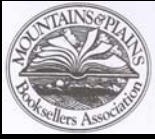
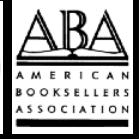
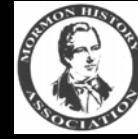




BOOKTALK



The bi-monthly Newsletter of
Sam Weller's Zion Bookstore
Salt Lake's Premier Full-Service Bookstore since 1929



February-March 2007

What Makes a Book Valuable?

By Tony Weller



Every year, tens of thousands of new titles are published in the United States alone. Some get immediate recognition, a few receive slow growing notice, and many will fade into obscurity. And a very few of them will defy the ordinary

principles of aging stuff and increase in value. Why?

I first attempted to dissect this topic within BookTalk back in 2000. Group presentations have sometimes eaten up two or three hours, but since my space is limited here, I will try to cover the principles as briefly and concisely as I'm able. And my list of factors that cause a book to become valuable has grown since I last wrote about it: my current list identifies sixteen factors that tend to point towards appreciation. If you can think of a factor I have missed, please let me know. I will elaborate my sixteen points after a few comments about the word, "rare" and about age.

First, let's examine the term, "rare."

Technically, it is only correctly applied to books that are extremely hard to find, regardless of their age, your wealth or their value. But, as with so many things, in common use, terms get sloppy. Most people use the term to mean collectible or expensive though rare does not necessarily correlate with value. We just don't talk often about rare things that are uninteresting, insignificant and of little value. Nonetheless, on most occasions, we too might apply the term, "rare" to a book that is merely ex-

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Haruki Murakami Read-a-Thon Tuesday May 8th

From 6pm to Midnight

By Sherri Pauli

Join us in store the very day author Haruki Murakami's new book *After Dark* is released. We will be reading from this much anticipated work from 6pm until midnight. As this will be a Read-a-Thon style event, feel free to bring snacks, blankets, and a pillow-whatever you need to stay comfy as you read.

The story unfolds in Tokyo, from midnight to dawn. Centered around two sisters Eri, a slumbering fashion model, and Mari, a solitary student pulled from her reading at Denny's by a host of noteworthy characters who represent the hallmark haunting and haunted antagonists we expect from Mr. Murakami.



Japanese author Haruki Murakami is also the writer of *A Wild Sheep Chase*, *The Wind-Up Bird Chronicles*, *Hard Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World*, and *Kafka on the Shore* among many other

novels and short story collections. He is known for his combination of humor, mystery, and psychological insight that paved the way for the colorful, charismatic, and sometimes terrifying characters that inhabit the worlds he creates.

If you are interested in mesmerizing drama, metaphysical speculation, and time interwoven with space, memory, and perspective, then join us on May 8th at 6pm and prepare yourself for an evening that will surely hold your interest until well *After Dark*.

pensive. It's kind of like not saying "krepp" in a Village Inn.

How old does a cat have to be before we call it "old?" Fifteen years maybe? Twenty? But would you ever think to call a twenty year old person "old"? And what about tortoises? Time is a relative concept and though it is ordinary for people to think of the age of things in human terms, it is not very helpful when measuring non-human things, like books.

Booksellers tend to think of books in centuries. The 21st and 20th are Modern. The 19th is old, but not significantly. The 18th and 17th catch our attention, but even the age of these books is still not sufficient to create notable value.

Truly, only books from the first two centuries of printing are old enough, in book terms, to create value irrespective of the specific book. Ones from the 15th century *are* valuable for their age because they are the first books to ever have been printed. We refer to them as incunabula. But this preamble about age is almost over because it is a minor factor in the valuation of most books.

What makes a book valuable is no different than anything else: high demand and small supply. So the real nature of our inquiry becomes an analysis of what creates high demand in the face of inadequate supply. If we figure this out, we will begin to understand value. I will approach this enquiry from the perspective of demand since it is the manageable side of our elusive equation. And now, here is my list of the circumstances or factors that cause a book to become desirable and valuable when the supply is not excessive. I will offer examples or explanations for each.

- 1) Importance or influence of the work - particularly in fields of science, medicine, exploration, theology or any that tends to change the way we live or think or believe. (Newton's *Principia Mathematica*; Lewis and Clark's *Journals*; *The Book of Mormon*.)
- 2) Popularity of the work - works that we love and cherish, often fiction or poetry. (*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*; *The Hobbit*; *Pride and Prejudice*.)
- 3) Topic of unusually rapid or delayed in-

crease of interest. (Golf, Martial Arts, Midwifery.)

- 4) Early work by a subsequently famous author - anything he or she made before being widely recognized. (Abbey's *Jonathon Troy*; Stegner's *Clarence Edward Dutton*; any Emily Dickinson.)
- 5) Historicity - works that may not have created the history, but were contemporary to it. (Something printed in Nauvoo or in the American colonies before the Revolutionary War.)
- 6) Fame of the illustrator - illustrators who best evoke the feeling of the work, a combination of skill, style and intuition. (Arthur Rackham, Maxfield Parrish, Maurice Sendak.)
- 7) Fame of the publisher, designer or typesetter - mostly fine presses but also presses of great influence or directed by a person of influence. (William Morris' Kelmscott Press; anything printed by Benjamin Franklin; titles from the Arthur H. Clark Company.)
- 8) Beauty of the object - gorgeous books. Excellent paper; artful typography; illustrations well executed and well printed; a beautiful binding in leather or maybe decorated cloth.
- 9) Uniqueness - in the strict sense. (One-of-a-kind or one of an extreme few; an artist's book or a manuscript.) In the instance of a book of which very few copies exist, the term unique is stretched a bit.
- 10) Ephemeral Nature - books that tend to disappear. (Juvenile books, pop-ups, cookbooks, pamphlets.)
- 11) Signatures or inscriptions of the author, illustrator or publisher. (But only if the writer has achieved large status and didn't sign too many.)
- 12) Provenance - former ownership. (Rumors don't sell well but if it can be certainly proven that a book was Joseph Smith's or Elvis Presley's copy, there will be value.)
- 13) Association - The copy given by the author,

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

illustrator or publisher to a close personal or professional associate, especially one who in some way is connected to the book. (We currently have a copy of the *Daring Twins* inscribed by L. Frank Baum to his sister; also an 1849 Webster's Dictionary that was owned and signed by George A. Smith and later given to his son, John Henry Smith. This example is of non-authorial association.)

- 14) Depth or specificity - the book that covers a narrow topic more thoroughly than others. (A 400 page book on soap; a multi-volume set on commercial airlines; *Pioneers and Prominent Men of Utah*.)
- 15) Suppressed or Illegitimate - (The recalled edition of Peter Mattiessen's *In the Spirit of Crazy Horse*; The elusive 1961 edition of Juanita Brooks' *John D. Lee*.)
- 16) Age - less significant than most think. Best measured, not from our point in time, but from the author's life or a period of importance to the subject treated. (Something from the 1500's or earlier; Einstein on relativity between the teens and the 1940's.)

These are the characteristics I've correlated with demand and increasing value. If one finds a combination of them in one book, notable value is almost guaranteed. But that is not all. The two other things that are nearly always necessary for a book to be valuable are condition and primacy. Let me write that first term a few different ways so that there's no chance of it being missed. Condition. *Condition*. CONDITION.

Anent primacy, in general it can be asserted that the earliest edition of a notable book is THE edition to have. It will nearly always be more valuable than later printings of the book. Nearly! There are exceptions, such as later editions that improve upon or notably augment primary editions. For instance, most collectors prefer the later editions of George Catlin's *Manners, Customs, and Condition of the North American Indians* since those are the editions with the stunning hand colored plates.

Likewise, the second edition of Powell's *Exploration of the Colorado River* is maybe eight times more valuable than the first.

Some have expressed suspicions that we book dealers have little troves of secrets that we hide and mystify to deliberately thwart the efforts of folks seeking admittance into some special vault of book knowledge. The truth is that no one knows enough about books—there are far too many for it to be humanly possible and the varying circumstances of their production and survival combining with our fickle and changeable taste and a vast array of printer and publisher practices makes the recognition and valuation of books an intuitive art that may not be perfectible, but which certainly gets easier with reading, exposure, affection and knowledge.

Sam Wellers Bookstore
& The Beehive Tea Room present:

The
NANCY DREW Mystery
Book Club



Friday, March 30th at 2:30pm
Admission \$8 Includes Light Refreshment

All Ages Welcome!

Event will be held at the
Beehive Tea Room
12 W. Broadway
Tickets & Books available at
Sam Weller's Bookstore



254 S. Main Street
Salt Lake City
328-2586



Employee reviews

You Suck: A Love Story

by **Christopher Moore**

Reviewed by Courtney Martin

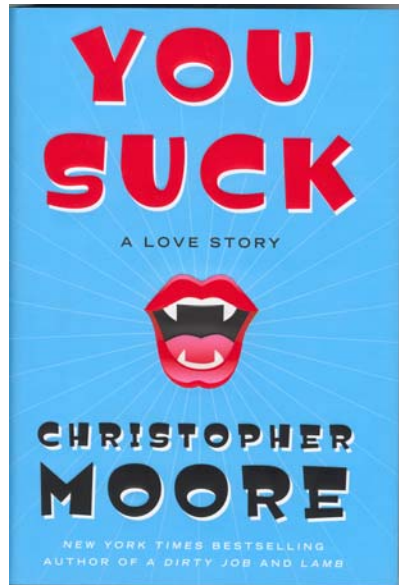
I realized the other day that when I write book reviews, they tend to be about my obsessions.

Maybe that is because I tend to read and rave about books treating topic matters that obsess me. Imagine that!

I have lost sleep over the physiological possibility that vampires could exist. If that isn't an obsession, I don't know what is. So, I find myself reading a lot of vampire books.

You Suck, the sequel to 1995's *Bloodsucking Fiends*, is a jewel among vampire fiction. No gloomy, angst-filled undead walk these pages, shrouded in black capes and unfulfilled desires. Moore's vampire protagonists are two love-struck kids in San Francisco who are just trying to understand their new physical status and, even more terrifying, each other. While facing these challenges, they must battle an ancient vampire with a chip in his shoulder, a 35-pound cat named Chet, a blue exotic dancer who longs to share their dark "gift", and two cops who just want to retire and open a bookshop. Chaos ensues.

I dare you to read this book without smiling. I am convinced it is impossible. In fact, I found myself chuckling on the bus while just thinking about this book. Christopher Moore has taken vampire fiction down to a whole new level.



Nature Girl

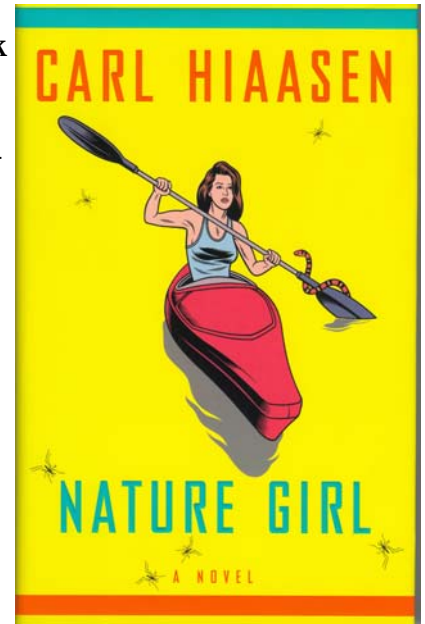
by **Carl Hiaasen**

Reviewed by Bruce Christensen

Carl Hiaasen fans should be delighted with this latest tale of Florida in which the greedy, despicable exploiters who attempt to despoil the natural beauty of the Sunshine State are pitted against the maladjusted misfits who try to prevent this from occurring.

If you are not a fan, if you have never been entertained by Hiaasen's mordant wit and outrageous satire, why don't you repent? *Nature Girl* is the perfect book to start with.

Our heroine, or one of them, plans revenge on a rude telemarketer for interrupting her at dinner, the only time of day she can spend quality time with her son. Sammy Tigertale, a half white/half Seminole takes a middle aged overweight drunk tourist on a late night boat ride through the everglades. The tourist dies of a sudden heart attack and, fearing the white mans' law might hold him responsible, Sammy flees to an uninhabited island where he takes hostage a Florida State co-ed.



It soon becomes very difficult to determine who is the captive and who is the captor. Add a half dozen zany characters who end up on the above mentioned uninhabited island and you have an enjoyable book to read on a cold winter night.

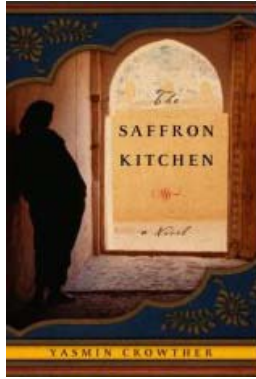
New Books 2007

The Saffron Kitchen

By Yasmin Crother
ISBN 9780670038114
\$23.95

In what is certain to be one of the most talked-about books of the year, Yasmin Crowther paints a magnificent portrait of betrayal and retribution set against a backdrop of Iran's tumultuous history, dramatic landscape, and cultural beauty.

Poetic, haunting, and brilliantly crafted, *The Saffron Kitchen* is sure to entrance fans of Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Namesake*, and Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club*.



The Shadow Catcher

By Marianne Wiggins
ISBN 9780743265201
\$25.00

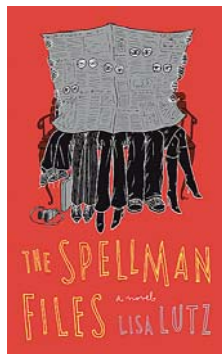
Following Her National Book Award finalist *Evidence of Things Unseen*, Marianne Wiggins turns her extraordinary literary imagination to the American West, where the life of legendary photographer Edward S. Curtis is the basis for a resonant exploration of history and family, landscape and legacy.

The Shadow Catcher calls to mind the best of the exploring, voyaging writers—Twain, Melville, Hemingway and Steinbeck.

The Spellman Files

By Lisa Lutz
ISBN 9781416532392
\$29.99

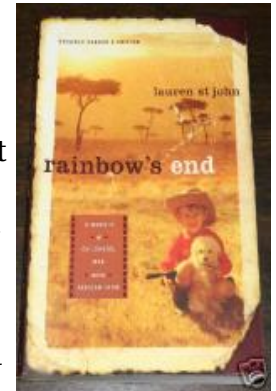
If Nancy Drew went to work for the Royal Tenenbaums you'd have Izzy Spellman, a twenty-eight year old private eye working for her family's investigative business. This family puts the "fun" in dysfunctional in this irresistible, laugh-out-loud debut novel.



Rainbow's End: A Memoir of Childhood, War, and an African Farm

By Lauren St John
ISBN 9780743286794
\$25.00

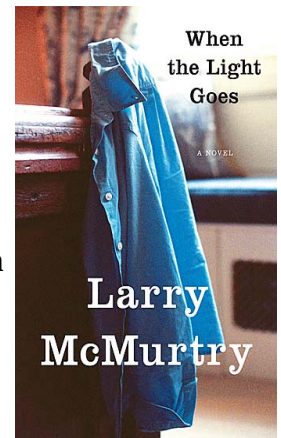
Rainbow's End captures the overwhelming beauty and extraordinary danger of life in Rhodesia. A heartbreaking book about race, patriotism...about being a child in the midst of it all. *Rainbows End* belongs on the shelf with such masterpieces as *Out of Africa* and *Don't Let the Dogs Out Tonight*.



When the Light Goes

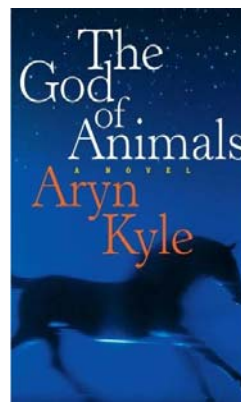
By Larry McMurtry
ISBN 9781416534266
\$26.00

In this sequel to the acclaimed *Duane's Depressed*, the Pulitzer Prize and Oscar winning writer crafts an elegiac and intimate portrait of an eccentric, aging oilman struggling to come to terms with the death of his wife. This book is a poignant contemporary Western told with subtle wit and the author's signature insight.



The God of Animals

By Aryn Kyle
ISBN 9781416533245
\$25.00



New writer Aryn Kyle produces an emotionally powerful novel that is satisfying, and compellingly rich in its plot. *The God of Animals* is a haunting novel that deftly and movingly captures not only the complexity of love, loss, and human relationships but also the fierce and powerful bond between horses and humans.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sunday, March 4

France Davis, author of *France Davis: An American Story Told*, will be reading and signing at the University of Utah, Little Union Theater as part of the Friends of Marriott Library Sunday Series. 3pm.

Thursday, March 22

Antonio Feliz, author of *Elijah's Power*, will be reading and signing here in the store. Sam Weller's Bookstore, 254 S Main Street, SLC. 6pm.

Thursday, April 5

The Small Press Forum will host the following authors: **Michael Norman**, *The Commission*, and **Joanna Staughn**, *Instinct*. The authors will be reading and signing here in the store. Sam Weller's Bookstore, 254 S Main Street, SLC. 6pm.

Friday, April 20

Karen Garthe and **Joanna Straughn** will read at the Anne Newman Sutton Weeks Poetry Series, hosted by Westminster College. 5pm.

Tuesday, May 8

Haruki Murakami book release party/read-a-thon for *After Dark*. Sam Weller's Bookstore, 254 S Main Street, SLC. From 6pm until midnight.

For more information regarding upcoming events, please call Shari Zollinger at 328-2586.

Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows **RELEASE DATE: July 21,** **2007**

Don't miss out on the seventh and final Harry Potter book.

Reserve and prepay for your copy of **Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows** at Sam Weller's and receive a 20% discount which you may donate to the Salt Lake City Public Library, or keep for yourself. You will be able to pick up your book at Midnight during the **Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows** release celebration at the downtown main Salt Lake City Public Library on Friday July 20 at midnight. Or pick your copy up at Sam Weller's Saturday, July 21,



Every Tuesday
at Sam Weller's is

PAPERBACK
TUESDAY!

So join us anytime
on any Tuesday and
enjoy **20% off** your
paperback purchases.

Rare Book Acquisitions

By Tony Weller

A very nice 2nd European edition of the *Book of Mormon*. This copy of the 1849 printing is in its original black embossed sheepskin binding. It has had expert repairs to the first few pages. It is bright, sound, complete and attractive! \$10,000

A fine jacketed first edition of **Juanita Brooks'** *Jacob Hamblin: Mormon Apostle to the Indians*, printed in 1980. \$100

A near fine and very attractive 2 volume set of **Aleister Crowley's** *Equinox* published by Weiser and printed in 1998. This facsimile reprints the first volume of the *Equinox*, which was first printed in London between 1909 and 1913. This new edition is very nice in gilt stamped white cloth and housed in a white printed heavy paper slipcase. And it's remarkably clean! \$475

A nice group of 1st trade editions of **Stephen King's** early novels. In chronological order they are:

I. *Salem's Lot*. 1975. A very good copy in a very good 3rd state jacket which is bright and has a few tiny closed tears in its edges. \$525

II. *The Shining*. 1977. A near fine copy in a very good jacket with just a bit of chipping at the folds. \$350

III. *Night Shift*. 1978. A good copy with light bumping and rubbing and remnants of former owner's bookplates on the front pastedown, in a similar dust jacket which is yellowed and has small tears. \$450

IV. *The Stand*. 1978. A very good copy. This book was poorly made and much too thick to have withstood most readers' handling. This copy is better than usual though with a slightly concave spine. The jacket is yellowed and has numerous small creases, chips and closed tears. It still looks nice, nonetheless, and is housed in a simple slipcase. \$300

You may remember that we re-sorted our entire bookstore a few years ago to inte-

grate the new and used books into common topical sections. You might also have noticed how modern publishers are making bold strides in new book design in our era. If you've browsed our rare book department, you may have even stumbled into one of the new books I am about to describe. Since we mixed new and used books in the rest of our store, we decided that we would keep some of the amazing, and in this instance, large books that are being produced today, in our rare book department. Here are a few of them:

I. *The Atlas of Human Anatomy and Surgery* by **J. M. Bourguery** and **N. H. Jacob** was originally produced between the years of 1831 and 1851. It was a major stride forward in medical anatomy. This new facsimile edition from Taschen Books, reproduces the work in full color with over 700 plates, some folding. It's a folio that measures roughly 11.5 by 16 inches. New. \$200

II. Also from Taschen, we have the large folio, **Leonardo da Vinci: The Complete Paintings and Drawings**. It presents his work in over 650 large, mostly color images. His work was too abundant to fit easily into one volume, so Taschen has added a catalogue raisonnee of his paintings and an extensive catalog of da Vinci's drawings. This heavy new volume measures 11.5 by 17 inches and is priced at \$200

III. Last year, Harvard published a very nice folio facsimile of the *Herbarium* **Emily Dickinson** made for herself when she was a teenager. This green linen bound volume elegantly reproduces her careful work with large nicely printed photographs. It comes housed in an equally attractive rust colored linen slipcase. Oooh! \$125

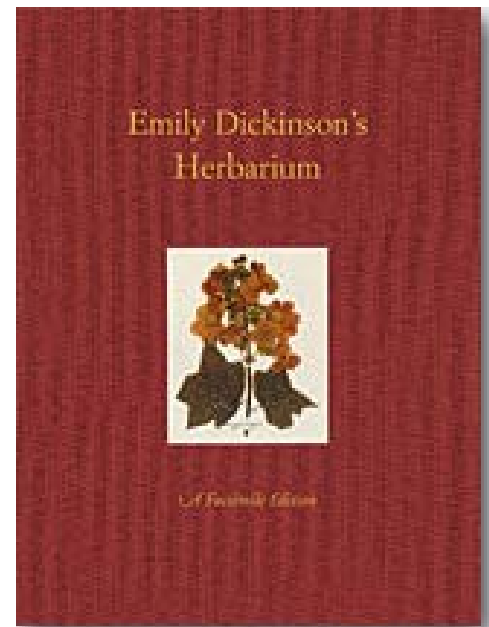
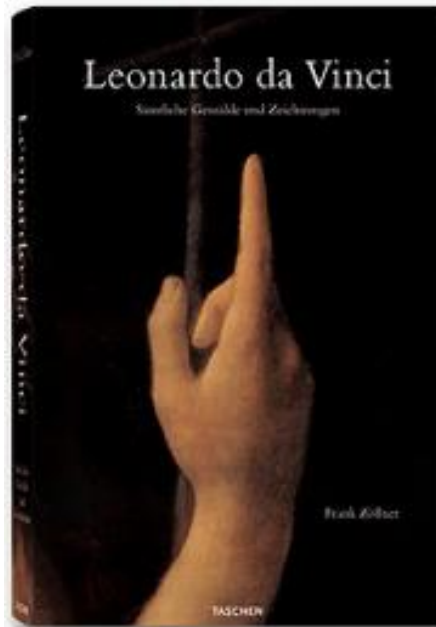
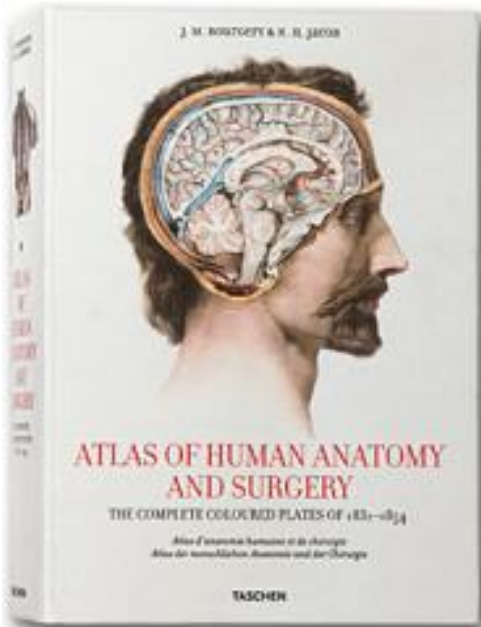
Used Book Buying

As usual, we will close our buying desk during the month of April. If you have something we need badly or are selling an estate, we will make a few exceptional appointments. However, for most books, we will make appointments through March and then not again until May.



Sam Weller's Bookstore

254 S. Main St., Downtown SLC
(At the Gullivan Plaza TRAX Stop)
(801)328-2586
(800)333-SAMW
www.SamWellers.com



From Left: ***The Atlas of Human Anatomy and Surgery*** by **J.M. Bourguery** and **N.H. Jacob**, ***Leonardo da Vinci: The Complete Paintings and Drawings***, and ***Emily Dickinson's Herbarium***. See page 7 for complete information.