

Journal of American Studies, 44 (2010), 1. doi:10.1017/S0021875810000137

Charles L. Cohen and Paul S. Boyer (eds.), *Religion and the Culture of Print in Modern America* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008, \$29.95). Pp. xx + 369. ISBN 0 299 22570 4.

Gregory S. Jackson, *The Word and Its Witness: The Spiritualization of American Realism* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2009, \$29.00). Pp. xiv + 409. ISBN 978 0 226 39004 8.

The history of print culture in American religion has included narratives about readers, authors, genres, printing, systems of distribution, and modes of reading. Gregory Jackson has amplified that list with an account of how “homiletical realism” – a mode of writing and visual depiction that used imagery and narrative to induce action – drew readers, hearers, and viewers into a double vision that held in tension an experience of the mundane and participation in a realm of moral and religious value. He finds in this Protestant style the roots both of literary naturalism in the nineteenth-century American novel and of cultural forms ranging from the sermons of Jonathan Edwards to the Social Gospel novel and the photography of Jacob Riis. Charles Cohen and Paul Boyer, by contrast, gather fourteen essays from a Wisconsin conference at the Center for Print Culture in Modern America. Both books interpret the functioning of print. Both attend in varying degrees to the relation of content, form, and function.

In the edited volume, Cohen looks at Bible translation before 1876, and Boyer describes the multiple genres of printed religious material. James Ryan contends that fiction both idealized Quakers and implied their irrelevance, while Ronnie Schoepflin finds in medical missionary literature initially an attitude of condescension and later a greater sensitivity to other cultures in books designed to intensify piety, raise money, and recruit more missionaries. David Whitaker explains how the treatises of Joseph Keeler (1885–1918) helped modernize Mormon organization, while Jonathan Pollack writes that the *Hillel Review* at the University of Wisconsin reflected between 1925 and 1931 a transition at the university from cultural Judaism to religious and Zionist concerns.

Turning to conservative Protestantism, Edward Davis illumines the competition between fundamentalist cartoons and modernist pamphlets in the depiction of science and religion in the 1920s, while William Trollonger argues that periodicals like *The Pilot* – published by the Minneapolis Baptist William Bell Riley – sustained a fundamentalist sense of community; Gari-Anne Patzwald makes a similar argument about the *Megiddo Magazine*, a publication of a small, scattered separatist sect; and Candy Gunther Brown explains how the healing revivalist Kathryn Kuhlman used multiple strategies to counter naturalistic constructions of the body and its healing.

The religious liberals enter the picture in essays by Erin Smith, who interprets the Religious Book Club (1925–) as primarily an attempt to help middle-brow readers interpret the religious implications of psychology and science. Kathryn Crowley argues that New Age women and feminists have more in common than they generally recognize. Finally, Matthew Hedstrom writes about the liberal New York preacher Harry Emerson Fosdick, the Jewish rabbi Joshua Loth Liebman, and the Trappist monk Thomas Merton as promoters of psychology and a mystical piety of immediacy as a means of religious renewal for middle-brow readers, while Paul

Gutjahr traces the background, and the inner contradictions, of the “Bible-zine,” the printing of the Bible in a magazine format that began in 2003.

No single theme runs through the essays apart from the obvious one that print functioned in multiple ways and appeared in diverse genres. The authors struggle with the tension between content and function; some of the essays treat their texts largely as documents to interpret the movements and traditions from which they emerged. A number – not all – attend more to content than to form and function, treating books and periodicals in much the same way that historians have always treated them. The chapters are invariably illuminating, well written, and carefully researched, but it is not fully clear from these essays how a history of “print culture” is to be defined as distinct from a history of religious movements and cultures written from printed sources. If the essays focussed intensely on questions of form, style, and function – topics that they do not ignore but that sometimes get lost in the larger story – the distinctiveness of the subject matter might be more evident.

Gregory Jackson comes closer to providing a history informed by a theory of representation that suggests a specific mode of investigation. He concentrates on features of language and style that define formal similarities among genres that include sermons, tracts, novels, and photographs. He tries to identify a formal structure that functions in similar ways across these genres, to explore the philosophical presuppositions that underlie the form, and to show the influence of the form on several distinct popular religious cultures. He argues for a post-Reformation shift that emphasized experience and narrative modes designed to engender it by using an “aesthetics of immediacy” that lured people into living simultaneously inside and outside of time. The texts reflected the historical particularity of the reader or hearer but also linked the reader to a transhistorical reality, be it in the realm of the eternal or the events of ancient Palestine. Especially after John Locke convinced the learned that knowledge came primarily through the senses, preachers like Jonathan Edwards employed graphic images that offered a similitude of experience, say, of sin, designed to inoculate hearers against its lure by graphic representations that also included its hellish consequences. Such allegorical frames could occur not only in pulpits but also in woodcuts, portraiture, and gravestones.

In the nineteenth century, homiletically realistic novelists like Louisa May Alcott expanded the images into narratives designed for the same effect, drawing on a template from John Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress*. The naturalistic novel kept the narrative form but dropped the older allegorical frame, but the Social Gospel novel, informed by depictions of Jesus that came from the higher critics of the New Testament, found new ways to combine realistic depiction and religious meta-narratives designed to elicit action on behalf of the poor. The photography of Jacob Riis followed a similar strategy to invite its viewers to identify themselves with the marginal and act on their behalf. By looking at formal structures in literature and photography, Jackson suggests one way to write a history of “print culture” that has a distinctive subject matter.

Jackson insists that such a history works best with artifacts of popular culture and he repeats the familiar critique of more formal theological histories. More attention to the formal theologies, however, could have helped him avoid a few errors: John and Charles Wesley did not teach universal salvation but rather general atonement,

something quite different; the mainstream Puritan preachers in New England did not move toward a covenant of works; even seventeenth-century Calvinists defended a particular form of freedom; and almost no Puritan theologians defined material success as a mark of election. It helps to know both the formal theologies and the popular religious forms. But such small flaws do not really detract from Jackson's accomplishment. His book is far richer and more sophisticated than a review can suggest, and he opens one pathway to a distinctive history of print culture.

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Journal of American Studies, 44 (2010), 1. doi:10.1017/S0021875810000149

Anya Jabour, *Scarlett's Sisters: Young Women in the Old South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007, \$22.95). Pp. 384. ISBN 978 0 8078 3101 4.

Young women in the Old South spent a great deal of time and ink contemplating and even trying to forestall the nearly universal fate of elite white women in the nineteenth-century American South: marriage, children, and a precarious perch on the pedestal of southern white womanhood. They have found a humane and insightful interpreter in Anya Jabour, who argues convincingly that age was as important to the experience of these young women as were their race, gender, and class, and (somewhat less convincingly) that young women sometimes used the materials of the southern feminine ideal to fashion resistance.

The first quarter-century of life for most elite women was “a lengthy process of transformation that encompassed multiple stages of life, each marked by distinctive rites of passage” on the way from girlhood to matronhood (3). Jabour follows her subjects through girlhood, school life, single life, courtship, engagement, marriage, and motherhood. Most importantly, Jabour finds that their experiences at all-female academies provided young women with “the building blocks of a female youth culture of resistance” (82). Similarly, she finds that many young women contemplated a life of “single blessedness,” and used the ritual of “turning out” into society and the process of courtship to extend and enjoy their singleness, realizing “the potential drawbacks of marriage” (135). And because bad husbands were in such plentiful supply, belles held out for the perfect match, hoping that the attachments of love would soften the practice of patriarchy (168).

But, as Jabour writes, love “proved to be a shaky basis on which to build egalitarian marriages in the Old South” (173). Marriage was the death knell of the culture of resistance that young women had cultivated from their school days. Married women learned to manage households and frequently migrated away from family and friends with their fortune-hunting husbands, increasing their emotional dependence on their frequently absent mates (211). It was not until they underwent the harrowing process of pregnancy, childbirth, and motherhood that women finally stopped looking back to the ephemeral ideal of single blessedness and instead “adopted a new identity that revolved around maternity” (217).

As it did with everything else, the Civil War also disrupted the gender norms of the antebellum South, and it is Jabour's analysis of the war years where her focus on