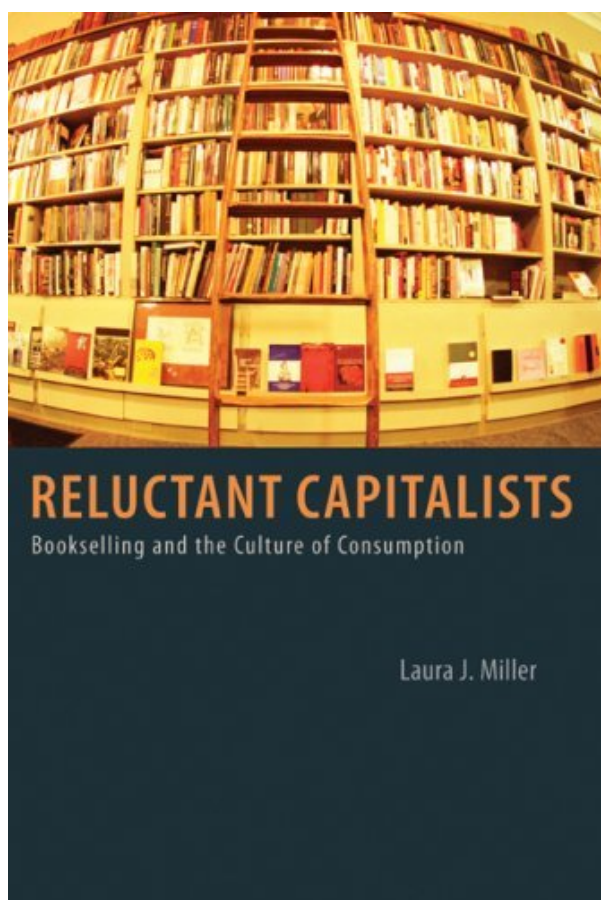
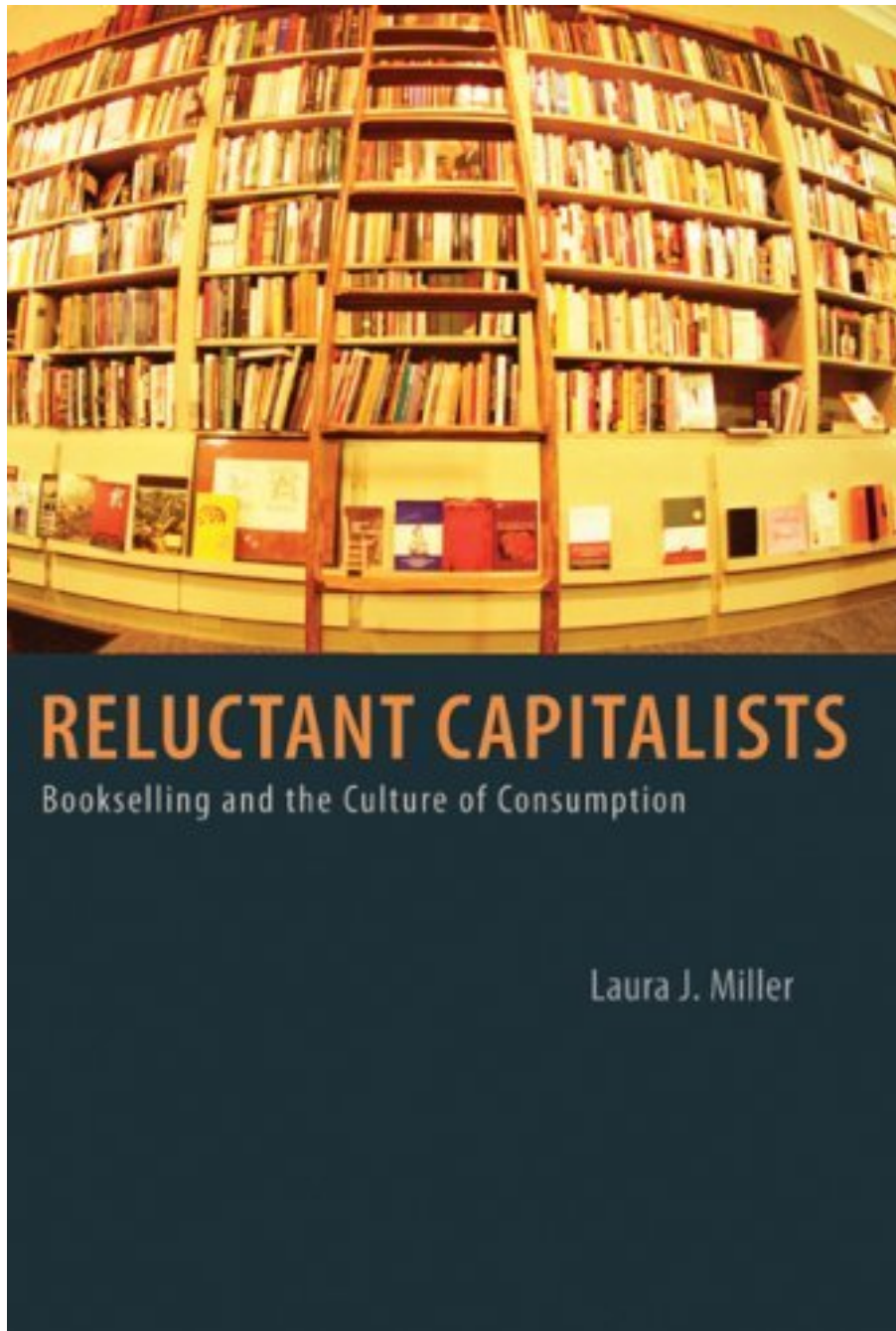


RELUCTANT CAPITALISTS: BOOKSELLING AND THE CULTURE OF CONSUMPTION BY LAURA J. MILLER



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Most helpful customer reviews

5 of 7 people found the following review helpful.

A very interesting view

By Michael Brook

The author looks at bookselling and especially book buying from a very sophisticated standpoint taking many economic, social, and cultural factors into account. The idea that the book both is and isn't a commodity like any other is examined up down and sideways. One interesting point: the rise of giants Borders and Barnes and Noble has made buying a book an entertainment experience (e.g., people go on dates at Borders!).

8 of 10 people found the following review helpful.

Highly recommended for booklovers concerned about the "bookstore wars"

By Larry A. Portzline

Booklovers who wouldn't usually be inclined to read something about the bookselling industry will appreciate this detailed account of the business, particularly in light of the ongoing -- and often ruinous -- competition between independent bookstores, the mega-chains, the "big box" retailers and the online giants.

13 of 14 people found the following review helpful.

Informative and thought provoking

By Jan Whitaker

A very well-done study of the book selling industry. So clever to use books as a focal point for a discussion of the complexities of buying and selling. Refreshingly free of jargon, though there are occasional traces of academic production (I intend to show in the next chapter ...). But this is minor given the generally clear-headed writing and thinking the author displays. Along with all the fascinating information about the development of book selling, as a vocation and as mere commodity pushing, she has included excellent reflections on the nature of the consumer and the consumer's choices to exhibit pure marketplace rationality vs. politically informed cultural activity.

Personally, I remain caught in the complexities of these choices: I bought this book on Amazon but feel it's critical to support independent bookstores (I do that too). I've just returned from a cross country trip and it's dreary out there in places that have no independents. Coincidentally they seem to be places that have no city centers, no architecture, no newspapers, few cultural events ..., nothing but cars and roads and big box stores.

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"[Miller] wishes to make the bookstore into a political arena. By patronizing the indies, consumers can protest excess commercialization and the proliferation of chains. It is one small way of striking back."

(Tyler Cowen Slate.com)

"Laura Miller sees what has happened since the 1960s as a long 'book war,' with implications that extend far beyond the book trade. Books are a particularly illustrative commodity. . . . They cut through to the central issues of modern capitalism. How 'reluctant' should retailers be in their surrender to the profit motive? What kind of retailing should consumers, by their purchasing practices, encourage?"

(London Review of Books)

"A diligent and fascinating account of important new developments in the distribution and retailing of trade books in the United States. Anyone with an interest in the study of books, business and book historians both, will find much of interest in here." (Michael Winship Business History Review)

"What emerges from Miller's nuanced and exceptionally well-documented survey of the book wars is an exemplary piece of scholarship and a model for how to undertake a sociology of the contemporary book world. . . . A fascinating and complex meditation on the broader politics of cultural consumption and the collective ethical implications of individual acts of consumer choice." (Simone Murray Media International)

From the Inside Flap

Over the past half-century, bookselling, like many retail industries, has evolved from an arena dominated by small independent shops to one in which chain stores have significant market share. And as other retail fields, this transformation has often been a less-than-smooth process. But this has been especially

pronounced in bookselling, argues Laura J. Miller, because more than most other consumer goods, books are the focus of passionate debate about commercialism. What drives that debate? And why do so many people believe that bookselling should be immune to questions of profit?

In *Reluctant Capitalists*, Miller looks at a century of book retailing, demonstrating that the independent-chain dynamic is not entirely new. It began a hundred years ago when department stores began selling books, continued through the 1960s with the emergence of national chain stores, and exploded with the formation of “superstores” in the 1990s. The advent of the Internet has further spurred tremendous changes in how booksellers approach their business. All of these changes have met resistance from book professionals and readers who believe that the book business should not be captive to market forces, but should also embrace more noble priorities.

Miller uses historical data and interviews with bookstore customers and members of the book industry to explain why books evoke such distinct and heated reactions. She reveals why customers seek out certain bookstores and why book professionals identify so strongly with different types of books. In the process, she also teases out the meanings of retailing and consumption in American culture at large, underscoring her point that consumer behavior is inevitably political, with consequences for communities as well as commercial institutions.

Some individuals may be laughing when looking at you reading **Reluctant Capitalists: Bookselling And The Culture Of Consumption By Laura J. Miller** in your extra time. Some might be admired of you. As well as some may really want resemble you that have reading leisure activity. Exactly what about your own feel? Have you felt right? Reading *Reluctant Capitalists: Bookselling And The Culture Of Consumption* By Laura J. Miller is a requirement and a hobby at once. This condition is the on that particular will certainly make you feel that you should check out. If you recognize are trying to find the book entitled *Reluctant Capitalists: Bookselling And The Culture Of Consumption* By Laura J. Miller as the choice of reading, you can discover below.