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From the Reference Desk

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From the Reference Desk

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Thankfully, the heat index here in the "Holy City" has begun to recede just as we enter one of the busiest times of the academic year. Students start crawling out of the woodwork asking for criticism of Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* or how to find the SEC's Edgar Files on the Web. Luckily, reference titles continue to emerge. As usual, a number of new titles have caught my eye.

G.K. Hall has just added another guide in their Reference Publication in Literature collection. **LynnDianne Beene's** *Guide to British Prose Explication Nineteenth and Twentieth Century* (1997, 0-8161-1987-2, \$70) lists explications from both books and journals which shed critical light on the prose works of selected British fiction writers. While some may quibble with the selection of certain writers and the omission of others, Beene includes the writers that most undergraduates are assigned. As with the other volumes in this collection, the *Guide* is arranged by author name and then within author name by specific title. Coverage can be as brief as the one entry for Dickens' little-read *Mrs. Lirriper's Lodgings* to the twelve pages of citations devoted to Joyce's *Ulysses*. Sources dating from the 1950s up to and including the 1990s are listed. The abbreviations for the journals cited is included in the front of the *Guide* while the main book sources are listed in the back of the volume. As any reference librarian will testify, guides to explication can be a godsend especially when they are as selective and scholarly as this one.

In the last issue of *ATG* (v.9#4, September, 1997, "Electronic and Print: A Merger in the Making," p.22), I wrote an article which touched on the intersection of electronic and print resources. More evidence is coming in which supports this trend. A couple of helpful guides and finding aids for locating Internet resources have recently been published which merit attention.

Of interest to both academic and

public libraries is **Greg R. Notess'** book *Government Information on the Internet* published by **Bernan** (1997, 0-89059-041-9, \$24). In this book Notess' intended purpose is to provide "subject and agency access to more than 1,200 governmental Internet resources." Readers can expect to see sites like the **Federal Web Locator** sponsored by the **Villanova Center for Information Law and Policy** as well as the **Internal Revenue Service's** Web page listed. All entries are numbered and contain the name of the site, sponsoring agency, URL, subject headings and SuDoc (Superintendent of Documents) numbers for relevant agency publications which are available via the site. The subject headings part of the entry refers to the subject index in the back of the book, thus researchers finding a site of interest can check under those subject headings in the index to locate additional sites which may be helpful. The SuDoc numbers refer to series or serials not monographs or pamphlets. In addition to the subject index, there are indexes by URL, SuDoc number, publication title and agency and site title. Notess is a librarian at **Montana State University-Boseman** and has done a service for reference and government documents librarians not to mention researchers. In teaching a session on Government Resources on the Web, I had occasion to refer to his work. The hope here is that *Government Information on the Internet* will be updated as the need arises in order to maintain its usefulness.

Gary Gach's *Writers.Net: Every Writer's Essential Guide to Online Resources and Opportunities* (1997, 0-7615-0641-1, \$22) has been published by Prima Publishing as a manual to assist writers use the Internet. In this book, Gach offers help to writers in using the Internet to do research, find publishing opportunities, learn how to improve their writing and "hang out with other writers." Chapters include leads to resources for online learning, networking with other writers, specific genre writing, i.e. romance writers, mystery writers, poets, screen writers; Net journalism, self publishing; Net research, and censorship and copyright. Besides listing specific resources Gach also offers advice and anecdotes which not only give the text narrative flow but add valuable insights. Resource entries include the title, URL and a brief explanation of the site's merits. The book also contains a dated, but useful glossary of Internet terms as well as a helpful index. Public libraries will find this guide especially useful and may want a circulating copy to go along with the one in reference.

Feminist literary criticism arose in part as a response to the marginalization of women's contribu-

tions to literature. This is not a phenomena exclusive to American and British literature. **Greenwood Press** has just released a reference which highlights the same shortfall as it relates to German literature. The *Feminist Encyclopedia of German Literature* (1997, 0-313-29313-9, \$99.50) contains over 500 entries which cover topics including literary concepts like postmodernism, various genres like poetry and the novel, cultural movements like surrealism, literary themes like gender transformation and female archetypes like the goddess and the wisewomen. While some individual authors are highlighted, editors **Friederike Eigler** and **Susan Kord** point to sources like **Elke Frederiksen's** *Women Writers of Germany, Austria and Switzerland* (1989, 031324989X; \$65.00) and her *Women Writers in German Speaking Countries* (1996, 0313282013, price N/A) both published by Greenwood, as more adequate sources for bi-bibliographical work. *Feminist Encyclopedia of German Literature* is a good background reference offering a starting point for further exploration. Each entry includes a brief bibliography of relevant books, most of which are in English or German. "See also" references are given when appropriate and an appendix of prominent names in German feminist literature is included. This reference would have benefited from a thematic index to help differentiate the various literary movements, theories, periods, concepts and genres. Also, a fuller listing of the contributor's credentials including more than just institutional affiliation is necessary. This applies to many references currently being published and would be helpful in allaying recent concerns expressed on some listservs about entries in reference books being written by graduate students rather than faculty.

Kluwer Academic Publishers has just released a reference which treats a topic neglected in the reference literature. The *Encyclopedia of the History of Science, Technology and Medicine in Non-Western Cultures* (1997, 0-7923-4066-3, \$420) fills a void by concentrating on a subject area which, at best, is given partial treatment in other sources. Recent works like Routledge's *Companion Encyclopedia of the History and Philosophy of the Mathematical Sciences* and Cambridge University Press' *Cambridge World History of Human Disease* offer sections that deal with non-Western approaches to the disciplines covered, but even in these cases the majority of the coverage is given the Western approach. The entries in this encyclopedia cover a variety of subjects including biographical sketches of prominent scientists; regional and national developments in specific fields like maps and map making, ethnobotany and physics and philosophical discussions on topics like Magic and Science, Technology and Culture and Western Dominance. The arrangement of essays is alphabetical with a helpful index provided in the back of the volume. A list of contributors along with the essays they wrote is also given. The book also has a number of illustrations but

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I found myself wanting more, especially when reading the article on road networks, city planning and navigation. This is something to consider for any future edition. For a one-volume reference, this encyclopedia is expensive, but it covers a topic not thoroughly covered in other sources.

Academic Press offers another solid contribution with the two-volume *Encyclopedia of Gerontology: Age, Aging and the Aged* (1996, 0-12-226862-8, \$300). There seems to be an increased interest in this topic. Witness the recent publication of the 2nd edition of the *Encyclopedia of Aging* (reviewed in September issue of *ATG*, p.48). Edited by **James E. Birren**, the *Encyclopedia of Gerontology* is a scholarly look at the physical, psychological and social issues confronting people as they age. Topics ranging from Housing to DNA and Gene Expression and from Pharmacology to Sexuality, Sensuality and Intimacy are treated. The articles are well-written and the set is illustrated with photos, diagrams, and drawings throughout. One unique feature of this set is that each article starts with a glossary of terms which assists in the reading of the article. Bibliographies are provided at the end of each article and there is a list of contributors as well as a good subject index in the back of the second volume. Given the price some libraries may be better served with the above mentioned *Encyclopedia of Aging* although most academic libraries supporting physical education programs and some larger public libraries collecting in this area will want to make the investment in this set as well.

The world of sports and athletics is receiving more attention from reference publishers. Two recent references attest to this growing interest and recognition. **Macmillan Library Reference's** *Encyclopedia of Sports Science* (1997, 0-02-864665-7, \$200) concentrates on both the "physics" or biomechanics of playing various sports as well as their physical demands and consequences. Editor **John Zumerchik** has divided this encyclopedia into two parts; sports and the body. Highlighting twenty-nine major sports from acrobatics to wrestling, each entry gives a brief history of the sport followed by an explanation of the mechanics of why a curve ball curves or the aerodynamic forces which effect a golf ball in flight. The second part of the encyclopedia covers issues relating to the body like aging and performance (an essay which I read with personal interest), energy and metabolism, and nutrition and the athlete, as well as sections on individual body parts like the knee, heart and skeletal muscle. This set is full of interesting facts and observations. It is also illustrated throughout with useful diagrams, drawings, charts and photos which add both visual appeal and value. Each essay is followed by a bibliography containing both journals and books and there is an index to the set in volume two. Some public libraries and most college libraries supporting a

physical education curriculum will want to purchase this encyclopedia.

ABC-CLIO's *Encyclopedia of World Sport from Ancient Times to the Present* (1996, 0-87436-819-7, \$225) is not only concerned with the history, development and description of individual sports. Close to three hundred sports ranging from chariot racing to foxhunting to lacrosse to volleyball are discussed. However, there are also articles dealing with sports-related concepts like aggression, ritual and leadership as well as articles on issues like drugs and drug testing, commercialization and women's sports, both in Europe and North America. Additionally, articles on disciplines which have a major interest in sports like psychology, law and medicine are included. This is an ambitious work which offers useful information on individual sports as well as a perspective on the broader issues related to sport. But it may be too ambitious in trying to cover what is a highly complex subject in three volumes. It is hard to pinpoint why, but I am left with the impression that the related social issues and disciplines touched on here deserve an encyclopedia of their own. Either that, or the publisher might expand this type of coverage in the current set and change the title of the encyclopedia to reflect this broader emphasis. That being said, *Encyclopedia of World Sport from Ancient Times to the Present* offers an interesting combination of fascinating fact with provocative "food for thought." It treats a neglected but important subject in a straightforward but scholarly way. All of the entries contain a bibliography, some extensive, and the third volume has, what seems to be a complete bibliography of all sources used in the set. Academic libraries and larger public libraries will want to purchase this set.

Reference librarians might also be interested in a few recently-updated editions of sources which have proven useful in the past. They include two new third editions by **Oxford University Press**: the *Oxford Companion to German Literature* by **Henry and Mary Garland** (1997, 0-19-815896-3, \$75) and the *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* by **F.L. Cross and E.A. Livingstone** (1997, 0-19-211655-X, \$125). Second editions of **Gale's** *Hispanic American Almanac* edited by **Nicolas Kanellos** (1997, 0-8103-8595-3, \$110) and *Locating United States Government Information* by **Edward Herman** published by **William S. Hein & Co.** (1997, 1-57588-203-5, \$68) have been recently released. (The latter has an Internet supplement). Also published by **William S. Hein & Co.** is the fifth edition of *Bieber's Dictionary of Legal Citation* by **Mary Prince** (1997, 1-57588-285-X, \$39.50). **HarperCollins** weighs in with the tenth edition of the *Encyclopedia of American Facts and Dates* by **Gorton Carruth** (1997, 0-06-270192, \$45). And finally, librarians will be glad to see the fifth edition of **Schirmer Books' Music Reference and Research Materials: an Annotated Bibliography** by **Vincent H Duckles and Ida Reed** (1997, 0-02-870821-0, \$45).