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From the Reference Desk-Reviews of Grove's Dictionary of Art and other reference materials

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From the Reference Desk

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As you know this issue of *ATG* focuses on the world of reference publishing. Given this emphasis, I thought it appropriate to discuss a reference set which *Library Journal* describes as "easily the publishing event of the year" and "one of the major publishing events of the twentieth century."

Containing over 32,000 pages in 34 volumes, Grove's *Dictionary of Art* (1996, 1-884446-00-0, \$8,800) is a massive scholarly effort with a massive price tag. The fact that it was published at all may say something about the viability of print references in today's electro-centric world. The commitment necessary for such an undertaking along with the fact that it is successfully selling at nearly \$9,000 a set, (so far 3,600 sets have been sold worldwide) points out that there is both a perceived and real market for a high quality print reference that fills a scholarly need.

It took almost fifteen years to complete the *Dictionary of Art* but even before it was published, ALA's *Guide to Reference Books* anticipated that it would supersede the *Encyclopedia of World Art*, the only English language art encyclopedia to mildly approximate it (see entry BF73). Obviously, there has been a lot of hype and high expectation associated with this work. Happily, it fulfills its promise. The *Dictionary of Art* supersedes all its predecessors and is a remarkable accomplishment.

As one would expect, the coverage is comprehensive with some 45,000 articles contributed by 6,700 scholars from 120 countries. Content-wise the *Dictionary of Art* is very impressive for it is not just an encyclopedia of the "fine arts." Articles on decorative arts, performance art, and multimedia installation are also included, as are those on other art forms like photography and portraiture.

Naturally, articles on individual artists, artisans, theorists, collectors, art historians, etc. are a major part of this set (they make up 46% of the individual entries). In addition, there are entries on artistic groups, art movements, publications and art patronage as well as on materials and techniques and art theory. But most impressively, particular attention has been paid to the art of non-Western peoples. Substantial articles are devoted to ancient cultures like those of Aboriginal Australia, India and ancient Egypt as well as, "the arts of Asia, Africa, Australasia and the Americas." For example, the article on African Art is over 220 pages long and subdivided into 15 sections, and this is in addition to individual articles on specific African countries like Zimbabwe, Nigeria and Kenya. In fact, this set includes articles on the art of "every modern country recognized by the United Nations" ranging from a half-page entry on Chad to a 590-page article covering the arts of China.

The *Dictionary* also contains articles on the artistic merits of specific objects like gardens, carpets, the bed, and the altarpiece as well as articles of topical interest like Allegory in Art, Environmental Art, Feminism in Art and Urban Life. On top

of all this, religious art and iconography are covered as are significant archaeological sites, important buildings and building types and monuments.

The editors of the *Dictionary* obviously realize that art does not occur in a vacuum and throughout this encyclopedia there is a conscious effort to put the works discussed in context. Not only are the creative factors touched upon, but the sociological, economic, political, historical and cultural settings which inform the art are highlighted.

The *Dictionary of Art* is an international production and the bibliographies reflect it. Naturally the vast majority of entries have bibliographies and in fact, sections within the more extensive articles have their own. The bibliographies list books, periodical articles, dissertations, unpublished writings, exhibition catalogs, and photographic and print publications. Rather than being arranged alphabetically by author, the materials are listed chronologically by date of first edition. Many of the citations refer to foreign language publications which should pose little problem to faculty and graduate students; however, it may prove frustrating to undergraduates.

Although this set is scholarly and comprehensive, the writing style is straightforward and accessible to both students and lay readers. However, on occasion readers will be confronted with an unfamiliar term. For example, while reading the article entitled "Chartres: Cathedral Architecture," I was puzzled by the statement that "the distinctive feature is the triforium." Besides guessing that it might be Latin I had no idea what the word triforium meant. Luckily a look in **Russell Sturgis' Dictionary of Architecture and Building** gave me a definition and illustration which explained the meaning of triforium. The point is that even though the writing is clear some supplemental "prowling around" may be necessary because of the technical nature of the subject matter.

However, this exercise also highlighted a major concern about this set. The index, while extensive and taking up an entire volume, is not without problems. My first response to solve the triforium puzzle was to consult the *Dictionary's* own index. In the index there was a reference to "triforium windows" which said see under Windows -- types. However under Windows -- types in the index there is no mention of "triforium windows," a classic blind cross reference. It is quite possible that there is reference to triforium windows in the article on Window types but the index does not reflect that. In another instance, I noticed a mistake in the alphabetizing within the index. On page 920 "Santa Rufino Factory" is followed by "Ssangbong Temple" and preceded by "Srubnaya culture" while on page 856, after "Santa Rosa Xtampak" where it should appear, there is no mention of "Santa Rufino Factory." There is also a concern about a lack of "see references" where they might be helpful. Looking for information on the Pennsylvania Academy of the Arts (one of the first art schools in America) there is no direct listing. In order to find this information, you must know that the Academy is located in Philadelphia because it is under the heading "Philadelphia" where it is found. However, there is no "see reference" to direct you. Users should be aware that they may encounter similar problems. (In fact, if such problems are noticed, you can report them to **Karin Agosta**, the *Dictionary's* Director of Marketing for North America 1-800-336-0055). Hopefully these are isolated instances but if they prove to be pervasive Grove should remedy the situation as soon as possible. It would be a shame to let a problem with the index mar such a landmark set.

Besides the index there are three appendices. The first is a list of the current locations of each work of art mentioned in the text, giving both the full name and abbreviation used for the name of the museum, gallery or other institution which currently holds the piece. (These abbreviations are also used in the bibliographies when refer-

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encing exhibition venues.) The second appendix is a listing of the abbreviations used for all the periodicals cited in the *Dictionary's* bibliographies and the third lists the abbreviations along with their citations for the reference books and preferred editions listed in the bibliographies as well as a list of the abbreviations of the various series cited.

As any encyclopedia of art should be, this set is illustrated throughout with photographs, reproductions, drawings, etc. The quality is generally good and supports the text. The illustrations database used for the *Dictionary* "numbered some 15,000 items" which were sized and electronically digitized. In the back of each volume the sources of the illustrations are acknowledged. However, the vast majority are in black and white. Color plates are few and far between which is a disappointment. While this set was obviously not intended for the coffee table, more color plates would have been expected, especially given the subject area.

With the high scholarly quality of this reference and the exceptional effort which obviously went into its production, my concerns may seem overly critical but at this price I was expecting perfection. While it is a significant achievement and a reference which will be the standard for years to come, the *Dictionary of Art* is not flawless. Nonetheless, most university libraries, major public libraries and college libraries that can afford it will want to make the investment. Grove offers different payment plans to spread the cost of the *Dictionary* over more than one year's budget which libraries may want to take advantage of.

American history has received some solid attention from two recent publications, both published by divisions of Simon and Schuster/Macmillan. Macmillan Reference USA has published the *Encyclopedia of the American West* (1996, 0-02-897495-6, \$375) while the Charles Scribner's Reference division has released the *Encyclopedia of the United States in the Twentieth Century* (1996, 0-13-210535-7, \$400). Both sets are worthy of discussion.

The *Encyclopedia of the American West* covers the historical developments of that part of America from the Mississippi River to the west coast including Alaska and Hawaii and some areas of Canada and Mexico. It acts to both update and expand Howard Lamar's one volume *Reader's Encyclopedia of the America West* last published in 1987. The time frame covered by this reference stretches from the first Spanish settlements through the beginning of the twentieth century but coverage is not confined to only events and people. Editors **Charles Phillips** and **Alan Axelrod** describe their view of the West as "a collection of multiethnic frontiers and as the spawning ground for an array of industries and enterprises that each gave rise to its own culture and carried with it important ecological consequences." As such, articles on Japanese-Americans, the Fur Trade, Wildlife, and Women Writers, as well as those on Cochise, the Homestead Act, the Dodge City War and Mark Twain will all be found within these four volumes. There are also articles on the development of each of the twenty-three states that make up the American West as well as articles on agencies and organizations as diverse as the United States Forest Service, the Texas Rangers and the Huntington Library. The writing is clear and precise and entries generally range from a half page to five or six pages in length. The set is illustrated with original photographs, art reproductions and some forty maps; all are in black and white. Other helpful features include a list of contributors including the articles they wrote, an alphabetical listing of all entries and a listing of biographies broken down by profession. In addition, there is a

helpful index in the final volume and "see" and "see also" references from a number of the entries. Given the wealth of writing about the American West, the bibliographies are somewhat disappointing. Many are brief and contain only references to books. There are some exceptions to this like those bibliographies for the entries on Violence and those on Women, but generally speaking the bibliographies could be more extensive.

The *Encyclopedia of the United States in the Twentieth Century* takes a different approach than the *Encyclopedia of the American West* and from a scholarly perspective, a more satisfying one. The arrangement is not alphabetical by individual unrelated entry but by broad categories or parts like the "American People," "Politics," "Culture," the "Economy," "Science, Technology and Medicine" and "Global America." These parts are then subdivided by specific aspect with individual essays devoted to each. For example, Part 1, "The American People" starts with an essay entitled Regionalism and is followed by those on the four major regions of country; the East, the Midwest, the South, and the West. Other essays then move on to consider overriding concerns like gender issues, race, ethnicity and immigration, class and family. These essays are scholarly being both factual and theoretical. Again, as an example, the essay on regionalism in Part 1, "The American People" contains factual references to New Deal programs like the TVA, as well as references to the theories of **Lewis**

Mumford and **Howard Odums** on regional synthesis. In Part 6, "Culture", the essay on the "Mass Media And Popular Culture" gives the reader both a factual history of the development of 20th century popular culture as well as scholarly interpretations of its impacts by individual writers like **Marshall McLuhan** and **Dwight McDonald**. While this style may not lend itself to quick, ready reference use, it more than compensates with the depth of coverage.

The set is illustrated with black and white photos but they are sporadic. There are also some maps, and statistical charts when appropriate, but text is the main attraction in this encyclopedia. Each article is followed by a bibliographic essay and while far more extensive and satisfying than the bibliographies in the *Encyclopedia of the American West*, they list few journal articles. Some eighty historians have contributed to this set and their affiliations, qualifications, research interests and publications are listed in Volume IV as is the index to the set. Given the arrangement of this reference, a good index is essential. and this one fits the bill providing easy access to specific names, events, and topics. There is also a helpful chronology highlighting events for each of the main parts in the encyclopedia, as well as an alphabetical table of contents and one by individual volume.

Different reference works are intended for different uses. Some are meant for quick occasional visits and others for more extended stays. The *Encyclopedia of the United States in the Twentieth Century* clearly falls in the latter category. It is an authoritative and scholarly contribution to the reference literature on America history that focuses on a time period which is not as thoroughly treated in any other set of which I am aware. Most larger libraries will want to add it to their collections.

Also under the Scribners imprint is *African Writers* (1997, 0-684-19651-4, \$180) a two-volume set which provides critical evaluations of sixty-five of Africa's most prominent writers.

The individual articles discuss each writer's career and contributions. Critical comments and analysis focus on both major themes and individual works. While many students will find the discussion of individual works of most immediate value, reading through the entire article offers the opportunity of gaining a fuller sense of the writer's importance. Each article has its own bibliography including references to both the writer's work, personal interviews and critical

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studies. Of course, some of the bibliographies are more substantial than others but on the whole they are strong. In addition, when appropriate, references to available English translations are made. In *African Writers* Scribners offers a similar critical treatment afforded the writers covered in their other "Writers" sets like *British Writers*, and *American Writers*. The hope here is that like those sets, *African Writers* will be supplemented. In his introduction, editor C. Brian Cox indicated that there were at least fifty other writers who he felt were worthy of inclusion in this set so it would seem that there is a obvious need. Both students and reference librarians would welcome the additions.

Since its recognition in the late 1960's as a distinct discipline, African-American Studies has grown in both adherents and scholarly respect. Evidence of this can be seen not only in the number of college courses and programs being offered, but in the increasing number of significant reference titles which have been published in recent years. The *Encyclopedia of African-American Culture and History*, published by Macmillan Library Reference (reviewed in *ATG*, April, 1996, p.54) the *Chronology of African American History* published by Gale Research and the *Kaiser Index to Black Resources 1948-1986* by Carlson Publishing are just a few examples of this. Now you can add the *Oxford Companion to African American Literature* published by Oxford University Press (1997, 0-19-506510-7, \$55) to this growing list.

The *Oxford Companion to African American Literature* is a one-volume reference that both individual scholars as well as libraries will want on their shelves. It is a solidly bound book which is crammed with useful information. As is customary with this type of literary reference, biographies of individual writers make up a significant number of the entries. But, there are also those which cover specifics works like *Letter From Birmingham Jail* and *Giovanni's Room*, literary movements like the Chicago and Harlem Renaissance, influential publications like *Phylon* and the *African American Review*, specific genres like "Folklore" and "Protest Literature" and influential concepts like "Expatriatism" and "Black Nationalism." While this book is useful for getting quick factual information, one of its major strengths is to provide context for the specific authors, movements and genres which are treated. However, few references can be totally comprehensive and there are some omissions here. For example, while there are articles on "Speech and Dialect" as well as "Folk Literature," there is no mention of Gullah, a specific Creole dialect which has had significant influence in coastal South Carolina and Georgia. This volume could also be improved by including a thematic index of the entries to provide the user a convenient list of the articles on genres, literary movements, specific works and important concepts. Such an index also helps give the user a better idea of the overall scope of the work.

But continuing on the positive side, each entry has a brief bibliography and "see" and "see also" references are used throughout the book. There is also an index which is helpful in locating specifics. All in all, this is an impressive effort well worth consideration by all types of libraries.

The *Dictionary of Plant Toxins* published by John Wiley (1996, 0-471-95107-2, \$195) is not a field guide for the occasional backpacker like myself. It is meant for the serious student and scientist and it lists not just those plants which are toxic for humans, but those "which are known or which are likely to have adverse effects on any and every form of life." Unfortunately not everything is known about all of the toxic principles of many plants especially those in the tropical rain forests, but this dictionary attempts to be as complete as possible including all vascular

plants as well as algae. Entries for each toxin contains the "common names with synonyms, chemical class and subclass" along with diagrams of chemical structure as well as the molecular weight, chemical formula and the *Chemical Abstracts* registry number. Naturally, the plant source is also included as is a brief description of the toxin's activity. Each entry ends with a reference to a source noting the toxin's isolation. The arrangement is alphabetical by name of toxin but the book has four indexes, one by subject, another by species a third by molecular formula and the last index, by common name. In addition, editor Jeffrey B. Harborne's introduction provides a brief general essay on plant toxins, tables of the more common poisonous plants and a bibliography.

Cooper's Comprehensive Environmental Desk Reference is another book that interested individuals as well as libraries may want in their collections. Published by Van Nostrand Reinhold (1996, 0-442-02159-3, \$99.95), this reference was designed to "unlock the door of environmental jargon," and while it is divided into eight sections, it is the first two which are most helpful in reaching this worthy goal. The first section is a dictionary of terms and terminology while the second is a listing of acronyms and abbreviations. According to editor, Andre R. Cooper, together these two sections list and define over 10,000 terms and abbreviations. Included in the coverage are both scientific and regulatory terms which reflect the standard jargon used by environmentalists, policy makers and commercial interests. Additional sections include a sample of a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment, a listing of the hazardous air pollutants mentioned in the Clean Air Act, a section of data conversion formulas, a listing of locations and telephone numbers for EPA offices, and a helpful topical index for selected terms contained in the first two sections. The book's layout and design are clearly organized while the content should be of value not only to practitioners, but to students and interested lay persons. As an added feature, this reference comes with a floppy disk spell check which can be installed to work with WordPerfect 5.1. This may or may not be a plus for some libraries, but for individuals using the book at home or in the office, this is a nice addition.

There have also been a few new editions of established works which are worth making note of. With the increasing interest in gerontology and geriatrics a second edition of Springer Publishing's *Encyclopedia of Aging* (1995, 0-8261-4841-7, \$159) is welcome. According to publisher Ursula Springer, the first edition which appeared in 1986 has been extensively revised with some 20% of the new version being completely original. Entries deal with topics ranging from alcohol use to pensions and Alzheimer's Disease to tax policy. In short, this volume covers all types of issues related to aging from medical to social to financial. The arrangement of the book is alphabetical by subject but there is also a subject index for more specific reference. Parenthetical citations throughout the text refer to a nearly 200-page bibliography of sources at the back of the volume. The *Encyclopedia of Aging* is a one volume reference which contains a good deal of information on a topic of growing concern. Congressional Quarterly has recently released a second edition of the *Directory of Congressional Voting Scores and Interest Group Ratings* (1997, 1-56802-181-X, \$ 269) edited by J. Michael Sharp. This two-volume set aids both scholars and interested citizens in identifying the voting characteristics of representatives and senators elected since 1947. First, CQ gives each member its own support and opposition voting scores in four key areas; conservative coalition (defined as "a voting alliance of Republicans and Southern Democrats against Northern Democrats"), party unity, Presidential support and voting participation. This is followed by the ratings for each member by

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In the following list I will attempt to include enough information to whet the work appetite of archivists in the hope that they will spare no efforts in their searching process.

Appleton Century Crofts was founded in 1831 when **David Appleton** gave up operating a dry goods store in New York and converted his premises to an attractive book store and in that same year published his first book. Appleton published text and science-related books (including medicine) as well as some bestselling trade books. A merger with the **Century Company** in 1933 put the company in a leader's place in reference book publishing; in 1948 Appleton acquired the textbook publisher, **F. S. Crofts**. Later **Prentice Hall** acquired the company and maintained it primarily as its medical book publishing arm. As of this writing Prentice Hall is part of **Simon & Schuster** which is owned by **Viacom**.

A. S. Barnes is credited by the editors of *International Publishing, An Encyclopedia* (Garland, 1995) as the first educational publisher in the U.S. (1839). The textbook list of ASB was included with those of four other publishers in an amalgamation (1890) creating the American Book Company (see above). A. S. Barnes, as a publisher of books on sports, indoor and outdoor, was acquired by **Thomas Yoseloff** in 1958. I don't know what became of the Barnes name or properties, excepting that I remember that **Ronald Press** eventually got most of the indoor titles. Ronald was absorbed by **Wiley** who, to the best of my knowledge eventually remaindered the line. I must point out that A. S. Barnes mentioned here has no connection with the Barnes of **Barnes and Noble**. That company was an offshoot of **Wilcox and Follett Co.** of Chicago and was primarily a dealer in new and used textbooks. The original B & N did publish a very successful line of college outlines and had American rights to some British classical titles. (More on Follett later in this series.)

The letter B brings to mind several reprint publishers. Lack of space dictates brief treatment but I suggest that archivists should recognize the work of this segment of the industry. During the Great Depression the low prices of reprints permitted impecunious citizens (and libraries) to stretch their funds for book buying and when thousands of World War II veterans took advantage of the GI Bill of Rights in Education, established reprinters were able to supply collateral reading material at low prices to students and government agencies who paid for most of the vets' book requirements. During this period of time several important new reprinters came into being ... **Ian Ballantine** was one of the most important figures in this field. His widow and his son, Richard, have recently embarked on a new

book merchandising venture and they, not **Random House** (which they are now part of), should be approached for archival material ... The brothers **Albert** and **Charles Boni** created the **Modern Library**. The famous brothers are mentioned in several standard publishing histories, often with **Horace Liveright** who was another important trade publisher of the mid-century and a partner of Boni brothers' Modern Library creation. **Richard Abel** and I were guests of **Daniel Melcher** at a luncheon in Luchows some time in 1974. The purpose was to bid bon voyage to **Albert Boni**, who in his mid-eighties, was finally retiring from publishing and moving to Florida. **Bennett Cerf** was the real promoter of ML. I remember his calling on Chicago booksellers in the mid-thirties, with a case full of Modern Library samples and an order book ... Other reprint houses which were of great importance were: **Blue Ribbon Books**, founded in 1933, was headed at various times by notables of the publishing community, including **Robert DeGraff** a founder of **Pocket Books** (1939), **Curtis Hitchcock** and **Eugene Reynal**, who founded a short-lived publishing house bearing their names. This company was acquired by **Harcourt Brace** in 1948 after Hitchcock died. Reynal became an important top official at Harcourt ... **A. L. Burt**, founded in 1883, as a reprinter of cheap juveniles eventually was absorbed by **Reynal & Hitchcock** ... **Bobbs-Merrill** is the last publisher of my letter B list. It was so important that I am doing a bit more research and will include it in my next column.

Probably the all-time champion reprinter, especially to the school and public library market, was **Grosset & Dunlap**. Their first reprint, **Janice Meredith**, appeared in 1903. By 1944 G & D was purchased by a group of publishers including **Random**, **Harper**, **Scribner**, **Little Brown**, and **Book of the Month Club**. I quote from Madison, *Book Publishing in America*: "This purchase was made in order to prevent unscrupulous buyers from misusing the list of this reputable firm." This statement causes my mind to go on a rampage: all five of those saviors of G&D have been taken over by mega-conglomerates. I am forced to the awful conclusion that those five were perhaps victims of a fate they prevented for G & D. And perhaps not — it's all in the way one defines the shenanigans of the megas. **Grosset and Dunlap** has become part of the **Putnam Berkley Group**, formerly a subsidiary of **MCA, Inc.** but recently combined with **Penguin**, a subsidiary of **Pearson** ... A Kansan cannot write about reprints without mentioning **Emanuel Haldeman-Julius** and his *Little Blue Books* of Girard, Kansas. Line H2 of *Guide To Book Publishers' Archives* locates two collections of books produced by this publisher, but notes that they do not contain archival material. There should be much available somewhere!

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ten interest groups representing a wide political spectrum ranging from the ACLU to the American Conservative Union and the US Chamber of Commerce to the Consumer Federation of America. All ratings are given in percentage 1 to 100. The *Directory of Congressional Voting Scores and Interest Group Ratings* offers a treasure trove of information to help analyze an individual representative's or senator's voting record as well as his or her philosophical leanings.

Lastly, there is Pergamon's second edition of the *International Encyclopedia of Educational Technology* (1996, 0-08-042307-8, \$175) edited by **Tjeerd Plomp** and **Donald P. Ely**. References like this may be seen as exercises in creative, but useful re-packaging. This book conveniently organizes articles related to educational technology which first appeared in the second edition of the multivolume *International Encyclopedia of Education* published in 1994 by Elsevier Science. It also updates and revises some of these articles and then adds nineteen new articles to enhance the content. The articles are of a serious scholarly nature with extensive bibliographies. But quality is not the issue. If a library has already spent \$3,795 on the second edition of the *International Encyclopedia of Education*, is a volume like this worth the added cost? Obviously this is an individual decision but a search in ERIC for relevant articles might serve the purpose of updating just as well. For those libraries without the *International Encyclopedia of Education* and in need of a specialized treatment of educational technology, this book is worth considering. 🌿