

serving, and cataloging. She has gone through collections of ephemera and more than sixty trade card scrap-books—genres inconvenient to handle and not always recognized as valuable primary sources. By studying the magazines themselves (their fiction, advertisements, and editorial comments), as well as numerous advertising trade publications, she clarifies the contextual importance of entire issues (as distinct from photocopies of separate articles) in depicting an aspect of culture. If, for instance, we own these magazines at all, do our catalog records note periods during which covers and/or advertisements were removed before binding? Are our film or digital reproductions, our electronically transmitted tables of contents, really complete?

The Adman in the Parlor may be read for fun and profit by any librarian who makes purchases, reads magazines, or thinks about American culture. What is past is prologue.—*Elizabeth Swaim, Wesleyan University.*

Levine, Lawrence. *The Opening of the American Mind: Canons, Culture, and History.* Boston: Beacon Pr., 1996. 212p. \$20 (ISBN 0-8070-3118-6, LC 96-33866).

This work is a collection of ten essays critical of the recent obdurate conservative summation of the university as a haven for tenured radicals (*Tenured Radicals: How Politics Has Corrupted Our Higher Education*, by Roger Kimball, 1990), dictators of virtue (*Dictatorship of Virtue: Multiculturalism and the Battle for America's Future*, by Richard Bernstein, 1994), intellectual impostors (*Imposters in the Temple*, by Martin Anderson, 1992), discourse decomposition (*The War against the Intellect: Episodes in the Decline of Discourse*, by Peter Shaw, 1989), and a politics of corruption and general closure of the American mind (*The Closing of the American Mind: How Higher Education Has Failed Democracy and Impoverished the Souls*

of Today's Students, by Allan Bloom, 1987).

Levine, professor of history and author of several well-received books on popular culture and African American Studies, provides a stinging examination of how and why the new conservative analysis of the contemporary American university is systematically wrong, produced within a faulty historiographical vacuum. The new openness and complexity of academe is threatening to their notion of the European canon as a universal standard for higher education.

Charged with the passion of a heavyweight boxer in the last round, Levine hammers at the conservative critics of the university. He refers to them as hyperbolic, angry, conspiracy-minded, one-sided people who usually have nothing good to say about the contemporary university and see no value in multiculturalism, a more representative university student and faculty, or the new areas of research and teaching concerning race and gender.

The author reminds readers that the present curriculum that critics of today lament was denounced as trivial and anti-intellectual in the past; that the Western Civilization requirement which many regard as the heart and soul of the curriculum did not come into being until a government program instituted it after World War I to ensure that American values were being taught; and that the recent debate over the American-centered literary canon is unfortunately dominated by an unfounded fear that the canon is finite, and to add (e.g., ethnic and gender studies) to it would mean the elimination of something else.

Those who enjoy a good intellectual argument will enjoy this work. It is a frank attempt to open the American mind to questioning an army of books that trash the ideals of cultural distinctiveness, multiculturalism, inclusiveness, and expanded democratic choices. Moreover, it is a critical

thinker's manifesto challenging a new wave of American protectionist literature.—*Itibari M. Zulu, University of California-Los Angeles.*

Thompson, Susan O. *American Book Design and William Morris*. 2nd ed., with new foreword by Jean-Francois Vilain. New Castle, Del.: Oak Knoll Pr.; London: The British Library, 1996. 318p. \$49.95 cloth (ISBN 1-884718-25-6). \$34.95 paper, (ISBN 1-884718-26-4, LC 96-31223).

The new edition of Susan Otis Thompson's *American Book Design and William Morris* has been supplemented with a foreword by Jean-François Vilain; otherwise, it is a reprint of the 1977 edition. The book originated as Thompson's 1972 doctoral dissertation for the School of Library Service, Columbia University, where she later taught until the school's closing in 1992. In this book, Thompson attempts the first comprehensive survey of American book designs and designers influenced by William Morris. By the final decades of the nineteenth century, Morris—the English poet, social theorist, and designer—had helped to turn widespread dismay over the negative effects of industrialization into an international Arts and Crafts movement. Thompson's study focuses on U. S. response to Morris's final venture, the Kelmscott Press, from its first publications in 1891 to the early years of the twentieth century. In so doing, she provides a context for understanding the artifactual value of a wide range of commercial and private press publications from this period.

Much work on the history of printing in the United States and on William Morris's influence has been published in the past two decades. Nevertheless, a century after Morris's death, evaluation of the significance of his influence on American book design remains challenging. To what degree was Morris's style simply copied as the latest Euro-

pean fashion? In what ways was the idiom of incunabular printing, as interpreted by this inspired, if nostalgic, Englishman, transformed to satisfy the growing sophistication of a much more recently formed nation?

Thompson has brought us a long way toward answering such questions. To demonstrate the scope and speed of the Kelmscott Press's impact in this country, she has compiled a body of primary evidence in the form of turn-of-the-century "Morrisian" books and contemporary commentary upon their designs and designers. Her introductory chapters on the state of publishing in the late nineteenth century, and on the distinguishing characteristics of various Classical and Romantic book styles of the period, are helpful, though somewhat dated given the greater understanding of Victorian style that has developed in the decades since Thompson's analysis was first published. More attention might have been given, for instance, to clarifying the relationship of the Kelmscott Press's interpretation of Renaissance and Gothic styles to larger revivalist trends. Morris himself began his career in a prominent Gothic Revival architectural firm, and closer analysis of this long-lived style, including an illustration or two, would have been particularly useful. Gothic Revival style was thoroughly integrated with Kelmscott influence in the work of many American typographers and book designers, most notably Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue, himself a Gothic Revival architect.

Morris's pre-Kelmscott influence on Victorian book design also is deserving of consideration. For instance, as Thompson points out, Morris, in his Kelmscott days, decried the printing of special large-paper copies of literary works because this practice spoils the proportions of the margins. Ironically, Morris was responsible for initiating the practice he later abhorred. Large-pa-