

SOURCES

of entries, a guide to related topics, a selected bibliography, and an index. The guide to related topics includes all the entries in the encyclopedia listed mostly under genres types and additionally by genre writers. Most of the biographical entries provide a brief synopsis of the author's life and a summary of one or two of their most famous or notable works.

Student Encyclopedia of African Literature will surely be compared to Routledge's *Encyclopedia of African Literature* (2003). Although the Routledge encyclopedia is definitely still considered the preeminent reference book on African literature, Greenwood has carved out a strong niche for itself by introducing a work that is more accessible for readers new to the subject. Additionally, the Routledge encyclopedia carries a heftier price tag, retailing for around \$350. One may consider using Greenwood's *Student Encyclopedia of African Literature* as an excellent starting point and consulting the Routledge encyclopedia for further examination and study on a research topic.—Sheila Devaney, *Data Services and Business Reference Librarian, University of Georgia Libraries, Athens*

Student's Encyclopedia of American Literary Characters. By Matthew J. Bruccoli and Judith S. Baughman. Facts On File Library of American Literature. New York: Facts On File, 2008. 4 vols. acid free \$340 (ISBN 978-0-8160-6498-4).

The selection criteria for the characters included in *Student's Encyclopedia of American Literary Characters* are those from plays, short stories, and novels that upper-grade students either know or should know, such as Guy Montag, No Name Woman, and Atticus Finch. Given the encyclopedia's attention to memorable characters, it is not surprising that many come from literary works that have become films. Somewhat shrewdly, the authors explain the intentional absence of many celebrated characters as the encyclopedia's way "to provide a testing place for its users—a facility to determine what they know, what they don't know, and what they want to know."

As a way to engage readers in the study of literature, *Student's Encyclopedia* provides a list of study questions after each analytical essay exploring a character. There are also brief lists of introductory secondary sources, such as casebooks, the Twayne series, and basic articles on key themes from scholarly journals. Although each essay is signed by the author, the creditability of *Student's Encyclopedia* as a tool for high school students would be stronger if the authors' affiliations had been provided. The writing is jargon-free and direct.

For quick reference and review of characters in traditional literature, users are better served by the more comprehensive staple reference works such as A. J. Sobczak's *Cyclopedia of Literary Characters* (Salem, 1998) and *Dictionary of American Literary Characters* (Facts On File, 2002) or more specialized sources such as *Dictionary of Real People and Places in Fiction* (Routledge, 1993). *Student's Encyclopedia* aims to encourage students to read more by examining vivid main characters.

Student's Encyclopedia could find a place in high school, public, and community college libraries as well as those hold-

ing curriculum collections. Students can draw on this set to help them find a theme to write about. However, because of its cost and need for supplements, libraries should weigh whether or not this is a source their students are inclined to use.—Nevin J. Mayer, *Coordinator of Instruction, John Carroll University, University Heights, Ohio*

Women, Science, and Myth: Gender Beliefs from Antiquity to the Present. Ed. by Sue V. Rosser. Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO, 2008. 335p. alkaline \$85 (ISBN 978-1-59884-095-7).

Editor Sue Rosser states in her conclusion that the major reason for this book is "to understand the co-evolution of gender and science" (431). She has authored ten books on the subject of women and science and has successfully edited this current work, which can be used as either a reference tool or an introductory text. The title is somewhat misleading, suggesting that the work's focus will be scientific theories about the nature and abilities of women and differences between the sexes. Beliefs throughout the ages and the world are interspersed throughout the articles, but this is not the book's strong point. Its unique quality is its treatment of the role (and absence) of women in the field of science, set against sociohistoric backgrounds.

The book is divided into two major sections, chronological and thematic. The six articles in the chronological section highlight changes in time through historical eras and are international in scope. The format alternates between socio-historic accounts and biographical essays listing and describing influential women in the field of science. The thematic section is divided into six subcategories and contains articles on the individual disciplines of science, aspects of human behavior, institutions, discrimination, and philosophical and theoretical critiques concerning women and science. Each article concludes with substantial references and suggestions for further reading. A general bibliography is also provided at the book's end.

Several added features follow the articles. An appendix of statistical tables provides data on education and employment of women in the sciences, much of which appears to be statistics from the United States. The glossary is uneven and contains simplistic terms and phrases unnecessary for the level of reader at which this work is aimed. Examples are "belief," "lesbian," and "middle ages."

The editor's conclusion describes Phase Theory, defined in the glossary as a "developmental scheme that explains how change occurs in curriculum, institutions and personal awareness" (460). Rosser outlines the first model developed in 1984 for curriculum in history and her modification of the model for the sciences in 1993. Rosser then applies this theory to the volume as a whole. This is the most interesting and unique aspect of the work. Her conclusion is thought provoking and provides a mechanism for understanding the articles in theoretical perspective.

There are many publications available that separately treat biographies of women in the sciences, philosophy of gender

in science, and history of scientific theories on gender. This resource weaves all of these strands into an enlightening picture of the effect of gender in the field of science. Highly recommended.—*Lisa Roberts, Catalog Librarian, California State University, Sacramento.*

Professional Materials

Karen Antell

Editor

Answering Consumer Health Questions: The Medical Library Association Guide for Reference Librarians. By Michele Spatz. New York: Neal-Schuman, 2008. 142p. \$65 (ISBN 1-55570-632-0).

Answering consumer health questions is a more complex process than medical librarians may immediately recognize. In this book, Michele Spatz clearly demonstrates the numerous facets of this task. In attempting to address this process, Spatz calls to mind the varied aspects integral to understanding and working with consumer-oriented health questions.

Comprising seven chapters, this book shifts its focus logically between the information provider and information receiver. It invites the reader to view the consumer health information transaction through a varied lens. This can be seen clearly in the author's preface: "In addition to possessing the skills needed to provide the appropriate informational resource, librarians must have an understanding of the psychology of health and medical consumers" (ix).

The book's chapters are laid out in an intuitive way. The author covers all of the important considerations that are unique to medical questions, including ethical and legal implications. Taking it one step further, Spatz draws on broad resources in her discussion of the psychological factors that affect the relationship between patron and librarian when obtaining and disseminating consumer health information. Understanding the diverse needs and backgrounds of health information consumers is examined, along with useful resources to help guide practice.

Answering Consumer Health Questions boasts several features that make it a wonderful reference resource. Dispersed throughout the book are vignettes that provide context and frame the reality and complexity of everyday reference scenarios. Another practical feature is the book's "exhibits." These sections provide links to useful resources that every medical library needs to be aware of to be an effective information provider.

As a reference book, this work reaches a broad audience. Perfect for library school students, graduate assistants (especially in medical libraries), and professional librarians, the material and scope of this book allows it to be read in its entirety or sampled and referenced as needed.

The author's evident delight in helping diverse patrons with personal and often complex needs demonstrates the

consistent struggle and reward of being a medical librarian. This book is a must-have for any medical library.—*Mark Hopkins, Library Technology Manager, Bird Library, University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center, Oklahoma City*

Crash Course in Reference. By Charlotte Ford. Westport, Conn.: Libraries Unlimited, 2008. 143p. \$30 (ISBN: 978-1-59158-463-6).

One in a series of Crash Course titles from Libraries Unlimited, *Crash Course in Reference* fulfills the promise implied in its title. Ford has crafted a succinct, well-designed manual for all things reference in public library settings.

In natural progression, the book covers the definition and standards for reference service, general reference collection development, specific types of resources, ethical considerations, and service policies. In addition, the importance of networking with other librarians is discussed. A list of additional information resources for learning about reference work is provided. Each chapter includes a set of review questions that could serve as assignment questions for students in MLS or LSTA programs. This reviewer was able to test drive the book with a library practicum student and found it beneficial as a teaching and learning tool; in addition, the student found it helpful in shaping her practicum questions.

Crash Course in Reference outlines the reference interview process and stresses its importance in providing high-caliber service to library patrons. The book provides a response to the customary interview question for reference librarian positions: "If you only had seven resources you could have with you on a desert island, which would you take?" The response helps make new librarians aware of the wealth of information that can be found with a few well-selected tools. Ford also places well-deserved emphasis on the importance of excellent customer service in reference transactions and includes RUSA's *Behavioral Guidelines for Performance*. Her presentation of ethical dilemmas in reference work serves as a reminder that patron confidentiality and privacy are of utmost importance. Ford presents questions for consideration when working on inquiries that appear controversial, acknowledging that while textbook responses may provide the framework for answers to reference questions, it is not always easy to discern one right way to respond.

More contemporary and accessible than Bill Katz's *Introduction to Reference*, which has long been a standard text in library school curricula, *Crash Course in Reference* is an affordable, must-have resource for public libraries of all sizes and is of particular interest for training new staff.—*Lisa Powell Williams, Adult Services Coordinator, Moline (Ill.) Public Library*

Gotcha Good! Nonfiction Books to Get Kids Excited About Reading. By Kathleen A. Baxter and Marcia Agness Kochel. Westport, Conn.: Libraries Unlimited, 2008. 259p. \$35 (ISBN 978-1-59158-654-8).

Gotcha Good! is written for the public or school librarian who wants to purchase or promote nonfiction titles for