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Mary Boleyn: the mistress of kings, Alison Weir (book review)

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have Violi's book may consider Unger's an optional addition. It will appeal to readers of biography, history, and political science. [See Prepub Alert, 12/20/10.]—Sharon E. Reidt, Marlboro Coll. Lib., VT

Weir, Alison. *Mary Boleyn: The Mistress of Kings*. Ballantine. Oct. 2011. c.400p. illus. bibliog. index. ISBN 9780345521330. \$28. BIOP

Having explored the final days of Anne Boleyn in *The Lady in the Tower*, popular historian Weir now turns her attention to Anne's sister Mary. Briefly the mistress of the French king Francis I and later of Henry VIII, Mary eventually wed a commoner for love and faded into relative obscurity—until Philippa Gregory's novel *The Other Boleyn Girl* drew her onto the stage again. Though any study of Mary is bound to be hampered by the scarcity of solid evidence about large parts of her life, Weir has striven to provide the most complete assessment possible; while she indulges in some well-researched speculation to fill the gaps, she remains clear about facts vs. what must be left to guesswork. Furthermore, she devotes much effort to examining the development of Mary's historical stature and dispelling the most egregious rumors—in particular, those surrounding Mary's reputation as “a very great whore” (neatly dismissed by Weir as a myth) and the paternity of her two eldest children. **VERDICT** As the first full biography of Mary Boleyn, this is a valuable resource both for historians and for casual readers interested in an accurate account of this recently popularized historical figure. [See Prepub Alert, 4/4/11.]—Kathleen McCallister, Univ. of South Carolina, Columbia, Lib.

COMMUNICATIONS

Gibbs, Wolcott. *Backward Ran Sentences: The Best of Wolcott Gibbs from The New Yorker*. Bloomsbury, dist. by Macmillan. Oct. 2011. c.688p. ed. by Thomas Vinciguerra. ISBN 9781608195503. pap. \$22. COMM

Fans of *The New Yorker* will welcome this collection of pieces written by Gibbs spanning the late 1920s through the early 1950s. *New York Times* contributor Vinciguerra intends to rescue Gibbs from growing obscurity with his introductory biographical essay and careful selection of articles. Gibbs was versatile, serving as an editor in addition to contributing to “The Talk of the Town” and writing profiles, parodies, short stories, and theater criticism. Profiles include the obscure, like Miss Rita Ross, the eccentric cat lady who collected stray cats to deliver to the SPCA, as well as the more famous, such as presidential candidate Thomas Dewey. Gibbs's wit shines through in the parodies,

including one of “Yes, Virginia...,” in which he portrays Santa Claus as a communist. In a foreword, P.J. O'Rourke provides his own parody of Gibbs. **VERDICT** Readers who enjoy the style and wit of *The New Yorker* will love this collection. It is easy to dip into for the perfect piece, and the large selection will satisfy.—Judy Solberg, Seattle Univ. Lib.

Levine, Robert. *Free Ride: How Digital Parasites Are Destroying the Culture Business, and How the Culture Business Can Fight Back*. Doubleday. Oct. 2011. c.320p. bibliog. index. ISBN 9780385533768. \$26.95. COMM

Don't have a subscription to HBO or Netflix but want to see an episode of *True Blood*? Just download it. What's the harm, right? Levine (former executive editor, *Billboard*) details how—beyond issues of morality—the illegal distribution of cultural products like television shows and music seriously impacts the economic and cultural underpinnings of society. His focus, though, is not on the average consumer who downloads the latest U2 song but on websites that illegally share or sell these copyrighted works. Similar to Lawrence Lessig's *Free Culture*, Levine's extensively researched work illustrates how digital piracy undermines artistic creativity and the economy. Furthermore, he offers solid ideas on how artists and businesses can work together to provide timely and inexpensive ways for consumers to obtain the product they want when they want it. **VERDICT** For anyone interested in trends in Internet usage, copyright law, and mass media and society. [See Prepub Alert, 4/11/11.]—Donna Marie Smith, Palm Beach Cty. Lib. Syst., FL

ECONOMICS

Birchard, Bill. *Merchants of Virtue: Herman Miller and the Making of a Sustainable Company*. Palgrave Macmillan. Sept. 2011. c.256p. index. ISBN 9780230106604. \$28. BUS

Herman Miller is best known for its iconic office furniture, which graces the galleries of the world's modern art museums. But business journalist and former *Enterprise* magazine editor Birchard reveals a lesser-known side of the company: long before environmentalism was trendy in big business, founder D.J. De Pree committed Herman Miller to environmental stewardship. Though his contemporaries may have thought he was off his rocker, his environmental initiatives were no less visionary than his hiring of brilliant designers like Gilbert Rohde and Charles Eames. Herman Miller's story reads like a lexicon of nearly every business buzzword of the last half-century: participative management (starting in the

1950s), lean manufacturing (taught by a Toyota guru), sustainability, economic value added, financial literacy of employees, and a dozen other concepts pioneered by this company. Along the way, the firm garnered accolades as a leader in the corporate environmental and social responsibility movements. **VERDICT** While manufacturing may be a dying art in the United States, this book illustrates how one company can do well by its shareholders, employees, society, and the environment—and still turn heads with its products. Herman Miller's sustainable sojourn is a remarkable story, capably told.—Carol J. Elsen, Univ. of Wisconsin Libs., Whitewater

Harper, Hill. *The Wealth Cure: Putting Money in Its Place*. Gotham: Penguin Group (USA). Aug. 2011. c.304p. bibliog. ISBN 9781592406500. \$26. ECON

When personal health is compromised, it naturally prompts a reevaluation of life goals. This is the impetus and concept behind CS: NY actor Harper's (*Letters to a Young Brother*) latest work. With happiness as a new priority, he investigates how to free oneself from the chains of materialism and the quest for wealth to focus on more important objectives such as personal satisfaction. To cure the sometimes frenetic pursuit of wealth, Harper successfully applies the regimen that was used to treat his illness: diagnose, treat, comply, maintain, thrive. He provides tangible ways for people to prioritize their own goals and refocus their lives. **VERDICT** While some of the author's anecdotes make one wonder whether he truly comprehends the position of privilege from which he speaks, his pragmatic advice would be generally beneficial to society. A comparable work is Laura Rowley's *Money and Happiness: A Guide To Living the Good Life*. This is an inspirational read for those interested in financial self-help and freedom, with a little celebrity autobiography sprinkled in. [See Prepub Alert, 3/21/11.]—Poppy Johnson-Renvall, Central New Mexico Community Coll. Lib., Albuquerque

Hoopes, James. *Corporate Dreams: Big Business in American Democracy from the Great Depression to the Great Recession*. Rutgers Univ. Oct. 2011. c.224p. illus. index. ISBN 9780813551302. \$24.95. BUS

Hoopes (business ethics, Babson Coll.; *Hail to the CEO: George W. Bush and the Failure of Moral Leadership*) throws his hat into the crowded ring of books on the evils of corporate America. Others include Ted Nace's *Gangs of America: The Rise of Corporate Power and the Disabling of Democracy*, William D. Cohan's *Money and Power: How Goldman Sachs Came To Rule the World*, and Jeff Madrick's *Age of Greed: The Triumph of Finance and the Decline of America, 1970 to the Present*.

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