

the reader prepared to see the evolution of language from pictograph to the binary code of computer programming. As he moves through the history of language, the development of writing, and the need to replicate the written word, eventually Warner brings the reader to copyright issues. The path is obvious: As writing got to be sophisticated and widespread, it became necessary to be able to make copies of the written word, through printing and so forth, and to transform the writing into other formats. In the fifth chapter, "Writing and Literary Work in Copyright: A Binational and Historical Analysis," Warner discusses telegraph codebooks that were assembled to ensure better accuracy in telegraphy, manuals of shorthand methods, and transcribed punched piano rolls. All were at the center of various copyright disputes, as the question was brought to judgment whether these works had literary and intellectual content, were infringements of ownership, and whether they were simply mechanical representations of random elements. To librarians, this may be the most fascinating chapter of Warner's book, as these questions bedevil the profession equally in the twenty-first century as in the nineteenth.

In summary, academic librarians should find this a fascinating, though sometimes difficult, study of the evolution of the written word and its meaning; the semiotic approach might sometimes confuse the reader, being more in the realm of "information science" than "library science." Students of information science should be enlightened and intrigued by it. Warner's book is to be recommended for the value it brings to the librarian's intellectual life.—*Tom Schneider, Harvard University Library.*

Weinberger, David. *Small Pieces Loosely Joined: A Unified Theory of the Web.* Cambridge, Mass.: Perseus, 2002. 223p. \$25 (ISBN 0738205435). LC 2002-102643.

Some years ago, Woody Allen told a story about a man who consulted a psychiatrist about a family member who was troubled by a disorder causing him to act like a

chicken. The psychiatrist said that without the patient present a diagnosis was difficult, but assuming that the behavior was not being feigned as a way of getting quick attention, it was clear that he needed to be hospitalized for observation. At this point, the man became very worried and replied that they could not allow the man who thought he was a chicken to be hospitalized because the family desperately needed the eggs. Not to editorialize excessively and ruin the joke, one of its more interesting points is that aberrations are often partly shared by those who are able to recognize the more obvious symptoms they cause in others. If there ever was one, this was a case for family therapy. Let me hasten to point out that David Weinberger, author of *Small Pieces Loosely Joined: A Unified Theory of the Web*, does not appear in any sense to be mentally ill. A former vice-president of strategic marketing at a software company, he is more likely to be described as refreshingly eccentric, as marketing people often are. Nonetheless, reading his book suggests that he shares a certain kind of impairment with the many who are transported and transfixed by the coming of new technologies—in this case, the Internet and the World Wide Web.

More recently, a significant publishing event helps to frame what is going on in books such as *Small Pieces Loosely Joined* because it helps us to recognize the shared impairment. David Brooks, a founding editor of *The Weekly Standard*, noted a couple of years ago that some big changes have occurred in American culture in the past few decades. One of these changes—the one that helps us here—is the blurring of an earlier distinction between businessmen and intellectuals. Just as intellectuals now, like businessmen, want to be rich, so businessmen want very much to intellectually justify their activities. (See *Bobos in Paradise: The New Upper Class and How They Got There* [New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000]). Having made oceans of money, the next step in the process is the discovery that the businessman

is not, after all, a materialist but, rather, the most refined kind of philosopher. The bobos, our “bourgeois bohemians,” in Mr. Brooks’s nice phrase, want it all.

This explains why a book written by a marketing specialist, which seems for the most part, judging by the numerous identifying references, aimed at people working in this field, on the surface is presented as a work of popular philosophy, as can be seen by a quick scan of the chapter titles: “A New World,” “Space,” “Time,” “Perfection,” “Togetherness,” “Matter,” and “Hope.” Weinberger’s main message seems to have not so much to do with these traditional philosophical concerns as with communicating the sense of awe and reverence he and many others have for the Internet and the World Wide Web. Thus, “The Web has sent a jolt through our culture, zapping our economy, our ideas about sharing creative works, and possibly even institutions such as religion and government Why did this technology hit our culture like a bolt from Zeus?” “we’re worried, we’re giddy, we’re confused,” and “The Web has driven through the plate glass window of traditional management.” The point of these observations seems to be the construction of the Web as a thing of deep spiritual mystery, and so perhaps it is not surprising that the analysis does little to clarify this. Add to this a tendency to multiply rhetorical questions beyond necessity and the result is, to say the least, difficult to pin down.

To take an example, consider Weinberger’s discussion of space. Having recalled the distinction between two very different conceptions of space, which are referred to with the terms “measured space,” or the space of Newtonian physics, and “lived space,” or space as we directly experience it, he then assumes that

the distinction between measured and lived space is the same as the distinction between real space and the so-called virtual space of the Web because the space of the Web can only be experienced and only exists insofar as it is experienced. Yet, surely this is true of any kind of telecommunications linking two or more experiencing subjects, from signaling to the letter, the telegraph, and the telephone. Does each of these technological inventions require us to rethink the metaphysics of space? Absent from this discussion is an argument showing why the Internet and the Web are so different. To me, all these seem to be simply special cases or extensions of lived experience and not fundamentally different; they are important because they show how technological inventions influence the way we experience the world, not because they indicate the need for a new metaphysics.

To take one additional brief example, Weinberger states that “The politics of the Web, by its very nature, is that of public rights and public ownership.” But if, as Weinberger argues, the concept of nature doesn’t apply to the Web (“Everything in it is artificial”), how could this be true? How could the Web have any nature at all save that of its pervasive artificiality? If the Web is so elastic in this ontological sense, it could be or become anything to anybody, and there is no reason why it would have to tend in the direction of public rights, or indeed in any direction.

But maybe I’m on the wrong track; perhaps something closer to the actual goal of the author is contained in this surprisingly revealing statement on page ten: “the Web has not yet been hyped enough.”—*Michael F. Winter, University of California, Davis.*