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From the Reference Desk-Reviews of Reference Titles

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From the Reference Desk

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Crime seems to pay, at least in reference publishing. Two recent titles from two different publishers attest to it. **Sage's** *Encyclopedia of Victimology and Crime Prevention* (2010, 978-1412960472, \$350) and **ABC-CLIO's** *Crime and Punishment Around the World* (2010, 978-0313351334, \$380), offer different perspectives but nonetheless give evidence of a continuing scholarly fascination with various aspects of crime as well as a maturation and diversification of crime as a field of study.

Edited by **Bonnie S. Fisher** and **Steven P. Lab** the *Encyclopedia of Victimology and Crime Prevention* explores corresponding and supportive disciplines. At one time discussions of crime prevention and victimology took place within larger fields like criminology, criminal justice, sociology, etc. But since the mid 1980's interest in crime prevention and victimology as separate but intersecting disciplines has grown. The content of the *Encyclopedia* confirms this growth. All told, there are 370 articles covering twenty-eight categories ranging from discussions of remedies within the criminal justice and legal systems to articles that deal with the specific correlates of victimization like race, gender, age, and sexual orientation. There are also articles that throw light on services and treatment for victims, related psychological and physical health issues, crime prevention efforts in residential communities and schools, as well as the media's role in crime prevention. A number of articles also deal with specific crimes running the gamut from arson to identity theft and from carjacking to rape. Naturally, these articles provide definitions of the crime. However, the bulk of each entry discusses the crime within the context of its victims and its possible prevention. In addition, there are essays covering different theories of crime and violence as well as those focused on methodologies including a number of victimization scales and surveys. Discussions of special topics like prison violence, hate crime, cyberstalking, and human trafficking round out the coverage. The tone of each article is academic but not stilted. Entries are informative, often providing background and definitions as well as explanations and conclusions. In addition, they

have the standard value added elements like bibliographies and "see also" references. The layout is text-rich but there are some maps and charts when appropriate. An appendix contains a list of resources like relevant organizations, government agencies, research institutes, and electronic research tools and clearinghouses. Web links and email addresses are provided for all. Volume two also has a chronology and a useful general index.

As noted in the introduction to this reference "prevention is a major goal of those who work with victims and ... the knowledge and study of victims and their victimization are keys to planning crime prevention." The *Encyclopedia of Victimology and Crime Prevention* successfully bears this statement out by melding these two complementary fields and showing where they intersect and how they support one another. At the same time there is ample coverage of specific elements within the two disciplines to inform students of both. In short, these two volumes provide readers a well-balanced and thorough reference that lends clarity to both disciplines while at the same time showing their complimentary natures. Undergraduate students are an obvious audience for this reference, and academic libraries would do well to consider it. However, it will also be a valuable resource for victim advocacy groups and crime prevention agencies. (It is available online from **Sage Reference Online** and trials can be arranged by visiting www.sagepub.com/freetrial.)

Given the lack of consistent and reliable statistics, it can be difficult to make informed country-to-country comparisons of how nations deal with crime and administer resulting punishment. In an effort to help researchers with this problem, **ABC-CLIO** recently published *Crime and Punishment Around the World*, a four-volume set that provides "historical and social context" as well as "the crime and punishment practices" in more than 200 "nations, principalities, and dependencies."

General editor **Graeme R. Newman** forgoes the usual alphabetical arrangement in organizing this set. Each of the four volumes focuses on countries within large regions including Africa and the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific, the Americas, and Europe. The entries themselves start with "snapshot indicators" that first note the type of legal system employed and then use a basic high, medium, and low rating designation for murder, burglary, corruption, human trafficking, Prison, death penalty, and corporal punishment. (An explanation of this rating system is provided in the introduction.) However, it is the text of each entry that provides the real value. Each country is given a background description that includes a discussion of the legal system

and the role of the police. This is followed by information about the major types of crimes committed as well as related crime statistics. The entry continues with a discussion of criminal prosecutions and the finding of guilt in the courts and then ends with information on forms of punishment and the prison system. As is often the norm with a work like this, the entries can be inconsistent in the amount of content they provide country to country. This is understandable in that the amount of reliable official source material available from an autocratic nation like Zimbabwe is limited compared to a Western democracy like Italy or France. That being said, the authors of these type "limited" entries supplement what is available with information from sources like the UN, the Overseas Advisory Council, and the U.S. State Department. This helps provide researchers a viable starting place with useful information for all of the countries covered. Each entry also has a brief list of further readings as well as Websites. In addition, there are general bibliographies in all four volumes. Adding to the scholarly tone, lists of contributors with their affiliations are also provided. Tying the set together is a categorical index that functions as a table of contents for the four volumes as well as a general alphabetical index providing volume and page references for specific topics.

Crime and Punishment Around the World assembles valuable facts and perspectives about an important topic in a useful and easy-to-use reference. The editors and contributors are to be congratulated for creating a unique single source that gathers together and provides this information. The entries are substantial enough to stand on their own as well as offer a basis for country comparisons. Students studying the current state of international crime and punishment as well as those looking for information on specific countries will find this set of value. It also offers specific information that can be used to supplement an overall country or area study. This set will be a valuable addition for most undergraduate and community college libraries supporting criminal justice and related programs. (It is also available as an eBook. More information can be found at <http://www.abc-clio.com/contact/customerService/>.)

The *Encyclopedia of the United States Cabinet: 1789-2010* (2010, 978-1592375622, \$275) is in its second edition. Authored by **Mark Grossman** and published by **Grey House Publishing**, this two-volume set updates and enhances the initial effort published by **ABC-CLIO** in 2000.

This new work includes information on two more presidential administrations along with a new organizational scheme. While the previous edition was organized by cabinet de-

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partment, in this second edition, **Mr. Grossman** decides to use a more direct chronological approach and organizes by presidential administration, which to this reader makes more sense and is easier to use. Each entry starts with an "essay on the cabinet" that offers "insight into the President's choices ... as well as the challenges they faced." In addition there are 97 "historical snapshots" sprinkled throughout the two volumes. They focus on a single year and provide facts that provide a flavor of the times. Both these features are unique to the second edition and are worthy additions. However, as in the first edition, biographies of the various cabinet members, both famous and obscure, represent the bulk of the content. Each sketch furnishes a discussion of the subject's early years, his/her nomination and career in the cabinet, and what he/she accomplished after leaving office. These brief biographies are fact-filled and informed and all have authoritative, scholarly bibliographies. The *Encyclopedia* has a number of value-added features including introductory essays on the history of the British Cabinet system and the origins of U.S. cabinet departments, as well as a section on the Confederate cabinets of **Jefferson Davis**. In addition, there are appendices that contain lists of female, African American, Hispanic American, and Asian American cabinet members, lists of failed and withdrawn nominations, a chronological list arranged by department, and a timeline when the various departments were created. A cumulative bibliography is also provided, listing scholarly books and articles, dissertations, unpublished manuscripts, government documents including Cabinet reports and House and Senate hearings, oral histories, and relevant family and individual papers with their locations.

The *Encyclopedia of the United States Cabinet: 1789-2010* gives readers a valuable historical perspective as seen through the lens of the Presidency and the executive branch. It also shows how the executive has grown in importance and mandate from Washington's first cabinet with its six members to the current **Obama** cabinet with its fifteen members. The content has been totally reorganized, up-to-date information is provided for the most recent two administrations, and new and helpful features have been added offering more historical context. In short, **Mr. Grossman's** meticulous and scholar approach provides students, scholars, and interested lay readers a new and improved resource that they will find both fascinating to read and valuable for serious research. His efforts are worthy of thoughtful consideration by most academic libraries as well as larger public libraries where current resources on history, politics, and government are needed. (The online version is available from the **Gale Virtual Reference Library** at <http://www.gale.cengage.com/servlet/GvrlMS?msg=ma>.)

A number of other "new editions" have recently come across our desks that are also worthy of mention. **CQ Press** has just published *Congress and the Nation, Volume 12 2005-2008* (2010, 978-0872894853, \$345). This volume is the most recent in a classic series of reference works that covers more than sixty years of American political history. As such it offers an unparalleled overview of presidential and congressional actions during the years covered. Like other recent volumes, this one has sixteen chapters that focus on key issues ranging from Homeland Security to Education; Foreign Policy to Agriculture; the Economy to Health and Human Services; and Labor and Pensions to Law and Justice. There are also chapters covering the **Congress** and the **Bush Presidency**. In addition, there are numerous appendices including a description of the legislative process, a glossary of terms, key votes in the House and the Senate, lists of all congressional committees, selected documents related to the President, **Congress**, and elections, and a list with descriptions of the public laws passed. There is also a section of political charts that provide lists and summaries of elections, convention balloting, and party affiliations.

CQ Press editors are noted for their objectivity and thoroughness. This recent edition adds to that reputation. Once again they have produced an essential volume for anyone serious about national politics. Libraries having previous volumes will be remiss not to add this newest one. (Information about the online version for the entire

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Column Editor: **Donna Jacobs** (Research Specialist, Transgenic Mouse Core Facility, MUSC, Charleston, SC 29425) <jacobsdf@musc.edu>

"I write. I write that I am writing. Mentally I see myself writing that I am writing, and I can also see myself seeing that I am writing. I remember writing and also seeing myself writing. And I see myself remembering that I see myself writing, and I remember seeing myself remembering that I was writing, and I write seeing myself write that I remember having seen myself write that I saw myself writing that I was writing and that I was writing that I was writing that I was writing. I can also imagine myself writing that I had already written that I would imagine myself writing that I had written that I was imagining myself writing that I see myself writing that I am writing." **Salvador Elizondo's** words define the page prior to the title page of **Mario Vargas Llosa's** *La tía Julia y el escribidor* (Aunt Julia and the Scriptwriter) and sets the reader up for the complexities of writing layered in a humor-spiced love story.

The Swedish Academy awarded **Mario Vargas Llosa** the 2010 Nobel Prize in literature "for his cartography of structures of power and his trenchant images of the individual's resistance, revolt, and defeat." My introduction to **Vargas Llosa** was on a trip to Tampa to visit a good friend. The introduction was courtesy of this friend, who shares a passion for reading all types of literature and is also immersed in Latin American literature. She knew of my affection for **García Márquez's** works and felt I could expand my horizons south of the Colombian border into Peru. An interesting recommendation, as **Vargas Llosa's** works are considered more "realistic" than **García Márquez** and because there is an unresolved rivalry between the two friends. What began as a friendship ended with an argument and a black eye for **García Márquez** at the hand of **Vargas Llosa** in Mexico City's Palacio de las Bellas Artes in 1976. So I read. I see myself writing about reading. Mentally I see myself reading on that trip to Tampa, and I type.

I am unsure why my friend suggested this particular novel by **Vargas Llosa**, as it has been almost 15 years since I first read the novel, for he is better known for his ability to blend social consciousness and political activism with literature. He even ran for the President of Peru in 1990 advocating privatization. *Conversation in the Cathedral*, *The Feast of the Goat*, and *The Green House* are more typical of this social/political blend. He has now left the political arena and concentrates on the writing: "Nothing better protects a human being against the stupidity of prejudice, racism, religious, or political sectarianism, and exclusivist nationalism than this truth that invariably appears, in great literature: that men and women of all nations and places are essentially equal." This novel, however, takes a little bit different direction. It is a love story, a love for an older woman entwined with a love for the profession of writing.

The story begins: "I was very young and lived with my grandparents in a villa with white walls in the Calle Ocharcán in Miraflores." The storyteller is studying law, but "deep down what I really wanted was to be a writer someday. I had a job with a pompous-sounding title, a modest salary, duties as a plagiarist, and flexible working hours: News Director of Radio Panamericana." His fascination with writers emerges with every word, sentence, and point of view on the page, and then he meets **Aunt Julia**, a recently divorced relative that is several years his senior. He hated her instantly. But this love story, based loosely on his own life, has all the elements of a soap opera: passion, family disgrace, May-December marriage, and melodrama as the story merges with his obsession for **Pedro Camacho's** radio serials and the creative process required to tell a good story.

Rereading **Vargas Llosa's** story about the scriptwriter's journey into the creative world

that places a story on paper is currently surreal for me. For the last year or so I have had the distinct pleasure of assisting a dear friend in crafting a story he needed to tell. To read a book in development has placed me on a sunny window seat with a voyeur's view into this world of writing. Words, research, sentence structure, point of view (omniscient or close third person), dialogue, character development, read, discuss, more words. And the process continues until the story begins to dance on the page and I find myself living in the historic mystical world my friend is creating. When I emailed him this column for review he responded with a challenge that he had posed to his writer's group: "Do books sometime choose writers to bring them to life? Google 'writers, writing' and you will find a majority are about the books that 'have' to be written; that 'demand' to be written. One year ago I went to an annual writer's conference with four book projects that I was working on. Three of the four got good critiques and encouraging comments and had the enthusiastic support of friends and families. The fourth had none of the above. In fact it had nothing going for it except that it demanded to be written. So I wrote it. I set aside the other projects, neglected family responsibilities and friends, and surrendered my life to this doubtful book just because it told me to. This year I went back to the same conference and found out that the book was right." Then he set out to discover quotes by famous authors about the profession of writing, the obsession of writing, the passion for writing. A fantastic dark comical foray into the minds of famous writers. I will leave you the quote he credited to **Toni Morrison**, another Nobel laureate in literature, which most addresses the point: "If there's a book you really want to read, but it hasn't been written yet, then you must write it." 🐾

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Congress and the Nation series is found at <http://www.cqpress.com/product/Congress-and-the-Nation-Series-1945.html>.)

The **Corsini Encyclopedia of Psychology** (2010, 978-0470170243, \$700) is now in its fourth edition. Published by **Wiley**, the latest version of this four-volume set keeps the emphasis on psychology (there is no "and Behavioral Sciences" in the title of the new edition) while maintaining the set's international flavor. Editors **Irving B. Weiner** and **W. Edward Craighead** mix updated entries from past editions with new articles commissioned

for this set. As in past editions the entries end with a valuable list of references and/or suggested readings and "see also" references. This edition seems to have more emphasis on biographies with "63 of the most distinguished persons in the history of Psychology" covered in individual articles, and 543 others listed in a separate section of brief entries noting their dates, research interests, and areas of expertise. A sense of serious scholarship and a desire to inform, the cornerstones of past editions, are equally evident here. This new edition deserves full consideration from academic libraries whether they own prior editions or not. (It is also available from the **Wiley Online Reference** at: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.nuncio.cofc.edu/book/10.1002/9780470479216/homepage/Order.html>.) 🐾

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CALENDAR! so he is not disappearing. Hooray! And **Doug** sent a great Holiday card from **American Institute of Physics** about the vortices created by airplane wingtips. The image from **D. Harris**, **V. Miller**, and **Charles Williamson** is from the January 2010 *Physics Today*.

<http://blogs.physicstoday.org/>

The vivacious **Eleanor Cook** won the **ABC-Clio/Vicky Speck Charleston Conference Leadership Award** this year! **Eleanor** has contributed so much to the Conference over the years not the least of which are the skits. Congratulations, **Eleanor!**

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