

2015

## From the Reference Desk: Reviews of Reference Titles

Tom Gilson

*Against the Grain*, [gilsont@cofc.edu](mailto:gilsont@cofc.edu)

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### Recommended Citation

Gilson, Tom (2017) "From the Reference Desk: Reviews of Reference Titles," *Against the Grain*: Vol. 27: Iss. 2, Article 22.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7771/2380-176X.7046>

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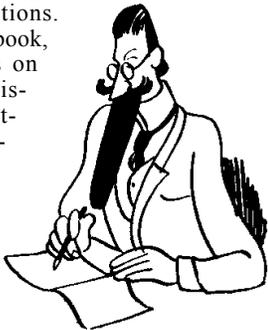
times in the small Middle Eastern Emirate from 2009 to 2011. **Mr. Dempsey** shows his skills not only in city planning but also as a writer, capturing varied and often funny experiences in a self-effacing manner.

**Dempsey** took the position in Abu Dhabi following a tour in Iraq and worked in the Emirate's Urban Planning Council during a frenetic period of expansion. *Castles in the Sand* discusses his work challenges and day-to-day experiences, describing a modern city engaged in a massive, reckless attempt to transform itself. He presents an outsider's view of a country in the midst of an almost unconstrained construction boom and the resultant impacts. Along the way, the author provides lively anecdotes of technical failures when he portrays the poor quality of construction through his own housing experiences and attempts to navigate the city's merciless traffic. He also discusses social issues, particularly in regards to the incredible number of immigrants living in slave-like conditions.

Throughout his book, **Dempsey** draws on news articles, history and even literature, all copiously footnoted, to provide comparisons and give the reader clearer understanding. When things seem to get a little dull, he takes a break to describe a funny incident. Of particular note is the almost four-page description starting on page 64 devoted to an epic haircut received while visiting one of the construction labor camps.

By the time I was done, I found myself sad that the book was finished and wanted to know more about the author. In reading his biographical note, I learned of his unfortunate passing. Not satisfied with the book's explanation, I conducted a Google search and discovered the following article, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2013/09/06/a-death-in-the-family/>.

After reading **Mr. Dempsey's** book, I have no desire to visit Abu Dhabi and feel as if I have been there simply by having read the book. This is a testament to **Dempsey's** narrative skills. All too briefly, he mentions visits to Yemen and Damascus prior to taking his position in Afghanistan. It is too bad that we do not have any more of his insights during that time period from this volatile portion of the world. In any case, his book is a pleasure to read and one from which anyone interested in the Middle East can learn.



## From the Reference Desk

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

*Asian American Society: an Encyclopedia* (2014, 978-1452281902, \$595) is a joint publication of the **Association for Asian American Studies** and **SAGE Reference**. Edited by **Mary Yu Danico** and **Anthony C. Ocampo**, this reference is a four-volume set with the first two volumes providing more than 300 alphabetically arranged articles and the third and fourth volumes containing numerous primary source documents, as well as a series of appendices and a general index. The intent of this encyclopedia is to reflect what it means to be Asian American from historical, social, cultural, political, and economic perspectives with discussions of both how the American experience has shaped Asian Americans as well as how they have impacted broader society.

The entries in the first two volumes speak to this effort. There are numerous articles that deal with specific aspects of broader themes ranging from education, religion, arts and culture to politics, social movements, family life, and class and labor concerns. Individual entries discuss topics as diverse as Tiger mothers, nail salons, **Kamehameha Schools**, the **Harold & Kumar Films**, Thai refugees, and the **Asian Exclusion Acts**. There are also entries that focus on the various ethnic groups comprising the Asian American community as well as articles that discuss identity issues like acculturation, language, and LGBTQ identity. The writing is accessible to undergraduates as well as the informed lay reader and employs a straightforward and factual approach informed by recent research. As one would expect, each entry has a useful list of further readings, not to mention "see also" references linking to related articles and document sections when relevant. As noted above there is a general index that enables readers to locate specific information as well as a thematic Readers Guide that gathers related articles under broad subject areas lending further access to relevant entries.

The editors have paid a lot of attention to providing interesting primary source documents that provide valuable context for the Asian American experience. There are over 200 documents ranging from an 1849 agreement of indenture between **Jacob Primer Lese** and a Chinese immigrant named **Awyte** to a 1908 article in Seattle's *Ranch* magazine warning of the "Yellow Peril" to a 2013 statement by the **Hindu American Foundation** on immigration re-



form priorities. Not only is the text of the document provided, but a descriptive annotation is given for each source reinforcing its relevance.

A four-volume set like *Asian American Society: an Encyclopedia* is increasingly rare but given the complexity and scope of the subject, it is fully warranted. Editors **Yu Danico** and **Ocampo** present an Asian American experience that is far more diverse and complicated than the stereotype of the "model minority" who are the "most successful and happiest" of America's racial groups. They do it by highlighting both the struggles and the triumphs of Asian Americans in entries with a sense of historic context and awareness. Most academic libraries will be interested in adding this title to their collections, and larger public libraries, especially those serving Asian American communities will want to add it to their wish list.

**SAGE Reference** has also published another in its collection of education encyclopedias. The *Encyclopedia of Education Economics and Finance* (2014, 9781452281858, \$375) is a two-volume set edited by **Dominic J. Brewer** and **Lawrence O. Picus** with a focus on how and who funds education, both public and private. The emphasis is primarily on the economics and finance of education in the United States, and the intention is to provide a solid background for understanding key concepts and issues as well as laying the foundation for further exploration.

In examining this reference work it becomes apparent that the economics and financing of education is a complex endeavor calling for sophisticated approaches. Numerous entries are devoted to budgeting strategies, economic statistical models, methods of taxation, and other sources of income like tuition and fees. Core economic concepts are discussed like the theory of markets, public choice, opportunity costs, and economies of scale. A myriad of complex issues impacting school financing also get attention including educational equity, lotteries, home-schooling, bilingual education, dropout rates, vouchers, private and public partnerships, and teacher performance and compensation.

The usual value-added features found in **SAGE** publications are here including an alphabetical list of entries, a Reader's Guide, "see also" references, solid bibliographies, a glossary, and a general index.

The *Encyclopedia of Education Economics and Finance* is intended as a non-technical introduction to a field that finds its foundation in the technical and empirical analysis of economics. While it does not shy away from discussing such topics, it does make a concerted effort to make the content reader-friendly to practitioners and undergraduates alike. Nonetheless, the approach remains serious and scholarly with entries being informed by the latest research. As one looks through the

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*Encyclopedia of Education Economics and Finance* there is a real sense of a resource that is defining a growing and maturing discipline. Academic libraries are the most obvious market for this title, and those supporting undergraduate and graduate education programs would be well advised to give it serious consideration.

Both of the **SAGE Reference** titles discussed above are available via the **SAGE Knowledge** eBook platform as well as in print. Search <http://knowledge.sagepub.com> for more information.

**Grey House Publishing** has released a new edition of *Nations of the World: A Political and Business Handbook* (2015, 978-1-61925-288-2, \$180). This 2015 annual edition provides profiles of over 230 nations and has been updated to include changes resulting from some “30 general elections and 21 presidential elections” and also reflexes the numerous economic changes experienced at the national level during the prior year.

Arranged alphabetically by country, each of the nation entries starts with an overview of the current political and economic climate that offers an informed and objective analysis that highlights key issues and concerns. This is followed by a historical profile that takes the form of a chronology. A political and social profile is next, which discusses topics ranging from the legislature, the legal system, and political parties to the media, religion, and education. An economic profile is also provided that discusses numerous topics including the general economy, trade, agriculture, industry, mining, energy, and banking as well as the environment, climate, and geographic factors. In addition, the nuts and bolts concerns of travelers and business people are addressed with information on things like passports and visas, currency, social customs, prohibited imports, health advisories, credit cards, telecommunications, security, transportation, etc.

*Nations of the World: A Political and Business Handbook* is a comprehensive and authoritative reference that offers more than 2000 pages filled with facts and figures. The analysis is informed, straightforward, and objective. The volume is well organized and easy to use. Students, business travelers, and tourists will all find it a helpful resource and as such it should find a ready place on shelves in undergraduate libraries as well as larger public and high school libraries.

Following **Grey House’s** general practice, buyers of the 2015 print edition get free access to *Nations of the World Online*, where users can access individual country reports for download. Access is available via G.O.L.D (Grey House Publishing’s Online Database Collection), and those who are interested can call 1-800-562-2139 ext. 118 to get a trial.

**Grey House** has also published a new edition of the *Complete Television, Radio*

*& Cable Industry Directory*, (2015, 978-1-61925-287-5, \$350). The 2015 annual is the third **Grey House** edition since they took responsibility for publishing what was once the classic reference title *Broadcasting Yearbook* (later entitled the *Broadcasting and Cablecasting Yearbook*). As with past **Grey House** editions, this book is a softcover, single volume consisting of approximately 2,000 pages filled with the names, addresses, and contact information for thousands of networks, stations, companies, associations, and agencies.

The *Directory* is divided into eight sections but starts with coverage of television, radio, and cable networks and stations. These three sections make up the bulk of the book. The additional sections focus on programming and production services, equipment manufacturers, professional services, associations, events, education and awards, and government agencies. Each of the first three sections are further divided into U.S. and Canadian sections which are arranged by province and state, and then city.

The *Complete Television, Radio & Cable Industry Directory* continues to stand as the most exhaustive directory covering the U.S. and Canadian television, radio, and cable industries. This is a “go to” source for any academic or public library that needs information about the broadcasting industry.

Online versions of this reference are also available via G.O.L.D with a print purchase. Those who are interested can call 1-800-562-2139 ext. 118 to get a trial.

### Extra Servings

**SAGE Reference** has a couple of new titles that have just made an appearance, including:

- *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Intercultural Competence* (April 2015, 9781452244280, \$375) is a two-volume set edited by **Janet M. Bennett** that focuses on the concept of cultural competence or that “set of attitudes, practices, and policies that enables a person or agency to work well with people from differing cultural groups. Other related terms include cultural sensitivity, trans-cultural skills, diversity competence, and multicultural expertise. What defines a culture? What barriers might block successful communication between individuals or agencies of differing cultures? How can those barriers be understood and navigated to enhance intercultural communication and understanding? These questions and more are explained within the pages of this new reference work...”
- *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Food Issues* (April 2015, 9781452243016, \$395) is a three-volume reference edited by **Ken Albala**. This new set “explores the topic of food across multiple disciplines within the social sciences and related areas including business, consumerism, marketing, and environmentalism. In contrast

to the existing reference works on the topic of food that tend to fall into the categories of cultural perspectives, this carefully balanced academic encyclopedia focuses on social and policy aspects of food production, safety, regulation, labeling, marketing, distribution, and consumption...”

**CQ Press** is planning to add a couple of updated editions that political science collections will welcome.

- *Washington Information Directory 2015-2016* (June 2015, 978-1-4833-8057-5, \$205.00; eISBN: 978-1-4833-8055-1, request price) has been a standard “source for information on U.S. governmental and nongovernmental agencies and organizations.” The 2015-2016 edition “provides capsule descriptions that help users quickly and easily find the right person at the right organization. *Washington Information Directory* offers three easy ways to find information: by name, by organization, and through detailed subject indexes. It also includes dozens of resource boxes on particular topics and organization charts for federal agencies and NGOs...”

- *Historic Documents of 2014* (June 2015, 978-1-4833-8052-0, \$205; eISBN: 978-1-4833-8050-6, request price) continues this series of well-regarded annuals that provide “informative background, history, and context ... for each document. The 2014 volume will begin with an insightful essay that sets the year’s events in context, and each document or group of documents is preceded by a comprehensive introduction that provides background information on the event. Full-source citations are provided. Readers have easy access to material through a detailed, thematic table of contents and a cumulative five-year index that directs them to related material in earlier volumes...”

**Elsevier** imprint **Academic Press** has just released the second edition of a major multivolume encyclopedia as well as a new three-volume set that libraries with ample budgets may be interested in:

- *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences, 2nd Edition* (March 2015, 9780080970868, \$12,000), edited by **James D. Wright**, is “fully revised and updated... and offers a source of social and behavioral sciences reference material that is broader and deeper than any other. Available in both print and online editions, it comprises over 3,900 articles, commissioned by 71 Section Editors, and includes 90,000 bibliographic references as well as comprehensive name and subject indexes...”

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Column Editor: **Donna Jacobs** (Retired, Medical University of South Carolina, Charleston, SC 29425) <donna.jacobs55@gmail.com>

- **Brain Mapping: An Encyclopedic Reference** (February 2015, 9780123970251, \$1344) is edited by **Arthur W. Toga** and “offers foundational information for students and researchers across neuroscience. With over 300 articles and a media-rich environment, this resource provides exhaustive coverage of the methods and systems involved in brain mapping. It fully links the data to disease (presenting side-by-side maps of healthy and diseased brains for direct comparisons), and offers data sets and fully annotated color images...”

**ABC-CLIO** also has a new title that may of interest:

- **American Civil War: A State-by-State Encyclopedia** (March 2015, 978-1-59884-528-0 \$189; eISBN: 9781598845297, call for pricing) is edited by **Dr. Spencer C. Tucker**. It is “intended for general-interest readers and high school and college students, **American Civil War: A State-by-State Encyclopedia** serves as a unique ready reference that documents the important contributions of each individual state to the American Civil War and underscores the similarities and differences between the states, both in the North and the South...”

**H.W. Wilson** has just published new edition of a title that many will recognize.

- The **American Book of Days** (February 2015, 978-1-61925-469-5, \$195) is in its fifth edition and “features 850 essays marking important anniversaries and the birthdays of history-making Americans throughout the 366 days of the year. All American holidays and pivotal moments are noted as readers can delve into fascinating and often overlooked accounts connected to otherwise familiar facts of American history. Cross-references and an extensive index make information easy to find, while expanded appendices feature historical documents...”

And lastly, **Oxford University Press** has just published a new edition of a standard research tool.

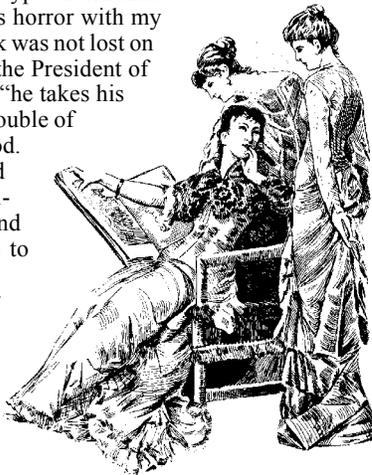
- **The Oxford Guide to Library Research**, 4th Edition (April 2015, 978-0-19-993106-4, £16.99) by **Thomas Mann** “provides a systematic overview of the best sources, both electronic and print, that go far beyond the coverage of Google and Wikipedia; demonstrates why brick-and-mortar research libraries are more important than ever; and teaches, with multiple concrete examples, how to find the best search terms to use in searching databases...”

**Patrick Modiano** was awarded the 2014 **Noble Prize for Literature** in October “for the art of memory with which he has evoked the most ungraspable human destinies and uncovered the life-world of the occupation.” Soon after the announcement, I began searching for one of his books to read for “**Booklover**.” **Suspended Sentences: Three novellas**, was the choice I made for my holiday reading. Travel, parties, family, and general holiday activity did not afford me the time for delving into these three stories. Then the attack on the offices of the satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo* located in Paris, France shocked the world. **Modiano** is described as an author who has spent his life examining the Nazi occupation and its effects on his country. Although this attack originated from a different type of extremist thinking, the timing of this horror with my interest in **Modiano’s** work was not lost on me. **Francois Hollande**, the President of France, said of **Modiano**: “he takes his readers right to the deep trouble of the occupation’s dark period. And he tries to understand how the events lead individuals to lose as well as find themselves.” It was time to read and so I began.

*After Image, Suspended Sentences*, and *Flowers of Ruin* are the translated titles for the three novellas. **Mark Polizzotti** is credited with the translation. In his introduction he describes, “A feeling of indirection pervades many of **Patrick Modiano’s** writings, and the three short novels in this volume are no exception. For all the specificity of detail — locations catalogued with loving precision, particular casts of light and shadow — one can’t escape a sense of haziness, as if everything were shrouded in gauze or viewed through a Vaseline lens. The narrative voice adds to this impression, the protagonists often placing themselves just to the side of the situation they’re describing. Like the prose in which they couch their stories, these narrators maintain a slight remorse, as if full engagement with one’s surroundings carried the threat of great pain, or mortal danger.”

Of the three, *After Image* particularly resonated with me. It is an out-of-focus story about a focal product. **Modiano** even confessed about his own writings: “The more obscure and mysterious things remained, the

more interested I became in them. I even looked for mystery where there was none.” The story begins simply: “I met Francis Jansen when I was nineteen, in the spring of 1964, and today I want to relate the little I know about him.” The illusive illustration of Jansen by the narrator sets up a page-turner where the reader is lead to believe that maybe in just the next paragraph all will be revealed. And it never is; the joy of reading the illusion, the mystery in itself, is the end game that **Modiano** sets up. Jansen is a photographer. He uses his Rolleiflex to capture a moment with minimum intrusion. When the narrator meets him Jansen has packed his life’s work into three leather suitcases and is moving to Mexico. The narrator offers to catalogue his photographs as he appreciates the documentary value of them and believes Jansen should be recognized at some point for this. A sense of déjà vu began to creep into my reading. The story line, albeit fiction, had a very familiar tone.



*Finding Vivian Maier* is a documentary released in 2013 about a young man’s discovery of the works of **Vivian Maier**. Bidding on a storage locker of vintage photographic material for a book he was writing for **Arcadia Publishing**, **John Maloof** discovers a box of negatives. **Maloof**

had become interested in the preservation of Chicago’s Northwest side where he lived and was writing about it with **Daniel Pogorzelski**. The box of negatives did not produce any material for their book *Portage Park*, but it provided the catalyst for **Maloof’s** immersion into finding **Vivian Maier**, the solitary nanny who took over 100,000 photographs of street life and left two storage lockers stuffed with clues to assist in the ultimate archiving, preservation, and presentation of her life’s work by **Maloof**. To connect you back to **Modiano’s** Jansen character — Jansen used a Rolleiflex, and, like **Maier**, he would capture street life in an intimate, minimally intrusive manner. **Patoche**, the narrator in *After Image*, describes Jansen’s work: “I only have to look at his photos to rediscover the quality he possessed in art as in life, which is so precious but so hard to acquire: keeping silent.” A description one might also bestow on **Maier’s** work. 🐾