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The Story of Jules Verne--the Anglo-American One.

Brian Taves and Stephen Michaluk, *The Jules Verne Encyclopedia*. Lanham, MD, & London: Scarecrow Press (800-462-6420), 1996. xvii+257. \$54.50.

This long-overdue book is a noteworthy publication for three reasons. First, it helps to provide an understanding of how the legendary French author Jules Verne, creator of the *Voyages Extraordinaires* and reputed "Father of Science Fiction," became a cultural icon throughout the English-speaking world. Second, it offers a new and revealing glimpse into how the 19th and 20th-century media industry (e.g., publishing houses, Hollywood producers, newspaper journalists, et al.) censored and adapted Verne's original works to fit their own ideological agendas. Third, this book will have immense practical value to all those interested in Verniana collectibles--from stamps, to old Verne paperbacks, to those pricey leather-bound first-edition translations of Verne's earliest novels.

But, to literary scholars, the most important feature of *The Jules Verne Encyclopedia*--its documentational "crown jewel"--is that it contains the first truly reliable and comprehensive guide to all the English-language editions of Verne's works published in Great Britain and the America from the 1860s to the present. This detailed bibliography is of unprecedented scope and accuracy. And it will undoubtedly become one of the standard reference texts on Jules Verne for all researchers, collectors, and librarians for many years to come.

Although this 100-page primary bibliography (with its accompanying "Title Cross Reference" index) stands as the innovative cornerstone of *The Jules*

Verne Encyclopedia, there are a variety of other historical documents, essays, and interviews which chronicle the rise of Jules Verne's popularity in the English-speaking world. Included, for example, is the story of the first American Jules Verne Society, a collage-like "autobiography" pieced together from all known interviews with the author, a visit to Verne's hometown (circa 1949), the first American translation and publication of Verne's translated short story "The Humbug," an analysis of the differences between the original French versions of Verne's novels and their (often terribly bowdlerized) English translations, a discussion of various worldwide philatelic tributes to Verne, and a perceptive study of Hollywood's many cinematic adaptations of Verne's works.

Inevitably perhaps, *The Jules Verne Encyclopedia* does have its flaws. The most glaring is the following: the text is continually marred by an unseemly number of typographical and spelling errors, misprints, misplaced illustrations, misattributions, and garbled French titles all of which necessitated a lengthy 19-page "Corrections and Additions" sheet (available from Brian Taves, e-mail "btav@loc.gov"; phone 202-675-4525). These editorial mistakes are both annoying and inexcusable in a publication of this caliber. They should have been corrected by Scarecrow Press's copy-editor long before the book went to press. It is my understanding (as one who helped to proof the manuscript) that the authors requested these changes to the galleys, but that they were either ignored or the corrections were somehow overlooked in the publisher's rush to get this book onto the market.

Further, it must be acknowledged that the overall focus of *The Jules Verne Encyclopedia* is not literary. With the possible exception of Taves's fine essay at the beginning, it seeks neither to analyze Verne as a writer nor to understand Verne's *Voyages Extraordinaires* in the context of world literature or the genre of science fiction. Not surprisingly, therefore, one finds very little bibliographic information about the large amount of literary criticism devoted to Verne published over the past few decades (even those monographs and articles available in English). One reason, of course, is that the main consumer market targeted by this publication is the general public and collectors of Verniana. While it is true that the latter--

probably more concerned with the completeness of their individual collections or the value of their Verne books as *objets d'art*--might not have found such a chapter of great interest, an annotated secondary bibliography of this sort, even a brief one, would nevertheless have added greatly to the value of this text as a research tool for all students and scholars of literature.

Despite these minor quibbles, however, I found *The Jules Verne Encyclopedia* to be both highly informative and authoritative. I strongly recommend it as essential reading for all aficionados of Jules Verne.

--**ABE**