Since the focus of this guide is contemporary fiction, it would have benefited from appendices that would help readers continue to find future translated works. For example an appendix that lists publishers promoting translated works or an appendix of relevant websites would have been useful. Still the introduction does include some tips on how to keep current with suggestions of online resources, magazines like World Literature Today, and international awards.

Though there are other useful reference works that examine translated works, such as Peter France’s The Oxford Guide to Literature in English Translation (OUP, 2000) and Mona Baker’s The Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies (Routledge, 1998), most were published before 2000. This guide is unique in that it focuses exclusively on contemporary works. It’s also less interested in exploring the history or theory of translation and more focused on guiding readers to the works of fiction themselves.

Librarians who select fiction for their collections will want to use Contemporary World Fiction as a collection development tool. It is recommended for most university and college libraries, particularly those who support world literature classes. Larger public libraries with strong literary fiction collections will also want to consider purchasing this work.—Arianne A. Hartsell-Gundy, Humanities Librarian, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio


Updates to poetry reference sources are not generally cause for celebration. However, Salem’s bundling of print sets with online access opens up access to multiple users based on personal preference is deserving of some applause. The selective nature of the set keeps it to a manageable fourteen volumes, with the option to purchase subsets of the collection.

Beyond updated and additional content, the set’s new organization increases its value to users. Subsets are available for American poets; British, Irish and Commonwealth poets; European poets; and World poets, rounding out the regional coverage. Chronological coverage spans from the earliest available oral traditions to newer poets such as Beth Ann Fennelly, although it takes a moment’s pause before looking for ancient poets such as Anacreon in the European volumes.

Reorganization of materials by geography aligns the set with textbook units and course offerings by Language Arts and English departments, making the purchase of individual subsets an attractive option based on curricular needs. The volume on World poets may support multicultural diversity needs of a collection. Each subset contains its own index, and a cumulative index comes with purchase of more than one subset.

Signed entries for each author include birth and death dates when available, other types of literature written, awards earned, biographical information, analysis of major poetic works or collections, and a bibliography. Images are also available for several poets, and are included in the online version as well. Many entries were updated by subject specialists for this latest edition, and bibliographies were updated for many as well. While brief, encyclopedic style entries of authors, including poets, may be found in other resources, such as the specialized volumes of Gale’s Dictionary of Literary Biography, this set is an outright purchase instead of a continuing one, and is narrowly focused on poetry.

The Topical Essays volumes give an overview of “Poetry Around the World,” further dividing some regions into time spans: “German Poetry to 1800,” “German Poetry: 1800 to Reunification,” “German Poetry Since Reunification.” Essays on criticism and theory are joined by essays on literary movements; these will appeal to students in survey courses, introducing topics such as “Harlem Renaissance” and “Postcolonial Criticism,” often in ten pages or less while still hitting the major points. Essays on topics such as Latin American Poetry remain unchanged from the previous edition, but the bibliographies for entries include updated annotated sources.

Additional features of the set include lists of Major Awards within each regional set, an explanatory essay on poetry explication, a glossary, and an essay on language and linguistics that teases out the overlap of these fields in the study of poetry.

Online access to the purchased subsets is included with purchase; author entries online include a more complete oeuvre of principal works at the top of the entry, instead of splitting the information as the entries in the Poetry volumes do. Standard online features such as citation generation (in MLA), exporting, e-mailing, and saving to a personal account are available. Recommended for high school and academic libraries.—Amy F. Fyn, Reference and Instruction Librarian, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, Ohio


Digital Collections Worldwide aims to organize, describe, and make transparent over 1,400 online collections the authors deem “authoritative, useful, and permanent” for its primary audience, “researchers” (xvi). Obviously, this is an enormous task since collections of digitized materials are constantly being created, modified, and updated. To address this inherent problem, this work comes with an associated online directory although it is unclear how long the authors and publishers plan to keep these links updated.

As a criteria for authority, the authors note that collections considered for inclusion had to originate from an “educational institution, governmental body, museum, corporate site, library (including national libraries), archives, or a scholar’s personal website” with an identifiable author or party and a clear purpose (xviii). Selected collections are organized by geographical region and then country.