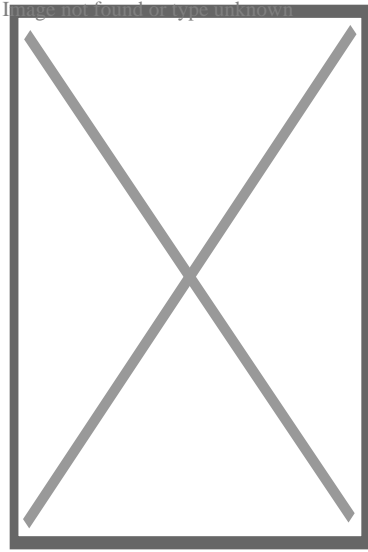


Bartholomew Brinkman. Poetic Modernism in the Culture of Mass Print



Bartholomew Brinkman. [*Poetic Modernism in the Culture of Mass Print*](#). Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2016. ix, 272p., ill. ISBN 9781421421346. US \$50.00.

Bartholomew Brinkman's surprising, skillfully argued *Poetic Modernism in the Culture of Mass Print* is about collecting and collectors. It is about the ways "both mundane and extraordinary" poems are produced, encountered, consumed, and archived. Brinkman sketches a "continuum of collecting practices" from the careful conservation of the book collector (who craves unifying systems and narratives) to the seemingly haphazard accumulations of the scrapbooker (whose interest is less in "completion" than in the pleasures of contrast and juxtaposition) (5). The introduction's work of defining and historicizing book collecting and scrapbooking is dense, and Brinkman spares no detail, but the care he takes pays off as he moves into the body of the book, a mostly chronological study of various sites of poetry collection.

The book has five chapters and a coda. Chapter 1 studies the cultural influence of the anthology, looking at Francis Turner Palgrave's precedent setting *Golden Treasury* (1861). Brinkman traces the influence of Palgrave's editorial practice and his belief in "objective poetic value" on the canon-shaping anthologies of the New Critics and eventually the modern poetry archive, the subject of the book's final chapter. In Chapter 2, on periodicals, Brinkman contrasts Harriet Monroe's curatorial use of white space in *Poetry Magazine* "which allowed poems to be savored as singular works of art" with the chaotic assemblages of popular magazines like *Life* that placed poems right in the middle of everything, creating an embedded discourse in the play of disparate but adjacent texts. This, he argues, "encouraged radical intertextuality," giving poems "social purchase" (94). This kind of radical intertextuality characterizes Marianne Moore's personal scrapbooks, the focus of Chapter 4, "Scrapping Modernism: Marianne Moore and the Making of the Modern Collage Poem." This is the chapter that pulled the book together for me. Brinkman's useful phrase, "scrappy poetics," allows him to argue for a reading of Moore's entire oeuvre, from the scrapbooks that predate her poetry through long poems such as "An Octopus" and "Marriage," as a poetics of collage that deliberately embraces feminine artistic practice.

Moore's collage aesthetic, often regarded as her entre into masculine avant-gardism and the high modernist poetic canon, becomes an unapologetically feminine practice in Brinkman's telling. Recasting Moore as a scrapbooker and insisting on "the scrapbooker [as] an active participant in reshaping and re-presenting mass print culture," Brinkman opens up new ways of considering the long collage poems of T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, and William Carlos Williams (108). He suggests, for example, that we read *The Waste Land* as "a violent assemblage of texts" not unlike Moore's own conflation of poems and other textual materials in her scrapbooks . . . [and her] yoking together of quotations in her collage poems" (138).

Chapters 4 and 5 neatly turn back from the exuberant, plastic juxtapositions of the scrapbooker to two of the formal institutions most responsible for codifying and calcifying our modern poetry canon: (1) selected and collected poems; and (2) the modern poetry archive. Brinkman's close reading of Eliot's editorial decisions in assembling the selected poems of Pound, Moore, and Kipling, and his argument that we should pay attention to the role of New Critics in building the archives we rely on as scholars of poetry bring the book full circle, back to Palgrave's "objective anthology" and the ideological ramifications of selection.

This meticulously researched and exhaustively argued book is a fascinating print-culture approach to modern poetry that will be of interest to scholars of modernist poetry, canon formation, periodical studies, book history, and archival studies.

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