

Author/Editor: Willaim Leggett

Title: The Critic, A Weekly Review of Literature, Fine Arts, and the Drama, Volume I

Imprint: 1885, Publication issues from November 1, 1828 to May 2, 1829

Dimensions (binding): 20.3 cm x 13.0 cm x 2.8 cm

Dimensions (text block): 19.7 cm x 12.5 cm x 2.1 cm

Collection: Private collection

Examination Date: 09/07/08

Treatment Date: September – December 2008

Conservator: Sonya Issaeva

Supervising Conservator: Chela Metzger

Treatment Objective

The goal of this treatment is to explore disbinding, washing, bleaching, sizing, and guarding in order to learn new techniques on a book discarded from the UT Library System. The volume will then be re sewn and rebound.

Description:

The Critic was a weekly literary and cultural review magazine published in New York city in the second half of the 19th century. This volume is a compilation of issues of this magazine from November 1, 1828 to May 2, 1829. There are three pieces of written correspondence, dated in June 1885, attached to the volume at the front end sheet. The writing appears to be done in carbon ink on The Critic stationary, which is a smooth heavily sized off-white machine-made paper. The manuscripts appear to be publishing memos regarding making the final corrections to some articles in the volume before printing. The articles, discussed in the memos, are pasted onto the last leaf of the front end sheet, following the written correspondence items. There are two notations in graphite in the upper left corner of the front pastedown.

Condition:

Binding: It is a half style sheep leather binding with dark green marbled paper sides. The marbled paper appears to be machine-produced. There are two stuck-on striped cloth end bands attached to the binding at the head and tail. The sections are sewn two-on onto four sawn-in cord supports. The front board and the first leaf of the front end sheet are completely detached. The back board is attached to the text block by sewing through the end sheet, and the pastedown is still connected to the first fly leaf. The leather covering of the front board near the spine is delaminated and adhered only partially. The leather is brittle, powdery and abraded everywhere on the volume. The leather covering is broken along the attachment of the back board to the spine. A strip of leather at the head of the back board, along the spine edge, had detached and is hanging loose. The attachment of the rest of the leather covering at the back board is similarly precarious. There are areas of heavy abrasion and loss of leather at the head and tail of the spine covering. The spine is tooled with blind gold foil lines and the title, which looks rolled on. The marbled paper has suffered abrasion and loss on both boards. Binder's board is exposed on edges, the corners are bent inward and slightly delaminated.

Text block: The text block has a flat back and narrow shoulders. The volume is printed on poor quality machine made paper of medium to light text weight. The text block paper is discolored overall, with isolated areas of staining, which appears to have been caused by excess moisture. There are no tears or losses to the pages. The end sheets do not appear to be made from the same paper as the text block, as they have aged differently from the rest of the text block. This is especially noticeable in the first fly leaf of the back end sheet, which bears a brownish burn-through that mirrors the last page of the text. This suggests that this discoloration may be caused by the printing ink. The leather tips and the spine covering on boards have caused the front and back pastedowns to preferentially discolor in those isolated areas. This discoloration, which is probably burn-through from the leather turn-ins, is also visible on the other leaves of the front and back end sheets, albeit to a lesser degree than on the pastedowns. There is image transfer of the handwritten memo onto the last leaf of the front end sheet, which is probably caused by the prolonged contact of the inferior end sheet paper with the ink used to write the memo.

Treatment Performed:

- Detached back board by cutting through the cords and the sewing.
- Lifted leather spine in panels. Lifted skiver label. Removed leather remnants from the spine mechanically using a Caselli micro-spatula.
- Applied a poultice of MC to spine, scraped off animal glue residue with a micro-spatula.
- Lifted off the cloth and cord end bands, washed out the adhesive residue in de-ionized water, re-assembled the end bands by rolling cloth and cord back together, using wheat starch paste.
- Disbound all sections. There were some minor losses at the spine edges of outside folios as a result of removing bits of tenacious dry and hard animal glue.

Washing, Sizing and Bleaching

- Washed 2 sections (p. 33-48, p. 209-224) in de-ionized water with a few drops of CaOH (calcium hydroxide), at the pH of 7 to 7.5. All sections that were sized and bleached were first washed in this manner.
- Sized 1 section with a 0.5% solution of gelatin (Index folio in front of the 1st section)
- Bleached 1 section (p.281-292) overall in a bath of 0.5% H₂O₂ (hydrogen peroxide). In addition to the overall bleaching, 2 sections (p. 341-356, p. 397-406) were locally bleached with a solution of 3% H₂O₂, using a small soft round brush to target isolated areas of intense discoloration.
- Bleached 1 section (p. 407-415) and the last blank endsheet overall in a bath of 0.5% NaBH (sodium borohydride) and locally with 1% NaBH, using a small brush to target isolated areas of intense discoloration.

Guarding

- Distressed 2 sections (p. 193-208, p. 225-240) at the spine edge and adhered complex guards to the folios in those sections in order to rebuild them using light weight Japanese tissue and dilute wheat starch paste.
- Guarded the outside folios of most sections to reinforce them for re-sewing and to compensate for losses along the spine edge.
- In the first and last sections, hinged single leaves around the nearest section.

Sewing

- Sewed sections together three-on, using 4 three-stranded linen cord supports on a sewing frame. Used waxed 2-stranded Irish linen twine as sewing thread.
- Made labeled cover pages for each section that underwent aqueous treatment or complex guarding for future reference.
- Cut the cover pages to be slightly smaller all around than the text block pages. Made these insert pages out of 70# Mohawk cream text weight paper and guarded them with Kizukishi Japanese tissue. Labeled the inserts with a hard graphite pencil.
- Sewed the cover pages into the text block in front of each treated section.

Sewing diagram: K = kettle, ● = cord support, ____ = no sewing, ---- = sewing

(3) ____ K ____ ● ____ ● ----- ● ____ ● ____ K ____

(2) ____ K ----- ● ____ ● ____ ● ____ ● ----- K ____

(1) ____ K ____ ● ----- ● ____ ● ----- ● ____ K ____

Lining

- The textblock was lined with medium-weight Japanese tissue (Kizukishi) and wheat starch paste. An overhanging airplane linen lining was adhered on top with Lascaux. The final lining was made of a strip of alum tawed skin, cut to the size of the spine. The tawed skin lining was chosen because the volume was going to be rebound as a tight back, with new cover leather adhered to the tawed skin lining. In this way, the spine would flatten out when opened and not arch up into a curve. The tawed skin lining would also provide strong consolidation of the textblock, while offering flexibility.

Boards

- The leather covering at the spine edge of the boards was lifted about ¼” past the edge of the paper covering.
- The pastedowns on the interior of the boards were lifted at the spine edge to accommodate the turn-ins of the new leather spine covering and the overhanging airplane linen lining.
- Cellugell, diluted with isopropanol, was used to consolidate the powery, fragile leather covering along the spine edges of the boards and at the foredge corners.

Replacement Leather Spine

- Un-dyed goat skin was used to prepare the new spine covering. The goat skin was dyed using Sellarset brand leather dyes (60% yellow, 30% brown and 10% red), diluted with water. The dyes were fixed with tinofix.

Board Reattachment

- The textblock was sandwiched in between the board and placed into a lying press, so that the squares were aligned.
- The leather spine piece was wetted out with water on the grain side and saturated with wheat starch paste on the suede side. The alum tawed lining of the textblock was sanded for better adhesion. The new leather spine piece was adhered to the spine of the textblock, like a tight tack. The overhanging leather was tucked under the lifted portions on the outside of the boards. The lifted areas were glued back down using Lascaux, so that the fragile original leather would not be darkened with moisture.
- Small amounts of Lascaux were inserted into the cracks in the original leather covering, which had resulted from manipulation of the boards. An additional coat of Cellugell, diluted with isopropanol, was applied to the leather covering at this point.
- The new spine piece had to be sanded down with sand paper and re-toned with diluted acrylic pigments, since the dyed leather had dried darker than expected due to saturation with moisture.
- After the spine covering was dry, the overhanging linen lining was tucked under the lifted portions and adhered with wheat starch paste. The lifted pastedowns were glued back down with wheat starch paste as well.
- Three layers of toned light weight Japanese tissue (Usu-mino) were placed over the exposed airplane linen along the inner hinge on the interior of both boards, like a ½” band aid. The tissue was also toned locally using watercolors to better integrate it with the discolored pastedowns and endsheets.

Original spine pieces

- A thin piece of un-dyed goat skin was used to line the lifted fragments of the existing leather spine, using Lascaux. The goat skin was thinned using the Sharfix and hand pared at the edges.

- Cellugell, diluted with isopropanol, was used to consolidate the flaking original leather. Small amounts of Lascaux were inserted into the cracks in the leather, which had resulted from manipulation of the fragments.
- The lined fragments of the original spine, including the label, were adhered to the new spine piece using Lascaux. The “Before Treatment” photograph of the volume’s spine was used as a reference for placement of the original spine fragments.
- The volume was placed into a custom made phase box.

Materials Used

Kizukishi Japanese tissue, Hiromi
Usu-mino Japanese tissue, Hiromi
Un-dyed goat skin, Leather Conservation Center
Sellaset leather dyes, Leather Conservation Center
Acrylic pigments, Liquitex
Watercolors, Winsor-Newton
Wheat starch paste, Zin Shofu, Talas
Lascaux, Talas
Cellugel, Conservation Resources
Isopropanol, Fisher Scientific