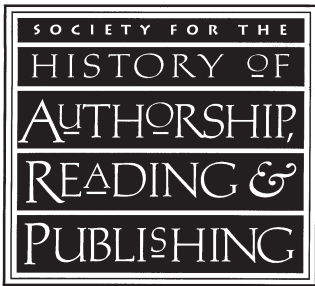




University of
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Volume 11, Number 1

Item Type	article;article
Download date	2025-05-19 17:36:33
Link to Item	https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.14394/43385



SHARP NEWS

Volume 11, Number 1

Winter 2001-02

GUEST COMMENT

English Studies and the Trouble with History

Bill Bell
University of Edinburgh

“This is a new journal for a new kind of history,” the editors of *Book History* announced in 1998. “With the exhaustion of literary theory,” they continued, “younger professors of literature are finding that book history provides a more rigorous and empirical approach” (ix, x).

I’d like to begin by questioning the claim that the enterprise in which the so-called “book historian” is engaged is really a “new kind of history.” If *l’histoire du livre* might seem like a relatively novel departure for some of today’s practitioners, the origins of the history of the book in the English-speaking world can be traced back well over a century. And, while some professors might find certain aspects of contemporary critical writing exhausting, it is questionable whether a unity called “literary theory” ever existed in the first place.

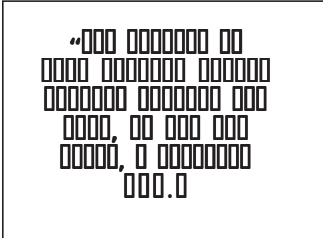
The history of book history within English studies has been, to say the least, a troubled one; and this is one reason why its important presence within the discipline has been obscured over the years. It is that forgotten history – a story of false starts, schisms, and misunderstandings – that we would do well to contemplate if we are to understand some of the tensions that exist for book history within English studies today.

In the absence of trained specialists, many of the first custodians of English studies were drawn from the ranks of journalism and the professions. A remarkable number of late nineteenth-century professors were themselves intimately connected with the history of the book trade – librarians, practitioners of the press, printers, publishers, journalists – individuals who shared a practical working knowledge of the world of books and publishing and who drew on their professional experiences to frame their respective approaches to the literatures of the past.

One of the most important events in the early history of the discipline was the appearance of *The Cambridge History of English Literature* in 1907. In the spirit of what today would be called “interdisciplinarity” its editors offered an outline of topics relevant to the student of English literature. Consequently, the *Cambridge History* would give pride of place to “libraries . . . the newspaper and the magazine” as well as “the labours of the press and the services of booksellers” (vii). In due course, these same categories would come to inform the layout of the first edition of the *Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature*.

Despite these and other attempts to define for literary studies the historical role outlined by its more imaginative pioneers, several factors were to militate against the evolution of a fully developed literary history in the years that followed. One key factor was without doubt the role – or the absence – of bibliography during and immediately after the years of the First World War.

It was W.W. Greg who famously announced that the bibliographer should have nothing to do with textual meaning. Following Greg, R.B. McKerrow, in his 1927 *Introduction to Bibliography for Literary Students*, described the distinction that he believed should be maintained between bibliography and literary criticism. Arguing that the principal virtue of bibliography lay in “its definiteness,” McKerrow went on to advocate a bibliography that would provide “a relief from critical investigations of the more ‘literary’ kind” (2).



Thirty years later, Fredson Bowers, drawing attention to what he regarded as a “perverse disregard” for bibliographical accuracy, could still refer disparagingly to “those higher critics whose chief concern is for the ‘total’ or ‘essential’ values of literature” (1).

This demarcation between branches of study was eventually to lead to the narrowing of bibliography itself, serving to marginalise it from the mainstream of the discipline for years to come. As newly emerging interpretative methods were seen to be more important than the enumeration of titles or the collation of texts, so bibliography, and its companion textual criticism, would soon come to have a severe “relevance” problem.

McKerrow’s attack on what he calls a more “literary” criticism must also be read against an emerging ideological mission within an English studies increasingly committed to its own cultural centrality as a “civilising subject.” A systematic privileging of “literary” over “non-literary” modes of expression (including bibliography and

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SHARP NEWS

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SHARP News (ISSN 1073-1725) is the quarterly newsletter of the Society for the History of Authorship, Reading and Publishing, Inc.

COPY DEADLINES

1 March
 1 June
 1 September
 1 December

SHARP WEB:

<http://sharpweb.org>

the writing of history) would come, with critics like F.R. Leavis, to bring an increasingly insular tone to literary criticism, isolating it methodologically from its fellow disciplines for several generations to come.

Another factor in the derogation of history within English studies was the domination, beginning with the influential work of I.A. Richards in the 1920s, of the specialist analysis of discourse. Richards's critical ideal, outlined in his influential work *Practical Criticism*, was, for the unmediated encounter between psychology and discourse, untrammelled by the historic specificity of the work, its materiality, or a regard for reading experience as itself an historical phenomenon.

As the century progressed, the concentration on new kinds of discourse theory intensified, rendering historic issues almost irrelevant. The terms "historicist" and "empiricist" eventually became terms of derision as the critical mainstream, in its pursuit of the latest theories of textuality, came to hold, if not exactly contempt, at least a disregard for historical methods.

This is not to say that there were not attempts, within the realms of critical theory itself, to bring about a rapprochement between the spheres of material history and discourse. Through a highly developed sociological analysis of culture and a sustained regard for the development of genre, modes of cultural production, canon formation, and the economics of literary labour, literary Marxism has long addressed the kinds of issues that have more recently become identified with the domain of book history.

Important in this regard was the appearance in 1961 of Raymond Williams's *The Long Revolution*, a book written in the shadow of Leavis, but seeking once more to discover "a social basis for art," grounded in what Williams called the study of "communications" (41). In 1977 (almost a decade before D.F. McKenzie's influential invention of "the sociology of the text") Williams described, in *Marxism and Literature*, a programme for what he called a "Sociology of Culture," making explicit reference to the importance of "the reading public . . . the economics of printing . . . books . . . authors . . . the history of publishing" in the analysis of culture (138). Writing over twenty years ago, Williams assumed that the emergent field in which these kinds of connections would take place looked like a politicised version of semiotics. Over two decades later, it may well be that book history is one result of the programme that Williams laid out in 1977.

Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, the groundwork was being laid outside bibliography for the kinds of detailed historical analysis that are going on today. 1969 saw the launch of the journal *New Literary History* (NLH), the pages of which represent a place where theory, materiality, and historical practice have often converged. Founded "in the face of the current rejection of history either as a guide to or knowledge of the present," the principal aim of NLH was, in the words of Ralph Cohen, to address the then pressing "theoretical and interpretative problems of literary history" (6). The extent to which, over the next twenty years, the tide had begun to turn is apparent from an article in the Spring issue for 1991 (a number that opens with the first English translation of Genette's famous introduction to the Paratext) in which it was confidently asserted that "a generation of younger scholars in the United States is returning to literary history" (359).

There is now, in English studies, an increasing preoccupation with material relations, manifest in the growing number of interdisciplinary approaches foregrounding the importance of the production, circulation, and reception of texts. The general acceptance of the work of writers like Pierre Bourdieu, Roger Chartier, Michel de Certeau, and Gerard Genette, has confirmed a desire within mainstream literary criticism to think again about the function of discourses as material, and not merely textual, phenomena. It is a project to which Edward Said gestured when he wrote in 1983 that the writer and text are "anchored in a complex system of cultural relationships which include the status of the author, historical moment, conditions of publication, diffusion and reception." If such a project is worthwhile, then its exponents will clearly have to know a great deal more about the history of authorship, book production, and reading in order to describe such complex systems at work.

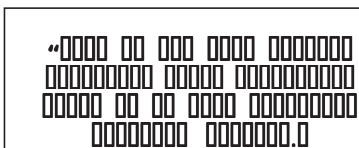
There is now a generation for whom "literary criticism" no longer represents a privileged domain, for whom a new-found confidence in interdisciplinarity poses a severe threat to the

very idea of “the literary” as an area of specialist study. At its most provocative, literary history is not merely about providing new readings of Dickens, Shakespeare, or Woolf – with or against the grain – but rather about the larger world in which these texts operate in relation to the material conditions of discourses in general.

The familiar and too-easy dichotomy between the so-called empiricism and the so-called critical theory is beginning to recede as empiricist methodologies are beginning to make their presences felt again, though in revitalized and theoretically informed ways. In such an intellectual climate, bibliography – next to linguistics the most highly theorised of all the sub-species of English studies – can no longer be content to carry out its traditional role as the handmaid of literary criticism. Nor, on the other hand, can it continue to isolate itself from mainstream intellectual life by positioning itself against all other interpretative traditions. As David Greetham remarked in 1992: “textual scholarship has begun to theorize itself, largely under the auspices of a Kuhnian shift in paradigm from intentionality to, for example, reception history and materialism” (x). Today, such a list would also have to include postcolonial and women’s studies.

The recent consolidation of a number of disparate endeavours under the rubric of “book history” (a term as misleading as it is inappropriate) is visible in the development of an organised infrastructure of centres, conferences, and collaborative projects, evidence that a field which has a history going back at least a century is in good health. Yet it may well be that English studies, with its inordinate regard for the literary, is no longer the most conducive place and that a more appropriate affinity for *l’histoire du livre* is to be found in the emergent field of “cultural studies.”

History itself has taught us that this imagined global community that we refer to as the “history of the book,” in all of its complexions, is not so much a discipline but, like cultural studies, a series of institutional, regional, and personal conjunctures that take place between a variety of scholarly traditions. And yet, the enormous



amount of investment, personal and institutional (manifested in the staking out of publishers’ lists, the founding of journals, the development of career tracks), all require us to be-

have, at least for the time being, as if a coherent and definable field exists.

There is no doubt that many have found consolation in the idea of an imminent return to history. For them, book history has come to represent a refuge from the bewilderingly rapid change of intellectual fashion, while still retaining professional credibility as “the latest thing.” In this respect, some of its most zealous advocates might ultimately prove to be book history’s greatest enemies. To overstate the importance of a subject deployable *against theory* is in the end to render it intellectually vulnerable.

The fault lines run deep, and the historic and often bloody battles that have been waged between history and interpretation are not altogether behind us. But at a critical moment in the life of the humanities, emergent fields are making new ways of integration possible. It is at these points of convergence that book historians within English studies are operating most productively.

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Bill Bell is Co-director of the Centre for the History of the Book at the University of Edinburgh and is presently editing the collection *Where is Book History: Essays in the Emergence of a Discipline* (forthcoming, University of Toronto Press).

CALLS FOR PAPERS

American Historical Association

Location: Chicago

Dates: 2-5 January 2003

Deadline: 1 February 2002

SHARP is soliciting papers for panel sessions at the American Historical Association convention, meeting in Chicago 2-5 January 2003. Please send a one-page abstract and a short curriculum vitae by 1 February 2002 to:

Jonathan Rose
Department of History
Drew University
Madison, NJ 07940 USA
E-mail: jerose@drew.edu

New Frontiers in Early American Literature

Location: University of Virginia,
Charlottesville, VA

Dates: 8-10 August 2002

Deadline: 15 February 2002

The University of Virginia (UVA) Library's Electronic Text Center, with the support of The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, announces a conference on "New Frontiers in Early American Literature."

The conference will bring together scholars exploring the Early American literary period in all its facets. Presentations on all authors and all genres are welcome. Interdisciplinary approaches are also encouraged.

This conference is inspired by our work in creating the "Electronic Archive of Early American Fiction," an expansive on-line collection of American novels and short stories written between 1789 and 1875. The texts chosen for the project are drawn from the UVA Library's world-renowned collection in Early American materials and include works by well-known authors such as James Fenimore Cooper, Edgar Allan Poe, and Charles Brockden Brown, as well as lesser-known writers such as Catharine Maria Sedgwick and Rufus Dawes.

Papers, poster sessions, and panel proposals from all areas of study in Early American literature will be considered. Possible topics include:

- Exploring the Frontier
- Popular and Domestic Fiction
- The Literary Marketplace
- Femininity and Masculinity
- Literature and the Civil War.

We also welcome papers related to these proposed sessions:

- Textual Editing
- Creating Digital Archives
- Using Digital Resources for Scholarship, Teaching, or Pleasure Reading.

We encourage submissions from various constituencies, including graduate students, academic computing experts, and faculty members. Proposals for digital or multimedia presentations are welcome.

The conference will take place in the central grounds of the University of Virginia, founded by Thomas Jefferson in 1819. Par-

ticipants and attendees will have the opportunity to attend a private tour of Jefferson's Monticello and a dinner in the University of Virginia's Rotunda.

We will be awarding four travel stipends of up to \$250 to eligible graduate students. Please note on your submission that you would like to be considered for one of these travel grants.

Please mail or e-mail one page abstracts by 15 February 2002 to:

Jennifer McCarthy
Electronic Text Center,
Alderman Library
University of Virginia
PO Box 400148
Charlottesville, VA 22904 USA
E-mail: jennifer@virginia.edu
Website: (Early American Fiction)
<http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/eaf>

Modern Language Association Irish Women Writers before The Great Hunger c. 1700-1845: Purpose and Politics

Location: New York City

Dates: December 2002

Deadline: 1 March 2002

Addressing a relatively unmined field in Irish Studies, this proposed Special Session of the 2002 annual conference of the Modern Language Association seeks to shed new light on the identity, politics, and goals of Irish women writers at work in Ireland (or elsewhere) c. 1700-1845, before The Great Hunger. It engages with women writing politically (not prettily), in response to conditions and forces around them, conditions which fundamentally compromised the production, publication, and consumption of "indigenously" Irish writing for some years.

Please send your one-page abstract and curriculum vitae to:

Maureen E. Mulvihill
Princeton Research Forum
5D, One Plaza Street West
Park Slope, Brooklyn, NY 11217 USA
E-mail: mulvihill@nyc.rr.com

Books and Empire: Textual Production, Distribution and Consumption in Colonial and Postcolonial Countries (SHARP Regional Conference)

Location: University of Sydney

Dates: 30 January - 1 February 2003

Deadline: 1 June 2002

The conference will be open to papers dealing with any aspect of the study of print culture, editorial theory and practice, and bibliography. However, there will be a special emphasis on colonial and postcolonial histories of the book, from the moment oral cultures met print cultures up to the present.

One main focus will be on the Asia Pacific geographic region and the role of imperial structures of book production, distribution, and reception within the region.

Australia and New Zealand will be relevant here since very developed projects to write their histories of print culture are in progress. But we also invite papers which survey the archival and other sources for the writing of a book history for other countries of the region, or which pursue relevant themes.

These could include relationships between colonial authors and metropolitan publishers, questions of copyright, methods of distribution, publishing and its effects within the regional countries, literacy and the teaching of reading, book reviewing, and other modes of reception.

Another main focus will be on the methodology of the history of the book:

- To what extent does the pursuit of national histories of the book distort the phenomena it seeks to explain? Is an international history of the book a viable alternative, and what shape(s) might it take?
- To what extent can or should the history and historiography of the book engage with literary criticism, and literary and cultural theory? How do we bridge the divide between empiricism and theory, particularly now that the 1980s and 1990s moment of theory seems to be ebbing?

The keynote speaker at the conference will be professor Roger Chartier from l'École des hautes études en sciences sociales, Paris.

Please forward proposals to:

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CALLS FOR CONTRIBUTIONS

The Transformation of the Publishing Industry Journal of Media Economics

Deadline: 1 July 2002

The *Journal of Media Economics (JME)* will publish a special issue in 2003 on "The Transformation of the Publishing Industry." *JME* invites papers on: the book publishing industry; the magazine publishing industry; the scholarly journal publishing industry; and the electronic distribution of book, magazine, or journal content. *JME* is a peer-reviewed journal published by Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Submission requirements: mail four copies of the paper, double-spaced on 8 1/2" x 11" paper by 1 July 2002; use American Psychological Association style manual; include a seventy-five-word abstract on a separate page; only the article title should appear on the first page; an attached cover page must contain the title, author affiliations, mailing address, telephone, fax, and e-mail information for all authors; authors must use non-sexist language; only articles written in English will be considered.

For further information, or to submit articles, please contact:

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AWARDS AND FELLOWSHIPS

Newberry Library Fellowships in the Humanities

Deadlines: 21 January 2002 (long-term
fellowships)
20 February 2002 (short-term
fellowships)

The Newberry Library, an independent research library in Chicago, Illinois, invites applications for its 2002-03 Fellowships in the Humanities. Newberry Library fellowships support research in residence at the Library. All proposed research must be appropriate to the collections of the Newberry Library. Our fellowship program rests on the belief that all projects funded by the Newberry benefit from engagement both with the materials in the Newberry's collections and with the lively community of researchers that gathers around these collections.

Long-term residential fellowships are available to postdoctoral scholars (and Ph.D. candidates in the case of the Spencer and Kade Fellowships) for periods of six to eleven months. Applicants for postdoctoral awards must hold the Ph.D. at the time of application. The stipend for these fellowships is up to \$40,000. Short-term residential fellowships are intended for postdoctoral scholars or Ph.D. candidates from outside the Chicago area who have a specific need for Newberry collections. Scholars whose principal residence or place of employment is within the Chicago area are not eligible. The tenure of short-term fellowships varies from one week to two months. The amount of the award is generally \$1,200 per month. Applications for long-term fellowships are due 21 January 2002; applications for most short-term fellowships are due 20 February 2002. For more information or to download application materials, visit

our Website at www.newberry.org. If you would like materials sent to you by mail, write to:

Committee on Awards
Newberry Library
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Chicago, IL 60610-3380 USA
Telephone: (312) 255-3666
E-mail: research@newberry.org
Website: <http://www.newberry.org>

LECTURES AND COURSES

Sue Allen Lecture: Publishers' Bookbindings 1830-1910

Location: The Reading Room
Fisher Rare Book Library
University of Toronto
120 George Street
Toronto, ON
Date: 23 March 2002
Time: 10:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

The Canadian Bookbinders and Book Artists Guild is inaugurating a Master Series of workshops in Spring 2002 with "Publishers' Bookbindings 1830-1910," a one-day slide lecture by Sue Allen. Sue Allen is widely regarded as one of the foremost authorities on nineteenth-century bookbinding and her book *Decorated Cloth in America: Publisher's Bindings 1840-1910* is considered definitive.

Her lecture will focus on the materials, technology, evolving styles of ornamentation, endpapers and endbands, and practitioners of the period.

This is a one-day version of the week-long sessions she has presented fourteen times at the University of Virginia Rare Book School. Ms. Allen will also look at and identify a limited number of books brought in for this purpose.

The course fee is \$45. For online application forms please visit: <http://www.web.net/~cbbag/BulletinBoard.html>. For registration or information please contact:

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Website: <http://www.cbbag.ca>

EXHIBITIONS

The Harvard Theatre Collection

Location: The Grolier Club
47 East 60th Street, NYC
Dates: 27 February - 27 April 2002

Established in 1901, the Harvard Theatre Collection was the first library in America devoted to the performing arts. On view will be a representative selection from the University's collections, which now number millions of original manuscripts of plays, rare books, art work, scene and costume designs, and musical scores.

— | —

**“Darkness Echoing”
An Exhibition of Irish
Literature, 1950-2000**

Location: The Grolier Club
47 East 60th Street, New York
Dates: 15 May - 27 July 2002

This exhibition of Irish literature in the second half of the twentieth century will include manuscripts, books, private press editions and broadsides of, among others, Nobel Laureates Samuel Beckett and Seamus Heaney; poets Thomas Kinsella, Paul Muldoon, Derek Mahon, Nuala Ni Dhomhnaill, and Eavan Boland; playwrights Brian Friel and Sebastian Barry; and novelists Brian Moore and William Trevor.

CONFERENCE REPORTS

**History of the Book in Canada /
Histoire du livre et de l'imprimé
au Canada
Open Conference for Volume III
/ Colloque préparatoire au
volume III (1918-2000)
Simon Fraser University at
Harbour Centre
Vancouver, 15-17 November
2001**

Submitted by Carl Spadoni
McMaster University

Nearly one hundred enthusiastic participants attended the third open conference for the History of the Book in Canada, a major

collaborative, bilingual research project. Focussing on Canada's diverse cultural milieu in the twentieth century, the conference featured forty papers in thirteen sessions on broad areas of scholarship: the context of authorship, First Nations, specialized publishing, regional publishing, major publishers, popular periodicals, communities of print, libraries and bookstores, encyclopaedic achievements, controlling print, educating and entertaining the young, and transforming print. The range of multi-disciplinary discussion and geographic coverage was truly astonishing, including topics such as the circulating libraries of the Manitoba and Saskatchewan Wheat Pools (Elise Moore), poetry contests conducted by the Alberta branch of the Canadian Authors' Association (Peggy Kelly), Yiddish literature in Montreal (Rebecca Margolis), obscenity laws and the suppression of popular books in the 1950s (Bruce Ryder), literary anthologies of Atlantic Canada (Sandrine Ferré-Rode), and the ideological assumptions in the television adaptations of L.M. Montgomery's novels (Patsy Kotsopoulos).

Some papers offered overviews of particular topics. In the session on libraries and bookstores, Peter McNally highlighted significant trends and events in Canadian library history; Frédéric Brisson gave a statistical explanation of the growth of bookstores during the period 1930-1995; and Lynn Copeland discussed the problems and challenges faced by Canadian academic libraries. A number of papers were intentionally specific in nature, drawing on a wealth of archival resources – the attempts of Hugh Eayrs and John Gray of the Macmillan Company of Canada to forge a national literature (Ruth Panofsky); the short-lived participation of Canadian writers in formulating propaganda during the Second World War (Peter Buitenhuis); and the role of CBC radio in shaping the emergence of a Canadian literature (Sheila Latham). Other papers relied on an array of oral testimony or correspondence with living writers or illustrators – such as Janet Friskney's insightful analysis of contemporary authorship in science fiction, romance, and crime fiction; Randall Speller's fascinating account of the work of illustrators on dust jackets done for the Ryerson Press; and DeNel Sedo's rousing ethnographic study of five Vancouver book clubs. Many of the papers employed slides, Websites, and presentation software to good advantage. Tina Loo, for example, showed a variety of lurid, sexually suggestive covers of crime magazines produced in Canada during

the 1940s and Susan Houston titillated the audience with reference to racy tabloid weeklies. More befitting the stereotype of the reserved, stately Canadian, Jo Beglo examined the exhibition catalogues issued by the National Gallery of Canada, with covers by illustrators such as Emily Carr and J.E.H. Macdonald.



National Gallery of Canada. Exhibition of Canadian West Coast Art (Ottawa, 1927).

With bright sunshine glittering over Burrard's Inlet (visible from some of the conference rooms), the hosts, Carole Gerson and Jacques Michon, extended a warm hospitality to the conference attendees. Mirth and camaraderie reached a high point when Professor Gerson distributed free t-shirts with the HBiC/HLIC logo to a few lucky people.

The conference included a session on the proposed table of contents for Volume III of the History, in which participants voiced constructive comments and shared divergent points of view. The Alcuin Society hosted an evening event where Rollin Milroy spoke about his forthcoming bibliography of Robert Reid's Canadian Private Press Books. There was also a small but attractive exhibition prepared by Ralph Stanton entitled "Pages for the History of the Book in British Columbia."



National Gallery of Canada. Canadian Section of Fine Arts: Catalogue, British Empire Exhibition, London, 1924 (Ottawa, 1924).

A refreshing aspect of the conference was the great number of graduate students in attendance, many of whom gave excellent papers on their ongoing research.

The organizers are to be congratulated for hosting a memorable scholarly experience. This collaborative project will now move ahead with a series of special meetings for the authors of each individual volume – a model borrowed from our friends to the south. In 2005 the project will host an international event at another of the research sites, Dalhousie University in Halifax.

ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

HoBo Website Moves

New URL:

<http://www.english.ox.ac.uk/hobo/>

After two years of generous hosting by the English Faculty at the University of Cambridge, the HoBo Website has now moved to the English Faculty at the University of Oxford.

The site was founded by Ian Gadd and Martin Moonie, in 1996, as the History of the Book @ Oxford. The primary aim of the site is to provide a comprehensive calendar of events in the UK, including seminars, lectures, conferences, bibliographical society meetings, and book fairs.

The site is regularly updated by Ian Gadd, who welcomes submissions of appropriate information either by means of the Web form at the site or by e-mail at: hobo@english.ox.ac.uk.

HoBo also provides a number of related resources, including a current contents service for the leading Anglophone journals in the field of book history.

The site has recently been redesigned and feedback is welcome from both new and regular visitors, by e-mail as above.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Catherine J. Golden, ed. *Book Illustrated: Text, Image, and Culture 1770-1930*. New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press, 2000. xvi, 320 p. ill. ISBN 1-58456-023-1 (cloth). £25.00 / \$39.95

The eight new essays in this ambitious collection explore various aspects of book illustration during a period in which advances in mechanical reproduction fed a growing public appetite for pictures of all sorts. The essays take as their touchstone Walter Benjamin's "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." About half the essays only mention Benjamin's essay in passing, while the other half are largely interested in revising Benjamin's notion of aura – a quality of an original work of art which Benjamin claimed is lost when that object is reproduced.

Notions such as aura and originality are problematic at best when applied to mass-produced objects. What, after all, constitutes the original work? Golden acknowledges this early in her introduction when she asserts that illustrated books can be said to have an artifactual status and therefore an aura in Benjamin's sense of the word. In her own contribution to the collection, "Cruikshank's Illustrative Wrinkle in *Oliver Twist's* Misrepresentation of Class," Golden locates such an aura in the "original" illustrated *Oliver Twist*. Yet, although Golden's argument is based on the first book version of Dickens' novel, the illustrations that she reproduces are photographed from its first publication in Bentley's *Miscellany*. Serialization in a periodical and publication in book form are two very different objects – each, I would contend, with its own aura and originality. The same contention could reasonably be made for any subsequent editions of the book. For this and other reasons, Benjamin's essay does not strike me as a particularly effective underpinning for the collection.

That said, the contributors do an excellent job of demonstrating and elucidating some of the complex interrelationships between image and word during the heyday of book illustration. Jonathan Bate analyzes the

ways in which eighteenth- and nineteenth-century illustrations drew upon various traditions of the stage, history painting, and the historical novel to novelize and historicize Shakespeare, floating him, as it were, on a tide of rising nationalistic aspirations. Sarah Webster Goodwin looks at the different uses that two publications (a periodical intended for male readership and a gift book aimed at women) made of the same popular images of a well-known ballerina. Robert L. Patten uses a political satire by George Cruikshank as a case study to explore the conflicted politics and dense pictorial conventions of one of the nineteenth century's most important illustrators. Golden considers the work of Cruikshank in the context of his sometimes-uneasy collaboration with Dickens. Elizabeth K. Helsinger shows how Dante Gabriel Rossetti's involvement in all aspects of the art of the book resulted in a hybrid artifact that was greater than the sum of its parts. And James A. W. Heffernan offers a comparative reading of Wilde's *Salome* and Pope's *The Rape of the Lock* through the lens of Aubrey Beardsley's illustrations.

While the final two essays are less engaged in historicizing pictorial and textual literacies, the collection as a whole is a valuable addition to the study of book illustration in particular and the history of the book in general.

Lane Stiles

Fairview Press and Mid-List Press

Wayne E. Hall. *Dialogues in the Margin: A Study of the "Dublin University Magazine"*. Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1999. viii, 252 p. ill. ISBN: 0-8132-0926-9 (cloth). £35.19 / \$42.95

Wayne Hall begins *Dialogues in the Margin* by citing the lead article in the *Dublin University Magazine's* (DUM) first issue, "The Present Crisis." According to Hall, the essay "maps out an ambivalence characteristic of the magazine's creators, Irishmen looking toward England, nervously occupying the uncertain margins bordering both Catholic nationalism

and British imperialism" (1). Ambivalence, whether political, social, religious, or literary, is the theme that Hall uses to unify his examination of the *DUM* long and influential history. Its history stretches from its first issue in 1833 (in the aftermath of the 1832 Reform Bill) to its last issue in 1877, which appeared in the midst of the Fenian movement.

Despite the sense of ambivalence regarding its own status as a journal publishing away from the center of English life, the *DUM* offered its readers (drawn primarily from the Protestant Ascendancy class), an unambivalent locus in which they could construct an identity as Irish people who were politically conservative, authors of inventive literature, and distinct from the majority politics of Catholic nationalism. Hall clearly demonstrates the significance of the magazine to Irish political and literary history. Occupying a status comparable to the *Edinburgh Review*, the *DUM* remains remarkable among British periodicals because it provided a nursery for the literary precursors to the Irish Literary Renaissance. When William Butler Yeats began to search for Irish writings upon which he could model his own attempts at a distinctly Irish literature, he found William Caletton's "Jane Sinclair" (76) and Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu's *Uncle Silas* (194) in the pages of the *DUM*.

Hall does not, however, ignore the political dimension of the magazine's literary offerings. The magazine's editors, beginning with O'Sullivan and then later with Isaac Butt, James M'Glashan, and Le Fanu (who edited, published, and owned the magazine at different times), remained committed to the cause of the Protestant Ascendancy, the minority class in Ireland that was threatened by the rising political power of Irish Catholics, and the increasing obsolescence of the established Church of Ireland. Hall organizes his study around these various editors, thereby showing that the magazine played an important role in perpetuating a colonial class that might have disappeared without it.

If there is a dimension of the study with which one might take issue, it is the absence of an adequate theorization of nationalism and colonialism, which could frame Hall's readings of the political articles and literary contributions contained in the *DUM*. Here is an opportunity to analyze the role of the

magazine in the formation of one strand of Irish nationalism in the nineteenth century. It is unfortunate, therefore, that Hall does not accommodate recent theoretical work on nationalism in any significant way in his manuscript. Such theorization would perform important work on the magazine, demonstrating its primacy within the historical matrix of nineteenth-century British imperialism.

Julia M. Williams

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Erin A. Smith. *Hard-Boiled: Working-Class Readers and Pulp Magazines*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2000. xi, 215 p. ill. ISBN 1-56639-768-5 (cloth); 1-56639-769-3 (paper). £48.50/\$64.50 (cloth); £16.95/\$19.95 (paper)

This lively, perceptive book is a wide-ranging study of the interaction of pulp detective fiction and its audience in the 1920s and 1930s. Drawing imaginatively on a vast array of sources, Erin Smith's analysis combines three areas of scholarship: the history of the book, working-class studies, and feminist cultural studies. Smith argues that pulp detective fiction "could be read in a variety of ways: as allegories about work, manliness, and labor/management struggles . . . ; as guides to dressing for success; as demystifications of the links among language, class, and culture; as sites for managing anxieties about shifting gender roles" (13). She also shows that pulp detective fiction defined itself as a genre in rebellion against the genteel niceties of classic detective fiction, of which the most prominent authors at that time were women. Pulp professed to be for the "manly" reader, and responded to both the limited education and the social anxieties of working-class men.

Hard-Boiled sheds new light wherever it goes. Noting the convoluted plots of many popular pulp detective novels, Smith demonstrates that following a tidy, logical plot was less important to working-class readers than identifying with the characters and experiencing the drama of individual scenes. The fiercely independent detective heroes of these

stories appealed to modern industrial workers who felt reduced to cogs in a machine. In a period marked by the sharpening of class divisions, these stories (like the advertisements that accompanied them in pulp magazines) also fed working men's desire for self-improvement. Smith convincingly contends that the stories' detective heroes, in effect, educated the reader in interpreting details such as clothing, manners, and pronunciation as indications of class and character. These heroes were also expert in the nuances of language, able to communicate with both the upper class and low-life criminals by adapting their vocabulary to their listeners. Further, they provided guidance in the mysteries of gender at a time when masses of women had just invaded the workforce.

This book will be an essential point of departure for future studies on the subject. Besides fruitfully combining several critical approaches, it makes the most of a rich variety of sources in literary criticism and theory, advertising history, labor history, publishing history, sociology, gender studies, and queer studies. Negotiating boundaries as easily as the hard-boiled detective, it also draws on both highbrow and lowbrow primary sources of the period. Its only flaw of any consequence is the absence of a bibliography. For anyone interested in literary, social, or publishing history, this is an enlightening, enjoyable read.

Margaret Nichols

Cornell University Library

Bill Bell, Philip Bennett, and Jonquil Bevan, eds. *Across Boundaries: The Book in Culture and Commerce*. Winchester: St Paul's Bibliographies; New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press, 2000. x, 160 p. ill. ISBN 1-873040-47-4 (St Paul's Bibliographies) £25.00. ISBN 1-58456-006-1 (Oak Knoll Press) \$39.95

This collection of nine essays originated in a conference held at the University of Edinburgh in 1996. The conference's principal concern was an examination of the kinds of boundary crossings intrinsic to the study

of Book History. The volume that came out of this conference focuses on the erosion of disciplinary and national boundaries as traditionally understood, but other crossings, both metaphorical and actual, are also fruitfully examined.

The volume opens felicitously with a wide-ranging essay in which Roger Chartier, drawing with characteristic resourcefulness on illustrations that range from the Early Modern to Borges, pronounces a salient warning against all forms of anachronism. Chartier is concerned not only with teasing out the distinctions between the oral, communal, and ritual performance of texts from the Early Modern period itself, but with exploring the complex links between the material forms of the book, the evolution of the literary institution, and the distortions resulting from an over-privileging of hermeneutic models of reading.

Because of its devotion to a single author within a limited time-frame, Sylvia Huot's essay on Watricquet de Couvin may seem, by comparison, quite narrow in its focus, but its aim is equally ambitious. Huot's central concern is not with the reader but with the emergence of the author within a specific genre of French literature; and in seeking to define the medieval concept of the book she engages not so much with the physical object itself as with its textual presence as metaphor or allegory. The physical aspects of the book again become paramount, however, as Lisa Jardine examines the importance of the book as *objet d'art* in the courts of renaissance Italy and considers the dynastic implications of some of the great collections found in these courts.

Wallace Kirsop's essay, "Patronage across Frontiers: Subscription Publishing in French in Enlightenment Europe," initiates the series of treatments of trans-national interactions that constitute an especially valuable aspect of the volume overall. Kirsop's treatment of the adoption and transformation of the English model of subscription publishing in eighteenth-century France is followed by the nicely combined analysis and narrative of James Raven's essay on "Book Traffic to America, c. 1750-1820;" the often intriguing revelations of Fiona Black's study of the books ordered by members of the Hudson's Bay Company in the Canadian Northwest or held

in libraries; Bill Bell's wide-ranging investigations of the reading matter of nineteenth-century Scottish emigrants; and Ian Willison's reflections on the interrelationship between the recent development of the History of the Book and the evolution of national and international literatures in English.

Such explorations seem especially relevant at a moment when increasing emphasis on Internet resources creates the illusion of a modern world without boundaries, while the production of a growing series of national Histories of the Book risks evoking images of earlier print cultures barricaded behind exclusionary fortifications. The editors of *Across Boundaries*, all associated with the forthcoming History of the Book in Scotland, will no doubt seize the opportunity to draw upon the many valuable lessons embodied in this stimulating collection - which ends with a graceful tribute by Alan Bell to George Saintsbury, whose name was invoked in the title of the original symposium.

Jane Millgate

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Lyde Cullen Sizer. *The Political Work of Northern Women Writers and the Civil War, 1850-1872*. Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2000. xxvii, 348 p. ISBN 0-8078-2554-9 (cloth). £37.95/\$45.00 ISBN 0-8078-4885-9 (paper). £15.95 /\$18.95

In *The Political Work of Northern Women Writers and the Civil War, 1850-1872*, Lyde Cullen Sizer presents an intellectual history of women's engagement with American political and social debate in the mid-nineteenth century. Through close analysis of the writing northern women produced during the period, Sizer explores how they addressed slavery and abolition, the purpose of the Civil War, and issues of gender roles and race relations. She focuses on nine major figures: Lydia Maria Child, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Fanny Fern, E.D.E.N. Southworth, Frances E. Watkins Harper, Rebecca Harding Davis, Gail Hamilton, Louisa May Alcott, and Elizabeth Stuart Phelps. Sizer argues that the Civil War

functions as a transformative event for these women, not only in terms of their understanding of women's roles in the political process, but in what Sizer calls "a revolution in the understanding of *woman* herself" (11).

Sizer has arranged her study as a chronology, rather than by individual author, examining work produced during the decade before the war, writings that appeared during the war, and texts - primarily fiction - written after the war. Sizer makes extensive use of the works of lesser-known women writers, often pairing them with those of their better-known peers. She also investigates the letters, journals, and editorial contributions of the nine women mentioned above. This far-ranging approach allows Sizer to reveal a wider spectrum of women's writing during the era and to demonstrate the complexity of the arguments in which women engaged, especially the conflicting attitudes toward women's actions within reform-minded circles.

Sizer convincingly demonstrates the powerful hold that the ideology of separate spheres exerted in the decade before the war and during much of the war itself. Women used the language of "separate spheres" and of "true womanhood" to create what Sizer terms a "rhetoric of unity" and to qualify women's heroic actions, such as battlefield nursing, as extensions of their domestic role. As the war continued this "rhetoric of unity," according to Sizer, became more difficult to sustain. Out of its fractures emerged a belief in "a wider arena of authority for women who proved their worth in the midst of [the war's] chaos and tragedy" (278) and resulted in new attitudes toward female characters expressed in post-war fiction.

To provide context for her study of women's authorship in relation to the Civil War, Sizer draws upon elements of publishing history and the evolving nature of literary audiences during the period. She has written a volume that will meet the needs of a variety of readers. For the student, the volume provides an accessible introduction to aspects of nineteenth-century women's history and authorship, highlighting the importance of women's networks that made professional writing possible. For the specialist, the discussion of the major texts rings familiar, but Sizer's juxtaposition of these texts with those

less well-known, as well as her extensive use of related non-fiction illuminates the historical and cultural significance of the efforts of nineteenth-century women writers to make plain “women’s central relevance to the greater war story” (91).

Melissa McFarland Pennell

University of Massachusetts, Lowell

Ezra Greenspan. *George Palmer Putnam: Representative American Publisher.* University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000. xv, 510 p. ill. ISBN 0-271-02005-9 (cloth). £37.95 / \$45.00

Ezra Greenspan has written a fine “cultural biography” of George Palmer Putnam, an archetypally representative man of his time – publisher, author, family man, nationalist, innovator, synthesizer, traveler, booster – a truly Barnumesque character of the American Renaissance. In Greenspan’s words, Putnam was “one of the most centrally situated, broadly and multiply involved, and professionally and patriotically dedicated figures of his time in the world of arts and letters” (xiii). A man of middle class taste and republican values, Putnam published a Homeric list of American authors. Beginning with Washington Irving (whom he succeeded in establishing as the first internationally acknowledged American author of significance, and who would serve throughout Putnam’s life as the cornerstone of his publishing business), Putnam published works by Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, Edgar Allan Poe, William Gilmore Simms, Susan Fenimore Cooper, Caroline Kirkland, Margaret Fuller, and Susan Warner (who gave him a real bestseller in *The Wide, Wide World*). As Greenspan concludes, “Never a man whose thinking was overly troubled by complexities or ambiguities, Putnam entered his maturity driven by a sense of service to profession and nation that, whether traced back to a source in family, region, or nation (or, as I tend to think, to a congruence of all three), powered his ca-

reer in the trade from its beginning to its end” (50).

Greenspan’s skill is in making clear the multiple levels of connectedness between Putnam’s private life, his business life in publishing, and the larger cultural life of nineteenth-century America. Greenspan moves easily from family letters and business documents to public speeches and numerous types of publications. His meticulous archival work grounds the biography in the nuts and bolts of Putnam’s daily life and at the same time locates Putnam as a witness to key events in national history: the completion of the Erie Canal, the opening of the Crystal Palace in New York, the arrival of the first steamships in New York harbor, the traumas and effects of the Civil War, and the chartering of the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Putnam was appointed its first honorary superintendent). As Putnam himself declared in a speech at an authors and publishers dinner in 1855, “The interests of the writers and publishers, and sellers of books, in this great and thriving country, are daily growing in magnitude and importance; - and those interests are, or should be, mutual and identical” (365).

My only caveat is that facts are occasionally repeated from chapter to chapter, a curse of writing a biography that is also a family saga and a reconstructed historical record. The illustrations are numerous and excellent. The family portraits convey a real sense of individual personalities while the cultural items – lithographs of New York harbor and the Crystal Palace, several views of Broadway, a page from *Putnam’s Monthly* – enrich the text significantly. A few weeks before completing this review, I learned that Ezra Greenspan’s *George Palmer Putnam: Representative American Publisher* had been awarded the prize for best biography in the Professional/Scholarly Publishing Division of the American Publishers competition for 2000. Their judgment confirms my own.

William E. Lenz
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Hilary Wyss. *Writing Indians: Literacy, Christianity and Native Community in Early America.* Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2000. xiii, 207 p. ISBN 1-55849-264-X. (cloth). £25.50 / \$29.95

Writing is an ambiguous term. It can imply literacy, orthography, or print. More generally, it can suggest a wide range of communication and expression. The role of writing in American Indian cultural development is particularly problematic. Because alphabetic literacy and print culture came to Native American cultures through European colonialism, scholars have questioned the degree to which “writing” in Native cultures was an “authentic” activity. How did Native people incorporate writing into their own cultures while maintaining pre-contact traditions? What goals did Native people have in writing? How can one decipher the early written words of native people, so obviously filtered (or downright abused) by European ethnographers?

In *Writing Indians: Literacy, Christianity and Native Community in Early America*, Hilary Wyss seeks answers to these questions by focusing on the ways Native people “engaged” with colonizers on paper. Concentrating on the writings of native converts to Christianity, Wyss redefines the terms of the debate over the Christian Indians’ relative cultural “authenticity,” arguing that alphabetic literacy and Christian theology provided them with a mode for enacting “bicultural” resistance.

Writing is central to Wyss’s study because she believes it was the American Indians’ primary means of negotiating with European colonialism. Through writing, Native people could partially control the construction of their identities. Drawing on contemporary theories of colonialism and cultural production, Wyss describes their work as “transculturations” – Native North American instances of the “autoethnographies” Mary Louise Pratt has identified in colonial Africa and South America.

Examining five such autoethnographic “situations” – ranging from the 1660s to the 1830s – *Writing Indians* makes impressive forays into the little-explored archival record of early Native American writing. Wyss’s discussion of the Native marginalia found in the Massachusetts-language *Bible* (1663), Peter

Jethro's and James Printer's ransom letters during King Philip's War, and Hendrick Aupaumut's 1792-93 diplomatic journal offer inspiring glimpses into that archive's potential for uncovering the meaning of writing among Native Americans during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Writing Indians also contributes a new understanding of the Native American literary canon. Wyss's short discussion of William Apess's *A Son of the Forest* (1833) and *The Experience of Five Christian Indians . . .* (1833), argues that "Apess is part of an extended tradition of Christian Indian critiques of Anglo-American superiority." Apess becomes, in Wyss's revised canon, the culmination of "a tradition of Native American life writing that precedes [him] by almost 150 years" (4). Throughout *Writing Indians*, those readers interested in recovering Native American texts and in re-imagining the literary resistance of Native converts will find much to think about and much to teach.

Readers familiar with early modern print and manuscript studies, however, will have several questions left unanswered by this work. Although Wyss asserts that early Native "documents all point to the role of print culture in defining the emerging identities in colonial New England," her use of the word "documents" is telling, for nowhere in the book is a reader given a clear view of the physical properties of printed texts, the nature of the manuscript sources, nor the social circulation of either.

If, as Wyss claims, the texts produced by Native converts were "bicultural products," then it seems reasonable to assume that their hybrid performance of resistance might have included manipulating and transforming the formal properties of print texts, communities of the book, epistolary networks, and scribal communities. Yet there is very little mention of this in *Writing Indians*.

Instead, Wyss employs the general term "language" to describe the many cultural performances Native people enacted – whether in manuscript or print. In contrast to her thick descriptions of Native social contexts and close readings of individual texts, Wyss's arguments about the language of Indian resistance appear flat and underdeveloped. So do the cultural performances of European

Protestants, whose theology is often described as "Puritanism," even when it is referenced in the second half of the eighteenth century. Surely their theology changed from 1663 to 1833. Certainly their sense of "writing" did.

Philip Round

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Kathleen P. Whitley. *The Gilded Page: The History and Technique of Manuscript Gilding*. Edited and introduced by Michelle P. Brown. New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press; and London: British Library, 2000. xiii, 220 p. ill. (44 B&W illustrations). Index and bibliography. ISBN: 1-884718-58-2 (Oak Knoll). \$39.95; 0-7123-4670-8 (British Library). £25.00

This book's title indicates its dual purpose. It is primarily a manual of gilding techniques for practicing book decorators. The author believes, however, that such practitioners should know the history of gilding. Thus, the book also provides such a history, ranging from prehistoric experiments in metallurgy and the decoration of monuments to Gutenberg and the rapid disappearance of gilding in the incunabular period.

The first chapter argues that the medieval illuminated manuscript is the culmination of three developments which coalesced in the fourth century CE: developments in techniques of gold application, the gradual adoption of parchment in place of papyrus, and how the codex came to replace the scroll. These three developments are presented as the constituents of the illuminated book, which appears at the time (and partly as a consequence) of the adoption of Christianity by the Roman Empire.

The second chapter describes medieval gilding, divided into a series of periods (Antique, Byzantine, Insular, etc.). For each, Whitley describes features of style and technique of gilded adornment, and, where possible, summarizes a contemporary treatise on gilding and describes an exemplary manuscript (the Harley Golden Gospels, for one). Pages of these manuscripts are reproduced but only in black-and-white. This is a great pity because Ms Whitley's descriptions – for instance, of "splendid intertwining patterns of color

and gold" (57) – cannot be verified in the illustrations as reproduced. The second chapter concludes with some account of the "arts and crafts" movement and the modern revival of book gilding.

These first two chapters lead into more practical discussions of gilding. Here, chapters concentrate on the tools needed, recipes for mordant, techniques for laying and tooling gold leaf, and the use of shell gold and metallic inks.

The book concludes with a chapter entitled "A Golden Age," contrasting "Medieval" and "Renaissance" attitudes towards the "natural" and the "artificial." Ms Whitley sees Renaissance art as emphasizing "accuracy" of observation and denigrating "artifice." The Industrial Revolution, then, provided the mechanical means to achieve Renaissance artistic perfection, but today our perfect accuracy of observation (by photographic means) and perfect reproducibility of artifact (by mechanical means) has provoked a reactionary search for the "spirituality" of creativity through a revival of medieval crafts, including those of the book. Ms. Whitley's allegiance to craft aesthetics and ideals here are made clear; this chapter silently invokes shades of Ruskin and Morris.

This book, then, is not a scholarly introduction to medieval gilding, but there is sound scholarship underlying it. Its histories are offered to modern revivalists and practitioners, and they are attempts to synthesize and summarize the known, rather than to offer original insights. While the works of J.J.G. Alexander and others remain the best current authorities on the illumination of medieval manuscripts, this book provides a concise and readable introduction, coupled with a practical focus upon techniques. As such, it is a book of value. One is disappointed, however, that the publishers, in a book about gilded and colored decoration, have not printed the illustrations in color, which would surely have been of greater use to both the historians and the practitioners in Ms Whitley's audience.

Stephen R. Reimer

University of Alberta

Alena Köllner. *Buchwesen in Prag: von Václav Matej Kramerius bis Jan Otto.* Vienna: Edition Praesens, 2000. 178 p. ISBN 3-7069-0041-6. ATS 495,- • 35,97

This German-language study of book history in Prague is the first in a new series whose goal is to give a comprehensive portrait of the history of the book in Austria from 1750 to the present. (The second book in the series, by Carl Junker, *Zum Buchwesen in Österreich. Gesammelte Schriften 1896-1927*, has just been published.) Köllner's book focuses on printing, the book trade, and publishing from c.1780 to c.1880 in Prague, which was, after Vienna, the most important city for printing and the book trade in the Habsbourg monarchy.

The book has two main parts, covering the end of the eighteenth through to the mid-nineteenth century, and the second half of the nineteenth century respectively. Aside from introductory demographic data and facts about the political and social situation in the Czech countries within the Habsbourg monarchy, the author's primary purpose is a systematic survey of the printers, booksellers and publishers, the prosperity of their companies, and their range of books. Two chapters are concerned with two significant members of the trade from the beginning and the end of this era of Czech book history: the journalist, writer, printer, bookseller, and publisher Václav Matej Kramerius from the late eighteenth century; and from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Jan Otto who established one of the most important Czech publishing houses and is known mostly for his still definitive Czech encyclopaedia.

The volume contains many appendices (copies of administrative letters and records), indices of companies, persons, places and facts, a detailed list of printers, booksellers, and publishers in Prague, an accurate list of secondary literature and a great deal of footnotes. Its style is dry and rather inaccessible. It is a specialist work, whose systematic arrangement makes it an encyclopaedic handbook. Although it does not mention its intended audience, the book would be helpful for German-speaking students of Czech or Slavonic studies and for the circle of international scholars who explore book history and for whom the Czech books are not readily accessible.

There are some weaknesses. The author presents encyclopaedic enumeration instead of showing connections or interesting chains of events: for example, she does not provide any explicit interpretation of the demographic information given in the first part of the book (e.g. linking this with the reception of readers or the goals of publishers), which makes such data seem rather purposeless. The author also groups together many different Czech writers without differentiating between them or explaining their importance for Czech literature; this means that only a small circle of Czech literary scholars can fully appreciate the implications of such information. There are also some grammatical defects in the book, which indicate that the author is not a native German speaker. However, it is the most detailed description of the book history of Prague in this period to appear so far in either German or Czech.

Pavína Vimrová
Prague

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Dietrich Kerlen and Inka Kirste, eds. *Buchwissenschaft und Buchwirkungsforschung. VIII. Leipziger Hochschultage für Medien und Kommunikation.* Leipzig: Inst. für Kommunikations- und Medienwiss., 2000. 183 pp. ISBN 3-00-005796-X. DM 10,-

Book research has a long tradition in Germany. It first received institutional backing in 1876 when the *Börsenverein des deutschen Buchhandels* established a *Historische Kommission*, at the recommendation of the publisher E. Brockhaus. After 1960, this research gained new momentum with the activities of B. Fabian, H.G. Göpfert, P. Raabe, H. Widmann, H. J. Koppitz, and others. And now a new generation of book historians is confronted with the task of researching a much broader field than ever before.

This collection sheds new light both on German book history and on the current status of German book research. The first section examines five research institutions which study the history of the book; these are affiliated with the universities of Erlangen,

Leipzig, Mainz (the oldest and largest), Munich, and Münster. The general curricula are broadly similar, as there is a concerted effort to combine book history with training for a profession, and students can pursue a scholarly career or take on jobs in the media, cultural management, and so on. The different traditions and affiliations of these institutes are visible, however, in their emphasis on different fields: Mainz offers the broadest programme; Erlangen provides some specialization in incunabula and paper research; Leipzig has developed an iconographic database and compares books with other media; Munich keeps close ties with the many publishers in that city and to the University's German Department; and Münster, formerly under the guidance of B. Fabian, emphasises its Anglo-American connections and the study of analytical bibliography. Although these reports demonstrate the broad spectrum of book research in Germany, they do not mention the experiences of other countries such as Austria and Switzerland with a traditionally large "German" book production.

In a second section, Erdmann Weyrauch reports on his monumental *Wolfenbütteler Bibliographie zur Geschichte des Buchwesens im deutschen Sprachgebiet 1840-1980*, and takes the opportunity to reflect on the history of bibliography and its future prospects; while E. Schmitz discusses the impact of the new media on libraries and what roles old and new books will play in this environment. The collection concludes with a section devoted to the use and reception of books in Germany. The contributions from Kerlen and Schön deserve special mention. D. Kerlen, applying a modified reception theory, argues for a focus on the type of the text (in whatever form) rather than the book. He contrasts short-lived informative texts (suited above all for digitisation) with what he calls "performative Langzeittexte" (i.e. lasting and valuable texts of literature, science, etc., which require active participation on the part of the reader). E. Schön, on the other hand, calls for a change of paradigm from reception theory to "Buchnutzungsforschung." Following the semiotic theory that signs only take on a meaning when they are read, he insists that research should focus on reading and especially reader reactions and activities; however, while such

an emphasis is certainly of interest for current empirical studies, it is hardly applicable to earlier periods.

The diversity of the articles shows that book history is not only thriving in Germany, but that its theory and practice are the subject of lively debate. Realizing that the “book” has lost its former dominant position, scholars are now trying to interpret this new configuration and its impact both on the book trade and the reader. As this collection demonstrates, this is a timely and necessary discussion, which should involve everyone interested in the history of the book.

Peter R. Frank

Heidelberg

Kevin G. Barnhurst and John Nerone. *The Form of News: A History*. New York: The Guilford Press, 2001. x, 326 p. ill. ISBN 1-57230-637-8 (cloth). \$35.00 / £26.95

This book provides a history of American newspaper form, defined to include everything from typography and layout to pictorial style, generic convention, and sectional organization. Because it treats form so broadly, it provides a valuable supplement to existing design histories such as Allen Hutt's *The Changing Newspaper*. Its greater contribution, however, lies in its description of how form evolves in dialectical relationship with changes in the newspaper's civic role. With this description, the authors compellingly argue that any consideration of the newspaper's function in society must include a treatment of its visual structure.

The book includes three sections providing a historical narrative, and one examining the role of pictures in newspapers. In the historical narrative, for each of several periods – printerly, Partisan, Victorian, and Modern – the authors describe the dominant newspaper style, type (basically the ownership and management structure), and “ideal.” These ideals are metaphors like “town meeting,” “courtroom,” “marketplace,” “social map,” and “index,” which interpret how the overall

design of the paper supports the function it has at a given time. For example, the term “social map” expresses how the professionalized “Modern” newspaper employed typographic clues, a clear visual hierarchy, and increased compartmentalization to prescribe a certain map of society for its readers. In the section examining the role of pictures, the authors do more than explore the evolving technology of newspaper images. They also show how other aspects of papers changed in response. For example, as photography made it possible to provide action shots of an event, news stories offered fewer descriptive narratives and more eyewitness accounts or detailed analyses of that event.

The authors' interpretations are not always convincing; at times, they offer conclusions that deserve more attention. But this is largely excused by the scope of the project. The authors acknowledge that they have offered only a mainstream narrative without the nuance and exceptions they normally would prefer. Hopefully, objections to their interpretations will simply prompt others to supplement and amend their work.

The authors' self-imposed limits do not, however, excuse one problem with this book. After having focused almost exclusively on the United States, in one of the last chapters the authors review newspapers from other countries in order to show how High Modernism (what might be called *USA Today* style) has spread around the world. In this chapter, they apply categories developed specifically in reference to the United States to other cultures. Such descriptions misleadingly suggest that all newspaper histories have followed the same trajectory as that of the United States. Further, they use teleological language, labeling papers that have not adopted American High Modernist style as “vestigial” or “throwbacks” (263, 265) – this forecloses a necessary discussion of the very different forms and civic roles newspapers have in other cultures. Particularly since the authors explicitly avoid such teleology elsewhere, and since they do not celebrate High Modernism, such an approach is unfortunate.

But this problem does not detract irredeemably from the book's overall value. It offers a useful and accessible overview of the history of American newspaper form. Ideally,

it will also serve as a baseline and model for future studies analyzing the relationship between form and the role a medium plays in society.

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Rosemary Mitchell. *Picturing the Past: English History in Text and Image, 1830-1870*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000. xi, 314 p. ill. ISBN 0-19-820844-8. £48.00 / \$85.00

The second great print revolution in Britain was the expansion of the market for publications of all kinds during the nineteenth century. This coincided with a new appreciation, and perceived need, for a national history. The print media marshalled to supply this need were textbooks for children, multi-volume historical works for adults, and historical novels. Rosemary Mitchell considers all of these genres in a book which beautifully evokes the many pleasures and mysteries of reading about the past, for the Victorians and ourselves.

A striking feature of the print market at this time was the preference for illustrated works; this might be dismissed as a function of the popularization of literature, but Mitchell instead makes the interaction of text and image a central theme of her book, taking seriously the visual component of historical works. Illustrations contributed to the reading experience by confirming the testimony of the text, by validating the author's scholarship, and by providing the reader with a fragment of historical experience. Just as the claim of the early-nineteenth-century textbook to recount “true stories” echoed the truth-claims of folk tales, visual representations of the past encouraged an examination that was partly objective study, and partly a projection of the self into the past.

Metaphoric illustrations, or tableaux depicting historical figures, offered the sensation of seeing events unfold; metonymic images, which reproduced an artifact or monument from the period, placed the reader in the position of an antiquarian uncovering the vi-

sual codes of past ages. A central chapter of this book, dealing with the historical works produced by William Harrison Ainsworth and his illustrator George Cruikshank, highlights the tensions inherent in the “picturesque” historiography of the early nineteenth century, which used both types of illustration and even combined them in meticulously researched scenes. The problem was that in Ainsworth’s books the virtuosity of Cruikshank’s illustrations began to make the “look” of the past more important than any moral or patriotic message.

The honourable intention to provide a national history to the reading public animated authors with a variety of social and political opinions. Mitchell notes that illustrations could support minority opinions within apparently more general works, citing the Catholic sympathies of John Lingard’s *History of England* and the efforts of the Strickland sisters, in *Lives of the Queens of Scotland*, to redeem the reputation of Mary Stuart. Charles Knight, publisher of the *Penny Magazine*, compiled a social history which was populist both in the choice of illustrative sources (notably Hogarth’s prints) and as a continuation of his intention to provide “true eye-knowledge” (119) to a wide audience – though not, sadly, in the result, which was a bulky, multi-volume work.

In the 1850s, a “growing sense of the inadequacy and artificiality of attempts so far to revive the past” (226), and an impatience with illustrative strategies which plucked scenes out of context, drove historical novelists – Thackeray, Eliot, and their contemporaries – to construct narratives which were authentic in style but independent of the contradictory and dubious documentary sources too readily accepted by the authors of picturesque histories. The later chapters of this book deal with the transformation of the historical novel in the age of “scientific” academic study of history.

The ample illustrations and sensitive readings of fiction and non-fiction works fully justify Mitchell’s primary theme, that illustration and text worked together in the creation and development of national historical consciousness. But *Picturing the Past* should also be commended for combining intellectual his-

tory and history of the book to illuminate a vibrant age in British cultural politics.

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Joy Tilley. *A Catalogue of the Donations made to Norwich City Library 1608-1656*. Cambridge: LP Publications, 2000. ix, 120 p. ill. ISBN 0-9518811-5-9. £15.00

The Norwich City Library was the first independent civic library to be founded in England after the Reformation. In 1608, three rooms were provided by the Norwich Corporation for a library for local preachers, over the south porch of St. Andrews Hall. No funds were available for books, and the principal citizens were encouraged to donate volumes. By 1634 the collection had grown to more than a hundred substantial works representing several hundred volumes. Then the number of donations virtually ceased until the end of 1656, when the collection was reorganised and operated by its users under the Presbyterian John Collinges. This was the first of several similar cycles of growth and neglect experienced by the library, together with various changes of management and location, until it ultimately passed into the custody of the Free Public Library in 1862. Miraculously, most of the books, the library catalogues, minute books, and various other documents have survived, despite the disastrous fire in Norwich Central Library in 1994.

With this wealth of material available, there have been several published accounts of the Library. However, the only detailed study of its operation during the seventeenth century relates to the period after the reorganisation of 1656/57. Joy Tilley’s catalogue therefore provides a welcome account of the early years. In particular, she provides a useful introductory essay on the origins of the library and its early development, together with a brief description of other libraries in the city.

The bulk of her work is concerned with identifying the early donors to the library and the titles they gave. In 1657 John Collinges

acquired a vellum “donations book” in order to attract further gifts. Thankfully he caused the records of all previous donations to be entered, and it is this manuscript which forms the key to the study. Yet Ms. Tilley has been able to unearth a remarkable amount of supplementary information. Her catalogue is arranged alphabetically by donor, with indexes of authors and titles of the donations. Most entries provide biographical details, frequently showing the religious and political affiliations of the individuals concerned. In several instances they are illustrated with portraits, funeral monuments or, in two cases, pictures of their houses. Each biography is followed by annotated catalogue entries for each of their gifts, with the current shelfmarks and notes of any marks of ownership. A detailed picture is therefore drawn of the content of the library and those who supported it. One might vainly wish for comparable information about those who used the collection at this time, but unfortunately virtually no evidence has survived.

By 1634 the collection reflected the Puritan religious sympathies of the city’s ruling elite. Tilley associates the change in the fortunes of the collection with the suppression of non-conformity in the city by the Bishop of Norwich from 1635. Then came the disruptions of the Civil War, when in 1641 the library was used by the local artillery company as an arms store. The library may even have closed at the end of this period as one potential donor, the Puritan minister John Carter, revoked a bequest in his will in September 1655 “nowe seeing (to my no small grief) that the library is locked up, ministers shut out of it, and that it is never like to be of publique use againe” (26). His complaint may have been the spur that ultimately caused the preservation of this remarkable collection.

Ms. Tilley’s study is a commendable example of how a university master’s dissertation can be developed into a worthwhile contribution to the study of libraries in the seventeenth century.

David Stoker
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Correction: In the previous issue, the title of the book edited by Peter Isaac and Barry McKay was listed incorrectly. The correct title is:

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