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From the Reference Desk

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From the Reference Desk

by **Tom Gilson** (Head, Reference Services, Addlestone Library, College of Charleston, 66 George Street, Charleston, SC 29401; Phone: 843-953-8014; Fax: 843-953-8019) <gilson@cofc.edu>

Oxford University Press recently released a set that any library supporting African American or Women's Studies will find essential. The second edition of *Black Women in America* (2005, 0195156773, \$325) updates and enhances the 1994 **Dartmouth Award** winning, two-volume set. It also reflects the growth of reader interest, as well as the expanding scholarship in this area over the last decade.

There are some 475 articles in this new edition and while this is a decrease from the number of articles in the 1st edition, there are numerous comprehensive entries that incorporate many previous articles. And of course, there are completely new entries that add valuable content. The thorough treatment of larger themes is obvious in articles ranging from Affirmative Action to the Visual Arts and from Colonial America to the Civil Rights Movement. There are also articles on topics as diverse as Legal Resistance, Domestic Workers, Suffrage, Broadcast Journalism, the Jim Crow Era, and Entrepreneurs. But the bulk of the articles are reserved for the women themselves. There are close to 350 individual biographical entries dis-

cussing women as varied as the **Forten Sisters**, **Leontyne Price**, **Althea Gibson**, and **Condoleezza Rice**. In addition, there are numerous shorter sketches within the longer thematic articles. For example, in the article on the Blues there is a two-page section featuring brief biographies of nine blues performers not covered in separate entries.

The set is handsomely produced with over 500 illustrations and black and white photos. The bibliographies, some of them substantial, have been updated and contain references to books, articles and Websites. Given that many of the thematic articles in this edition are more comprehensive, indexing is important. Luckily, there is both a useful general index pointing to specific volumes and page numbers, as well as thematic outline of entries. There is also an impressive chronology of Black women's history and a selected bibliography as added features.

Black Women in America is a definite choice for most public and academic libraries, as well as those high school libraries that have the necessary money in their budgets. There is nothing quite like it for thoroughness and comprehensive coverage of the Black woman's experience in America. Of course, the first edition is still useful and those libraries that have it may want to place it in circulation.

Routledge's *Encyclopedia of Modern Jewish Culture* (2005, 041529813X, \$425) is another worthy second edition. Edited by **Glenda Abramson**, this offering updates the *Blackwell Companion to Jewish Culture*, published in 1989, also edited by **Abramson**. Expanding the original single volume into a two-volume set, **Abramson** and

her contributors have increased content by two-thirds with updated and added entries. The result is a well-rounded, scholarly overview of Jewish culture from the 18th century to the present.

Culture here is broadly defined as "literature, language, music, the performing and visual arts, philosophy, and scholarship in the humanities." And reflecting the far reaching breadth of Jewish culture, coverage is international. The articles are of three major types, brief biographies and topical essays ranging from 200 to 1000 words and longer survey articles that can be as long as 5000 words. Thus along with a biographical sketch of the British composer **Ronald Senator**, readers will find a survey article on Serbian-Jewish Literature, and next to the article on **Marcel Proust** is an essay on Psychoanalysis and Judaism. There are also numerous articles that are country specific like *Sectarian Trends in Modern Israel*, *French-Jewish Intellectuals after 1968*, and *Jews in British Cinema*. And while one would expect articles covering Great Britain, Europe, Israel and America, there is also recognition of the Jewish culture in places like Australia and South Africa with articles like *South African Jewry after Apartheid* and *Australian Jewry*.

The organization of the book is alphabetical by headwords. "See also" references are provided within the text of the articles by printing related headwords in small capital letters. However, sometimes access is problematic. In looking for information on the Borscht Belt, famed hotbed of Jewish comedy in early 20th century America, the index is no help. The article on Jewish comedy discusses it and the various Catskill summer resorts where it was centered, but there is no reference to the Borscht Belt or the Catskills in the index. Obviously more thorough indexing would be helpful. Other features that would be useful in future editions would be a topical guide of the articles, as well as an alphabetical listing of entries.

Nonetheless, the *Encyclopedia* is a worthwhile addition to collections supporting Jewish Studies programs and interests. It successfully offers a collective definition of modern Jewish Culture, as well as a gateway to more comprehensive study. The articles are clearly written, factual and cover a diversity of topics while providing useful bibliographies. With its focus on cultural issues, the *Encyclopedia of Modern Jewish Culture* also acts as a helpful complement to the highly praised *Encyclopedia of Judaism* (2001, 0826415148, \$335) published by **Continuum**. (This edition includes the 4th volume which was first published as a supplement. There is also a 5th volume supplement published in 2003, 0826415806, \$150.)

The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Science Fiction and Fantasy: Themes, Works and
continued on page 55

Interview Alice & Klaus Peters from page 53

- Optimizing distribution through project oriented international marketing and a pricing policy that affords purchase by individuals.

ATG: Will you be offering additional material to the electronic versions of journals and books?

AKP: Yes, our journals offer images, programs, extensive tables of data on their official Websites. Similarly we offer electronic data on CD with our printed books, including software, images, and audio clips and in some cases searchable full text versions of the book. Other books have dedicated

Websites with supplementary material, solution manuals, and searchable texts.

ATG: What other information about your present plans do you wish to share with librarians?

AKP: I believe your questions were very comprehensive and allowed me to present our current plans and ideas. I believe that librarians and publishers work on the same side of the information challenge and that we need to listen to one another and make use of new technology to benefit our common constituency, the reader. Libraries struggle with space and budget constraints and publishers incur increasing costs in the attempt to maintain the quality of their product. Together, we will meet these challenges.

Wonders (2005, 0313329508, \$349.95.) is both focused and ambitious. It attempts to define dominant themes and representative works within two of our most popular and prolific literary genres. Fortunately, Editor **Gary Westfahl** and his fellow contributors are up to the challenge.

For the purpose of this three-volume set, a theme is broadly defined as a "topic or element in works of literature that invites discussion and analysis." Some 400 themes are covered in the first two volumes. Each article consists of an overview explaining the theme followed by a survey that draws on specific examples, and then, a brief discussion containing a conclusion about the theme. The themes are diverse and include character types like magicians and scientists, locations ranging from castles to planetary colonies, issues like race relations and sexuality and concepts like chivalry and hubris. The third volume helps illuminate the themes discussed in the first 2 volumes by offering summaries and discussion of 200 classic works. These works are not restricted to novels and short stories. There are also entries on films from the classic like *Metropolis* to the contemporary like *The Matrix*. Television programs are also included ranging from *The Outer Limits* to *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, and of course, the numerous *Star Trek* incarnations (both on television and in film). The arrangement of volume three is alphabetical by title with multivolume series listed under the title of the first volume. Therefore **Robert Jordan's Wheel of Time** Series is under the title *Eye of the World*. This exposes a problem that should be addressed in future editions. There is no mention of series titles in the index and while they are mentioned in the entry, they are not directly cross referenced in the alphabetical arrangement. If the series title is all the reader knows; he/she will be unable to locate information without browsing the volume. Luckily many series titles are similar to the title of the first novel in the series, but this can still cause difficulties. However, that being said, there are a number of other useful features including a guide to related topics under broad categories, alphabetical lists of all the themes and works covered, and bibliographies for each entry containing both journal articles and books. There is also a thoughtfully selected general bibliography in the last volume.

Editor **Gary Westfahl** and his contributors are well informed and knowledgeable, treating the subject with the seriousness it deserves. While some may quibble about a missing theme or favorite title, the *Greenwood Encyclopedia of Science Fiction and Fantasy* provides students and interest readers with a scholarly reference that will satisfy their curiosity, as well as open new doors to future exploration. With its unique emphasis on themes, it will stand beside and compliment other standard sources like the *Encyclopedia of Science Fiction* (1993, 0312096186, OP — used copies available via Amazon) and the *Encyclopedia of Fantasy* (1999, 0312198698, \$85). Both of these titles

were published by **St. Martin** and edited by **John Clute**, who also acted as an advisory editor to this work.

Wiley's five-volume *Water Encyclopedia* (2005, 0471441643, \$1,475 — individual volumes, \$350) offers exhaustive coverage of one of our most essential resources. The over 1000 entries are steeped in the latest science and are often highly technical with numerous charts, tables, formulas, graphs and illustrations. In addition, there is ample discussion of the social, legal, economic and cultural aspects of water and its uses. The set is not arranged alphabetically throughout all five volumes, or even within the volumes. Rather, relevant articles are collected under broad subsections and referenced via the individual volume index. Each volume deals with major related issues and is individually subtitled in sequence, volumes 1-5:

Domestic, Municipal, and Industrial
Water Supply and Waste Disposal

Water Quality and Resource Development

Surface and Agricultural Water

Oceanography; Meteorology; Physics
and Chemistry; Water Law; and Water
History, Art, and Culture

Ground Water

However, the organizational format is cause for concern. Although it covers a single, if multifaceted topic, the *Water Encyclopedia* comes across as a collection of individual volumes more than a unified set. While each volume has its own table of contents and index, there is no table of contents for the entire set of volumes, nor, does there seem to be "see also" references connecting related articles. (Interestingly there is a complete table of contents for all five volumes online at: http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-0471441643_descCd-tableOfContents.html.) Fortunately, there is a cumulative index in volume five. But none of the volumes are identified by volume number anywhere on the book bindings. This leads to wasted time in finding the cumulative index itself, and then in locating referenced articles. It is almost like this work suffers from an identity crisis, unsure of whether it is a group of individual titles, or an encyclopedia set.

However, this less than user-friendly organization does not detract from the essential quality of the information provided. Editors **Jay H. Lehr** and **Jack Keeley** are respected scientists and researchers, who along with their contributors have created a major reference for professional scientists, academics, and advanced students. The *Water Encyclopedia* is available in these five volumes and online via **Wiley InterScience**. Point your browser to <http://www.mrw.interscience.wiley.com.eow> for further information.

ABC-CLIO has published a three-volume set that many libraries will find interesting. *American Indian Religious Traditions: An*

Encyclopedia (2005, 1576075176, \$285) lists articles covering topics ranging from Dreams and Visions to Sandpainting, and from Vision Quest Rites to Female Spirituality. These articles are essay length and offer the overall context of the topic discussed, as well as providing examples from specific peoples. These entries are not short sketches, or brief definitions. In fact, some, like those dealing with Oral Traditions, Missionization and Sacred Societies, are long, multipart articles usually subdivided by regions, or sometimes individual nation.

The treatment is scholarly but with an attempt to provide discussion of "native spiritual traditions as they are understood by people within the communities themselves." More than half of the articles in these three volumes are written by Native scholars and Native elders are quoted as authoritative sources. Each of the entries has a selective bibliography citing scholarly sources, and there are numerous cross-references. Following the editors' introduction there are maps and descriptions of Native peoples by broad regions ranging from the Northwest Coast and Alaska to the Great Plains to the Southeast. These maps and description are repeated in each volume. The final volume has a list of the 500 Indian entities recognized by the United States Bureau of Indian Affairs.

With a set consisting of long essays, the index grows in importance and this one is a bit idiosyncratic. For example, in looking for information on smudging (purifying and smoke offering rituals), the index leads the reader to a number of separate pages. However in a couple of instances, while these type rituals are discussed, the word smudging does not appear. So in a sense you would have to look at all of the pages listed, or know what smudging is, to get the import of some of the references. One wonders if future editions would benefit from a glossary of such terms.

American Indian Religious Traditions: An Encyclopedia reflects the growing maturation of this area of study. It helps bring together diverse traditions and practices without short circuiting the complexity of the topics discussed. The articles are serious and scholarly while being respectful and sensitive to "Native" concerns. The title is a good fit for academic libraries supporting Religious or Native American studies, as well as larger public libraries where there is interest. Libraries preferring a single volume with shorter, more numerous and specific entries might consider **Facts on File's Encyclopedia of Native American Religions** (2000, 0816039496, \$75). Ideally, interested libraries will want to have both titles.

Speaking of one volume works with numerous brief and specific entries, **Routledge's Encyclopedia of Early Cinema** (2005, 0415234409, \$225) merits discussion. Edited by film historian **Richard Abel**, this is a unique reference that will be welcomed by serious students of film history. Focused on the beginnings of cinema, this volume covers developments from "the early to middle 1890's and ends in the middle 1910's." Articles address topics

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Book Reviews — Monographic Musings

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

Column Editor's Note: In this issue, we are privileged to print the commentary of veteran reviewers **Burton Callicott** and **Jared A. Seay**. While the books they explore are divergent in content, their subjects share a common thread: passion. **Writers and Personality** by **Louis Auchincloss** radiates the author's passion of literary giants and the written word. The same fervor of gaming and gamers is exuded in **R. V. Kelly 2's Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games**.

As I prepare this month's **Monographic Musings** column, I am sadly counting down my last days in the **Addlestone Library** and getting ready for my move to the **College of**

Charleston's Office of Accreditation, Planning, and Assessment. My departure from this fine library is bitter-sweet; as I will sorely miss the warm and intelligent people beside whom I have worked as well as my duties as a librarian, I am excited at the opportunity to tackle the issues of student learning outcomes and learning centers — at the forefront of which is the **Addlestone Library**. I am indebted to the wonderful and amazing **Katina Strauch** for allowing me to stay in tune with my library roots by continuing to edit and write book reviews for **ATG**.

Happy reading, everyone! — **DV**

Auchincloss, Louis. *Writers and Personality*. Columbia, SC: U. of South Carolina P, 2005. 1570035806. 128 pages. \$24.95.

Reviewed by **Burton Callicott** (Reference Librarian, College of Charleston)
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After reading the first few sentences of **Auchincloss'** latest from the **University of South Carolina Press**, I knew I was in for a treat. Having gotten a BA and an MA in English in the early and mid-'90's, I have consumed my fair share of continental literary theory and criticism. For many, including myself, who began their deeper involvement in literature in the post-modern age, **Barthes**, **Deleuze**, **Foucault**, etc. were real heroes who provided joyful, exciting tools and terms to comment on familiar and thoroughly-criticized authors. Like most good things, however, this novel, theoretical approach to literature began to lose its luster and, at least for me, became rather tiresome. So it was like a breath of fresh air to crack the spine of my review copy of

Writer's and Personality and read "**Henry James** expressed what many readers have comfortably — and some uncomfortably — felt about the strong and seemingly unbreakable ties between the lives of the three Bronte sisters and their novels....." (3).

What a pleasure it is to read critical prose such as **Auchincloss'** that flows and is readily comprehensible. What a delight it is to encounter a reference to **Henry James** and to speak openly and directly about actual, real life authors and their... personality! The short chapters and wide selection of authors and works discussed in this somewhat anachronistic treatise will make most readers very comfortable and will provide sheer joy to lovers of classic novels and writers. After a few paragraphs, I

immediately felt as if I had been transported to **Auchincloss'** parlor, in front of a fire, with a nice snifter of brandy, seated in a leather easy chair after a satisfying meal where I was treated to a wonderful, impromptu exposition on the **Bronte** sisters. This illusion continued for me as **Auchincloss** flowed easily (and quickly!), many "chapters" are only a few pages long) from the **Brontes** to **Flaubert** and then to **Trollope** and so on. **Auchincloss** manages to cover twenty four authors in a book of just over 100 pages. Though there is no clear, overarching principle behind his selections of authors and works, the choices feel organic. With the simple thesis that an author's personality imbues his or her work whether or not that is the author's intent, **Auchincloss** frees himself to roam across time periods, continents, and even languages. (In keeping with the purity and sensibility of the commentary, quotations from French novels are printed in the *langua franca*.) "It would seem then that **Flaubert** has succeeded in suppressing all evidence of his personality. And yet some of it seeps gratifyingly through. The man who is so intensely conscious of all the cheats of a self-advertising civilization and the daydreaming which it engenders to keep the masses chained in the kind of half life that Emma leads, emerges from time to time in his mordant humor and compassion for the dumb and easily led" (12).

As an author of numerous novels and works of fiction of his own, not to mention his voluminous critical commentary, **Auchincloss'** conveys a sense of strength and confidence that comes from a life spent writing and reading. His comments not only provide astute critical observations but also provide a unique look into the mind of a creative writer. Scattered throughout **Writers and Personality**, we get glimpses of the mechanics and orchestration necessary to produce a successful novel that only a fellow novelist would see and note: "The cleverest part of the novel [*The Late George Apley*] is in the quotations from [Apley's] letters and public addresses, in which one follows the gradual desiccation of his soul and the ultimate triumph of moral platitudes over heartfelt ideals — all against the gloomy backdrop of his own half-awareness of what is really going on" (81). As with many things, **Auchincloss'** greatest

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as diverse as early technology and materials, development in film style, social contexts, and individual film companies.

While the development of early cinema was most obvious in the United States and Great Britain, it blossomed in a number of other countries. An examination of the **Encyclopedia** makes this clear. Some of the longest entries discuss cinema in individual countries and cover areas like production and distribution, exhibition, audiences, and regulations. The **Encyclopedia** also has articles covering film companies existing in countries ranging from China to Spain and from India to Finland, as well as entries on prominent filmmakers and other key figures in countries ranging from Brazil to Norway and from Japan to Germany.

All in all, there are more than 950 entries contributed by nearly 150 scholars and film specialists. The articles are straightforward and factual with the longer entries followed by brief bibliographies. The thematic entry list and general index provide access and related articles are highlighted in bold in each article.

The **Encyclopedia of Early Cinema** portrays the complex and rich history of a medium that was to evolve into a dominant cultural and artistic form, as well as a significant international industry. It is a fascinating story and this useful reference will help students and other interested readers explore its full scope. Primarily intended for academic libraries, this work may also find an audience in larger public libraries where film is major interest and budgets can afford the somewhat steep price.