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 version 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 lighthearted 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-

port on the Library of Congress, and four appendices. Hamilton has a bad case of index card syndrome.

Among the topics explored are authorship as a profession, the economics of book publishing, book reviewing, book marketing and sales, literary celebrity, American presidents as authors, stolen books, book dedications, etiquette, self-publishing, editing, and the universal library. Hamilton is at his best when dealing with subjects close to his professional specialization, such as the lack of ad revenue for book review pages in American newspapers, the self-publishing racket, and book tours, where he can draw on personal experience, insider knowledge, or original research.

The book's facetious tone undermines real discussion of any topic, but a couple of general themes emerge. One is the theme of historical continuity: Most authors have never made much money from books, books have always succeeded more through accident than merit, politicians have never (or rarely) been good writers, books have never (or rarely) been well edited, etc. The second theme is that things are getting progressively worse: Too many books are published, the publishing business has become too commercialized, fewer reviews are published, marketing is becoming more and more grotesque, etc. Although these two themes do not exactly contradict each other, there is dissonance between Hamilton's bemused tone and the fairly dire situations he reports.

Humor is a subjective thing. Some readers may find this book funny. For me, Hamilton's humor is bland and unoriginal. He has a weakness for cheap shots at hackneyed targets (Richard Nixon, Dan Quayle, Oprah Winfrey) and an irritating tendency to think that anything having to do with sex is funny. Despite his known sympathy for third-world countries, his compulsive pursuit of humor can lead to a tasteless remark such as this: "My favorite tin-pot revolutionaries come from Bolivia, which changes governments the way most people change underwear."

Inevitably, Hamilton commits errors of fact and interpretation in excerpting tidbits from secondary sources. Surely, it is a mistake to quote John Adams on George Washington's lack of education (Adams was jealous of Washington's popularity) and to include as an example of Washington's bad writing a personal letter written at the ripe old age of 17 and ridicule it for lacking punctuation. John Milton's daughters are described as "ungrateful," when in fact they had little to be grateful for. Authors writing anonymously for the Stratemeyer syndicate (Hardy Boys, Nancy Drew, Bobbsey Twins, Tom Swift) promised "not to divulge that they were the men behind the pen names assigned them." The Smithsonian article from which this section was taken names at least one woman, Lilian Garis, among said authors.

Thankfully, Hamilton does not try to make fun of librarians. They figure prominently in the chapter "Best Stolen Books," which offers a sensitive reading of librarians' ambivalent feelings about publicizing book theft. "The Universal Library" is a workmanlike chapter on the history, current operations, and problematic future of the Library of Congress. It gives a balanced overview of the information explosion, preservation problems, digital projects, and even personnel matters at LC.

Hamilton concludes a chapter on book reviewing, entitled "Inglorious Employment," with a challenge to reviewers. Bland reviewing, he laments, "contributes to reader malaise and the decline of reading and literary standards. It also makes the literary world a drearier and, paradoxically, less friendly place." Tempting as it might be to fashion a nonbland review of this inoffensive book, there is nothing to justify it. *Casanova* probably will pass fairly quickly into oblivion, like thousands of other books published every year.—*Jean M. Alexander, Carnegie Mellon University.*

Lessig, Lawrence. *Code and Other Laws of Cyberspace*. New York: Basic Bks., 1999. 297p. $30, cloth (ISBN 046503912X); $14, paper (ISBN 0465039138). LC 00-271772.