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Editorial Review

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A joint effort of editorial staffs from Merriam-Webster and Encyclopaedia Britannica, *Merriam-Webster's Encyclopedia of Literature (MWEL)* "contains entries for authors, works, literary landmarks, literary and critical terms, mythological and folkloric figures, fictional characters, literary movements and prizes, and other miscellaneous matters." The book is encyclopedic in coverage but very dictionary-like in its brevity of entries.

The more than 10,000 entries in this volume cover a vast amount of territory. There are biographical entries covering all nationalities and periods (*Cavalcanti, Guido; Futabatei, Shimei; Joyce, James*), brief entries on literary characters (*Bovary, Emma; Hawkins, Jim*), on specific works (*Driving Miss Daisy; Lotus-Eaters, The*), on forms of criticism (*Feminist Criticism, New Criticism*), on movements and events (*Jindyworobak Movement, War of the Theaters*), and on styles (*Eclogue, Guwen*). The only thing lacking is entries on the literary traditions of specific countries.

The average entry is well under 150 words, with the longest under 700 (*Shakespeare, William*, for example), and some as few as seven (*Lineation* is defined simply as "an arrangement of lines [as of verse]"). Pronunciation is provided for most entries (even *Miller, Daisy* has one) and then an etymology for entries that define terminology. For biographical entries, places and dates of birth and death are given. The entry proper includes any cross-references ("used sparingly" according to the prefatory material) in small-capital letters. Titles of works are given in the original language followed by English translation. All entries are unsigned, and there are no bibliographies. Several hundred small black-and-white photographs and illustrations are provided.

By attempting to cover almost everything, some entries are almost uselessly brief (as in the *Lineation* example above). Others, though with a literary connection, almost seem lifted from a Merriam-Webster dictionary. *Epigraph*, for example, has two definitions, the first being "an inscription on a statue, a building, or a coin," and the second, "a quotation set at the beginning of a literary work." An oddity is the inconsistent description of living writers in both the present and past tense. The entry *Drabble, Margaret*, for example begins, "English writer of novels that are skillfully modulated variations on the theme of. . . ." *Proulx, E. Annie*, however, begins, "American writer whose darkly comic yet sad fiction was peopled with quirky, memorable characters." Nevertheless, *MWEL* admirably covers topics from a wide breadth of literary subjects. The volume also will serve as a valuable supplementary source for literary allusions, with such entries as *Banshee, Jezebel, Kali*, and a variety of other mythological and religious entries.

MWEL perhaps most closely represents the various Oxford Companion titles for depth of coverage, though even in that series one must first find the appropriate country-or genre-related volume. Any number of literary dictionaries and biographical dictionaries contain similar entries, but for sheer ready-reference capabilities, *MWEL* is in a class of its own. Its low price further justifies a place for this volume on any library's reference shelf.

Review

This single-volume compendium of world literature blends a dictionary and an encyclopedia format to provide the latest coverage of authors and literary terms. Over 10,000 entries and numerous illustrations blend in a fine all-genre compilation which assesses novels, poems, plays, and literary criticism. Enjoy

surprisingly detailed sketches which include plot summaries and listings of works. -- *Midwest Book Review*

About the Author

For more than 150 years, in print and now online, Merriam-Webster has been America's leading and most-trusted provider of language information. All Merriam-Webster products and services are backed by the largest team of professional dictionary editors and writers in America, and one of the largest in the world.

Users Review

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Lori Leavitt:

The publication with title Merriam-Webster's Encyclopedia of Literature has a lot of information that you can discover it. You can get a lot of gain after read this book. This book exist new knowledge the information that exist in this guide represented the condition of the world right now. That is important to you to understand how the improvement of the world. This kind of book will bring you within new era of the globalization. You can read the e-book with your smart phone, so you can read it anywhere you want.

Paula Adame:

A lot of people always spent all their free time to vacation or go to the outside with them loved ones or their friend. Did you know? Many a lot of people spent that they free time just watching TV, as well as playing video games all day long. If you want to try to find a new activity honestly, that is look different you can read a book. It is really fun for you. If you enjoy the book that you simply read you can spent all day long to reading a e-book. The book Merriam-Webster's Encyclopedia of Literature it is quite good to read. There are a lot of individuals who recommended this book. These were enjoying reading this book. Should you did not have enough space to create this book you can buy the actual e-book. You can more simply to read this book out of your smart phone. The price is not too costly but this book has high quality.

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Julie Gibson:

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