

marily of "how we done it good" accounts of specific projects. Of course, the positive spin on this is that the book has something for everyone. On the whole, it is an enjoyable treatment of its subject matter, with useful insights and tips on enhancing librarian-faculty collaboration for the benefit of both their academic constituents and the collaborators themselves. — *John Payne, Furman University.*

Hakken, David. *Cyborgs@Cyberspace?: An Ethnographer Looks to the Future.* New York and London: Routledge, 1999. 264p. \$60, alk. paper, cloth (ISBN 0-415-91558-9); \$18.95, paper (ISBN 0-415-91559-7). LC 98-38185.

This is a difficult book to read and sufficiently marginal to librarianship that the value for us of Hakken's insights probably is not worth the trouble it will take to read them. The reason for reviewing the book here at all is that the "cyberspace" that concerns Hakken is not Internet chat or patron information-seeking behavior but, rather, the manner in which culture influences "information systems development," which he abbreviates as ISD.

Hakken is writing from a multiply marginal position. He is an anthropologist in a technical institute, working with engineering colleagues who, as often as not, do not see the value of social science in general. Because he is an enthusiastic proponent of STS (Science, Technology, and Society studies, investigating the "cultural construction of techno-science"), he faces, as well, opposition from those who see science as objective and universal. Within anthropology he is in the more recently respectable, but still defensive, community of scholars who study Europe and North America rather than non-Western cultures; and among them, he studies work, workers, and workplaces rather than larger communities. Finally, he is a Marxist and a Post-Modernist, expressed in almost unreadable prose.

If all that were not enough, a good part of the literature Hakken and his colleagues are producing analyzes something whose very existence, much less

definition(s), is argued: Does the fact that many claim we are undergoing a "computer revolution" that is creating new forms of work mean much, anything, or something different when work and workers are studied?

Hakken seemingly never met jargon he did not embrace. My saying this is partly a question of theoretical differences with Hakken. I see nothing gained by the Marxist term *social formation* in place of society or social organization, but Hakken defends the term as "not giv[ing] unwarranted priority to any one level," like *national*.

But in other cases, it is a matter of Hakken apparently wanting to frame every thought with a unique term, regardless how opaque the result. An important point is the differentiation of views of computers and computing as either good or bad for the larger society, in terms of jobs lost, benefits gained, shifts in locations of power, etc. But to label the contrasting views "computopian" and "compptropian," and then to use the terms frequently, impedes reading, as do neologisms such as "cyborgification," "machinofacture," and "cyberfacture," or "preanthropoic" versus "transanthropic," to cite only a few.

Hakken's view of social theory emphasizes individual actors rather than structures, which leads him to use (mostly as abbreviations) many unfamiliar terms: TAN (Technology Actor Network), ANT (Actor Network Theory) and ANTERS who practice it, not to mention RANT (Realist ANT) and TANT (Technocist ANT.) More familiar terms such as "labor theory of value," "computer revolution," and "computer-mediated communication" almost always occur, chapters away from their introduction, as LToV, CR, and CMC. And so on, very far on, indeed.

As a post-modernist writer who would deny the possibility of an authoritative text ("my personal walkabout in cyberspace has given me glimpses of a truly different world, and I wish to share them"), Hakken would likely object to a reviewer pointing out omissions from the

bibliography and argument. The work of anthropologists who have studied cyberspace (such as David Jacobson and, especially, Bonnie Nardi, who has the virtue from our perspective of having studied library reference desks ethnographically) would have added value to the book. Hakken makes much of the difficulty of studying groups or organizations that have no center, no village plaza, when communication is electronic and actors are scattered and cannot all be observed directly. But the anthropologist Hortense Powdermaker encountered the same problem in her attempt to study the Hollywood film industry in the 1930s, when most communication took place by telephone. And despite Hakken's having conducted some of his research in Norway, he ignores the founder of modern network analysis in ethnography, John A. Barnes, whose legendary vision of a fishing net on a Norwegian dock in the early 1950s solved his problem of studying a spatially dispersed community.

For a work about information system design, the book itself is poorly crafted. There is no glossary, and only a few terms (and fewer of the many unfamiliar abbreviations) can be recovered through the index. There are noticeable numbers of typographic errors and at least three instances of in-text citations either omitted from the bibliography or with year garbled, and another with author sequence reversed.

The book is not without virtues; one has a nagging sense that the author is a good guy and would be fascinating to talk with. The main value is that beneath his jargon and academic factionalism, Hakken remains an ethnographer grounding his understandings in the acts, statements, and opinions of real people in real settings. He is particularly good at puncturing technology-based visions that ignore social, cultural, political, and/or economic factors that do matter. But the effort to slog through the book outweighs its value for those outside the specific research and policy arenas that concern the author. A shorter and more readable ver-

sion by Hakken, and accessible in *JSTOR* as well, is "Computing and Social Change: New Technology and Workplace Transformation, 1980-1990," in *Annual Review of Anthropology*, vol. 22. (1993), 107-132.—Gregory A. Finnegan, *Harvard University*.

Hamilton, John Maxwell. *Casanova Was a Book Lover and Other Naked Truths and Provocative Curiosities about the Writing, Selling, and Reading of Books*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Pr., 2000. 351p. \$24.95, alk. paper (ISBN 0-8071-2554-7). LC 99-059582.

The jacket of this ponderously light-hearted book features a black-and-white image of the Sheik gazing soulfully into the eyes of a vamp, whom he embraces with his left arm while holding an open book with a red cover in his right. Old-fashioned typography reinforces the jocular title, which promises an assortment of "naked truths" and "provocative curiosities." Never mind that Casanova is conflated with Rudolph Valentino or that the coy term *book lover* is misapplied to one of the boldest writers of the eighteenth century. According to John Maxwell Hamilton, "the best way to study books, reading, and people is not to take them too seriously."

Hamilton is the Hopkins P. Braezeale Professor and dean of the Manship School of Mass Communication at Louisiana State University, author of books on international affairs and the media, and commentator on Public Radio International's Marketplace. I expected more from him than this collection of anecdotes and truisms ("having garnered a prize, a book almost certainly will enjoy a big boost in sales") gathered from a huge range of secondary sources and strung together with mediocre prose. Perhaps LSU Press was trying to score a hit with the general reader, and Hamilton was hoping to clear out his desk drawer. Along with the anecdotes, he throws in a couple of light essays previously published in magazines, quick-and-dirty media studies conducted by his graduate students, a journalistic re-