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From the Reference Desk

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From the Reference Desk

by **Tom Gilson** (Head, Reference Services, Robert Scott Small Library, College of Charleston, Charleston, SC 29424; Phone: 843-953-8014; Fax: 843-953-8019) <gilson@cofc.edu>

The Holocaust and its aftermath have left an indelible political and social mark on contemporary history. It has also inspired one of our most forceful literatures. Published by **Routledge** and edited by **S. Lillian Kremer**, *Holocaust Literature: An Encyclopedia of Writers and their Work* (2003, 0415929857, \$250) is a two-volume encyclopedia centered on this compelling, international body of writing.

Included in the encyclopedia are 300 biographical entries covering the life and works of novelists, poets and dramatists, memoirists, historians and "a small number of influential religious and secular philosophers and theorists." Essays vary in length from 1800 to 8000 words, depending on the importance of the author being discussed. The authors covered range from the non-Jewish novelist **W.G. Sebald** to the historian **Saul Friedlander**, from the influential thinker **Hannah Arendt** to the modern poet **Karen Gershon** and from the controversial memoirist **Viktor Frankl** to the revered **Isaac Bashevis Singer**. Each entry offers biographical highlights, as well as critical evaluations and is written by a scholar in the field. (There is a complete list of contributors with biographical notes in the second volume.) In addition, all of the essays have a bibliography of primary and secondary sources, many of which are substantial.

The added features are also noteworthy with a number of very helpful appendices included. There is a listing of author birthplaces and languages of composition. (Fourteen languages are represented, ranging from Czech to Yiddish, as well as authors from countries as diverse as Guatemala, Lithuania and the Netherlands.) There are also appendices linking authors with genres and with literary themes, as well as those that identify the various ghettos and concentration camps referred to in Holocaust literature. Rounding out the set is a glossary and a general index.

Holocaust Literature is an essential purchase, and not only for libraries serious about supporting Jewish studies programs. It is a necessary addition for colleges and universities offering diverse courses on Western literature and cultural history. Given the importance and seriousness of the subject, larger public libraries will want to find a place for it on their reference shelves, as well.

Interested libraries may also want to consider **Oryx Press'** *Encyclopedia of Holocaust Literature* (2002, 1573562572, \$54.95). While less comprehensive, the price and general quality make it a solid choice for circulating collections, or branch library reference collections.

By launching their recent reference imprint, with its growing list of titles, **SAGE Publications** is making a name for itself. Works like the *Encyclopedia of New Media* (2003, 0761923829, \$125) will add to their reputation. Edited by **Steve Jones**, the Chairman of the Department of Communications at the **University of Illinois at Chicago**, this work fills the need for a scholarly treatment focused on the current state of media communication.

The *Encyclopedia of New Media* tries to take a comprehensive look at the topic from the main actors, to particular technologies, to current uses, to pressing issues. Regarding the biographies, the *Encyclopedia* gives equal space to pioneers like **Alan Turing**, **Marshall McLuhan** and **Edward R. Tufte**, as well as today's business entrepreneurs like **Steven Jobs**, **Margaret Whitman** and **Jeff Bezos**. Profiles of activists like **Mitchell Kapur** and **John Perry Barlow** and multimedia artists like **Laurie Anderson** and **Nam June Paik** are also included, pointing to the diversity of the coverage. Issues from copyright to unwanted spam and from privacy to the digital divide are discussed, as are concepts like synchrony and asynchrony, information design and virtual community. Full explanations are also given for new media terms like listserv, cookies, emoticons, firewalls, plug ins, blogs and hypertext.

The treatment is scholarly and serious, but thankfully, you do not have to be a "techno wiz" to understand the content. The articles are descriptive and clearly written and each has a list of sources for further reading, a number of which are Web sites.

The *Encyclopedia of New Media* offers a wealth of information and is as comprehensive, and as current, as possible.

Steve Jones and his contributors accomplish a difficult task, providing the historical context, as well as an

up-to-date perspective for an admittedly, moving target. Both academic libraries and public libraries will find this a timely and highly useful reference. Libraries with larger budgets may find room for it in their circulating collections.

The *Encyclopedia of Catalysis* (2003 0-471-24183-0, \$1995) is another high priced, high quality encyclopedia from **Wiley**. Catalysis is the speeding up of a chemical reaction by a substance that itself does not react. Awareness of this process has become essential in "energy-efficient environmental protection and in the production of wide ranging agrochemicals and pharmaceuticals." Edited by **Istvan T. Horvath**, this six-volume set offers a comprehensive look at the science behind catalysis, as well as its use and benefits. It covers the three broad areas of catalysis, heterogeneous "where the surface of a solid is the active catalyst; enzyme (or biological) catalysis, where biopolymers are involved; and homogeneous catalysis where nonpolymeric molecular species are the active catalyst." There are general articles on all three of these, as well as those that discuss specific examples with titles like *Electrocatalysis-Heterogeneous*, *Hydroamination-Homogeneous* and *Dehydrogenation-Biological*. Articles also range from ones on topics like whole cell catalysis for the production of food and flavors to those on auto exhaust catalysis and emissions control. In addition, the *Encyclopedia* boasts essays on processes like biodesulfurization, as well as on classes of enzymes like nitrile hydratase. The articles are highly technical and are full of formulas and chemical diagrams, tables and charts. The bibliographies are often extensive. The article on polymerization has 440 citations, and while it is exceptional, articles with 75 to 100 citations, are fairly common. The first volume has a full list of the international cast of contributors, and each volume has a section containing the conversion factors, abbreviations and unit symbols used in the encyclopedia. Naturally there is a general index in the last volume.

The *Encyclopedia of Catalysis* is not science for the uninformed. It is intended for readers who, although they may not be specialists in the field, "have a combination of education and experience at least equivalent to a bachelor's degree in chemistry or engineering (in the United States)." In short, the general lay reader need not apply. Academic research libraries, as well as corporate libraries specializing in chemistry and chemical engineering will want to give serious consideration to this set. (An online version is also available from **Wiley Interscience** and is updated. The current print edition contains 151 articles but the online version is expected to double in size by 2004. See their Website at <http://www.mrw.interscience.wiley.com/enccat/>)

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On the other end of the continuum is **Oxford University Press' *The Oxford Companion to the History of Modern Science*** (2003, 0195112296, \$110.) Purposely intended for a general audience, the scope here is sweeping and deals with the history of an entire branch of knowledge.

With more than 600 articles on the development of science since the Renaissance, editor **J.L. Heilbron** and his contributors relay a story of discovery and invention that has led to our modern world. The *Companion* is replete with biographical sketches of all of the usual suspects: **Bacon, Copernicus, Darwin, Mendel, Harvey, Fermi and Hawking**, as well as the lesser known like **Lise Meitner, Theodosius Dobzhansky and Roselind Franklin**. There are articles on the history of whole disciplines ranging from computer science to physical chemistry, ecology, immunology and geophysics. The practical application of science is also covered in articles on navigation, photography, horticulture, the Internet and the development of a number of specific, scientific instruments. There are also articles that touch on the social and cultural implications of science through the centuries. Entries with titles like science and religion, social responsibility and science, pseudoscience and quackery, women in science and science and daily life are examples.

The Oxford Companion to the History of Modern Science provides as much coverage of this broad topic as can be expected in a single volume. There are more than 840 pages of text, crammed full of information and facts. In order to give readers a sense of the coverage, a thematic listing of entries is provided that outlines the contents, as well as links related topics. It is a very useful tool and should be one of the first stops for users of this reference work. There is also a helpful general index, as well as a bibliographic essay of further readings and a listing of the winners of the Nobel science prizes. All in all, this is a work that should appeal to libraries of all types needing a top quality overview of the history of modern science.

Women in Higher Education: An Encyclopedia (2002, 1576076148, \$85) is another one-volume title that may find a place in both circulating and reference collections. Published by **ABC-CLIO** and edited by **Ana M. Martinez Aleman and Kristen A. Renn**, this book chronicles the place of women in higher education from the founding of the Mount Holyoke Female Seminary in 1837 to the present, when women outnumber men in total college enrollment.

Although organized in nine distinct parts with topics arranged alphabetically within each part, ***Women in Higher Education*** is able to provide an overarching perspective on the topic. The initial three parts provide a historic, social and theoretical background, while the remaining six parts get down to the specifics. The in-

dividual parts are titled historical and cultural contexts, gender theory and the academy, feminism and the academy, women in the curriculum, women and higher education policy, women students, women faculty, women administrators and women employees. Each of these parts includes an overview article and range from having one essay (women employees) to having thirty individual entries (women students). While the overview essays are helpful in laying the groundwork for the more in depth articles that follow, the articles themselves often offer historic perspective and context for the issues being discussed. The issues are wide ranging and include concerns as diverse as affirmative action, transformation of the curriculum, unionization, student rights, women athletes, feminist pedagogy, latina administrators, faculty salaries, gender inequality, sexual assault, and classroom climate. Each entry has a useful list of references including both print and electronic sources and the text is enhanced with photos, as well as some tables and charts. Given this book's structure, the index is very helpful in accessing specific topics and serves to give added unity to the content.

The approach and overall treatment in ***Women in Higher Education*** is academic and serious, with a feminist perspective. As one of the justifications for this title, the foreword notes "women in academe still live and work in a male-dominated world ... where access may have been improved, but the quality of that access remains a critical issue." After reading through a few of the articles, that is a statement hard to argue with. ***Women in Higher Education*** is a valuable work that helps the reader understand the strides made, as well as the continuing barriers facing women in academic life. College and university libraries, especially those supporting gender and women studies programs, will find it a valuable purchase.

Greenwood Press has re-titled, updated and expanded the one volume ***Nations without States***, first published by **Praeger** in 1996. In what is now a four-volume set, author **James Minahan** adds approximately 150 new entries to the ***Encyclopedia of the Stateless Nations: Ethnic and National Groups Around the World*** (2002, 0313316171, \$475). According to **Minihan**, the national groups listed in these volumes share "just one characteristic - they identify themselves as separate nations." But he goes on to offer three more specific criteria for inclusion in the ***Encyclopedia***. First he cites, "self identity as a distinct group," second, "the outward trappings of national consciousness," and last, "the formation of a specifically nationalist organization ... that reflects its claim to self-determination." That such stateless nations exist and that they have become more important on the world scene is undeniable. Since the end of the Cold War and the break up of the Soviet Union, nationalities like the Chechens, the Pushtuns and the Kurds have made international headlines. The ***Encyclopedia*** covers these, and a host of others. Some are better known like the Afrikaners of South Africa, the Basques of Spain, Italy's Sicilians and the Palestinians in the Middle East. Others are less

familiar like the Palaungs and Lahu of south-east Asia, the Altai of Siberia and the Suvadivians in the Maldive Islands. Interestingly, a number of Native American tribes also fit **Minihan's** criteria including the Navajo, the Sioux, the Pueblo and the Cherokee. And there are also a few surprises like the inclusion of Texans, Southerners and the Mormons. The entries are generally five to seven pages long and provide the population, the homeland location, a description of the flag, a discussion of the people and culture, as well as their language and religion. However, the bulk of each entry concentrates on the national history and is often half of the article. Each article also lists the variant names the nationality is referred to by, and has a brief, selected bibliography for further reference. While there is an alphabetical listing of entries, a listing by region or country is lacking. Admittedly, the general index is helpful in this regard but a separate regional/geographical index would be of added value and should be considered for any future edition. Each entry has a thumbnail illustration of flags and geographic locations. This is a good idea, but both look like they have been reproduced from a Web page and are disappointing. The list price is also fairly high, but there were used copies available at **Amazon** when I checked.

Nevertheless, the ***Encyclopedia of the Stateless Nations*** is a useful and timely set that brings together information that is increasingly important. It is a work that will definitely appeal to high school and public libraries. Undergraduate libraries will also find this set helpful, but the entry bibliographies could be enhanced to have more to academic appeal.

As any librarian can tell you, the creation of abbreviations is a growth industry. Just check out the recent ***ALA Handbook***. The world of finance is another field where the abbreviations just keep coming. **John Paxton's *Dictionary of Financial Abbreviations*** (2003, 1579583970, \$100) is a handy little volume that business librarians will welcome. Published by **Fitzroy Dearborn**, the ***Dictionary*** is focused on the U.K. and the U.S., but there is also a fair amount of international coverage included. Abbreviations from the worlds of "commerce, finance, banking, and accounting," as well as for "large international organizations, trade unions and employee organizations are contained among the more than 4000 entries. There are abbreviations for world currencies, stock exchanges, United Nation and individual government agencies, private organizations and watchdog groups, as well as for specific financial terms. Each is defined with clear explanations ranging from a phrase, to a paragraph in length. Some may find the \$100 price tag a bit steep, but when you need it, having this information in one easy to use volume, is worth it.

Gail Schlachter and Reference Services Press have updated another one of their reference books appreciated by cash strapped students. ***College Student's Guide to Merit and Other No-need Funding 2002-2004*** (2002,

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is not targeted at a need based audience. This guide is geared to "the students caught in the middle — who have too much family income to meet financial need requirements but not enough to be able to pay for college without help." The *College Student's Guide* identifies 1300 programs that fund merit based financial aid for worthy students. As the title implies these programs are available to current and returning college students and "none of these programs consider income in the selection process." The entries are arranged by the broad categories sciences, social sciences, humanities and a catch all, any subject. However, there is a subject index that keys you into specific areas of interest ranging from accounting to zoology. There are also indexes by program title, sponsor, residency and tenability (programs restricted to a certain geographical area). The individual entries list the title of the program, the sponsor, purpose, eligibility requirements, financial data, duration, limitations, the number of grants awarded and the deadline for applications. Full contact information for each sponsor is also provided including addresses, phone and fax numbers, as well as email and Website addresses.

College Student's Guide to Merit and Other No-need Funding 2002-2004 is suitable for reference and circulating collections, and, at the price, some individuals may want personal copies.

Book Reviews — Monographic Musings

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

Column Editor's Note: Jacques Barzun stated, "Whoever wants to know the heart and mind of America had better learn baseball." Our nation's favorite pastime enraptures men and women, young and old, from all corners of the world, regardless of creed or class. The classic Mudville poem "Casey at the Bat" brings the game into classrooms all over the country. Baseball's greatness have given us such adages as "it ain't over till it's over" (Lawrence "Yogi" Berra) and "don't look back—something might be gaining on you" (Leroy "Satchel" Paige). Chicago Cubs announcer Harry Caray's resonant "holy cow!" remains in the ears of fans around the world. In 1998, over 11 million fans attended at least one baseball game per month. It comes as no surprise, then, that the Library of Congress has records for nearly 8,000 baseball resources.

These fresh titles are respectable additions to the body of baseball literature. Timm Boyle's *The Most Valuable Players in Baseball* offers useful statistics within easy reach. Baseball's segregated past is explored in Leslie A. Heaphy's *The Negro Leagues* and Darrell J. Howard's "Sunday Coming." Finally, America's fascination with the big diamond is explored in *Reel Baseball*, a collection of essays and interviews edited by Stephen C. Wood and J. David Pincus. McFarland has recently published a multitude of other books about baseball, several of which have landed on my summer to-read list. Their sport-specific Web site, www.mcfarlandbaseball.com, has a boast-worthy list of available titles. When not scouring information about my sport of choice, I will enjoy being taken out to the ballgame and the crowds, I will consume peanuts and crackerjacks in mass quantity, and I will heartily root for my home team, the Charleston Riverdogs. Happy reading (and spectating), everyone! — DV

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