now, in their turn, aging and being replaced by a fresh generation of the stodgy. Universities are still dominated by utilitarians with those in the humanities desperately hawking their wares in a market in which they have few buyers. Most students still pass through the university experience touched less by the classroom than by encounters outside it.

For all the dreariness of the theme it surveys, this is a stimulating book. Axelrod has taken a much harder look at universities than is usually the case, and has done a real service in focusing on the student experience. Perceptive readers will feel more than a touch of *déjà vu* in reading this — and with a *déjà* that can be painfully *maintenant.*

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Roger Chartier — *The Cultural Uses of Print in Early Modern France*, translated by Lydia G. Cochrane. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987. Pp. xi, 354.

Chartier introduces his collection of essays about printed texts with an assault on the traditional interpretations of popular culture. He attacks the supposition that a "coherent" populace enjoyed an "exclusive relationship" to a "pure, homogeneous" culture (3). Instead, he envisions a cultural analysis that is more subtly attuned to the overlap of written and unwritten media, of elite and popular culture. He would prefer, indeed, to replace these categories with a more nuanced understanding of how culture shapes society. If he is attacking a straw man that bears little resemblance to the sophisticated cultural studies that we currently enjoy, the sin is pardonable. The real question is: Does he contribute to this sophistication?

Half of his essays are about texts, mostly about texts within a single genre. A great deal of time is spent tracing the transformations of style and substance in various "normative" texts: how to die, how to be civil, how to be (and identify) a rogue. The analysis is subtle but claustrophobic, rarely making contact with any context, whether the audience or the society. In each case, these texts are claimed to represent general attitudes, though how they achieve this status and whether by shaping attitudes or by reflecting attitudes is not very clear. The only real evidence comes from their style, and the number of editions and print runs. This leads, by implication, to knowing their accessibility, their diffusion and popularity. But the links in that chain are tenuous. As Chartier notes in the introduction, we should be particularly cautious about assuming that texts "that were aimed at shaping the thought and conduct of the common people" (7) were successful merely because they were accessible.

The most succesful of these essays transcends the limits of a genre to consider a "publishing formula": the *bibliothèque bleue*. Tracing the evolution of these texts from their origins as elite editions, subsequently edited and reformatted for easier comprehension, and bowdlerized to avoid offending the Church, Chartier is able to demonstrtate both the complexities of any dichotomy between elite and popular reading matter and the way that publishers consciously popularized their products. Yet

the essay that investigates an aspect of the *bibliothèque bleue* in greater detail (the literature of roguery) is more interested in literary criticism than in measuring its cultural role. For sixty-six pages of "How did these books provide amusing reading and create the impression of reality?" (266), there are four that ask "How are we to understand the attraction of [these) works?" and speculate that the combination of authenticity and illusion makes them — somehow — "popular" (336).

In two of his essays, Chartier moves beyond texts to readers, posing the difficult but essential question of what access readers might have had to the texts that supposedly shaped and represented their ideas. His best evidence deals, inevitably, with the elites. He summarizes the information we have about their books and libraries, but also asks how they read, in what contexts and to what ends. There are valuable reflections on the role of reading as well as the content of what was read.

Of even greater value are his attempts to assess the role and importance of print in the culture of the non-elites. In several of his essays, he attacks this question from a variety of angles and using a wealth of evidence. The relevant material was often cheap and ephemeral: the *bibliothèque bleue*, chapbooks, broadsides, and cartoons. It survived in no inventories after death and its itinerary after publication is necessarily obscure. But Chartier teases consumption patterns out of a range of accounts and out of the very nature of the printed matter. He is justly skeptical of evidence for familial reading at peasant *veillées*, but curiously accepting of similar evidence for group reading in cities. The many printed pictures that combined image and words persuade him that this material appealed to a range of literate and non-literate audiences and even "transformed a culture that...had been deprived of contact with the written word" (166).

Deducing function from form is a tricky business, however, and his conclusions are not always persuasive. He would like to think that print was "profoundly integrated" into the workshop because "the master craftsman and his workers could consult the books of familiar techniques to guide them as they worked" (152). But the notion of a bunch of craftsmen scratching their heads over a how-to book is a serious misunderstanding of artisan culture.

He is least sure in the two essays not dealing directly with printed material. Part of the problem with these is that they are not terribly original. His essay on the *fête* adds a few texts to the mass of information we already possess on elite attittudes, but his conclusion simply restates the familiar oppositions between elite and popular that he criticizes in the introduction. And Robert Muchembled (not mentioned in the notes) had already offered a better interpretation the year before this essay was written.

Similarly, his study of the *cahiers* of 1789 rests on a lengthy and rather pointless survey of the many studies that have already addressed the issue. He finally offers to analyze differences between urban and rural *cahiers*, but the result, unfortunately, is rather obvious. Rural grievances focused on "*seigneurial* rights and tithing" and urban *cahiers* did not. Rather than being a function of their very different experiences of the *seigneurial* regime, however, we are assured that this is evidence of "two cultural levels" (137). As for the "ideological consensus between (the *cahiers*) of the Second and Third Estate", is it not significant that one wanted the king to share power with institutions dominated by the elites where the other wanted him to share power with the nation? But, here, Chartier is merely summarizing the conclusions of others.

In the end, does this book really help us understand popular culture? Rather than attemting to escape the problems posed by nornmative, elite texts, as a growing number of historians of popular culture are doing, Chartier continues to wrestle with the same texts, trying to make them yield more information. The assertion that popular culture can be gauged through various literary, and usually elite, artifacts that were offered to the populace is a traditional one. But it has rested on several large assumptions: not only must we "postulate the existence of people such as these...[who]...read posters, broadsides, canards, and chapbooks" (343), we must also assume some kind of predictable response to what they read. Chartier's achievement lies both in persuading us that the first assumption is plausible and avoiding many of the excesses of the second.

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Judith Chazin-Bennahum — *Dance in the Shadow of the Guillotine*. Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1988. Pp. xxxiii, 209.

Though actors, directors and playwrights were executed during the Terror, the author of this study found "not one mention of a dancer having been killed during the Revolution" (191). The fortune of dancers in France was in shattering contrast to the fate of dancers in Cambodia in the present generation. In the mid-1970s, the Khmer Rouge "killed ninety percent of the dancers in Cambodia and destroyed all the literature on dance" (*Dance Magazine*, October 1990, p. 50). The troupe of Cambodian classical dancers is kept afloat by the memories of a handful of survivors, a sobering reminder of the fragility of source material for the history and art of dance. Fortunately, the book under review is grounded in numerous sources, ably researched and presented with verve.

One of the distinct merits of Professor Chazin-Bennahum's evocative work is that it transports, indeed propels the reader into the midst of outdoor festivals and indoor theatres in revolutionary Paris. Some spectacles depicted events in the new patriotic calendar and were themselves tantamount to political events. The choral dance drama *La Réunion du Dix Août*, for example, began as an outdoor extravaganza and proved so popular that it was later transferred to the stage of the Opéra. Choreographed by Pierre Gardel with costumes and sets by Jacques-Louis David, it was first shown at the Opéra on the very day that Desmoulins and Danton were executed, 5 April 1794. Crowds filled the stage, scenes changed from the Bastille to the march on Versailles — with women seated on cannon carriages — to the Place de la Révolution. After songs predicting the conquest of tyranny and the unshackling of the enslaved peoples of Europe, "the heroines then do a ballet, that, as we might imagine, is ferocious and triumphant." At the end of the second act,

> a group of blind people, orphans, nurses, and artisans singout: 'Do not worry, children, your parents are the nation, the Republic is your mother, you will bless the day of the Revolution...' (114)

Or consider the striking staging of *La Fête Américaine*, first performed at the Opéra-Comique on 24 August 1794: