

Trading Words: Poetry, Typography, and Illustrated Books in the Modern Literary Economy

Professor Claire Hoertz Badaracco



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Between the turn of the century and about 1940, dramatic changes took place in both British and American print culture. Publishers scrambled as new markets developed or were created via advertising. Lithographers and designers helped establish the preeminence of "modern" aesthetics. And the centuries-old printing industry was transformed by unprecedented technological advances. In Trading Words Claire Hoertz Badaracco examines these fascinating developments in an engaging study of the economics of literary design. She investigates how writers sold their poetry by marketing their reputations, how book printers used American literature to break the long hold of European classics on the mass market literary imagination, and how direct mail and advertising made or broke subscription publishing enterprises during the 1930s. Drawing on rare books and manuscript materials from distinguished collections in the history of printing and marketing, Badaracco freshly surveys the development of twentieth-century "mass culture" and reinterprets the philosophies, ideals, and schemes of the poets, typographers, and publishers who succeeded in capturing the public imagination.

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