

Dr. Seuss, which does a fine job of establishing Geisel as a political writer, which is typically covered in other reference works, but is not the focus of the entry. Genres are also well represented, with a specific strength with the coverage of science fiction including representation of authors from well-established canonical figures such as H.G. Wells, but also including more obscure international writers such as Karel Capek and also contemporary authors such as China Mieville. Further strong points of *Literature and Politics Today* are the entries on national literatures and subsets of national or regional literatures such as difference between Francophone or Anglophone literatures.

The entries have brief bibliographies, which tend to list a few major primary or critical works. However, often these bibliographies are not current enough. For example, the Toni Morrison entry has no citations newer than 1997. Booker is the author for many of the entries, but many other experts, mostly professors of English, are also represented, resulting in reliably accessible and informative writing throughout. Overall, this work does an admirable job of representing *Literature and Politics* and will serve as a valuable supplement to other reference works in literature. Recommended for high school and college libraries.—Shannon Pritting, *Library Director, SUNY Polytechnic Institute, Utica, New York*

Make 'em Laugh!: American Humorists of the 20th and 21st Centuries. Ed. by Zeke Jarvis. Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood, 2015. 322 pages. acid free \$89 (ISBN: 978-1-4408-2994-9). E-book available (978-1-4408-2995-6), call for pricing.

While books about comedy often strip all the life out of it, good books about comedy are a useful resource for learning about key performers, for analysis of comedy trends, and for discovery of little-known works one may have missed. Unfortunately, *Make 'em Laugh!: American Humorists of the 20th and 21st Centuries* is not one of those good books about comedy.

The volume's purpose is to examine "the issues of craft and technique found in each artist's work as well as the social significance of these artists and their work" (xvi). A lengthy introduction provides an essay on various cultural aspects of humor, though it is puzzling why the editor chose to include references to literary and cultural figures who do not have entries in the book (Edna St. Vincent Millay, e.e. cummings, W.C. Field, and Shirley Temple, to name a few). The book is organized in several sections: literature, popular writing (which includes comic strips), television and film, and stand up and performance. The entries in each section are alphabetized, include biographical and career information, and have a few sources for further reading. The introductory material does not address how or why the entries were selected for inclusion, which would have been very helpful in determining just what this reference book intends to do. It does say that the text "tries to take a very broad view of humor so as to see as many different aspects of humor as

possible," (xv) but that does not assist with identifying the book's purpose.

The entries contain mostly factual information (some of which, unfortunately, is incorrect) and little analysis or insight into the individual's humor. There is also an alarming lack of inclusion of minority humorists. Had the editor chosen a narrower focus, such as just stand-up comedians and actors, or a more limited date range (most of the entries are from the late twentieth century through current), this book would have had a clearer focus and purpose. As it is, it's exclusive, not nearly thorough enough, and just too broad to know what its purpose is.

Not recommended.—Tracy Carr, *Library Services Director, Mississippi Library Commission, Jackson, Mississippi*

Modern Genocide: The Definitive Resource and Document Collection. Ed. by Paul R. Bartrop and Steven Leonard Jacobs. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2015. 4 vols. Acid free. \$415.00. (ISBN: 978-1-61069-363-9) E-Book available (978-1-61069-364-6), call for pricing.

As a term, "genocide" is one of the more recent entrants in the English language lexicon, having gained currency only since World War II and that conflict's attendant pogroms of the Jewish and other peoples. As a concept and course of action, however, that of a methodical effort to eliminate an entire race or ethnic group, history shows that there have been numerous holocausts stretching back, probably, to the origin of our species. In fact, there have been so many concerted efforts on the part of People A to rid Planet Earth of People B, that the editors have limited the scope of their work to those instances that occurred during the twentieth century, hence the import of "modern" in its title.

Editors Bartrop and Leonard state in the "Introduction" that their purpose in creating yet another reference work on genocide studies—and there have been several other excellent titles of late—is to educate ". . . a new generation to what has transpired in the century just concluded [so that] we can break this cycle of violence, death, and destruction and move humanity forward positively" (xxxvii). The question of whether education, commendable goal that it is, will act as a deterrent to such baser human instincts as hate and greed, is one for the philosophers to grapple with, as this is beyond the capacity of a mere book reviewer. That being said, the editors and contributors have done a yeoman's job in laying out the facts regarding mass murder over the last hundred years. The bulk of these four volumes are taken up by ten substantial chapters, each one focusing on a discrete episode of genocide as defined by Article 2 of the United Nations Convention. In alphabetical order, they range from Armenia during World War I to Rwanda in 1994. Each chapter follows a standard format beginning with an overview essay that frames the occurrence in its cultural and historical context. Other aspects examined include "Causes," "Consequences," "Perpetrators," "Victims," "Bystanders" (witnesses), and "International Reaction." An interesting and useful feature that

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this reviewer has not seen in other comparable reference works is a section on “Historical Dilemmas.” An explanatory note indicates that this text is designed to acquaint “students and researchers to debates and controversies in the study of certain genocides and atrocities. It presents a historical question with different perspectives on the issue” (131), such as “Why is the Armenian genocide not known as well as some other major genocides?” (131). More conventional, though important, features include sections on primary source documents, a bibliography and encyclopedia style A-Z signed articles.

The “Contributors” page indicates a crew well versed in their subject matter. Co-Editor Paul Bartrop holds a PhD earned at Monash University, located in Melbourne, Australia. He currently serves as Director of the Center for Judaic, Holocaust and Genocide Studies at Florida Gulf Coast University; he is widely recognized as a leading thinker and writer in his field. The other Co-Editor, Steven Jacobs, holds a Doctor of Divinity degree from the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion and is now Associate Professor in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Alabama. Both men have had numerous books published regarding various aspects of genocide studies. They were ably assisted in this most recent endeavor by a lengthy list of librarians, academics and other researchers.

As alluded to earlier, this area of inquiry has generated a fair amount of scholarly attention. A mere sampling of recent titles include Israel W. Charny’s *Encyclopedia of Genocide* (two volumes, ABC-CLIO, 2000); Alexander Mikaberidze’s *Atrocities, Massacres, and War Crimes* (two volumes, ABC-CLIO, 2013); and Leslie Alan Horvitz/Christopher Catherwood’s *Encyclopedia of War Crimes & Genocide*, revised edition (2 volumes, Facts on File, 2011). While each are solid sets in their own respective rights, it is the three-volume *Encyclopedia of Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity*, edited by Dinah Shelton (Macmillan Reference USA, 2004) that comes closest in depth and scope to the title under discussion here. The fact that Shelton’s effort received a starred review in *Booklist* is evidence of the level of scholarship that went into its creation. Nevertheless, for libraries whose budgets allow for the purchase of only one major work in genocide studies, this reviewer strongly recommends the 2,200+ page, four volume ABC-CLIO set. It is the most current, thoroughly researched, clearly written and informative work on the market today.—*Michael F. Bemis, Independent Reference Book Reviewer*

Personal Finance: An Encyclopedia of Modern Money Management. Ed. by Barbara Friedberg. Santa Barbara, CA: Greenwood, 2015. 403 pages. acid free \$89 (ISBN: 978-1-4408-3031-0) E-book available (978-1-4408-3032-7), call for pricing.

This single-volume reference offers access to overviews of financial ideas and concepts, key events, and business figures that have shaped modern personal finance and money management. The editor, Barbara Friedberg, the author of

How to Get Rich: Without Winning the Lottery and Invest and Beat the Pros—Create and Manage a Successful Investment Portfolio and founder of the popular website *BarbaraFriedbergPersonalFinance.com*, has compiled an invaluable and easy-to-use reference to increase financial literacy and independence among American citizens across different age brackets and life stages, especially young adults who are handling personal finances and making financial decisions for the first time.

There are approximately 125 entries ranging from 1,000 to 2,000 words. Eighty-eight topical overviews explain financial ideas and concepts and are organized alphabetically by topic. Each article is signed at the end. In fact, Barbara Friedberg contributed many entries as evidenced from the signings. Other entries were written by nineteen different writers from a diverse cross-section of academia and practicing professionals.

Entries are subdivided into relevant subtopics. Subheadings in boldface delineate the different subtopics. Often, articles discuss the advantages and benefits of different financial tools, as well as the risks and disadvantages. Readers are encouraged to see related cross-referencing and further reading sections listed at the end of each article.

Other strengths of this reference are that economic and financial topics, such as derivatives, hedge funds, inflation, and short sales, which are often deemed complex for laypersons, are explained in easy to understand language. Many entries supply information about common financial interactions, such as acquiring a first credit card, buying insurance, understanding credit scores, renting apartments, or buying first homes. Many entries address aspects of financial planning, such as saving for retirement or choosing financial advisors. Moreover, many of these overviews would often be challenging to locate by other methods.

Seventeen articles are furnished about events that shaped the current economic and financial outlook. The years range from the 1930s (The Great Depression) to the years 2011–12 (The European Debt Crisis). Interestingly, the Iraq War is given its own article coverage, because the costs incurred by the United States government in funding this war had a lasting effect on the American financial outlook. Only twenty articles for people who have impacted personal finance are provided, including entries for the three last presidents: William Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama. Interestingly, five entries are about influential women: Christine Lagarde, Mary Schapiro, Muriel Siebert, Elizabeth Warren, and Janet Yellen.

After the Table of Contents, the reference offers a Guide to Related Topics that categorizes article entries by twelve topics: Banking, Business, Consumers, Debt and Credit, Economics, Finance, Government, Insurance, Investing, Legal, Real Estate and Retirement. The reference is complemented by a glossary of more than two hundred words and an Index for ease of use.

As discussed both in the preface and introduction, many Americans are suffering catastrophic financial losses, are incurring rising debt and saving less, and have less disposable