

with a background in the social sciences would not dispute the central tenets of the author's argument—that scientific representations are approximations to real phenomena, that social and cultural factors influence scientific knowledge, that plurality of models and theories is often valuable, and that informed criticism of scientific ideas should be encouraged. At the same time, one is sometimes unsure of what she means by *knowledge*. What, essentially, is knowledge? How does it differ from *information*? In certain places in the text, she appears to intend to limit the term *knowledge* to *scientific knowledge*, but in other instances she seems to use the term to refer to all knowledge. Turning to stylistic matters, prospective readers should be forewarned that despite its catchy title, the book's subject matter and expository style are abstract and academic. With a handful of notable exceptions, the text is nearly devoid of concrete examples. For all readers except those trained in philosophy, this absence of concrete illustrations hinders understanding. Seemingly written for philosophers and sociologists of science, the book contains little that lends itself to easy digestion. Following and understanding Longino's arguments and analysis requires sustained attention, effort, and re-reading. Even so, any who have an interest in the genesis and nature of scientific knowledge should find her exploration of epistemology enlightening and rewarding.—James D. Haug, *The Smithsonian Institution*.

***Reading Acts: U.S. Readers' Interactions with Literature, 1800–1950.*** Eds. Barbara Ryan and Amy M. Thomas. Knoxville: Univ. of Tennessee Pr., 2002. 289p. alk. paper, \$36 (ISBN 1572331828). LC 2001-5651.

On the surface, it might not be obvious that there are connections between the issues librarians are facing these days and these essays that completed their introspections more than half a century ago. Yet, a closer inspection of this fascinating compilation of eleven historical and lit-

erary essays on “reading acts” from several historical periods—and this is important—reveals issues that are alive and kicking today for librarians. What do people read? How do they make their choices about what they read? What primary source documents should we be saving today so that similar analyses can be done in the future concerning today's readers? These are all questions we ponder and analyze on a regular basis. Moreover, a collection such as this forces one to think about issues such as resource preservation, collection development policies for archives, as well as the need to develop an ability to think imaginatively.

But I digress, as I suspect these were not the goals of the authors and editors of this collection, though one clear sign of the quality of this book is the number of questions it raises and the issues it presents for future research. The intent here was to have scholars work with documents left by actual readers who are deemed “ordinary.” These documents include diaries, commonplace books, fan mail, booksellers' reports, and student papers. The essays included here cover several historical periods, deal with books written by prominent authors, and touch on a number of literary genres and cultural groups. Add to this another working premise of this collection, that scholarship can begin with the reader's perspective, the ways in which ordinary people—in this case meaning nonreviewers and nonscholars—responded to and used their reading.

This is achieved with a great variety of perspectives. The first essay by Elizabeth B. Nichols asks the question, Was there a gap between the experiences of elite New England women readers in the early national period, as recorded in letters and diaries, and prescriptions of what was proper reading for women? Alison Scott's “This Cultivated Mind” chronicles the reading of an immigrant woman, Mary Ann Wodrow Archbald, through a study of her journals, letter books, commonplace books, and her surviving library, complete with extensive marginalia. Scott uses these

materials to create a record of reading's crucial role in her developing identity as a woman and as a Scot living in America. Amy Thomas examines a rare manuscript of Micah Croswell's, a South Carolina colporteur, conversations with readers in 1854. Croswell's report for the American Tract Society, though not published at the time, includes superb details on conversations he held on his travels. Croswell preserved diverse voices, but his notes also reflect his comfort with people most like himself. Leon Jackson examines the varied reactions in nineteenth-century America to Thomas Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus*, and why it held different meanings for different groups. Letters play a significant role in several essays. Barbara Ryan studies fan mail sent to a popular writer (popular with fans, but not with the critics) and the mutually supportive relationship this reflected while Regina Kunzel studies letters written in response to a *True Confessions* story on unwed mothers and a sidebar from the United States Children's Bureau telling unwed mothers where they could get help. The author makes the point that letters such as these can teach us more about popular culture than the producers of magazines can.

These absorbing essays are generously supplemented with extensive notes for further reading. Not only do they work well as intellectual tonic, they serve as gateways to a rich body of literature. All in all, an exemplary work that should be in all academic libraries.—*Ed Tallent, Boston College.*

**Vaidhyathan, Siva.** *Copyrights and Copywrongs: The Rise of Intellectual Property and How It Threatens Creativity.* New York: New York Univ. Pr., 2001. 243p. alk paper, \$27.95 (ISBN 0814788068). LC 2001-2178.

*Copyrights and Copywrongs* is a cultural history of copyright law, the self-proclaimed goal of which is to explain how essential the original foundations of American copyright law are to the educational, political, artistic, and literary culture of this country. The author makes an eloquent argument for copyright law as it was originally intended, the purpose of which was to encourage creativity and cultural expression, the proliferation of ideas, and the sharing of information. Remuneration and rights of authors were almost by-products of the greater goal to create a robust intellectual commons. The essential purposes of the Founding Fathers have steadily eroded as copyright has developed into a form of property law.

Vaidhyathan traces the history of copyright law from its Constitutional foundations to the Digital Millennium Copyright Act of 1998, drawing heavily on case studies and episodes from popular culture to illustrate its evolution. The author explores the role of some giants of American culture in defining and refining copyright law as it is applied to an expanding array of mediums—from print literature to film to stage to music and computer games. Mark Twain's promulgation of "thick" copyright protections and the extension of authors' ownership are extensively discussed, as are Thomas Edison's role in defining copyright in early cinematography, and D.W. Griffith's—a key figure in securing copyright protection for stories on film—pioneering application of corporate copyright, a right previously reserved for individual authors. The book is heavily populated with more contemporary icons such as Led Zeppelin, George Harrison, and Steven Spielberg. We know the stories, the songs, and the films that have tested American copyright law. Their familiarity brings life and realism to the case studies and legal machinations.

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