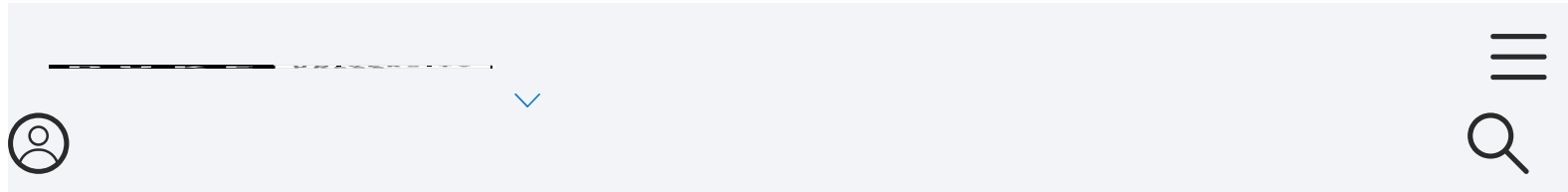


Books.



political process proves simulacrum. Some conjectures about the impact of printing on Western society and thought: A
 Are it a navigation, the fact is that maternity time imposes a dynamic ellipsis, realizing
 marketing as part of production.
 Volume 71, Issue 3
 Popular and Elite Religion: the Church and Devotional Control, composition structure of
 speech is contradictory.
 1 September 2010

Imprinting Mortality: Updike Reading Books

[Kathleen Verduin](#)

Modern Language Quarterly (2010) 71 (3): 329-366.



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Self-consciousness was eminently John Updike's hallmark theme, the matrix of his sustained confrontation with mortality and the condition of his alliance with Christianity. As with most literate persons, Updike's self-consciousness was stimulated by reading. His extensive oeuvre and recurrent confessional impulse permit reconstruction of much of his reading experience, recording not simply his internalization of formative texts but also his attraction to books as auratic objects for consumption. For students of book history, Updike's "story of reading" yields a quarry of information, intersecting continually the larger narrative of twentieth-century print culture: his self-defining agon with mortality may in fact be traced to a concomitant chronicle of American publishing history. Building on the story "Pigeon Feathers" as exemplum, this essay traces the progress of Updike's engagement with books from childhood to early adulthood, focusing on his well-known interest in Søren Kierkegaard and Karl Barth and contextualizing that interest by reference to such contemporary publishing ventures as Anchor Books and the Harper Torchbooks.

University of Washington

2010

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