Chapter 7: John Adams's marginalia: then and now

H.J. Jackson

Abstract

Jackson's chapter explains how the custom of writing in books is, on the one hand, viewed as an act of defacement, while on the other, marginalia created historically by significant individuals is highly prized in the literary world and adds value. Using the example of marginalia created by John Adams, (1735–1826), the second President of the United States of America, the chapter shows how his extensive use of marginalia has provided future generations with an understanding of his views and political outlook than otherwise possible. The author argues that books were expensive during this period and passed around a wide circle of potential readers. Therefore, notes made in the margin by readers such as Adams were not intended to be private but planned in part as a way of providing a 'public record of his life' for future generations.

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John Adams is a 2008 HBO miniseries on the life of John Adams and the first 50 years of the United States. Directed by Tom Hooper. Written by Kirk Ellis, based on the book by David McCullough. Join or Die. Abigail Adams: You do not need to quote great men to show you are one. John Adams: Liberty will reign in America! John Adams: [on clubs used for beating out rope] Could they not also be used for beating out men's brains?! John Adams: Facts are very stubborn things. John Adams was a politician, philosopher, lawyer, and one of the Founding Fathers of our country. Adams served as George Washington's Vice President for two terms before he became the second President of the United States. Described as learned and thoughtful, John Adams was more remarkable as a political philosopher than as a politician. “People and nations are forged in the fires of adversity,” he said, doubtless thinking of his own as well as the American experience. Abigail Adams by Benjamin Blythe, 1766. He then decided to become a lawyer, studied with James Putnam in Worcester and was admitted to the bar in 1758. In 1764, he married his third cousin, Abigail Smith, and the couple would eventually have five children including future president, John Quincy Adams.