 } 0	P0 } L1 } 1	P3 } L4 } S8 } 8
14.2 Library staff	P0 } L1 } 0	P0 } L1 } 0	P3 } L3 } S3 } 3	P0 } L1 } 1	P4 } L6 } S2 } 6
14.3 Local politicians	P0 } L1 } 0	P0 } L1 } 0	P0 } L1 } 0	P0 } L1 } 2	P2 } L8 } S8 } 8
14.4 Parents/Grandparents	P0 } L1 } 0	P0 } L1 } 1	P2 } L4 } 4	P0 } L1 } 1	P0 } L2 } S4 } 4
14.5 Teachers	P0 } L1 } 0	P0 } L1 } 1	P0 } L1 } 1	P0 } L1 } 1	P2 } L7 } S7 } 7
14.6 Users who find books they consider objectionable	P0 } L2 } S2 } 4	P1 } L1 } S2 } 2	P1 } L1 } S2 } 2	P1 } L0 } S1 } 1	P0 } L0 } S1 } 1
14.7 Others (please specify)	P0 } L1 } 0	P0 } L1 } 0	P0 } L1 } 1	P0 } L1 } 0	P0 } L1 } 0
14.7.1 Others					
14.7.2					
14.7.3					

15. Is there a written procedure to deal with complaints about books?

- 15.1
- 15.2 If yes, it would be appreciated if a copy could be enclosed with your reply.

YES	NO
P0 } L1 } S1 } 1	P4 } L4 } S4 } 12

APPENDIX V

6 Riebeeck  
Acton Road  
Rondebosch  
7700  
23 May, 1980.

Dear

All of us never seem to have enough time to do all that is required and expected of us. Although those little extra things receive our best intentions we are just so busy that we do not get round to them.

From the questionnaire which reached you - I hope - about three weeks ago, I have had no reply. Perhaps you mislaid it or it got lost in the post or any one of many possibilities could have happened.

In any event I am enclosing another copy of the questionnaire. I am sure you will try and find the short time needed to fill it in and return it. Most of them have been returned. I would like to get them all back. Will you help?

Thank you for your kindness which I much appreciate.

Yours sincerely,

Digby Sales

## APPENDIX VI

### C O N F I D E N T I A L

Code:

Date:

#### BOOK SELECTION IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES

This study is being performed as part of the work towards an M.A. degree in Librarianship at the University of Cape Town. Through this research we are hoping to understand better the book selection process and the opinions of librarians concerning this process. All information collected will be treated confidentially. Neither the names of individuals nor institutions will be identified in the thesis.

---

#### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Sections A and C are to be answered by the head of the library or the deputy.
2. Sections B and C are to be answered by the person responsible for book selection. If this should be the same person who answered section A, then it should be answered by the person next in seniority who is involved with book selection.
3. The term "book" or "books" will be used consistently throughout the questionnaire to mean book or books that your library considers it must have.
4. The term "library" will be used consistently throughout the questionnaire to mean either an autonomous urban public library or a provincial library service whichever one applies in your case.
5. Please answer the questions in the order that they appear.
6. Unless otherwise instructed, please make a cross in the box next to the word, phrase or sentence which reflects your answer.
7. Many questions provide for not just a positive or negative answer, but also give you the opportunity to indicate where you stand along a FIVE point scale.

16. Would it help you in dealing with complaints you receive about books if the South African Institute for Librarianship and Information Science laid down guidelines?

NO	YES
P 4 } 11 L 4 } S 3 }	P 0 } 1 L 0 } S 0 }

16.1

17. Does your library have books which are controversial in terms of the broad categories specified in question 12.1-12.6 which are not on the open shelves?

YES	NO
P 0 } 3 L 0 } S 0 }	P 4 } 10 L 4 } S 3 }

17.1

17.2 If no, please do question 18; if yes for which of the following reasons are they not on the open shelves?

17.2.1 Because they are stolen or defaced

17.2.2 Because they generate complaints

17.2.3 Because you can see to it that they are not given to unsuitable people

17.2.4 Others (please specify)

17.2.4.1 Banned

17.2.4.2

17.2.4.3

Never Always

	1	2	3	4	5				
17.2.1	P 0 } 1 L 0 } S 1 }	P 0 } 1 L 1 } S 0 }	P 0 } 0 L 0 } S 0 }	P 0 } 0 L 0 } S 0 }	P 0 } 0 L 0 } S 0 }				
17.2.2	P 0 } 1 L 0 } S 1 }	P 0 } 1 L 0 } S 0 }	P 0 } 1 L 0 } S 0 }	P 0 } 0 L 0 } S 0 }	P 0 } 0 L 0 } S 0 }				
17.2.3	P 0 } 1 L 0 } S 1 }	P 0 } 0 L 0 } S 0 }	P 0 } 0 L 0 } S 0 }	P 0 } 0 L 0 } S 0 }	P 0 } 0 L 0 } S 0 }				
17.2.4	P 0 } 0 L 0 } S 0 }	P 0 } 0 L 0 } S 0 }	P 0 } 0 L 0 } S 0 }	P 0 } 1 L 0 } S 1 }	P 0 } 0 L 0 } S 0 }				
17.2.4.1									
17.2.4.2									
17.2.4.3									
<table border="1" style="width: 100%;"> <thead> <tr> <th>NO</th> <th>YES</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>P 0 } 0 L 0 } S 0 }</td> <td>P 0 } 3 L 0 } S 3 }</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>						NO	YES	P 0 } 0 L 0 } S 0 }	P 0 } 3 L 0 } S 3 }
NO	YES								
P 0 } 0 L 0 } S 0 }	P 0 } 3 L 0 } S 3 }								

17.3 If yes, are these books in a reserve collection available for loan?

18. Please indicate if your library prohibits the loan of certain types of books to any of the following

groups of users:

18.1 Children

18.2 Young adults

18.3 Adults

YES	NO
P 2 } 7 L 3 } S 2 }	P 2 } 4 L 1 } S 1 }
P 0 } 1 L 0 } S 0 }	P 4 } 10 L 3 } S 3 }
P 0 } 0 L 0 } S 0 }	P 4 } 10 L 3 } S 3 }

19. When a book is banned both for possession and for distribution it is the policy of your library:

19.1 To destroy the book and the catalogue cards

19.2 To remove the book and catalogue cards to a safe place

19.3 To remove the book to a safe place and stamp the catalogue cards 'banned'

19.4 To ignore the banning as the library staff have better things to do than pull out banned publications

19.5 Others (please specify)

19.5.1 To obey the law

19.5.2

19.5.3

P L S	1 2 2	} 5
P L S	0 2 0	} 2
P L S	3 1 1	} 5
P L S		} 0
P L S	0 0 1	} 1

SECTION B : BOOK SELECTION

1. Does your library have a written book selection policy?

Code:

NO	YES
P L S 4 3 } 8	P L S 2 1 } 4

1.1

2. Book selection policies of your library.

2.1 Please briefly state what the policy in your

library is for the selection of books: (If insufficient space, please answer on a separate sheet of paper)

2.2 Please give your opinion of its good and/or bad

points: (If insufficient space, please answer on a separate sheet of paper)

3. Do you think a library should have a written book selection policy?

YES	NO
P L S 3 4 } 8	P L S 0 1 } 4

3.1

4. Please indicate the importance of the following objectives\* to your library:

very important      of no importance

4.1 Culture

4.2 Education

4.3 Information

4.4 Leisure

4.5 Others (please specify)

4.5.1 Preservation

4.5.2 Research

4.5.3

	1	2	3	4	5
4.1 Culture	P L S 2 4 } 8	P L S 0 1 } 2	P L S 0 0 } 1	P L S 0 1 } 1	P L S 0 0 } 0
4.2 Education	P L S 1 3 } 6	P L S 1 2 } 4	P L S 0 1 } 2	P L S 0 0 } 0	P L S 0 0 } 0
4.3 Information	P L S 2 5 } 9	P L S 0 1 } 2	P L S 0 0 } 0	P L S 0 1 } 1	P L S 0 0 } 0
4.4 Leisure	P L S 3 4 } 8	P L S 0 1 } 3	P L S 0 1 } 1	P L S 0 0 } 0	P L S 0 0 } 0
4.5 Others	P L S 0 0 } 0	P L S 0 1 } 1	P L S 0 0 } 0	P L S 0 0 } 0	P L S 0 0 } 0
4.5.1 Preservation	P L S 0 1 } 1	P L S 0 0 } 0	P L S 0 0 } 0	P L S 0 0 } 0	P L S 0 0 } 0
4.5.2 Research	P L S 0 1 } 1	P L S 0 0 } 0	P L S 0 0 } 0	P L S 0 0 } 0	P L S 0 0 } 0
4.5.3					

\*cf. LIBRARY ASSOCIATION. Public library aims and objectives. Library Association Record, vol. 73, no. 12, December 1971, p. 233-4.

5. Please indicate your opinion concerning the impor-  
tance of the objectives identified in question 4:

- 5.1 Culture
- 5.2 Education
- 5.3 Information
- 5.4 Leisure
- 5.5 Others (please specify)
  - 5.5.1 Preservation
  - 5.5.2 Research
  - 5.5.3

	of no importance				
	1	2	3	4	5
P L S	0	P0 L0 S1	P0 L0 S0	P0 L1 S2	P3 L4 S8
P L S	0	P0 L0 S0	P1 L0 S2	P0 L0 S1	P2 L5 S7
P L S	0	P0 L0 S1	P0 L0 S0	P0 L0 S1	P3 L5 S10
P L S	0	P0 L0 S0	P0 L0 S1	P0 L2 S2	P3 L5 S9
P L S	0	P0 L0 S0	P0 L0 S0	P0 L0 S0	P0 L0 S0
P L S	0	P0 L0 S0	P0 L0 S0	P0 L0 S0	P0 L0 S1

6. When selecting a book which of the following aspects  
does your library weight in terms of importance?

- 6.1 To provide quality material to all types of readers
- 6.2 To cater for manifest reader demand
- 6.3 To balance the deficiencies in manifest demand with quality material
- 6.4 To meet demand only if it is quality material
- 6.5 Others (please specify)
  - 6.5.1
  - 6.5.2
  - 6.5.3

	of no importance				
	1	2	3	4	5
P2 L2 S2	6	P0 L1 S1	P0 L0 S1	P1 L1 S0	P0 L1 S0
P2 L2 S0	4	P0 L0 S2	P2 L2 S2	P1 L0 S0	P0 L1 S0
P1 L2 S0	3	P0 L2 S3	P2 L1 S0	P0 L0 S1	P L S 0
P1 L0 S0	1	P0 L0 S1	P1 L3 S5	P0 L0 S2	P0 L2 S2

7. In selecting for the collection as a whole which one  
of the following viewpoints does your library re-  
flect?

- 7.1 As many viewpoints as you can find
- 7.2 Those views acceptable to most of the community

P0 L5 S2	} 7
P3 L0 S2	} 5

8. When selecting do you take into consideration any  
gaps in the collection?

Never						always
	1	2	3	4	5	
P L S	0	0	0	P0 L0 S1	P2 L3 S1	

9. Please indicate the importance of the following methods of selecting a book:

- 9.1 Publicity pamphlets received from publishers and booksellers
- 9.2 Book reviews
- 9.3 Reading or skimming through a book received on approval
- 9.4 Formal and informal discussion among staff
- 9.5 Others (please specify)
  - 9.5.1 Borrower's requests
  - 9.5.2
  - 9.5.3

	1	2	3	4	5
P 0 } L 1 } S 1 } 2	P 0 } L 2 } S 1 } 3	P 0 } L 0 } S 0 } 0	P 3 } L 1 } S 2 } 6	P 0 } L 1 } S 0 } 1	P 0 } L 1 } S 0 } 0
P 0 } L 3 } S 3 } 4	P 1 } L 2 } S 2 } 5	P 1 } L 1 } S 1 } 2	P 0 } L 1 } S 0 } 1	P 1 } L 0 } S 0 } 0	P 0 } L 0 } S 0 } 0
P 3 } L 3 } S 3 } 9	P 0 } L 1 } S 1 } 2	P 0 } L 1 } S 0 } 1	P 0 } L 0 } S 0 } 0	P 0 } L 0 } S 0 } 0	P 0 } L 0 } S 0 } 0
P 3 } L 2 } S 2 } 7	P 0 } L 2 } S 1 } 3	P 0 } L 1 } S 1 } 2	P 0 } L 0 } S 0 } 0	P 0 } L 0 } S 0 } 0	P 0 } L 0 } S 0 } 0
P 0 } L 1 } S 0 } 1	P 0 } L 0 } S 0 } 0	P 1 } L 1 } S 0 } 2	P 0 } L 0 } S 0 } 0	P 0 } L 0 } S 0 } 0	P 0 } L 0 } S 0 } 0

10. What percentage of the books\* selected are purchased by the methods indicated in question 9?

- 10.1 Publicity pamphlets received from publishers and booksellers
- 10.2 Book reviews
- 10.3 Reading or skimming through a book received on approval
- 10.4 Formal and informal discussion among staff
- 10.5 Others (please specify)
  - 10.5.1
  - 10.5.2
  - 10.5.3

	%
P 0, 0, 1 L 0, 1, 40 S 5, 10, 2, 20	
P 0, 1, 60 L 7, 20, 33, 3 S 5, 10, 10, 15	
P 70, 100, 100 L 20, 33, 90 S 65, 80, 90, 90	

\*number of titles

11. If a book receives favourable reviews, but it deals with a subject controversially or is written on a controversial subject which of the following actions do you take?

- 11.1 You get it on approval before deciding to buy it
- 11.2 You buy it only if there is a big demand
- 11.3 You buy as many copies as are needed
- 11.4 If you cannot get it on approval you do not buy it
- 11.5 You decide not to buy it
- 11.6 You buy only a few copies
- 11.7 Others (please specify)
  - 11.7.1
  - 11.7.2

P37	L4	S4	11
P	L	S	0
P27	L	S	3
P07	L1	S0	1
P	L	S	0
P27	L	S	3

12. When you receive a book on approval which you think may become banned soon, which of the following actions do you take?

- 12.1 You buy only a few copies
- 12.2 You do not buy it as it may become banned
- 12.3 You wait and see if it does become banned
- 12.4 You buy as many copies as are needed
- 12.5 You do not buy it
- 12.6 Others (please specify)
  - 12.6.1 Depends on quality and demand
  - 12.6.2
  - 12.6.3

P07	L1	S1	2
P	L	S	0
P37	L	S	7
P07	L0	S0	1
P	L	S	0
P07	L0	S1	1

13. After the banning has been lifted on a book of which the library does not have a copy, are you aware of this?

Always		Never		
1	2	3	4	5
P37	L4	S4	11	0
P	L	S	0	0
P07	L0	S1	1	0
P	L	S	0	0

14. When you receive a book which is no longer banned and which the library does not have a copy, which of the following actions do you take?

- 14.1. You ignore it as there are so many new books to be considered
- 14.2 You buy as many copies as are needed
- 14.3 You do not buy it
- 14.4 You buy it only if there is a big demand
- 14.5 You buy only a few copies
- 14.6 Others (please specify)
  - 14.6.1 Only if outstanding quality
  - 14.6.2 Take into account author, subject and demand
  - 14.6.3 Depends on book

P L S	0
P L S	2 } 6 3 } 2 }
P L S	0
P L S	0
P L S	0
P L S	1
P L S	1
P L S	2

SECTION C : OPINIONS

Code:

Instructions: Please read the statements in questions 1 - 11 with care before indicating whether you disagree, are undecided, or agree with them. Provision is made for further comments on this section in question 13.

1. It is important that a society should be given the full facts about what is happening in the world

1.1 Yes

1.2 No

1.3 Undecided


2. What a child chooses to read from the library should be the responsibility of the parents not of the library

2.1 No

2.2 Yes

2.3 Undecided


3. The library has a responsibility to promote not only books of some literary quality, but also books reflecting a moral standard

3.1 Yes

3.2 No

3.3 Undecided


4. The reading of material you regard as pornographic leads to anti-social behaviour in adolescents

4.1 No

4.2 Yes

4.3 Undecided


5. The reading of material you regard as pornographic leads to anti-social behaviour in adults

5.1 Yes

5.2 No

5.3 Undecided


6. The public has little critical ability of what they read so that they will select the inferior rather than the superior

6.1 No

6.2 Yes

6.3 Undecided


7. Reading as such has a positive effect on the reader

7.1 Yes

7.2 No

7.3 Undecided


8. The competent authorities such as government ministers are the only ones who must be fully informed as to the activities of our enemies

8.1 No

8.2 Yes

8.3 Undecided


9. Censorship suppresses true art together with that which has no literary merit

9.1 Yes

9.2 No

9.3 Undecided


10. The censorship laws in South Africa are too permissive

10.1 No

10.2 Yes

10.3 Undecided


11. Libraries should be exempt from the censorship laws

11.1 Yes

11.2 No

11.3 Undecided


12. Please indicate the importance of the following statements according to your thinking on censorship:

strongly agree                      strongly disagree

- 12.1 It is necessary because of the times we live in
- 12.2 It should only apply in the areas of the Official Secrets Act and hard core pornography
- 12.3 It is beneficial in protecting society from undesirable literature
- 12.4 It is a repressive measure which should not be used by a democracy
- 12.5 Others (please specify)
  - 12.5.1
  - 12.5.2
  - 12.5.3


13. Please make any comments you wish concerning section C:

14. Please make any comments if you wish, concerning the previous section you answered:

15. Please make any further general comments you may consider necessary:

16. Please indicate if you would like your library to receive a microfiche copy of the thesis:

16.1

NO	YES

Personal details

17. Please briefly describe your position:

<u>Head librarians</u>		<u>Others</u>		<u>Chief selectors</u>		<u>Others</u>	
P	3	1	} 2	P	3	0	} 2
L	4	1		L	2	1	
S	4	0		S	2	1	
} 11				} 7			

18. Are you a member of the South African Institute for Librarianship and Information Science?

18.1

X YES y		X NO y	
P	3	P	0
L	4	L	0
S	4	S	0
} 11		} 2	

19. How many meetings under the auspices of S.A.I.L.I.S. did you attend during 1979?

19.1 One

19.2 Two

19.3 Three

19.4 Four or more

19.5 None

X		y	
P	1		
L	1		
S	0		
} 2			0
P	1		
L	0		
S	0		
} 1		1	4
P	1		
L	2		
S	1		
} 4		0	
P	0		
L	2		
S	2		
} 4		1	3
P	0		
L	0		
S	0		
} 0		0	1

20. Please give all your academic and professional qualifications, and where and when they were awarded. Please also indicate the major subjects studied for the academic qualifications e.g. BA(History and English) (Unisa) (1968) HDLS(Unisa) (1970):

23 JUL 1981