Social Media Report

Every conference is a hectic, immersive, humbling experience. All of us have, at one point or another, rushed down a hallway en route to yet another panel juggling satchel, conference program, notepad, pen, coffee cup, appetizer plate, and assorted handouts and business cards, fervently wishing we had more hands (plus more brainpower, the better to accommodate all the facts, ideas, feedback, and questions swirling through our minds).

My version of SHARP 2011 involved this and more. In addition to handouts, program, coffee cup et al., I toted my laptop and smartphone everywhere I went, typing frenetically and questions whirling through our minds.

For I was one of more than a dozen persons who, with the encouragement of SHARP’s executive board, took to social media to capture, digest, and reflect on the proceedings of the intensive four-day event. Prime among our arsenal of tools was Twitter, the online micro-blogging service through which users publish short posts of up to 140 characters. Collectively, we generated over two thousand ‘tweets’, all tagged with the conference’s unique identifier, #sharp11. Our endeavor was part competition, part collaboration: we came enticed by the chance to win prizes for our tweeting (the award: copious of the DeLong Book of the Year), and stayed for the conversations, the context, the camaraderie, the community.

My belief in the potential of instant one-to-many online communication is not new. I am an avid user of Facebook, Craigslist, Tumblr, and Google Plus, in addition to Twitter. But the ways in which #sharp11 tweeters used Twitter were varied and wise, and both reaffirmed my faith in, and taught me new things about, the utility and power of social media. Of course, the vast majority of tweets were like bullet-pointed notes, serving to record kernels of paper presentations and focusing, as could be expected, on new, pithy, important, funny, or contentious claims. Interestingly, different tweeters took vastly different approaches to their broadcasting duties: while some quoted speakers verbatim, others summarized the methodologies they used, commented on larger themes and connections to other papers, and linked to relevant online reading and resources.

The service was also a useful proxy tool, a bit of metaphysical magic, in that tweeters used it to liaise with those elsewhere, both attendees (recording presentations in other rooms) and non-attendees (many of whom registered their gratitude for the stream of information being broadcast from Washington, D.C.). In addition, Twitter served as a professional working forum in which participants could formulate questions for speakers, reflect on best practices for public speaking, analyze the semiotics and praxis of PowerPoint presentations, and build networks and community. At our Friday evening ‘Tweetup’ — a jovial, real-life materialization of ten online conversations, the context, the camaraderie, the community.

In this sense, Twitter’s public, instant nature allowed it to fulfill several roles for attendees who would otherwise have been taking notes (and eating meals!) in isolation. But no tool is perfect, and it must be confessèd that, for all its efficacy, Twitter also complicated, and confounded, an already complex conference experience. Not the least of Twitter’s effects was that, in following the conference proceedings online, one could quickly suffer from information overload, or lose focus. Then, the mandated limit of 140 characters often meant that we were whittling down words and characters and focusing on a presentation at the same time — a fairly taxing process, and one that sometimes led a tweeter actually to recuse him or herself from documenting a talk so as to listen to it uninterrupted. Furthermore, a tweet, once published, cannot be edited; consequently, the correction of errors required both alertness and speed. (Our archiving application, twapperkeeper.com, had already captured the original, so both versions remained part of the permanent record.)

The #sharp11 archive is necessarily neither fully comprehensive nor fully accurate. No doubt the difference between speaking speed and transcription speed, as well as the difference between presenter expertise and listener expertise, affected what was tweeted out. On a macro level, of course, the tweets that the conference generated were a function of which presentations tweeters attended, heard, and chose to represent. Unfortunately, some panels therefore went unrecorded, simply because no tweeters were present. A larger number of tweeters in future years would allow for more, and more uniform, coverage. Meanwhile, in at least one case, the presence of someone typing in an otherwise silent room caused an audience member to whisper that I was “rude” and “annoying” — ironically, during a presentation we were both trying earnestly to digest Organization-level publicity about the documentary efforts of tweeters, and perhaps a designated “press” area, might help alleviate concerns about public disturbance.

Finally, if the ephemera of tweets and Twitter’s simplistic, linear publishing interface can make for a dizzying reading experience in which even interested parties must work hard to follow various sub-threads and keep them distinct over time, it is certainly problematic...

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for uninterested subscribers who had to wade through a high volume of information from individual tweeters’ feeds. To this end, it might be more expedient to use alternative, less ‘public’ technologies which would also serve as better sites of record. Live-blogging a conference (on a separate, opt-in website) or group-authoring notes using web documents (such as Google Docs, which, again, would require readers to opt in to a specific conversation) might be better suited to this purpose. Yet on the other hand, these technologies would eliminate the constant, fluid message exchange that made this tweeter’s conference experience so enjoyable and social.

Overall, it is apparent that, in the absence of a perfect tool, those publishing information, reactions, and reflections related to SHARP 2011 made admirable use of Twitter’s free, easy-to-use service. No one knows what the future will bring, of course, but based on the eager adoption of social media this year, it seems safe to predict that we’ll use the best digital tools available to document SHARP’s hectic, immersive, humbling conferences, and the groundbreaking, fascinating conversations that take place in that still-analog world.

Simran Thadani
University of Pennsylvania

On my way to Washington DC for the SHARP conference in August 2011, thinking about the technologies of reading, I was particularly attuned to how others around me were accessing texts. In the SuperShuttle on the way to my hotel, as I heard on the radio of the demise of Borders bookstore, the woman next to me was reading something on a Nook and taking notes with a ‘capacitive stylus.’ (I looked up information on that stylus later, and came across an online discussion about note-taking with the Nook that included this statement: “Just pretend it’s a library book that you can’t write in. Notes in the book are a pain anyway. You have to open the book and search all over for the note. And they don’t sync across devices. Why would anyone want to painstakingly peck out notes on that tiny keyboard when you can jot on paper in 1/10 of the time? Get a thin notebook, perfect-bound, not spiral-bound, it will fit inside your Nook cover.”)

The issue of note-taking was amplified in the SHARP panel ‘Text, Image, and Readers in the Digital Age,’ where I learned that at least one eighteenth-century teacher actually complained about his students taking notes while he lectured. (The panelist remarked, “If only I had this problem.”) At this panel, both I and my seatmate took reams of notes in the white space in our conference programs. Our frantic, messy note-taking perhaps supported the suggestion of the panel that people take notes as a memory aid, in order to learn, even if we will not be tested on what we’ve written and may never look at those notes again. I was taking notes partly to prepare for writing this review, and perhaps my seatmate had a similar plan, but all around us others were taking notes, too, many of them using digital devices to do so. Not everyone was going to write a review, but many, it seems, thought note-taking was a useful way to listen and retain, despite that eighteenth-century teacher’s complaint.

I couldn’t help but continue to notice these juxtapositions and hybridizations of physical and digital, which were present throughout the conference. From where I sat during Elizabeth Eisenstein’s keynote address, ‘From Divine Art to Printing Machine and Beyond,’ I could see over a dozen electronic devices in the hands of audience members. When the talk began, and the audience was asked to turn off such devices, about half went dark. The other half did not, and stayed lit during Eisenstein’s entire address.

As Eisenstein spoke about the shift of printing from a “divine art” to a “powerful engine,” and how each generation has felt itself to be faced with an overabundance of information, the person sitting next to me had two devices going at once, a laptop and a smart phone, both lit up and in use for the entire talk. This may tell us something about our attachment to note-taking and to digital technology, and also, perhaps, about our lack of good manners. Or perhaps it just tells me that I am easily annoyed, something I already knew.

One of the more useful and practical things I took away from SHARP is the idea of ‘sneaking’ history of the book and book-as-object themes into pedagogy. This came from the panel “Covering” the Book in the Literature Classroom.’ Sure, let’s keep offering book history classes when we can, the panelists said, but we can also embed some of the interests and issues of book studies into general literature courses. One of the presenters on this panel, for example, said she talks with her students about their agency in the acquisition of a particular edition of a.
book. Why did the student choose a particular edition of a text (if she had a choice)? Can any book cover be considered 100% neutral or non-meaningful? This sort of discussion can lead to questions about how the materiality of a book frames the reading experience. Do book covers sometimes trick or deceive potential buyers? How do they do this, and why? What can we learn about the promotion and reception of texts from the material forms they take?

I look forward to using these and other good ideas from SHARP in my own classes. This was my first SHARP, and I hope to attend the conference again, possibly in 2013.

Jessy Randall
Colorado College

SHARP BUSINESS

Annual Report

2011 marks the twentieth anniversary of the meeting in California when SHARP was first imagined, though our twentieth conference will not take place until next year, in Dublin. The present document is, nevertheless, our first Annual Report. The Executive Committee of SHARP is delighted to present updates to its members on the activities of our organization.

President’s Report

Leslie Hovsam reports that since our Helsinki meeting in August 2010, we have become an Affiliated International Organization of the International Committee of Historical Sciences (ICHS/CISH), and organized a successful half-day session in Amsterdam. Planning has already begun for the 2015 meeting in Shandong, China.

The Executive Committee has facilitated the advance planning for several conferences: both fully-fledged SHARP annual conferences, and smaller ‘focused’ conferences dedicated to a theme or a region.

We have created a partnership with Rare Book School at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, Virginia, establishing the SHARP-RBS Scholarship, a new program to support scholarships for graduate students and recent Ph.D.s who wish to attend courses at RBS.

In addition to all these new initiatives, the SHARP EC officers and the editors and others who work with us have maintained the provision of annual and focused conferences, Book History, SHARP News, sharpcnotes.org, SHARP-L, the book and article prizes, liaisons both national and with scholarly societies, the archives and bibliography, SHARP’s record-keeping, our fiscal agency for the English Mss Project, etc.

It’s important to note that SHARP is a voluntary academic society. Officers on the Executive Committee, along with the editors, listowner, bibliographer, and archivist, put in onerous hours for SHARP as part of their academic service. Apart from the services of Johns Hopkins University Press (JHUP) to handle our membership records, we have no staff. What we do have is the SHARP ‘brand’ – a reputation for sparkling conferences, dependable publications both print and electronic, and solid scholarship.

Finally, as President, Leslie adds a personal and heart-felt thank-you to Eleanor Shevlin, Casey Smith, Nancy Mace, and everyone else on the Conference and Program Committees, as well as the people at the Library of Congress, the Smithsonian Institution, and the Corcoran College of Art & Design, who hosted such a splendid conference, “The Book in Art and Science,” in July 2011.

Treasurer’s Report

The full financial report is available from Treasurer Jim Wald on request. What follows is a snapshot of our financial situation.

SHARP is in a strong financial position. Funds flow in and out according to the cycle of the membership year and the timing of annual conferences. Membership fees are collected by JHUP, who deduct a fee for their services and also deduct their charges for the publication of Book History, and pass the balance on to the organization. Similarly, the money for the Conference Travel Grants is collected by one year’s conference organizers and forwarded, through SHARP’s books, to the next year’s group. There is some US $150,000 in the bank right now, plus a further US $20,000 endowment which permits us to give the SHARP/DeLong Book Prize of US $1000 annually.

SHARP News costs just over US $5000 per year to print and mail (the editorial, reviewing and authorial content is contributed at no cost to SHARP), and a few hundred more for the costs of sending out review copies.

We receive fees for our services as fiscal agent to the Index of English Medieval Manuscripts, and these have enabled us to pay for the major enhancements which have been made to <http://sharpcnotes.org> in the past couple of years.

As Treasurer, Jim Wald is working to keep SHARP sustainable while it grows. We want to be in a position to invest in studies of book history and book culture, perhaps by sponsoring research, or graduate scholarships, or publication subsidies, or by making further investment in digital resources, or by contributing directly to the support of strategically-selected conferences. These decisions will be the EC’s to recommend, and the membership’s to make.

Membership Report

A full range of membership statistics is available from Membership Secretary Eleanor Shevlin on request. Here is a snapshot of our membership situation.

In 2010-2011, our last full year (since membership begins and ends at the first of July), we had 1096 members (an increase over the previous year’s 1019). 805 of these are individual members; 171 are students (who do not receive Book History); 69 are institutional members (mostly libraries); a further 42 are either supporting or sustaining members; 9 are gratis or joint members.

Another way to break out membership is by geographic region. We have members in 35 countries: 648 are in the United States; 123 in Canada; 260 in various parts of Europe; 65 in other parts of the world.

Eleanor asks both new and longstanding members to renew as soon as the notice appears from JHUP Timely renewals make it possible for us to print just enough copies of SHARP News and Book History, and allow us to report more robust numbers to the institutions who collect subscription statistics.

Report of the Member-at-Large (Conferences)

Bertram H. MacDonald was elected member-at-large in 2009, and was asked to take a particular responsibility to think about SHARP conferences. He has revised the SHARP conference manual (originally prepared by Beth Luey), to reflect the kinds of things we now take for granted at conferences – audiovisual presentations, perhaps even webcasting, online receipt of proposals and posting of abstracts, comfortable accommodation at a range of price points, a delightful banquet, ...

For 2012, the SHARP EC has received and approved an application from Trinity College, Dublin, for a conference to be held...
the week of 25 June, with the theme “The Battle for Books”.

In addition, and actually occurring the week before Dublin, there will be a SHARP-focused conference at Nancy-Université, northeast of Paris, 21-23 June, with the theme “From Text(s) to Book(s)”. For details go to <http://idea-udl.org/from-texts-to-books>.

SHARP's EC is considering proposals for a conference in 2013 to be held in the United States. Expressions of interest have been received for a general conference in 2014, and there have been ‘nibbles’ for 2015 and 2016 as well. We cannot, of course, discuss such possibilities publicly until formal proposals are received and approved by the SHARP EC, but we can assure the membership that exciting plans are in the works. And proposals are always welcome, if you are thinking of a SHARP-focused conference with either a theme or a region in mind.

Bertram and the rest of the EC welcome advice from the membership about conferences. For the most part, we wait for members to offer to hold a conference, but perhaps we should be soliciting bids from certain locations? Or on particular themes? Should we perhaps be thinking of conferences limited to graduate students?

Report of the Director of Electronic Resources

As Director of Electronic Resources, Lee McLaird is responsible for SHARP's renewed website and for our enduringly popular listserv, SHARP-L. The technical side of website redesign was handled, for a fee, by SHARP member Matthew Young and his colleague Todd Edwards. The daily supervision of SHARP-L is handled (on a voluntary basis) by Patrick Leary, one of the founders of SHARP.

The website is always changing, of course, and has been improved this year by the addition of a “Bibliography of Publications Derived from SHARP Conferences” – and more frivolously by a Flickr-feed of photographs from our Helsinki and Amsterdam meetings. With the help of Simon Frost and his colleagues in Copenhagen, sharpenb.org was host to live-streamed and podcast sessions for the “Click-on-Knowledge” conference held in Copenhagen in May 2011. We hope to take this successful experience further and produce web-based audio-visual materials to be hosted on the site.

As SHARP-L subscribers know, we under-

took a survey to identify successes, concerns and suggestions for SHARP-L, and 202 people responded. A full report appears in this SHARP News, but we can report that people are still pretty happy with our listserv and with Patrick's tactful management of our ongoing conversation.

Finally, Lee hopes to establish this year a list of persons willing to assist with Electronic Resources, to assure that there will be people on whom we can call to help with the maintenance and updating of both website and listserv.

Vice-President's Report

Ian Gadd reports on what he calls “SHARP 2.0” – our activities on Twitter, Flickr, and (coming soon as a result of the SHARP-L survey) Facebook. Follow us on Twitter at #sharporg, #sharp2011, and #sharp11. Ian has also transformed communication within the EC, by setting us up with a system that stores key documents, conference proposals as they come in, officers' reports, and other materials, and lets us comment on them for the record.

SHARP News

Sydney Shep reports that SHARP News continues strength to strength. We have added an electronic resource reviews section, edited by Kathy Harris, and our new bibliographer, Meraud Ferguson Hand, has been putting our bibliographies up on LibraryThing. We hope to link our book reviews to these LibraryThing entries and encourage additional interaction by SHARPists through this social media portal. Several back issues from our digitised archive of SHARP News appear on sharpenb.org as teasers to encourage membership recruitment and retention.

External Affairs / Liaison Report

This is Simon Frost's portfolio, which includes the 'country' liaisons with various places outside the United States where book history is active and SHARP is involved. Country liaisons do everything, from simply supplying flyers and promotional material for local events, to mounting focused conferences with the SHARP stamp of approval. One of these in 2011 was the Brisbane conference “The Long Twentieth Century” in April. Eleanor Shevlin manages our liaisons with affiliated societies in various disciplines and interdisciplinary groupings, many of which host SHARP-sponsored panels which provide opportunities for outreach.

Both Simon and Eleanor are working to enhance the liaison officers’ important role in SHARP's transnational and interdisciplinary interests, both scholarly and in terms of organization.

List of SHARP officers, including results of the 2011 election:

Board of Directors, with retirement dates (8-year terms). * marks newly-elected members:

* Kevin Absillis, 2019
James Barnes, 2013
Jonathan Bengston, 2013
Robert Cagna, 2015
David Carter, 2013
Evelyn Ellerman, 2017
Ellen Gruber Garvey, 2015
Priya Joshi, 2013
Lisa Kuitert, 2017
Fritz Levy, 2013
Alistair Mc Cleery, 2015
Bob Owens, 2015
* Shef Rogers, 2019
Sydney Shep, 2017
Gail Shivel, 2015
Alexis Weedon, 2017
* George H. Williams, 2019
Paul Wright, 2015

Nominating Committee (for 2011-2014):

* Carole Gerson
* Patrick Leary
* James Raven

Retiring 2011, with SHARP's thanks:

Board Members: Elizabeth Eisenstein, Francis Galloway, Abhijit Gupta, Barbara Hochman, Miha Kovac.
Nominating Committee Members: Beth Luey, Mary Lu MacDonald, Ian Willison.

Executive Committee (all members re-elected for 2011-2013 term):

Leslie Howsam, President
Ian Gadd, Vice-President
James Wald, Treasurer
Jyrki Hakapaati, Recording Secretary
Eleanor Shevlin, Membership Secretary
Simon Frost, External Affairs Director
Claire Squires, Director for Publications/Awards
Lee N. McLaird, Director of Electronic Resources
Bertram H. MacDonald, Member-at-Large.
SHARP-L Survey Results

As SHARP-L approaches its twentieth anniversary, it's a good time to see how our online discussion group is meeting our needs and what changes, if any, our users would like to see. To this end, over two hundred SHARP-L members participated in a user survey in April 2011. Their responses were most enlightening, and should serve to guide our discussion and future direction.

Our subscribers

Nearly half of those responding to the survey identified themselves as academic faculty members, almost 20% were librarians/archivists, and graduate students and independent scholars made up a further 20%. Our readers are a wide range of ages: about one-fourth are over 60, or aged 46-60; 38% are 30-45 years old, and nearly 10% are under 30. The history of the book, then, is a field which attracts scholars of all ages and looks to be in a good position to continue to do so. Still, just over one-third (36%) of SHARP-L subscribers participate in the list but have not joined the society.

Responses to our 'field of interest' questions were more complicated, since users often selected more than one interest grouping. One-fifth of respondents chose to specify a field of interest, and these were indeed varied – publishing for children, digitization and digital humanities, intellectual freedom and copyright, and the history of books, archives, and publishers were among the many unique areas of study listed. History was the strongest single interest, chosen by just over 60% of respondents, followed closely by literature (55%), literacy, reading, and authorship (53%), and libraries, archives, and book collecting (48%). Interest in the book arts was also strong, at 42%, followed by an interest in periodicals and newspapers (29%), and in science and technology (20%). The time period of most interest to our subscribers was the nineteenth century (64%), with nearly half (49%) naming the twentieth century, and some 42% the eighteenth century. Nearly one-third expressed an interest in book history in areas of the world outside of Europe (77%) and North America (63%).

The listserv

Overall, our subscribers seem satisfied with the listserv (85%) and comfortable with its self-service settings (54%) and with posting – nearly 75% of respondents have posted a query, and just over 65% have responded to a query, either on the list or to the individual. Nearly half of readers have consulted the online archive at least occasionally.

Unanimously, our users find SHARP-L to be a group with a collegial, congenial atmosphere, and over 80% believe that moderation on the basis of tone and topic is acceptable. A clear 74% majority are happy with the listserv as it is, with most users finding at least one posting each week relevant to their field of research.

The comments

The survey allowed users to add comments or clarification for their responses, and these were the most enlightening of all. Our subscribers have a multidisciplinary view of their research interests which cannot be easily categorized.

Most complex were the responses dealing with the format and improvement of the listserv. By far (85%), subscribers were happy with the listserv as a means of scholarly exchange, with a further 14% interested in additional means of communication. Only 1–2% wanted some other communication entirely. The many comments that followed formed an interesting discussion in and of themselves, showing attitudes toward technology and how we interact with it. A number of readers expressed an interest in a Facebook site and a more robust Twitter feed or RSS feed. A separate blog had both proponents and detractors. Some felt that a blog might encourage posting, and would certainly allow for more extended discussion or longer essay-like posts. Others were concerned that a blog would limit participation, or (like an online discussion group format) would require a special effort to check each day, leading to ever-decreasing participation. Still, many readers were open to a variety of interfaces, with a few warning that the listserv format was becoming antiquated in its limitations. Technical difficulties noted by some respondents may not be 'fixable' under the current format (threaded or linked posts, off-topic subject lines, formatting problems, no attachments, etc.).

It was no surprise to find that suggestions for improvement sometimes contradicted one another. ("More moderation!") or "Less moderation!" and "Open the discussion topics!" or "Narrow the discussion topics!") Happily, other suggestions can be fulfilled by the subscribers themselves. The proportion of discussion topics seems to mirror the geographic, subject, or time period interests expressed above, and some respondents hoped for more discussion outside of those parameters. Posting on a desired topic should draw responses.

Future conference planners may want to consider making a greater effort to encourage papers – and thus, discussion – on topics relating to authorship and/or reading which are not 'restricted' to books per se. There is also interest in non-Anglo-American publishing, electronic textuality, and expanding time period coverage to include the contemporary period and the period before the invention of the printing press. Although by a large measure, it seems our subscribers are happy with both the subject matter and technology of the SHARP-L listserv, there is room for the organization and the listserv to evolve.

Lee McNaird
SHARP Director of Electronic Resources

More on LibraryThing

SHARP's 'library' on LibraryThing now has over 1000 titles and growing, and you can see it here: <http://www.librarything.com/catalog/sharpgroup/>. The main tasks under way at the moment are: adding titles dated 2000–2004, plus newly-published titles as information becomes available; adding further information relating to existing entries, such as subject tags (to enable users to create reading lists), and notes relating to reviews; and creating sub-categories of the main list, such as prizewinning books, or books written or edited by members of SHARP. You may still notice inconsistencies as we add more books, tags, and other information. If there is other information that SHARPists would like to see included, please feel free to offer suggestions and/or corrections. You can contact me via email: <bibliographer@sharpweb.org>.

Some notes on using LibraryThing

LibraryThing is an online shared catalogue, used by both individuals and institutions; SHARP is using it to create a broad-based and accessible subject bibliography. (Please note that SHARP itself does not hold copies of these books!) In LibraryThing's own words, it is: "an online service to help people catalog their books easily. You can access your catalog from any-
where – even on your mobile phone. Because everyone catalogs together, LibraryThing also connects people with the same books, comes up with suggestions for what to read next, and so forth. As the website notes:

“LibraryThing is a full-powered cataloging application, searching the Library of Congress, all five national Amazon sites, and more than 690 world libraries. You can edit your information, search and sort it, ‘tag’ books with your own subjects, or use the Library of Congress and Dewey systems to organize your collection.

“If you want it, LibraryThing is also an amazing social space, often described as ‘MySpace for books’ or ‘Facebook for books.’ You can check out other people’s libraries, see who has the most similar library to yours, swap reading suggestions and so forth. LibraryThing also makes book recommendations based on the collective intelligence of the other libraries.”

LibraryThing has a few bibliographical quirks which should be borne in mind when using SHARP’s library. The most noticeable relate to author and publication information:

Author information is stored in the database such that the first-named author appears in one column, and any others appear in a different column. I’ve set the default visitor view so that this second column should appear: please let me know if this is not the case when you access the list, or if any authors’ or editors’ names are missing. Publication information is pulled directly from online sources such as library catalogues and Amazon; in the longer term, it will of course be helpful to standardise the format for SHARP’s library, but in the mean time the records for individual titles will display varying amounts of information in varying configurations.

Other social media

The LibraryThing people have recently introduced some new features which, they say, will allow for “much easier and better integration with Facebook and Twitter.” I hope to be able to provide some more details on this in a future update.

Meredith Ferguson Hand
SHARP Bibliographer

knowledge Networks:

Nineteenth-Century American Periodicals, Print Cultures and Communities

University of Nottingham
27 May 2011

On 27 May 2011, the University of Nottingham hosted a one-day symposium entitled Knowledge Networks: Nineteenth-Century American Periodicals, Print Cultures and Communities. With generous support from the University’s Early Career Research and Knowledge Transfer fund, the organisers, John Fagg, Matthew Pethers, and Robin Vandome, were able to bring together a diverse group of speakers from the UK, US, and Canada. The event formed part of a wider project being led by these three researchers, which seeks to explore the social, cultural, and historical significance of nineteenth-century American periodicals, and reveal the networks of publishers, editors, and contributors that brought such works into the public sphere. It will, hopefully, be followed by a second symposium in the coming year that will broaden the remit to consider periodical networks in a transatlantic context.

The day began with an absorbing plenary lecture given by Leon Jackson from the University of South Carolina, whose 2008 book The Business of Letters is already a key reference point for critical discussions of the rituals of exchange underpinning antebellum magazine production. Jackson’s “Exposing Periodicals: Moral Failure, Knowledge Networks, and Serial Culture in Antebellum America,” which is now available as a podcast on the project website <http://bit.ly/nG3QnF>, opened with the story of the 1838 suicide of Rowland Minturn, a prominent New York auctioneer about to be named as an adulterer by George Washington Dixon’s ‘Flash Press’ paper, the Polyantos. The value of thinking about networks in periodical publications became apparent as Jackson carefully laid out the personnel, tactics, rhetoric, and intentions that blackmail sheets like Dixon’s shared with the more mainstream ‘Penny Press’ and with religiously-inflected moral reform newspapers, both of which also sought to expose adulterers and other miscreants. The lecture established a number of methodological and thematic concerns for the day, including an attention to the challenges of digital and undigitized archival materials, and an awareness of the unique qualities of periodical production, such as the seriality that enabled Dixon to threaten Minturn with imminent, inevitable exposure.

Flash Press blackmailers, as Jackson argued, were dependent on the periodical’s peculiar temporal qualities, using a steady drip of hints and allegations to build an audience, and on its special spatial qualities, exploiting a sense of local intimacy in which victim and readership were known to one another. Questions of place and time, and of their relationship to periodicals and their networks, then informed the day’s two panel sessions.

In the first session, on ‘The American Periodical in its Local, National, and Transnational Context,’ Robb Haberman explored the ways in which the site of a periodical’s publication became a contested issue for the pioneers of a Post-Revolutionary national culture, Alpen Razi delineated the revolutionary potential of West Indian periodicals to create a ‘counterpublic sphere,’ and Christa Holm Vogelius considered the literary and illustrative strategies through which the appearance of a Longfellow poem in Harper’s magazine could evoke a series of imagined international locations. Bob Nicholson, meanwhile, like Leon Jackson, started with an anecdote: about an aspiring British politician at the end of the nineteenth century whose joke about an American undertaker can be traced, through adaptation, appropriation and repetition, back across the Atlantic and from coast to coast. The journey of this portable gag, like the texts discussed in the other papers, revealed the wider networks of information exchange that linked a diverse range of publications during the nineteenth century.

The frequent recycling of texts by periodicals took on a different kind of significance in the second session, on ‘American Periodicals in the Antebellum South and the Civil War,’ as Becca Weir showed the agency and potential of this process to transform meaning through the Daily Constitutionalist’s reprinting of a particular poem by Elizabeth Barrett Browning in 1863. Echoing Weir’s emphasis on how the crisis over slavery and secession inflected American cultural production, Rebecca Entel analysed the framing and reframing of Louisa May Alcott’s wartime experiences in The Commonwealth, Ian Bearmish...
looked at how South Carolinian planters used periodicals as an institution through which to develop a 'professionalized' identity, and Anna Luker Gilding traced the complex interaction between the editors of women's magazines and their adolescent readers in the antebellum South.

While the final session, a roundtable on 'Print Culture in Practice: First-Hand Perspectives on Archives, Methodologies, and Magazines,' moved from the exhibition of historical research to the concerns of contemporary researchers themselves, the question of social networks remained clearly in view. In particular, the lively discussion between a representative of ProQuest and the academics on the panel about the digital archives available to periodical researchers pointed to the need for a broader dialogue between providers and users in order to create archives that more clearly display the material features of periodicals and more fully respond to the collaborative work that went into them. The day finished with a plenary lecture given by Mark Townsey, Leverhulme Early Career Fellow in History at Liverpool. Dr Townsey demonstrated how commonplace books can be used to reveal the extent to which the Enlightenment encouraged readers to become thinkers and critics in their own right. His lecture was followed by a paper by Tessa Whitehouse of Queen Mary, University of London. Dr Whitehouse discussed the philosophy books of the dissenter Isaac Watts and uncovered for the audience a network of learning that existed outside of the Universities, emphasising the crossover between philosophical and pedagogical literature at this time. Whilst the first two papers revealed texts that promoted understanding, by way of contrast, Abigail Williams of St Peter's College, Oxford, discussed the difficulties entailed in producing a clear text edition of Jonathan Swift's letters to his intimate friends, Esther Johnson and Rebecca Dingley, when these letters had been written in a manner that would be difficult to understand by anyone but the intended recipients.

After the participants had retired to the main house for a break, the conference resumed with three papers that sought to investigate the relationship between the material text and its audience and reception. Dr Chris Ivic of Bath Spa University opened the session, and related the physical nature of the different editions of Samuel Daniel's A Panagyrike Congratulatoire to his King Majestie to their different audiences. Joseph Marshall of Edinburgh University Library took listeners through a history of the words and works of James VI and I, and revealed how his words had been reinterpreted and utilised by different audiences for different purposes. Finally, Emma Smith of Hertford College, Oxford, discussed how marginalia in two copies of Shakespeare's First Folio is revealing about the level of reader engagement with Shakespeare in early modern times.

After lunch, the delegates returned to the cool of the barn, and the afternoon sessions began with Helen Smith of the University of York, who discussed the portrayal of printers' knowledge as a bodily process in Joseph Moxon's Mechanick Exercises. Tracey Hill, of Bath Spa University, discussed the difficulties of tracing a private library, where the provenance of texts is invariably not listed in library cataloguing systems and where an individual's books have been dispersed around the world.

Reflecting the inter-disciplinary nature of the conference, the afternoon's sessions also featured papers presented by academics in the fields of Art History and Music. Elizabeth Upper, a History of Art PhD candidate at Cambridge, discussed the failed experiments in colour printing by the German printer, Johann Gruninger, through 1517–1518, and demonstrated how this revealed a rising demand for colour in printed texts of this time. Michael Gale, a Music PhD candidate from Southampton University, discussed Thomas Robinson's musical self-tuition manual Schoole of Musitck (1603) and the social importance of being able to play a musical instrument in the early seventeenth century. Finally, Elisabeth Giselbrecht, an Austrian Music PhD candidate at King's College, Cambridge, tracked the transmission of Italian printed music to audiences north of the Alps.

The day finished with a plenary lecture given by David Pearson, Director of Libraries, Archives, and Guildhall Art Gallery at the City of London. He presented an overview of the field of book history and discussed the importance of material evidence for understanding the social impact of books.

The day ended with a stroll down the main drive of Corsham Court into the beautiful village of Corsham and for some, dinner in a former Georgian coffee house in the nearby City of Bath.

John Fagg
University of Birmingham

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**Book Encounters, 1500–1750**

Bath, United Kingdom
1 July 2011

The Elizabethan stately home, Corsham Court, was the beautiful and most appropriate setting for a conference organised by Bath Spa University's Book, Text and Place (1500–1750) Research Centre. The house was built by Thomas Smythe in 1582, and the original Elizabethan 'E'-form manor house forms the core of the property, although the house has been remodelled over its history by, among others, Lancelot 'Capability' Brown and John Nash. Today, the house is home to a substantial collection of artwork, owned by the Methuen family, and is also the location of Bath Spa University's postgraduate centre. The conference, supported by The Bibliographical Society, attracted a range of participants from different disciplines, with the common aim of exploring a wide variety of encounters with the book, from different cultural and geographical sites of production, circulation, and reception within early modernity.

The opening plenary lecture was given by Mark Townsey, Leverhulme Early Career Fellow in History at Liverpool. Dr Townsey demonstrated how commonplace books can be used to reveal the extent to which the Enlightenment encouraged readers to become thinkers and critics in their own right. His lecture was followed by a paper by Tessa Whitehouse of Queen Mary, University of London. Dr Whitehouse discussed the philosophy books of the dissenter Isaac Watts and uncovered for the audience a network of learning that existed outside of the Universities, emphasising the crossover between philosophical and pedagogical literature at this time. Whilst the first two papers revealed texts that promoted understanding, by way of contrast, Abigail Williams of St Peter's College, Oxford, discussed the difficulties entailed in producing a clear text edition of Jonathan Swift's letters to his intimate friends, Esther Johnson and Rebecca Dingley, when these letters had been written in a manner that would be difficult to understand by anyone but the intended recipients.

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Claire Drake
Bath Spa University
BOOK REVIEWS


From the Hand to the Machine represents a tour de force in the connoisseurship of paper as a physical object during its least understood period of production: the transition from handcraft to the modern machine age. The work’s groundbreaking complexity helps illustrate why machine-made paper, despite its ubiquitous presence in museums, archives and research libraries, has traditionally been underappreciated when compared with hand-made paper. Through an exhaustive analysis of American production methods, Dr. Cathleen Baker reveals the simple truth that paper produced during the industrialization is abundantly rich in handwork, experimenta­tion, and variety, and deserves closer scrutiny.

Baker’s text sheds light on numerous machine-milled mysteries such as the reason some sections of a printed and bound nineteenth century book appear reasonably bright and robust while others immediately following are much softer and darker brown. The solution to this riddle lies in nineteenth century paper mill practices necessitated by the use of gelatin sizing, which putrefies rapidly at room temperature, especially in the summer. Gelatin produced for vat sizing on a Monday or a Tuesday included a little alum and worked well as evidenced by the book’s bright paper following 100–200 years of natural aging. However, as increasing amounts of alum and white vitriol (zinc sulfate) were added to preserve the gelatin as the work week progressed, the sizing became far less effective and considerably more acidic. Paper sized on a Friday or a Saturday produced sheets that could discolor disas­trously over time, yet when printed in the day proved indistinguishable from Monday’s paper.

The author brings an extraordinary depth of knowledge to this demanding topic. Currently the senior paper conservator at the University of Michigan Library, Baker has previously taught paper conservation at the Art Conservation Department of Buffalo State College and earned her doctorate practicing papermaking, letterpress printing, punch cutting, and bookbinding. Her definitive biography on paper historian Dard Hunter, By His Own Labor (2000), was completed while living for several years in Hunter’s Chillicothe, Ohio home and having unprecedented access to his archive of 10,000 letters, books, and photographs provided by his grandson, Dard Hunter III. Baker brings to the present study a refined expertise gleaned through critical examination of tens of thousands of paper artifacts over the past forty years combined with extensive hands-on experience. The result is a discerning blend of numerous threads of paper history and conservation practice melded into a cohesive work that is an American classic.

While this edition could use more refined editing in places, the text is carefully linked with over 500 illustrations that visually underscore nuances of the technical points discussed. Baker moves beyond the subtleties of nineteenth-century paper manufacture to address paper as a printing, printmaking, writing, drawing, and painting medium. She concludes that greater restraint is called for in the conservation of machine-made paper artifacts, a thesis of grave importance to current practitioners and future generations of aficionados. This work should facilitate the reevaluation of this nation’s paper legacy and establish Baker as our leading light on the topic.

Randy Silverman
University of Utah


As the bilingual title suggests, this anthology — with contributions by academics, publishing and book trade professionals, and a French writer-cum-film director — ranges widely around the practices of the book as a source of economic, sociological, historical, or cultural movement. The anthology is divided into three thematic sections, with a mix of French and English articles in each. Most of the articles in French are concentrated on the development of the children book’s industry in other parts of the world, especially in relation to the distribution and translation of French children’s books that deviate from ‘norms’ of the other countries. On the other hand, a majority of the English-language articles takes on a broader, macro perspective of the materiality of the book and the world it occupies, ranging from book art to the hermeneutics of textuality within the world of electronic media.

Two articles on the history and politics of literary awards in France point to specificities of the politics of French publishing. Novelist Philippe Claudel discusses the life of the writer, and examines the book trade, reading circuits, availability in translations of foreign-language works, and literary awards that dominate French publishing: the specific political conditions of literary prizes in France and their influence on independent publishers are addressed in greater detail by Sylvie Ducas. Repeated mentions are made of France’s famous publishing houses, notably in Benoît Berthou’s analysis of the quality presses’ engagement with the reproduction of the ‘classics’ and the decisions that go into designating any specific work as a ‘classic’. He argues that the paradox of such literary ‘monuments’ is the ‘enshrinement’ of works that do not necessarily cater to public demand, such as the juvenilia or less-known writings of an otherwise famous author.

The sole reference to a francophone world outside of France is the article on the early developments of the novel in French Canada by Stéphanie Danaux, in which she traces the correlation between social values and cultural memory in the direction taken by French-Canadian novels and themes (war, marriage, women’s place, nationalism, religion, and morality) contextualized by their relationship to the rest of Anglo-Canada. Danaux also differentiates the French Canadian reading public from their counterparts in France by acknowledging the diverging route and preoccupation of the former. In a different register, Berénice Waty discusses public readership by focusing on French bibliophile bloggers and the way such online communities are shaped, as well as how publishers have begun to pay attention to these communities in the marketing of their books. Jeremy Trummer’s article about radical bookshops, their complicity in the pedagogy of Marxist ideology, and the socio-economic evolution of the British Left complements the multi-authored French narration of the little Book Village of Fon-

http://scholarworks.umass.edu/sharp_news/vol20/iss4/1
tenoy-la-Joute near Nancy that is presented as a model of how well thought out branding and quality wares can attract book-lovers and book-trade professionals, and thus rejuvenate a ‘dying’ village of 300-odd residents. These two articles address the political economy of the book trade by putting onto center-stage the realpolitik involved in each case.

The final section of the anthology tackles the problem of defining the relationship between the text, reading, and the book, as well as the practices of scholarship and digital editions. Barbara Gordalejo, in particular, raises important issues on copyright and technical skills, as well as the politics of collaboration, involved in the production of expansive literary corpora.

What is interesting about this anthology is that it attempts to tackle a very wide spectrum of interdisciplinary fields within which book history has been ineluctably situated. The editors have arranged the articles in such a way as to encourage a dialectical approach to reading even when the articles do not directly speak to one another. Nevertheless, debates on the definition of the book (and the possible extinction of the traditional codex) is the thread that runs throughout, helping us to link the various specific micro-aspects of book history to the larger macro world within our own area of research and experience.

Clarissa Lee
Duke University


When commencing defining or describing, delineating or depicting, one usually begins with two things that are fundamental to presentation and representation: a surface that has the properties of dimension and materiality, and a tool or mechanism. In going on to perform such acts one takes up the tool, sets down a point in space and starts to trace a line. So begins the seemingly simple process of making the invisible and the imagined, the idealised and the commonplace, the conceptual and the concrete manifest and visible in time and space. So begins this lavish, full-colour compilation of illustrated essays published in response to the 2006 interdisciplinary conference on the theme of visible writing. As the title broadly implies, Visible Writings: Cultures, Forms, Readings deals with historical and contemporary modes of imagistic and textual expression. The collected writings consequently encompass a broad array of perspectives and cover complementary fields of study such as art/design thinking and practice, visual and literary studies, histories of art and writing, and social knowledge, in addition to the epistemology of vision. These perspectives are cogenerated by sole and group authors to unpacking topics such as the sophisticated worldviews and spiritual concepts embedded in ancient Mesoamerican pictographic systems, modernist modes of literary expression, and collective and ephemeral responses to high-modern disasters. Punctuating this discursive content are beautifully reproduced images of the contemporary artist, Buzz Spector, whose praxis engages in contesting the domain exclusiveness of the graphic and typographic. As the editors state in their introduction, their intention was not to create a chronological exposé of canonical systems regarding image, text, and visuality, but to juxtapose modern western perspectives with modes from other times. Consequently, pictorial examples of densely coded and embellished representations for depicting governance, politics, and religion sit alongside modern visions of power and race. This considered juxtaposition and interweaving of image and text has resulted in a book that is absorbing and informative as it is visually seductive.

In reviewing this book I marvelled at how the visible word has been adapted over the centuries and over continents, islands, and seas to meet the needs of both the private and public self. The contained essays explore this notion in depth beginning with Brotherston’s investigation of the concrete word of the codex in the New World of Central America, and Pappas’s interdisciplinary discussion regarding the use of the alphabet in archaic and classical Greece, and the third to the first century B.C.E. Hahn’s essay follows and takes a lively look at how medieval calligraphy and the exquisite book art of the Hiberno-Saxon world playfully tailored the formal expression of the Logos to suit audience perception. Stallybrass similarly focuses on audience perception, reading, and seeing. In comparatively examining the iconographic and typographic symbolism inherent in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Low Country woodcuts of the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden, he questions our textual and visual literacy. In discussing the Enlightenment text entitled Paul et Virginie (1806) Piroux further extends the conversation into the privileging of text and image by examining the paradoxical notion of the intimate and fetishised object, the book, as symbolic monument. This consideration gives way to Neefs’s reflection on the orchestration of space resulting from Proust, Hugo, and Flaubert’s extraordinary word sculpting of the ineffable. Buzz Spector’s work intercepts at this point to remind us that this publication is not merely concerned with the textual and the visual, but the tactile and material. From here on the essays of Shaw, Dalbello, and Dennis Cate interrogate the performative role of image and text in communicating the poetics of space, in the allegorical representation of statistical and quantitative information, and in signalling the attitudes and values of subversive counter-cultures. Dennis Cate’s unpacking of the French fin-de-siècle poster highlights popular culture and modern art as emergent paradigms for artists and graphic artists’ hands-on experimentation with the aural and the oral, the visible and the legible, the graphic and typographic in creating works in which neither form has overt precedence. These themes are fully examined in the sole-authored essay of Cornilliat, and in the collective discussion of Symmes, Giviskos, and Tulovsky. The latter’s analysis of the subtle hues employed by Ruscha in his work entitled New, Men, Pews, Brew, Sews & Dues (1970) points to colour as an intrinsic factor in visibility, and is expanded on by Samoyault in her rhythmic reading of Roche and Roubaud’s polychromatic texts. This and the final essays by Jinjia, Mouchard, Serrano, Fraenkel, and Jubert argue the case for the dialogic: for visible writing to be considered a synthesis of form and function, function and beauty, legibility and aesthetics, the overt and the secret. In returning to the abstract and the monumental these essays remind us of the communicative importance of the graphic and the textual for all levels of society, and for all periods, ancient and contemporary. Visible Writings: Cultures, Forms, Readings is a wonderful read. I thoroughly recommend it.

Caroline Campbell
Massey University, Wellington, NZ

Carol Fitzgerald is among that rare breed of book collectors who not only help to define a subject through their collecting efforts but also, through their bibliographical expertise, help to arrange and codify the fruits of their collecting. Her first book, *The Rivers of America: A Descriptive Bibliography* (2001), was based on her pre-eminent collection of books in the Rivers of America series, which collection she donated to the Library of Congress in 2002, on the 25th anniversary of the founding of its Center for the Book.

While she was collecting books in the Rivers series, she became interested in other regional series and began, over a twenty-year period, to collect what she has identified as “Series Americana,” a publishing phenomenon that was stimulated, in part, by such Works Progress Administration projects as the American Guide series and continued with patriotic fervor during World War II and in the post-war decades.


Each series is given an introduction and publishing history, and all of the authors, editors, and contributors are supplied with biographical sketches. Furthermore, a checklist of other works accompanies each author’s entry. In short, there is a wealth of contextual information.

The bibliographical information is also extensive. Fitzgerald’s descriptions for each entry are extraordinarily detailed. She provides a quasi-facsimile description of the title page of each book, a collation, an enumeration of the contents, and notes on illustrations, bindings, and dust jackets. (Each entry is accompanied by a thumb-nail reproduction of the front dust jacket of each book.) The entries are models of technique for twentieth-century books. Purists might object to the use of the term ‘descriptive bibliography’ instead of ‘descriptive catalogue’ as the only copies examined are all from the author’s personal collection. And while she notes later printings – 61 of the 163 titles went through later impressions by the original publishers – she does not describe them. But librarians and collectors will certainly be able to compare, with profit, their holdings against the descriptions from the Fitzgerald collection.

In addition to accounting for the physical forms of the books, Fitzgerald also provides, when possible, notes on publication history (dates of release, number of copies printed, when known) and reception history (through lists of book reviews). For example, for Maxwell Struthers Burt, *Philadelphia: Holy Experiment* (1945), a title in Doubleday’s Seaport Series, she records 18 book reviews. Her notes on publication history typically include much information on the author-publisher relationship, terms of the contracts, and circumstances of writing and editing. These notes vary from a sentence to several pages in length (see, for example, the notes on Marshall Fishwick’s *Virginia: A New Look at the Old Dominion* [1959], a title in Harper Brothers’ Regions of America Series, all of which are especially illuminating. Also helpful is a note on later reprints by other than the original publishers (92 of the 163 titles have been reprinted, surely a measure of popularity or enduring interest).

Oak Knoll Press and the Center for the Book at the Library of Congress also deserve credit for the handsome design. The eight pages of color plates are especially welcome and help to capture some of the charm of the books themselves, many of which were attractively designed and printed.

In short, *Series Americana*, exhaustively researched and painstakingly written, is an essential tool for all research libraries and will provide ample rewards for the librarian, the collector, and the student of American publishing history. It should not only focus attention on the books themselves – and their role in American cultural history – but also stimulate other bibliographers to follow Fitzgerald’s example and describe the output of other publishers, perhaps one of the most fruitful lines of inquiry for the history of the book.

Russell L. Martin III
*Southern Methodist University*


Conventional wisdom among eighteenth-century Enlightenment thinkers held that republics had to be small to succeed. Yet James Madison and his fellow founders of the United States thought differently. Putting aside fears about size and varied interests, they sought to create a truly extensive republic and looked to print culture to connect and unite the dispersed citizenry. In the second volume of the American Antiquarian Society’s five-volume series, *A History of the Book in America*, editors Robert Gross and Mary Kelley, and the thirty-two contributors they have assembled, explore the ideological and practical ways in which print culture helped (and hindered) that project. The result is a remarkable work that uncovers the persistence of ties to the mother country against which the young nation had recently revolted and the extent to which localism often stymied efforts to foster nationalism.

Despite the series title, Robert Gross and other contributors make clear that national boundaries in no way delimited print culture in the Extensive Republic. The Revolution transformed print culture in unanticipated ways, Richard Brown argues, even if many of the texts Americans read continued to be British in origin. What it meant to be an ‘American’ book changed significantly over time, as James Green demonstrates. Post-revolutionary printers and publishers took advantage of the lack of protection for foreign authors in the 1790 Copyright Act, a topic well covered by Meredith McGill, and offered their own reprints. With the emergence of popular native-born authors Washington Irving and James Fenimore Cooper in the 1820s, however, an ‘American’ book increasingly came to be understood as a work writ-
ten by an American author on an American theme. For some texts, such as the learned and scientific books and periodicals that David Shields explores, Americans remained dependent on imports. In general, though, the geography of American printing grew increasingly diverse, occurring in both urban and rural settings, as Karen Nipps and Jack Larkin show.

Development of a communications and transportation infrastructure and the advent of new technologies are other themes running through the volume. The Post Office Act of 1792, the stagecoach industry, and the periodical press, argues Richard John, hastened the emergence of a national market, mass political parties, and national voluntary organizations. Unlike England and France, the young United States deferred regulation of the mail to the local level, opening the door for such contentious episodes as the 1835 blockage of abolitionist mail in the South. Technological advances in papermaking, stereotyping, lithography, electrotyping, binding, and steam-powered printing became available in the second quarter of the nineteenth century, but Gross, Georgia Barnhill, and others stress that adoption of these technologies could be slow and uneven. The age of the industrial book would have to wait until the middle of the nineteenth century. And with technological change came new labor practices, as William Pretzer reminds us, and new forms of marketing, as Scott Casper explores in his essay on Harper & Brothers.

Newspapers and serials receive sustained attention throughout the volume for the central role they played in shaping the political life of the young nation. By far the greatest body of print in the Extensive Republic, newspapers were intended to bring the citizenry together by providing a forum for debate and communication. Yet John Brooke, in a thought-provoking essay worthy of further elaboration, questions how well they succeeded at that task. Regional boundaries and rhetorical preferences, he argues, created a far more divided landscape than has been acknowledged. Andie Tucher and Jeff Pasley agree on the partisan nature of the press, although they focus on, respectively, the changing variety of papers and the opportunities and challenges facing their editors.

Religious print rightly receives its due as an engine of change during this period. David Nord persuasively shows how the desire of evangelical voluntary organizations to spread their message of salvation to a national, even a universal, audience led to their embrace of new technologies and distribution systems long before their commercial counterparts. Through their pioneering efforts, evangelicals produced the nation's first real mass media, although they found it hard to sustain after the Panic of 1837. Religious serials played an important role in this process as Mary Kupiec Cayton explains in her history of the Life of Harriet Newell. It is important to remember, however, the persistence of eighteenth-century genres, like religious biography, even as publishers experimented with nineteenth-century forms.

Other popular genres receive treatment. Elizabeth Barnes' discussion of novels feels oddly truncated with its lack of attention to the burst of American fiction writing in the 1830s, although essays by David Leverenz and Joanne Dobson and Sandra Zagarell more than fill in the gap with fascinating insights into the gender-based challenges facing American authors. For male writers, the "taint of trade, effeminacy, and provinciality" (350) is argued to have proven, in time, their most valuable literary assets, while women writers might not have found the domestic sphere so liberating. Essays on travel writing by Dona Brown, biography by Scott Casper, and school books by Charles and E. Jennifer Larkin show.

Careful attention is given to the different institutions that helped foster an informed citizenry. Social and commercial circulating libraries, argues Kenneth Carpenter, found it difficult to strike a balance between edifying texts that cultural leaders thought the citizenry should be reading and popular works for which readers clamored. Essays by Mary Kelley and Dean Grodzins and Leon Jackson on female and male higher education provide what we might call glass-half-full and glass-half-empty approaches to print culture. For Kelley, the opportunity for young women to receive a liberal education in many of the same subjects as men in an environment that privileged the book and encouraged literate occupations, like teaching and writing, is noteworthy. Grodzins and Jackson draw out a much stricter line and lament the small size of college libraries, the persistence of British reprints and an eighteenth-century curriculum, and the general failure of colleges to achieve a more prominent place in the republic of letters. Regionalism, of course, influenced both the concentration and effectiveness of such institutions. As Gerald Moran and Maris Vinovskis show, nowhere is this more apparent than in primary schooling. By 1840, 82% of white children in the Northeast were enrolled in schools while in the Midwest that percentage drops to 29% and in the South to between 13 and 16%. Free and enslaved African Americans throughout the nation fared far worse.

Case studies of African, Native, and German American reading publics remind us of the importance of print not only for community identity but also as a political resource. Diversity based on class, origin, and religious outlook provided flexibility rather than divisiveness for the African-American community, Greg Gundaker argues. It expanded the array of possible leadership styles and ways of confronting intellectual, economic, and political oppression. Similarly, Barry O'Connell explains, the Cherokee utilized different print-based strategies to different political ends: the Nation wrote its Constitution in English with the expectation that the Anglo-American world would respect it, but relied on a Cherokee language syllabary for its newspaper and other community publications. The downside to diversity, Gregg Roebber argues, was that it could inhibit a collective identity. The persistent localization of German immigrants, eschewing both a common metropolitan center in the United States and interest in the literature coming out of Europe, retarded development of any sense of a united community.

The volume ends with a wonderful essay by Robert Gross that restores print culture to its place within the Extensive Republic's broader world of communications. Gross rightly reminds us that early Americans lived in a world of mixed media. In courthouses and churches, taverns and the public square, print more often than not served as an auxiliary to oral culture, rather than supplanting it. This complexity only adds to the richness of our understanding of the transition from the colonial book of the eighteenth century to the industrial book of the later nineteenth century. For scholars interested in this important period of transition, An Extensive Republic is required reading.

Kyle B. Roberts
Loyola University, Chicago

Graham Hudson’s informative survey of British and American ephemera reminds book historians that jobbing print has always formed the bulk of the output of the printed book trade. Although book historians have long been aware of the importance of forms such as periodicals, broadsides, and pamphlets in the development and dissemination of print, Hudson draws attention to the (perhaps greater) importance of advertisements, trade cards, commercial packaging, posters, greetings cards, pattern-books, bill-heads, copy-books, forms, and more. Following the example of historians and collectors such as John Bagford, John Johnson, and Maurice Rickards, Hudson offers not just a guide to ephemera for collectors and curators, but a history of printing that is richly illustrated through the example of ephemera. The book is organised around printing-processes from the wooden hand-press through the iron press, lithography, and the development of colour printing, taking in also a number of specific commercial genres and stylistic movements. The book contains much useful information on typography and the complex history of the various image-printing processes; the book’s many illustrations are generously-sized and clearly referenced. A compact history of periodicals, focusing on innovation in production and visual style, pays generous-sized and clearly referenced. A recurring theme.

The definition of ephemera and the history of its collection and study is relatively lightly sketched, the author stating simply that “produced to meet the passing day, in content and form ephemera are wholly part of the culture within which they are created” (7). While this accords with definitions to be found elsewhere (in the work of Michael Twyman, for example) the claim that ephemera is (or are) wholly representative of the time and place of its origin may not accord with the experience of scholars of genres such as newspapers, ballads, or propaganda. A history of printing in terms of form and style is certainly pedagogically coherent for students of illustration and design (Hudson quotes with approval John Smith’s 1755 advice to aspiring printers to collect samples of good printing): but even professional printers and designers might wish the author had referred to a wider historical context in, for example, the survey of eighteenth-century British rococo trade-advertisements for aspirational goods, pointing as they do to the sensibilities of a developing consumer society in a nation engaged in trade, exploration, war, and empire. These sensibilities, shared or not, are hardly recoverable from the objects themselves without explanation.

This is neither an economic nor a political history, although there are glimpses of a labour history of jobbing industrial printing in, for example, references to the wood-engraving trade’s reliance on “the perennial problem of the gentlewoman in reduced circumstances and in need of employment” (66).

Although ephemera remains marginal by its own definition within the histories of art, publishing, and beyond, Hudson’s study is a valuable reference and guide that advances our knowledge and understanding of the subject. It is to be hoped that future historians of publishing will continue to look beyond the book, and also that social and cultural historians will learn to read ephemera no less critically than art and literary historians have taught us to view works that have been reprinted more often than these singular specimens of the press.

Giles Bergel
Merton College, University of Oxford


Mark Noonan’s history of The Century Illustrated Monthly traces the magazine’s development from its launch as Scribner’s Monthly in 1870 through its successful run as The Century in the 1880s to its decline a decade later – the victim, in part, of the increasing competition of cheaper mass-circulation magazines such as Cosmopolitan and Munsey’s. Situating The Century in the larger publishing history of the period, Noonan also explores the ways in which the editors of The Century positioned their publication as a steward of American culture and a promoter of Victorian gentility.

The Century’s role as a tastemaker for the middle and upper-middle classes has been explored before, most notably in Arthur John’s The Best Years of the Century (1981). Noonan’s contribution rests in the way he complicates that view by exploring how the magazine’s fiction and poetry offered counter-narratives that subvert the essentially conservative views that scholars have ascribed to The Century under editors Josiah Holland and Richard Watson Gilder. Noonan shows, for example, how early efforts to build the circulation at Scribner’s Monthly depended in large part on the contributions of American women writers, including Helen Hunt Jackson, Rebecca Harding Davis, and Frances Hodgson Burnett. Noting the technical polish, innovation, depth of characterization, and sheer professionalism of these writers, Noonan also deftly demonstrates the ways in which their work challenged the magazine’s otherwise traditional cultural agenda. At a time when The Century’s editorial stance was hostile to the labor movement, the fiction of Burnett and Elizabeth Stuart Phelps presented sympathetic views of the working class and the poor. Challenging conventional ideas of gender, Constance Fenimore Woolson’s short story “Jeannette” explored a woman’s right to self-determination while Rebecca Harding Davis’s novella Earthen Pitchers (serialized from November 1873 to April 1874) addressed the commercialization of nineteenth-century publishing and the challenges facing female artists in a patriarchal society. Later, Noonan explores The Century’s three-year-long series on the Civil War (November 1884 to November 1887). There, in a close and careful reading of some of the accounts in the series, Noonan outlines Gilder’s commitment to forging national unity by offering positive views of the South and southern manhood. At the same time, though, the magazine carried Mark Twain’s critique of such sentimental – and sanitizing – romanticism in “The Private History of a Campaign that Failed” and in Huckleberry Finn. Other chapters document The Century’s role in championing literary realism, in re-inscribing earlier concepts of race, and in resurrecting the plantation myth and otherwise idealizing the South.

At times, Noonan acknowledges the role commerce may have played in producing
competing narratives: much of *The Century's* growth could be traced to the popularity of fiction in the period, so refusing to run it was not economically viable. Primarily, though, Noonan provides not so much an explanation for the competing narratives as close and thoughtful readings of fiction both well-known (Howell's *The Rise of Silas Lapham*) and largely forgotten (Burnett's *Through One Administration*). Those readings raise questions about the role editors play, about the ways in which print culture creates communities of the like-minded, and about the complex web of intertextuality that characterized magazines of the nineteenth century and beyond.

Donna Harrington-Lueker
Salve Regina University, Newport, R.I.

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Recent forays into the debate over liberal education, such as Michael Berube’s *What’s Liberal about the Liberal Arts?* (2006) or Martha Nussbaum’s *Not for Profit Why Democracy Needs the Humanities* (2010), are often traced back to Immanuel Kant’s *Conflict of the Faculties* (1798) and Cardinal Newman’s *Idea of the University* (1852), and are just the latest in a long tradition. Among the many documents peppering the history of the American university, Yale’s *Reports of 1828* are considered foundational in establishing the curriculum we know today and the idea of a liberal education. The *Reports* are easily enough found on the internet (and they are simply reproduced in this text), but the real value of David Potts’ *Liberal Education for a Land of Colleges* is how he contextualizes the *Reports* in his lengthy (80-page) and well-researched and documented introduction and through thorough annotations of the documents. Although the debate is not new, higher education looked much different at the beginning of the nineteenth century, existing in a “tenuous and tentative state of development” (8). For instance, Potts reminds us that in 1828 there were 50 American colleges and universities enrolling around 3,600 students — a far cry from the 19.1 million students studying in over 4,300 institutions in 2010. Despite the difference, the same conversation was occurring in terms of fundamental questions of college: How to achieve financial stability? How to respond to the diverse needs of legislatures, faculty, students, and the public? How to raise standards without jeopardizing enrollments? And finally, should a college education be practical or liberal in nature? While describing the composition, publication, and reception of the Yale Reports, Potts enumerates examples of experiments and alternative proposals floating around at the time, such as Amherst’s 1827 “new-modeled” practical curriculum that would meet the “wants and demands of an enlightened public” (24), also reproduced in the volume, along with an 1825 pamphlet regarding Harvard and undergraduate curricula from Yale, Amherst, and Harvard, creating a fascinating casebook for understanding both the *Reports* and the educational milieu of the time.

Potts’ engaging narrative concludes that the Yale Reports “[provide] a comprehensive snapshot of the issues stirring higher education and an interested public in the 1820s … [but moreover] create a crucial conceptual shift in the definition of liberal education” (33). This shift is illustrated in the distinction between process and content — in other words, teaching students how to learn, not just what to learn. Potts identifies ‘mental discipline’ as a key element in the Yale Reports’ description of a liberal education, linking it to the persistent educational buzz-word ‘critical thinking.’ Provoking no surprise now, the Reports’ authors “argued that the mental discipline of liberal education provided ‘a foundation for professional eminence’” (37). Nonetheless, *SHARP News* readers will find this valuable as it impacts a history of reading indelibly connected with the rise of the university. As the number of students has grown from less than 1%, in 1828, to today, when over 50% of the population has attended college to some degree, the emphasis on ‘mental discipline,’ or critical thinking, has certainly had an influence on the development of reading in the country. Potts concludes by calling the Yale Reports “untapped potential” (48) in the area of the history of higher education; likewise, it can be fruitfully mined for insights on the history of reading.

Eric Leuschner
Fort Hays State University


Geraldine Sheridan’s examination of female labor practices in France during the eighteenth century draws upon her ‘reading’ of published and unpublished engravings prepared for the Académie royale des Sciences’ *Descriptions des Arts et Métiers* (1761-1788), as well as plates that appeared in Diderot’s *Encyclopédie* (1762-1772) and its supplementary volume (1777). All in all, Professor Sheridan examines 216 engravings from 1690 onward that contain scenes of women at work, an early-modern vision categorized in five units: the Traditional Economy (Agriculture, Mining, Fishing); Artisanal Trades (Ornamental and Luxury Products, Essential Goods); Textiles; Manufactories; and Commercial Activities. She believes that a careful analysis of illustrations does not merely supplement textual descriptions of working women. Rather, in several instances it will correct and supersede them.

However useful Geraldine Sheridan’s evaluation of the plates may be for historians of technology, culture, and society, the editors and engravers of the *Encyclopédie* and the *Descriptions des Arts et Métiers* had no intention of granting women a central role in France’s preindustrial labor force. Only 4.8% of the engravings in the *Descriptions* even acknowledge a female presence, and merely 2.7% of those in the *Encyclopédie* do. Occupations dominated by women, such as laundering, clothes mending, and food preparation, had no place in either book; important all-female guilds, such as the seamstresses’ and linen drapers’, were neglected altogether.

Nevertheless, Sheridan’s sharp eye for details of dress and physical exertion, her familiarity with early-modern labor techniques, and her command of secondary literature legitimize findings that should inspire a host of specialized studies. For example, while texts in the *Descriptions* and *Encyclopédie* reveal little about female labor’s specific contribution to mining, agriculture, or fishing, the accompanying vignettes show women cranking the windlass, pulling the oxcart, laboring in the field, catching shrimp, transporting herring, and dragging nets. They are engaged in backbreaking, undervalued labor, and rewarded with half the salary of a male worker or nothing at all...
for their contribution to the family economy. Moreover, while guild restrictions in the eighteenth century closed apprenticeships to most women, plates illustrating fan construction, feather dressing, snuffbox ornamentation, or the damascening of steel swords display “women performing tasks that required training, ability, skill, and dexterity, though such qualities are rarely explicitly mentioned in the texts” (78). Moreover, imagery of women’s work in the artisanal trades was not limited to the manufacture of luxury items. Wax production, pin manufacture, the casting of lead shot and type, and the making of catgut and edge-tools found their place; and textile labor – particularly the production of silk garments – deeply involved young women at the cost of their health and even their lives.

For Geraldine Sheridan, large-scale production was distinguished from artisanal labor and is labelled under her rubric of ‘Manufactories.’ The latter defined an enterprise “often supported, and sometimes fully capitalized, by the royal administration” (183). The patterns of labor of ‘Manufactories’ were more disciplined and harsher than those of artisanal workshops, taking on the guise of an anonymous assembly line. By way of contrast, women in commerce were most visible. They were literate, had access to money, maintained ledgers and stock, and served as “the interface between production and sales” (204). While Louder Than Words celebrates women’s physical prowess more than their commercial skills, it reminds us that for eighteenth-century Europeans, the feminine contribution to community survival remained an exploitative enterprise.

Raymond Birn
University of Oregon


The varied output of the Leadenhall Press provides a colourful window into mid- and late-Victorian reading. The examples in Matthew McLennan Young’s comprehensive checklist stem from the years 1863–1913, with a particular emphasis on the 1880s and ‘90s, and as his nearly 450 entries and plentiful illustrations show, the Press printed a wide variety of books that were largely representative of mid- and late-Victorian popular reading – classic literary reprints, pamphlets, religious treatises, antiquarian curiosities, children’s literature, travel writing, and above all humour – and that also often proved to be unusual in material format or in subject matter. As The British Printer observed in 1893, “Originality, quaintness, and fertility of invention are apparent in almost everything issued from the Leadenhall Press, so that it is possible to recognize its productions by their typographical peculiarities without reference to the imprint” (15). That “originality, quaintness and fertility” emerges here in the numerous colour and black-and-white illustrations throughout the book. The books themselves are as diverse as their subject matter, from the hand-coloured illustrations and embroidered page marker of The Follies and Fashions of Grandfathers, to the remarkable ‘midget folio’ within the ‘enlarged edition’ of Quo Vadis? (1879), to what is perhaps Tuer’s own best-known work, the two-volume History of the Horn-Book, which included seven facsimile horn-books in compartments and has itself subsequently been reprinted in facsimile editions of varying fidelity and quality.

In the “Appreciation” that opens the book, Andrew White Tuer emerges as the driving force behind the press. Tuer’s partner Abraham Field, as Young notes, is still a largely unknown figure, but other interesting characters emerge, including Thomas Hailing, who provided the impetus for The Printer’s International Specimen Exchange (1880–1887), edited by Tuer, to which a global network of more than 400 printers sent in samples of their work. Tuer was also actively involved in one of the committees that oversaw the exhibition at the South Kensington Museum in 1877 to celebrate the quadricentenary of Caxton’s first printing efforts in England – a miscellaneous, highly collaborative, and forward-looking exhibition to which a diverse body of English publishers and printers contributed. And the very visual nature of the Press’s work also meant that the Leadenhall Press network included a long list of illustrators, among them Mrs. Arthur Gaskin, Edwin Ellis, and William Luker; the humorous back-and-forth between Tuer and the caricaturist Phil May in cockney satires such as Phil May’s Catter-snipes (1896) is characteristic of the Press’s collaborative methods.

Given all this startling diversity, it is sometimes hard to draw out from Young’s narrative an overarching sense of the primary interests and practices of the Leadenhall Press: was it opportunistic or somehow selective in its choice of works to publish? If the latter, then what were its principles of acceptance, and were they somehow based on a vision for the material form of the finished book? And what do all these books have in common? The answer seems to include a dedication to continuity and innovation (Tuer spent a lot of time collecting old wood-blocks and publishing facsimiles), an interest in out-of-the-way information, an often humorous or at least light-hearted approach to the subject matter (except perhaps with regard to instructive works), and a general exuberance of presentation. That is, the Leadenhall Press marks a particular strain of curiosity, nostalgia, inventiveness, and enthusiasm in the processes of Victorian cultural production.

Young’s engaging appreciation of Tuer and thorough and often detailed checklist of books establish the Leadenhall Press and its books as fertile ground for further research on Victorian publishing networks and on Victorian popular reading and humorous literature. It would also reward scholars to attempt a closer bibliographical study of the books, and the ways in which the new possibilities inherent in nineteenth-century printing technologies could offer a platform to express the interests, ambitions and quirks of a character like Andrew White Tuer.

Yuri Cowan
Client University, Belgium

Calling all Book Review Editors

SHARP News is looking for anyone interested in the Asia/Pacific Book Review Editorship. Our stalwart antipodean, Simone Murray, is stepping down after several years in the job in order to devote time to family business. Tasks include reviewing publishers’ catalogues, soliciting copies, and commissioning and editing reviews. We would be interested in breaking up this portfolio into a number of smaller geographical zones such as Australasia and the Pacific; South and South-East Asia; Latin America; Africa. You should be a scholar familiar with the area, but need not be resident therein. An institutional affiliation makes the job easier. Please contact editor@sharpweb.org for further information.
E-Resources Reviews


Building on the success of 19th Century British Library Newspapers and other such databases, Gale has begun the ambitious 19th Century UK Periodicals. The database will feature full-runs of nearly 600 titles from the years 1800 to 1900 (some six million pages ultimately) from copies found in specialist libraries, such as the British Library and the National Library of Scotland. Series 1 – New Readerships is the first of five groupings of periodicals and will be followed by groups based on themes of Empire (currently available), Culture, Working Life, and Knowledge. An academic advisory board, led by Professor Joanne Shattock (University of Leicester), chose the list of projected titles based on The Wellesley Index of Victorian Periodicals, The Waterloo Directory of English Newspapers and Periodicals, and other catalogues. The database, like most of Gale’s other products, requires an institutional subscription, though short-term trial subscriptions can be had for free.

New Readerships features 90 periodicals consisting of nearly one million pages that, broadly speaking, address new classes of readers in the nineteenth century: women, children, humour, and leisure and sport. Titles such as the Englishwoman’s Domestic Magazine, The Englishwoman’s Review, The Lady’s Newspaper, and Myra’s Journal of Dress and Fashion typify new women readers through a mix of domestic, fashion, and early feminist periodicals. The Boy’s Own Paper, The Girls’ Own Paper, and their imitators represent the young reader, a group much enlarged by the education acts. Periodicals such as Fun and Punch serve to illustrate the growth of humour magazines; and periodicals such as Daily’s Monthly Magazine of Sports and Pastimes and The Sporting Times do the same for leisure and sports. (The number of hobby magazines for cycling, fishing, golf, hunting, and racing are particularly enlightening.) Whereas women and children embody recognizable groups of ‘new readers,’ humour and sports appear less coherent as groups of readers, though they generally reflect a male audience. Hence, the grouping of the four under ‘New Readerships’ appears to this reviewer a bit of a stretch.

As in Gale’s 19th Century British Library Newspapers (which it largely replicates), the scanned images were taken from new microfilm then underwent “extensive clean-up and digital enhancement” according to the site’s introduction. When available, color images were scanned in color — surely a first in databases of this kind. Thus, the quality of the images is exceptionally good. The optical character recognition (OCR), while never perfect, operates better in this database than in other comparable ones (probably due to easier-to-read sources). The authors of this database also give more bibliographical and historical background for the periodicals: each title is linked to its corresponding entry in The Waterloo Directory of English Newspapers and Periodicals which gives dates, editors, prices, and size of the periodicals, even without a separate subscription to The Waterloo Directory. The introductory information (found under ‘About’) and the Topic Guides give information about the database and the materials found within it. The advanced search feature allows searches to be narrowed by periodical, frequency of publication, article type, collection (e.g., New Readerships or Empire), and grouping within collections (e.g., women or humour).

However, like Gale’s 19th Century British Library Newspapers, 19th Century UK Periodicals has its faults. Browsing an individual issue of one periodical page by page requires a few too many clicks of the mouse instead of being a clearly defined entry point. Even maneuvering in an individual issue involves drop-down lists rather than a simple list of issues. The categories for article type are limited to six — advertising, arts and sports, business news, news, opinion and editorial, and people — which are too broad to narrow a search effectively. (And, once again, why combine arts and sports into one category?)

That said, New Readerships and 19th Century UK Periodicals serve as another significant contribution to the number of Victorian periodicals now available electronically. The eventual 600-title target will double the number of scanned periodicals available to scholars — truly a remarkable accomplishment.

Troy J. Bassett
Indiana University-Purdue University, Fort Wayne

Leigh Hunt Online is a web-based archive launched and maintained at the University of Iowa by Sid Hutten and Krystina Baum, Head of Special Collections. Kristin Bauman of the Preservation Department in the library is the Project Conservator, and the project has grown under the management of a sequence of visiting fellows in Iowa Special Collections, including Juli McLoone, Nana Holtsmader, Anne Covell, and, currently, Colleen Kelley. In addition, the site has grown due to contributions by scholars — mostly in the way of manuscript transcriptions. The team has plans to secure more materials with the help of other libraries, with the eventual goal of presenting all surviving correspondence of Leigh Hunt (1784–1859), so that what began as an institutionally-specific collection will ideally grow into a full-fledged archive.

The project began with the digitization of the 1600 letters in the Brewer-Hunt collection at the University of Iowa, which are now available for viewing online; as noted, many have been transcribed by scholars, including volunteers who have used the site. As befits a library-driven project, the metadata is excellent and the site is extremely well-organized. Because they have built the resource using CONTENTdm collection management software, a number of decisions were already made; but the Iowa team has customized the interface and user experience in very effective ways.

From the home page, a user has multiple ways of getting into the archive. At the bottom, an enticing row of thumbnail images offers some ‘highlights of the collection’ and leads one to high-quality zoomable page images, with plenty of bibliographical information (and in some cases, full transcripts) available upon clicking ‘document description.’ All of this metadata is aggressively hyperlinked, so that clicking on any piece of it (a name, a date, a keyword) will bring up all other instances of that piece in the collection. From the home page, a list of ‘sample searches’ provides another easy way into the archive, leading one directly (for example) to all of Hunt’s correspondence with Mary Shelley. Further, one can search in the small box in the upper-right-hand corner (perhaps too well-hidden?), and bring up a list of documents with thumbnails and descriptions. Finally, one may browse lists of names...
associated with the letters, or simply browse
the entire collection as a thumbnail list.

The results page is extraordinarily clear
and easy to use, with facets on the left margin
to narrow one’s findings by year, creator, etc.
In my experience, one gets good, complete
results that are easy to navigate and absorb.
The document display interface is also quite
clear and powerful. The window is relatively
stripped down, offering a white panel with the
full-color page image inset. Very high-quality
images can be enlarged to show surprising
details, and an object can itself be searched
from this window. Like the search box on the
home page, I believe the ‘view’ drop-down
menu is not prominent enough, given the
wealth of data that lies there, but once one is
familiar with the functionality, it works very
well. A ‘page & text’ view option allows one
to view the manuscript and its transcription
(if one exists) in a side-by-side configuration,
and this will help users to check accuracy.
For example, the transcriptions at this point seem
not to be able to render underlining or other
diacritical marks from the manuscripts; so
users will want to have both versions before
them as they work. What one wants now is a
way for these documents to be repurposed,
analyzed, and shared as part of the ongoing
critical conversation about Hunt and his large
circle of correspondents. In short, projects
like Leigh Hunt Online need to be integrated
into the larger structures of scholarly pro-
duction that are increasingly going digital.
The SHARP community should find ways to
enable conversations about this integration,
both in technical and institutional terms.

Right now, Leigh Hunt Online provides
a wonderful model of a special collections
library reaching out to a larger scholarly
community and enabling the development of a
valuable collaborative resource. The Leigh
Hunt project has already passed through a
peer-review process organized by NINES
(Networked Infrastructure for Nineteenth-
century Electronic Scholarship), and can now
be searched as part of a growing federation
of resources relevant to nineteenth-century
British and American literature and culture.
My own hope is that Leigh Hunt Online will not
only continue to grow and abide, but inspire
other, similar kinds of hybrid projects, with
librarians, digital humanists, and traditional
scholars working together to produce and
sustain the digital resources we all need.

Andrew M. Stauffer
University of Virginia

Thus it is that, in the Houghton’s quiet,
pale blue Edison and Newman Room,
Johannes Gutenberg – printer of the 42-line
Latin Bible, the first book to be printed using
moveable type – metaphorically rubs
shoulders with Bruce Rogers – the designer
commissioned for the hefty Oxford Lectern Bible.
Between these mighty bookends dating from
the 1450s and the 1930s are featured Martin
Luther’s last living translation of the Greek
and Hebrew texts into High German (1545);
Christopher Plantin’s massive Polyglot Bible
with its carefully-considered parallel arrange-
ments of Hebrew, Latin, Greek, and Aramaic
text (1569-72); John Baskerville’s prized 1763
publication, printed with specially-formulated
ink onto hot-pressed sheets; the Doves Press
Bible (1903-05), whose text was reimaged
from standardized, Cambridge-approved
paragraphs into long lines of prose and short
lines of poetry; and the Golden Cockerel
Press edition of the Four Gospels, designed
and illustrated by Eric Gill (1931). Nested
among all these is the King James Bible. One
might at first wonder why this grand folio
does not take pride of place, given the exhi-
bition’s title and occasion, but its unassuming
positioning is actually advantageous: all the
better to contextualize its blackletter debt to
its German and Latin predecessors; all the
better to appreciate its undeniable influence
on the English Bibles that followed.

Much has been written on each of the
eight volumes on display. This show is the
more laudable, then, for it discusses each item
thoroughly yet simply. The labels explicate
the books’ historical significance, their creators’
initial achievements, and the reactions to their
publication. They explain method (the pro-
cess of printing by moveable type) and record
provenance (a Bible intended for Harry Elkins
Widener, the Harvard-educated book collec-
tor who perished on the Titanic) and mention
bindings (one in red morocco, another in the
original alumn-tawed pigskin, etc.). Addition-
ally, no two books on display show the same
opening, so that the beginnings of Ezekiel
and Mark, the middle of Samuel and Judges,
and the end of Psalms find their moment in the
spotlight along with the unavoidable opening
words of Genesis: “In the beginning...”

In staging this deeply pedagogical visual
feast, exhibition curator Hope Mayo, Philip
Hofer Curator of Printing and Graphic Arts,
doubted had to restrict the number and type
of works on display; for surely there are other
editions of the Bible that merit spots in
such august company. However, it is pre-

EXHIBITION REVIEWS

The Bible in Type from Gutenberg to Rogers:
An Exhibition Commemorating the
Four-Hundredth Anniversary
of the King James Bible

Houghton Library, Harvard University
18 January – 18 June 2011

This year, academic, cultural, and religious
institutions throughout the Anglophone
world commemorate the four-hundredth
anniversary of the publication of the King
James Bible (London: Robert Barker, 1611).
This magnificent ‘authorized’ version of the
Scriptures was intended for use in parishes
across England, its vernacular accessibility
undergirded by seven years of scholarly
research, its widespread popularity the result
of the vision of a powerful royal patron.
Although it was not the first such official
undertaking – the Great Bible of 1539 and
the Bishops’ Bible of 1568 had been pub-
lished under the auspices of state and church,
respectively – the King James Version of the
Bible is widely considered to be one of the
most important works ever published in
England. It further strengthened the connection
between state and church; it both reflected
and affected the religious beliefs of the
time; and it had a significant impact on the
vocabulary of English and on its legitimacy
as a literary medium.

The Houghton Library’s tribute to this
monumental tome situates the King James
Bible within an admirable lineage of books
both influential and beautiful. The introduc-
tory walltext asserts that, “throughout the
history of printing, the ability to create
a typeface and layout suitable for presenting
the Biblical text has been regarded as the
greatest test of talent and the ultimate proof
of achievement for the typographer or book
designer.” As such, each Bible in the show
has been selected for display based on some
aesthetic accomplishment: in many cases its
typographical grandeur, but also, variously,
its copious illustrations, its manually-rubricated
margins, its calligraphic initials, or the brilliant
whiteness of its paper stock.
SHARP NEWS VOL. 20, NO. 4

Altered and Adorned:
Using Renaissance Prints in Daily Life

Art Institute of Chicago
30 April – 10 July 2011

This exhibition of over one hundred works welcomes the public with an interesting juxtaposition of a devotional woodcut, altered, adorned, and bearing the marks of heavy use, surrounded by several pristine prints, examples of Renaissance art for art’s sake. The starting point is a coffer with a fifteenth-century which matured under the postdoctoral tenure of Antonio Pollaiuolo’s who left them untouched, are appropriately use, surrounded by several pristine prints, paired with reproductive prints, exemplified in the position of a devotional woodcut, altered, and bearing the marks of heavy use, surrounded by several pristine prints, paired with reproductive prints, exemplified in the 30 April-l0 July 2011

Altered and Adorned:
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This exhibition of over one hundred works welcomes the public with an interesting juxtaposition of a devotional woodcut, altered, adorned, and bearing the marks of heavy use, surrounded by several pristine prints, examples of Renaissance art for art’s sake. The starting point is a coffer with a fifteenth-century colored Nativity woodcut pasted on the inside of its lid. The acquisition of this box in 2009 was the seed of the exhibition, which matured under the postdoctoral tenure of the Art Institute of the curator, Suzanne Karr Schmidt. While the box is flanked by a small contemporary Florentine round engraving picturing Judith with the Head of Holofernes, likely intended to adorn the lid of a jewelry box, the rest of the room showcases the depth and breadth of the Art Institute’s collection with a dozen famous master prints, including Martin Schongauer’s Large Bearing of the Cross, Antonio Pollaiuolo’s Battle of the Naked Men, and Titian’s Submersion of the Pharaoh’s Army in the Red Sea. These masterpieces, surely in the Northern print tradition, where many vignettes invite the beholder to smile; in Chicago, this includes albums of prints, prints pasted as bookplates, text illustrations, and board decorations, all interactions created by both publishers and owners of these books.

Next is Scientific Prints, a display that underscores the importance of printed images in early modern science, as well as their multifarious role ranging from portraits of scholars, to paper scientific instruments, to pop-up anatomy broadsheets layered with organ flaps, to natural history illustrations and celestial maps – these latter ones instantiated by Dürrer’s Rhinoceros and his unsigned Celestial Map of the Northern Sky and Celestial Map of the Southern Sky.

The last gallery houses Musing Prints and Religious Prints and includes two particularly striking works. An early reader of a fifteenth-century Apocalypse blockbook has drawn in pen at the rear end of the Lamb of God (receiving the Seven-Sealed Book) four turds. Prima facie blasphemous, this alteration finds a meaningful context in the Apocalypse blockbook graphic tradition, where many vignettes invite the beholder to smile; in Chicago, this can be appreciated in the copy owned by the Newberry Library (Inc. 15), very similar to the leaf of the Art Institute. Less humorous but surely as interesting is a host iron, serving as a communion wafer mold. This instrument for impressing a crucifix pattern on wafers epitomizes the ubiquitous presence of the printed image in the early modern period.

The exhibition did not travel, but records of it will remain on the Art Institute’s website <http://www.artic.edu/aic/exhibitions/exhibition/renaissanceprints> (also <http://aic.onelenculture.co.uk/silverlight>), and in the beautifully illustrated catalog, which is organized in seven essays and discusses many of the works on display. (This was published as Susanne Karr Schmidt, Altered and Adorned: Using Renaissance Prints in Daily Life, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2011, ISBN 03001269116, 112pp, $35.)

While helping to debunk the notion that any sign of alteration is detrimental to the original, it is hoped that the website and the catalog will also invite further investigation of the response to and use of prints and printed images. Rather than devaluing the originals, these marks are precious evidence testifying to the presence and importance of prints and printed images in early modern culture.

Renzo Baldasso
Southern Illinois University Carbondale

Stories to Watch:
Narrative in Medieval Manuscripts

J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles
22 February – 15 May 2011

Long before Japanese manga and animated movies, decorated books were used to present famous religious and secular tales to a largely illiterate public. Stories to Watch is a single-room jewel-box of an exhibition, which visitors see as they enter the museum’s North Pavilion, home to mainly pre-eighteenth century art. Viewers of all ages should prepare to be awed, but they might also be confused by the title variants (perhaps a simple copyediting error). The title word ‘Narrative’ (a textual term of art) is replaced in some Getty materials announcing the exhibit by the less-abstract ‘Narratives,’ which could be seen as a synonym for ‘stories.

The manuscript exhibit consists of approximately 30 displays from 21 books and leaves. (The illustrated exhibition checklist can be downloaded at the main exhibition page at <http://www.getty.edu/art/exhibitions/stories_watch/>.) The narrative illumi...
nations from different periods (tenth to the seventeenth century) and regions (from the western reaches of early Christianity to as far east as Isfahan) present a fascinating variety of pictorial storytelling. The majority of the images represent religious subject matter, although among the later leaves there are a few secular depictions of fables and bestiaries. The online exhibit also invites the viewer to participate in an interactive experience with the twelfth-century Vita Christi, a recent Getty acquisition: a rosary book structured around meditations on the life of Christ and originally designed to tell a story solely through images. Manuscript illustrations provided medieval viewers with a visual entry point to their devotions and a focus for their meditations. The exhibit draws attention to the ingenious methods used in medieval manuscripts to visually convey crucial factors of narrative, including the drama of decisive moments, the development of events through time, and verbal interaction. Typically, medieval artists illustrated stories with single images inserted at intervals throughout the text. However, these individual narrative scenes are more than simple snapshots. The moments chosen for depiction were strategically selected, and visual hints were often included to help the viewer imagine what happened before and after. Sometimes, the artists combined several stages of an event into one image, thus constructing an artificial moment instead of a sequence of events. In the miniature but dramatic (and gory) scene that fills the initial H in an Austrian Scholastic History (ca. 1300) the biblical heroine Judith beheads the Assyrian general Holofernes.

In medieval manuscripts, the depiction of a sequence of events can occur either within a single image or as a series of separately framed scenes. Although a series can give more narrative clues, the viewer still has to jump from scene to scene and fill in the gaps between them. Often, the artist helps identify the protagonists involved in successive events, for instance, by using the same costume and colors for each character throughout. Nevertheless, it can be difficult to determine the direction in which to read a pictorial narrative because the layouts vary on the page. The characters of the two witnesses appear recurrently in the Dyson Perrins Apocalypse (London, mid-thirteenth century).

Stories move forward not only by physical action but also through dialogue and other forms of verbal action. In the current age of cartoons and comics, one is accustomed to finding speech bubbles inserted into pictorial narratives. Medieval artists integrated script into illustrations as well, but they also found other ways to depict what was being said. Techniques included using significant gestures, or showing the subsequent effects of spoken words. For example, the Armenian artist illustrating the creation of the world in a mid-seventeenth century Isfahan bible collapsed a series of events into a single page, with repeated characters using hand gestures to convey conversation.

The exhibition makes an explicit connection between the visual stories in medieval manuscripts and today's pictorial narratives by including a 1936 comic strip, which shows the main character repeated in each panel, similar to pictures found in manuscripts. This viewer was reminded of a completely different recent exhibit at the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum in Ridgefield, Connecticut. There, Jimbo in Purgatory, by the modern graphic artist Gary Panter, was presented alongside a sample of a medieval illuminated manuscript. The effect was similar to the Getty's attempt to create context: seemingly an afterthought for material that really speaks for itself. The goal is clearly educational: in fact, the Getty exhibition is required viewing for a UCLA extension course, entitled 'The Medieval Comic Book: Illustrated Stories in Illuminated Manuscripts."

C. J. Dickerson

Mark Twain Library, Redding, Connecticut

From the Shadows: 20 Years of the Dutch Society of Bibliophiles

Museum Meermanno House of the Book
The Hague, the Netherlands
20 March 2011 – 19 June 2011

The decade-old Dutch version of Wikipedia defines bibliophilia as collecting books based on their appearance. A bibliophile does not necessarily enjoy reading. He or she collects books first and foremost because of their unique appearance or their rarity. The Wikipedia entry focuses on explaining how bibliophiles collect rare books, often hand printed, in a limited number, with a unique typography. The exhibition under review here demonstrates this definition to be true in only a small number of cases by putting sixty collectors, their personal stories, and some of their most cherished possessions on display. The focus of the exhibition is the relation between collector and collection: why, how and for what purpose does someone collect; where does the collection originate; and how does a bibliophile use his or her collection?

For over two centuries, bibliophilic societies have existed in countries surrounding the Netherlands. The Dutch Society of Bibliophiles was founded only in 1990, though judging from the personal accounts showcased in Meermanno, it could easily have been established centuries earlier. Some of the collectors make clear their collections were inherited or that their love for acquiring books is derived from their parents' equally intense love for books. In other cases, that of Wolbert Vroom for instance, the collection started from a professional interest. As an architect specialising in renovating monumental buildings, Vroom gathered an extensive collection of books by and for architects, mainly focused on the period of Vitruvian classicism (roughly 1485-1750).

Sometimes the story of how a book ended up in a collection makes apparent how the professional and the personal domain overlap. For instance, Ayolt Brongers owns about 60,000 volumes on cultural history, including an original handwritten work by Dutch author J.F. Helmers. Brongers was given the book by a student whom he tutored in mathematics. The professional and personal domains overlap in other ways as well: many of the bibliophiles who in this exhibition step from the shadows of their collections are librarians, publishers or booksellers who seem either to work close to what they love or to fall in love with the objects in their workplace.

The reasons for starting a collection diverge widely. For Steven de Joode, working at antiquarian and rare book dealer FORUM, collecting books is an inescapable result of intellectual interests. He wanted to be able to work close to what they love or to fall in love with the objects in their workplace.
One of the myths surrounding bibliophiles—the one stating they do not read the books they own—is easily rejected by the exhibition. For instance, Professor Emeritus Frans Janssen, a specialist in book studies, owns about 10,000 books on book printing and typography, making clear that a bibliophile can be a highly practical student of the books he owns. Publisher Dick Coutinho collects books from the period 1500–1550, with the specific intent to recreate a personal library from that time, in order to find out what worldview a contemporary reader might gather from reading those books. And Paul Begheyn, director of the Netherlands Institute of Jesuit Studies, is compiling a Bibliotheca Jesuitica Neerlandica Impressa 1540–1773, in which all books by Jesuits printed on Dutch soil in that period are to be gathered. An interesting fact: because, as a Jesuit, Begheyn has no personal possessions, the collection is actually owned by the institute.

The last room of the exhibition space presents the visitors with the bibliophiles’ view on the future. Sometimes it is something— the one stating they do not read the books they own. Exceptions: because, as a Jesuit, Begheyn has no personal possessions, the collection is actually owned by the institute.

The Papers of the Bibliographical Society of Canada / Cahiers de la Société bibliographique du Canada is a semi-annual, bilingual, peer-reviewed journal published in Canada. Devoted to bibliography and the history of the book, it has published many important contributions by Canadian researchers in these fields since its inception in 1962. In celebration of the 50th anniversary of the journal, the Bibliographical Society of Canada will be offering free promotional copies of recent issues to individuals who are not already members of the society. If you are interested in receiving one or know of a fellow scholar who would be interested, please send an email, specifying name and mailing address, to the Secretary of the Society (secretary@bsc-sbc.ca<mailto:secretary@bsc-sbc.ca>) by 1 March 2012.

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Bibliography

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27 December 1942 – 5 October 2011

It is with deep sadness that we announce that the Fisher Library has lost its guiding spirit. Richard Landon, the Fisher’s long-time Director, died peacefully on Wednesday 5 October.

In 1967, when Richard joined the department, initially as a rare book cataloguer, the collection was estimated to be some 40,000 volumes, plus a small collection of papers. Today, largely under his leadership, the Fisher houses over 700,000 volumes, with an additional 3,600 linear metres of archival material. His dedication in building the Fisher into one of the world’s greatest rare book libraries is a legacy that will endure for generations to come.

With the exception of a brief hiatus when he pursued a graduate degree in Bibliography at Leeds University, Richard spent his entire career at the University of Toronto, progressing from cataloguer to Director of the Fisher Library. He built research collections of books and manuscripts in all areas of academic interest over the whole period of recorded history, thereby supporting the twin pillars of the university: research and teaching. He did this by purchase — reading antiquarian booksellers’ catalogues, visiting bookshops, and attending book fairs in search of books and manuscripts — and by gift, encouraging private collectors to donate their libraries. Richard also developed a close relationship with a wide range of Canadian authors, ensuring the preservation of their manuscripts.

Richard lectured and published widely primarily on book history and bibliography. He taught courses in Bibliography, Book History, and Rare Books and Manuscripts at the University of Toronto and had been a Visiting Professor at Columbia and the University of Virginia. He was a mentor and inspirational influence to generations of students, many of whom have gone on to distinguished careers in the area of rare book librarianship.

Richard will be missed by all of his colleagues here at the Fisher Library, and by a wide community of students, scholars, book lovers, friends and family.