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Review of Philip G. Altbach and Edith S. Hoshino, *International Book Publishing: An Encyclopedia*

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NOTE: At the time of publication, the author Martha L. Brogan was affiliated with Yale University. Currently June 2007, she is Associate University Librarian for Collection Development and Management at the University of Pennsylvania.

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Review of Philip G. Altbach and Edith S. Hoshino, *International Book Publishing: An Encyclopedia*

Abstract

This ambitious volume calls upon a cadre of international specialists, ranging from scholars to practitioners, to inform the reader about the past and future status of book publishing. Recognizing the dearth of research and analysis devoted to book publishing as both a commercial and cultural endeavor, editors Philip G. Altbach and Edith S. Hoshino have constructed a balanced and timely state-of-the-art review that is useful in not only library reference collections but also the offices of acquisitions librarians, collection development managers, area studies specialists, editors, publishers, booksellers, and savvy suppliers.

Comments

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ever, I suspect that administrators will not take the time to read the entire book. Most useful to them will be Joanne Euster's essay, which describes the reorientation of the library from the storehouse to the gateway model, Carla Stoffle and Kathleen Weibel's essay which describes possible avenues for funding and emphasizes the need to incorporate technology into the budget rather than depend on donor support for automation; and Paul M. Gherman's and Robert C. Heterick's concluding essay, which probes the increasingly intimate relationship between the library and the campus computing service

The book concludes with a summary review of the literature concerning the current issues in academic librarianship and a very good annotated bibliography that mirrors the chapter headings.—*Eva M. Sartori, University of Nebraska-Lincoln.*

International Book Publishing: An Encyclopedia. Eds. Philip G. Altbach and Edith S. Hoshino. New York: Garland, 1995. 736p. \$95, alk. paper (ISBN 0-8153-0786-1).

This ambitious volume calls upon a cadre of international specialists, ranging from scholars to practitioners, to inform the reader about the past and future status of book publishing. Recognizing the dearth of research and analysis devoted to book publishing as both a commercial and cultural endeavor, editors Philip G. Altbach and Edith S. Hoshino have constructed a balanced and timely state-of-the-art review that is useful in not only library reference collections but also the offices of acquisitions librarians, collection development managers, area studies specialists, editors, publishers, booksellers, and savvy suppliers. Equally important, the encyclopedia may also serve as a course of study for students of publishing, the book trade, librarianship, area studies, and comparative education. Virtually all the essays are well documented, and frequently accompanied by

bibliographies for further research, and the excellent index facilitates access to complex subjects. Even the appendix is a valuable research tool—a major compilation of book production statistics by region and country from the *Unesco Statistical Yearbook, 1970 to 1990.*

In his introductory essay, "Research on Publishing: Literature and Analysis," Philip Altbach, professor of higher education at the School of Education, Boston College, and director of the Research and Information Center of the Bellagio Publishing Network, sets the philosophical and scholarly context for the encyclopedia, discussing why book publishing has received so little analytic attention and recommending ways "to expand the network of research and analysis concerning publishing and book development." This well-tempered advocacy piece lends coherence and strength to the main body of the encyclopedia, which is organized into two parts.

The first part, "Topics in Publishing," consists of thirty-four essays on types of publishing (e.g., college textbook, electronic, reference, university press); sociopolitical aspects of publishing (e.g., copyright, freedom of the press, publishing in the Third World); and the economics of publishing (e.g., book marketing, bookselling, international book production statistics). There is a refreshing array of "voices" among these essays, ranging from the personal conviction of Bill Henderson, founder and publisher of Pushcart Press, in "The Small Press Today and Yesterday," to the factual eloquence of William S. Lofquist, commodity/industry specialist with the U.S. Department of Commerce, in "A Statistical Perspective on U.S. Book Publishing," to the theoretical insights of Shigeo Minowa, dean of the School of International Business and Management of Kanazawa University, Japan, in "The Societal Context of Book Publishing." The range of individual perspectives proffered on the future of publishing—

in decline, in ascendance, at a standstill—gives credibility to the encyclopedia by acknowledging the varying viewpoints of industry analysts, scholars, and practitioners.

The second part of the encyclopedia considers the state of publishing from the perspective of six regions—Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, and North America—and selected countries (about thirty, including South Africa, Japan, Russia, Nigeria, and Canada). Although there is no formula for style or coverage, the reader can reliably expect the historic, demographic, and sociopolitical background of each country to be explored and relevant current statistical information about publishing to be provided. These country-based essays describe at length the cultural context that characterizes book publishing. Even the most cosmopolitan of readers will have something to learn: why some experts guard against African indigenous publishers “leapfrogging” over conventional book production methods directly to new electronic technologies; the lack of trained publishing professionals in developing countries, such as copyeditors in India; how the distribution system in Japan, which is based on consignment sales, affects book selling; the significance of “komiks,” derived from the American comic book, in the Philippines; or why Great Britain and France have displaced Mexico and Argentina as the leading countries importing books from Spain.

The shortcomings of the encyclopedia are few; however, the following are worthy of mention. Among world regions, Africa and Asia receive the most extensive consideration. Europe lacks the overview essay that other regions receive—an instance where the significance of the European Union as a publisher might have been articulated. The Middle East consists of merely three essays and only the contribution on “Israel” by Irene Sever is new. “The Arab World” and “Egypt” figure among seven reprints in

the encyclopedia, three of which are from Altbach’s *Publishing and Development in the Third World* (1992). The contribution on the United States is largely a financial statement, devoid of philosophical or cultural context. The other regional essays are so informative that the reader longs for comprehensive geographic coverage.

Topics lacking treatment include ethnic publishing in the United States and an overview of official and intergovernmental publishing. Most subjects are sufficiently introduced within the typical double-column, six- to twelve-page, length, but others are perhaps too complex to explore within these confines. Albert Greco’s “Mergers and Acquisitions in the U.S. Book Industry, 1960-89” falls short of a satisfactory examination of economic concentration in the publishing industry; the reader expects more precise documentation for some of the tables and would be grateful if the appendix of mergers took into account the seminal work of Elin Christianson, “Mergers in the Publishing Industry, 1958-1970,” *Journal of Library History* (1972).

Through the range and diversity of topics and countries covered, common themes emerge—discussions about the stakeholders in international copyright debates from various regional perspectives; the importance of autonomous indigenous publishing; and the value of the book as a cultural asset weighed against its viability as a commercial product. *International Book Publishing: An Encyclopedia* is greater than the sum of its parts and should stimulate further research.—*Martha L. Brogan, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut.*

Reference and Information Services: An Introduction. 2nd ed. Eds. Richard E. Bopp and Linda C. Smith. Englewood, Colo.: Libraries Unlimited, 1995. 626p. \$47.50 cloth (ISBN 1-56308-130-X); \$35 paper (ISBN 1-56308-129-6).

If the year 1876 counts as the Big Bang of United States librarianship, arguably the