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From the Reference Desk: Reference Reviews

Tom Gilson

College of Charleston, gilsont@cofc.edu

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From the Reference Desk

Reference Reviews

Column Editor: **Tom Gilson** (College of Charleston) (gilsont@cofc.edu)

A number of useful and interesting reference books have crossed my desk during the past few weeks. Admittedly they are an eclectic mix, but they are titles worth knowing about.

By far the most visually interesting is **Bob Cotton's** and **Richard Oliver's** *Cyberspace Lexicon* published by Phaidon and distributed by Chronicle. (1994, ISBN 0-7148-3267-7, Pbk. \$29.95). It resembles an overstuffed *Wired* magazine, full of color and slick graphics. Described as a "guide through the maze of new and emerging technologies," which make up cyberspace, this book provides hundreds of definitions drawn from the merging worlds of telecommunications, computers, media and electronics. The definitions are clear and precise and offer cross references, as well as pointing to entries of related interest. In addition, short but more detailed articles supplement the definitions and highlight key concepts. But, the visuals are what make the *Cyberspace Lexicon* unique. Through an abundant use of bright colorful illustrations, imaginative computer graphics and crisp photographs, Cotton and Oliver have produced a book that is both fun to look at and useful.

Another heavily illustrated and useful book is **Rolf Anderson's** *Atlas of the American Economy* published by Congressional Quarterly. (1994, ISBN 1-56802-001-5, \$34.95; ISBN 1-56802-052-X, Pbk.

\$19.95). Anderson divides his book into four parts; the Big Picture, Big Trends, Basic Industries and Notes and Sources. The Big Picture looks at the economy in broad generalized aggregates according to production, employment, principal industries by state and the major changes in the economy. The Big Trends section marks changes in growth, demographics, technology, international trade/global economics, consumerism, competition and small business/big business. Anderson divides his Basic Industries section into 75 major industrial groups, providing charts and graphs covering employment, revenue and other trends. He also provides a Highlights section for each entry listing interesting facts which augment the charts and graphs. In Notes and Sources Anderson offers analysis of each entry from the first three parts of the book, as well as brief cites for his sources of information. The *Atlas of the American Economy* is a quick and handy source for a basic overview of the US economy.

Crimes of Perception: An Encyclopedia of Heresies and Heretics published by Paragon House is a fascinating look at the darker side of Western religious history. (1994, ISBN 155778-519-8, \$29.95). Author **Leonard George** has produced a book with over 600 well crafted entries covering persecutions like the Great Witch Hunts of the Inquisition, early Christian heresies like gnosticism; heretical texts like the Jewish Zohar and heretics like Savonarola and Galileo. The encyclopedia is arranged alphabetically. No index is provided but there is a list of the entries arranged under broad topic area. In addition, a bibliography of further readings is provided, also by broad topic area.

ABC-CLIO's one volume *Encyclopedia of Utopian Literature* (1995, ISBN 0-87436-

757-3, \$65.00) covers major topics in both utopian and dysutopian literature. Over 300 entries are arranged alphabetically and include articles on individual works, specific writers, and important themes and characters. Author **Mary Snodgrass**, nicely balances summaries and definitions with analyses, leaving the reader interested in further exploration. The articles are cross referenced and there is an index, as well as a 28-page bibliography.

Those of you who have been wondering what all the talk about total quality management actually means will be relieved to know that McGraw-Hill has come to the rescue. They have recently published the *McGraw-Hill Encyclopedia of Quality Terms and Concept* (1995, ISBN 0-07-024099-X, \$34.95). Authored by **James Cortada** and **John Woods**, this reference is a good place to start unraveling the mysteries of this popular management style.

Other one-volume reference works which might merit a place on your reference shelves include:

Bruce Wetterau's *Congressional Quarterly's Desk Reference on American Government*, obviously published by Congressional Quarterly. (1995, ISBN 0-87187-956-5, \$49.95).

Oryx Press' *Funding Sources for Community and Economic Development*. (1995, ISBN 0-89774-947-2, Pbk, \$47.50).

The Oxford Hachette French Dictionary: French-English, English-French, published by Oxford University Press. (1994, ISBN 0-19-864519-8, \$35.00).

Roderic Ai Camp's *Mexican Political Biographies 1935-1993. 3rd edition*, published by University of Texas Press, Austin. (1995, ISBN 0-292-71174-3, \$55.00; ISBN 0-292-71181-6, Pbk, \$ 24.95).

Standard and Poor's Smallcap 600 Guide a guide to small companies and their stocks) published by McGraw-Hill (1995, ISBN 0-07-052098-4, Pbk, \$ 27.95). 🐱

