

## Reference Books

Tammy J. Eschedor Voelker

Editor

*The American Beauty Industry Encyclopedia.* Edited by Julie Willett. Santa Barbara, Calif.: Greenwood, 2010. 338 pages. Acid-free \$85 (ISBN: 978-0-313-35949-1). E-book available (ISBN: 978-0-313-35950-7), call for pricing.

Billed as the first encyclopedia exclusively about the beauty industry, this compilation is indeed the first to gather the industry's complex blend of trends, entrepreneurs, marketing, and the occasional troubling practice. The volume explores the industry according to the idea that "it is the intersection of culture and society, beauty and business, that fosters the industry's multimillion-dollar reach into pocket books and headlines" (xv). The 115 or so entries cover a wide range of topics and assume no prior knowledge of the industry. Julie Willett, an associate professor of history at Texas Tech University, edited the volume. The contributors are professors, doctoral students, researchers, and journalists.

As the first encyclopedia on this topic, the volume occupies a unique space among beauty industry books. Many previous books have explored the industry using an exposé or "insider reveal" style. The closest, most recent comparison is Geoffrey Jones's *Beauty Imagined: A History of the Global Beauty Industry* (Oxford, 2010). The book covers the industry's global history from a decidedly business perspective (Jones is a Harvard Business School professor). Willett's encyclopedia focuses on the late nineteenth- and twentieth-century American beauty industry and offers a more sociological perspective.

This volume maintains a broad focus that amounts to a summary of the contemporary industry. A list at the beginning organizes the entries by topics: Clothing, Companies, Hair, Health, Industry, Institutions, Magazines, Male Beauty, Media, Movements, People, Products, Professions, Television, and Treatments. The entries are a worthy cross-section of today's American beauty industry as the intersection of culture, business, and personal value.

The entries are concise, straightforward, and well written. The majority of entries maintain an encyclopedic tone. But some go beyond the publisher's statement that the volume makes "analytical use of categories such as gender, race, sexuality" and come across as judgmental. For example, the entry about the television show *What Not to Wear* concludes, "WNTW teaches women to value themselves through their appearance and that they must appropriately care for their appearance in order to move ahead at work and attract a good (middle-class) man" (304). Entries such as this one read not as an analysis of the industry but as an indictment.

Although the entries are concise, each contains a further readings section. Furthermore, the volume's selected bibliography is of great value, especially the thorough list of books. The included photographs are sparse and not in color, a

disappointment for such a visual industry.

This encyclopedia is an admirable overview of the modern American beauty industry. It is also a valuable reflection of the multidisciplinary nature of the industry and should attract the interests of those in diverse fields, such as cultural studies, gender studies, sociology, history, marketing, media studies, art, and fashion. It is recommended for academic libraries serving these and related departments. Since the layout of the printed volume is not especially integral to the content, libraries might also consider the e-book. This volume is also recommended for public libraries, where even the casual reader will likely have an interest in the topic.—*Michele Hadburg, MSLS Candidate, School of Information and Library Science, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, North Carolina*

---

*The Concise Encyclopedia of World War II.* By Cathal J. Nolan. Santa Barbara, Calif.: Greenwood, 2010. 2 vols. Acid-free \$195 (ISBN: 978-0-313-33050-6).

A momentous and global war, World War II had far-reaching consequences. A subject of significant historical importance and of intense interest for many, there remains a nearly endless supply of new works devoted to World War II. In this deluge, Boston University military professor Cathal J. Nolan's *The Concise Encyclopedia of World War II* stands out for its global treatment, but it also contains several weaknesses. A two-volume set, this reference work contains encyclopedia entries, maps, and a select bibliography.

World War II encompasses myriad historical approaches, and Nolan's encyclopedia focuses primarily on military aspects while also addressing diplomatic and political subjects. Although narrowly focused on military matters, Nolan's work provides a remarkably even coverage of military issues for each country involved in the war. While other volumes of this size tend to have a slight Western or United States focus, Nolan's work excels in its comprehensiveness and contains many entries not commonly found in similar works. This work's success in achieving broad global coverage is its greatest strength. In addition to its outstanding worldwide account, this set provides more than twenty detailed yet easy-to-understand maps depicting troop movements across nearly all fronts.

A useful work for those seeking basic information about military issues during the war, Nolan's set has several notable weaknesses. Although a concise encyclopedia, this set is more similar to a desk reference or a subject dictionary. While Nolan's encyclopedia strives for succinctness and often succeeds, many entries offer exceedingly limited information and are often a single paragraph in length. However, not all entries conform to the principle of conciseness, such as the "Barbarossa" entry, which spans nearly twenty-one pages. A major weakness of this two-volume set is the notable lack of a suggested readings list for the majority of entries. Only lengthy entries such as "Barbarossa" and the "Sino-Japanese War" provide suggested readings. Nolan does supply the