

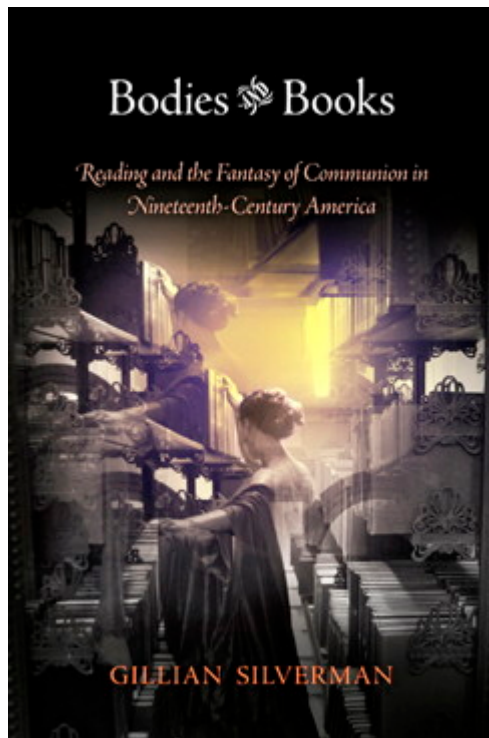
Five Poems



The Rutgers Female Institute, Fifth Avenue,
BETWEEN FORTY-FIRST AND FORTY-SECOND STREETS.

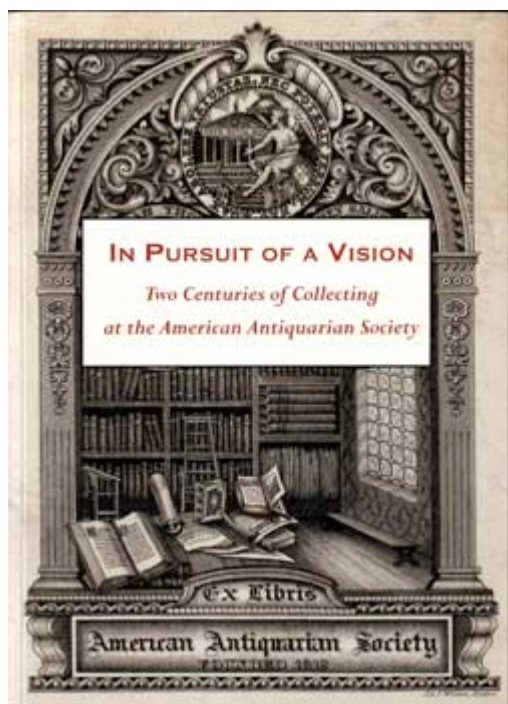
How did a nineteenth-century woman of means accomplish so much, unhampered and unassisted by a husband, and what sort of life did this strong-willed woman live?

Close Reading



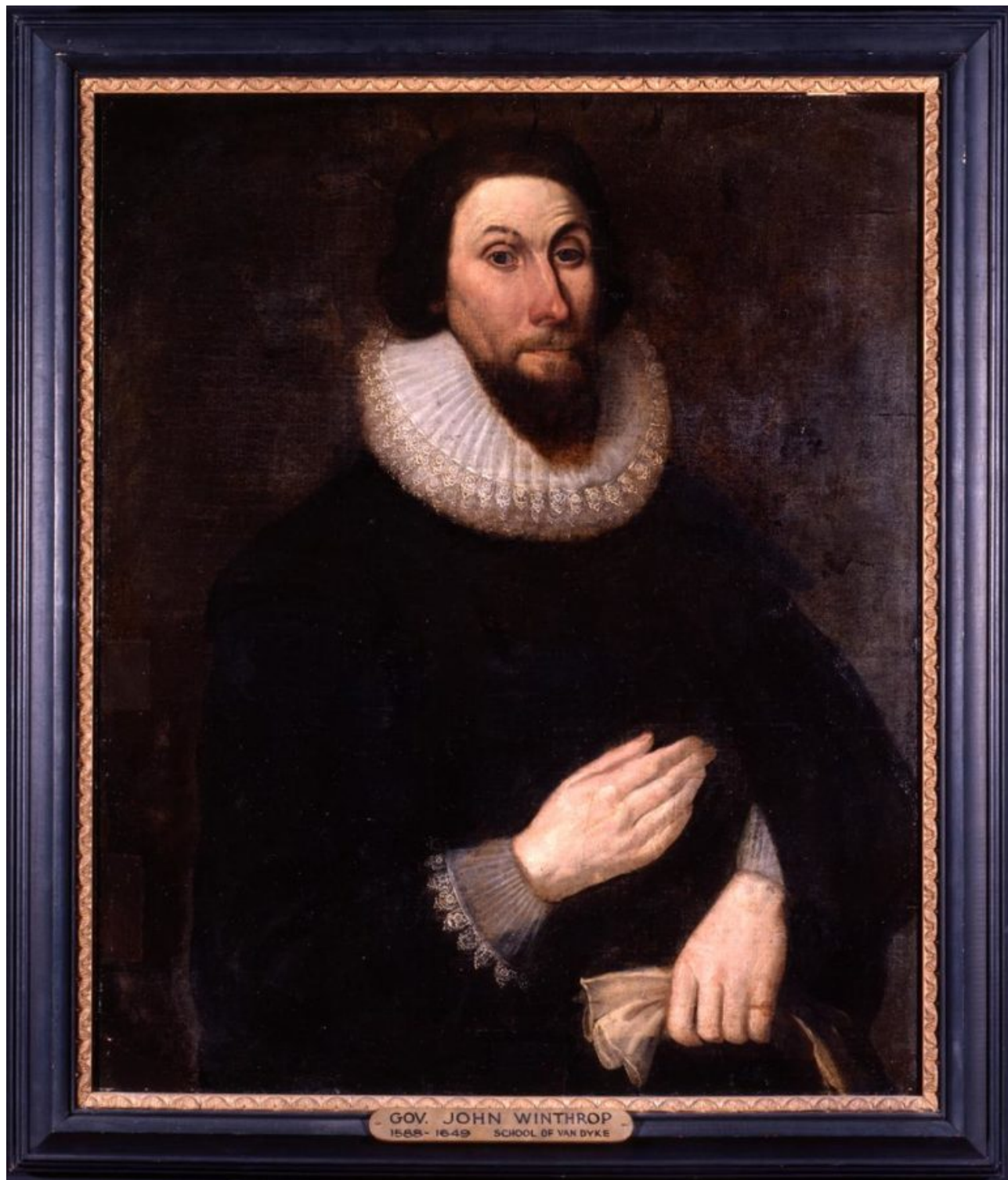
Silverman is concerned with reading writ large: her analysis is not tied to particular genres, genders, races, localities, or ages, as is often the case in more deeply historical studies.

[The Things They Collected](#)



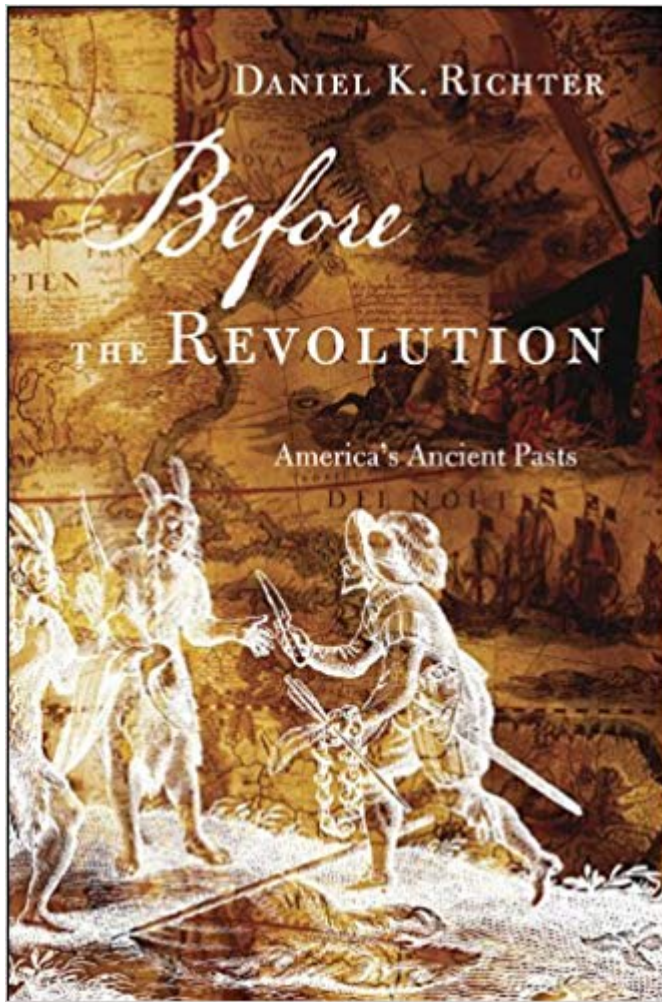
Beginning with Thomas' initial gift of 2,650 titles, the research library currently boasts nearly 750,000 volumes, over 2 million newspaper issues, as well as large collections of periodicals, graphic arts, children's literature, and manuscripts.

Sodomy and Settler Colonialism: Early American Original Sins

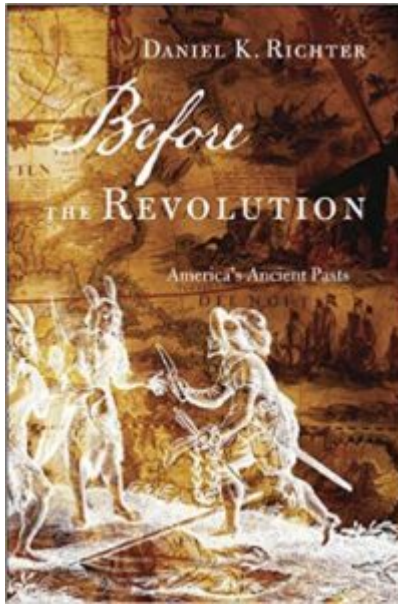


While the Puritans feared the encroachment of the wilderness on their borders, the greater, paradoxical fear was of the perversion of the natural order lurking within human nature itself.

Excavating the American Past



Historians have long used metaphors drawn from geology and archaeology to describe their work; they are always “digging into archives,” “excavating the past,” and “uncovering layers of evidence.” In his new survey of the history of colonial North America, *Before the Revolution: America's Ancient Pasts*, Daniel K. Richter adopts this formula with great success, using the core lessons of geology to structure his argument. Two of the central obstacles in writing a synthetic history of early America are making each distinct phase relevant to the next and doing so without casting the sum as mere prelude to the American Revolution. Richter deals with these two structural difficulties by uniting them, arguing that early America can best be understood by analyzing how each of six cultural phases (those created by, in his terms, Progenitors, Conquistadors, Traders, Planters, Imperialists, Atlanteans) “rested on—and took its shape from—the remains of what came before” (3). Though the Revolution layer may have “spread over the older ones,” Richter argues that “what came before never fully disappeared. Indeed, the new was always a product of the old, made from bits and pieces retained from deeper strata” (4).



By showing that the significant differences in social organization that Europeans and Native Americans inherited in the sixteenth century were a result not of long-seated differences but rather recent transformations, Richter forces readers to see the categories “Native” and “European” as historically contingent and dynamic, not timeless and universal.

One of the hallmarks that we have come to expect from Richter’s scholarship is his ability to turn what we think of as normative on its head and exploit our momentary vertigo to great rhetorical success; this book is no exception. In the first section, “Progenitors,” Richter does not paint a picture of fundamental difference between Native and European societies on the eve of contact, as is common in similar synthetic histories. Rather, Richter delves further into the ancient past to find that North Americans and Europeans shared much. On both sides of the Atlantic, he argues, unmistakably similar societies grew out of a 400-year period of climate change called the Medieval Warm Period (900 to 1300 C.E.) that brought a lengthened growing season and a stable climate. In both North America and Europe, agricultural work was central to daily life and subsistence; in each, the ability of small groups of elites to mobilize a labor force to perform this work and to control its products created great disparities between rich and poor, and in each elites strengthened and consolidated their positions by controlling access to outside resources and to the spiritual world.

As much as these groups shared, however, “the bizarre European custom” of primogeniture, “according to which individual warriors were entitled to possess land in perpetuity, pass it on to their lineal descendants in the male line, and force others to do the work of making it productive,” ultimately meant that when each confronted the challenges that the Little Ice Age brought after 1300, each would respond differently (42). Whereas strong kingdoms, now verging on nation-states, supported by large armies and tax revenue and born of conquest, were the result of economic crisis in Europe, decentralized chiefdoms bound together by matrilineal kinship, diplomacy, and trade networks evolved in North

America. By showing that the significant differences in social organization that Europeans and Native Americans inherited in the sixteenth century were a result not of long-seated differences but rather recent transformations, Richter forces readers to see the categories "Native" and "European" as historically contingent and dynamic, not timeless and universal. Such a maneuver allows Richter to offer a history of colonial America that is a product not of the inevitable contest of incompatible cultures, but rather of a series of human responses to changing circumstances.

A second important feature of Richter's argument is his insistence that European political, religious, and economic development were central in the experience of all the inhabitants of North America. While not wholly a new premise, what is remarkable about Richter's efforts is that he balances careful consideration of metropolitan affairs with close attention to how those policies were worked out on the ground. Here Richter's cultural layers work exceedingly well, allowing him to illuminate how preexisting structures shaped new waves of colonization and to fully integrate colonial and imperial histories.

For example, Richter's discussion of "Nieu Nederlandt," based on the recent flurry of work on that Dutch colony, pays close attention to the ways that Dutch trade was instrumental to the success both of Native Americans and Europeans in the mid-seventeenth-century northeast. Before the English arrived in significant numbers, it was Dutch traders working from trading posts on the South (Delaware), North (Hudson), and Fresh (Connecticut) Rivers, who knit together a regional economy based on the exchange of furs, wampum, and European goods in the 1620s and 1630s. As thousands of English planters arrived in subsequent decades to build agricultural communities in New England and the Chesapeake, Dutch commerce remained important, with these Englishmen and women "superimpose[ing] themselves on a trading network dominated by the Dutch West Indian Company and its various affiliated and disaffected merchants" (213).

In coming decades, New Netherland's traders continued to play an outsized role in supplying English colonies in New England and the Chesapeake with manufactured goods, European foodstuffs, African slaves, and markets for English settlers' tobacco. Though the prevalence of Anglo-Dutch exchange in early America is now well known, Richter's careful efforts to show that those networks predated and made possible English settlement is important in reorienting the way that Anglo-Dutch trade is often understood. Instead of seeing the cross-national relationships Dutch and English colonists built as aberrant, as British metropolitan officials did, Richter portrays them as organically arising out of the messiness of the colonial situation, with British monopolistic trade laws as artificially imposed from outside.

Representative of an imperial vision for the Americas that found its origins in European politics and culture as opposed to experience on the ground in the Americas, England's efforts to limit Dutch trade in North America in Richter's telling blends well with another of his chief arguments: that England's

Restoration policies were key to colonial history and that they were central in producing the violence that swept English America in the 1670s.

Richter's understanding of the centrality of the Restoration in the history of early America comes through most clearly in his retelling of Bacon's Rebellion. Not so much refuting as side-stepping earlier work, Richter argues that the way to understand the rebellion and its place in Chesapeake history is to see it not through Nathaniel Bacon's eyes, but through those of Virginia governor William Berkeley. In Berkeley, Richter finds someone who held tensions between metropolitan and periphery within himself. On the one hand, the court-connected Berkeley and the coterie of great planters he surrounded himself with worked to make Virginia into the "neo-feudal utopia" Restoration officials imagined as they consolidated economic and political power during the 1660s (271). Even if their interests aligned with metropolitan imperialists on issues such as distrust of representational government, the embrace of African slavery, and the pursuit of peaceful relations with Native Americans, Berkeley and his planter allies deviated sharply with "Restoration imperialism[s]" assault on Dutch trade because of its deleterious effect, in their view, on tobacco prices (280). Though they did not support the violent consequences of Bacon's Rebellion, these great planters' opposition to the Navigation Acts sprang from the same conditions that prompted debt-ridden and desperate colonists to join Bacon in seizing Native American land. In Richter's account, therefore, metropolitan changes in policy were as responsible for producing Bacon's Rebellion as were colonial issues.

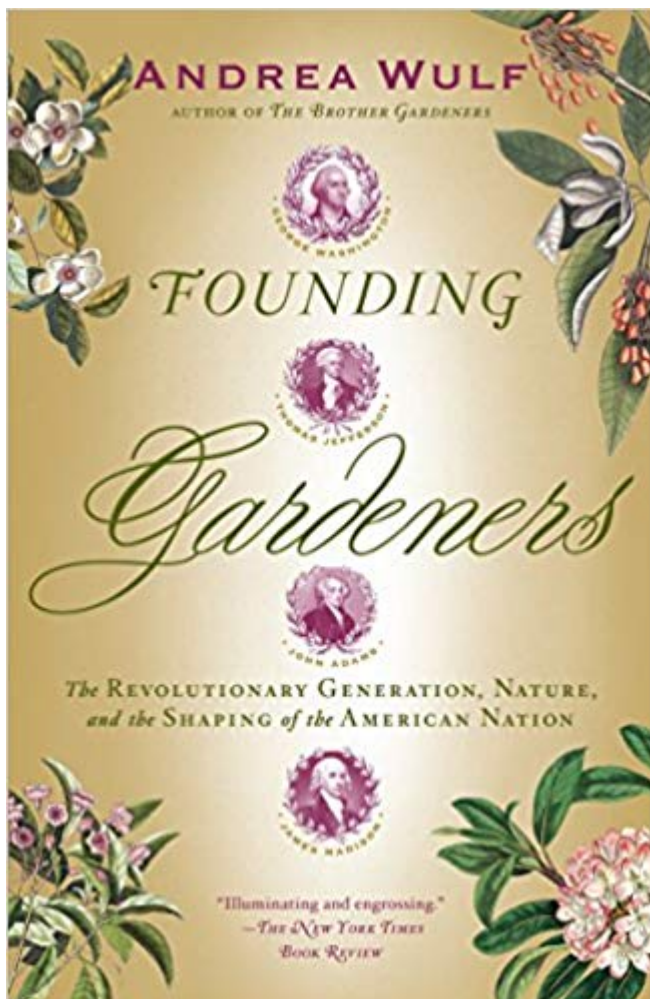
The downside to all this attention to the imperial reshuffling of the 1660s and 1670s and the Glorious Revolution (which Richter discusses alongside the Restoration) is that the rest of the book, in which he charts the movement of commodities, ideas, and peoples in the eighteenth century that bound the Atlantic more closely together and created its distinctive "polyglot social forms," seems more like a coda to the transformations of the half-century before than a determinative phase in and of itself (7). Though Richter recounts the European, African, and Native American migrations that marked this period, the violence of slavery, and the opulence of the transatlantic consumer culture that slavery fueled, the major action of the book is over. As he races towards the "cataclysm" of the Seven Years War, however, he again hits his stride, bringing conflict between Native American traditions, colonial interests, and imperial desires back together again. In that imperial scramble, he contends, "Native American traditions of property, land, trade and power smashed against those of Europeans, in turn setting land-grabbing creole planters against imperial officials" and destroying "the fragile unity of the Atlantean world" (389).

A successful synthetic history—one that is far-reaching in its vision and yet contains enough detail and nuance to make compelling claims—requires a talented writer, and Richter is that. One sentence tucked into his discussion of the origins of feudalism and its connection to Christianity captures his skill in distilling huge transformations into beautiful prose. "In that village church,

meanwhile—as in the great Christian cathedrals that, throughout Europe, served the function of temple mounds—a creed originally preached by a wandering prophet of forgiveness who had been executed in the most ignoble way mutated into a religion focused on an authoritarian judge-king who, on the Last Day, would wield his sword, cast his enemies into the fires of Hell, and grant arbitrary pardon to the few who acknowledged his lordship over all and had paid the price for their sins in this world and in Purgatory” (43).

A sweeping narrative intended for general readers, students, and historians alike, Richter has offered a gripping and enjoyable book (it is burdened only by footnotes relating to quoted materials) that does what few comparable syntheses accomplish: advance a powerful argument about the ways that colonial cultures continued to shape early America long after they were buried.

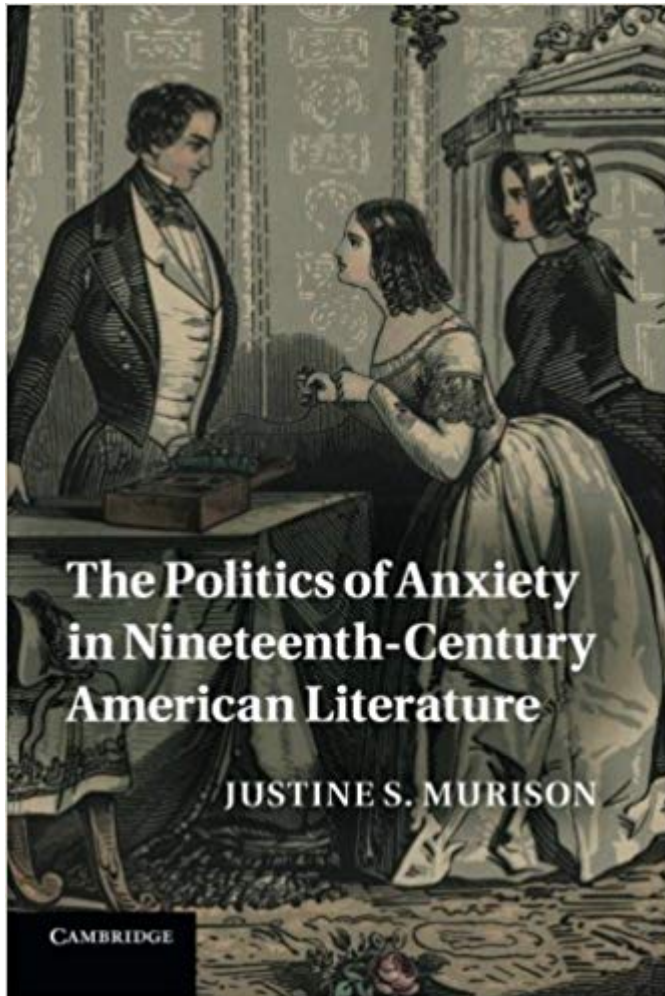
Landscape with Figures



At a time when the wealth of the new nation derived from farming, importing

exotic plants [...] and establishing the systems of practice needed to make plants valuable were vitally important.

Nervous Americans



The nervous system, in the nineteenth-century imaginary, was the point of contact between the mind and the world.

A Voice Inside My Own



Anne was oppressed and it is difficult for me to write her. I don't want to oppress her further and when I write her I feel sometimes her pressing back on me and this awareness of pressure is important if I want to write Anne because finding her Spirit or Soule among the words that she inhabits. She inhabits the words that are her speaking.

I desire to speake one word befor you proceed:

What law have I broken?

What breach of law is that

to speak what they would have me to speak

I speak not of

expressing any Unsatisfaction

I must keep my conscience.

I desire to hear God speak

I desire to speak to our teacher.

Now if you do condemn me for speaking what in my conscience I know to be truth
speak plainly whether you think

I must either speak false or true in my answer.

I desire you to speak

to that place

the meanness of the place

I came first to fall into

my Imprisonment

I fear I shall not remember it when you have done.

If one shall come unto me in private, and desire me seriously

comes to me in a way of friendship privately

come in the flesh

open it unto me

I will willingly submit

what rule have I to put them away?

the elder women should instruct the younger
in a way of friendship

I then entertain the saints
I entertain them that fear
I entertain them, as they have dishonoured their parents I do

Do you think it not lawful for me to teach women?
If one shall come unto me

a friend came unto me
I had set my hand
I had not my hand
held them unlawful
held before as you

In what faction have I joined with them?

did I entertain them against any act
What breach of law is that Sir?

I hear no things laid to my charge
I did not come hither to answer to questions of that sort.

If I sound repetitive I'm repeating Anne. Anne repeating words repeated in text before as "proceedings" or transcripts in copied forms and reprinted in books and taken and retaken down, especially in the case of the trial "before the

Church in Boston" because the text that is still here as a Body is a copy made by Ezra Stiles. This was then copied and put in books but those people who copied were not good spellers. Copies are a spell bound in text.

So I'm again copying here and maybe I'm a better speller but if you copy someone's mistakes doesn't that mean you made a mistake? I don't want to make a mistake. I don't want an Argumentum ad nauseum because that is an argument based on the fallacy that just because something is repeated makes it right. I don't want Anne to just repeat. I want Anne to reappear.

conscience, Sir.

An oath Sir Sir, but
when they preach
breach of law
is that
law is that Sir?

Sir prove
it

No Sir,
Prove this
then Sir

You know
Sir

Name one
Sir.

what he doth declare though he doth not
know himself
in regard of
myself I could,
That's matter of
conscience,

pray Sir

No Sir
I do not
believe
that

Ey Sir

Ey Sir

Yes Sir.

I do fear the
matter of conscience,
as they do

If it please you by authority to put it down I will freely let you for I am subject to your authority.

What I can't name often lives at the back of my mouth in Spirit and it's distracting to me because I can't deal with not saying what I want to say. When I can't say it makes me stop.

Writing is different I have a dictionary and a thesaurus and I can get lost in meaning and connections between words but saying is different. If I stop there is a time expectation and this makes me anxious so even more I can't speak and the words' Body is lost and Spirit is lost and Soule is lost and the words get swallowed up. So if there's a passage of time where someone is quiet for a hundred years is a lot of words getting swallowed up and lost and how many survive. If there's almost four hundred years words swallowed. Not tinny satellite delay. Not musty book delay. Not can't say not wasn't said not thought better about. Words taken away. Like the Bodies and Soules, the Bodies lying in the Grave rising agayne gives me the creeps resurrection words. Saying words that have a history carries that history carries the anxious expectation out of the Grave where it was lost. Now the word reaches and touches my ears unwarmly brutish. I am not familiar. I sit down and word by word come together.

Redemption is not Resurrection. Reread is not Rewrite is not Respeak. Speaking is never vayne conversation because it is Speaking and not Respeaking even if its Body dies not the Soule or the Spirit. Certain things go on living whether or not they're written and whether they're spoken they stay with you. Their Body dies but tell me their Soule dies.

the Body that dyes shall rise agayne

but what Body shall rise

prove that both soule and body are saved?

I am redeemed

inquire for Light

in private.

in the sight of God

Though I never doubted that
the Soule was Imortall yet ...

did not come to
inquire for Light

see fadeth away like a Beast.
in the sight of God

And I see more Light a greate deal by
God indeed,
it is cleare to me or God by him hath given me Light.
I doe thanke God that I better see
for I never kept my Judgment from him.

I think the soule to be nothing but Light.
Yes I doe, takinge Soule
for Light
returned to God indeed, but the Soule dyes

The Spirit is immortall indeed
but prove that the Soule is.

the Soule dyes
the spirit that God gives returnes
returnes to God that gave it.
Castinge the soule into Hell

there was none with me but myself
I took Soule for Life.

I thank the Lord I have Light

It's important to speak about God when you're speaking about Anne. The magistrates deciding Anne's sentence thought Anne said God spoke to her, but they did not believe God spoke to her. I don't mean they didn't believe in God because they did. Maybe they were frightened of believing God spoke to Anne. Frightened of believing God was that sort of God that could speak to Anne. Anne is speaking to me and I'm trying to write Anne but it is difficult.

answer me this
to prevent such aspersions

Being much troubled to see the falseness

I came afterwards to the window

wherein he shewed me the sitting of the judgment and the standing of all high
and low

he shewes that he dyes

he hath let me see which was the clear

But now having seen him which is invisible

I do not remember that I looked upon

writings you should see

though there be a sufficient number of witnesses

Shew me whear thear is any

answer before you

let me see

It is more than I know.

I desire you to answer

proves it that speakes soe.

If there was witchcraft involved recall those and the witchcraft inside Soules. It must be that sort of witchcraft if we can say one atom acts and another atom miles miles away they act that is empathy which is witchcraft. These are Soules how they have a connection to being so it is a connection to everything which you cannot waste.

Do not be afraid of when they tell you it is witchcraft I would tell you, Anne. Witchcraft is the Soule in aggression in assertion also it is in passion. The Soule messy risks obedience and if you wait the interpretation drags you under in its husbandry. Cleanly speech falls under the heading of prophesy and is not subject to control. If you choose in your speech this arrangement reaches more easily and acts and connects to speech more these parts of speech you hardly control like predicate and deixis. Anne is here. I hear her.

So to me by an immediate revelation.

the voice of Moses

said

bring proof of these things

the voice of John Baptist

said

I find things not to be as hath been alledged

the voice of antichrist

said

but that is to be proved first.

Do you think it not lawful

and why

this is a free will offering

if you do condemn me for speaking

for I am subject to your authority.

for all those voices are spoken of in scripture

those voices are

of my own heart

those voices are

Obliterated }

what hath bine spokin

it shall rise,

but what Body shall rise,

if he be not united to our fleshly Bodies, than those Bodies cannot rise.

held them

fleshly Bodies

have I joined with them?

whan I sayd I had pleaded for them as much as others

I ment only in seekinge Comfort from them.

Statement of poetic research

I will admit first of all that the word “statement” makes me uneasy. It is more comfortable for me to ask questions and give examples than to make a statement. In the work presented here, which uses as its source-text the transcriptions of the court and church trials of Anne Hutchinson, questions are the starting point for my text. Questions are the nature of research.

But I believe a lot was asked of her. I was first provided the transcripts of the trials in a graduate course on the history of secularization that used questions around this text and its context as a starting point. Anne Hutchinson was considered a heretic by those who were questioning her in the trials, by both the city and church officials—though that is a difficult distinction to make of the highly orthodox early Bostonians. It is interesting to me that, as an unorthodox woman in the midst of a generation seen as an important seed of American democracy, she causes so much trouble—both for the orthodox establishment of the Bay colony and for our own founding myths. Anne Hutchinson was a religious dissident and was punished for it. What I couldn’t help gathering from the transcripts was that, while she was answering the questions of the magistrates, frequently being coy, her own questions were never answered. This is what spurred me to re-take her words, to find the questions I hear her asking and bring them back into conversation.

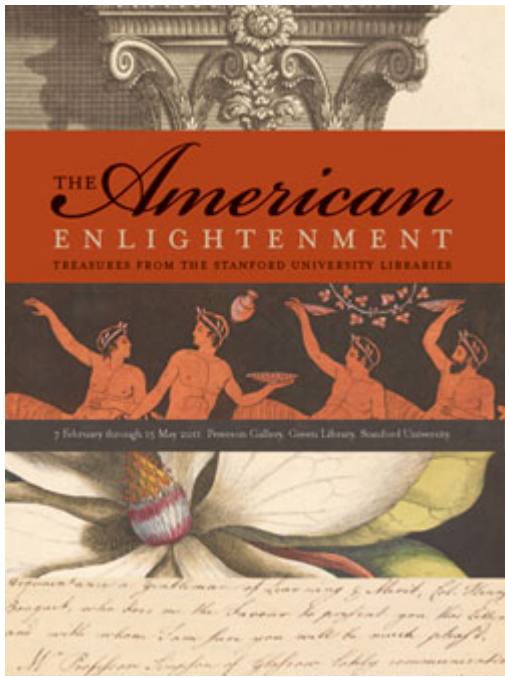
This work is a combination of my text and Anne Hutchinson’s. My own writing is part empathetic response to the difficulties I heard in her voice, as her beliefs and womanhood were dissected, and part meditation on her own, and the transcripts’, place in America’s history. Each verse line of Hutchinson’s text in the work is a line reproduced from the transcription; my intention is to

preserve her diction and her concerns. There are questions even here, however. Is a transcription an authored work? If the words are being spoken, is the voice then the author or is it the person who attempts to set the voice on paper—is Anne Hutchinson the author of these transcripts? Is authoring a form of creating or one of capturing? Conversely, is re-contextualizing also a re-authorizing? Giving in to various kinds of authority over the text allows it to be opened in different ways. Certain frames are required for the presentation of a text. My own authority here, my taking, hampers how you read Anne Hutchinson's words. Yet, in the case of my authority as a reader, she calls out to me to want her voice to be captured, at the very least in how her words and faith can speak out from the page. In this sense, we can be subject to her authority if we allow ourselves to listen.

If a person can be said, at all, to be alive today when they have passed away long ago, it would seem to be in her voice, speaking in her words that were once "taken down," written. Just as the soul is often said to reside someplace in the body that is non-physical and non-anatomical, though usually somewhere in the chest, so too the voice arises seemingly miraculously from the same chest, perhaps even from the same source. The written word, in turn, emulates this voice, allowing it to live timelessly, albeit in a bound format. Thus, I am interested in unbinding Anne Hutchinson's voice from the trials, from the magistrates' questions, from transcription.

As I have grown more familiar with Anne Hutchinson, the historical person, and her life before and after the trials, the more she speaks to me as "Anne" through the words she has chosen, the words that have been taken. I cannot be sure if she has revealed her voice to me the way she felt revealed to by her God, but I do feel a scary closeness to her, a spooky action-at-a-distance, like her words are somehow also mine but separated, by time. When I read the transcripts, in my voice, when I read her words, they came out from my body. Something was being transmitted, so I felt I must take it down.

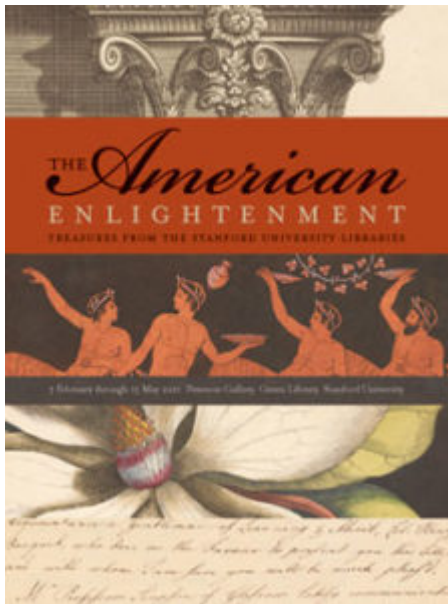
Enlightenment in the Margins



Caroline Winterer describes America as “a vast Enlightenment laboratory” but one cannot easily imagine Winterer’s exuberant, capacious and eclectic American Enlightenment locked away behind laboratory doors. This Enlightenment may indeed have been a laboratory experiment, but it was also a classroom lesson, a fashion show, a gardening experiment and a backcountry adventure. Winterer is the first historian in a generation to take a real shot at interpreting the American Enlightenment. The collection of “books published by Americans, books owned by Americans, and books about America” that she recently exhibited at the Stanford University Library seems to suggest new solutions to the American Enlightenment’s two central problems: one, whether there was there anything fundamentally American about it; and two, whether the American Enlightenment was really anything more than a sideshow to the main (i.e. European) production.

The first problem, the Americanness of the American Enlightenment, became visible in the mid-1970s, when historians last made a major effort to describe the movement. Most 1970s scholars conceived of the Enlightenment as an intellectual project, and they struggled to identify anything uniquely American about it. Henry May made what was probably the bravest effort by dividing the American Enlightenment into four phases: the Moderate, the Skeptical, the Revolutionary and the Didactic. Ultimately, though, this schema seemed to raise more questions than it answered.

Here is an Enlightenment in which there is no gulf between ideas and practices.



Winterer, sensibly, sidesteps the problem of the American Enlightenment's intellectual essence, choosing instead to characterize the Enlightenment as a set of projects and encounters in American settings. The most literal encounters on display in the exhibition are those described in the journals of Lewis and Clark, which describe a physical journey across the continent. But as Winterer demonstrates, Americans worked in many other ways to locate their continent within a larger mental and physical world. Noah Webster's *American Spelling Book* contains a lengthy list of city and country names from around the globe. American pupils practiced their spelling by copying the tidy columns of names ("Ex e ter, Mer ri mak, Hat te ras, In di a..."). As they did so, they brought the New World in line, literally, with the Old.

Many books in the exhibition are drawn from the Founder-centric collection of the late Stanford Professor Jay Fliegelman, which has never before been exhibited to the public; the broad scope of the material (combined with other Stanford holdings) allows the Founders to play a variety of roles in the exhibition. A letter in which Benjamin Franklin describes his experiments with conductivity practically sizzles with scientific curiosity. By contrast, two books belonging to John Hancock are presented, unapologetically, as Americana: the viewer is invited to admire how Hancock's signature evolved from modest origins into the "flamboyant" autograph that graced the Declaration of Independence. The crown jewel of the Fliegelman collection is a copy of *Paradise Lost* signed by Thomas Jefferson (once) and by James Madison (five times!). The viewer must decide for herself whether this was a complex act of appropriation or whether Madison was simply testing his pen.

Since the advent of cultural history, scholars of the Enlightenment have drawn attention to the pathways and practices through which Enlightenment ideas operated in the world, and Winterer offers several lovely examples. A copy of John Newton's evangelical *Olney Hymns* has been dog-eared by its anonymous owner to Newton's most famous hymn, "Amazing Grace." The hymnbook, Winterer notes, has been "loved nearly to death," its tattered binding reinforced with strips

of gingham cloth. Here is an Enlightenment in which there is no gulf between ideas and practices. Quite the contrary—it was through routine practices like singing and sewing that Americans demonstrated their commitment to evangelical ideas.

Exhibit cases devoted to architecture, fashion and style emphasize the ways in which Americans made the Enlightenment manifest in their homes and on their bodies. Noting that Jefferson called Monticello his “essay in architecture,” Winterer shows us some of that essay’s sources, such as Andrea Palladio’s handsome *I Quattro Libri dell’Architettura*. Less majestic but equally compelling is the 1809 issue of Rudolph Ackerman’s *Repository of Arts, Literature, Commerce, Manufactures, Fashions, and Politics*, which invited Americans and Britons to express the spirit of improvement by upholstering their furniture in bright pink fabric with polka dots.

On the whole, this exhibit sets out to complement earlier scholarship rather than to upend it. Winterer finds space for ideas *and* practices, for august Founders *and* anonymous readers. As a result, the exhibit is rather eclectic. Its nineteen exhibit cases are not organized hierarchically, and they do not need to be viewed in any particular order. It is worth noting that this approach stands in rather stark contrast to the ultra-formal categorization scheme used by Thomas Jefferson to organize his own [library](#). Where Jefferson imagined an orderly universe of information that one might hope to master, Winterer’s approach helps us understand the Enlightenment as the messy work in progress that it really was.

Only on rare occasions does the exhibition’s cheery accessibility seem to obscure something significant about the Enlightenment in America and beyond. Consider, for example, a copy of Charles Rollins’ *History of the Arts and Sciences of the Ancients*, which has been opened to an illustration of a Roman castle under siege. The castle’s defenders have attached a fearsome-looking pincer to a sort of crane, and they have used this contraption to pluck an ascending enemy off a castle wall. Winterer, noting that the castle looks far more medieval than Roman, describes the scene as “charmingly anachronistic.” However, I found the image more ghastly than charming. The unarmed man dangles helplessly in the pincers as the defenders of the castle prepare to drop him to his death. Charles Rollins comments blandly, “Many may imagine this [crane] a very mysterious machine, but the plate sufficiently shows that nothing is less so.” In other words, he expected his readers to muse about how such a device might be built. Enlightenment thinkers were not just interested in improving the condition of mankind. They were also extremely interested in discovering better ways to kill each other.

The American habit of writing in books is such a persistent motif in this exhibition that we come to sense that something important must be at stake. Some inscriptions seem to represent American claims to knowledge: the apparently possessive Oliver Ellsworth signed one book “Oliver Ellsworth’s,” adding on the next page, for good measure, “Oliver Ellsworth his property.” In

other cases, writing in books could be a part of auto-didacticism. New York lawyer James Kent, for example, wrote lengthy notes to himself in his copy of the proceedings of New York's constitutional convention. Writing in books could also be a way of educating someone else, as we see in the case of Charles Thomson, who annotated his *own* translation of the Bible for the benefit of his niece. Inscription could even be an act of political defiance, as when Henry Laurens, denied pen and ink as a prisoner in the Tower of London, somehow managed to sign his name in a rat-bitten copy of a radical political tract, *The Judgment of Whole Kings and Nations*.

But did all this scribbling amount to anything? Here I return to the second question I raised earlier: whether the American Enlightenment was anything more than a sideshow to the main European event. Even devoted Americanists must admit that America's direct contributions to Enlightenment libraries were relatively meager. The arts and letters of the American colonies paled in comparison to those of France; American print output was dwarfed by that of London. American knowledge was built on European foundations, and American discoveries were rapidly assimilated into European knowledge projects. All told, it would be very easy to categorize the American Enlightenment as marginal.

Thus Winterer makes an important move when she shows us how much was going on in the margins of Enlightenment books. Americans writing in the literal margins of European books come to represent Americans acting in the figurative margins of the European Enlightenment. After showing us how lively these margins really were, Winterer seems to suggest that the margins were, in fact, critical to the core Enlightenment project—that is, that Enlightenment knowledge as a whole was a hybrid production in which printed text and handwritten marginalia were both essential. Seen in this light, America's importance is in no way diminished by its marginality.

Perhaps the clearest example of America's centrality-through-marginality is an exhibit case in which Winterer has placed a Philadelphia copy of Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* side by side with a copy from London. The nervous London printer has omitted a particularly seditious phrase—"the royal brute of Britain"—from the text, but an unknown reader has inscribed the missing words with a pen. Here the traditional flow of knowledge has been reversed: an important text from America has been brought to England for inspection. Even more interestingly, these two copies of *Common Sense* show how Enlightenment knowledge circulated not only within printed texts but around them, alongside them and in their margins. The handwritten comment amplifies the power of the printed text; "the royal brute of Britain" seems far more provocative in manuscript than it would have seemed in print.

Stanford University, a tech-happy campus where a lot of people are thinking very hard about how to transmit knowledge, is a perfect host for this exhibition. The library's Digital Libraries Systems and Services Group has created lovely pigment print reproductions of fragile plates such as those in

Mark Catesby's *Natural History of Carolina, Florida, and the Bahama Islands*. Both bright and subtle, these images replicate the originals faithfully while embodying the kind of progress that Enlightenment thinkers celebrated. Better yet, the tech team has made the entire exhibition available [online](#) and viewers are encouraged to download its high-resolution, public-domain images for classroom use.

About the Exhibition: "The American Enlightenment: Treasures from the Stanford University Library" ran at Stanford University's Green Library between February 7 and July 15, 2011. A printed exhibition catalogue can be purchased through the [Stanford Library](#). The online version of the exhibition will remain available indefinitely.

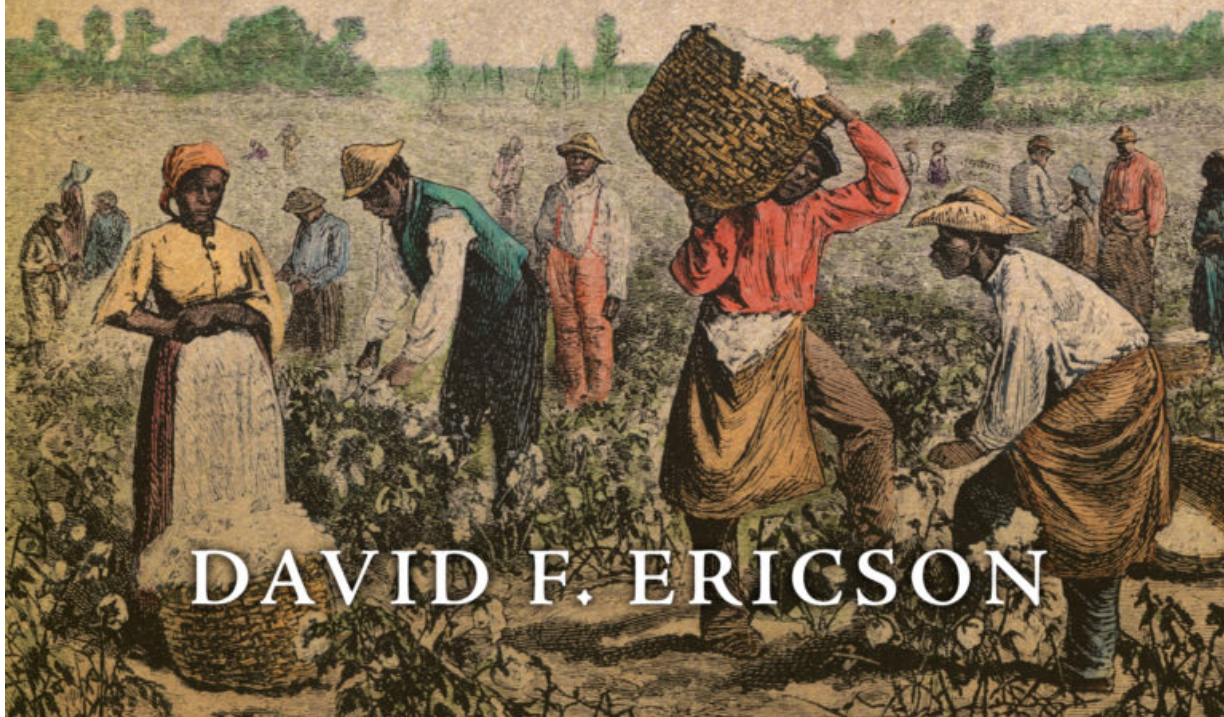
Slavery and the State

SLAVERY

IN THE AMERICAN REPUBLIC

DEVELOPING THE
FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, 1791–1861

DAVID F. ERICSON



Rented slaves built federal forts, roads, and the United States Capitol.
Sometimes they served as soldiers and sailors.