

Book Reviews



H. Faye Christenberry, Angela Courtney, Liorah Golomb, and Melissa S. Van Vuuren. *Literary Research and Postcolonial Literatures in English: Strategies and Sources. Literary Research: Strategies and Source*, 11. Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 2012. 262p. \$60.00 (ISBN 9780810883833). LC 2012-009243.

Let me begin by removing any suspense. I found this to be a very useful book in both argument and format, clearly written, systematic in approach and scope, full of good ideas and good practices. An integral strength of this work lies in the ways in which it presents actual-hypothetical cases not simply in the abstract but step-by-step consonant with actual—or at least preferred—practice.

Longitudinally, and complementing earlier volumes in this series, *Literary Research* focuses writing by citizens of the former British colonies in Africa, South Asia, and the Caribbean, beginning in 1947 (except South Africa from 1910) with the manumission of India and continuing to the present. Latitudinally, the full range of formats and content is addressed, with chapters on basics of online searching; general library reference sources; library catalogs; print and electronic bibliographies; scholarly journals; literary reviews; magazines and newspapers; microform and digital collections; manuscripts and archives; and web resources. A well-formulated final chapter deals with “researching thorny issues,” and the work concludes with a lengthy appendix in the form of outreach that systematically addresses the major sources “in allied disciplines.” While not all scholars in these disciplines will agree with all the choices made here, they can serve as a useful point of departure.

It is especially gratifying to find that significant attention has been devoted to ferreting out book reviews. It is little wonder that academics and others find

writing reviews to be vexatious—little intellectual credit is granted them and, once published, they tend to lapse into oblivion almost immediately. This is a particular pity; in theory, at least, effective approaches to a specific body of literature should begin with rounding up as many reviews as possible of that corpus for orientation and evaluation. Easily said, yet there can scarcely be any genre of literature more protean than the book review. Ideally, cadres in all disciplines should organize systematic ways to track reviews, but that has yet to occur. One might have expected that the advent of the World Wide Web would have made doing this both more routine and quicker, but not really so. Not even close.

Using works by three postcolonial writers (Vikram Seth, Earl Lovelace, J.M. Coetzee), the authors go on to sketch (192–95) ways to overcome this deficiency, all of which are probably more labor-intensive at present than they ought or need to be, and hence all the more in need of this kind of explicit attention. The discussion of the ways in which the authors demonstrate how a meager first harvest of citations to published book reviews of the works of these authors mushrooms into a much larger number is an object lesson in the virtues—and rewards—of long-term persistence and productive dissatisfaction.

Another genre of sources that is well-covered are the newspaper indexes, overused by undergraduates and underused by advanced students and faculty, the former because they are led to them by librarians and classmates, the latter because they have traditionally found it unpleasantly cumbersome to troll through microfilm and microfiche, often with little or no profit. Speaking of traditional research, a further appeal of *Literary Research* is that

the authors do not treat print sources as hopelessly *passé*, and, since so much of this/these literature/s remains elusive, the recommended search strategies go well beyond the norm. (Thus the only CIP subject heading, "Literature—Research—Data Processing," [iv] seriously misleads.)

Although probably not its purpose, the Appendix illustrates, if in reverse, that works like *Literary Research* can—in fact, would—benefit other than literary scholars *per se*. For instance, historians, whose writ covers the entire past and therefore whose work ideally has a symbiotic relationship with virtually every discipline, should certainly be aware of some of the works discussed here—after all, are not all historical sources also literary creations? To take just one example, the *MLA International Bibliography* database contains thousands of citations to the work of, and about, the chroniclers of the Indies of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, and adds scores more each year. Scholars interested in the history of the Americas—and not only the Americas—for that period need to be aware of the judgments of nonhistorians on these sources. While the sheer number of relevant citation materials found in the *MLA International Bibliography* is likely to be daunting, work that ignores or is unaware of them will most likely prove vulnerable. Much more interdisciplinary osmosis is needed, and *Literary Research* is a step in that direction.—*David Henige, University of Wisconsin.*

David Shumaker. *The Embedded Librarian: Innovative Strategies for Taking Knowledge Where It's Needed.* Medford, N.J.: Information Today, Inc, 2012. 232p. \$49.50 (ISBN 9781573874526). LC2012-017662.

"Embedded librarianship" has existed for some time and has taken on many forms in the most current decades. It's a model developed out of the practice from the medical and scientific fields and in current decades has been massaged into a new role, revitalizing the tapering

statistics of information professionals and librarianship. Technology has helped to more easily facilitate the practice of placing information professionals in strategic partnerships with faculty, student groups, and others within the campus community. David Shumaker, clinical associate professor at the School of Library and Information Science at the Catholic University of America, in *The Embedded Librarian: Innovative Strategies for Taking Knowledge Where It's Needed* has surveyed the literature, studied embedded programs, and written the first comprehensive survey of this practice. He offers a varied look, using analysis, case studies, templates, and exercises, which will prove valuable to those already involved in embeddedness or those considering endeavoring into the field.

Shumaker bases his book in two beliefs, already prevalent within the information profession: the library world "is changing and must change." In launching from this premise, he looks at a variety of organizations and, in doing so, identifies the characteristics that contribute to successful embedded librarianship, as well as explaining how information professionals in all types of library settings are using embedded librarianship principles to enhance how they engage their library communities. The author looks at public, academic, school, medical, law, and many other types of specialized libraries in analyzing how the practice of being embedded has enhanced librarianship. The chapters are laid out in a coherent outline that follows the arc of this practice through its history to its implementation in various library settings.

The book is divided into two parts: a historical and analytical overview, followed by a second section that gives the framework for successful embedded librarianship. Part One addresses the historical aspects, gives a summation of embedded librarians in higher education, the health sciences, corporations, nonprofits, government, schools, and public libraries. Part Two strives to offer