

SOURCES

a work that defies comparison to existing works because it's really the first serious study of its kind.

The entries are arranged alphabetically and cover a wide range of figures (for example, Buddha), general terms (such as lust), and numerous topics shared by several religions. For example, topics such as marriage or love of neighbor are included multiple times because they're applied to religions individually (Marriage in Buddhism, Marriage in Christianity, and so on). No reason is given as to why some terms are given only a general entry while others are given multiple entries tied to individual religions. And while numerous world religions are mentioned in the text, most coverage is given to Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism.

By soliciting entries from nearly two hundred academics from around the world, the editors are able to draw upon a wealth of expertise. The entries are uniformly excellent, with the authors often supporting their writing with references to religious texts or existing works. The entries themselves range from a quarter page to several pages, and all include references and suggestions for further reading. If there's a negative to be found regarding the entries, it's that the large number of contributors means that there's not a uniform voice. Given the unlikelihood of anyone reading several entries consecutively, however, this doesn't detract much from the work. Each volume includes both a general index and a topical index sorted by religion.

While someone unfamiliar with religious study may get something from the text, this work will prove of much greater value to those already familiar with the topic they're researching. The entries are clearly written, but someone unfamiliar with religious studies could easily become quickly lost due to lack of familiarity with the topic.

One of the more interesting pieces of the encyclopedia is a section called "Reflections on Love by Contemporary Spiritual Leaders," which is a series of short essays on love by such famous religious leaders as Pope Benedict and the Dalai Lama. Although none of the essays were written specifically for this text (all are taken from existing works or speeches), it's nonetheless fascinating to see the similarity among views across religions. There is a second section that gives a perspective on love by authors covering the areas of sociology, philosophy, and religious studies, but it's not nearly as interesting as the thoughts of our current religious leaders.

It's difficult to imagine this text appealing to a wide audience given its extremely limited scope. That doesn't mean, however, that it's not a valuable or worthwhile purchase. It's well written, reasonably priced, and the only in-depth work of its kind. For large academic libraries with strong religious collections, or for seminary libraries, this is a worthwhile addition.—*Craig Shufelt, Fort McMurray (Alberta) Public Library*

Encyclopedia of Obesity. Ed. by Kathleen Keller. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 2008. 2 vols. acid free \$250 (ISBN 978-1-4129-5238-5).

Editor Kathleen Keller, Director of the Child Taste and

Eating Laboratory and Assistant Professor at the Institute of Human Nutrition at Columbia University, has succeeded in providing an in-depth, authoritative resource covering the medical, cultural, and societal implications of obesity. This two-volume work provides 475 detailed entries written by experts and researchers in the field of obesity and health. The text covers a wide range of medical and cultural topics relating to obesity, including treatment, prevention, and genetics, and it examines obesity in relation to different cultural and age groups.

Though the text's target audience ranges from the general public to clinicians and researchers and it "is intended to serve as a general and nontechnical resource" (ix), the complexity and technical language of many of the entries seem to be geared more toward researchers and those in higher education, not to a general reader. Such entries as "Doubly Labeled Water" and "Cushing Syndrome" are far too technical for the general reader and are more appropriate for an undergraduate or graduate student audience. There is also a great deal of detail and medical terminology used (for example, "monozygotic and dizygotic twins" [191], "excessive emesis" [192], "racemic mixture" [273], and "parmissionious explanation" [748]). A more detailed glossary or key terms box for more complex entries would have enhanced the readability of the text for a more general audience.

Entries range from several paragraphs to several pages. There are inconsistencies in the format of lengthy entries. Some longer entries are broken down by subheadings while others are not. The lack of subheadings made it difficult to locate desired information within the entries and follow the writer's discussion on the particular topic.

"See also" references and a bibliography are included at the end of each entry. Unfortunately, citations provided in the bibliographies are listed in a large paragraph and are separated by only semicolons. It is frustrating and time consuming to read and pick out the citations from the giant paragraphs, especially for entries such as "Asia Southeast" and "Vegetarianism," which have more than half a page of references.

The most comparable work is Dana Cassell and David Gleaves's *The Encyclopedia of Obesity and Eating Disorders* (Facts On File, 2006). The entries cover similar topics and the text is geared toward the general public as well as researchers; however, the entries are not as detailed and the text does not cover as many topics as the *Encyclopedia of Obesity*.

Despite the organizational drawbacks, the content and information provided are detailed and cover the gamut of obesity and related conditions. The "Reader's Guide" and "List of Articles," in addition to the index, aid in locating information. Such additional features as a body mass index table and "Prevalence of Obesity in Males and Females by Country" tables contribute to the variety and breadth of the text.

Considering the technical language and complex writing style, this encyclopedia is recommended for universities and research institutions with obesity, nutrition, and related majors and research programs.—*Maria C. Melssen, Reference/Education Librarian, University of Toledo, Ohio*