

which included extensive book displays, led to the architect's inclusion of libraries in his house designs. Kruger then states that Wright's buildings subsequently influenced generations of architects, implying that architectural ideas spread exponentially without really explaining how.

These criticisms of *American Home Life* are minor, relative to the book's overall significance

to the field of "home history." All collections of essays by different authors from different fields run the risk of overlapping or contradictory material and uneven depth. *American Home Life* will be of great interest to specialists in a variety of fields, as well as general readers interested in how the so-called "modern" house evolved.

Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge*

GERALD L. POCIUS

Hooper-Greenhill, Eilean. *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge*. London and New York: Routledge, Chapman & Hall, 1992. 232 pp., 32 illus. Cloth \$99.95, ISBN 0-415-06145-8. Paper \$37.50, ISBN 0-415-07031-7.

Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge is part of the growing body of literature from the museum community in Great Britain that examines the relationship between material culture research and museology. Museum professionals and heritage workers have increasingly attempted to investigate more systematically the theories and practices that have governed their work, looking at how past trends have influenced current methods. Eilean Hooper-Greenhill's book is part of this tradition, focusing on how the concept of the museum has taken different institutional forms over the past 500 years.

Hooper-Greenhill argues that, up until now, the histories of museums have largely been simple institutional chronologies that outline the development of particular museums. Her study attempts to examine museums in a more relative way, to understand how particular collections of objects that are now often dismissed as trivial and unscientific made cultural sense in their day. Using categories from Foucault on the various stages of the structure of western knowledge, Hooper-Greenhill surveys specific major institutions from each time period as case studies of museum evolution.

The Medici Palace serves as the initial focus as possibly the first museum in Europe. Hooper-Greenhill skilfully blends the evolution of

this family collection with attitudes toward the material world of the time. As the medieval world gave way to Renaissance ideals, there came a greater emphasis on life in the present. Consequently, objects became signs of wealth and instruments of power, and the newly emergent economic classes turned to collecting to foster their status. Artists as a specialized class also began to emerge, able to fill the new domestic spaces of the house with objects that indicated knowledge and wealth.

By the end of the sixteenth century, there was a relative decline in the number of private patrons and collectors. It is from here that Hooper-Greenhill traces the emergence of the notion of the public museum. By this time, collections accessible to the public were common throughout Europe, often falling under the notion of the "cabinet of curiosities." Hooper-Greenhill examines these collections with a view to understanding them not as a jumble of disconnected artifacts (as they have ordinarily been considered), but rather as a reflection of the collectors, their power and their world view.

Hooper-Greenhill then moves on to examine the more "scientific" museums that characterized the European scene, specifically looking at the Repository of the Royal Society in England. Hoping to create a "universal" collection of material things that would be identical to the study of "universal" language, collections were built up to cover all materials in the world, rather than simply to reflect a particular collector or curator.

With the coming of the French Revolution,

museums underwent a democratization, leading to our more recent notion that museums, often funded by private benefactors, were run by expert curators for the education of the ordinary public. The museum became an instrument in the reorientation of power relations in countries like France, placing democratic ideologies in the forefront of curatorial work, criticizing the older power arrangements of museums and emphasizing values of the new. The accessibility of museum collections to the public led to new and specialized subject positions, as well as new display strategies.

Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge is an important contribution to our knowledge of the museum as a cultural artifact. Although Hooper-Greenhill's use of Foucault is an innovative and useful tool in understanding museum development, her final product can be considered that of any anthropologist: to produce an ethnography of the structures, rules and participants of this particular western institution. Because of this, there might have been additional attention paid to anthropologi-

cal ethnographies of museums (such as Sally Price's work) and to institutional ethnographies generally.

There are only minor criticisms of this study that might be raised. Most notably, the final chapter seems, at times, like an afterthought and does not approach present practices in the same relative framework as the earlier sections of the book. But this does not detract from the value of Hooper-Greenhill's work.

Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge provides a readable and informative account of the early European attempts to collect objects, and the various cultural reasons why these attempts occurred. Because of this, it is useful for both museum historians and students of material culture generally. Hooper-Greenhill has produced an important book that will be standard reading for those interested in museums as a cultural product of particular times. Only through such treatments can a clearer understanding be reached of the arbitrary nature of this important institution.

Gerald L. Pocius (ed.),
Living in a Material World:
Canadian and American Approaches to Material Culture

GREGG FINLEY

Pocius, Gerald L. (ed.). *Living in a Material World: Canadian and American Approaches to Material Culture*. St. John's: Institute of Social and Economic Research, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1991. 290 pp., 60 illus. Cloth \$29.95, ISBN 0-919666-67-1.

Material culture studies are exhibiting more and more intellectual energy these days. One reason for the growing sophistication of the artifact studies movement is the array of material culture anthologies that have appeared in recent years. Notwithstanding these developments, a distinctive Canadian contribution remains to be added to this growing body of literature. A "Material Culture Studies in Canada" has yet to materialize. In the meantime, however, Gerald L. Pocius, an Associate Professor of Folklore and Director of the Centre for Material

Culture Studies at Newfoundland's Memorial University, has edited an important, new book – a material culture anthology that boasts substantial Canadian content.

Material culture practitioners from across Canada and the United States gathered in St. John's, Newfoundland, in the spring of 1986. The occasion was a conference entitled "North American Material Culture Research: New Objectives, New Theories." (See Gregg Finley's conference review in *Material History Bulletin* 24, Autumn, 1986: 39–41.) Some five years later, in 1991, Memorial University's Institute of Social and Economic Research published *Living in a Material World: Canadian and American Approaches to Material Culture*. Leading material culture theorists, including Jules David Prown, Thomas J. Schlereth and Henry Glassie, contribute to this anthology as do a number of