April 1998

From the Reference Desk

Tom Gilson

College of Charleston, gilsont@cofc.edu

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Recommended Citation

Gilson, Tom (1998) "From the Reference Desk," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 10: Iss. 2, Article 14.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.2833>

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From the Reference Desk

Column Editor: **Tom Gilson** (College of Charleston) <gilson@cofc.edu>

Confession may be good for the soul but it does not do much for the ego. A recent letter from the folks at **Fitzroy-Dearborn** corrects a mistake I make in a review of their *Encyclopedia of Latin American Literature* (ATG, June 1997, p.42). I referred to Fitzroy-Dearborn as a British publisher. They are not. While they "maintain a large editorial and marketing operation in London, Fitzroy-Dearborn is American-owned and American-incorporated." I stand corrected.

However, regardless of origin, Fitzroy-Dearborn publishes quality references. One recent title which amply demonstrates this is the much praised *Encyclopedia of Television* (1997, 1884964265; \$300). Edited by Horace Newcomb this worthwhile project was undertaken as a joint venture by Fitzroy-Dearborn and **Museum of Broadcast Communications** in Chicago. There is nothing quite like this *Encyclopedia of Television*. Books like *Les Brown's Encyclopedia of Television* (1992, 0810388715; \$55) might be better called a dictionaries of television, while those like James Parrish's and Vincent Terrace's *Complete Actors' Television Credits, 1948-1988* (1989, 081082258x; \$55) serve more as compendiums of specific facts. However, this present three-volume set is a full blown subject encyclopedia which discusses major programs, personalities, technical developments and topical issues in a serious but accessible fashion. One of the strengths of the set is its treatment of controversial issues like racism, sexual orientation, political process and censorship as they relate to television. As one would expect, U.S. dominance in television is reflected in this encyclopedia, but British, Canadian and Australian contributions are also highlighted. Television systems in other countries like France, China, and Japan as well as regions like Central Europe are treated in individual overall entries. When appropriate, entries contain casts, producers, programming histories and actor's credits. Most entries contain useful bibliographies and there are "see also" references linking related topics. There is an index to the complete set and an alphabetical listing of all entries in each of the three volumes. The editor is to be congratulated for the section entitled "Notes on Contributors" which gives their credentials, whether they be full professors or doctoral students. There is no guessing when it comes to qualifications in this set. My only concern is the quality of the binding. It is of the type of reinforced paper which I have seen tear on other occasions when a book is heavily used, and I expect that this set will be a high-use item. However, that should not deter libraries from considering purchase. Given the ever-increasing interest in television and its influence, the *Encyclopedia of Television* should become a standard tool for reference librarians in all types of libraries.

Garland Publishing has become a major source of single volume subject encyclopedias and a number of recent titles add to their growing catalog. *Britain in the Hanoverian Age 1714-1837* (1997, 0-8153-0396-3; \$125) complements two previous Garland publications, *Victorian Britain: An Encyclopedia* (1988, 0-8240-1513-4; \$125) and *Twentieth Century Britain: An Encyclopedia* (1995, 0-8240-7205-7; \$95). One might

ask, why a subject encyclopedia on this era of British history until you think about the events and people that dominate it. Three great revolutions — the American, the French and the Industrial — all occurred during this time while great names like Burke, Johnson, Nelson, Malthus and Handel echo throughout the era. Edited by Hanoverian spe-

cialist Gerald Newman, 561 of the 1,121 entries are biographical sketches while the rest cover topics like literature and culture, politics, warfare, religion and specific events. There is a thorough alphabetical index as well as a thematic index which groups articles by major topic. A nice touch is the use of **boldface** within the text of each article to indicate that there is another article in the encyclopedia which deals with that specific topic. The bibliographies following each entry are helpful and there is a "Guide to Further Research" which rounds out the volume. Adding to the text of the book are 795 black and white illustrations. *Britain in the Hanoverian Age 1714-1837* is a well-structured, scholarly reference which will be useful for the interested layperson and researcher alike. Most academic libraries and larger public libraries should consider it.

A more recent Garland publication, *Instruments of Science: An Historical Encyclopedia* (1998, 0-8153-1561-9, \$138) is a fascinating look at a topic deserving of attention. Technology has a transforming effect on all our lives and this volume presents the story of many of the most important technological devices ever invented. Offering more than explanations and definitions given in standard sources like the *Van Nostrand's Scientific Encyclopedia*, this reference places each scientific instrument in historic perspective. Recently, I was reading about the history of Antarctic exploration. The author talked about the development of the chronometer which made it possible for James Cook and others to explore the uncharted waters of Antarctica. Wanting to know more, I checked the index of *Instruments of Science* and was led to an article which gave me the full history of the development of the chronometer as well as a picture of John Harrison's original 1735 invention. This volume gives the same quality coverage to 324 other scientific instruments. Editors Robert Bud and Deborah Warner discuss each instrument, its invention, early applications, and later development. Included are helpful photographs or illustrations of each instrument. All entries end with brief but useful bibliographies. Libraries should definitely consider this reference.

Routledge contributes a highly specialized but welcome title with its *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* (1998, 0-415-09380-5, \$165). Edited by Mona Baker this is a scholarly treatment of an emerging field. The book is divided into two parts, both arranged alphabetically. The first deals with concepts and techniques like machine-aided translation, equivalence, contrastive analysis and pure language. The second part covers the history of translation studies by discussing various traditions including African, Chinese, Persian, British, Turkish, etc. Included in these essays are histories of the traditions as well as brief biographies of influential figures. The articles are scholarly and well researched and while intended for an academic audience, professionals in the field will find them of interest. Each article ends with a list of further readings referring to the impressive bibliography which follows the main text. The index is my only concern. It is somewhat inconsistent. In the article on the American tradition, the essential role of interpreters is recognized in the discussion of early explorations like that of Lewis and Clark. While the name of their interpreter, Toussaint Charbonneau, is referred to in the index, there is no trace of either Lewis or Clark, or Sacajawea, the expedition's other main interpreter. Also more "see" and "see also" references would be helpful. There is no way of knowing that the article dealing with legal interpreting is listed under court interpreting except to guess. However, my concern about the index does not extend to the content. This volume has obvious value in providing background and factual information about translation studies. In addition, subject encyclopedias like this provide an often unrecognized service. They offer a single, unified framework from which to view a discipline, gaining a sense of both scope and content. The *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* accomplishes this by giving a sense of what the discipline is all about. In short, this book adds clearer definition to translation studies, a "discipline in progress." This is a great help to scholars, both for the current information provided as well

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as for leads to further research. Academic libraries supporting courses in translation studies and related areas will want to add this book to their collection.

What do *The Sun Also Rises* and *The Sound and the Fury* have in common besides being major contributions to American literature? Neither was a bestseller. How do I know? A quick check in McFarland's new *Bestseller Index: All Books, Publishers Weekly and The New York Times through 1990* (1998, 0-7864-0422-1, \$115) reveals this fact. While the alphabetical author list of the *Bestseller Index* shows that Hemingway and Faulkner had bestsellers during their careers, these two titles did not make the grade. This alphabetical author list is the main portion of the *Bestseller Index*. Each author entry provides the title of the book, the list(s) it appeared on, the date of first appearance, its highest ranking and number of total weeks. For the statistically inclined, editor Keith L. Justice supplements the author list with appendices that reveal interesting tidbits like which authors have had more than ten bestsellers (Louis L'Amour heads the list with a total of 30) or which books have appeared for more than 100 weeks (Not surprisingly, Alex Comfort's *Joy of Sex* holds the record at 753 combined weeks). Another appendix informs us of all authors listed for more than 100 weeks. (Stephen King is the grand champion with a remarkable total of 1,731 weeks.) The *Bestseller Index* covers any of the bestseller lists published in *Publishers Weekly* or *The New York Times*. The Children's Bestseller List, Mass Market Paperback List, the Trade Paperback List, etc. are included. In addition to the facts provided, the editor's introduction and brief histories of these two bestseller lists makes fascinating reading for anyone interested in books and popular culture. *Publisher's Weekly* started their list on May 13, 1919, while surprisingly, *The New York Times* waited until 1935 to join the fray. Regardless, both have provided a barometer to the popular reading tastes of the nation making this index a helpful tool for not only locating specific facts, but for gaining insight into American popular culture. This is an interesting and fun reference which public and academic libraries will find valuable.

Students are in constant need of resources which help them in understanding the meaning of literary works. *Literature and Its Times* (1998, 0-7876-0606-5, \$395) from Gale is another title that should be added to the list of references suited to this need. Taking a different slant, this five-volume set places an individual work in historical perspective, both in light of the times which the work portrays, as well as the time it was written. The concept of "literary work" is expansive and while the emphasis is on fiction and drama, entries also cover speeches, essays and documents. Some three hundred works are discussed ranging from *Macbeth* to *West Side Story*, and from *Animal Farm* to the *Gettysburg Address*. While many of the items are heavily studied "classics," there has been an effort to include noteworthy works by ethnic and women writers so readers will find coverage of Homer's *Iliad* and Mary Renault's *Bull From the Sea* in the same volume. Besides the historic contexts, each entry includes a plot summary and a list of further readings. The set is arranged chronologically starting with Volume 1 covering works set from Prehistory—1790 through Volume 5, which covers 1960-2000. Structuring the set like this is useful. It enables students to not only see how each individual work is influenced by its historical contexts, but allows them to compare how different works portray similar time periods. Another helpful touch is, each volume contains the index to the entire set. Overall, this multidisciplinary treatment, melding literature and history, provides students a good background for the study of these works. The writing is straightforward and suited for college freshmen. *Literature and Its Times* supplements literary criticism adding depth to a student's understanding. In addition, teachers will find that browsing this set may spark additional ideas for comparing and contrasting specific literary works.

There will never be a shortage of interested readers for fiction depict-

ing the darker side of human nature. People are fascinated by macabre, ghoulish tales fashioned to make their skin crawl. (Remember who has been on the bestseller list for more weeks than anyone else in history.) However, there has been some fairly good literature to come out of the "dark side." The fertile imaginations of writers ranging from Arthur Conan Doyle to Peter Straub to Shirley Jackson have all produced fiction intended to frighten and perplex. The newly published *St. James Guide to Horror, Ghost and Gothic Writers* (1998, 1-55862-206-3, \$140) provides a bio-critical guide to these and over 400 other writers. Each entry has a brief biography, complete list of the author's works and a critical essay. The essays are brief but offer critical insights to major works and the full listing of works gives a sense of each writer's output. A number of entries also contain lists of film/media adaptations as well as other critical studies. This is a useful reference for anyone interested in getting a critical overview or suggestions for titles by a favorite author. However, any future edition should provide stronger bibliographies of additional criticism. The *St. James Guide to Horror, Ghost and Gothic Writers* is a good place to start research but it should offer more guidance to additional sources. Libraries which have found the other St. James Guides (*Crime and Mystery Writers*, *Fantasy Writers*, and *Science Fiction Writers*) valuable will want to give serious consideration to this book.

Gale's *Drama for Students* (1998, 0-7876-1683-4; \$55/vol.) does for plays what their recently published *Novels for Students* does for novels. In my review of *Novels for Students* (ATG, Dec. 1997-Jan. 1998, p.32, 34) I said that this set "pinpoints some of the most studied novels in high school and college introductory English classes." Replace the word plays for novels and you have a description of *Drama for Students*. All of the good things I said about *Novels for Students* hold true for this set. The essays in *Drama for Students* also "offer students an excellent starting point and give them a solid grounding for further exploration." In fact, many students will think they have died and gone to "research heaven" after finding these books in the reference stacks. However, reference librarians know that they have only gotten to St. Peter's Gate. Reference sets like these are valuable introductions, especially for high school students and first year undergraduates. They open the door to the possibilities of how a student might view a work of literature. For this reason most high school and public libraries, as well as college libraries, will want to consider them.

Acknowledging the global nature of today's business world, Routledge began publishing a series of bilingual business dictionaries in 1995. Adding to their French-English and German-English dictionaries, they have just released the *Routledge Spanish Dictionary of Business, Commerce and Finance / Diccionario Ingles de Negocios, Comercio y Finanzas* (1998, 0-415-09393-7; \$99). Offering definitions to "100,000 terms and references in Spanish and English," this volume compares favorably to *Wiley's English—Spanish, Spanish—English Business Dictionary* (1996, 0-471-12664-0; \$44.95) which covers 40,000 terms. More like a phrase book, the Wiley dictionary is intended for ready reference, quickly matching Spanish and English terms with their counterparts. The Routledge dictionary takes a more sophisticated approach. Working with the IBEROTERM Terminology Centre, Routledge developed a list of Spanish and Latin American terms in areas like accountancy, banking, marketing, personnel management and taxation. Both individual words and hyphenated compounds have been included in the dictionary and, in addition to definitions, parts of speech, gender (for Spanish nouns) and subject and geographic labels are given for each term. Because Spanish and Latin American, along with British and North American, terms are included, variant spellings are cross referenced. Appendices in both languages include a sample resumé, job application, offer of employment and a sample balance sheet. Also included are lists of stock exchanges, financial and economic indexes and countries worldwide. A great deal of care has gone into the preparation of this dictionary and it shows. Libraries or business firms in need of a good bilingual Spanish-English business dictionary should make the investment. They will find this book worth it.