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Gregory S. Brown, *A Field of Honor: Writers, Court Culture, and Public Theater in French Literary Life from Racine to the Revolution*. [www.gutenberg-e.org](http://www.gutenberg-e.org) and Columbia University Press, 2002. 387 pp. Links, images, notes, and bibliography. \$49.95 U.S. (e-text). ISBN 0-231-12460-0.

Comment on Digital Publishing by Gregory S. Brown, University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Early modern cultural historians whose work has greatly influenced *A Field of Honor* have shown that the concept of the book did not begin with the printing press. Indeed, in the period between the Renaissance and the Enlightenment print did not replace oral or manuscript communication outright, but the material form of the printed book did become socially accepted as the guarantor of the integrity, fidelity, and singularity of the work that it carried. In the twenty-first century we historians as authors and readers are living through a similar transition (rather than revolution) in cultural history as printed sheets of paper bound together cease to constitute the dominant carrier medium for a book.

As in the early modern period the changes in communication today are as much socio-cultural as technological, and the Gutenberg-e series in which my book has been published is intended to explore both aspects of this change. Further information about the program, including information for both individual and institutional subscriptions to either the entire series or any particular title, is available at <http://www.gutenberg-e.org>. These books are not in the strictest sense e-books. They are not created to be downloaded and then read through special software such as Microsoft Reader or Adobe e-Reader (though such an option may become available soon). They are instead on-line texts to be read in ordinary web browsers, though a partial representation of the book (that is the text only) is available on the site in PDF format for printing

Once having obtained the book readers may wonder how to approach this book. On one level it is a single monograph which develops its argument across six largely chronological chapters so it can be read as a traditional print monograph

Within and across these chapters there are also many subordinate themes and stories. In preparing this work for publication as an electronic book, I have tried to make the sections into what hypertext theorists such as George Landow refer to as discrete lexias so readers interested in a particular writer or topic may select sections that tell a particular story (One approach therefore would be to use the Gutenberg-e search feature to search for a particular proper or common name or theme either within a single title or across the library of books on the site The current search function for *A Field of Honor* is a free text search of body text section titles or metadata keywords; this function effectively replaces the index of a conventional print monograph The publisher (Electronic Publishing Initiative @ Columbia University Press) is at work to enhance the search feature making use of XML coding to allow for thematic searching across a broader library of electronic works in History.

Within the body of the book each section leads logically into the next section and a navigation menu always visible on the left of the screen enables readers to keep track of which chapter and section they are currently viewing Within each chapter the paragraphs are consecutively numbered allowing for precise citation; each section heading includes an html anchor allowing for precise linking or bookmarking In addition to the navigation bar the reader will encounter in the e-text internal links to relevant passages in other sections and chapters of the book

Moreover, throughout the body of the book, the text is supplemented not only by conventional footnotes (which appear as subscript numbers hyperlinked to the notes) but also by links to specific entries in the

appendices that are relevant to that section—such as an item in the glossary of terms, a primary document, an image (of which thumbnails appear in the body text itself), or an external web resource. These external resources include both on-line primary sources (mostly from the BNF Gallica site) and relevant historical or literary websites. These appendices—Images, Archive, Web Resources, and Glossary—can also be accessed from icons that appear at all times in the menu frame at the top of the screen.

Readers of the electronic version, therefore, are consulting the entire work. Those who read only the PDF printouts of the text are reading what the publisher calls "a partial representation of an electronic work." In short *ceci n'est pas un livre*: the printed book is not a book. Though I expect many readers will feel most comfortable with the print outs of the text they are encouraged to consult the electronic version if they wish to consult it in a thematic rather than linear fashion or to consult the appendices

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