June 2001

From the Reference Desk-Reviews of Reference Titles

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Recommended Citation

Gilson, Tom (2001) "From the Reference Desk-Reviews of Reference Titles," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 13: Iss. 3, Article 20.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.3500>

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From the Reference Desk

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Social history has evolved into a significant branch of historical inquiry. It concentrates on the lives and experiences of ordinary people and its importance, as an active field of study, has to grow since its emergence in the 1920's. For evidence of this, one needs look no further than to a new encyclopedia recently published by Scribner's. The *Encyclopedia of European Social History from 1350 - 2000* (2001, 0684806452, \$650) is a serious and scholarly work that offers a comprehensiveness that will serve the needs of both student and professional historian.

Containing over 200 essays, the *Encyclopedia* is organized in 23 thematic sections filling 6 volumes (including the index). Laying the groundwork is Volume 1, with essays on the methods and theoretical approaches in the practice of social history, as well as articles on specific chronological periods, those on regions and countries within Europe and essays on Europe's relationship with the rest of the world. Volume 2 looks at the broad processes impacting change like technology, war and secularization. It also contains essays on population changes, as well as articles on phenomena like urbanization, life in rural communities and articles on state-society issues like absolutism, the liberal state, bureaucracy and military service. Volume 3 covers issues related to social structure, varying forms of protest, crime and social control, as well as essays on social problems like public health, poor relief and welfare. The fourth volume deals with family, gender and sexuality issues along with the roles played by work and labor. Also contained in this vol-

ume are essays on medical practice, childbirth, psychology and the physical senses. The fifth volume is devoted to popular culture and ranges from articles on music and dance to those on drinking and drug use, and also includes those on religion, education and literacy. The final volume contains biographies of notable figures drawn from a variety of Gale Group titles like the *Encyclopedia of World Biography* and *Notable Women Scientists*, a list of contributors with credentials and most importantly, the index. Given the topical structure of this reference a good index is imperative and this one fits the bill. It leads the reader to specific volume and page numbers, as well as being cross-referenced. Each essay has its own useful bibliography and the text is complemented by photos, illustrations and maps, all adding to the impression of high quality.

With the *Encyclopedia of European Social History*, editor **Peter N. Sterns** and his contributors have created a work of enduring scholarly value. The essays are thorough examinations of the topics covered, not short burst of factual information. In short, this is an encyclopedia that demands that a reader spend time with it to gain maximum value. Students of European history will seek out this handsome set repeatedly. Most academic libraries will find it a necessary purchase.

Literary translation is an essential means of introducing cultures to one another. Without translations into English, the classic drama of the Greeks, the poetry of the Tang Dynasty and the fiction of modern writers like **Solzhenitsyn** would be inaccessible to

most of us. However, there are both obvious and hidden implications inherent in the mediation imposed by translation. So much so, that a formal field of study focused on the practice of literary translation has emerged demanding serious consideration.

Fitzroy-Dearborn has published a 2-volume reference set that attests to the vibrant nature of translation studies while at the same time helping to map and define them. Edited by **Oliver Classe**, the *Encyclopedia of Literary Translation into English* (2000, 1884964362, \$285) contains over 600 articles by 290 contributors. The entries fall into three major categories: surveys of major languages that have been translated into English, articles related to the theory and practice of literary translation and those covering individual writers and works. Languages ranging from Arabic to French-Canadian are covered in this set, as are influences like feminist translation theory and cultural misrepresentation. Of course, specific authors and individual works are given a good deal of attention and range from the *Gilgamesh* epic and the *I Ching*, to 20th century writers like **Umberto Eco** and **Isabel Allende**. The organization of the book is solid with the entries listed alphabetically and includes title, translator and general indexes. In addition, there is an alphabetical list of all articles, a list of writers and works by language and a chronological list of writers and works.

Under the watchful eye of **Mr. Classe**, the *Encyclopedia of Literary Translation into English* does justice to this important, interdisciplinary field of study. The commitment to scholarship is obvious from the selected translations listed in each author entry to the bibliographies at the end of each article to the thorough notes on individual advisors and contributors. This is a natural choice for academic libraries supporting advanced literature and linguistics courses. Such libraries should also consider the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies* (1998, 0415093805, \$165) edited by **Mona Baker** and **Kirsten Malmkjaer**.

Speaking of **Routledge**, they have recently published a useful addition to their list of contemporary culture encyclopedias. The *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Latin American and Caribbean Cultures* (2001, 041513188X, \$399) contains over 4000 entries in a handy three volume set. Many of the articles are more like dictionary entries,

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public domain on university library acquisition budgets. The 29 page report can be downloaded as a pdf file from the PA Website (www.publishers.org) and the 2001 update, which has only recently been released, contains comparative data on spending in Europe, Australia and New Zealand. In general the picture painted by the report is not a happy one, with 36% of university libraries spending less on book acquisitions in 1998/99 than they did in the previous year, and 20% spent less on journals. The per capita spending on books also continued to decline. There is a great deal of use-

ful analysis in the report, and it is well worth the effort to download.

I started this column with a reference to **ALPSP**, and to give another perspective on the importance of professional society publishing, the Annual Report of the **Institution of Electrical Engineers** for 2000/2001 has just been published. The total operating income of the **IEE** was \$55 million (at the current exchange rate of 1.42), of which over 55% was accounted for by income from publishing and information services. Any decrease in this amount as academic libraries try to manage their budgets in a time of some difficulty would have a serious impact on the **IEE**, and on most other professional societies.

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brief, factual and to the point. Coverage concentrates on social, political and cultural developments in Latin America and the Caribbean region. The editors define contemporary as starting with the 1920's up through the present. The content runs from brief biographical sketches of important figures to individual country studies. There are also a number of articles on major themes like architecture, the cinema, education and research, fashion, intellectual life, the media, folklore and the arts. Individual articles focus on topics as diverse as reggae and punta rock, the circus and comic strips, tequila and chewing gum and television and theatre festivals. This reference is attuned to quick visits for facts and definitions, not comprehensive research. Most of the entries are brief and have no bibliographies. Those bibliographies which do appear, are generally short, 2-4 entry lists. And this is just a pet peeve but the editors follow the disturbing practice of listing the contributors without their credentials. On a more positive note, there is a helpful thematic index grouping articles into specific categories. There is also a thorough general index.

The *Encyclopedia of Contemporary Latin American and Caribbean Cultures* fills a void and focuses on this region's culture just as interest seems at a peak. While not an exhaustive, in-depth treatment, it has an ambitious and broad scope of coverage and will be of use to readers in need of precise, clearly written information about these cultures. However, it is a bit pricey, so need should dictate purchase. Appropriate for both academic and public libraries.

Another title that will be of interest to both academic and public libraries is **ABC-CLIO's** *Encyclopedia of the United States Cabinet* (2000, 0874369770, \$275) by **Mark Grossman**. Organized into a 3-volume set, the *Encyclopedia* is divided into sections by government department and then chronologically by cabinet member.

Coverage includes cabinet members of each administration from **Washington** to **Clinton**, as well as members of the Confederate cabinet of **Jefferson Davis**. The biographical entries offer factual summaries of each cabinet member's contribution in office, as well as highlights from their overall careers. The text is informative and peppered with quotes by contemporaries that add interest to the biographical facts. Each entry has a short but helpful bibliography and there is a cumulative bibliography in the last volume. In addition, there are a number of appendices containing listings of cabinet members by administration, members who died in office and those whose nominations failed or were withdrawn.

While the biographical information is the most obvious benefit of this set, readers will also find the departmental histories that introduce each section valuable. They are 2-3 pages long articles that cogently relay the development and current duties of each of cabinet department.

Author **Mark Grossman** has done an admirable job in providing an interesting and well organized biographical reference that is readable and easy to use. While information about many of these men and women can be found in other sources, the *Encyclopedia of the United States Cabinet* puts it all together in one quickly identifiable package. Readers interested in the history and development of American government will appreciate the effort.

Springer recently published a new health reference that both students and professional caregivers will welcome. The *Encyclopedia of Elder Care: The Comprehensive Resource on Geriatric and Social Care* (2000, 0826113680, \$129) lives up to its title. It is a comprehensive, practical resource devoted to the medical and social issues of long term care. Written by practitioners and educators, there are close to 300 informative articles in the *Encyclopedia* and the range of coverage is impressive. Conditions ranging from psychotic disorders and mania to dizziness and hypertension are included, as are diseases specifically related to aging like dementia, osteoporosis and Alzheimer's. There are also articles on practical concerns like retirement, tax policy, and Medicaid, as well as those on emotional issues like bereavement, caregiver burnout and death anxiety. In addition, there are entries related to professional concerns like case management, assessment tools, clinical pathways and best practices. The articles are well written and firmly grounded in recent research. Parenthetical citations are used

in each article and refer to a thorough bibliography containing references to recent books and scholarly articles. In addition, each entry lists keywords useful in searching the Web, as well as relevant Websites.

Encyclopedia of Elder Care: The Comprehensive Resource on Geriatric and Social Care is reference that tackles an important subject and does it with scholarly care and professional attention. Editor **Mathy D. Mezey** and the rest of the contributors to this volume have reason to be pleased. They have created an important and useful resource that should find a home in libraries, professional offices and on personal bookshelves.

In a novel turn-a-round of information repackaging, **Bernan Press** has re-packaged an entire government Website, into print. The *Biographical Directory of the Federal Judiciary, 1789-2000* (2001, 0890592586, \$225) is basically a book version of the *History of the Federal Judiciary* portion of the Federal Judicial Center's Website at <http://air.fjc.gov/history>. Actually, the idea behind this effort is sound. Combining the information gleaned from multi-page sites into a more manageable, single volume print reference makes sense for some users. The *History of the Federal Judiciary* portion of the *Federal Judicial Center's* Website is not particularly difficult to navigate but there are definite advantages to a single print volume. The table of contents in the print version lays everything out in 2 easily viewed pages. On the other hand the Website requires delving through 2-3 layers of Web pages to get to lists of some of the contents. The print version also seems more logically arranged and its organizational scheme more obvious and easier to grasp. On the down side, there is no print function except for making Xerox copies, and in the book version you have to search by paging through the volume, which may strike some students as archaic. Clicking through, or searching the database, especially in the biography portion of the Website, will have more appeal to them. More importantly, there is no remote access to the book; you have to be in the library to use it.

As far as content goes, there is little, if any, noticeable difference. It is just more difficult navigating the Website than thumbing through the book. The real difference is price. The Website is free and the print volume is \$225. While having this information in book form is useful, librarians are generally sensible when it comes to spending, and the price of this reference book is way above the value added. If you need this information, just bookmark the Website.

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A few new editions have also come to light and are deserving of attention. First published in 1991, *Scribner's African American Writers* was well received and along with the other titles in the *Scribner Writers Series*, it has found a place in many reference collections. An expanded and updated second edition has now been released which will prove even more useful. Also edited by **Valerie Smith**, the second edition of *African American Writers* (2001, 068480638X, \$225) adds 20 new authors to its coverage, as well updating and revising all prior entries. Authors like **Jamaica Kincaid**, **August Wilson** and **Octavia Butler** join **James Baldwin**, **Langston Hughes** and **Zora Neal Hurston** in this new edition. Also contained in this 2 volume set are revised essays on slave narratives, the Black Arts Movement, and a new essay on spiritual biography. But obviously, it is the author essays that garner the most attention. They offer a skillful melding of biographical sketches with literary criticism. The life story, education and influences of each writer are included, along with a brief analysis of specific works and discussion of the author's overall contribution. Each entry has a selective bibliography of the writer's own work, as well as helpful listings of secondary sources.

The second edition of *African American Writers* lives up to the quality that readers and librarians expect from the *Scribner Writer Series*. Reading these essays offers an enlightening overview of each author treated, and lays the groundwork for further exploration. It will prove a highly useful set for high school students and undergraduates, as well as the general reader. Most public, undergraduate and high schools libraries will want to consider it.

The third edition of **Springer's Encyclopedia of Aging** (2001, 0826148425, \$199) is primarily intended for students of gerontology and geriatrics along with clinicians working in the field. As with prior editions, this new version will prove a significant resource for both. However, the *Encyclopedia of Aging* has broader appeal. It covers a topic that is of growing interest to a number of people and is written in a clear and intelligible fashion.

The *Encyclopedia* has expanded to a 2-volume set and according to the blurb on the dust jacket, 200 of the 600 articles are

"brand new." How they derived this figure is unclear, but a page count shows 88 pages of additional text. (I suspect that they are including "brand new and revised" articles.) Nonetheless, there are a number of new and significant entries including ones on Calcium Metabolism, Baby Boomers and their Future, Family and Medical Leave Act, Palliative Care and AIDS: the Epidemiological and Social Context.

As you can tell, this reference draws from a number of diverse disciplines to address issues facing the aged and their caregivers. The *Encyclopedia* is informed by recent research from fields ranging from biology and genetics to sociology and economics, and from medicine and nursing to psychology and policy studies. It is the type of reference set that serves to answer specific questions, as well as offer a starting place for more involved exploration. The bibliography remains impressive. It consists of 165 pages of double columns, filled with the citations referred to within the text of the *Encyclopedia*. While this is actually fewer pages than the bibliography in the second edition, it has been updated and edited to include the latest research available.

This newest edition of the *Encyclopedia of Aging* will only add to its reputation as a comprehensive and practical reference. The editors have expanded the scope of the *Encyclopedia*, and updated

its contents to reflect the most recent developments in this growing field.

And finally, reference librarians will be glad to know that the 2001 edition of the *American Reference Books Annual* (2001, 1563088886, \$115) has hit the shelves. This is the 32nd edition of this reference standard and a total of 1561 book and CD-ROM reviews of items mostly published in 2000 are squeezed in between the covers. (A few titles from 1999 are also included.) A total of 37 chapters fully cover the growing diversity of subjects now part of the reference literature, as well as the various categories of reference tools, i.e., encyclopedias, atlases, directories, etc. This edition also carries on the practice started in the 2000 edition of including a chapter that reviews professional library literature on varying of topics whether related to reference or not.

The *American Reference Books Annual* remains an essential purchase for reference collection development. It gives selectors both a bibliography of recent reference titles, as well as professional reviews to assist in evaluating their relevance. I have only one problem with this publication. With their growing numbers, it is time that *ARBA* begin reviewing Web versions of reference sources. Reviewing books and CD-ROMs is no longer enough. 🐼

Book Reviews: Monographic Musings — Airing the Classics

Column Editor: **Debbie Vaughn** (Reference Librarian, College of Charleston) <vaughnd@cofc.edu>

In tropical climates, like those in India and parts of Nepal, hot, wet weather bathes the land and its inhabitants during the summer months. From June to September, books are at-risk items, particularly susceptible to mold and mildew. For this reason, the monastic library collections are

tended to on the sixth day of the sixth moon in a celebration known as Airing the Classics.

There is some history

behind this "Double Sixth" observance: on their journey down the river to China, Buddhist pilgrims suffered a dose of turbulence, leaving their books drenched with water. Immediately, they nursed their library collection—they aired their classics—in order to save their precious volumes.

I have made a personal resolution this year to observe this Buddhist holiday. On the sixth day of the sixth moon, I am going to dote on my own library. I will dust my books and their shelves, I will give them air to breathe, and I will take an hour or so to do nothing but consider other works to add to my collection. Perhaps this month's reviews will help you consider the same.

Happy reading!

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