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From the Reference Desk

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From the Reference Desk

Column Editor: **Tom Gilson** (Head, Reference Services, College of Charleston) <gilson@cofc.edu>

Oceans cover a majority of our planet's surface and are essential to life. An understanding of their complexities is important and now there is a comprehensive six-volume encyclopedia devoted to their study. The *Encyclopedia of Ocean Sciences* (2001, 012227430X, \$1400) is another top-flight science reference from Academic Press. It is intended for a scholarly audience offering in-depth treatment of the physical processes, chemical properties, geological elements and biological life forms of the world's oceans.

As you would expect, the strength of this set is in the scientific facts and explanations provided. Over 400 scientists from universities, marine laboratories and oceanographic institutions worldwide contributed to the *Encyclopedia* and it shows. Articles range from the role of oceans in climate to the na-

ture of current systems in major oceans, and from fish behaviors like migration and reproduction to the influences of the carbon and nitrogen cycles. There are also essays on specific ecosystems like salt marshes, phenomena like marine snow and processes like iron fertilization. In addition, there is coverage of man-made impacts like fishing methods, ocean ranching, shipping, deep-sea drilling and oil pollution as well as discussions of coastal zone management, pollution control and fishery management. The text is full of illustrations, tables, charts, formulas and other visual representations that both complement the content as well as enliven the look of the set. A judicious use of color plates in each of the six volumes also contributes to the overall appeal. A traditional alphabetical arrangement is used and the set is heavily cross-referenced. However, use of the index is cumbersome. References are to page numbers with no reference to volume number. Add to that the fact there is no key indicating which pages are contained in each volume and you have a recipe for inconvenience. Partially making up for this is a table of content that lists the articles contained in each volume and includes "dummy entries" directing the reader to the relevant articles. This content list is repeated in each volume.

The *Encyclopedia of Ocean Sciences* gives the reader a sense of the vastness and interrelated nature of the discipline. It pro-

vides sophisticated background information for academic and professional audiences as well as guidance to specific research via its many bibliographies. First year undergraduates and informed laypersons may also find it of value, especially the introductions which start each article, but any future edition might consider a glossary to make the set more accessible to this audience. However, that's not the main concern here. This set is meant for any library serious about supporting marine science and oceanographic studies. For them, it will be an obvious purchase. As a bonus, Academic Press also offers access to an electronic version. Buyers of the set can register for Web access at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1006/rwos.2001>.

Science librarians and their patrons will also be pleased that Academic Press has recently published a third edition of a highly respected standard. Last published in 1992, the *Encyclopedia of Physical Science and Technology* (2002, 0122274105, \$3750.00) reflects the exponential growth of the field, as well as its evolving and changing components. However, this third edition is not a mere incremental update. The encyclopedia has been re-evaluated and changed in an involved process described by editor-in-chief, **Robert A. Meyers**, in his preface. According to Meyers some 200 articles from the second edition have been deleted while 300 new articles have been added and about 480 retained. These

continued on page 54

Professor Chatterjee Profile from page 51

It is usually very difficult for women to overcome cultural barriers and to balance profession and home and to "try to do it all." It has been difficult in my case too, and encouragement and support from family has been very helpful. For me personally, physics has been somewhat a way of life and was something I just had to find time for.

I think this is why I see metaphoric images of the hidden sub-atomic world in everyday life. Spending a couple of decades writing only research papers, this entwining of life with physics manifested itself in my books and outreach efforts over the last few years.

JL: I understand that you are now involved in scientific publishing and that you are working on a project here in North America? Could you talk a little about that?

Prof. Chatterjee: I have joined Institute of

Physics Publishing, which is the publication section of the Institute of Physics, a learned society for physics, based in England. I find my new role both interesting and challenging. I have always enjoyed expanding my interests and feel I have contributed in meaningful ways not only to pure research but to education and physics outreach. I see my current role as contributing to the international dissemination of physics and interfacing between physicists and the publishing world. In the past I have been author and referee and it is informative to learn about the other side — almost like seeing the rear side of the moon!

I do intend to continue my pursuit of higher physics as I cannot imagine a life without that!

JL: What do you tell students—especially young women—who may be interested in pursuing a career in physics? It seems like an incredible time to be involved in science, but it is also a very difficult time to obtain grant funding and resources needed to do world-class research.

Prof. Chatterjee: I have in general tried to encourage all students to come to physics, but it is not always simple. Regarding young women, I think many more should come to physics. I have personally tried to encourage my women students to study physics and have succeeded in some cases. I think this trend is increasing as I remarked earlier and I hope the number of women in physics continues to grow. Regarding the problems of funding, these affect all students and it is important for us to continue public awareness of physics so that funding authorities recognize the importance of physics and its incredible role in every development and aspect of science.

JL: It is a pleasure to speak with you and thanks for taking time out of your busy schedule so that ATG readers can learn about your life and work in theoretical physics. Thank you very much.

Ed. Note: *FlnstP is the abbreviation for, Fellow of the Institute of Physics. — JL

changes embrace a variety of fields and include new developments in computer engineering, bio-medical science, robotics, practical and theoretical physics, and communications technology. Other broad areas of coverage include earth sciences, environmental and atmospheric studies, optics and lasers, energy, aerospace engineering and mathematics. The content of the *Encyclopedia* is technical and scholarly, consisting of comprehensive overview articles totaling 14,000 pages of text highlighted by illustrations, tables, charts and photographs. Directed toward a more advanced audience, the treatment here is more in-depth than the *McGraw Hill Encyclopedia of Science and Technology* with articles ranging 17-18 pages in length.

Although costly, the *Encyclopedia of Physical Science and Technology* merits fully consideration by academic and professional libraries collecting in this area. There is however one caveat. This set reflects a "snapshot in time" of a constantly changing, multi-disciplinary area of study. Comprehensive collections will want to maintain past editions, even if they purchase this new one.

Public librarians will be excited about two recent ABC-CLIO entries. Both **John J. Eddleston's** *Jack the Ripper: An Encyclopedia* (2001, 1576074145, \$75) and **James R. Lewis' Satanism Today: An Encyclopedia Of Religion, Folklore and Popular Culture (2001, 1576072924, \$85) touch on topics of perennial interest.**

The public fascination with Jack the Ripper and his infamous Whitechapel murders is nearly as strong today as it was when he first stalked East London in the late 1880's. A quick search on Amazon reveals 74 books listed on the subject. There are also quality references that cover the case like Headline Book's *Jack the Ripper A to Z* by Paul Begg, et al. (1994, 0747255229, \$15.95) and Philip Sugden's *Complete History of Jack the Ripper* (2001, 0786709324, \$15) published by Carroll & Graf. But the difference in Eggleston's treatment, and its strength, is its organization. He has divided his book into 14 sections, many of which center on the personalities involved. There are independent sections on the victims, the witnesses, police and of course the suspects, as well as a section on others who played a part like doctors, journalists, government officials and the friends and relatives of the murdered women. Eggleston also has sections that deal with various locations in the East End, as well as the letters and correspon-

dence, and myths and errors related to the case. In addition there is a useful chronology, a section on Ripper-inspired books and films and a list of other resources ranging from newspaper reports of the time to Websites. The book is illustrated with many of the gruesome photos familiar to Ripper aficionados along with maps, copies of letters written to newspapers and pictures of East End locations as they look today.

Naturally, Eggleston has his own opinions, which he freely offers, but he is equally concerned with presenting the facts related to the crimes. For example, while there are still arguments about the number of victims, Eggleston believes that the Ripper killed as many as seven women in a three-year time period. But in an attempt to disclose all the facts of the case, he lists some 17 possibilities with detailed histories of each. Eggleston also has his theories about the Ripper's identity and he relates them in a summary section. But again, he lists the more than 100 possibilities that have been proposed over the years and he rates them as to likelihood, along with his justifications.

Public libraries where there is high interest in crime may want it for reference but *Jack the Ripper: An Encyclopedia* is one of those books that will just as often find a place in circulating collections. Thoroughly researched and written in a straightforward style, it is another book that adds "grist to the mill" about a haunting serial killer whose identity still remains open to question. The only downside is the cost. Given the availability of similar titles like the ones listed above, the price is high, even for a hardcover edition.

James R. Lewis' Satanism Today: An Encyclopedia of Religion, Folklore and Popular Culture is a more scholarly treatment of a broader, but equally compelling subject. As you would expect, there are entries identifying specific "devils and hells found in major religious traditions." In addition, there are articles on the major religions themselves as well as concepts like heaven and hell. Such entries are descriptive and informative, theological discussion is absent. There is also treatment of the modern phenomena of religious Satanism; especially the influence of **Anton LaVey's** Church of Satan along with discussion of the conservative Christian subculture and its battle with the "Evil one." But again, within these topics, the main emphasis is on the conflicting and ambiguous images of Satan that have evolved in modern culture. In short, the real focus of this reference is the evolving portrayal and imagery of Satan. Pointing to this diversity, Lewis offers the differing portraits of Satan in the literary works of **Dante** and **Milton** and those in the work of artists like **William Blake** and **Hieronymous Bosch**.

He also traces influences in popular music ranging from the heavy metal music of **Black Sabbath** and **AC/DC** to stories of blues legend, **Robert Johnson**, selling his soul to the Devil. In addition, Lewis relates examples in modern literature from **C. S. Lewis' Screwtape Letters** to the works of conservative Christian novelist **Frank Peretti** as well as examples in popular films like *Devil's Advocate* and the *Exorcist*. Other entries range from coverage of role-playing games like *Dungeons and Dragons* to the practice of Neopagan Witchcraft, and from bogus accusations of Satanic Ritual Abuse like the *McMartin Case* to the *Night Stalker*, **Richard Ramirez**, a convicted serial killer and self-proclaimed Satanist.

Reading Lewis' *Satanism Today* brings home the fascination with Satanic imagery in human culture, particularly Western culture, and points out its diversity and pervasiveness. Public libraries with an interest in the occult will find it a popular and useful addition to their reference collections. Depending on need, academic libraries may opt for adding it to either reference or circulation.

With the *Encyclopedia of Global Change* (2002, 0195108256, \$325), **Oxford University Press** has issued a timely and important reference on a topic of pressing concern. Subtitled *Environmental Change and Human Society*, this two-volume set is a scholarly overview of both the natural processes and the manmade factors that contribute to global change. It distills research from the last 30 years into 300 articles by over 250 scholars and practitioners. A look at the synoptic outline of contents reveals articles falling into major categories like earth and earth systems, human factors in global change, impacted resources, as well as case studies of specific areas like Antarctica, Chernobyl and the Sahel. There is also coverage of the human responses to global change ranging from scientific tools to social policies and discussions of international agreements, associations, and institutions as well as some selected biographies. The study of global change is cross-disciplinary by nature and the variety of topics treated in this set is impressive. Issues as diverse as the effects of tourism, deforestation, public policy responses, nuclear hazards, sustainable development, the phosphorus cycle, geoengineering, fossil fuels, extinction of species, and environmental law are included. The content and its treatment are serious but accessible, and will appeal to a range of readers from scientist to the informed lay person. Each entry has its own bibliography containing citations from recent literature with many of the references coming from 1990s publications. As men-

continued on page 55

tioned earlier, there is a synoptic outline of contents along with a useful index and a full list of contributors with their credentials and affiliation. The set is nicely bound with the print clear and paper of good quality. Charts, tables, photos, illustrations and sidebars complement the text.

Editor **Andrew S. Gourdie** and his contributors have done a real service by integrating a considerable amount of disparate information, giving it clarity and focus. As with most Oxford UP productions, these two volumes represent an authoritative and thorough treatment by a group of dedicated scholars. While the primary audience for this set will be academic and professional libraries, issues related to global change are of such importance that this work should have broader appeal. In short, many larger public libraries will find it a worthy addition to their collections.

Routledge has also published a scholarly encyclopedia worthy of comment. Edited by **R.J. Barry Jones**, the *Encyclopedia of International Political Economy* (2001, 0415145325, \$500) provides over 1200 articles of varying length on issues and themes related to this interdisciplinary field of study. In doing so, the *Encyclopedia* helps define international political economy, lending a cohesive framework to its diverse elements. The complexity of this task is illuminated by the *Encyclopedia's* own definition of political economy. "Built largely on the insights of politics and economics, it (political economy) also draws on history, sociology, and anthropology to provide an understanding of the socio-cultural and historical context in which politics and economics are played out." Alone, these threads are difficult to tie together. Add to that, the international elements this work tries to incorporate, and you are left with a challenging task. Happily, the *Encyclopedia* generally succeeds. Wide-ranging theories and concepts are included like arbitrage, capital mobility, dependency theory, structuralism, wage controls and Neo-Marxism as well as specific definitions of terms like diseconomies of scale, domestic resource cost, Kondratieff waves and vertical integration. In addition, the impacts of international agreements ranging from the Tripartite Pact of 1936 to the Treaty of Rome, and from GATT to NAFTA are explained. There is also coverage of influential writers and theorists ranging from **John Stuart Mill** and **Max Weber** to **Susan Stange** and **Milton Friedman**. Admittedly, many of these issues and people are covered elsewhere. But this encyclopedia emphasizes the international implications. However, one major concern is the lack of a thematic index or synoptic outline. In a work like the *Encyclopedia of International Political Economy* where much of the value is in lending definition to a discipline, the organization of entries into related categories that can be viewed at a glance, helps give added unity to the topics covered. It is an additional feature that enhances the usefulness of a set like this. Also, a number of the entries are more like dictionary definitions and do not have bibliographies. But that being said, this encyclopedia still fills a unique niche.

This is a work produced by academics for an academic audience. The topics are often complex and replete with specialized jargon. Nonetheless, students will find this set of value for a variety of courses. Academic libraries supporting curriculums ranging from public administration to international studies will want to consider this set.

Book Reviews — Monographic Musings

Column Editor **Debbie Vaughn** (Reference Librarian, College of Charleston) <vaughnd@cofc.edu>

*It is a new year and this is a new volume of **Against the Grain** — what a better way to celebrate than to introduce two new reviewers to our gaggle.*

***Burton Callicott** is the newest addition to the Reference folk at the Robert Scott Small Library at the College of Charleston. Burton hails from New York, where he was most recently employed by Long Island University in Brooklyn where he spent much time conducting Website user testing. Here at the College, he is an invaluable addition to our Library Web Committee and is continuing his exploration into Website usability.*

*Though we are all adorably familiar with her husband **Jared Seay**, **Patricia Ann Seay** is new to the **ATG** family. A former teacher of English and a former editor for Cameron and Barkely Corporation, Patricia is—hands down—the most thorough researcher I know. The time and energy that she has spent investigating her own diagnosis of Fibromyalgia make her a learned commentator of **Fibromyalgia & Chronic Myofascial Pain: A Survival Manual**.*

A hearty thanks to this issue's critics! — DV

Brink, Tom, Dan Gergle, and Scott D. Wood.
Usability for the Web: Designing Web Sites That Work.
San Francisco: Morgan Kaufman, 2001.
1558606580. 432 pages. \$49.95.

Reviewed by **Burton Callicott**
(Reference Librarian, College of Charleston) <callicottb@cofc.edu>

Tom Brinck, Dan Gergle, and Scott D. Wood have put forth a very clearly written, well-organized book on Website usability. The authors infuse "usability" principles throughout the design of a Website from the pre-planning stages to the launch. This is not a technical book that dwells on fancy coding, plug-ins, or design theory. This is the rare, sorely needed Website book that focuses on use rather than style, on function rather than spectacle. *Usability for the Web* consistently (and sometimes relentlessly) stresses the utilitarian aspects of a Website—how a visitor can obtain the information, or product that they came to the site for in the first place. Utility is the *raison d'être* for most sites and the one thing that can easily be forgotten in the midst of the latest flashy Web technology. Brink and company know that for any Website to be satisfying, it has to function efficiently. *Usability for the Web* provides sober guidelines that will ensure satisfying Websites.

Once the authors have provided a very cogent definition of usability and outlined the problems associated with

poor usability, they state the book's goal: "we have defined a development process that addresses usability issues throughout the development lifecycle. We call it *Pervasive Usability*" (11). Such a development process sounds great...if you are about to start creating a Website from scratch. If, however, you already have an existing site and would like to make it better, as I imagine most of the audience of this book would, the authors point out in great detail all of the places where usability was *not* considered in the design of a site and you will wish that you had read the book before you ever began to think about HTML.

This is not to say that this book is without worth regardless of where you are in the development of your Website. Most chapters provide great tips for making spot improvements to Websites, primarily by pointing out ways to simplify the site and clean up the presentation of information. Everything from site layouts, to textual content, to font size and style are given thorough treatment: "We suggest that you include Verdana and Geneva as

continued on page 56