

THE BOOK

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Looking Back, Looking Forward: Summer at the Society in 2005 and 2006 Program in the History of the Book Summer Conferences and Summer Seminars

2006

BOOKS AND THEIR READERS TO 1800 AND BEYOND.

Jay Fliegelman, William Robertson Coe Professor of American Literature and American Studies at Stanford University, will lead the 2006 Summer Seminar. "Books and their Readers to 1800 and Beyond" deals with the meaning and forms of signatures, marginalia, gift inscriptions, and other marks of ownership, especially as they illuminate the emotional and intellectual relations to artifacts. The seminar will examine books as parents, children, friends, mentors, loved ones, prompt texts for performance, witnesses, cultural capital, and sources of authority and authorization. The latter case is part of the work of commonplace books, though transcribed or edited extracts serve multiple personal ends. Working with specific artifacts, the class will engage the charged vocabulary of things, commodities, possessions, and belongings and will ask the question in what way is a book "owned." One point of departure is the assumption that any collection of books is an autobiography written with objects rather than words and focuses on collecting as both preservation and the conferral of new meanings onto texts. All of these concerns turn on the history of reading and the complexities of readerly identification with its edification, dangers, and pleasures. Drawing heavily on the interest of class members, the payoff of the class will be the multiplication of the kinds of questions one can ask of books in their incarnational mixture of materiality and meaning.

Fliegelman has won multiple teaching awards. Among his scholarly works is *Declaring Independence: Jefferson, Natural Language, and Performance*. He is finishing a book called *Belongings: Dramas of American Book Ownership, 1630-1860*. Leah Price, professor of English at Harvard University, will be guest faculty.

Complete details about both events
the seminar: June 12-16, 2006
the conference: June 16-18
are posted on the AAS website:
www.americanantiquarian.org



LIBERTY/ÉGALITÉ/INDEPENDENCIA: PRINT CULTURE, ENLIGHTENMENT, AND REVOLUTION IN THE AMERICAS, 1776-1826

The second annual AAS conference in the history of the book will explore the circulation, translation, revision, cross-cultural interpretation, and influence of key texts in the incitement of revolt against colonial dominion and the establishment of independent states in the western hemisphere during the first age of Revolution. Topics to be addressed include the effect of European Enlightenment books and pamphlets on independence movements throughout the Americas; the representation of Revolutions in North America, France, Haiti, Central and South America, and the 1808-14 Spanish War of Independence against France in the press. Speakers will also consider the publication of public documents, charters, and political declarations and their international influence; print and the reaction against Revolution in the Americas; the literature of Revolution and the creation of the *vox populi* in new American nation states; the role of print in defining norms and excesses in liberated polities, particularly in respect to Jacobinism, factionalism, radical libertarianism, and filibusterism; and print's function in highlighting the problem of slavery in newly independent American nations.

The conference has been organized by a committee that includes David S. Shields (English, University of South Carolina), Mariselle Meléndez (Latin American literature, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign), and Karen Stolley (Spanish, Emory University). The format of the conference will be the

reading and discussion of invited papers and will include the annual James Russell Wiggins Lecture in the History of the Book in American Culture to be delivered by Shields, who serves as the conference chair.

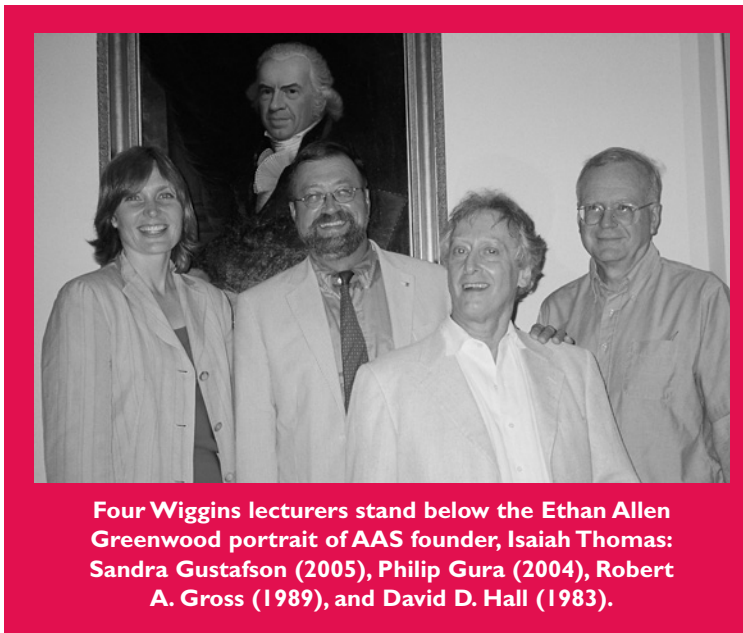
2005

From History of the Book to Histories of Print, Manuscript, and Performance *Reflections on the 2005 Conference*

In 1983 David D. Hall presented the inaugural James Russell Wiggins lecture on the History of the Book in American Culture at the AAS, inaugurating at the same time the Program in the History of the Book in American Culture. In “On Native Ground: From the History of Printing to the History of the Book,” he marked a transition in scholarly methodology and the emergence of a new field, envisioning “the history of the book as the history of culture and society.” In the more than twenty years since

Hall gave that lecture, book history has built on the foundation laid by historians of print and bibliographers to incorporate social, political, and economic history, the history of reading, and literary criticism. Under Hall’s general editorship the five-volume *History of the Book in America* has begun to appear, consolidating an important historical methodology in a landmark study. Historians of the book have developed an exemplary methodology for exploring the relationships between technology, verbal expression, and social and political meaning. As presenters at the June conference on “Histories of Print, Manuscript, and Performance in America” demonstrated, the interpretive tools drawn from history of the book are well suited for analysis of performance, manuscript, and other communicative technologies.

When Hall delivered the first Wiggins lecture, he defined history of the book in relation to the “older” media of performance and manuscript, establishing print as the cutting edge of media history. Yet at that moment desktop computers were already becoming staples of the workplace and the Internet was evolving from an internal tool of the Department of Defense to a public medium. In recent years, the rise of the Internet and



Four Wiggins lecturers stand below the Ethan Allen Greenwood portrait of AAS founder, Isaiah Thomas: Sandra Gustafson (2005), Philip Gura (2004), Robert A. Gross (1989), and David D. Hall (1983).

the World Wide Web have made the limitations of treating print and the book as primary agents of historical transformation increasingly visible. These new media have helped to illuminate the processes of technological innovation, highlighting the complex changes that affect all forms of verbal expression when a new medium is introduced. Early fears that the website would supplant the codex and that web surfing would replace literary reading have not disappeared, but they have grown more nuanced in light of the emerging interfaces of print and e-media, such as

the development of massive electronic archives of printed materials (notably the “Archive of Americana” produced by Readex in cooperation with AAS) and studies of the forms of literacy generated by electronic media. With the massive presence of the Web and other electronic media in our daily lives, it is no longer possible to ignore the historical contingency of the book as a medium. The increasingly pressing sense of the emergent properties of print and the book in relation to electronic media intensifies as well the need for scholars to contemplate similar dynamics between print and other modes of verbal expression at earlier historical moments.

The somewhat polemical claims that I am making here about future directions for the history of the book draw on themes that I explored at greater length in my 2005 Wiggins lecture on “The Emerging Media of Early America.” That lecture served as the keynote address for the conference on “Histories of Print, Manuscript, and Performance in America” that convened in Worcester on Friday, June 10, and continued through midday on Sunday, June 12. In twenty-seven papers presented in nine well-integrated panels, scholars in fields such as English, history, American studies, and theater, among oth-

ers, explored how the histories of print, manuscript, and performance are “histories of culture and society.” After opening remarks by the Ellen Dunlap, John Hench, and the conference organizers (Sandra Gustafson, Carla Mulford, Jeffrey Richards, and David Shields), the conference began with a panel focused on Benjamin Franklin. Because of his influential career as a printer, Franklin has often been treated as a paradigmatic figure in the history of the book. Panelists Jesse Lander, Christopher Hunter, and Mulford illuminated other facets of Franklin’s career, creating a more balanced view of his mastery of a variety of communicative media. The succeeding panel on “Manipulating Media” (Shields, Joan Radner, and Susan Williams) continued the emphasis on the integration of print, manuscript, and performance, focusing on the definitions of and conditions for expressive failure and success in different textual forms. The final panel on Friday (Carolyn Eastman, Lloyd Pratt, and Oz Frankel) explored the roles played by non-print media in the constitution of the post-Revolutionary public sphere, with a notable emphasis on oratory as an influential genre.

The first two panels on Saturday opened an important line of inquiry, employing the social categories of “race” and gender to critique and reorient traditional histories of expressive media. In “Mediating ‘Race’” (Thomas Doughton, Phillip Round, and Heather Nathans) and “Gendered Histories of Print, Manuscript, and Performance” (Hilary Wyss, Granville Ganter, and Joycelyn Moody) the social meanings communicated by the choice of textual form were productively elaborated and new questions about “race,” gender, and verbal technologies were raised. The internalization and transformation of social norms through textual media were explored in the subsequent panel on “Subjectivity and Form.” In papers on Puritan devotional reading (Matthew Brown), changes in conceptions of authorial subjectivity between the early national and romantic periods (Angela Vietto), and antebellum diary writing as a performance of individuality (Thomas Augst), the panelists explored the subtle ways that individuals encounter and absorb linguistic expression, and how that experience varies according to the ways that the medium is employed and interpreted.

The last panel of the day on Saturday marked a shift in the program to an emphasis on performance that continued through the two panels on Sunday morning. These final three sessions—“Between Stage and Page” (Richards, Lucy Rinehart, and Katherine Wilson), “Lyric Enactments” (Philip Gura, Coleman Hutchison, and Ingrid Satelmajer), and “Visual Texts and Performances” (Peter Stallybrass, Martin Brückner, and Laura Schiavo)—offered rich accounts of such performance genres as theater, musical performance, and poetic recitation, and treated visual texts (primers, wall maps, and stereoscopes) in relation to, and as forms of, performance. All nine of the papers in these sessions emphasized the movement between the printed word and its visual or corpo-

real materialization. A number of these papers focused on the dissemination of drama and song through manuscript and print, as well as in performance. The interplay between a visual or aural image and its manifestation in a particular social context were also shared concerns of the panelists. The sense of the extraordinary richness of performance as a topic for future research that these panels produced was further strengthened by the workshop on source materials offered by Georgia B. Barnhill, the Andrew W. Mellon Curator of Graphic Arts at the AAS. Barnhill’s presentation on “Research Materials for the Study of the Spoken Word and Public Performance” very effectively conveyed the range of potential research topics as well as demonstrating the AAS’s sophisticated website design that helps make accessing the archives so rewarding.

The panels were all plenary sessions, which allowed conference participants to hear one another’s papers. Conversations carried over from one panel to the next, and continued on in the question and answer sessions and in the breaks. Shared meals at the Goddard-Daniels House and at the lovely Herron House fueled a lively sense of collegiality that continued until the conference’s closing moments on Sunday. The presence of a number of former Wiggins lecturers, including David Hall, Robert Gross, and Gura, conveyed a sense of continuity that is the basis for the new departures in the field signaled by the strong and creative work presented at this vibrant conference.

Sandra M. Gustafson
University of Notre Dame

AMERICAN ♦ ANTIQUARIAN ♦ SOCIETY

a national library of American history

185 Salisbury Street

Worcester, Massachusetts 01609-1634

Telephone (508) 755-5221

E-Mail: csloat@mwa.org

Ellen Dunlap, President

John B. Hench, Vice President for Collections and Programs

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The editors welcome all news relevant to the interests of the Program in the History of the Book in American Culture.

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Matriculants and faculty of the 2005 Summer Seminar: front row, from left, Henigman, Johnston, Antracoli, Bynum, Promey, Wadewicz, Chaison, Garfinkel; second row: Beneke, Rivett, Roberts, Nipps, Kirschner, Wyss, Seidel, DeLombard; third row: Hall, Millner, Blosser, Furstenburg, Warner, Stallybrass, Vogan, Ruffin; in doorway: Hench, Gould, Green.

Publishing God: Printing, Preaching, and Reading in Eighteenth-Century America *Reflections on the 2005 Summer Seminar*

The last seminar I attended was probably a good ten years ago when I was a graduate student of Philip Gura's at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. I teach seminars now; I don't as a general rule take them. But after participating in the AAS conference "Histories of Print, Manuscript, and Performance in America" this summer, I packed my bags and left the (relative) luxury of the Worcester Courtyard by Marriott for the WPI dorms and the weeklong seminar in the History of the Book "Publishing God: Printing, Preaching, and Reading in Eighteenth-Century America" masterfully led by Michael Warner (English, Rutgers University) and Peter Stallybrass (English, University of Pennsylvania) with guest faculty James Green (Library Company of Philadelphia), and David Hall (history, Harvard Divinity School). The experience was extraordinary. Perched around a long seminar table in the Goddard-Daniels House, all of us—graduate students just starting work on dissertations, junior faculty, and even mid-career types like myself—tackled questions about materiality, textuality, religion, and eighteenth-century reading and writing practices and the larger theoretical questions raised by close attention to all of the above. We read. And we read some more. We discussed and we argued and we listened to our wonderful seminar co-leaders as they challenged us and each other to think

through matters together that were central to our very disparate research projects. And then we had the glorious experience of handling almanacs, sermon collections, writing instruments, Bibles, and ...show and tell never does lose its magic, and when show and tell involves the extraordinary resources of scholars like Stallybrass, Warner, Green, and Hall, as well as the incredible institutional collection of AAS and Stallybrass's personal collection of artifacts, this is not an easily forgotten experience.

John Hench, Joanne Chaison, Caroline Sloat, and all the staff members of the AAS made us feel welcome in every possible way, from inviting us into their homes, providing us with lunch every day, and even setting up evening events, never mind opening up the collections of the AAS to us. Our seminar leaders were extraordinary in their willingness to share their time, their ideas, and their energy with us. All in all, the collegiality of the seminar participants, the erudition and enthusiasm of our seminar leaders, and the generosity of the AAS staff made this a wonderful experience. I'm grateful I had the opportunity to participate, and I look forward to the ways this most remarkable intellectual exchange will invigorate my research and my teaching in the years to come.

Hilary Wyss
Auburn University

Here's the good news and the bad news: this year's summer seminar in the History of the Book drastically raised the bar for future seminars. It was simply an outstanding week. "Publishing God: Printing, Preaching, and Reading in Eighteenth-Century America" was led by two aficionados of book history and print culture, Michael Warner and Peter Stallybrass. In addition to their expertise, the seminar attracted David D. Hall, and James Green, who gave special presentations on "Marketing Devotion" and "Benjamin Franklin, Religion, and Print." Coming from a wide variety of disciplines and locales, the seminar's participants helped sustain vigorous discussions throughout the intellectually intense week. Sunday evening's opening reception, and the Thursday-night dinner at the home of John and Lea Hench, were amiable social events that leavened the serious course of study.

Each day was divided into morning seminar discussions, held at the Goddard-Daniels House, and afternoon workshops in the Council Room in the library, which made use of the Society's impressive holdings and archives. Seminar discussions typically set up historical contexts for the publication and dissemination of printed materials as well as theoretical and critical issues that focused on such matters as the relation between literacy and oral transmission, reading communities and reception, transatlantic Protestant cultures, secularism and piety, and evangelicalism's role in the history of publishing in early America. The afternoon workshops were particularly informative because they made such wonderful use of the discipline's material artifacts, including bibles, psalters, primers, devotional handbooks, and many other genres. Stallybrass unfolded the hidden complexities of the changes in the *New England Primer*; Warner put on display the incredibly rich archive of English and colonial American psalters; Green explained the complicated production process of the colonial printing shop (seminar participants, including spatially challenged ones like myself, learned to fold sheets to form replicas of quarto and duodecimo texts). These sessions were further enhanced by high technology—the impressive PowerPoint images that Stallybrass and Warner displayed each day of books, prints, and manuscripts. These sessions did not preclude open discussion and scholarly debate, but they did ground discourse in the material realities of book history. One memorable moment was when Green held up a rather diminutive bound object and explained that this was one of the "big books" that Franklin published.

The overall structure of each day brought history and theory into creative dialogues, each animating the other, as the seminar's topics moved from "New Histories of Reading" to "Cultures of the Bible" and "What Is a Sermon?" Other sessions considered "Benjamin Franklin," "Marketing Devotion," "The New-England Primer," and "An Evangelical Public Sphere?" Each day's intellectual queries and critical

issues seemed to have a cumulative effect and carry on into the rest of the seminar. There was impressive intellectual coherence that the leaders, Warner and Stallybrass, established and the participants helped to sustain. Discussions were generally cordial though not fluffy, with just enough disagreement and debate to keep things consistently interesting. At the seminar's conclusion, the participants expressed what I saw (and felt) was sincere gratitude to the seminar leaders. I don't know where and how Warner and Stallybrass got their energy that week. Their level of preparation was Herculean. Together they proved to be quite a pair. Their contrasting pedagogical styles complemented each other, Warner's critical rigor playing off Stallybrass's intellectual exuberance. One could not help but think of Lennon and McCartney.

Philip Gould
Brown University

MATRICULANTS

Alexis Antracoli, Ph.D. candidate in history, Brandeis University; Chris Beneke, assistant professor of history, Bentley College; Jacob Blosser, Ph.D. candidate in history, University of South Carolina; Tara Bynum, Ph.D. candidate in English, Johns Hopkins University; Jeannine DeLombard, assistant professor of English, University of Toronto; François Furstenberg, assistant professor of history, University of Montreal; Susan Garfinkel, research specialist—digital reference team, Library of Congress; Philip Gould, professor of English, Brown University; Laura Henigman, associate professor of English and American studies, James Madison University; Patricia Johnston, professor of art history, Salem State College; Ann Kirschner, visiting scholar, McNeil Center for Early American Studies; Michael Millner, Society of Fellows and assistant professor of English, University of Chicago; Karen Nipps, senior rare book cataloguer, Houghton Library, Harvard University; Sally Promey, professor of art history, University of Maryland; Sarah Rivett, assistant professor of English, Washington University; Kyle Roberts, Ph.D. candidate in history, University of Pennsylvania; Rixey Ruffin, assistant professor of history, University of Wisconsin—Stevens Point; Kevin Seidel, Ph.D. candidate in English, University of Virginia; Caroline Sloat, director of scholarly programs, American Antiquarian Society; Nancy Vogan, professor of music, Mount Allison University; Adrienne Wadewitz, Ph.D. candidate in English, Indiana University; and Hilary Wyss, associate professor of English, Auburn University.

SYLLABUS

The syllabus for "Publishing God: Printing, Preaching, and Reading in Eighteenth-Century America" may be found on the AAS website:

www.americanantiquarian.org/sumsem05syl.htm

Courtesies of Trade: An Overview of American Book History

EDITOR'S NOTE: Since the year 2000, a series of international colloquia on the history of the book has been held in Sherbrooke (Quebec), Prato (Italy), and London. The latest was convened this past July 10-12, 2005, in Sydney, Australia. Its focus was "Books, Publishing, and Reading in the Contemporary World: International Comparisons." Starting with reports on the several national book histories completed or under way for France, Spain, Great Britain, Canada, the United States, and Australia, the conference took a wide and innovative view of publishing around the globe, with original prospects on Francophone Africa and the Communist world in Europe and Asia (with a focus on contemporary China) and on the contrasting views of intellectual property and copyright developed in nineteenth-century Britain and France. Michael Winship, co-editor of volume 3 of *A History of the Book in America*, presented an account of the multivolume project sponsored by the American Antiquarian Society. Robert A. Gross, co-editor of volume 2 of HBA, offered the following remarks on "Courtesies of Trade: An Overview of American Book History."

Jason Epstein and André Schiffrin followed parallel tracks to the same destination. Both men led distinguished careers as editors and publishers in New York City over the second half of the twentieth century. Following in the wake of the innovative Jewish entrepreneurs who entered the close, genteel world of publishing in the 1920s and opened it up to the bracing currents of modernism and the lively diversity of urban culture, Epstein and Schiffrin were eager to bring the best of world and American literature to wide audiences. Each played a signal part in the "paperback revolution" of the 1950s. As a fledgling editor at Doubleday, the twenty-four-year-old Epstein launched Anchor Books, the first publishing series to issue major works of the Western literary canon in attractive, inexpensive formats, just as American higher education was embarking on its huge postwar expansion. Schiffrin, son of the French emigré publisher who had started the Pléiade series in Paris during the 1930s, followed suit, also at twenty-four years of age, with the Signet Mentor classics. Both then went on to top editorial posts at Random House, where they gained renown for their talent at turning serious books into commercial successes. At Pantheon, the firm co-founded by his father and later acquired by Random House, Schiffrin invigorated intellectual life during the Cold War by publishing such leading figures of the European left as Gunter Grass, E. P. Thompson, Michel Foucault, and R. D. Laing. From his editorial base Epstein fostered Norman Mailer, Gore Vidal, and Philip Roth, while co-founding the *New York Review of Books* in the mid-1960s and inaugurating the Library of America in the early 1980s. For both men, publishing was a small, personal world, made up of authors who became lifelong friends and of independent booksellers who were trusted intermediaries with the public and first-hand reporters on popular tastes. Though a commercial enterprise, "the book business" also performed a vital cultural service.

Or so it did until the late 1980s, when U.S. publishing was upended by the wave of corporate mergers and buy-outs that integrated the major New York firms into multi-media empires. That marked the end, as Schiffrin tells it, of the economic balancing act by which publishers had traditionally supported low-earning books on the bonanza of bestsellers. Demanding blockbuster books on fashionable topics, the new boss at Random House scanned Pantheon's upcoming list in spring 1990 and sneered at

the small print runs. "Who is . . . this Carlo Ginzberg?" Schiffrin was soon gone with the rest of his staff, who resigned *en masse* to protest the new regime. They have now regrouped as the New Press, publishing as a nonprofit with the support of a university and a foundation. "Market ideology," he laments, has taken over publishing and subjected it to remorseless demands for ever-growing profits to meet ever-expanding expectations on Wall Street. Epstein stayed on and weathered the storm, yet in retirement he, too, takes a dubious view of the transformation. "The book business as I have known it is already obsolete." A "high risk, low margin" enterprise at its core, publishing is hard-pressed to produce the "mass merchandise" required by the superstores dominating American book-selling and to create the elusive "synergy" anticipated by the media managers at the helm. "A cottage industry within an industrial conglomerate makes no sense."¹

Culture versus commerce, public purpose versus private profit: such oppositions form a familiar refrain in the history of the book, both in the Old World and the New. This discourse, invoked at every major turning-point in communications since Gutenberg, marks a fundamental continuity in our field. Ideology—talk about books and reading—matters as much as economics in the production, distribution, and reception of the written and printed word. The memoirs by Epstein and Schiffrin also reveal longstanding practices dating back to the beginnings of American publishing in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Their first successes with trade paperbacks repeated the opportunistic strategy of entrepreneurs like Mathew Carey, who built the first American publishing firms after 1790 by reprinting British and European books in versions that were cheaper, if less attractive, than the imported originals. Just as Carey took advantage of the absence of U. S. copyright protection for foreign works, so Random House assembled much of its Modern Library, and Schiffrin found many of his mentors in the public domain. Already tested in the marketplace, the literary classics constituted an extensive "backlist" available for the asking—exactly as did the steady-selling sermons, the Augustan poetry, and the novels of sensibility originally published abroad that constituted the bread-and-butter of publishing in the new republic. Even when energetic firms like Boston's Ticknor and Fields adopted a different business model in the mid-1840s and concentrated on issuing new

books by living American and English authors, they counted on steady sales over the years to recoup their investment. A strong backlist secured the fortunes of Ticknor and Fields, as it would for publishers for more than a century down to Schiffrin, where it accounted for half of Pantheon's revenue. As much as possible publishers sought to cover their risks and ride out the business cycle with regular income from predictable sources like textbooks and children's books. Best-sellers were, in Epstein's experience, considered "lucky accidents." In a business aiming at stable returns, not maximum profits, editors from Fields to Epstein and Schiffrin cultivated long-term relationships with writers and refrained from "poaching authors" from competitors. So, too, did they count on traveling salesmen to forge durable connections to local book stores. In this "quaint" enclave of American capitalism, where even large companies like Random House had only 100 employees, the desire to make money was muted by an ethos of gentility and a love of good books. And then the barbarians entered the fortress.²

Can such a narrative of long-term continuity in the American book trade be believed? The question arises not only from the Epstein and Schiffrin memoirs but also from an overview of *A History of the Book in America*, the five-volume series sponsored by the American Antiquarian Society, which is approaching completion. British observers were once fond of remarking that having existed as a nation only since 1776, the United States barely has a history. Perhaps for that reason American historians overcompensate by delving into the national past in such depth and detail that the record makes sense only when organized in short, comprehensible periods. The original model for a national book history—*Histoire de l'édition française*—requires only four volumes to traverse some four hundred and fifty years; *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain* promises seven volumes for fourteen centuries; the *History of the Book in Scotland* goes from the sixteenth century to 1980 in four volumes, the *History of the Book in Canada* from colonial beginnings to 1980 in three. Most of these volumes encompass a century or more; only as they approach the overwhelming world of the twentieth century do they cut the time span down to a manageable five or six decades. By contrast, after tracking the creation of "the colonial book in the Atlantic world" over the two centuries of settlement in British North America, the American series takes a half-century as its norm: 1790-1840, 1840-1880, 1880-1940, 1940-1990. Given the historian's disposition to chart a narrative of change over time, the result is unfortunate. We are prone to exaggerate developments in a single era—the expansion of output, the force of technology, the growth of markets, the proliferation of genres, the multiplication of readers—and to miss the underlying dynamics in print culture as a whole. Time and again capitalism shapes and reshapes American publishing, yet in each era the participants, like Epstein and Schiffrin, are taken aback. *La plus ça change*, a critical reader may be tempted to declare. Can we develop a wider view?³

It is hardly news that printing was an industry from the start, turning out books as commodities on the market. That was the

view of Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin at the birth of *histoire du livre*, and Elizabeth Eisenstein expanded on it in her argument for *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change*. Early modern printers, she maintained, were "freewheeling entrepreneurs" who thrived in a "competitive, commercial environment." Having invested in expensive machinery, they were quick to seek out buyers for their products. In the drive for profits, such businessmen as Aldus Manutius, "the prototype of the early capitalist," and Peter Schaeffer adopted new methods of publicity, dispatched salesmen far and wide, and developed innovative, reader-friendly texts. Two centuries later in Montpellier, France, the bookseller Isaac Rigaud kept his eye equally fixed on the main chance. "The best book for a bookseller," Robert Darnton quotes him as saying, "is a book that sells."⁴

Yet, this picture of early modern printers as unabashed capitalists in an open, competitive market is overdrawn. The conduct of communications was severely constrained by the state. Determined to control discussion of public affairs, royal authorities did not merely patrol the press and suppress publications. They enlisted the book trade in its own regulation. Through grants of monopolies and privileges, the Stationers' Company in London and the Book Guild in Paris acquired a vested interest in licensing and censorship. Far from welcoming a free market, they worked hard to limit it. Some printers, like Joseph Moxon, saw themselves as learned men and longed to escape the taint of trade. That was an illusion best confined to treatises on *Mechanick Exercises*. In practice, as Adrian Johns has emphasized, piracy and plagiarism were rampant in the book trade, and try as the Stationers' Company might, they were impossible to root out. Everywhere in the Old World, those outside the circle of privilege bid to undermine those within. The provincial bookseller Rigaud had no qualms about dealing with smugglers and violating the state ban on Voltaire. Even so, he could not shed the mercantilist assumptions of the *ancien regime*. Shamelessly turning the law against his rivals, he labored long and hard for local monopoly. Where that was not possible, as in England after the lapse of licensing in 1695, participants in the book trade still found effective ways to eliminate competition and limit their risks. It was not for lack of effort that they ultimately lost the claim to perpetual copyright. Printers proved no less willing to cozy up to power, thanks to the carrots of bribes and the sticks of prosecutions for seditious libel. Who could resist the temptation of printing "by authority"? Under monarchical regimes that employed every resource at their command—heavy taxes on newspapers, stiff postal fees, surveillance of mail, controls over imports, trials of dissidents, and discouragement of popular education—to restrict public discussion to a narrow elite, caution was both smart politics and good business.⁵

Such conservative notions crossed the Atlantic with the colonizers of the First British Empire, and they persisted in the so-called "free air" of the New World, even as royal power relaxed its hold and accommodated local opinion and a vigorous press took shape, giving voice to a ferocious debate over British men and measures in the lead-up to Revolution. In the new republic,

the federal government promoted an informed citizenry and free and open discussion of public affairs. It foreswore the state powers customarily employed to control opinion: no stamp taxes, no banned books, no prosecutions for libel (following the debacle of the 1798 Sedition Act), no surveillance of mail, no embargoes on imports. And through postal subsidies, printing contracts, short terms for copyright, and investments in education, it took positive steps to disseminate “useful knowledge” among the people. Under such circumstances, it is hardly surprising that an entrepreneurial book trade emerged and vigorously dedicated itself to expanding markets. In the pursuit of profit, booksellers split off from printers, concentrated on publishing, built regional and national networks for distributing books, and adopted new technology to increase output and cut costs. Released from Old World constraints, capitalism seemingly gained an easy triumph, and with its character fixed in type, the record of the book trade unfolds in our scholarship as variations on that theme.⁶ But that is not the whole story, as the successive volumes of *A History of the Book in America* make plain. In crucial ways, book publishers acted persistently to reduce risk, limit competition, and achieve stability in an uncertain economic world. And as the field matured, some editors came to see their work with authors as a literary pursuit. The path was clear for Epstein and Schiffrin. But a heavy cost was paid by the public, for whom books were often expensive and unavailable. Periodicals—first newspapers, later magazines—became the most popular secular medium of print. In short, the history of the book trade reveals a continuing tension between the entrepreneurial pursuit of profit and the conservative desire for stability, and that tension shaped printing and publishing on both sides of the Atlantic and played out in different ways according to the political and business environment, the state of technology, and cultural attitudes towards risk.⁷

Since they are so little noticed, let me highlight here the strains of conservatism that run through American book history. The great achievement of the book trade in the half-century after independence was to establish a native publishing industry that was the product of imitation, *not* innovation. Plagued by scarcities of skilled labor and capital and struggling to survive in an uncertain business climate, printers and booksellers hedged their bets before embracing new practices. Virtually every aspect of the trade was based on English and European models. Technology came from abroad, as did the men trained to use it, though Americans were quick to make their own adaptations. So, too, did the texts that were regularly reprinted, constituting the stuff of the trade well into the 1840s. Many genres—the penny press, the illustrated weekly, to take two examples—originated in the Old World, then spread to the New, where they eventually won large followings. The challenge lay in creating and reaching markets for these products, all the while limiting financial risks. To this end, booksellers sought to share costs with authors and to raise advance subscriptions. Crucially, they established cooperative arrangements both to expand business and to regulate competition. Through “courtesy of trade,” they organized access to reprints, and by co-publishing some titles and exchanging others,

they supplied books for regional and national markets. But until the mid-nineteenth century, publishing lacked an expansive outlook. Book prices remained high, edition sizes small, and distribution problematic. Through trade sales, publishers found one efficient means to deliver books to readers, but that required both wholesalers and retailers to travel regularly to cities—notably, Boston, Philadelphia, New York, and Cincinnati—where the business was concentrated. That was not always a good thing. When some booksellers ventured into the countryside, they treated the inhabitants with urban disdain. “To bring books among such rabble,” sighed one weary salesman on the frontier, “is like throwing Pearls before Swine.”⁸

The book trade broke out of these limits from the mid-1840s on, and publishing assumed a modern character that would last well into the twentieth century. The leading “houses,” based in the northeast, issued their own annual lists of new titles and reprints, which, together with the steady sellers in their backlists and the staples of textbooks, generated the revenue. After the Civil War, these works were distributed through the “national book trade system” detailed by Michael Winship—a system that supplemented trade sales and wholesale jobbers with traveling salesmen, who regularly paid visits on bookstores and took and fulfilled their orders. Yet, those arrangements were inadequate to the task. As late as 1930, the United States had some four thousand outlets for retailing books, but only a fifth were exclusively devoted to the business, and they were located primarily in the major cities. Clearly, the vast population was under-served, yet whenever newcomers sought to expand the business, they were greeted the same way the Stationers’ Company viewed interlopers. That was the case when entrepreneurs in the early 1840s pounced on a loophole in the postal system and churned out cheap reprints of popular English and American novels in newspaper format, and likewise when a similar gambit was tried in the 1870s and 1880s with the development of the so-called library series—inexpensive works in a uniform format masquerading as magazines. Established publishers organized to suppress such competition, which, they claimed, drove prices down to “ruinous” levels. They proved equally hostile to the subscription publishers who arose in the Civil War and did a handsome business selling Twain, Grant, and other popular writers to the countryside. Actually, everybody in the book trade was occasionally tempted to cut corners and offer bargains to favored customers. Faced with persistent underselling, publishers and booksellers periodically closed ranks, only to come apart in short order. The American Book Trade Association, formed after the Panic of 1873 to uphold prices, was dead within four years. Twenty-five years later a new cartel enjoyed greater success in fixing retail book prices, but it provoked sustained opposition from the great urban department stores, which ran their own discount book sections. Challenged in court, the price-setting scheme fell afoul of the Sherman Anti-Trust Act. Only after that defeat did American publishers finally abandon the goal of emulating the British model of keeping prices high and business stable, even at the cost of losing potential markets.⁹

The dynamic force for growth lay outside the established book trade. From the 1820s to the 1840s, it was the benevolent societies—the American Bible Society, the American Tract Society, and the American Sunday School Union—that did the most to expand the market for printed books. Intent on propagating the word and winning souls for Christ, the religious publishers pioneered the use of stereotype plates and steam-powered presses, dispatched an evangelical army of colporteurs to peddle bibles and tracts throughout the land, and built the first modern bureaucracies to organize these efforts on a national scale. As David Nord has demonstrated, America’s first mass media appeared in the nonprofit sector. Other efforts developed in the mass media of newspapers and periodicals. The “story papers” of the early 1840s followed closely in the wake of the penny press. The “library series” of the 1870s palmed themselves off as magazines. The route to large-scale commercial publishing clearly lay with the popular media. Under the guiding hand of the outsider Harry Scherman, the Book-of-the-Month Club found the key to success by selling books like magazines, mailed out on a monthly basis to advance subscribers. On the same principle the paperback revolution advanced in the 1940s and 1950s, with serious novels sharing magazine racks with “pulp fiction” and rotating monthly. Only after Epstein and Schiffrin introduced the Anchor and Mentor series and made paperbacks respectable did most bookstores allow them onto their shelves.¹⁰

From this brief overview I want to suggest a large theme that cuts across the fifty-year periods by which we have divided up American publishing history since 1790. That theme sets the established book trade in uneasy relation with the more popular media. One aims to produce high-status items for a stable trade and to earn solid, predictable profits; the other aspires to take advantage of the potential mass audience in a vast, continental nation. It is commonly said that what distinguishes the book business from other enterprises is that its products are unique, with each title obliged to seek its own audience. That view favors the “literary publishing” in which Epstein and Schiffrin made their careers, with editor and author front and center. (No one worries in this approach about the compositors, pressmen, binders, and other workers performing standardized labor at their machines.) But the mass media—the penny press, the urban dailies of Pulitzer and Hearst, the large circulation periodicals of the early twentieth century—operated on different premises, winning readers with successful formulas and subordinating individual items to a corporate whole. Over the course of two centuries, it appears, the mass media have set the pace of change, and it was the unhappy fate of Epstein and Schiffrin to be present at the moment when trade publishing was finally made subject to the forces most responsible for expanding the market for print. Whether the one and the many will survive together is an open question.

Robert A. Gross, University of Connecticut

FOOTNOTES

- 1 André Schiffrin, *The Business of Books* (London and New York: Verso Books, 2000), quotations on 91, 104; Jason Epstein, *Book Business: Publishing Past Present and Future* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2001), quotations on xii, 8, 19, 105.
- 2 James N. Green, “The Rise of Book Publishing in the United States, 1785-1840,” in Robert A. Gross and Mary C. Kelley, eds., *An Extensive Republic: Books, Culture, and Society in the New Nation, 1790-1840*, volume 2 of *A History of the Book in America* (forthcoming); Michael Winship, *American Literary Publishing in the Mid-Nineteenth Century: The Business of Ticknor and Fields* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Winship, “The Rise of a National Book Trade System in the United States, 1865-1916,” in *Les mutations du livre et de l'éditions du XVIIIe siècle à l'an 2000* (Saint Nicolas, Québec: Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 2001); Schiffrin, *Business of Books*, 11; Epstein, *Book Business*, xi, 17.
- 3 On the persistent theme of culture versus commerce in publishing history, see Robert A. Gross, “Texts for the Times: An Introduction to Book History,” in Scott Casper, Joanne Chaison, and Jeffrey D. Groves, eds., *Perspectives on American Book History* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002), 1-16
- 4 Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin, *The Coming of the Book: The Impact of Printing 1450-1800*, trans. David Gerard (London: Verso Books, 1984), 109; Elizabeth Eisenstein, *The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe*, 26, Robert Darnton, “What Is the History of Books?” in Darnton, *The Kiss of Lamourette: Reflections in Cultural History* (New York: Norton, 1990), 115.
- 5 Paul Starr, *The Creation of the Media: Political Origins of Modern Communications* (New York: Basic Books, 2004), 23-46; Adrian Johns, *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).
- 6 Starr, *Creation of the Media*, 83-150.
- 7 Ronald J. Zboray, *A Fictive People: Antebellum Economic Development and the American Reading Public* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), similarly emphasizes the failure of mid-nineteenth century publishers to respond effectively to the needs and desires of ordinary readers, although his model differs from what I present here.
- 8 James N. Green, “The Rise of Book Publishing in the United States, 1785-1840”; Rosalind Remer, *Printers and Men of Capital: Philadelphia Book Publishers in the New Republic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), quotation, 141.
- 9 Michael Winship, “The Rise of a National Book Trade System in the United States, 1865-1916,” 296-304; Hellmut Lehmann-Haupt, “Book Production and Distribution from 1860 to the Present Day,” in Lehmann-Haupt, ed., *The Book in America: A History of the Making and Selling of Books in the United States* 2d. ed. (New York: R.R. Bowker, 1952), 383-90; Jeffrey D. Groves, “Courtesy of Trade” and Scott E. Casper, “Alternative Publishing Systems: Other Variations on the Trade,” in Scott E. Casper, Jeffrey D. Groves, Stephen W. Nissenbaum, and Michael Winship, eds., *The Industrial Book, 1840-1880*, volume 3 of *A History of the Book in America* (forthcoming); Beth Luey, “The

Organization of the Industry,” in David Paul Nord, Joan Shelley Rubin, and Michael Schudson, eds., *The Enduring Book: Publishing in Post-War America*, volume 5 of *A History of the Book in America* (forthcoming);

10 David Paul Nord, *Faith in Reading: Religious Publishing and the Birth of Mass Media in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); Winship, “The Rise of a National Book Trade System in the United States, 1865-1916,” 300-301; Janice A. Radway, *A Feeling for Books: The Book-of-the-Month Club, Literary Taste, and Middle-Class Desire* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1997); Luey, “The Organization of the Industry.”

11 This view of publishing as divided between a conservative, high-end book trade and cheap, popular media closely resembles Janice Radway’s formulation of the tension between the “literary book” and the “circulating book.” See Radway, *A Feeling for Books*.

AAS Marks Golden Anniversary of Readex Partnership

The Readex release of the digital Archive of Americana—editions of *Early American Imprints, Series I: Evans, Series II: Shaw-Shoemaker*, and *Early American Newspapers (1690-1876)*—and the creation of *American Broad­sides and Ephemera* are the most recent highlights of the fifty-year collaboration between AAS and Readex. (*Congressional Serial Set [1817-1980]*, with *American State Papers [1789-1838]*, the fourth component of the Archive of Americana, was developed with other partners.) An afternoon symposium to celebrate the anniversary was presented as part of the Society’s annual meeting in October 2005. Chaired by John B. Hench (AAS), the panel included August Imholtz, Jr. (NewsBank, inc.), Marcus A. McCorison (AAS), Edward G. Gray (Florida State University), and Robert Scott (Columbia University). Two additional speakers designated respondents and embellishers were Daniel S. Jones, (NewsBank) and Ellen S. Dunlap (AAS).

The search for an economical means to produce photographic micro-reproductions of texts in the 1930s led to the establishment of Readex by Albert Boni. A successful New York publisher, Boni developed a serious, personal interest in scientific photographic literature and Microprint, a proprietary, lithographic process in which the image of a text is printed on coated card stock (100 micro-images appear on each 5 7/8 x 9 inch card) emerged from this pursuit. Collaboration with AAS was far from an immediate development. Boni and Keyes Metcalf of the New York Public Library made an unsuccessful attempt to reproduce its enormous card catalogue and, just as World War II was breaking out, Boni began to issue the Session Papers of the British Parliament.

By the early 1950s, when additional products were being considered, AAS came into the picture. Boni met Clifford Kenyon (Ted) Shipton (AAS librarian, 1940-1959, and director 1959-67) in the second half of 1954 and swiftly shaped an agreement whereby AAS and Readex Microprint Corporation would co-

sponsor a facsimile edition in Microprint of extant American books, pamphlets, and broadsides, published between 1640 and 1800. AAS had been recording and collecting this material since 1812, beginning with Isaiah Thomas’s own collection. Also contributing to the feasibility of the facsimile edition was the twelve-volume bibliographical work *American Bibliography* [1901-34], by Charles Evans that had located nearly thirty-six thousand imprints. Although Evans died in 1935 before he could complete the volume listing publications for the year 1799, this volume (through 1800) would be completed by Shipton. He, in addition to overseeing the filming of twenty-five thousand items at AAS, would also locate some thirteen thousand additional items for filming and review every roll of microfilm. Shipton’s editing of Evans involved the elimination of “ghosts” (the deletion of some three thousand entries to items without proof of actual printing), the corrected and edited presentation of entries, and the preparation of a main-entry card for each entry. Readex agreed to pay all production and distribution costs, all project expenses incurred by AAS, and an annual fee of \$5,000 for the editorial work.

The newspapers are the second genre of sources in which AAS has another long history of collecting and bibliography. Clarence Saunders Brigham, who became librarian in 1908, when Evans was starting his work, had already established his reputation as a scholar and bibliographer. Under his stewardship, the AAS collection grew dramatically with the addition of books and, especially, newspapers, for which he began creating bibliographical tools. The state-by-state lists published in the *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* eventually appeared in 1947 as the two-volume *History and Bibliography of American Newspapers, 1690-1820*.

The first series of *Early American Imprints* in Microprint was finished in 1968, the year after Shipton retired from AAS. By the 1980s institutions favored microfiche and microfilm, which were read on relatively easy-to-use machines that also offered printing capabilities. Now, as the twenty-first century opens, the preference for digital resources continues to involve AAS staff in the preparations for the transformation from microfiche or microfilm and the addition of new digital products. Some 1,226 additional titles held by AAS were located for inclusion in the Digital Evans project.

In recent years, the selection and preparation of the Society’s extensive collections of broadsides and ephemera for digital release (<http://www.readex.com/scholar/broadandeph.html>) continues to make the Society’s collections more widely available and contribute to the expansion of methods and subjects of historical research. So many other institutions and technologies have also become players in this field that Sandra Gustafson opened her 2005 Wiggins Lecture, “The Emerging Media of Early America,” in June by noting that the “expanding domain of web-based archives will increasingly transform not only what scholars of early America read and teach, but how those texts are read and taught.”

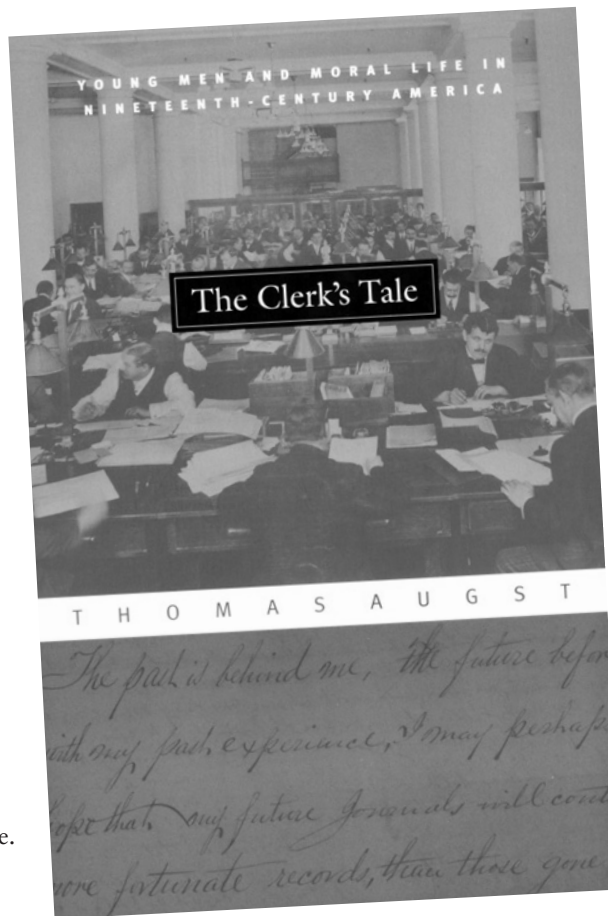
The complete texts prepared for delivery by Gustafson and the panelists will be published in the *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society* (Volume 115, part 2).

Book Note

Thomas Augst, *The Clerk's Tale: Young Men and Moral Life in Nineteenth-Century America* (University of Chicago Press, 2003), 321 pp. + xi, illus; cloth \$62.00; paper \$25.00; ISBN 0226-03220-5.

The study of middlebrow sensibility in nineteenth-century America has produced some of the richest work on the period's literature to date, in large part because it attends to the way in which literary characters embody the vexed and often anxious changes in both taste and literacy during the period. Analyzing texts such as Hawthorne's *The Blithedale Romance* (1852) and Alcott's *Little Women* (1861), critics have shown us how these narratives offer a virtual "how-to" kit for a middlebrow readership seeking to negotiate the vexed terrain of cultural consumption. Jo March as writer of sensational pulp fiction, the Veiled Lady as fetishized female celebrity: these characters and those who respond to them help us map out the emergence not just of new forms of culture, but also of new ways of reading and responding to an emergent mass culture.

But how does the literary scholar go about constructing a history of the middlebrow with almost no recourse to literature as a primary source? One answer is Thomas Augst's *The Clerk's Tale* (2003), a fascinating and often impassioned study that opens up important new ground for history of the book scholars and American cultural studies more generally. With specific focus on the emergent class of white-collar professional men whose arrival to urban centers in the 1830s and 40s signaled the new face of corporate capitalism—the clerk—Augst seeks to understand how conceptions of "moral authority," "character," and "self-worth" were fashioned for these young men at a period of intense economic and social upheaval. His answer is that these men forged a particularly modern form of selfhood through a discursive process he describes as a "practice of literacy." Starting with the diaries and letters written by approximately twenty clerks from the 1830s to the Civil War, Augst proceeds to examine the way in which the young white-collar professional male circulated in a world saturated by new technologies of reading and writing. Conduct books, lectures to young men (especially Emerson's), treatises on eloquence and penmanship, the minutes of the New York Mercantile Library: all of these are for Augst forms of "literary leisure," a process that "redeems the value of experi-



ence through the cultivation of taste across multiple sites of education and recreation" (63). But literary leisure is also an opportunity for the disciplinary process of middle-class self-fashioning, or what he calls the "standardization of moral knowledge" (15). As he puts it, "For middle class men, free time was not merely a privilege, but a moral test" (62). Indeed, Augst suggests that the clerk's life was measured, often obsessively and frequently quite anxiously, against the presence of his "moral Other." Like Professor Bhaer admonishing Jo March about her indulgence in "bad trash" in Alcott's *Little Women*, Augst's moral Other was a kind of idealized self reflective of a rational market culture that sought an "accounting for moral character" (the title of Chapter One), or proper "investment of time" (194), the "profit of pleasure" (79), and so on

Augst's work is thus influenced by earlier literary studies that borrow from Foucault in order to understand the interior life of the middle-class subject, such as Brodhead's *Cultures of Letters* (1993), Nancy Armstrong's *Desire and Domestic Fiction* (1987), or Francis Barker's *The Tremulous Private Body* (1984). (I am particularly reminded of Barker's analysis of Samuel Pepys's eighteenth-century diary.) Diary writing, for example, is a "technology of the self" (33) in which one becomes a future and quite critical version of oneself, "an administrator or judge or accountant, wielding the sovereign power of reason over the disarray of the unexamined life, the disorder of experience" (35). But, importantly, Augst also reads the clerk as seeking the autonomy and freedom promised by democracy. As he puts it with a clarity that informs his entire study: "However banal the results often look to others, we struggle to become authors of our lives, seeking to secure a space of freedom, to claim a moral authority that, prior to the twentieth century, was most often described as character" (17). Augst thus maintains that to acquire advanced forms of literacy was to access new forms of political agency and class mobility—and ultimately new forms of selfhood—not available prior to the 1830s. If the extremes of Foucauldian discipline and democratic freedom sound like competing terms, that's because they

are, but Augst is graceful and persuasive in suggesting that these are the contradictions of modern life—both for the nineteenth-century clerk and for ourselves.

Yet while Augst provides a compellingly complex and “thick” description of the clerking classes, his analysis sidesteps the possibility that a large portion of the clerking classes can be read as fairly indifferent to the forms of moral authority he outlines. Augst is certainly aware of a more excessive class of clerks, as when he explains that “The library was also a substitute for the brothel, the saloon, the gaming table, the theater, and other sites where men could spend ‘unemployed hours’ with ambivalence if not hostility toward the general domesticity of Anglo-Protestant morality” (178). But as social historians such as Timothy Gilfoyle, Patricia Cline Cohen, Christine Stansell, and Carroll Smith Rosenberg have shown, the clerk, like the libertine of the early republican period, was central to the Jacksonian period’s concerns about sexual excess (this especially from reformers decrying female prostitution) and

economic profligacy (especially after the Panic of 1837, the white-collar classes were all but synonymous with over-extended credit and debt). Indeed, the pages of newspapers from the period, such as the *New York Herald*, are filled with diatribes against reckless and apparently immoral clerks; similarly, myriad urban dime novels and stage melodramas star white collar men who seem to occupy a social sphere altogether separate from the one Augst discusses. Augst chooses not to engage with this material—his only extended reading of a fictional text comes in a final chapter that centers on Melville’s “Bartleby.” It may be that the “moral Other” Augst describes is the compensatory mechanism that responds to this more reckless body of white collar clerks, but one wonders how a fuller examination of this far less moral body of young professionals would complicate his excellent and valuable study even further.

David Anthony
Southern Illinois University, Carbondale

www.americanantiquarian.org

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