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McCabe, James Patrick, O.S.F.S. *Critical Guide to Catholic Reference Books*. 2d ed. Research Studies in Library Science, no.2 revised. Littleton, Colo.: Libraries Unlimited, 1980. 282p. \$22.50 U.S.; \$27 elsewhere. LC 80-16209. ISBN 0-87387-2030-3.

Those familiar with the first edition of Brother James McCabe's *Critical Guide to Catholic Reference Books*, published in 1971, might be surprised to learn that the second edition has been increased by 202 titles. Even though more than forty of these were earlier works omitted in the first edition, in this age of ecumenism the number of Catholic reference books is considerable. It should be kept in mind, though, that a rather broad definition of Catholic reference works is used. As Russell Bidlack pointed out in the introduction, the author has used reference books in the way Constance Winchell did in her *Guide to Reference Books* (8th ed., American Library Assn., 1976, p.xiv) to include those works "which, while intended primarily to be read through for either information or pleasure, are so comprehensive and accurate in their treatment and so well provided with indexes that they serve also as reference books." The term *Catholic* is used in a broad sense also. In addition to dealing with topics specifically relating to the Catholic church, the volume includes the social sciences, literature, the arts, and similar subjects to which Catholics have traditionally contributed their own unique perspective. Many of the works are written or sponsored by non-Catholics, but only those that deal exclu-

sively or in large part with the church are included.

The work is divided into five chapters—"General Works," "Theology," "The Humanities," "Social Sciences," and "History"—with each of these divided into main sections and then further subdivided by form or subject. Thus a glance at the table of contents, which shows chapters, sections, and subdivisions, would enable one to find all of the works on the Councils of the Church fairly easily since "Councils" is one of the sections in chapter V on history. The subheadings include each of the councils in addition to sections of sources, dictionaries, and handbooks.

Each entry gives complete bibliographical information, with the LC and ISBN numbers added when available and also an annotation ranging from two lines to four paragraphs. Some of the annotations are taken from reviews of the work and sources of these are included for those who wish to read the entire review. Although most of the works listed are in English, the author notes in his preface that no important foreign-language works have been omitted and that some of the most significant new titles are those produced in European countries. While no cutoff date for entries is specifically stated, a check of all new entries would seem to place it at 1978, and only six works, all published in the U.S., had this date.

One of the most valuable features of the guide is its thirty-page author/title/subject index. Since each entity in the book is numbered, one can find a specific work fairly quickly by turning to the proper section and numbered item. Subject entries are all in capital letters and thus can be found quickly also. Although some names are listed as subjects, e.g., Teilhard de Chardin, most of the subject entries are quite general. There is the general heading *Saints*, for example, but no entries for beatification or canonization, terms mentioned in news articles recently. This would probably pose no problem for those familiar with Catholic terminology but might present some difficulties for others.

As a reference book, the general format, the careful selection and editing of the works cited, and the useful index make this

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work a pleasure to use. It will be especially valuable for all Catholic institutions, but it is recommended also for large academic and public libraries and for those having special collections in theology.—*Lucille Whalen, State University of New York at Albany.*

Morse, Grant W. *Guide to the Incomparable New York Times Index*. New York: Fleet, 1980. 72p. \$11.95; \$6.95 paper. LC 79-87815. ISBN 0-8303-0159-3.

Morse has somehow managed to convince himself (and a publisher) that the *New York Times Index* is so enigmatic and abstruse that his personal intervention was warranted in the form of this slim volume. "Incomparable" qualities notwithstanding, he admonishes those who "... naively insist that any intelligent person is capable of comprehending the *Index* without a guide." The fact that the *NYTI*, like many other reference sources, harbors a few unique elements and approaches by no means justifies Morse's well-intentioned contribution.

The *Guide to the Incomparable New York Times Index* seems to have been prepared under the assumption that the user is mild-

ly retarded yet simultaneously delivers page after page of extremely tedious information on subject headings, cross-references, and entries. One wonders who constitutes Morse's primary audience. He immodestly and ungrammatically announces that "Here-in one will find what you always wanted to know about the *New York Times Index*, but never dared ask." Though Morse does answer many questions that none would dream of posing, he does provide several practical observations, e.g., the *NYTI* serves as index and abstract, it can often be used as a fairly accurate guide to major stories in other newspapers, and that librarians should save the daily news summaries until the *Index* itself arrives. Certainly he seems hard-pressed to carry on for seventy-two pages; an appendix section, for example, contains full-page photographs of the *Index*, of an anonymous hand removing microfilm from a cabinet, of someone removing reel from box, and of someone consulting film on a reader. Furthermore, the book is strangely arranged; there is no logical sequence or progression. Perhaps the most useful section is the one entitled "Miscellaneous Information."

Morse's prose style is, to say the least, most unusual. Rarely has this reviewer seen anything like it committed to print. Two typical examples:

The reputation of the Times shines perhaps the brightest in that within its pages are found a large number of source documents in full or in substantial excerpts, and thus it came to be regarded as "The newspaper of record."

Throughout the years The New York Times has maintained a status unequalled in the history of periodical publishing in the length of time of its continuous publication, the comprehensiveness of its coverage, and the quality of its authoritativeness. It is beyond question the outstanding resource for general reference and serials divisions of libraries worldwide.

There is no need to belabor the obvious. The *Guide to the Incomparable New York Times Index* is simply not a worthwhile reference acquisition. For the most part, Morse has made much ado about not much at all. In order to preserve the reputation of both author and publisher, the *Guide*, like a faulty automobile, should be recalled if in fact it has already been released.—*Mark R.*

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