

With the exception of Paulsen's *German Universities and University Study* (1906), the second chapter of J. Periam Danton's classic *Book Selection and Collections: A Comparison of German and American University Libraries* (New York: Columbia Univ. Pr., 1963), p.12-33 (which is not mentioned by Kunoff, but from which his readers would benefit), Kunoff's topic is not well covered in English. Thus, Kunoff's close following of the more significant German authorities, and of other documents such as university statutes, regulations, and personal correspondence, allows English readers an often fascinating view of the major German universities of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.—Paul H. Mosher, *Stanford University*.

*Fiction, 1876-1983: A Bibliography of United States Editions.* New York:

Bowker, 1983. 2,328p. \$99.50, cloth, 2v. set. LC 83-21376. ISBN 0-8352-1726-4.

The idea behind *Fiction, 1876-1983* is a highly promising one. Derived from the databases of *Books in Print* (800,000 titles)

and *American Book Publishing Record* (almost 2 million titles), the 170,000 entries (*not* titles, as Bowker erroneously claims) of *Fiction* list—in theory and in the promotion, at least—"virtually every fiction title that appeared in the U.S. in the period covered." The format is that of a sort of cumulative *Books in Print* for fiction. There is an author index, a title index, a directory of publishers and distributors, and an author classification index, which groups authors by nationality and literary period where such information was available.

Based upon the questions given in the foreword as examples of the types of queries that *Fiction* is capable of answering, Bowker apparently expects this book to be a kind of one-stop authority for reference questions dealing with the U.S. publication of fiction editions. With *Fiction*, they say, one can date the first U.S. translation of *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, identify the first edition of *A Farewell to Arms*, find the title of John Cheever's last anthology of short stories, and learn the kind of fantasy novels published between the wars.

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Were it all that Bowker claims it to be, *Fiction* would be an essential addition to almost every public and academic library and to the reference shelf of many booksellers and researchers. Unfortunately, Bowker has greatly overstated the book's comprehensiveness and accuracy and greatly understated its deficiencies. To begin with, what is perhaps the most ludicrous example of the book's shortcomings: of the six sample questions in the foreword, two cannot be answered at all, two can be answered (at best) partially, and only two can be answered accurately by *Fiction*. Not one of the four authors mentioned in the six questions has a complete, accurate entry. It took some time, in fact, to find *any* author whose entry appeared to be complete.

The only omission acknowledged by Bowker is the absence of most out-of-print mass market paperback editions, though no reason for their exclusion is given. Since there have been thousands of fiction titles published only in a mass market paperback form and since they are often the



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least documented titles by what might otherwise be better-known writers, their absence creates a real loss. While these omissions are perhaps explicable if the editions were also missing from the original databases, other deficiencies in *Fiction* are not easily explained or excused.

The mistakes have no discernible boundaries: famous and obscure authors, cloth and paper editions, major and minor publishers alike are all mistreated. Titles are omitted; editions are omitted or incorrectly priced; entries are unnecessarily incomplete; nonfiction titles are listed as fiction; some entries are not even correctly alphabetized. Many editions published in the fifties, sixties, and seventies by major firms such as Knopf, Pantheon, Harper, Viking, and Little, Brown, and which have appeared in *Books in Print*, are not to be found in *Fiction*. For example, only one of the three hardcover editions of Nobel Prize winner Elias Canetti's *only* novel is listed; the revised edition of Gore Vidal's

*City and the Pillar* is listed, but not the original; the hardcover editions of John Cheever's *Wapshot Chronicle* and *Scandal* are both omitted; numerous editions of Jack Kerouac are missing; at least one of Malcolm Bradbury's novels is absent. The errors are really so pervasive that the book must be considered profoundly unreliable.

*Fiction* finally strikes this reviewer as a kind of first draft, an exploratory mapping of a territory to be covered later in detail. Despite all its faults, *Fiction* is useful, and perhaps even without real competition as a single-source reference work. But because of its extensive deficiencies, no author entry can be assumed to be complete and accurate without some additional outside confirmation. A new and thoroughly revised and corrected edition is called for; it's a shame that the work couldn't have been compiled and edited a little more carefully the first time.—Tom Haydon, *Wessex Books*.

## ABSTRACTS

*The following abstracts are based on those prepared by the ERIC Clearinghouse of Information Resources, School of Education, Syracuse University.*

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**Public Online Catalogs and Research Libraries. Final Report.** By Douglas Ferguson and others. Research Libraries Group, Stanford, Calif. Council on Library Resources, Washington, D.C. 1982. 195p. ED 229 014. MF—\$0.83; PC—\$12.32.

In 1981 and 1982, the Research Libraries Group (RLG) and four other organizations par-

ticipated in a coordinated study of public online catalog users and nonusers. Standard, self-administered questionnaires were used to gather data from 8,094 users and 3,981 nonusers in thirty-one research, academic, community college, public, and governmental libraries with seventeen different online catalogs. This final report presents findings and implications of data collected at three institutions: Dartmouth College, Northwestern University, and Stanford University, all members of the Association of Research Libraries (ARL). The data from these institutions are contrasted with those collected from twelve other ARL libraries. These data include uses of the public online catalogs, perceived problems, preferences for improvement, and user and nonuser characteristics. The report also presents the results of a related special study that gathered qualitative evidence in structured interviews with library staff at Dartmouth, Northwestern, and Stanford. A final chapter discusses implications of the study and notes a general patron acceptance of public online access catalogs. Appendixes include a list of participating libraries and computer systems, statistical analyses of data collected, sample questionnaires, and other documents. An executive summary and forty-seven tables are also provided.