

TRYSH TRAVIS

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EDUCATION

Yale University	PhD, American Studies, December 1998 MA, American Studies, June 1993 Dissertation: "Books, Bookmen, & the Rise of Mass Culture: 1930-1965" (Michael Denning, director)
Bread Loaf School of English	MA, English, August 1993
New York University	BA, Liberal Arts, Gallatin Division, June 1987 University Honors Scholar, Graduation with Honors

AREAS OF SPECIALIZATION

U.S. Cultural and Literary History, 1900-present
Cultural Studies; Gender Studies
History of the Book; Mass Media Theory and Criticism

TEACHING

2004- Present	University of Florida, Assistant Professor of Women's Studies
1998- 2004	Southern Methodist University, Assistant Professor of English
1997-1998	Trinity College, Visiting Lecturer in American Studies and English

TEACHING AWARDS

2007, 2008	Designated Outstanding by Student Award Winners in the College of Liberal Arts, UF
2001	Golden Mustang Award for Outstanding Junior Faculty, SMU
1993	Yale University Teaching Fellowship Prize

BOOK

The Language of the Heart: A Cultural History of the Recovery Movement from Alcoholics Anonymous to Oprah Winfrey
Chapel Hill: U. North Carolina Press, 2009. [See abstract, p. 13]

WORKS IN PROGRESS

"Reading Matters: Books, Bookmen, and the American Century, 1930-1970"
[Book proposal under review at U. North Carolina Press; see abstract, p. 14]

SELECTED GRANTS AND FELLOWSHIPS

Summer '09	Humanities Scholarship Enhancement Grant, U. Florida (declined)
Summer '07	Florida Humanities Council Mini-grant for Community Projects
2005-06	National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship
Summer '05	Humanities Scholarship Enhancement Grant, U. Florida
Summer '03	William Reese Fellowship, Bibliographical Society of America
Spring '03	John Nicholas Brown Fellowship in American Civilization, Brown University
Spring '03	Kirk Fellowship for Research on Alcoholism & AA, Brown University
Spring '03	Sam Taylor Research Fellowship for Methodist College Faculty in Texas
2001	Southern Methodist University Graduate Faculty Research Travel Grant
Summer '00	National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Stipend
Summer '00	Newberry Library Summer Research Fellowship
2000-'01	Maguire Center for Ethics Fellowship, SMU
2000	Women's Studies Curriculum Development Grant, SMU
1999	Honors Program Curriculum Development Grant, SMU
1999	Southern Methodist University Graduate Faculty Research Travel Grant
1996	Princeton University Library Research Fellowship
1990-'95	Mellon Fellowship in the Humanities
1988	NEH Summer Fellowship for School Teachers

REFEREED JOURNAL PUBLICATIONS

2008	"Women in Print: History and Implications" <i>Book History</i> , 2008: 275-300
2008	"'Handles to Hang onto Our Sobriety': Commonplace Books and Surrendered Masculinity in Alcoholics Anonymous" <i>Men and Masculinities</i> , doi: 10.1177/1097184X08318182: 1-26 [Print edition forthcoming, spring 2010]
2007	"'It Will Change the World If Everybody Reads This Book': New Thought Religion in Oprah's Book Club" <i>American Quarterly</i> , fall 2007: 1027-1051
2004	"Print Culture in the Alcoholics Anonymous Fellowship" <i>Social History of Drugs and Alcohol Review</i> , vol. 19: 28-62
2003	"Divine Secrets of the Cultural Studies Sisterhood: Women Reading Rebecca Wells" <i>American Literary History</i> , spring 2003: 134-161
2001	"The Man of Letters and the Literary Business: Reviewing Malcolm Cowley" <i>Journal of Modern Literature</i> , winter 2001-2002: 1-18
2000	"What We Talk About When We Talk About <i>The New Yorker</i>" <i>Book History</i> , summer 2000: 253-285
1999	"Books as Weapons and 'The Smart Man's Peace': The Work of the Council on Books in Wartime" <i>Princeton University Library Chronicle</i> , spring 1999: 353-399

CONTRIBUTIONS TO ANTHOLOGIES

- Forthcoming *Oxford Companion to the Book* Michael Suarez & H. R. Woodhuysen, eds.
(commissioned)
Entries on American book trade organizations, book clubs, and popular genres.
[2700 words total]
- Forthcoming “New York’s Cultures of Print” (commissioned)
In *The Cambridge Companion to the Literatures of New York City*, Cyrus Patell &
Bryan Waterman, eds. Cambridge U. Press, 2010: 345-361.
- Forthcoming “The Reading Cultures of Alcoholics Anonymous” (commissioned)
In *A History of the Book in America*, vol. 5, David Nord, Joan Shelley Rubin, &
Michael Schudson, eds., U. North Carolina Press, 2009: 432-446.
- 2007 “Think Globally, Act (and Teach) Locally”
In *Many Floridas: Women Envisioning Change*, The Florida Consortium for Women
and Gender Studies, Cambridge Scholars Press: 80-88.
- 2003 “Cover Stories: Introducing the Material Book”
In *What Really Works: Teaching Ideas for University English*,
Pat Gantt and Lynn Meeks, eds., Christopher-Gordon Press: 218-230
- 2002 “Print and the Creation of Middlebrow Culture” (commissioned)
In *Perspectives on American Book History*, Joanne Chaison, Scott Casper, and Jeffrey
Groves, eds. U. Massachusetts Press: 339-366
- 1998 “Book Trade Organizations,” “Book Trade Publications,” “Book Clubs”
In *History of the Mass Media in the United States: An Encyclopedia*
Margaret Blanchard, ed., Chicago: Fitzroy-Dearborn

BOOK REVIEWS

- 2007 Jennifer Travis, *Wounded Hearts: Masculinity, Law, and Literature in American Culture*
Men and Masculinities, 9.4 (April 2007): 549-551.
- 2006 Simone Murray, *Mixed Media: Feminist Presses and the Publishing Process*
Australian Feminist Studies, 21.51 (Nov 2006): 393-394.
- 2006 “‘Sin Fronteras’: A Report on the Thirteenth Berkshires Conference on the History of
Women” (invited)
Australian Feminist Studies, 21.49 (March 2006): 97-99.
- 2005 Cecelia Konchar Farr, *Reading Oprah: How Oprah’s Book Club Changed the Way*
America Reads and Kathleen Rooney, *Reading with Oprah: The Book Club that*
Changed America
Society for the History of Authorship, Reading, & Publishing Newsletter,
Fall 2005: 13.

BOOK REVIEWS, CONT'D

- 2004 Lisa Botshon & Meredith Goldsmith eds., *Middlebrow Moderns* and Nicola Humble, *The Feminine Middlebrow Novel*
Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature, summer 2004: 379-382.
- 2003 Christine Pawley, *Reading on the Middle Border: The Culture of Print in Late 19th-Century Osage, Iowa*
Publishing Research Quarterly, summer 2003: 68-69.
- 2003 Amy Thomas & Barbara Ryan, eds., *Reading Acts: U. S. Readers' Interactions with Literature, 1800-1950*
The Book (American Antiquarian Society Newsletter), March 2003: 3.
- 2001 Ronald & Mary Zboray, *A Handbook for the Study of Book History in the United States Libraries and Culture*, summer 2001: 201-203.
- 2000 Mary Corey, *The World Through a Monocle: The New Yorker at Mid-Century*
Society for the History of Authorship, Reading & Publishing Newsletter, summer 2000: 8.

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

- 2008 **"Outside the 'Disease' Box: In Memory of David Foster Wallace"**
Alcohol and Drug History Society *Daily Register*
http://historyofalcoholanddrugs.typepad.com/alcohol_and_drugs_history/2008/09/david-foster-1.html.
- 2007 **"SHARP and Technologies Other than Print"**
Society for the History of Authorship, Reading & Publishing Newsletter,
Fall 2007.
- 2007 **"The Secret Society"**
Bitch: Feminist Responses to Popular Culture, Fall 2007, issue #38: 13
- 2007 **Commentaries on HBO's *Addiction***
Alcohol and Drug History Society *Daily Register*
http://historyofalcoholanddrugs.typepad.com/alcohol_and_drugs_history/2007/03/daily_register__1.html
- 2006 **"A Short History of Feminist Bookselling in Gainesville"**
<http://www.wildirisbooks.com/>
- 2006 **"James Frey: Feelings As Facts"**
Chronicle of Higher Education, 30 Jan 2006: B5
- 2001 **"Cathy and Heathcliff, The Dysfunctional Couple"**
Chronicle of Higher Education, 11 May 2001: B13-14.
- 2000 **"Why Study Men?"**
S.M.U. Women's Studies Newsletter, winter 2000: 6.
- 2000 **"In My View: Sexy Book Trade Archives"**
Society for History of Authorship, Reading & Publishing News, winter 2000: 2-3

INVITED TALKS

- 2009 **“Publishing Development and Development Publishing”** (plenary address)
 Florida State University History of Textual Transmission Series
- 2008 **“Oprah Winfrey as an Economic and Political Actor in U.S. History”**
 Teaching American History Project, Hartford, Connecticut
- 2008 **“The Cold War & the Book Men: Theorizing Gender & Publishing in the Mid-20th Century”**
 ▪ University of Florida, History Department, Pozzetta Lecture Series (March)
 ▪ University of Maryland, D.C.-Area Americanist Colloquium (April)
- 2005 **“Trauma, Recovery, & Spirituality in 20th-Century Women’s Literary Fiction”**
 ▪ University of Texas at Dallas, Gender Studies Program Speaker Series (March)
 ▪ Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, PA, English Department Speaker Series (Jan.)
- 2003 **“Reading, Writing, and Publishing the ‘Big Book’ of Alcoholics Anonymous”**
 Harvard University History of the Book Colloquium
- 2003 **“The New Devotional Reading”**
 American Antiquarian Society (Worcester, MA) Works in Progress Series
- 2002 **“The Problem of Bigness: Popular Publishing in the 20th Century”**
 From Papyrus to Pixel: Book History Across the Disciplines Seminar, Wellesley College
- 2002 **“‘Yes, I am One of Them Too’: Reading to Identify in Alcoholics Anonymous”**
 Rutgers Lectures in the History of Print Culture
- 2001 **“Rebecca Wells and the Canon of U.S. Domestic Fiction”**
 U.S. Women Writers Seminar, University of Oklahoma Honors College
- 2000 **“Divine Sister-hood and the Tradition of Book History Scholarship”**
 Drew University Lecture Series in the History of the Book

ACADEMIC CONFERENCE PAPERS

- 2009 **“Publishing and Development/Development Publishing”**
 Modern Language Association (session arranged by the Society for the History of Authorship, Reading & Publishing)
- 2009 **“The Place of Gender and Sexuality in the Debates over Campus Drinking”**
 National Women’s Studies Association
- 2009 **“Re-thinking Therapeutic Culture through Sobriety”**
 American Studies Association
- 2008 **“Keyword: Political Economy”**
 Society for the History of Authorship, Reading & Publishing

ACADEMIC CONFERENCE PAPERS, CONT'D

- 2008 **“As Though Stopping Were Enough’: The Possibilities of Feminist Recovery”**
Media, Spiritualities, and Social Change Conference, U. Colorado
- 2007 **“The Globalization of 12-Step Recovery: Exporting ‘The Language of the Heart’”**
American Studies Association
- 2007 **“The Women in Print Movement: History and Implications”**
Society for the History of Authorship, Reading & Publishing
- 2007 **“Sisterhood is Powerless: Meditation Books and Recovering Female Addicts”**
International Communications Association
- 2006 **“Cold War-Era Bookmen and the Export of Cultural Democracy”**
Modern Language Association (special session)
- 2006 **“The Past and the Present of Feminist Publishing”**
National Women’s Studies Association
- 2006 **“Think Globally, Act (and Teach) Locally”**
Florida Women’s Studies Consortium
- 2005 **“Remaking Feminist Bookselling in a ‘Post-feminist’ World”**
Modern Language Association (session arranged by the Feminist Caucus)
- 2005 **“Spirit and Selfhood in Contemporary Women’s Devotional Readers”**
American Studies Association
- 2005 **“The Incest Narrative and the New Domestic Fiction”**
Berkshires Conference on the History of Women
- 2004 **“Books and Reading in Cold War America”**
Modern Language Association (special session)
- “The Masculinity of Books and Book Men”**
Modern Language Association (session arranged by the Society for the
History of Authorship, Reading & Publishing)
- 2004 **“The Influence of Alice Walker: The Color Purple and the New Domestic Fiction”**
American Literature Association
- 2004 **“Reading the Language of the Heart: The Narrative Tradition of Alcoholics
Anonymous”**
Psychoanalysis and Narrative Medicine Conference, U. Florida
- 2003 **Revisiting False Consciousness**
American Studies Association
- 2002 **“Don’t Read this Book Just With Your Head!’: Oprah’s Book Club”**
Modern Language Association (special session)

ACADEMIC CONFERENCE PAPERS, CONT'D

- 2001 **"Book Trade Archives: Problems and Promise"**
 Society for the History of Authorship, Reading & Publishing
- 2001 **"Michael Cunningham's Laura Brown: The American Woman Reader, circa 1949"**
 American Literature Association
- 2000 **"'You Are Not Your F---ing Khakis': Masculine Recovery in David Fincher's *Fight Club*"**
 American Studies Association
- 1999 **"Ideas and Commodities: The Image of the 20th-Century Book"**
 Media-in-Transition Conference, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- 1999 **"Richard Wright: The Author & His Public"**
 Society for the History of Authorship, Reading & Publishing
- 1997 **"'A Nation of Readers': Print Culture in Wartime America"**
 Modern Language Association (session arranged by the Popular Culture Association)
- 1996 **"'We're Not Making Ford Automobiles!' Professional Identity at *The New Yorker*, 1925-1975"**
 Modern Language Association (special session)
- 1996 **"The Council on Books in Wartime & the Construction of a U.S. Market-Public"**
 Princeton Library Research Fellows Colloquium
- 1996 **"'Love is the Essential Word': Reader-Text Relations at *The New Yorker*"**
 Society for the History of Authorship, Readership, and Publishing
- 1995 **"Buying & Selling *Lolita*: Shaping the 'Serious Reader' in Cold War America"**
 American Studies Association

TALKS IN THE COMMUNITY

- 2009 **"The Art of Losing: Lessons from U.S. Women Writers"**
 Women's History Month speaker, Ocala Chapter of Zonta International
- 2007 **"Women & New Thought Religious Tradition"**
 Invited participant, community roundtable discussion on *The Secret*
 Friends of Wild Iris Books, Gainesville
- 2005 **Invited Panelist, Women, Activism, & the Academy**
 Theory * Activism * Creativity: Navigating Textual Politics Conference,
 U. Florida English Graduate Student organization
- 2005 **"Risking Being a Feminist"**
 Invited Speaker, Speak Up/Speak Out Panel,
 Vox Voices for Planned Parenthood, U. Florida

TALKS IN THE COMMUNITY, CONT'D

- 2005 **“Teaching Feminism in a Post-Feminist World”**
 Invited Participant, Women in Academia Roundtable,
 Women’s Leadership Conference, U. Florida
- 2003 **“The Archive of Twentieth-Century Popular Culture: ‘Where Does it End?’”**
 Brown University Library Humanities Consortium
- 2002 **Invited Panelist, Literature and the History of the “Brows”**
 The Writer’s Garret, Dallas, Texas
- 2002 **“American Women’s Writing, American Women’s Lives”**
 Four-part public lecture series on Foster’s *The Coquette*, Stowe’s *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*,
 Wharton’s *The Custom of the Country*, and Jong’s *Fear of Flying*
 Godbey Lecture Series, Southern Methodist University
- 2002 **“A Gendered History of ‘The Disease Concept of Addiction’”**
 Dallas Area Social History Group
- 2000 **“Consciousness Raising and Women’s Fiction in the 1960s”**
 Invited Speaker, Writer’s Block Roundtable, The Writer’s Garret, Dallas, TX
- 1999 **“First Time Full-time: On Being a New Faculty Member”**
 S.M.U. Teaching Effectiveness Symposium
- 1999 **“Reading in Mid-Century America: A Map of the Literary World”**
 Dallas Area Social History Group
- 1999 **“A Reading Sisterhood: Rebecca Wells as a ‘Woman Author’”**
 Godbey Lecture Series, Southern Methodist University

GRADUATE ADVISING, PROJECT DIRECTOR

- In progress **“Idealized Motherhood Discourses in Second & Third Wave Feminism”**
 MA Thesis, Sarah Austin, Women’s Studies Program, U. Florida
- 2008 **“Dealing with Drugs: Gender, Genre, and Seriality in *The Wire* and *Weeds*”**
 MA Thesis, Amy Long, Women’s Studies Program, U. Florida
 ▪ Student hired as Advocacy Assistant, ACLU Drug Policy Reform Project
- 2008 **“Laboring to Uphold the Image of Suburbia: Representations of Deviant Sexual
Desire in *The Virgin Suicides* and *Middlesex*”**
 MA Thesis, Mallory Szymanski, Women’s Studies Program, U. Florida
 ▪ Student hired as Instructor in Sociology, Santa Fe Community College
- 2007 **“Writing Liberation: A Comparison of the Newsletters Published by the Gay
Liberation Front of Washington D.C. and of Ames, Iowa in the Early 1970s”**
 MA Thesis, Amanda Culp, Women’s Studies Program, U. Florida
 ▪ Student hired as Full-time Adjunct Instructor in Women’s Studies,
 University of South Carolina Upstate

GRADUATE ADVISING, PROJECT DIRECTOR, CONT'D

- 1999 **“Left Bank Book-Making: A Study of Contact Editions and Three Mountains Press”**
MA Thesis, Alison Hoffman, English Department, Trinity College
▪ Student awarded the Paul Smith Distinguished Masters Thesis Prize

GRADUATE ADVISING, OTHER ROLES

- In progress **Outside Reader, “Redefining Domesticity: Women’s Poetry in 20th Century American Literature”**
PhD Dissertation, Megan Leroy, English Department, U. Florida
- In progress **Outside Reader, “The Sense of Touch in Feminist Art”**
PhD Dissertation, Lesley Gamble, Art History Department, U. Florida
- In progress **Outside Reader, “The Publics of Emily Dickinson”**
PhD Dissertation, Trisha Kannen, English Department, U. Florida
- In progress **Outside Reader, “Matron, Maidens, and Madwomen: Gender, Space, and Consumption, and in Chicago’s Civic Spectacles, 1863-1893**
PhD Dissertation, Taylor Patterson, History Department, U. Florida
- In progress **Outside Reader, “Talking Back: On Being an Iranian Women’s Rights Activist in ‘Exile”**
MA Project, Sanam Dolatshahi, Journalism & Communications, U. Florida
- 2009 **Outside Reader, “Boys Will Be Boys (When They Drink): Competing Interpretations of Masculinity and the Duke Lacrosse Case”**
MA Thesis, Sean Fahey, History Department, U. Florida
- 2009 **Second Reader, “Adolescents, Body Image, and Middle School Curricula: How and Why Schools Should Challenge Standards of Appearance”**
MA Thesis, Desirae Krell, Women’s Studies Program, U. Florida
- 2008 **Outside Reader, “Radicalizing Romance: Subcultures, Sex, and Audience Expectations”**
PhD Dissertation, Andrea Wood, English Department, U. Florida
- 2008 **Second Reader, “Promoting Ecofeminist Activism through the Net: A Project to Construct an Online Presence for Women for Wise Growth”**
M.A. Non-Thesis Project, Katheryn Turner, Women’s Studies Program, U. Florida
- 2007 **Outside Reader, “Nellie Peters Black and the Practical Application of the Social Gospel in the New South, 1890-1919”**
PhD Dissertation, Carey Shellman, History Department, U. Florida
- 2006 **Second Reader, “Genderqueer Constructions: Essentializing the Narration of Gender Identity”**
M.A. Thesis, Stacey Moyer, Women’s Studies Program, U. Florida
- 2006 **Second Reader, “For the Benefit of Girls: Evaluating a Girls’ Program in Appalachia”**
M.A. Thesis, Kendra Vincent, Women’s Studies Program, U. Florida

GRADUATE ADVISING, OTHER ROLES, CONT'D

- 2005 **Second Reader, "Unsound Compositions: Women and Compositional Agency"**
M.A. Thesis, Laura Minor, Women's Studies Program, U. Florida

ACADEMIC SERVICE

Reader/Reviewer

Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada, (Communication, Cultural Studies and Women's Studies Division); Routledge Press, U. North Carolina Press, U. Massachusetts Press, Palgrave Press, SUNY Press, Cornell U. Press, *American Literary History*, *American Quarterly*, *American Studies*, *Book History*, *Contemporary Literature*, *Social History of Alcohol and Drugs: An Interdisciplinary Journal*

- 2007-present **Undergraduate Coordinator, Women's Studies Program**
Advise and oversee progress to degree of all majors and minors; maintain relevant areas of program website; develop and oversee all external internships; coordinate all Honors Thesis projects; standing member of program curriculum committee; general mentoring, hand-holding, and wise counsel.
- 2007-present **Society for the History of Authorship, Reading and Publishing Liaison to the Modern Language Association**
Coordinate annual Affiliate Organization session at the MLA annual convention; outreach and promotion of SHARP to MLA membership and vice versa.
- 2006-present **Curriculum Committee, Center for Women's Studies and Gender Research**
Revised course descriptions for catalogue; developed ideas for large-enrollment classes; oversaw programmatic implementation of minus grading system.
- 2006-present **Mentor, McNair Scholars Program**
Partner with first-generation college undergraduates seeking to develop skills necessary for PhD study, advising them as they develops independent research projects.
2009-present: "Female Embodiment in the Nineteenth-Century American West"
2007-08: "Radical Women in Gainesville: A Historical Exhibit," UF Special Collections Library, <http://www.uflib.ufl.edu/UFDC/?s=rwg&m=hitletter>
2006-07: "Building Feminist Institutions in Gainesville During the 1970s: A Historical Analysis"
- 2007-2008 **Mentor, University Scholars Program**
Oversaw independent project on "A History of Feminism in Gainesville," published in *UF Journal of Undergraduate Research*.
- 2006-07,
2004-05 **Coordinator, Gender Conversations Series**
Organized a university-wide lunchtime colloquium aimed at bringing together scholars from different fields whose work treats issues of gender and sexuality
- August 2007 **Consultant to the Florida Humanities Council**
Invited participant in day-long workshop on scholarly-public partnerships and funding.

ACADEMIC SERVICE, CONT'D

- 2006-07 **Consultant on Gender, National Endowment for the Humanities Consultation Grant, Matheson Museum (Gainesville, FL)**
Served as one of six subject-specialists advising staff and board of regional history museum on collection and programming development.
- Spring 2002 **Reader, applications for "Boundary Lines: Women Rewriting the American South"**
NEH Summer Seminar for School Teachers, Anne Goodwyn Jones, Director
Reviewed applications and made recommendations for acceptance.
- 1999-2002 **Book Trade Archives Preservation Project**
Chaired a committee made up of members of the Society for the History of Authorship, Reading & Publishing devoted to the location and preservation of book trade business records.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

- 2006-2009 **Secretary, Board of Directors, Friends of Wild Iris, Inc.**
Advisory and outreach work with owners of local women's bookstore making transition to non-profit educational and community service organization.
- Nov. 2004 **Election Protection Volunteer**
Acted as poll-watcher and voter advocate in Duvall Co., Florida, during the national election.
- 2004 **Gainesville-Area National Organization for Women**
Organized and led voter registration drive at county farmer's market; coordinated visits by NOW speakers to Women's Studies classes at the University.
- 2000-2001 **North Texas Food Bank, Operation Frontline**
Worked with under-resourced populations in Dallas county (adolescents, adults, seniors) teaching cooking skills, nutrition, and food safety, and preparation through collaborative learning.

MEDIA APPEARANCES

- 2006 **Editorials on James Frey and *A Million Little Pieces* Fraud**
Chronicle of Higher Education article "James Frey: Feelings as Facts" cited in
Dayton (OH) *Daily News* 2 Feb. 2006 and Durham (NC) *Herald-Sun* 3 Feb. 2006
- 2003 **"Believer Beckons with Cool, Witty Attitude"**
Featured expert in article by Alyson Ward about new literary magazines
Fort Worth *Star-Telegram*, 26 Apr. 2003: 1F, 5F
- 2002 **"Current Research on V[iking] P[ress] and Malcolm Cowley"**
Research summarized in a fanzine devoted to Viking Portable Editions
The Modern Library (And Viking Portable) Collector, #43 (2002): 1, 6
- 2001 **"Therapeutic Language"**
Interview, *Wordmaster*, Voice of America radio program, 3 June 2001.

MEMBERSHIPS AND AFFILIATIONS

American Historical Association

American Studies Association

Modern Language Association

National Women's Studies Association

Society for the History of Authorship, Reading & Publishing

REFERENCES: Available upon request.

*The Language of the Heart: A Cultural History of the Recovery Movement from
Alcoholics Anonymous to Oprah Winfrey*

“The Language of the Heart” is a cultural history of 12-Step Recovery, told through its print culture. Alcoholics Anonymous (fd. 1935) and its offshoots are typically thought of as oral cultures, but in fact the 12-Step world supports a robust and complex print culture. Originally developing outside the established book marketplace and in conscious defiance of its logics, by the late 20th century recovery publishing had become an important industry category with annual sales in the millions. This development coincided with 12-Step culture’s evolution from a restricted, quasi-Christian, masculinist subculture to a feminized “spiritual” discourse disseminated through the broadest channels of popular culture. “The Language of the Heart” charts these interdependent cultural and economic evolutions.

The book’s first chapter treats “**The Metaphor of Disease**,” tracing the concept of addiction as a disease through post-WWII American social institutions and into the cultural common sense of the late 20th century. The hospitals and churches, lobbyists and P.R. firms, insurance and criminal justice agencies that promoted the disease metaphor created the communications infrastructure through which 12-Step ideas would ultimately be disseminated. Chapter Two, “**The Antidote of Surrender**,” explores AA’s belief that alcoholism results from “self-will run riot,” an over-investment in the triumphalist ideology of the self-made man. To remedy this disease, AA’s original members—white, middle-class, middle-aged, straight men—cultivated for themselves a new masculine identity, which rejected the invidious distinctions offered by the contemporary, competitive world, and embraced instead the anonymity of the humble and generic “alcoholic.” This new alcoholic self, available to all who would claim it, formed the moral center around which AA’s print culture would grow.

“**Reading the Language of the Heart**,” the third chapter, charts the development of that print culture, looking at the tensions between AAs who saw books and reading as inimical to the personal witness on which the fellowship was founded and those who saw them as key tools for stabilizing and spreading AA ideas. These anxieties came to the fore during the writing of *Alcoholics Anonymous* (“the Big Book”) in the late 1930s, and they resurfaced again a decade or so later when amateur literature published by Christian authors seemed to threaten the Big Book’s hegemony. They were ultimately resolved by the creation in the mid-‘50s of a canon of official, “Conference Approved” AA literature, which was intended to preserve the fellowship’s universalizing and ecumenical appeal. Chapter Four, “**The ‘Feminization’ of AA Culture**,” examines the threat to that canon posed by the rise of recovery literature written by addiction professionals, looking at the development in the 1970s and ‘80s of 12-Step literature for women. Women’s recovery literature made clear that in fact a specifically gendered self lurked beneath the universal “alcoholic” identity that all AAs supposedly claimed and on which the fellowship was premised; unsurprisingly, it generated a backlash literature whose authors excoriated it as the work of “special interests.”

The book’s last chapters leave behind AA proper to explore recovery’s manifestations in the wider popular culture. Women’s recovery literature branched off in two distinct directions during the late 1980s, creating both a grassroots feminist print culture centered on healing from sexual abuse and a flood of bestsellers about “codependency.” Chapter Five, “**The Varieties of Feminist Recovery Experience**,” center on these linked phenomena. Both literatures critiqued the patriarchal family as an incubator for addictive and abusive behavior and promoted a gender-specific self-esteem as an antidote. Their success in the non-fiction market helped to create an audience for recovery-themed fiction, and the chapter closes by reading Alice Walker’s bestselling *The Color Purple* as the founding text of that genre. Chapter Six, “**Oprah Winfrey and the Disease of Difference**,” looks at the marketing of women’s recovery across the media platforms of Winfrey’s Harpo Inc. during the 1990s, specifically at the workings of Oprah’s Book Club (1996-2002). Re-endowing the recovered self with the universalism it had lost in the ‘80s, Winfrey made it into both a commodity and a political tool, suggesting that recovery’s posture of humility and gratitude would not merely enrich readers own spiritual lives but would also generate an affective energy capable of sweeping away barriers of race, class, and nation and thus transforming the world.

Reading Matters: Books, Book Men, and the American Century, 1930-1970

In his pioneering study of the spread of print culture and the rise of modern nationalism, Benedict Anderson has argued that print forms have an inherent capacity to create “imagined communities.” Binding individuals across time and space, these communities are “distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined.” Twentieth-century trade book publishers (or “book men,” as they like to call themselves) form one such imagined community, and one whose importance has been overlooked by contemporary scholarship. Working out of their own sense of status anxiety and a genuine belief in the principles of liberal democracy, they collectively promoted an image of books and an ideal of reading that reflected their own place within the hierarchy of American culture. Despite the evolution of the global media industries and a changed geopolitical climate, the ideology of books and reading crafted during the Cold War remains with us today.

Building on the rhetoric of cultural uplift and self-improvement that had characterized reading promotion during the first half of the century, mid-century book men crafted an argument about reading as the preferred leisure activity of the enlightened citizen—and a key weapon in the fight against fascism. In the postwar period, book men found themselves threatened on the one hand by the growing power of mass culture, and on the other by conservatives who sought to curtail the flow of ideas and print. The language of “democracy” became a way to consolidate their collective identity and solidify their place in American culture. Better than any other form of media, books educated men for informed participation in the democratic public sphere. Equally as important, reading offered the emotional and spiritual gratification necessary to resist the despair and cynicism that lurked behind the bright contours of the modern culture—traits that were not only dispiriting in themselves, but were the dangerous precursors to totalitarianism. Making reading integral to the progress of what Henry Luce called “the American Century” would broaden book men’s economic base, secure their influence within the nation’s cultural elite, and consolidate a coherent and fully modern masculine identity. The image of the book man that had lingered from the turn of the century—a quaint, somewhat effete “gentleman” dabbling at the edges of cultural production—would be dispelled, replaced by a thoughtful and mature Cold Warrior, placed squarely at the masculine center of the nationalist liberalism that now determined the shape of the free world.

Reading Matters is a book of six chapters, divided into three parts. The first part is a gendered history of turn of the century publishing. In the first chapter, I draw on memoirs and trade publications to chart the gradual decline of trade publishing’s cultural and economic hegemony—and its concomitant crisis of masculine identity—in the decades from the Gilded Age through the Great Depression. The second chapter, focused on the Council on Books in Wartime, argues that the Second World War provided the book trade with an opportunity to reverse this decline. The sense of crisis and the shared struggle of the war effort, coupled with improved production and distribution technologies and a vast new potential audience in the form of bored GIs, allowed book men to imagine America as a “nation of readers” and themselves as the inspired leaders of that nation. The book’s second part chronicles attempts to maintain that vision in peacetime by making book reading an integral part of the consolidation and expansion of Cold War democracy. Chapter Three focuses on the national panic over the degradation of reading, as manifested in the debate over “Why Johnny Can’t Read (And Why Ivan Can),” and attempts by the American Book Publishers Council and its offshoot, the National Book Committee, to weave reading into the fabric of American life. Chapter Four examines the workings of the Franklin Book Programs, Inc., an international program that sought to build the publishing capacity—and hence the liberal democratic infrastructure—of developing nations. The book’s final section consists of case studies of two book men: Edward Aswell of Harper and Brothers, who edited Richard Wright’s early works, and Malcolm Cowley, best known as a chronicler of the Lost Generation but also a developer and editor of the paperback Viking Portable Editions. In their respective grapplings with race, radicalism, and the increasingly rationalized book industry, they enact a version of white liberal masculinity that remained central to the rhetoric of American culture, even as it was becoming increasingly peripheral to that culture’s day-to-day workings.