

Abstracts

- 17 **Jody Greene, Francis Kirkman's Counterfeit Authority: Autobiography, Subjectivity, Print**
 This essay explores the relation between print culture and literary authority in seventeenth-century England, through the career of the rogue author, translator, and autobiographer Francis Kirkman. Barred from traditional forms of authority by his middle-class birth and rudimentary education, Kirkman claimed new forms of self-authorization promised by the press. In his autobiography, *The Unlucky Citizen*, as well as in his biography of the impersonator Mary Carleton, the self-styled "German Princess," Kirkman developed strategies of counterfeiting authority to compensate for the traditional entitlements he, like Carleton, lacked. These strategies involved harnessing the press to circulate authoritative versions of his authorial persona that were intended to substitute for his unauthorized status. Kirkman's ultimate failure to "gain some Reputation by being in Print" is instructive for scholars interested in the history of autobiography and in the changing conditions of authorship in the first era of print culture. (JG)
- 33 **Coleman Hutchison, Breaking the Book Known as Q**
 This essay considers a series of questions about the relations between material presentation and poetic meaning that emerge from a simple but under-acknowledged fact about the 1609 *Shakespeare's Sonnets* quarto: unlike nearly every other sonnet sequence from the period, Q's poems are broken by a series of nonuniform, seemingly arbitrary page breaks. Arguing that these breaks have profound implications for the interpretation and reception of Shakespeare's poems, the essay suggests that *not* reading page breaks is itself a reading practice—a historically specific, socially determined act in which certain elements of materiality are granted attention and authority while others are not. Espousing instead an approach to the materiality of *Shakespeare's Sonnets* that would take seriously the matter of Q's page breaks, this essay understands the page and the page break to be units of meaning with particularly urgent implications for the recognition of poetic form and for the interrelations between a history of the book and the idea of literature. (CH)
- 67 **Matthew P. Brown, The Thick Style: Steady Sellers, Textual Aesthetics, and Early Modern Devotional Reading**
 Research on the early modern book trades has uncovered a set of steadily reprinted devotional titles, a canon whose popularity challenges conventional notions of English and American literary history for the seventeenth century. My essay attends to these steady sellers as they helped structure the literary culture of early New England. The essay demonstrates that the pious conduct books rely on the performative literacies of sight, sound, gesture, and touch, on the sensory effects of literary expression, and on the cross-referencing collation of discrete passages, in a phenomenon I call—drawing on editorial theory and information history—

the thickening of devotional textuality. With evidence from the prescriptive literature and its use in personal miscellanies, the essay revalues the aesthetic experience of devout colonists. Further, it examines the book format as a precursor to the modes of nonlinear reading associated with digital texts, and it historicizes such uses of the book format in the light of devotional sensibilities. (MPB)

87 **Paula McDowell**, Defoe and the Contagion of the Oral: Modeling Media Shift in *A Journal of the Plague Year*

This essay contributes to a history of evolutionary models of media shift through a reading of Daniel Defoe. Published in 1722 but depicting events of 1664–65, *A Journal of the Plague Year* represents temporal distance in terms of shifts in modes of communication. Modes that in reality are coexistent and interdependent are here represented as parts of a linear, progressive development. Defoe helped shape an emergent hierarchy of media forms with print at its apex. A key structuring binary of this text opposes a backward past associated with orality to a new, print-oriented modernity linked to the collection and reproduction of accurate statistics and true report. The essay first examines Defoe's handling of the "Women-Searchers"—agents employed to search bodies to determine cause of death, whose oral reports formed the basis for the printed bills of mortality—then considers the depiction of rumors and an oral street culture that is associated with old women, error, and contagious superstition. (PMcD)

107 **Lorraine Piroux**, The Encyclopedist and the Peruvian Princess: The Poetics of Illegibility in French Enlightenment Book Culture

This study focuses on the French Enlightenment's fascination with the materiality of non-Western and nonalphabetic scripts in the broader context of the history of the book. By examining definitions of writing in the *Encyclopédie* as well as Françoise de Graffigny's novelistic appropriation of the Inca quipu script in *Lettres d'une Péruvienne* (1747), I argue that there emerges from these texts a conception of the literary sign capable of challenging the fundamental principles of the Enlightenment printed book: dematerialized textuality and absolute legibility. Shaped by the scriptural imagination of eighteenth-century book culture, literature was able to acquire full aesthetic legitimacy only insofar as it was defined as the other of the purely semantic text. (LP)

124 **Andrew Piper**, Rethinking the Print Object: Goethe and the Book of Everything

This essay combines a consideration of the two-decades-long publishing strategy of Goethe's last major prose work, *Wilhelm Meisters Wanderjahre* (1808–29), with a reading of specific formal features unique to the final version of the novel. In doing so, it argues that Goethe's use of print and narrative work in concert to form what we might call a particular media imaginary—to reimagine the printed book not according to emerging nineteenth-century criteria of

sovereignty, nationality, and permanence but instead according to values more in keeping with the technological capabilities of print media, such as transformation, diffusion, and connectivity. In his vigorous engagement with the material manifestations of his work as a key site of literary work, Goethe offers us an ideal place to explore the productive intersections that the disciplines of book history and literary history are opening up today. (AP)

- 139 **Alexander Des Forges**, *Burning with Reverence: The Economics and Aesthetics of Words in Qing (1644–1911) China*
 Educated individuals in Qing-dynasty China frequently organized “word-cherishing” societies to collect and dispose of paper with writing on it respectfully. This practice, which was found in Jiangnan-area centers of culture as well as in Chinese communities in diaspora as far removed as San Francisco, reveals a preoccupation among the literati with questions of commensurability between potentially incompatible registers of social meaning. In its emphasis on individual written words (*zi*) rather than a more general concept of writing (*wen*), this practice is also indicative of the challenges that literati faced in attempting to compose civil service examination essays in parallel form. It further suggests that the concept of the book and the concept of the fragment of text develop in mutually reinforcing fashion, and it hints at the new significance accorded concrete questions of technique in Chinese literary criticism of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. (AD)
- 156 **Beth A. McCoy**, *Race and the (Para)Textual Condition*
 When seen through the lens of the African American freedom struggle, the seemingly minor spaces and places federated by Gérard Genette under the term *paratext* take on a major role. Entangled throughout the margins and fringes of books and other kinds of texts (especially visual ones), the paratext (e.g., citations, prefaces, typeface) has served as a field through which white supremacy has been transacted indirectly: white-written prefaces to fugitive slave narratives are vivid examples. At the same time, the paratext has also served as a vector through which white power has been resisted. Examining the paratextual issues surrounding Frederick Douglass’s *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave and Without Sanctuary*, James Allen’s exhibition of lynching photography, this essay explores what is gained and lost when the paratext is used as a means of resisting racialized domination. (BAMcC)
- 170 **John G. Nichols**, *Ezra Pound’s Poetic Anthologies and the Architecture of Reading*
 Between 1914 and 1933, Ezra Pound edited four anthologies of poetry: *Des Imagistes*, *Catholic Anthology*, *Profile*, and *Active Anthology*. These compilations arose out of crucial stages of Pound’s career in the teens, when he reacted

against Victorian poetry, and in the 1930s, when he acted as a spokesperson for the modernist movement. Using the anthology as a vehicle for the presentation of innovative poetry as well as a guidebook on how to read it, Pound experimented with anthology formats to propel readers into the project of modernism through devices such as elliptical prefaces and fragmentary notes. He sought to train readers for the demands of interpreting modernist poetry and to reclaim control over an audience educated by burgeoning university literature departments and the mainstream poetic anthologies they employed. (JGN)

186 **Evan Brier, Constructing the Postwar Art Novel: Paul Bowles, James Laughlin, and the Making of *The Sheltering Sky***

This paper considers the story of the making of Paul Bowles's novel *The Sheltering Sky* as a case study for the emergence of the art novel as a commercial niche after World War II. Bowles's novel expresses disdain for American culture and depicts its characters' flight to the Sahara, but its subject matter contrasts with the story of the novel's creation: an unlikely collection of American mass-culture and high-culture institutions, including Doubleday, the William Morris Agency, and the avant-garde publisher New Directions, collaborated in the production and promotion of *The Sheltering Sky*. The story of the novel's making and of its immediate commercial success, the product of a New Directions marketing campaign that effectively advertised Bowles's distance from American culture, exemplifies a neglected aspect of postwar cultural history, when institutions from across the cultural spectrum recognized the existence of a growing market for avant-garde detachment. (EB)

200 **Alice Brittan, War and the Book: The Diarist, the Cryptographer, and *The English Patient***

I trace the historical connection between Gutenberg's invention of the printing press and the development of print-based cryptography to examine how war transforms the cultural meaning of books as mobile objects and as readable texts. The first section of the essay, "War and Print," argues that the spatial portability of print is key to our understanding its role in the two forms of national aggression at the center of Michael Ondaatje's novel—namely, British colonialism and the Second World War. The second section, "War and Handwriting," turns to *The English Patient* and proposes that in Ondaatje's novel the admiration of immobile works of art and the act of handwriting attempt to defy the violent human displacements that print enabled. (AB)

214 **Peter D. McDonald, Ideas of the Book and Histories of Literature: After Theory?**

The continuing fallout from the theory wars, evident not least in the nostalgic after-theory narrative that is still in vogue, has dissipated critical energy in

contemporary literary studies. Rejecting that narrative, this essay calls for a review of the legacy of theory and the polemical oppositions that set it against other scholarly enterprises, like book history. In particular, it suggests that the theoretical interrogation of the category of literature in the past forty years fruitfully intersects with book history's investigation of the material conditions of literary production, opening up new possibilities for literary historiography, while also imposing new demands on it. The essay identifies two traditions of antiessentialist thought (the skeptical and the enchanted), considers the ontology of the printed literary text, and examines the legacies of, among others, Jacques Derrida and Pierre Bourdieu. (PDMcD)