

***On the Commerce of Thinking: Of Books & Bookstores* by Jean-Luc Nancy (trans. David Wills). Fordham University Press, 2009. Pp. 59. \$16 (Paperback). ISBN: 9780823230372**

**Reviewer:** Jessica R. Dreistadt<sup>1</sup>

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*On the Commerce of Thinking: Of Books and Bookstores* is a brief, yet resonant, philosophical text that beautifully describes the enchantment of books. Based on the title I expected, and looked forward to, a critical analysis of how and why ideas are suppressed or are promoted by the publishing industry and the relationship between the exchange of ideas and the exchange of political and economic currency. I was both grossly incorrect and delightfully surprised.

As a writer and avid reader, I encountered *On the Commerce of Thinking* with the deep reverence Nancy ascribes to the exchange of the written word. This review and its application to social action is a dance of ideas derived from both Nancy's thoughts and those which his work inspired within me.

The process of writing, sharing one's work with others, and engaging with ideas which others have emblazoned into our collective conscience through composition and exhibition are radical acts of disclosure, exposure, and transformation. Through books, the universe of ideas becomes recorded, revealed, unveiled, and unleashed.

Books are appeals for ideas to be discovered. They never passively sit on a shelf; books yearn to be found, opened, and unfolded. Like books, we, too, are vessels filled with stories to tell and thoughts to liberate. But unlike our speech and actions, which disintegrate over time into misty

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