

“It is not possible even in an encyclopedia to convey all the variation and variety of NRMs (New Religious Movements) that now exist,” (vi) editor Peter B. Clarke writes. It is likely that many librarians and library users have little idea that NRMs are so numerous and so varied (I didn’t). The book’s stated purpose is to provide examples of the multifarious NRMs now in existence around the world, in order to demonstrate the universality of the phenomenon.

A global scope and wide-ranging scholarship are two of this encyclopedia’s many strengths. The editor’s learned introduction will be of use to both scholars of the subject and those with little knowledge of it. While most entries deal with particular movements, others explore broad classifications and themes, as well as key topics, thinkers, and ideas. The entries are alphabetically arranged, with an index at the end and an extensive, nine-page list of entries at the beginning of the work, ranging from movements as large as Reform Judaism to the little-known “Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn.” A point to consider is that the “accessibility” of this book—not in terms of clarity of arrangement but in terms of content and style—will be questionable for some undergraduates.

The recent publication *New Religious Movements: A Documentary Reader*, edited by Dereck M. Daschke and W. Michael Ashcraft (New York Univ. Pr., 2005), will be an important companion to the *Encyclopedia of New Religious Movements*. Comparable in quality though not in scope, its primary documents, gleaned from the movements themselves, will surely shed light and encourage further study. Used in conjunction with *Encyclopedia of New Religious Movements*, the *Documentary Reader* can flesh out and contextualize many NRMs.

Another work that can be compared to *Encyclopedia of New Religious Movements* is John Wolffe’s *Global Religious Movements in Regional Context* (Ashgate, 2002). It is the fourth monograph in the textbook series, *Religion Today: Tradition, Modernity, and Change*. The function of this book in an academic collection might be to introduce undergraduates to NRMs as a field of study. It includes an introduction to the key issues and controversies, amplified with some case studies from around the world. It has illustrations and extensive references. It is a very useful volume, if less erudite and comprehensive than the other two covered here.

The purpose that Clarke puts forth for *Encyclopedia of New Religious Movements* is modestly stated in comparison to the wealth of information and educational potential that the work offers. The purpose is most certainly achieved, and the quality of the book is excellent. It is desirable for seminars and larger academic libraries, especially religion, comparative religion, and theology collections.—*Benedette Palazzola, Librarian, University of Michigan English Language Institute, Ann Arbor*

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***Encyclopedia of Social Theory***. Ed. by Austin Harrington, Barbara L. Marshall, and Hans-Peter Müller. New York: Routledge, 2006. 723p. acid free \$225 (ISBN 0-415-29046-5).

If you are a regular reader, you may be wondering if *RUSQ* is reprinting earlier reviews. Yes, we critiqued an *Encyclopedia*

of *Social Theory* in spring 2005. However, that was a different work, edited by George Ritzer (Sage, 2005).

This latest offering is published by Routledge. Each of its three editors has made important scholarly contributions. Harrington, a professor at the University of Leeds (United Kingdom), has authored works on the history of social thought, while Marshall (Trent University, Canada) has explored feminism, gender, and sexuality. Over the past twenty years, Müller (Humboldt University, Berlin) has written numerous books and articles on social inequality and political sociology, mainly in German. Most of the volume’s two hundred contributors are university faculty in Europe and the United States.

While the Sage title is especially notable for its treatment of contemporary theorists (biographical articles account for about 40 percent of that work), the Routledge volume concerns itself more with drawing linkages between schools of thought. Though about 20 percent of the entries relate to major figures such as Jacques Derrida, such entries are typically brief, providing few personal details. The most extensive essays (up to 2,500 words) cover themes such as “consumption” and “queer theory.” Boldface type (used extensively in the text to cross-reference other entries) enables users to explore and recall connections between terms.

Approximately 140 of the 479 items in Routledge’s encyclopedia are covered by main entries in Sage’s. However, the Routledge work does a finer job of teasing out concepts. For instance, related ideas like “domination,” “freedom,” “race,” and “slavery” are each identified and discussed, helping students develop greater precision in their thinking and writing. Looking in its index, the Sage encyclopedia does not seem to address any of these terms discretely. Unfortunately, a major drawback of the Routledge title is that it generally assumes an extensive vocabulary of its readership. For instance, the article on “deconstruction” uses unexplained terms like “aporetic” and “discursive,” words unknown to the typical undergraduate. In contrast, Sage’s encyclopedia is quite readable.

In sum, Routledge’s encyclopedia is useful for advanced students, faculty, and serious readers, and would be a helpful addition to an academic collection on social theory. Yet given the steep price of such works, many libraries can only afford one title. Those primarily serving the general public or lower-division undergraduates will probably be satisfied with the Sage title. Purchase Sage first, then Routledge if you have sufficient funds.—*Bernadette A. Lear, Behavioral Sciences and Education Librarian, Penn State Harrisburg, Middletown, Pennsylvania*

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***Encyclopedia of the Blues***. Ed. by Edward Komara. New York: Routledge, 2006. 2 vols. acid free \$295 (ISBN 0-415-92699-8).

This two-volume set focuses on the blues in America from its roots in African and American traditional music up to the present contemporary style. It is well organized and complete, covering all the essentials of this genre in more than 2,100 entries. Included are not only the major artists, but also the historians and songwriters, the musical forms and