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From the Reference Desk: Reviews of Reference Titles

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From the Reference Desk

by **Tom Gilson** (Associate Editor, *Against the Grain*, and Head of Reference Emeritus, College of Charleston, Charleston, SC 29401) <gilson@cofc.edu>

World Clothing and Fashion: An Encyclopedia of History, Culture, and Social Influence (2014, 978-0765683007, \$249) is the most recent work by prolific reference book author, **Mary Ellen Snodgrass**. Published by **M.E. Sharpe**, this two-volume set offers more than 310 entries covering "milestones" in the history of clothing and fashion from "the pre-historic use of skins and shells" to the contemporary fashions of **Versace** and **Vera Wang**.

The individual articles fall into a variety of categories ranging from accessories and adornments to fabrics, fibers, and materials and from manufacturing, production, and care to fashion trends and movements. There are also

entries that focus on techniques from applique to textile printing as well as trades and professions from costume design to modeling. Other articles are devoted to numerous regional, national, and culture styles as well as clothing types and specific clothing items. There are also biographical entries for key players in the development in the fashion and design.

The entries themselves are survey articles that offer historical background and relevant facts all written in a straightforward and accessible style. Value-added features include a glossary of 82 terms as well as a chronology of significant events, a collected bibliography, and a 120-page general index. The set is visually enhanced by black and white photos, but one regrets the lack of color images in a reference on clothing and fashion. Admittedly, the production cost of color photos was probably prohibitive. That being said, it is hard to visualize clothing and fashions one is unfamiliar with, so additional illustrations and images would have enhanced the set. Fortunately, images are readily available on the Web.

World Clothing and Fashion: An Encyclopedia of History, Culture, and Social Influence brings together diverse elements of a fascinating topic with social, cultural, artistic,

and economic implications, all viewed from a historical perspective. It is a reference work that high school students and lower-division undergraduates will find useful for their initial research. Interested public library patrons will also find it a helpful resource. In short, ***World Clothing and Fashion*** ... provides a reliable starting point for students working on research papers as well as a resource of informed background information for the interested lay reader.

The set is also available in the **Sharpe Online Reference** collection. See <http://www.sharpe-online.com/>.

Diabetes in America: A Geographic & Demographic Analysis of an Epidemic (2013, 978-1619251724, \$350) is the first in a new **Health in America** series being offered by **Grey House Publishing**. Using data from the National Minority Quality Forum, this reference "looks at diabetes in every state, U.S. territory, and congressional district" and then provides rankings and comparative statistics.

Starting with a profile of the entire United States, the book continues with profiles for

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each state and U.S. territory as well as each congressional district within each state. Each profile starts with a color-coded map that shows the prevalence of diabetes geographically and a brief narrative that includes aggregate statistics followed by a more thorough breakdown of categories that divides by gender, race/ethnicity, and age. The specific categories divided include the number of diabetics, the prevalence of the disease, the percent who are undernourished, number of hospitalizations, annual total costs, and percent of diabetics with HbA1C above 7. The last 175 pages of this near 1,000-page volume consist of numerous tables of comparative statistics that provide state and U.S. territory rankings for the various breakdowns and categories mentioned above.

Diabetes in America: A Geographic & Demographic Analysis of an Epidemic is crammed full of relevant and useful statistics on a disease that victimizes millions of Americans and is a national health problem. Nursing and medical students studying and researching diabetes will be its main beneficiaries, but those professionals involved in health policy formulation as well as community health advocates will find real life applications for the information contained in this reference. Buyers of the Print Edition get FREE ONLINE ACCESS at <http://gold.greyhouse.com>.

Applied Science: Engineering and Mathematics (ISBN: 9781619252448) is one of three recently released volumes in **Salem Press' Applied Science** reference series. The other two are **Applied Science: Science & Medicine** (ISBN: 9781619252400, \$195) and **Applied Science: Technology** (ISBN: 9781619252431). All are priced at \$195. The articles in these volumes have been selected from **Applied Science: A-Z Arrangement** (2012, 978-1-58765-781-8 \$595), a five-volume set edited by **Donald R. Franceschetti**. These new volumes are evidently intended for those libraries that are not interested in the full set and its higher price tag but see a need for individual volumes that focus on specific applied sciences.

Obviously, the articles compiled in the volume under review focus on the fields that make up engineering and mathematics ranging from fractal geometry to robotics and from probability and statistics to chemical engineering. These entries also provide an appreciation of the relationship between the two broad disciplines, as well as offering a sense of their significance in our daily lives. The entries range from 3,000-4,000 words in length, and all employ the same format. Each starts with a brief list of connected and related fields, a summary statement, and a list of key terms and concepts. This is followed by a definition of the field and its basic principles, a background and history, a section on how the discipline works, relevant applications and resulting products, the field's impact on industry, careers and course work, and finally social context and future prospects. The writing is jargon free and not overly techni-

cal but nonetheless informed. Each entry also has a list of further readings as well as useful Websites. Other value-added features include a multi-page table of common units of measure, a biographical dictionary of significant scientists, a glossary of terms, a timeline, a general bibliography, and a subject index.

Applied Science: Engineering and Mathematics provides informative discussions of the various fields that constitute these two major disciplines while at the same time giving the reader a sense of both the diversity of these fields as well as the connections they share. As such, this volume will be of use to both those who seek a better understanding of the specific fields within engineering and mathematics as well as to students who are contemplating future careers in these areas. While the book is intended for high school students, it will find a ready audience with interested undergraduates and lay readers as well. Libraries that already have the parent set **Applied Science: A-Z Arrangement** may want this individual volume in their circulating collection. As with all **Salem Press** reference works, online access comes with a print purchase.

A second edition of **Western Movies: A Guide to 5,105 Feature Films** (2013, 978-0786463725, \$49.95.) is available from **McFarland**. Written by **Michael R. Pitts**, this edition adds 900 film titles to the original, listing Westerns from the early silent era to the present. According to the introduction, in order to qualify for inclusion a film must have been, or must currently be, available for public viewing. The films can be feature length or part of a serial and can range in format from 8mm to various video formats.

The variety of Western films covered is impressive and includes Hollywood classics like *Stagecoach* and *High Noon* and B pictures from companies like **Republic** as well as TV originals like *Lonesome Dove*, multi-part serials like *Deadwood Dick*, and films with a western setting like *The Petrified Forest*. Entries are brief but offer useful details. Each starts with the film title and then provides the release company and date, running time, color or B&W, director, script writer, cast, brief synopsis, and a short critical comment.

No doubt many fans and researchers will find this reference both useful and interesting. Basic information for each film is provided, and the cast lists are thorough and, in fact, take up the majority of the entry. However, each synopsis is only about a sentence or two long and the criticism takes the form of a pithy comment or two. But perhaps more problematic from the research standpoint is the lack of a full general index. Other than the alphabetical list of titles, the main finding aid is the Index to Entry Numbers which is really a name index. There is no indexing to aid those researchers who want to find the titles of films made by different companies like **Republic** or **United Artists** or a list of Western serials or films made in the silent era. Such information is contained in the entries, but there is no direct way to get to it.

Western Movies: A Guide to 5,105 Feature Films does provide readers and researchers

with an impressive alphabetical list of titles and relevant detailed information for each film. Despite the indexing shortcomings, **Mr. Pitts** should be given a great deal of credit for compiling such a rich list of Western genre films. And admittedly, the price is more than reasonable for the amount of information provided. However, future editions might consider more thorough indexing, even if it means raising the price a bit.

Extra Servings

In March 2014 **M.E. Sharpe** will release:

- **Biographical Dictionary of Chinese Women: Tang through Ming, 618-1644**. Edited by: **Lily Xiao Hong Lee and Sue Wiles** (2013, 9780765643148, \$124.95) "contains more than 400 biographies of women active in the Tang through Ming dynasties (618-1644). Many of the entries are the result of original research and will form the only substantial information on women available in English..."

This volume completes a four-volume project that also includes:

- **Biographical Dictionary of Chinese Women: Antiquity Through Sui, 1600 B.C.E. – 618 C.E.** Editors-in-chief: **Lily Xiao Hong Lee and A. D. Stefanowska** (2007, 9780765617507, \$122.95)
- **Biographical Dictionary of Chinese Women: The Twentieth Century, 1912-2000** (2002, 9780765607980, \$131.95) Edited by: **Lily Xiao Hong Lee**.
- **Biographical Dictionary of Chinese Women: The Qing Period, 1644-1911**. (1998, 9780765600431, \$110.95) edited by: Editor-in-chief: **Lily Xiao Hong Lee and A.D. Stefanowska**; Volume Editor: **Clara Wing-chung Ho**.

Salem Press is releasing the new editions of two of its better known titles:

- **Magill's Medical Guide**, 7th edition - 5 volumes. (ISBN: 9781619252141, \$425; e-ISBN: 9781587652158: \$425). This new edition "covers diseases, disorders, treatments, procedures, specialties, anatomy, biology, and issues in an A-Z format, with sidebars addressing recent developments in medicine and concise information boxes for all diseases and disorders... the purchase of the printed set entitles a school or library to three years of complimentary online access to the **Medical Guide's** content..." (Available Jan. 2014)
- **Cyclopedia of Literary Characters**, 4th edition - 5 volumes. (ISBN: 9781619254978: \$399; e-ISBN: 9781619254985: \$399). "This comprehensive edition combines the characters profiled in the first

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three editions of *Cyclopedia of Literary Characters* (1963, 1990, 1998) along with brand new coverage of characters that appeared in works of fiction published between 2000 and 2012...

Berkshire Publishing has just released:

- *The Berkshire Dictionary of Chinese Biography* - 3 volumes, (ISBN: 9781933782669, \$595) "is the work of more than one hundred internationally recognized experts from nearly a dozen countries... It makes the entire span of Chinese history manageable by introducing the reader to emperors, politicians, poets, writers, artists, scientists, explorers, and philosophers who have shaped and transformed China over the course of five thousand years..."

January 2014 saw **Sage Reference** publish two new titles:

- *Encyclopedia of Sport and Exercise Psychology* by **Robert C. Eklund** and **Gershon Tenenbaum**, (ISBN: 9781452203836, \$375) "explore the theory, research, and application of psychology as it relates to sport and fitness in a manner that is accessible and jargon-free to help readers better understand human behavior in sport and exercise settings."
- *Cultural Sociology of Mental Illness: An A-to-Z Guide* by **Andrew Scull**, (ISBN: 9781452255484, \$350) "looks at recent reports that suggest an astonishing rise in mental illness and considers such questions as: Are there truly more mentally ill people now or are there just more people being diagnosed and treated? What are the roles of economics and the pharmaceutical industry in this controversy? At the core of what is going on with mental illness in America and around the world, the editors suggest, is cultural sociology..."

CQ Press was busy in January 2014 publishing a new work:

- *Encyclopedia of Social Media and Politics* - 3 volumes, edited by **Kerrie Harvey**, (ISBN: 9781452244716, \$415) explores "how the rise of social media is altering politics both in the United States and in key moments, movement, and places around the world. Its scope encompasses the disruptive technologies and activities that are changing basic patterns in American politics, and the amazing transformations that social media use is rendering in other political systems heretofore resistant to democratization and change."

January 2014 will see **ABC-CLIO** release:

- *Encyclopedia of American Recessions and Depressions* - 2 volumes, edited by **Daniel J. Leab** (ISBN: 9781598849455, \$189) looks "at the financial cycles in American economic history from colonial times to the present day, with an eye on the similarities and differences between past and present conditions as analyzed by leading economic historians..."

Greenwood is also publishing a new title in January 2014:

- *All Things Dickinson: An Encyclopedia of Emily Dickinson's World* - 2 volumes, edited by **Wendy Martin** (ISBN: 978-1-4408-0331-4, \$189) "illuminates the beliefs, customs, events, material culture, and institutions that made up Emily Dickinson's world, giving users a glance at both Dickinson's life and times and the social history of America in the 19th century..." and "provides the wider context necessary for a more complete understanding of Dickinson, presenting Dickinson's life and times as well as discussion of her poetry and letters..."

In July 2014, **Oxford University Press** will publish:

- *Encyclopedia of Aesthetics*, 2nd edition - 6 volumes, edited by **Michael Kelly** (ISBN: 9780199747108, \$1195) is "now expanded to include over 800 entries and surveys the full breadth of critical thought on art, culture, and society, from classical philosophy to contemporary critical theory." The second edition also offers "enhanced or new coverage of international aesthetics, modern aesthetics, new media, and new fields of research such as geoaesthetics and neuroaesthetics..."

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