

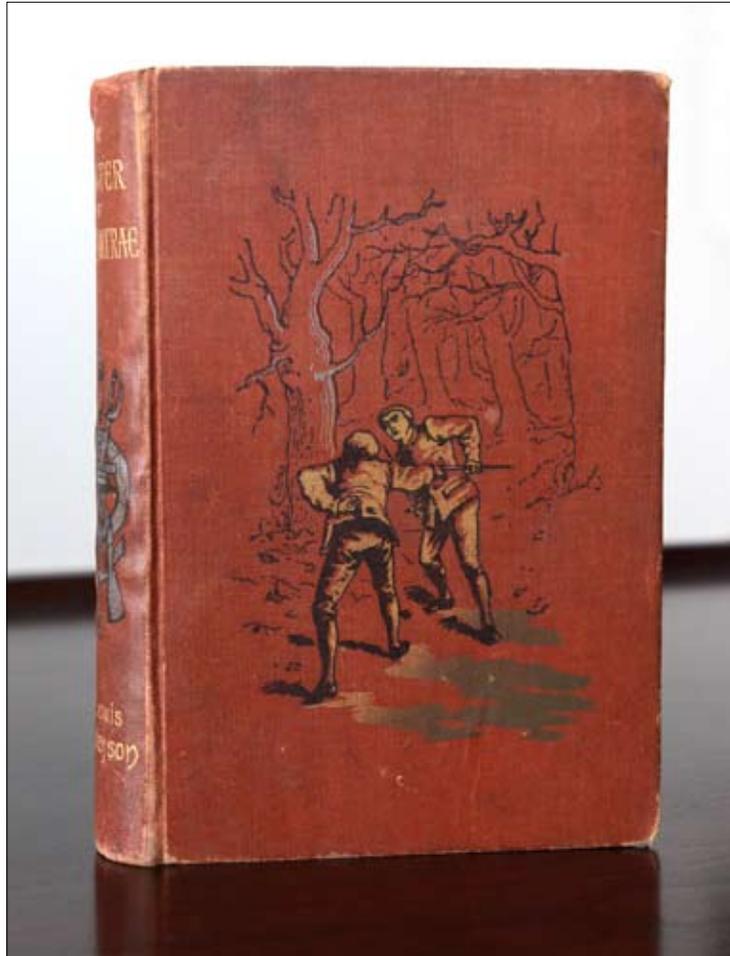
Epitext

The ecology of second-hand books

Michael Gorman

I have collected books since I was nine or ten years old, more than sixty years ago. I am not a collector of rare and expensive books but a life long snapper-up of unconsidered trifles, many, especially in the early decades, bought secondhand for very little from scruffy London secondhand shops, bookshops, jumble sales, school and hospital fetes and the like. Such rarities as I possess have been more the result of happy accidents than judicious selection from the catalogs of auction houses and the other haunts of refined bibliophiles. My down-market collecting has its felicities – I bought a good copy of Graham Greene’s disavowed and scarce early novel *The Name of Action* for one penny from a stall in a church jumble sale in Pinner, Middlesex, in 1971. Chief among those felicities is the pleasure that I get from the traces of the books’ previous owners – their signatures, bookplates, inscriptions, re-bindings, and other amendments and enrichments – not to mention the odd 60-year-old letter, postcard, or photograph.

E.book is one of the most confusingly inaccurate terms of our time. Such digital artefacts would, more properly, be labeled *e.texts*, since the only (admittedly major) thing that they have in common with printed codexes is the body of the text. The other subsidiary texts, visual information, and design elements found in printed books can convey important attributes of both the text and the book. So-called e.books will always lack some of the types of subsidiary information found in books and sometimes lack others. *E.texts* always lack book jackets, bindings, end papers, and colophons, they may or may not contain illustrations and their captions; the wording and decoration of title leaves, that is, the title page information and the sort of information usually found on title page versos (publisher’s name and address, edition and printing statements); and page numbers (since an e.text is more akin to a digital scroll than to



The author’s copy of R.L. Stevenson’s The Master of Ballantrae was sold by a bookseller on Jersey, one of the Channel Islands.

a codex). They may or may not carry prefaces, forewords, acknowledgements, notes, indexes, advertisements, etc. If they are derived from books, they will almost certainly not reproduce the typographical design and layout of those books; if the text exists only in digital form, it will certainly have their publisher’s digital house style (uniform design, typeface, and layout). All these elements surrounding, elucidating, enriching, and providing the boundaries of texts in books have been called *paratext* by the French literary scholar Gérard Genette.¹ He calls the paratext a “threshold” and says it comprises important and necessary parts of a book that help the author convey his or her meaning. He distinguishes between the *peritext* (the elements such as those listed

above that are found in the book as published) and the *epitext* (elements not found in the book as published). It is important to note that the peritext of a book may be the work of the author, of the publisher, or of a third party (the author of a preface, an indexer, an illustrator, etc.), but they are all aimed at enriching the reading experience and assisting the author’s purpose. Genette’s definition is more lofty and extensive than the one that I would like to use here. I have written professionally about the use of the peritext in cataloguing,² but will write here about a humble form of epitext. To the literary scholar, the epitext may include letters written by the author, book reviews and the like, and even the societal, historical, or scholarly context in which the text was created and issued. My immediate interest is in the printed, manuscript, and other additions made to published books by previous owners and their friends and by booksellers. These are not usually of note to scholars (though they can be in the case of certain annotations) but can be of great interest to most book collectors.

Long-term Caxtonians will see a relationship between the “association copy,” which was the subject of the Club’s 2011 book, *Other People’s Books*, and books containing epitext. One See EPITEXT, page 2

above that are found in the book as published) and the *epitext* (elements not found in the book as published). It is important to note that the peritext of a book may be the work of the author, of the publisher, or of a third party (the author of a preface, an indexer, an illustrator, etc.), but they are all aimed at enriching the reading experience and assisting the author’s purpose. Genette’s definition is more lofty and extensive than the one that I would like to use here. I have written professionally about the use of the peritext in cataloguing,² but will write here about a humble



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EPITEXT, from page 1

could say that association copies are the elite of the latter. However, as was pointed out at the accompanying symposium, the more time passes between the addition of epitext and its discovery by a scholar – or even just a fan – the more interest the epitext has. Imagine the interest in, say, a Shakespeare-era shopping list, were one to be discovered! The books I write about below are perhaps less important monetarily, bibliographically, and biographically than the books discussed in *Other People's Books*, but I enjoy them in the same way.

The Master of Ballantrae

I recently re-read R.L. Stevenson's *The Master of Ballantrae*. My copy is bound in illustrated boards and was published by Cassell in 1894. It contains

ten illustrations by the Royal Scottish Academician William Brassey Hole (1846-1917), which, to my untutored and unsympathetic eye, are wooden and fustian.

At the end of book are 16 unnumbered pages listing hundreds of books published by Cassell in the late 1890s – a

peritextual feature of bibliographic interest not found in most modern books and certainly not in e.texts. The page opposite the half-title is signed, in pencil and a firm hand, "W.B. Gordon." The endpaper inside the front cover carries an apparently homemade bookplate consisting of a sketch of a sundial and hills seen beyond bare trees, with a hand lettered border reading "LUX ET UMBRA VICISSIM SEMPER AMORE" (Light and shade by turns [but] always love) and "William Bonnalie Gordon." I know nothing of Mr. Gordon but the *London Gazette* of December 31, 1901 lists a William Bonnalie Gordon as the Secretary of the Anderson Electrical Traction Syndicate of Bradford, Yorkshire, a company that was being wound up in accordance with various Companies Acts. Was he the original owner of my book? In the bottom right hand corner of the same endpaper is a small rectangular maroon label with gold lettering reading "LE LIEVRE BROS. BOOKSELLERS, / STATIONERS & PRINTERS / 13 HALKETT PLACE, JERSEY." Le Lievre is a common name in Jersey and the other



The bookplate establishes the Stevenson's owner as being one William Bonnalie Gordon.

Channel Islands (Peter Le Lievre, 1812-1878, was a famous painter of the Guernsey landscapes), but I can find no trace of the booksellers today. I re-read *The Master of Ballantrae* after I had re-read RLS's *Kidnapped* and that after seeing the 1938 film of the book starring Freddy Bartholomew. Thus, thanks to the epitext, something that started for such a trivial reason ended with incomplete and probably unresolvable wonderings about a Bradford businessman and a possible holiday purchase of a book in the Channel Islands more than 100 years ago.

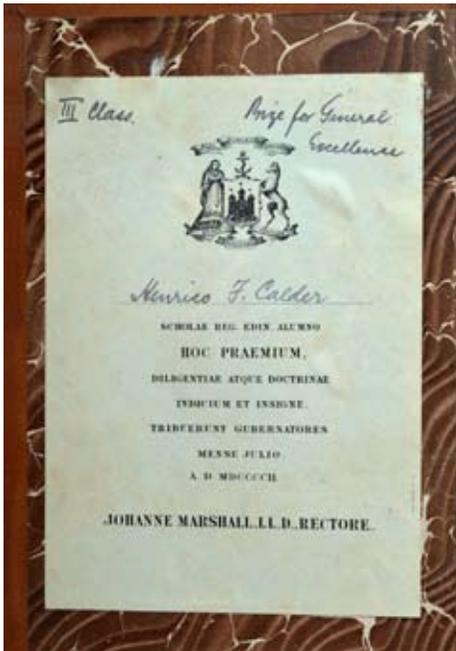
Types of Animal Life

A book I bought from a barrow outside a bookshop in Flask Walk, Hampstead, in London, nearly 60 years ago led to other facts and speculations. The book is *Types of Animal Life* by St. George Mivart, published in 1894 by Osgood, McIlvaine, & Company of Albemarle Street, London.³ The author (1827-1900) was a biologist, known for being an early and ardent follower of Darwin who later was torn between his understanding of evolutionary



The Edinburgh coat of arms.

theory and his pious Catholicism and ended out of favor with both Catholics and evolutionists (then largely mutually exclusive groups). His father was the owner of Mivart's Hotel, now better known as Claridges. The book is illustrated by 103 uncredited etchings of such exotica as *The Golden Mole* and *The Oscellated Turkey*. None of these was the reason I bought the book all those years ago. The reason can be found in two epitextual elements. The book is handsomely bound in caramel coloured leather with a ridged spine decorated in gold that must have once had a title label. The front and back boards are deeply embossed with the same coat of arms in gold. It is the coat of arms of the City of Edinburgh bearing at the top, in a scroll, the motto of that city – NISI DOMINUS FRUSTRA – and beneath another motto, in a matching scroll – MUSIS RESPUBLICA FLORET. The first can be translated as "Without the Lord, everything is vain." The second ("The state flourishes with the arts") is the



Bookplate in Types of Animal Life.

motto of Edinburgh Royal School, founded in 1128 by King David I of Scotland for the Augustinian friars. In fact, this is a specially hand-bound presentation copy for Royal School prizes. The marbled endpapers are coffee and cream. The endpaper inside the front board carries a printed bookplate with the school coat of arms, a Latin inscription dated "MENSE JULIO, A.D. MDCCCXII" (July 1902), and the name of the then-Rector (principal master) "JOHANNES MARSHALL, LL.D." Handwriting on the bookplate tells us that this book was pre-

sented as the "Prize for General Excellence" in the "III Class" to "Henrico F. Calder" (Henry F. Calder). The school, now called the Royal High School,⁴ is "a six-year comprehensive [non-selective] school serving a catchment area in the north west of Edinburgh" and still has, 110 years later, a Rector (the first woman to occupy the post) and a Third Year class, though the 2011-2012 Commemoration Day program does not list a Prize for General Excellence. The epitext of a book by an almost forgotten biologist has led me into speculation and research into the heraldry of Edinburgh and the story of a school that is almost 900 years old.

Extraordinary Women

I cannot recall where I bought my copy of Compton Mackenzie's *Extraordinary Women* published in London by Martin Secker in 1928. It is a satirical *roman à clef* set in Capri (called 'Sirene' in the book) and, in particular, a community of lesbians, principally the painter Romaine Brooks⁵ (called "Olimpia Leigh" in the book), the novelist Radclyffe Hall⁶ ("Aurora 'Rory' Freemantle"), and Mimi Franchetti⁷ ("Rosalba Donsante"). The topic was daring for its time (though hardly eyebrow-raising today) but was not the subject of red-faced letters to *The Times*, banning by the Home Office, or the attentions of the police in 1928. Perhaps that was due to it having been published in a limited edition of 2100 (100 signed by the author) and perhaps because it is light and satirical in tone, without any of the explicitness that caused D.H. Law-

rence and James Joyce so much trouble at the time. Compton Mackenzie (1883-1972) was the popular author of, among others, *Sinister Street* and *Whisky Galore* – books much appreciated by their middlebrow readers. My copy (unsigned by the author) is one of the first, limited edition. It is bound in yellow cloth, with brown and blue borders on the front board, and printed (by the Mayflower Press, Plymouth) on good quality paper with uncut edges. The epitext that makes this copy special was supplied by one Elsie C. Ormerod who, not content with signing her name in red ink, with flourishes underneath, on the title page, also signed the half title "E.C. Ormerod." Ms. Ormerod decorated the front endpapers and the half-title with colored pen and wash illustrations of the three major characters of the book. The illustrations are lively (each about 6 inches high) and very much of their time. The first clearly shows the Radclyffe Hall character. She is wearing a monocle, a wide brimmed black Spanish hat, a man's shirt and tie under a severely tailored plaid jacket, and a sour expression, and is smoking a cigar. The endpaper opposite this rather ferocious figure pictures a willowy "Olimpia Leigh" (Romaine Brooks) with hand on hip and the other wielding a preposterously long cigarette holder. She has shingled blonde hair and wears a pale gray, double-breasted, waisted man's suit like an extreme version of the male suits of the day, a green striped man's shirt with French cuffs and darker green tie, and pointed shoes. She is exactly what the See EPITEXT, page 4



Hall



Brooks



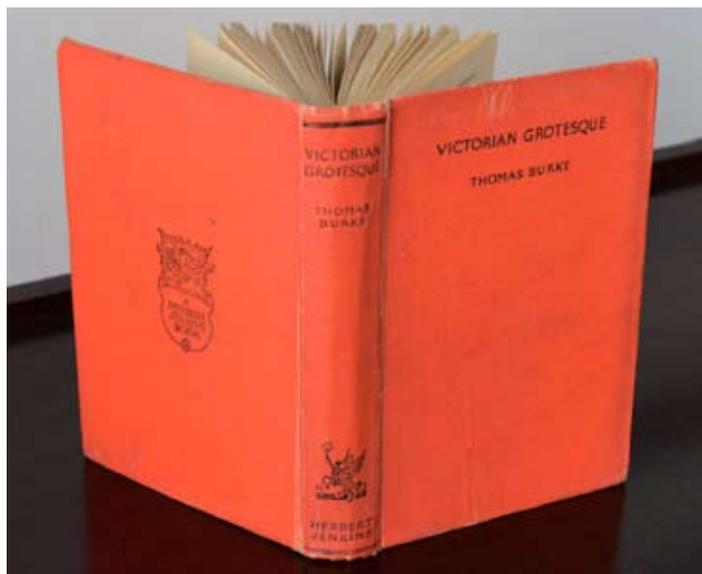
Franchetti

EPITEXT, from page 3

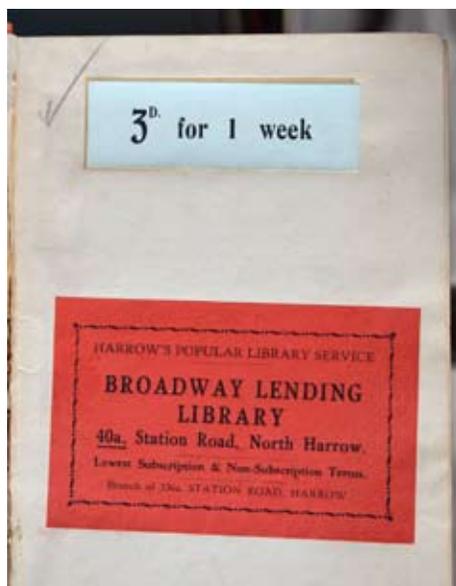
character's grandmother in the novel calls *un peu trop beau garçon* (a little too like a handsome boy). To the left of this figure's head, Ms. Ormerod wrote, in red ink "My dear. How hideously divine" – a stereotypical Bright Young Things utterance. The final illustration is on the half-title. It pictures "Rosalba Donsante" (Mimi Franchetti) with shingled red hair, a classical Roman profile, heavy sculpted eyebrows, and a long cigarette holder in her carmine mouth. She is wearing a blue, wasp-waisted, wide shouldered man's jacket with wide, darker blue lapels over a white man's shirt and a wide blue tie secured by a pearl stickpin. She sits in profile, hand on hip, looking both forbidding and alluring. Ms. Ormerod had a talent equal to that of the magazine illustrators of the day. Her illustrations are both expressive and faithful to the descriptions in the book and, much as happens when you see a good film of a book, they become the images of the characters in your mind's eye as you read my copy of *Extraordinary Women*.

Victorian Grotesque

Hardly anyone today remembers or reads Thomas Burke (1886-1945), a prolific and then popular author in Britain. An early book, *Limehouse Nights: Tales from Chinatown* (London: Richards, 1917), remains one of the most popular but his many novels and short story collections of London life (the last, published in 1944, was *Dark Nights*) dealing with working class characters, Victorian music hall performers, murderers, and other outsiders sold well and entertained many middlebrow readers of the inter-war years. His short story *The Hands of Mr. Ottermole* (1931) was voted the best crime story of all time in 1949 by a panel of critics including the duo who wrote as Ellery Queen. Burke also wrote and edited many books of essays, anthologies, and the like. One of his later, less-successful novels, *Victorian Grotesques*, deals with the tribulations of a music hall comedian called Jimmy Rando, his domineering wife, and a lovely but conscienceless singer called Birdie Bright. The *Dictionary of Literary Biography* describes the novel as "capably written, but ... too pathetic to be enjoyable."⁸ I quite liked it when I read it years ago, but the novel itself was not the real reason for my purchase. First, it was published by Herbert Jenkins, whose orange cloth covers and winged centaur logo graced many of P. G.



ABOVE: *Victorian Grotesque*. BELOW: two of its paste-ins.



Wodehouse's books and have a special place in my heart for that reason. Second, the book had belonged to one of the many commercial lending libraries that fed the middle-class reading public with a steady diet of best-sellers, genre fiction, and popular reading of all kinds from the late 19th century until they finally expired in the 1950s and 1960s. This book bore the stamps of a small local lending library, the Broadway Lending Library of Station Road, Harrow, a suburb of London. The most famous 'circulating library' was that run by the giant pharmacy chain Boots (1898-1966). One of the signifiers of the comfortable bourgeois life of the character played by Celia Johnson in the film *Brief Encounter* is that she borrows books from Boots. Many Boots branches had comfortable reading rooms with library tables and chairs as well as the shelves of their specially bound books. Readers paid a small subscription annually and pennies

to borrow each book. The lure of the circulating library was twofold. The obvious attraction was speedy, inexpensive access to the best-sellers of the day and genre fiction, many of which were not bought by the public libraries in those days. The other was less overt – though stressed discreetly by Boots and others – the books were widely thought to be 'clean' and uncontaminated by the many germs that were popularly believed to lurk in and on public library books that were read by the *hoi polloi*. They were, thus, considered more 'suitable' for the twin-set and pearls wearing ladies who were the mainstay of the circulating libraries.

Victorian Grotesque has two labels on its endpapers. A red label headed HARROW'S POPULAR LIBRARY SERVICE and giving the address of the Broadway Lending Library and advertising "Lowest Subscription & Non-Subscription Terms," from which I infer that a borrower could pay per book borrowed or pay an annual fee that guaranteed a particular number of books to be borrowed, either for nothing or for a greatly reduced fee, and a pale green label reading "3D for 1 week" (three pence a week, which is about 50 pence – 80 cents – in today's money). There is another pale green label on the page opposite the first page of text with instructions to the reader:

Readers – Please Note.

THIS BOOK HAS TO PASS THROUGH THE HANDS OF NUMEROUS READERS. PLEASE TAKE EVERY REASONABLE CARE OF IT, AND RETURN TO US IN AS GOOD AND CLEAN CONDITION AS YOU RECEIVED IT.

DO NOT TURN DOWN THE PAGE CORNERS OR FOLD THE BOOK BACKWARDS.

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If further time is required for reading, it will be given on request at the Library, unless the Book is needed for other waiting readers.

THE REGISTERED BORROWER MUST NOT TRANSFER THIS BOOK TO ANOTHER READER WITHOUT THE LIBRARIAN'S CONSENT.

BROADWAY LENDING LIBRARY
40a Station Road, North Harrow
Branch of 336a
STATION ROAD, HARROW

Anyone who has ever worked in a library will recognize these strictures and the reasons for them, but I doubt any public library would have issued so many instructions, still less pasted them into every book. I also doubt that the circulating libraries employed qualified librarians, but, then as now, almost everyone calls anyone who works in a library a 'librarian.'

The number of people, even in Britain, who remember and read the books of Thomas Burke must be small and roughly equal to the number of those who remember circulating libraries. They are both as one with Nineveh and Tyre. However, in picking up my copy of *Victorian Grotesque*, I am taken back to that world – a time of now-forgotten middlebrow best-selling novelists and their novels borrowed from a circulating library and read in suburban living rooms to the accompaniment of music played on the Marconi wireless while the reader waits for the maid to bring in the afternoon tea.

Echoes of the past

Book collectors are, it seems to me, different from other collectors in that, while the latter seek perfect, unsullied specimens of their coins, stamps, butterflies, furniture, art, sea-shells, etc., many book collectors relish the traces of the lives of past readers found in particular copies of of second, third, or even fourth hand books. Who was that woman in the photograph found in Book X? Who was the man who signed his full name with many flourishes in dedicating Book Y to his "dearest Madge" on her 17th birthday in 1889? Who was Madge? Why did someone have Book Z bound in a revolting green cloth with his monogram on the cover and on a bookplate inside with a line from Kipling's "If..."? Why does a battered book of essays on cricket signed on the flyleaf "P.D. Gorman, Xmas 1953" mean more to me than almost all of the thousands of books I own? These signs of past lives, known and unknown, live in the books they once owned and read – traces of the past, signifiers of meaning both decipherable and undecipherable.

§§

NOTES

- ¹ Genette, Gérard. *Paratexts: Thresholds of interpretation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- ² Gorman, Michael. *Cataloguing in relation to the paratextual components*. In *I dintorni del testo: approcci alle periferie del libro: atti del Convegno internazionale [International Convention on Paratext]*, Roma, 15-17 novembre 2004; Bologna, 18-19 novembre 2004/ [edited by] Marco Santoro e Maria Gioia Tavoni.
- ³ The publishers of Hardy's *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*.
- ⁴ See: <http://www.royalhigh.edin.sch.uk/>
- ⁵ 1874-1970. An American expatriate noted for her portraits.
- ⁶ 1880-1943. The author of the classic lesbian novel *The Well of Loneliness*, which was published in the same year as *Extraordinary Women*.
- ⁷ A lover of the Italian classical pianist Renata Borgatti who, when the Mackenzies visited Capri early in the 1920s, had an affair with Compton Mackenzie's first wife, Faith.
- ⁸ Bleiler, Richard. "Thomas Burke." *Late-Victorian and Edwardian British Novelists*. Second Series/ edited by George M. Johnson. Detroit: Gale Research, 1999. (*Dictionary of Literary Biography*: vol. 197)

Dick Seidel: librarian, archivist, former Caxtonian

Dan Crawford

Troublemaker.

Don't let the memory of a cheerful laugh and a soft voice fool you. Dick Seidel (1938-2013) threw on hot water, and made plenty of it. When he saw something he thought was wrong, he moved quietly and reasonably to change it, even when it might have been safer to stand aside.

When he joined the Caxton Club in 1968, he was a brand new librarian in acquisitions at the University of Illinois Circle Campus, and the Caxton Club was a big old boys club in its eighth decade. Eager for work, he found himself on the Council in 1969, already a bit disillusioned by the traditional values of the Club. "Some members used it as a private dinner club," he recalled. "It was a place they could take clients and impress them with a heavy Midwestern meal and a big name speaker. They didn't want change."

In time, he went from Circle Campus to the Newberry Library, and became Secretary of the Caxton Club. Both UIC and the New-



berry were heavily dependent on men who belonged to the Caxton Club for funding. Still, he persevered, finding some like-minded men on the Council who thought perhaps it was time to go beyond three beverage choices with the prime rib: Scotch, water, or Scotch and water. Wine had been suggested, but turned

down as nothing the kind of men who made up the Caxton Club would drink with a meal.

This brought up another tiny change some Council members were thinking of bringing up again: why not admit some women as members? Although less important than the wine question – because admitting women had been suggested time and again without avail – it nonetheless horrified a few influential Council members.

"They were afraid their wives would want to join, and THAT would turn it into a social club instead of the club for intellectual pursuits – and Scotch – that it was."

It took work, planning, and a certain amount of negotiation, but the Caxton Club eventually slid into the second half of the Twentieth Century. Under Dick Seidel's secretaryship, modernity intruded on the Membership directory. (Members' phone numbers were included.)

It wasn't as if Dick had nothing else to do with his time. At the Newberry, he worked for the brilliant but unpredictable Bill Towner.

See SEIDEL, page 8

CAXTONIAN, JUNE 2013

Book and manuscript-related exhibitions: a selective list

Compiled by Lisa Pevtzow

(Note: on occasion an exhibit may be delayed or extended; it is always wise to call in advance of a visit.)

Art Institute of Chicago, 111 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, 312-443-3600: "They Seek a City: Chicago and the Art of Migration, 1910–1950" (more than 80 works, primarily by southern- and foreign-born artists, portray Chicago's transformation to the polyglot, cosmopolitan place that it is today), Galleries 182–184, through June 2. "The Artist and the Poet" (a collection of works on paper that surveys the ways visual artists have been inspired by poets in the 20th century), Galleries 124–127, through June 2. "Play, Pretend, and Dream: Caldecott Medal and Honor Books, 2010–2013 (16 Caldecott Medal and Honor award winners from the last four years), Picture Book Gallery, Ryan Education Center, through December 1.

Chicago Botanic Garden, Lenhardt Library, 1000 Lake Cook Road, 847-835-8202: "Historic Landscapes: Architectural Design in Print" (rare books with engravings of landscape design from the past four centuries in Europe and America), through May 19. "Butterflies in Print: Lepidoptera Defined" (hand-colored plates and scientific engravings of butterflies and moths), through August 18.

Chicago History Museum, 1601 N. Clark Street, Chicago, 312-266-2077: "Vivian Maier's Chicago" (Maier spent her adult life as a nanny but devoted her free time and money to photography), through January 2014.

Harold Washington Library Center, 400 S. State Street, Chicago, 312-747-4300: "Illustrated Press: Chicago Home in One Place: A South Side Story and Kathy Has a Question" (founded by Chicago journalist Darryl Holliday and graphic artist Erik Nelson Rodriguez, The Illustrated Press produces journalism as comics), Congress corridor, ground floor, through July 28. "Horizon" (juried exhibit of the work of 53 book artists on the subject of the "horizon" by the Guild of Bookworkers), Special Collections Exhibit Hall, ninth floor, through June 30.

Lilly Library, Indiana University, 1200 East Seventh Street, Bloomington, Indiana, 812-855-2452: "One Hundred Books Famous in English Literature" (commemorating the Grolier Club's influential rare book exhibition in 1903, this re-enactment was compiled

by Caxtonian and newly appointed director of the Lilly Library Joel Silver. It features three books by William Caxton: an original copy of *Canterbury Tales*, an original copy of *Confessio Amantis*, and the show's one and only facsimile, *Le Morte d'Arthur*, of which only two copies are extant, through August 24.

Loyola University Museum of Art, 820 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago, 312-915-7600: "Graven Images: Marc Chagall's Bible Illustrations" (Chagall's illustrations for the Hebrew Bible commissioned by French publisher Ambroise Vollard), through June 16. "Truth is in the Telling" (Passover Haggadot from the collection of Chicagoan Stephen P. Durschlag), through June 16.

Newberry Library, 60 W. Walton Street, Chicago, 312-943-9090: "Treasures of Faith: New Acquisitions" (more than 40 books on religion dating from the 13th to 19th centuries), through July 6.

Northwestern University's Mary and Leigh Block Museum of Art, 40 Arts Circle, Evanston, 847-491-4000: "Drawing the Future:

Chicago Architecture on the World Stage" (architecture and urban planning in the United States, Europe, and Australia through drawings, large-scale architectural renderings, sketches and rare books), through August 11.

Oriental Institute, 1155 East 58th Street, Chicago, 773-702-9514: "Between Heaven & Earth: Birds In Ancient Egypt" (explores the impact that birds had on ancient Egyptian religion, design, and the conception of the state), through July 28.

Smart Museum of Art, 5550 S. Greenwood Avenue, Chicago, 773-702-0200: "The Sahmat Collective: Art and Activism in India since 1989" (works in a variety of media from over sixty artists), through June 9.

Art Institute: Play, Pretend, and Dream

DAVID EZRA STEIN. ILLUSTRATION FROM INTERRUPTING CHICKEN, 2010. CANDLEWICK PRESS.



Harold Washington Library Center: Horizon

THE PERSEPHONES, 2009. DESIGN, PRESSWORK, AND BINDING BY CAROLEE CAMPBELL.

University of Chicago, Joseph Regenstein Library Special Collections Research Center Exhibition Gallery, 1100 East 57th Street, Chicago, 773-702-8705: "The Seminary Co-op Bookstore Documentary Project" (Exhibition documents the history of the Seminary Co-op and the experiences of its patrons and staff through photographs, interviews, artifacts, and memorabilia), through July 13. "Recipes for Domesticity: Cookery, Household Management, and the Notion of Expertise" (the relationships among food, class, and gender, as well as the ways in which domestic expertise became formulated through these books), through July 13.

Send your listings to lisa.pevtzow@sbcglobal.net

Caxtonians Collect: Harry Stern

Interviewed by Robert McCamant

Bookselling was Harry Stern's second career (assuming you don't count his years as a translator for the Army). His first had been in the wine department of the family supermarket business. He picked antiquarian bookselling as a business out of the telephone directory because he recognized the name of Ken Nebenzahl when he came to the category. Harry had gone to school with Jossie, Ken's wife, so he already knew the man.

As it happened, the day Harry dropped in on Ken to see if he would hire him was a lucky one, because Ken's previous assistant, David Lasswell, had just left for Sotheby's in New York. So Ken took Harry on for a trial.

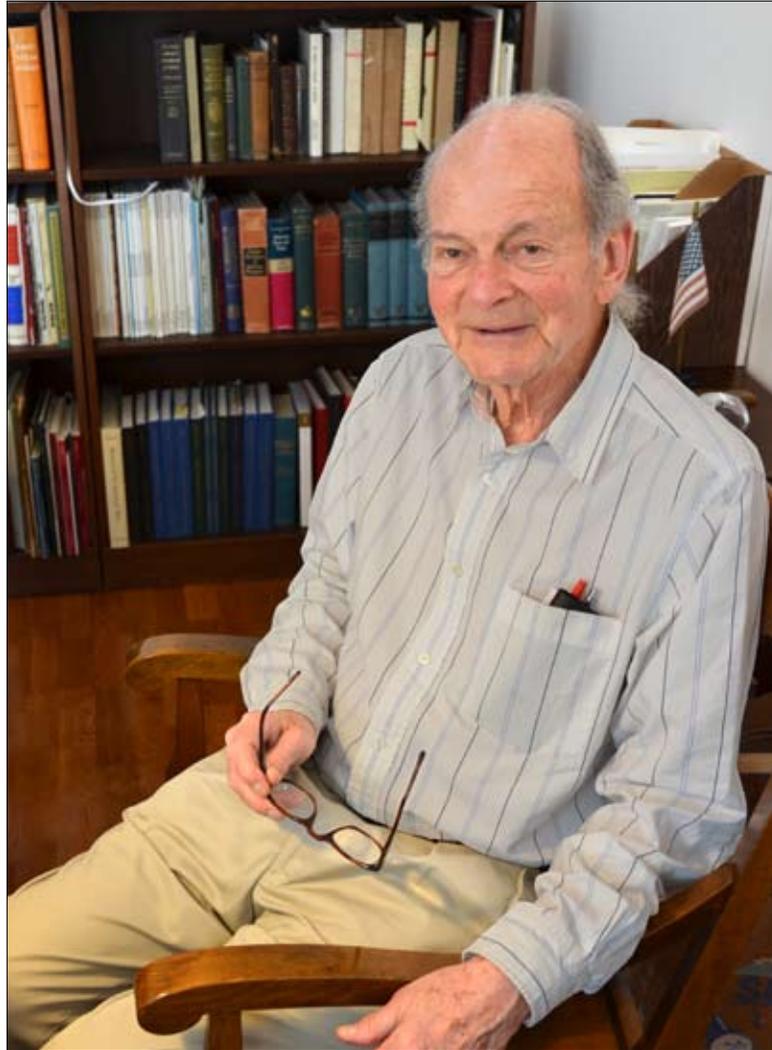
Of course, Harry had a few things besides luck going for him. He had grown up with a "silver spoon" (as he admits) – in a comfortable home just off Astor. His background included 13 years of rubbing shoulders with the right children at the Latin School, a degree from Yale in Classical Languages, and then Army service translating sometimes French but mostly German, first in Arlington, Virginia and then in Switzerland. Oh, and both Harry and Ken had sold wine before they discovered selling books!

Harry worked for Ken ten years, then set out on his own. "As a proprietor, the hours are longer," Harry wrote in 1996. "The cash flow worries are deeper, the stress level more profound. But the exhilaration of repetitive gambling – buying a book, enhancing its value through personal research, and then re-selling it at a profit – that is a hard-to-beat narcotic." That, and the fun of always learning something new – "Antiquarian bookselling is a perpetual apprenticeship," he says.

At first he had a shop, upstairs at 625 N. Michigan. But in 1981, he gave that up. "By the end, you might get three or four customers a week wandering in. It really didn't pay." Without a shop, he was able to travel more, pursue tangents.

There had, however, been at least one positive outcome from the open shop. One day in the late 1970s, Petrea had walked in looking

for some poetry. Harry recognized her as a school friend of his first, by then ex-, wife, Suzanne, whom he had met at an alumni function. She hadn't recognized him, so he called her by her school-age nickname. She asked how he knew her nickname. They've



been married 34 years.

Stern still loves to work a book fair. He never takes a booth. He walks the floor, chatting with sellers – frequently old friends – and scanning their stock. When he sees something that interests him which seems underpriced, he buys it. Then he continues wandering the floor with the book under his arm. Almost invariably, another bookseller stuck in a booth asks him what it is, and he shows it to them. Voila! Sale at a profit! These days he does quite a few appraisals. Typically it's for a college library which has been given books by a donor. Visiting book fairs helps him keep his finger on market prices.

Oddly, many of his most profitable sales

over the years have been of collectible items besides books. There were paintings, broadsides, Abe Lincoln's penknife, even a desk. "I got George Bernard's Shaw's writing desk in a trade from another dealer," he says. "I had a devil of a time trying to establish that it really was his desk. Luckily, the guy I got it from finally found the papers, so I was able to sell it back to a dealer in England."

He talks about how the trade has changed. "Sure, prices are much higher for the standard items which have wide appeal. I might have gotten \$10,000 at the best for a *Wealth of Nations* back when I started. Now you see them for \$150,000. But the internet means that every customer knows exactly what the going price is in every corner of the world."

I asked him what he collected for himself. At first he demurred: "I buy things I like. The things I can't sell become the things I collect!" But there was a pattern in the things he showed me: – An autographed photo of Gerald Ford, to which the president had added "I'm a Ford, not a Lincoln." – A scratched drawing of a heart, signed by Dr.

Denton Cooley, who was the first doctor to implant an artificial heart. – The phrase "Que sera, sera," signed by Jay Livingston. In other words, he's tickled by autographed items which relate to the fame of the signer.

He lives in Lake Forest, but spends quite a bit of his time in an apartment on North Michigan where he keeps his reference library and a small bit of stock. He joined the club in 1966, which puts him in very select company – only a handful of current members joined before him. He believes he joined because Ken Nebenzahl told him that if you were going to sell antiquarian books, you should belong.

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**Luncheon: June 14, 2013, Union League Club
Dr. Piermaria Oddone
“Have We Discovered the Higgs Boson?”**

Dr. Oddone, Director of Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory in Batavia, will speak about the recent news that the Higgs boson has been found. It’s taken decades and over a billion accelerator collisions, but scientists at CERN found strong evidence of its existence in March of this year. Popularly dubbed “the God Particle,” this boson could unlock mysteries of the universe. (Without it, the current theoretical understanding of atoms, chemistry, and life do not work out.)

Before coming to Fermilab, Oddone – who hails originally from Peru, by way of MIT and Princeton – was Deputy Director at the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory where he was instrumental in bringing the NSF Center for Particle Astrophysics and the National Energy Super Computer Center to Berkeley. In 2005 he received the Ponofsky Award for his invention of the Asymmetric B-Factory, a new kind of particle collider. At Fermilab (he came in 2005), Oddone has continued to push the boundaries of science, including experiments that have helped reveal Higgs’s hiding places. In his own words, he “comes to tell us the Higgs story and what lies ahead.”

**Dinner: Wednesday, June 19, 2013, Union League
Paul Durica
“Simon Pokagon and His Birch Bark Book”**

Simon Pokagon, a Potawatomi author and Native American advocate, was a featured speaker at the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition, where he also sold booklets – printed on birch bark – called The Red Man’s Rebuke (later retitled The Red Man’s Greeting), which reproached the fair’s organizers for ignoring the original inhabitants of the region while celebrating the “progress” of the non-native residents of Chicago. Paul Durica will discuss Pokagon and his birch bark book.

Paul Durica has a newly minted PhD in English from the University of Chicago and is the founder of Pocket Guide to Hell which offers tours and reenactments in Chicago.

The Caxton Club is planning a July 19 trip to the **Lilly Library** in Bloomington, Indiana for a guided tour of the Grolier 100 show as well as other rare books of particular interest to Caxtonians in attendance. Our host will be Joel Silver. A bus, meals, and overnight stay are anticipated but not yet arranged. Please contact Jackie Vossler at jv.everydaydesign@rcn.com or 312-266-8825 to express your interest.

*June luncheon: Union League Club, 65 W. Jackson Boulevard. Luncheon buffet (main dining room on six) opens at 11:30 am; program (in a different room, to be announced) 12:30-1:30. Luncheon is \$30. June dinner: Union League Club, 65 W. Jackson Boulevard. Timing: spirits at 5:00, dinner at 6:00, program at 7:30. \$48. For reservations call 312-255-3710 or email caxtonclub@newberry.org; **reservations are needed by noon Friday for the Wednesday dinner.***

SEIDEL, from page 1

Putting a spoke in the Newberry president’s wheels from time to time provided another set of adventures.

Leaving the Newberry and the Caxton Club in the 80s, he sought new fields to conquer as a free-lance archivist, most notably for the

Episcopal Diocese and the Chicago Board of Education. On his first day with the Board of Education’s archives, he was stunned to find exactly nine yearbooks. Combing garage sales (and book fairs) he was able to make that collection more representative.

Cut down entirely too soon by a brain

tumor, Dick Seidel leaves behind a legacy of scholarship and dedication. And, trouble-maker that he was, a Caxtonian legacy of wine and women. (I never heard how he felt about song.)

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