

left out of the book, for the most part there is good representation from different parts of the globe. *Education for Library Cataloging* is a good choice as a textbook for coursework in International Librarianship as well as a primer in what to expect if one's information center is affiliated with partners outside the United States and Canada. This book should be seen as an important "must read" for all library students and practitioners concerned about issues of increasing globalization in bibliographic control. It is highly recommended.

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LEVIE, FRANÇOISE. *L'Homme qui voulait classer le monde, Paul Otlet et le Mundaneum*. Bruxelles: Les Impressions Nouvelles, 2006. 352 p. (80 b&w ill.) ISBN 2-87449-022-9.

To the readers of this journal the founding founder of bibliography and information science, the Belgian Paul Otlet (1868–1944), ground-layer of the *Universal Decimal Classification*, anticipator of multimedia, virtual libraries, and the Internet, and co-inventor of the microfilm or, as it was originally called, "le *Biblio-phote*" (p. 107) (an achievement he shares together with Robert Goldschmidt), scarcely needs introduction. Françoise Levie's new biography of Otlet embodies the research she has started with the production of the documentary of the same name (Sofidoc, 2002, 60 min.). It is impossible to give a chapter-by-chapter overview of this informatively dense and beautifully illustrated book, which consists of twenty chapters, a concluding piece by Benoît Peeters, a very useful list and description of the pivotal figures in Otlet's life, and a list containing the locations of the sources consulted (an index is, unfortunately, not provided). I will therefore restrict myself by pointing to Levie's innovative contributions to our knowledge of Otlet and to topics that are of genuine interest to the readers of this journal.

Levie's book is the result of a fascinating, worldwide quest into the remains of Otlet's work and his international connections. Ever since W. Boyd Rayward's monumental 1975 *The Universe of Information: The Work of Paul Otlet for Documentation and*

*International Organization* (Moscow: VINITI), this book is the second systematic survey of the Collections of the Mundaneum (now, after various peregrinations, preserved at Bergen/Mons, Belgium) (cf. pp. 339–340), which contains Otlet's private documents, the "Otletaneum". Sixty-eight unopened banana boxes were the main source of inspirations for Levie's research. Of special interest in this respect is Levie's discovery of Otlet's 1916 diary "le *Cahier Blue*". As these boxes were, at the time Levie conducted her research, not classified and as they were thereafter re-divided and re-classified, precise references to this collection are not provided and the text is simply quoted during the course of the book (p. 339). While this is perfectly understandable, I would have welcomed exact references to Otlet's main works such as, for instance, *Traité de documentation* and *Monde, Essai d'universalisme* which are also quoted without supplying further details.

Levie's focus is not exclusively on Otlet's contributions to bibliography and information science *per se*, but aims at offering a very complete, chronological overview of the life and work of Paul Otlet. Levie succeeds very well at documenting Otlet's personal and familial life, and offers ample socio-historical and political contextualisation of Otlet's activities (e.g. the interaction between Otlet's internationalist endeavours and the expansionist politics of King Leopold II (p. 59), and Otlet's ardent pacifism during World War I are relevantly highlighted (pp. 161–176)).

Levie begins by exploring Otlet's childhood days and by bringing into perspective some of the traits which are relevant to understand his later work. She shows how his father Edouard, an internationally active railway contractor, awoke a mondial awareness in the young Otlet (pp. 20–21) and how his encyclopaedic spirit for the first time found expression in a systematic inventory of the small Mediterranean isle his father bought (*L'île du Levant*, 1882) (p. 31). From the age of 16 Otlet suffered from a disorder of his literal memory (Otlet's personal testimony in the *Cahier Blue*, on p. 47), which might perhaps explain his lifelong obsession with completeness and accuracy. Of special interest to the readers of this journal are chapter 4, in which Otlet's and Henri Lafontaine's adaptation of Melvil Dewey's *Decimal Classification* and the origin of the *Universal Decimal Classification (UDC)* is discussed *in extenso* (pp. 51–70; also see chapter 6, p. 98 for Otlet's attempt at a universal iconographical index) and chapter 17, in which *Traité de documentation* (1934) is presented

(pp. 267–277). In chapter 5 (pp. 75–89), Levie discusses Otlet's interest in urbanism (also see, p. 147ff) and recounts how in Westende he built from scratch a complete coastal village, a kind of mini-utopia, in close collaboration with the architects Octave Van Rysselberghe and Henry Van de Velde (unfortunately, it was destroyed in 1914). In close connection to their pacifist ideals, Otlet and his Nobel-prize winning co-worker Lafontaine sought to realize a World City and in 1911 saw their ambitions shared by the joint work of the French architect Ernest Hébrard and the American-Norwegian sculptor Hendrik Anderson (pp. 128–141). Later, in the late 1920s, Otlet joined forces with Le Corbusier to establish such a world-centre (pp. 229–247, a 1930 letter of Le Corbusier to Otlet on this matter is reproduced on pages 234–235). In his later moments of desperation, Otlet called on virtually every major political leader, including Mussolini, Franco, and Hitler to achieve this goal (pp. 217–218, p. 294). In these chapters related to architecture, Levie draws extensively on previously unstudied correspondence and adds much detail to our knowledge of Otlet's explo-

rations in this area. In several other chapters, Levie documents in great detail the less unknown rise and downfall of Otlet's "Mondial Palace" (which was inaugurated in 1919) (chapters 12–14 and 16).

Looking back on Otlet's endeavours it is not difficult to realize that many of his "utopian" ideas were realized in the course of history. Levie's unique work represents a most welcome update of our knowledge of Otlet. It bears direct relevance for historians of information science and bibliography and historians of architecture, but will, no doubt, attract many scholars from other disciplines, as it places Otlet against the background of several important historical trends and as it is very accessibly written. I take it that publishers are already preparing an English edition of this work – or else, they should be. I wholeheartedly agree with Levie's conclusion that we haven't finished discovering Otlet's work (p. 318).

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