

SOURCES

The Oxford Encyclopedia of British Literature did not use a panel of advisors.

Parts of the encyclopedia's organization are problematic, as are some selection decisions. Instead of a systematic outline of contents, there is a sketchy "Topical Entries" list. Drabble's book remains more complete in a number of areas, such as contemporary genres and eighteenth-century literature. Essays that might have enhanced the encyclopedia's contemporary coverage are spy fiction and gay and lesbian literature. Interestingly, there is no article for the eighteenth-century historian Thomas Warton, whom the preface describes as the person who launched the first serious (but failed) attempt at a comprehensive history of English literature.

There are four hundred articles about authors, providing medium-length treatments (most are three to five pages) and lightly annotated bibliographies of primary and secondary sources. These essays are modeled after the well-known British Council model, used by *British Writers*, meaning that they are fluent, concrete, and illustrative of an author's style, themes, and literary devices. However, the encyclopedia's essays are a quarter to a third of the length of their more generous prototype. *British Writers* and the *Dictionary of Literary Biography* (Thomson Gale, ongoing) remain the best choices for longer treatments, as they are more likely to give students the perspective they want on individual works.

Although *The Oxford Encyclopedia of British Literature* provides some valuable core articles, such as "The Canon," "Literature," and "Literary Theory," it does not exceed the established sources in coverage of topics. More useful as a supplemental than an essential purchase, *The Oxford Encyclopedia of British Literature* should be considered by medium-to-large academic and large public libraries, especially if they maintain comprehensive collections in literature. Smaller libraries seeking solid, medium-length articles on major authors and a sampling of many topics might also weigh this title. This set works best to enrich the information contained in other Oxford Press literary titles, especially *The Oxford Companion to English Literature*. Ideally, libraries offering the *Oxford Reference Online: Premium Collection* might add the *Literature Collection*, so that the encyclopedia's insights reach more users.—Nevin J. Mayer, *Coordinator of Instruction, John Carroll University, University Heights, Ohio*

The Philosophy of Science: An Encyclopedia. Ed. by Sahotra Sarkar and Jessica Pfeifer. New York: Routledge, 2006. 2 vols. acid free \$350 (ISBN 0-415-93927-5).

Philosophy of science "emerged as a recognizable sub-division within philosophy only in the twentieth century" (xi), beginning with the Vienna Circle. It engaged many of the most prominent philosophers of that century, including Whitehead, Russell, Popper, Hempel, Carnap, and Kuhn. The entangled histories of philosophical and scientific inquiry are outside the main focus of *The Philosophy of Science: An Encyclopedia*, as are considerations of science by other philosophical schools. The selection of topics and persons treated in the 130

articles is further narrowed by the exclusion of the philosophy of mathematics, all scientists "no matter what the extent of their philosophical influence," and most philosophers within the tradition whose work is not "distant enough to allow 'historical' appraisal" (xi). Yet given the importance, range, and sheer ambition of philosophy of science in the twentieth century, this careful definition does not result in anything that could be called a narrow topic.

The Philosophy of Science: An Encyclopedia serves a purpose comparable to existing encyclopedias and companions dedicated to specific schools, eras, or topics in philosophy. Researchers primarily interested in the philosophy of science will find it far superior to the general encyclopedias of philosophy currently available in print or online. It is considerably more thorough even than Routledge's own general encyclopedia, which devotes an entire volume to roughly the same topic (*Philosophy of Science, Logic, and Mathematics in the 20th Century*, vol. 9 of *Routledge History of Philosophy* [Routledge, 1996]).

The editors and most of the one hundred or so contributors are professors of philosophy, and the articles are targeted to graduate and higher-level undergraduate philosophy students. The articles are of consistently high quality and cover the major conceptual developments and thinkers in the philosophy of science tradition, as well as the scientific methods and theories that they have engaged. Philosophy students will be grateful that the articles on scientific topics such as "Kinetic Theory" and "Molecular Biology" include explanations of key concepts such as Avogadro's Number and DNA. Unfortunately, no corresponding accommodation is made for science students who may not be familiar with symbolic logic or the major developments in the history of philosophy.

Indeed, the major weakness of *The Philosophy of Science: An Encyclopedia* is that it makes few concessions to those who do not already have a general understanding of its topic. It would have been a kindness to these outsiders to add "twentieth century" to the title, which is sure to mislead students who come across it in the catalog while looking for information on, say, Aristotle's biology. Apart from alphabetical and topical listings of the entries, there are no special finding aids, charts, or timelines that might be expected in a specialized encyclopedia. This lack is offset somewhat by an excellent introductory essay and a thorough and well-constructed index. The index, however, would have benefited greatly from the use of bold lettering or one of the other conventions to differentiate sustained discussions from the many, many passing references to persons and subjects.

Because of its strengths, *The Philosophy of Science: An Encyclopedia* is strongly recommended for academic libraries that support philosophy programs teaching philosophy of science or emphasizing twentieth-century Anglo-American philosophy.—Alistair Morrison, *Product Manager for LexisNexis Academic, Bethesda, Maryland, and MLS Candidate at the University of Maryland, College Park*