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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>

Did we really need another reference work on English literature? After paging through the recently published *Oxford Encyclopedia of British Literature* (2006 0195169212, \$475), the answer is a definite yes.

Edited by **Columbia University's David Scott Kastan**, British literature is defined here as including "writers, conventions and institutions of the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland." In short, **Joyce** and **Swift** are grist for the mill, as well as **Wordsworth** and **Orwell**. However, the over 500 articles in these five volumes are more than a collection of biographical sketches. Larger themes and genres ranging from Aestheticism to Utopianism and from Melodrama to Science Fiction are covered, as are literary forms like Ballads, Morality Plays, Travel Writing and The Novel. Individual articles also discuss topics like Copyright and Plagiarism, as well as Literary Theory and Orientalism. Of course, biographies are still the major part of the content and popular writers like **Agatha Christie**, **Ian Fleming**, **J.K. Rowling** and **John LeCarre** find a place beside **Dickens**, **Milton** and **Shakespeare**. Another positive is that women are given their due. Beside articles on writers like **Jane Austen**, the **Brontës** and **Virginia Woolf**, there is coverage of less widely known authors like **Frances Burney**, **Anna Laetitia Barbauld**, and **Mary Wroth**.

The entries are scholarly, and while often evaluative, balanced and fair. The biographies concentrate on the literary and professional life of the subject rather than the personal. The five volumes are text-rich with some black and white photos for visually relief. Each article has a list of further readings, some more extensive than others. Future editions might employ stricter standards in this regard. Why the list of further readings for **Aemilia Lanyer**, who published one volume of verse in 1611, is more substantial than that for **C.S. Lewis** or **Katherine Mansfield** is a mystery. But given the overall quality of the set, this is a very mi-

nor concern. Other useful features include a chronology, a directory of contributors and a 150-page general index.

Oxford Encyclopedia of British Literature occupies its own niche. More concise than *Scribners' British Writers Series* but more comprehensive than the *Oxford Companion to English Literature* (2006, 0198614535, \$60), this reference work holds a solid middle ground. It is a worthy choice for both academic and public libraries.

While we are on the subject of British literature, scholars and aficionados of **Jane Austen** will welcome **Greenwood's All Things Austen: an Encyclopedia of Austen's World** (2005, 0313330328, \$149). In more than 150 articles author **Kirstin Olsen** describes the world of **Jane Austen** from alleghouses to umbrellas with stopovers to investigate topics as diverse as cosmetics, etiquette, gambling, religion, and pregnancy and childbirth. However, this is a scholarly production. Within each of the articles there are references to specific passages in **Austen's** works that use a system of abbreviations related to the standard text of **Austen** scholarship, the *Oxford Illustrated Jane Austen* (1988, 0192547070, \$115). Many of the articles are one or two pages long but those on more important topics are substantially longer. For example, the article on Places is 24 pages and lists hundreds of locals related to **Austen** along with the work in which they appear. It also includes some brief discussion and a few maps. The set is illustrated with period illustrations from the **Lewis Walpole Library**. These are in black and white but fortunately there is Website at <http://wlimages.library.yale.edu/walpoleweb/> where readers can view enlarged, color versions by typing in the call numbers provided with each illustration in the set. While individual entries do not have lists of further reading, there is an 18-page, selective bibliography divided by broad category in volume two. There is also a useful timeline of events in the lives of the **Austen** family.

However, access to specific information can be a problem. In her introduction, **Ms. Olsen** gives as an example of the fascinating tidbits one can expect to find in this set. She notes that readers will learn the origin of terms like "box office," and will investigate the mystery of what sort of spectacles **Frank Churchill** was fixing at the **Bates**. That information may be in the set, but readers will not locate it using the alphabetical list of

entries or the index. Neither "box office" nor **Frank Churchill** appears in the list or in the index.

This problem aside, *All Things Austen: an Encyclopedia of Austen's World* will be greatly appreciated by scholars and fans alike. It will also appeal to those interested in the social history of her time. It successfully reflects the world in which **Jane Austen** lived and which she so vividly portrayed. *All Things Austen* will stand alongside another **Greenwood** title, *A Jane Austen Encyclopedia* (1998, 0313300178, \$109.95) as a valuable resource in the study of this ever-popular author. Both academic and public libraries will want to add it. And it is another one of those titles that could just as easily find a place in a circulating collection.

Sage Reference delivers a unique five-volume set with its recent publication of the *Encyclopedia of Anthropology* (2006, 0761930299, \$895). With over 1000 entries written by more than 250 authors, it is the first encyclopedic work that attempts to represent and integrate the various and diverse areas of physical/biological anthropology, archaeology, cultural/social anthropology, linguistics and applied anthropology. This is a tall order but this set does an admirable job. There are a number of articles that take the interdisciplinary nature of anthropology head on, pointing to intersections with other areas of study in articles related to Geography and Geology, Evolution, Paleontology, Philosophy, Religion and Theology and Sociology. In addition, there are articles that discuss research and theoretical frameworks ranging from Enculturation to Feminism and from Territoriality to Xenophobia. And as you would expect, there are a wide variety of biographical entries. The articles vary in length from short descriptive entries of 500-1,000 words to longer more involved essays of up to 5,000 words. There is a Reader's Guide that classifies articles into broad but related topics, as well as "see also" references at the end of each entry. The bibliographies are somewhat disappointing for a set of this quality. Limits have been placed on the number of citations according to length of article with what seems like a minimum of three, and a maximum of eight citations.

However, the production values are quite high. The set is visually attractive containing numerous photos, illustrations and sidebars with a liberal use of color that makes the overall presentation a real strength. The 96-page index is repeated in each volume which is both a plus and a minus. Of course, the convenience of having the index in each volume is a positive while the additional space taken by the

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index has created a five-volume set that might have been a three-volume set at a reduced price.

Given the number of interrelated disciplines included, the *Encyclopedia of Anthropology* is necessarily a sweeping survey, but it is comprehensive and effective, offering essential and valuable information. While academic and scholarly, this set will appeal to a wider audience including interested students and informed lay readers. Both academic libraries supporting anthropology courses and public libraries needing a reference treating this diverse field should give it strong consideration. Those wanting more specific treatments might also consider **Garland's** second edition of the *Encyclopedia of Human Evolution and Prehistory* (1999, 0815316968, \$225) and **Routledge's** paperback edition of the *Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology* (2002, 0415285585, \$36.95).

Illegal immigration into the United States is forefront in the news. But as a recent title from **ABC-CLIO** points out, there is a historic and an international perspective to this crucial issue. *Immigration and Asylum: from 1900 to the Present* (2005, 1576077969, \$285) is a three-volume set that traces the "flow of immigrants, displaced persons and asylum-seekers" through the 20th century. With two world wars, countless smaller conflicts, overt genocide and ethnic cleansing, not to mention natural disasters, economic disparities and political instability, hundreds of millions have moved, or have been forced to move worldwide.

According to Editors **Matthew J. Gibney** and **Randall Hansen** the articles in this encyclopedia revolve around four themes: the distinction between asylum and migration, the major émigré groups, expulsion and other historic reasons for migration, and the politics of migration. The first two volumes consist of almost 200 entries written by approximately 130 contributors. Individual articles discuss diverse topics like Civil War and Migration, Environmental Refugees, Humanitarian Intervention, Mexican Immigration, Middle East Guestworkers, Open Borders, Repatriation, Trafficking, and Vietnamese Boat People. The articles are clearly written including historic perspective, as well as up-to-date facts. Each entry has a useful list of references, including books, journal articles and some Websites. "See also" reference link related articles. Volume three consists of primary documents related to immigration and asylum. UN resolutions, international and regional agreements, national legislations and other historic documents are included for a total of nearly 90 distinct documents.

Immigration and Asylum: from 1900 to the Present offers readers thoughtful and balanced coverage of an important and timely topic. It is another one of those subject spe-

cific encyclopedias that, depending on need, would be equally at home in a circulating collection. Scholarly but accessible to the lay readers, this set will find an audience in both academic and public libraries.

The *Encyclopedia of the Developing World* (2006, 1579583881, \$565) will be a welcome addition to many academic reference collections. Published by **Routledge**, this three-volume set has 762 articles ranging in length from 500 to 5,000 words that discuss the developing world since 1945. Edited by **Thomas M. Leonard**, the articles have been written by 251 contributors from various fields and countries, giving the set both an interdisciplinary, and international, flavor.

As currently defined, the countries of the developing world are not only those that are economically underprivileged. The definition has expanded to include those where there is a lack of political participation, basic education and health services, environmental protection and civil and human rights. Except for the largest industrial nations of the G-7 and countries like Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, Australia and New Zealand, the rest of the world qualifies as developing. And all of those nations, as well as a number of regions are individually discussed in this work. Entries cover countries ranging from Angola to Zimbabwe and from Bulgaria to Yemen while other essays offer regional discussions of the Caribbean, East Asia, North Africa and the Southern Cone of Latin America among others. There are also articles that focus on organizations and agencies impacting the developing world from the **CIA** to **Amnesty International** and from **HAMAS** to the **World Bank**. Rounding out the set are numerous biographical sketches and topical entries that cover people as different as **Mohandas Gandhi** and **Slobodan Milosevic**, and subjects as diverse as the **Aswan High Dam** and **Liberation Theology**. In short, the *Encyclopedia* is comprehensive in its coverage, but at the same time, stays focused on the topic at hand. Of course, it also has useful features like bibliographies, cross referencing and a thorough index, as well as an alphabetical and a topical listing of entries. (This encyclopedia is another example where the index is repeated in each volume with the accompanying pluses and minuses noted above.)

Rumors
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Jill Coupe <jill.coupe@worldnet.att.net> who is a librarian. **Jill** was college roommates with **Anne Robichaux** <AWKR772@charleston.net>, of all people! Who would have ever guessed! What a small world. Anyway, Jill's story, "Old Friends, New Eyes," will be published in the June issue. Watch for it.

And, not to worry, we are continuing the

Encyclopedia of the Developing World provides a scholarly look at a serious and important topic. It is more than a mere discussion of the countries and regions making up the developing world. Besides providing factual and historical profiles of these nations and regions, the biographical and topical articles in this work add useful and necessary context that help readers view the broader picture. Undergraduates and faculty will find it an effective source of background information, as well as solid facts. Academic libraries should give it serious consideration. Larger public libraries may also be interested if there is demand among their patrons for this type information.

For those libraries less interested in a full blown encyclopedia but needing a source for up-to-date facts and country profiles, **Grey House's Nations of the World: A Political, Economic & Business Handbook** (2006, 1-59237-079-9, \$155) should be a worthwhile choice. Now in its 6th edition, *Nations of the World* has updated each of the 230 country profiles reflecting changes from "77 political elections resulting in 31 new heads of state, 64 new heads of government and 18 changes of ruling parties." Each profile has three parts. The first is a country overview containing current political and economic events from the last five years, as well as sidebars including key facts and indicators. The second is a profile including historical development along with a look at the political structure, education, welfare, main cities, languages spoken, media, economy and trade, agriculture, tourism, manufacturing, banking, climate, and geography. And for travelers there is information on entry requirements, health precautions, hotels, public holidays, telecommunications, transportation security and other relevant issues. The third part of each entry is the business directory that provides useful addresses, telephone numbers and email information, as well as Internet sites relevant to those wanting to establish business connections.

Nations of the World will appeal to those libraries that do not want to make the investment in a source like **Routledge's Europa Year Book** (2005, 1857433068, \$1025) while at the same time wanting more than the **CIA's World Fact Book** (2005, 1574889427, \$34).

Fiction Contest. Please send in your submission! That means YOU! The deadline is **October 15, 2006**. We want short fiction (2500 words max) which involves publishers, vendors, and/or librarians. Get busy!!! For more information, please see this issue, p.72 or visit the **ATG Website**. www.against-the-grain.com

Speaking of busy! Was talking to **Colin Steele** <Colin.Steele@anu.edu.au> the other day. He sent this beautiful book about Aus-

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