



Merchants, Barons, Sellers and Suits: The Changing Images of the Businessman Through Literature

Christa Mahalik

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Merchants, Barons, Sellers and Suits: The Changing Images of the Businessman through Literature originally began as a conversation about a hybrid course at Quinnipiac University. Its purpose was to take an online English course for non-traditional business majors and create a theme that would be relevant to the business world. Being given the task to create this course from the ground up was exciting and intriguing. There turned out to be a lot more material that could be used for this theme than previously thought. To gauge the temperature of the topic, a panel was set up with the theme of businessmen (or women) and their changing image through literature. At the 2009 NeMLA (Northeast Modern Language Association) conference in Boston, the panel was held and many ideas, such as some of the ones presented in this book, were discussed. A secondary theme evolved out of the construction of the first. Participants discussed the environment as a catalyst in the change of 'what a person actually thinks a businessman (or woman) looks like.' Many of these images were formed based upon pop culture, such as the traveling salesman in the Looney Tunes cartoons who sells brushes door to door and hails from Walla Walla, Washington. Others were based on the images read about in books, such as Willy Loman from *Death of a Salesman*. The essays included in this volume, presented by doctoral candidates and scholars from across a range of geographical regions and disciplines, result in a collection that investigates the idea of the changing image of the businessman throughout literature both in America and in Europe. The arrangement of the collection is a comparative timeline allowing the changing images of business to evolve with each essay.

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