



SHARP News

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In My View: Women and Book History

The Toronto *Globe and Mail* reported last summer that some twenty-six banks across Canada had recently been robbed at gunpoint by 'the bookworm bandit' – so labelled by police because he looked bookish, with 'feminine features', a hat, and spectacles. Contemporary popular culture, it seems, identifies book-ishness with respectable garb, a delicate facial structure, and that indefinable air of being studious and physically somewhat incompetent, even when carrying a loaded weapon. Why does that happen, and how long has it been going on? The contemporary values implicit in this trivial news item set reading and study in competition, both with consumption of the broadcast and other mass media and with the athletic pursuits that are still regarded in some circles as 'manly'. To a guest editor confronted with the large question of women and book history, the story suggests that it may be useful to put a feminist twist on the commonplace bibliographical focus upon the book as a physical object: the book is also a gendered object. And contrary to familiar stereotypes of frail bookworms or of bespectacled spinster librarians, the book in history has mostly been identified (or gendered, as feminists and post-modernists prefer to say), as masculine.

Book history is often theorised, or at least organised, around Robert Darnton's circuit: first authorship, followed by publication (including the interventions of editors, printers, bookbinders, booksellers and others) and then by reading, which in turn feeds into the authorship of further books. Scholars such as Adams and Barker, focusing on the book as object rather than on the human agency involved in its production, have incorporated the aspect of survival, stressing the continued existence of books in libraries.¹ Working within this paradigm, women can be identified at every node of the cycle and at all periods in history, from the printers' widows operating independently in the craft guilds of early modern Europe to the avid readership of romance novels, not to mention a strong tradition of women's writing. A few wealthy women collectors have possessed important private collections of rarities, while many professional women have managed the acquisition and circulation of public collections in community and academic libraries. Others perform the invisible but essential services of publishers' readers, translators, designers, copy-editors, and indexers. The dual burgeoning of women's history since the 1970s and book history since the 1980s has generated an impres-

sive body of books and articles based upon research into women's contribution to the book trades, arts and crafts. My purpose is neither to enumerate that scholarship nor to criticise it. It is important, nevertheless, to remark on something that is concealed by schematic theoretical models: most of the women whose work in the book cycle has been so painstakingly discovered by researchers have been atypical individuals, outstanding anomalies in a cultural field dominated by men. Most publishers and editors have been men; the majority of writers of scholarly, legal, theological and political works were men; printing trade workers at all levels were almost always men. The bookbinders, whose trade used a variation on the 'feminine' skills of needlework are one exception. The others are library workers, whose profession was feminised in the early twentieth century,² and some authors, especially novelists. For the most part, what Febvre and Martin called 'the little world of the book' has been a male domain.

This fact is of course no surprise, but its explanatory value could be used more effectively: I want to suggest that book historians think about how the book has been implicated in those structures of masculine power and authority known to feminist scholarship as patriarchy. The approach I have in mind would differ from the compensatory efforts of the juxtaposition of women's and book history: rather than simply add women on to the research agenda, or restore female voices to the narrative of the rise of printing and the flourishing of print culture, I would like to see book historians focus on the gender identity of the book itself, both as physical object and as cultural product. We have seen the implications of a feminist analysis – in terms of patriarchy, power, discipline, possession, and other dimensions – on literary studies and on social history, as well as on the other humanities disciplines and on the social and physical sciences. Why should book history be immune?

The case for the book being intrinsically, though invisibly, 'marked' as masculine can be made in a number of ways. One is to observe that publishing, which after all has to do with 'making public' means moving a text out of the private sphere, the world identified as domestic and feminine, and into the public, to the political, competitive commercial place where ideas and writings jostle for dominance. Another approach is to think about collecting. In patriarchal culture, books have been valued for their rarity, with the first edition being highly prized. Not only have most collectors been men (the exceptions being royal and aristocratic women) but the language of book collecting is the language of possession. Richard Curle, for example, wrote rhapsodically about

2 Dee Garrison, *Apostles of Culture: The Public Librarian and American Society, 1876–1920* (NY: The Free Press, 1979), 173–241.

1 Robert Darnton, 'What is the History of Books?', *Daedalus* (Summer 1981) 65–83; Thomas R Adams & Nicholas Barker, 'A New Model for the Study of the Book', in *A Potencie of Life: Books in Society. The Clark Lectures 1986–87* (London: The British Library, 1993) 5–43.

'points' – those typographical, textual and other peculiarities or eccentricities that distinguish one issue of a first edition from another. 'Books without points,' he said, 'are like women without beauty – they pass unnoticed in the crowd. But books with points excite immediate interest and everybody, so to speak, turns to gaze at them'.³ Feminist historians and art historians have written about the power of the male gaze, the way it shapes and frames a culture's 'way of seeing' women in public spaces. Perhaps we can also think about the gendered, possessive, not altogether unsexualised way that book collectors have fixed their gaze upon the object of desire.

A feminist approach to the book as object might focus more on utility than on possession. In working out this analysis I have been influenced by Jane Marcus, whose concept of a feminist aesthetic is developed in *Art & Anger: Reading like a woman*.⁴ Such an aesthetic, she suggests, will be 'materially grounded in process rather than exclusively concerned with the work as a finished product.' A feminist analysis of literature 'doesn't wish to compete: it is antihierarchical, antitheoretical, not aggressively exclusionary'. Does a feminist approach to the book as physical object then downplay the hierarchy of the first edition, the theory of the copy text, and the exclusion of authors outside the literary canon? Jane Marcus continues: 'This model of art, with repetition and dailiness at the heart of it, with the teaching of other women the patient craft of one's cultural heritage as the object of it, is a female poetic which women live and accept. ... Transformation rather than permanence is at the heart of this aesthetic, as it is at the heart of most women's lives. History is preserved not in the art object, but in the tradition of *making* the art object.' Applying these ideas to our subject, I think of the tradition of *making use* of the object book, not only of reading and rereading; but also of lending, sharing and returning; of seeking instruction, enlightenment, solace or escape. Clearly, a feminist book history is strongly oriented to readers, to theorising the way that past readers experienced and used the books they encountered.

In this context we ought to be prepared to think about books, physical objects and texts, that are not conventionally literary. If we look at cookery and household books, for example, we observe that both text and book design often serve to generate and take advantage of an air of feminine domestic authority. Although since the end of the nineteenth century large commercial publishing houses have produced, distributed and profited by them, it has often been women who wrote cookery and household books, and mostly been women who read them, and also *used* them, repeatedly and daily, as sources of authority in ways that bear investigating. Cookery and household books remind us that the way large numbers of readers, both men and women, make *use* of books may be just as interesting as the ways in which small numbers of authors, publishers and collectors work together to create, fashion and preserve books.

For every woman printer or publisher there were countless oth-

3 Richard Curle, *Collecting American First Editions* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co, 1930), 86.

4 Jane Marcus, *Art & Anger: Reading like a woman* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1988), xvi; 222.

ers whose intellectual and craft ambitions were frustrated; and for the great majority of men in those fields, there were wives, daughters and employees whose domestic and behind-the-scenes labour made the family business possible, or made it flourish. The cookery and household books that women used and valued were not often entered by title into household inventories, if only because they sat in the kitchen rather than in the library. 'The book' has been a predominantly masculine institution for much of its history. How, then, has the term 'bookish' come to be associated with physical fragility and other feminine attributes? Book-history scholars might consider extending that powerful analysis of the feminisation of librarianship in the twentieth century; perhaps when impressionable children using public libraries got into the habit of identifying the providers of books as women, people who combined intellectual nurturing with institutional discipline, they may have grown up to regard the book itself as gendered feminine. This is perhaps a far-fetched idea, and I have no solid evidence at hand: I suggest it to encourage myself and others to make use of the powerful theory and flexible methodology of feminist analysis when we think about and investigate the history of books.

Leslie Howsam, University of Windsor

Teaching Women and Text: Medieval to Renaissance

The study of literature by women has long been a specialism in the English Department at the University of Birmingham and for the past six years I have been teaching an undergraduate course in seventeenth-century women's writing, made possible initially by the publication of the ground-breaking anthology *Her Own Life* (Routledge, 1989), three of whose editors are themselves Birmingham graduates: Helen Wilcox (*Women and Literature in Britain 1500–1700*, 1996), Elaine Hobby (*Virtue of Necessity*, 1998) and Hilary Hinds (*God's Englishwomen*, 1996). Material for the study of medieval women writers has grown, too, and our medieval literature courses have increasingly seen undergraduates working on women's writing from the earlier period, a development again initially spurred by a much-needed anthology: Alexandra Barratt's *Women's Writing in Middle English*, 1992.

Running parallel with literature teaching has been involvement in the teaching of bibliography. Valerie Edden, my medievalist colleague, and I both participate in an M.A. in **Meaning and the**

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Production, Transmission, and Editing of Texts which itself has led to further graduate work on women and text, most recently on women's travel diaries; and recently we joined forces to present a course called **History of the Book: Manuscript and Print**, as part of the three-year undergraduate course in Bibliography and Paleography. Both these courses draw on our own research interests: Valerie's in the compilation of medieval manuscript collections and mine in early printers and booksellers.

The idea for a new postgraduate course in **Women and Text: Medieval to Renaissance** sprang from a growing realisation that, for both Valerie and myself, research and teaching interests were cohering at the intersection of textual production and women's literature. We decided to draw up a proposal for a new M.Phil.(B) programme which could explore every aspect of women and text and build on areas of work which, in the undergraduate curriculum, are distributed across several courses. The M.Phil.(B) is designed to sit mid-way between a taught master's course and a PhD: it allows for a core of teaching by weekly seminar with a greater degree of independent research than the M.A., enabling students to embark on a substantial piece of research via a dissertation of 24,000 words. Its attraction for us, as teachers, is that it enables us to make possible in, we hope, coherent fashion our own intersecting interests of bibliography and women's literature.

Women and Text: Medieval to Renaissance, which has now been approved and which is currently being piloted with a first intake of our own graduate students, is designed to look at every aspect of the relationship between women and text. As well as developing students' skills in literary criticism it teaches them about the book as a physical object, its production and consumption in the period, and introduces theoretical issues about text and gender. In particular it is concerned with:

- women as writers and translators
- women as material producers of texts (patrons, commissioners, scribes, printers, booksellers)
- women as consumers (readers, buyers, owners of books)

As well as this seminar series, students follow a course in 'Methods and Materials of Research' and, along with the rest of the postgraduate community, attend the English Department's weekly literature research seminars given by invited speakers.

For each seminar students are required to read independently (in history, literature, literary criticism and the history of the book) in order to contextualise a particular case study. The case studies themselves involve work on specific texts, writers, or issues. A couple of examples might help elucidate. In a seminar on 'Medieval women readers and patrons', for example, students were required to read a number of key books and articles (by D.N. Bell, S.G. Bell, Julia Boffey, Karen Jambeck, Carol Meale, Shannon McSheffrey etc.); they were asked to draw distinctions between different groups of women readers (lay, religious and lollard women) and to discuss the methodological problems involved in assessing the evidence of women's involvement in book ownership and patronage in the middle ages. A seminar on 'Manuscript circulation in the seventeenth century' had a reading requirement (including Love, Woudhuysen, Marotti and Ezell) and a case study which took students to the *Index to English Literary Manuscripts* to compare the entries on Katherine Philips and Aphra Behn. Semi-

nar discussion centred on some specific questions arising from the case study, such as: what do the entries reveal about the different uses of manuscript? how do our conceptions of these writers (already known to most students in modern printed editions, which are also consulted as part of the exercise) change when faced with the information about manuscripts? At the same time, larger questions arose – about the social and literary construction of women writers (including, of course, their representation in the *Index*, where they are the only two women given entries in the whole volume!); and about the relationships between manuscript and print in the period – which, cumulatively, produce a course which interrogates some of the orthodoxies of both women's literature/history and the history of the book.

We are lucky in the strength of the Special Collections of the University Library where students are able to handle manuscripts and early printed books while learning about their physical construction. Highlights for this year's students were handling an illuminated book of hours and finding a sixteenth-century printed psalm book with exquisitely embroidered binding. As well as the University Library's Birmingham collections, students have access to the specialist Renaissance holdings of the Department's Shakespeare Institute in Stratford-upon-Avon. Birmingham City Library has a fine collection of early printing and some private press and fine printing material, as well as its own Shakespeare collection; and manuscripts and early printed books are also accessible to us in the cathedral libraries of Hereford, Worcester and Lichfield.

No doubt we will make revisions to the course in the light of the experience of our first intake of students but – since our 'pilot' postgraduates are following the course part-time (i.e. over two years) – we have not yet seen the first cohort through to completion of dissertations, enabling us (and them) to evaluate the course as a whole. We can, however, report here our sense that this is proving an engaging and challenging course for teachers and students alike and would like to record our thanks to the students who have joined us in the enterprise. It has long been my own gripe that too much literary research, including work on writing by and for women, has blithely ignored the material conditions of the production of texts and the complexity of the relationship between manuscript and print. In offering a course which, uniquely, brings together a feminist literary approach with a thorough grounding in the history of text production, we hope to help in raising a generation of scholars who will be keenly alert to the materiality of texts written by and for women and who will find themselves, in consequence, asking new questions of those texts – and of us! If you would like to join us in this exploration, please contact us at the address below.

Afterword While preparing readings for this course I have been acutely aware of the way in which published work on women as *material producers of books* is so widely scattered among journals of different kinds. This aspect of the relationship between women and text is under-represented when compared, for example, with the wealth of accessible material on women writers in particular and on women as readers and patrons. There is, however, a great deal of research going on in this area of women's role in book production (as we found when Birmingham hosted a post-

graduate study day for the **Book Trade History Group** earlier this year), much of it not yet published. SHARP readers may be interested to know that Gail Chester and I are now working on a proposal for a book – provisionally entitled *Women and the Book: female participation in print culture from the sixteenth century to today* – which will provide ‘state of the art’ overviews by period as well as articles representing particular case studies.

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Building a Database of American Women Booksellers

In 1994 I began research into the history of a single bookseller – the Hampshire Bookshop of Northampton, Massachusetts. Founded in 1916 by two Smith College alumnae (Marion Dodd, class of 1906, and Mary Byers Smith, 1908), the Bookshop claimed to have been the first bookstore in America established and managed by women.¹

Thinking that 1916 seemed a rather late date for the entry of women into the bookselling profession, I soon realized that to test the Bookshop’s claim I would have to undertake far more background investigation. So little work had been done with regard to this field of women’s endeavours that I found it necessary to provide some context myself. It was time to begin compiling the history of women in bookselling.

There is a rich opportunity here in which many scholars may wish to participate. As I pointed out in the analysis of the Hampshire Bookshop, the stories of individual booksellers must be researched and told in the singular before their influence may be gauged in the aggregate. How, then, to conduct the foundational research on hundreds of small firms? Let me share with you some of what I learned, and let me invite you to examine and contribute to this growing compilation.

Anecdotal evidence. Upon first survey of the territory, one learns that the written histories of bookstores tend to be of the memoir variety, often with only sketchy and biased treatment of the booktrade at large. But read them! There’s nothing like gossip to provide clues for a more scientific search. Madge Jenison’s *The Sunwise Turn: A Human Comedy of Bookselling* (Dutton, 1923, 1951), Margaret Hard’s *A Memory of Vermont: Our Life in the Johnny Appleseed Bookshop, 1930-1965* (Harcourt, Brace & World, 1967), and W. G. Rogers’s *Wise Men Fish Here: The Story of Frances Steloff and the Gotham Book Mart* (Harcourt, Brace & World, 1965) all provide fascinating glimpses into the state of American bookselling in the twentieth century. All have been re-issued recently in paperback through the American Booksellers Association’s Booksellers House series. They help to frame an understanding of women’s role in the profession.

Research questions. Beyond the initial exercise of gathering and recording facts for their own sake, I considered how the stories of the Hampshire Bookshop and others contributed to the overall understanding of book history. I wanted to gauge trends in

¹ My doctoral dissertation was recently completed as *No Frigate Like a Book: The Hampshire Bookshop of Northampton, 1916-1971* (University of South Carolina, 1998). The Hampshire Bookshop’s papers, held by Smith College, form an exemplary record of the ‘life’ of a literary bookstore.

professionalism of the field and the impact of bookselling on American literature, economy, and society. How and when did women first become proprietors of bookshops? How did the business arrangements come about? To what extent did the activities of bookstores, large and small, affect the works or reputations of authors? Was the experience of women in the bookselling business different from that of men? (This last question assumes that the histories of bookstores established and run by men have been fully examined, but there is still plenty of work to be done in this area too.)

Comprehensive list. As the array of bookstores, principals and employees, and locations grew, the necessity for a systematic method of recording them became apparent, as did the need to know how many, and which, firms and individuals were yet unmentioned in published histories. I constructed a simple database with information already in hand. Five fields were included: name of bookshop, date founded or cited, location, name of founder or bookseller, and source of information. I limited entries to (1) women who had held management or ownership positions in the bookselling industry, beginning in the early twentieth century; and (2) bookstores that were owned, partially owned, or once owned by women. In an attempt to build as full a record as possible but distinguish women in leadership positions from those who worked as clerks or assistants, I gathered information from several key sources.

- *American Book Trade Manual*, 1915, 1919; *American Booktrade Directory*, 1922–. Marion Dodd claimed that there were no women bookstore owners in 1916 when she helped establish the Hampshire Bookshop (it now appears there were a few, widely scattered and not well known). At virtually the same time as the Hampshire Bookshop opened its doors, a handful of female managers, primarily in the Northeast, began their own bookselling operations. A wave soon followed. By 1920, dozens of others had opened their own enterprises in New York City and elsewhere; by 1921, women had gained a permanent foothold in the ABA. It is fortunate for researchers, then, that the booktrade directories published by Bowker every few years extend back almost as far as women’s earliest managerial involvement in bookselling. In the early years of the directories, most women’s names were preceded by the title ‘Miss’ or ‘Mrs’, making them easy to distinguish; in later years, the distinction became less clear.
- *Publishers’ Weekly* likewise proved a valuable source in constructing a database. I systematically read its semi-annual indexes, 1905–1939, to cover the main period of my study (the scan could be extended earlier as well as up through World War II, when *PW* discontinued indexing). *PW* indexed even its brief ‘Business Notes’ thoroughly, making it the single most comprehensive source for clues. I photocopied all indexes, highlighted the references to women booksellers or bookstores known to be run by women, and then returned to microfilm or hard copy to record the mentions. Annual records of ABA membership and convention attendance were published in the pages of *PW* as well, with courtesy titles indicating women’s names early on.
- Records of the Women’s National Book Association, the Na-

tional Association of College Stores, and college alumnae associations also provided leads.

The database (in FileMaker Pro for the Macintosh, but exportable as ASCII text with standard delimiters) now contains 180 records and is quickly sortable by any field to discern patterns.

Locating materials. Ultimately, details of bookstore operation – the way in which books and other printed materials were published, ordered, promoted, sold, and delivered – had to be examined comprehensively. The obscurity of most of the bookstores and booksellers involved proved an obstacle to locating unpublished papers through standard sources such as NUCMC, OCLC, or RLIN, and the lack of a key literary name or work often made for difficult sleuthing. But phone calls to colleges or local historical societies in the area of a bookstore often yielded enough information to facilitate further search. Regrettably, the records of few bookstores have been preserved – even fewer, it appears, than those of publishers, and in any case posing similar problems of archiving and access. ('You want X Bookstore's employee records? Oh, no one ever thought to keep those!') The American Booksellers Association and the archives of Columbia University (including those of the Women's National Book Association), to name but a couple, have become important repositories of bookseller information, and colleges often hold papers of their associated bookstores. A compiled listing similar to the recent guides to publishers' archives would be enormously helpful.

To follow up further, public records – real estate transactions, incorporations, vital statistics – provided concrete evidence, and unpublished documents in related archives or publications yielded biographical or historical information. The local newspaper in a bookstore's town or city often documents the firm's history in minute detail, both from a news perspective as well as through advertising. (In the case of the Hampshire Bookshop, the existence of an index to *Daily Hampshire Gazette* was a vital aid.) Many leads turned up as well through queries to the SHARP and EXLIBRIS listservs, and I was surprised and gratified to make the acquaintance of many former Hampshire Bookshop customers, employees, and authors. At last count the follow-ups for this single case study numbered twelve interviews and 134 letters. One of the most daunting obstacles was finding not information fifty years old, but current locations and phone numbers of living persons – the Internet, however, has done a great deal to make this task easier. Many booksellers also acted as publishers, so standard bibliographical searches and book searches may yield valuable data (as was certainly the case with the Hampshire Bookshop).

If you have done research on the history of women in bookselling, if you would be interested in participating in a joint project, or if you would like a disk copy or printout of the database, please contact me at Wesleyan College, 4760 Forsyth Road, Macon, Georgia, 31210-4462 USA. I can be reached on Email at barbara_brannon@post.wesleyan-college.edu.

Barbara A. Brannon, Wesleyan College

Major Bibliographic Project Completed at Brown

The John Carter Brown Library at Brown University announces the completion of its twenty-year bibliographical project, *European Americana: A Chronological Guide: 1493–1750*. The last

volume in the resulting six-volume reference series was recently published by Readex Books in New Canaan, Connecticut. The Library, the preeminent collection of books about North and South America printed before 1825, had hoped for decades to produce a union list or guide that would enable scholars to review, year-for-year, what had been published in Europe concerning the 'New' World to the west.

The project's first volume, covering 4,300 books printed between 1493 and 1600, was published in 1980. The six volumes published between 1980 and the end of 1997 treated a total of 32,000 books on myriad subjects. Not only the history of European exploration and portrayals of native American peoples were included, but every conceivable facet of cultural interaction, from hurricanes and hammocks to syphilis and slavery, manatees and marvel-of-Peru – all of which are included in a subject index. The resulting compilation now serves as a primary resource for researchers in various fields, and for librarians, bibliographers, and antiquarian bookdealers. *European Americana* has been hailed as 'one of the great bibliographical catalogues of this century' (*The Book Collector*, London). William Reese, the rare book dealer in New Haven, Connecticut, recently described the undertaking as 'the greatest bibliographical project in Americana since the epic labors of Sabin, Palau, Medina, and Evans'.

The six-volume series is distributed by Readex Books, 58 Pine Street, New Canaan, CT 06840. More information about the bibliographical project is available from the John Carter Brown Library at Providence, RI 02912-1894, or from <http://www.newsbank.com/readex/scholarly/euroam.html>

New Centre to Map 18th Century London Book Trade

Mansfield College, Oxford University and the Cambridge Project for the Book Trust announce the funding by the British Academy Humanities Research Board and Oxford University of 'The Print Culture of Eighteenth Century London', a seven year project and centre designed to produce new maps of the sites of all print and book trades in London in the eighteenth century, including details of succession of occupiers/personnel, surviving building plans and elevations, a mapping of associated trades and literary meeting places, and links to other databases and booktrades and topographical projects in progress. Computer aided design will be central to the project, enabling a recreation of the streetscape, interiors, and new mappings of commercial relationships that existed during this period in London book trade history.

A launch of the project and new centre is provisionally planned for January 1999, with the establishment of a web-site by December 1998. A regular series of seminars and events is also planned beginning in 1999. Pre-launch inquiries should be directed to the Director, James Raven, c/o Mansfield College, Oxford University, Oxford UK OX1 3TF Email: jr42@CUS.CAM.AC.UK

Conference Reports

Reprinted with the kind permission of the editor of *The Bookseller*. The sixteenth **Annual Conference on the History of the Provincial Book Trade in Britain** was held this year in the delightful surroundings of Napier University's Craighouse campus from 21–23 July. This annual gathering of academic and amateur scholars

of print culture has grown in increasing stature in recent years. When the papers of this year's seminar are published next July, this will be seen not only to have been perhaps the best yet, but also to have marked a turning point in the study of the book in provincial Britain.

As was appropriate the first paper presented was on a Scottish theme; Dr Iain Beavan of Aberdeen University, offering 'A scandal manufactory: the Aberdeen Shaver and its times', looked at the role of one satirical periodical in Aberdeen life in the 1830s. The Scottish theme continued with the second paper 'William Smellie and the printer's role in the eighteenth century Edinburgh book trade' delivered by Stephen Brown of Trent University, Canada. Dr Brown's paper brought to prominence the wide-ranging career of a printer who played an important part in the Scottish enlightenment. Future researches will be eagerly awaited. Paul Morgan, formerly of the Bodleian Library, offered a typically witty and erudite account of two precursors of the history of the provincial book trade. In 'W H Allnutt and Henry Cotton: two pioneer book historians contrasted', Mr Morgan traced their careers and, in a talk full of anecdote, surveyed their contribution to and place in the history of print.

The second morning took on a medical theme: Richard Sher of New Jersey Institute of Technology gave a detailed analysis of an eighteenth century medical bestseller, William Buchan's *Domestic Medicine*. Jonathan Sanderson, a doctoral student at Leeds University and winner of the first BBTS Conference Fellowship, presented 'Medical secrets and the book trade', which traced the publishing history of the *Pharmacopoeia Londinensis*. This book not only sought to regulate the formulae employed by apothecaries but also acted as a weapon in their desire to become separated from the Grocers' Company of which they were members, and to obtain the support of the College of Physicians towards this end. Anglo-Scottish book trade relations were reviewed in the next two papers. Dr Warren McDougall of Napier University, who is editing the eighteenth-century volume of *The History of the Book in Scotland*, has for some time been indexing the letterbooks and ledgers of Charles Elliott in the John Murray archive. This is proving a rich seam of material and some of his findings were used to discuss Elliott's large volume of two-way business with the London trade. Professor Peter Isaac, convenor of the British Booktrade Seminar, carried on Dr McDougall's theme by examining Elliott's relations with the English provincial trade and his widespread retail trade with customers in England.

A trip out of the confines of the lecture hall is often part of any conference and the British Booktrade Seminar is no exception. On this occasion some of the riches of the Edward Clark Collection at Napier were displayed and Graeme Forbes, sub-librarian with responsibility for special collections, outlined Clark's background and the growth of the collection and discussed the compilation of the excellent catalogue.

The support for this conference from Scottish, Welsh and Irish book historians and national libraries has always been noticeable and noteworthy. Why, one wonders, are the BL, Bodleian and Cambridge so rarely represented? This year, as has been the case often in the past, Dr Philip Henry Jones of the University of Wales, Aberystwyth, examined a fascinating aspect of the Welsh-language

book: 'Scottish printers and publishers and the Welsh-language book trade during the second half of the nineteenth century'.

The final day began with Barry McKay offering a paper entitled 'Niche marketing in the nineteenth century' in which he surveyed the printing and publishing history of the Shepherds' Guides of the northern counties. David Stoker of the University of Wales, Aberystwyth, in his paper entitled 'The country book trade in 1784–85' took Pendred's *Directory* of 1785 as the starting point for an analysis of the provincial book. By employing optical character recognition and adding field delimiters he was able to turn the contents of the Bibliographical Society's reprint into a database. This was related to an imprint and year search of ESTC to provide a basis for comparison to examine the feasibility of using existing data as fieldwork for a general understanding of the English provincial book trade. The final session concentrated on Manchester. Brenda Scragg of John Rylands Library examined the neglected career of 'William Ford, bookseller of Manchester' who in the early part of the nineteenth century was described as 'the principal English and foreign bookseller and a great patron of the arts', while Michael Powell of Chethams Library delivered a paper, written in conjunction with Terry Wyke of Manchester Metropolitan University, on 'Auctioning Books in Manchester'.

The general bent of the papers delivered this year was towards a greater understanding of the background and trading conditions in which the provincial book trade operated in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The years of enumeration, so often (and unfairly) criticised, are now bearing a heavy crop of fruit. The papers from this conference are now published by St Paul's Bibliographies and Oak Knoll Press as the *Print Network* series. The papers from the 1997 conference have just been published under the title of *The Reach of Print* under the editorship of Peter Isaac and Barry McKay. The 1999 Conference will be held in Aberystwyth on 27–29 July. Full details when available will be sent to anyone contacting **Professor Peter Isaac**, 10 Woodcroft Road, Wylam, Northumberland NE41 8DJ; or Barry McKay, Kingstone House, Battlebarrow, Appleby-in-Westmorland, Cumbria CA16 6XT. Email: bmr@cerbernet.co.uk

On 15 September 1998, a **Postgraduate Conference on the History of the Book** (nineteenth and twentieth centuries) was held in the Department of History and Philosophy of Science, University of Cambridge. The idea came out of the postgraduate network of the Book Trade History Group, although the conference was organised as an independent event. It was a friendly gathering of 22 postgraduate students (12 of them speakers) and 3 junior scholars as commentators. The attendants, most of them in advanced stages of their doctoral research, came from countries as diverse as their disciplines. Students from Canada, the US, Australia and the UK shared a sample of what they have produced within their departments of English, Media Arts, Education, Typography and History and Philosophy of Science. Such variety, however, did not exclude similarities and common trends among the different papers.

The conference began with a session on 'Multiple and diffuse authorship', chaired by Jon Topham, where Catherine Hollis and Shaf Towheed discussed the literary and legal dimensions of

collaborative writing and editing in works of Djuna Barnes and Rudyard Kipling respectively. Bill Palmer gave a paper about women writers of chemistry textbooks in the nineteenth century, suggesting the importance of the role of textbooks as in the passing of scientific ideas from one generation to the next. The session 'The trials and tribulations of publishing', chaired by Alexis Weedon, was more diverse, with a paper by Prathima Anandan on the publishing history of a particular work (Kate Chopin's *The Awakening*), another on the role of the Literary Agency of London, by Robert Gomme, and another on the house of George Allen & Unwin Ltd during the Great War, by Jane Potter. Whereas the first paper focused on the unconventionality of the author and how this affected the history of the reception of the text, the last two dealt with the way in which social, political and economic conditions affected publishing in particular periods.

Following lunch, the session 'Serial publications, and who controls them', chaired by Richard Price, raised a discussion about whether, and to what extent, serial publications should be treated in the same way as books when tracing their history. The manner in which this kind of publications was analysed in the papers of Sam Alberti (on the Victorian *The Naturalist*), Eugenia Roldán-Vera (on Rudolph Ackermann's publishing enterprise for Latin America in the 1820s) and Jessica Gardner (on the *London Magazine* in the 1960s and 1970s) seemed to lead to a positive answer. The last session, 'Reading and Readers', chaired by Aileen Fyfe, was characterised by an emphasis on methodologies for the study of these topics, which reflects the fact that this aspect of the history of the book remains, to a degree, a contested field of historical research. Teresa Gerrard gave a paper on the analysis of editors' responses to readers in three Victorian periodicals, Andrew Fieldsend reflected on the theoretical issues of freedom in reading and Gail Chester spoke about her own research experience on studying the role of publishers' readers in the twentieth century.

On the whole, the conference offered an amicable forum for a serious exchange of research results, experiences, unsolved problems and anxieties of graduate students working on the history of the book. The event owed much to the relaxed atmosphere of the Department of History and Philosophy of Science in Cambridge, the delicious meals and copious coffee provided at the breaks and the excellent organisation of Aileen Fyfe.

Eugenia Roldán-Vera, Department of History and Philosophy of Science, University of Cambridge

Call for Papers

The Library History Round Table (LHRT) Program Planning Committee of the American Library Association (ALA) solicits proposals for papers to be read at its 1999 Summer Program Session and Research Forum, 'Bringing Libraries to the People: Histories of Library Outreach', which will explore public, private, and commercial efforts to bring library collections and services to non-traditional users in the United States. Papers might focus on the motivations of the individuals involved, the contents of collections, and the methods of delivery. Papers will be considered for publication in a collection. Abstracts of no more than 500 words should be sent to David Hovde, HSSE Library, 1530 Stewart Center, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN

47907-1530, USA, Tel: (765)494-2833, Fax: (765)494-9007, Email: hovde@purdue.edu. Deadline for proposals is **15 December 1998**. Completed manuscripts (15-30 pp. double-spaced) should be submitted by **1 March 1999**.

The Research Society for Victorian Periodicals will hold its thirty-first annual meeting in New Haven, Connecticut, on 17-18 September 1999. The conference will be co-hosted by the Sterling Memorial Library and English Department of Yale University. RSVP seeks proposals for individual papers or full panels on any aspect of Victorian periodicals, including their history as a publishing form, their cultural significance, theoretical bearings, and uses in teaching and scholarship. Since RSVP is highly interdisciplinary, we encourage proposals relating periodicals to such fields as art history, music, theatre, literature, science, and social science. We welcome proposals from graduate students as well as established scholars. Please send 2-page abstracts accompanied by a 1-page cv of the panelist(s) by **15 February 1999** to Linda H. Peterson, Department of English, P.O. Box 208302, Yale University, New Haven, CT 06520-8302. Fax: 203-432-7066.

SHARP is entering its third year of association with the **American Literature Association (ALA)**, and will sponsor two sessions at the 1999 ALA conference, which will meet 20-23 May 1999 in Baltimore, Maryland. Proposals are invited for papers for the following sessions:

Session 1: 'Cash, Class, and American Literary Periodicals'. Particularly welcome for this session are papers that explore the connections and interactions between editorial policy and practices and the economic and cultural realities of publishing. Papers may focus on one or more periodicals and may consider periodicals from any period. Abstracts of one to two pages should be addressed to Robert J. Scholnick, English Dept, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, VA 23185-8795. rjscho@facstaff.wm.edu. Deadline for submissions is **10 January 1999**.

Session 2: 'Teaching Book History in the American Literature Survey'. Historians of the U.S. book are invited to present strategies and materials they have employed to bring questions of book history and/or print culture into their introductory courses in American literature. Following the panel discussion a working lunch session will be organised in which a variety of Americanists can present particular syllabi or specific projects/lessons in book history or print culture that they have used successfully in American literature courses at any undergraduate or graduate level. Please send expressions of interest and a paragraph or two specifically describing your topic and/or materials by **10 January 1999** to Sharon Shaloo, 8 Ravine Street, Arlington, MA, 02476, USA. Email: S_Shaloo@msn.com

Research papers and panel proposals are invited on the history of journalism and the mass media for the **Western Journalism Historians Conference** at the University of California, Berkeley, to be held 26-27 February 1999. Submissions representing a wide variety of theoretical and methodological approaches are welcome, including historiographical treatments of bibliography, biographical subjects, media law and ethics, and cultural and sociological

treatments of journalism history. Papers that have been presented at prior conferences or published in journals will not be accepted. Panel proposals must include a title, an abstract and a list of presenters. Submit three copies of the paper, including a 100-word abstract and cover page with each copy. Please do not include the name of the author/s on the cover page. With the submission, include a title page with the author's name, mailing address, telephone number and Email address, if available. Please send papers and panel proposals **by 5 December 1998** to Beverly G. Merrick, Conference Coordinator, Western Journalism Historians Conference, Department 3J, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, New Mexico 88003-8001 Email: bmerrick@nmsu.edu

Conference Announcements

The **Annual Conference on Book Trade History**, organised through the Faculty of Continuing Education at Birkbeck College, will be held this year at the Royal Geographical Society at 1 Kensington Gore, London on 28 and 29 November 1998. Entitled 'Journeys Through the Market: Travel, Travellers and the Book Trade', it will explore areas of the trade in travel books since the 16th century and examine publications ranging from accounts of voyages and shipwrecks to the publication of guide books. The conference fee of £75 covers coffee, tea and a buffet lunch on both days, and anyone interested in book history will be welcome.

The **Southeastern American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies** (SEASECS) announces its 25th Anniversary Conference to be held 4–6 March 1999 at the Radisson Hotel and the University of Tennessee in Knoxville. The theme of the conference is 'Reunions, Celebrations and Anniversaries'. The programme includes a panel discussion retrospective of the last 25 years in eighteenth-century studies, moderated by J. Paul Hunter, former president of ASECS and presently director of the Chicago Humanities Institute. Other plenary speakers are the Goethe scholar Daniel Wilson of the University of California, Berkeley, in celebration of Goethe's 250th birthday and Charles Hinnant, University of Missouri (Columbia) on 'Money matters'. Also planned is a session at the East Tennessee Historical Society, a walking tour of late eighteenth-century frontier buildings, two chamber music programmes, and a 'Play Upon Plays' readings from the theatre. We offer all this intellectual and social fare in addition to the visual pleasures of the mountains and valleys of the Tennessee River area. Graduate students will compete for prizes of \$500, \$300 and \$200 for the best papers presented at the Conference. For registration materials or for questions about local arrangements, write or Email University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN37996: Dr Peter Höyng, Dept of Germanic Languages (hoeyng@utk.edu) or Dr Elaine Breslaw, Dept of History (ebreslaw@utkux.utcc.utk.edu).

Fellowship Announcement

The **Department of English at the University of Otago** has secured funding for a one-year postdoctoral fellowship from the Marsden Fund of the Royal Society in New Zealand and is seeking a talented postgraduate with an interest in print culture or a related historical topic. The fellowship is tenable from October

1999 through September 2000 at an emolument of NZ\$44,444. The post-holder will undertake research on Otago printers and publishers, focusing primarily on the 1901–1982 archives of the Otago Master Printers Association and should anticipate publishing at least two articles, establishing a foundation for further scholarship in the field. While the project will focus on the Otago book trade, once preeminent in New Zealand, it is hoped to contextualise Otago's experiences through comparisons with developments in other regions and other commonwealth/settler societies. Thus the fellowship should provide a valuable opportunity to join a growing body of scholars engaged in print culture research in New Zealand and around the world. Interested candidates or PhD supervisors should contact the fellowship coordinator: Dr Shef Rogers via Email at shef.rogers@stonebow.otago.ac.nz or via the Dept of English, Bryan Hall, University of Virginia, Charlottesville VA 22903. While he is on leave there he can be reached by phone at 804 295 3538.

Scholarly Liaisons

SHARP is sponsoring the following panel sessions at the **American Historical Association convention**, which meets in Washington, DC 7–10 January 1999:

The Expansion of the American Public Sphere (Friday 8 January, 9.30–11.30am, Shoreham, Capitol Room)

Chair: Jeffrey Finlay, Library of Congress, 'Merchants, Coffeehouses, and Print Culture in Early New England', Phyllis Whitman Hunter, University of North Carolina at Greensboro; 'Robert Bonner and the Transformation of American Popular Culture', William L. Joyce, Princeton University; 'From Citizen to Producer to Consumer: Finding an Audience for the African-American Magazine, 1900–1950', Tom Pendergast, Full Circle Editorial, Inc.;

Comment: Trysh Travis, Southern Methodist University
The 'How To' Genre in Nineteenth-Century England and America (Friday 8 January, 2.30–4.30pm, Shoreham, Capitol Room)

Chair: Louise L. Stevenson, Franklin and Marshall College; 'Women's History/Women's Books: Recovering the Nineteenth-Century Mrs. Beeton', Leslie Howsam, University of Windsor; 'The American Tourist Guidebook, A Guide to Gentility', Richard Gassan, University of Massachusetts at Amherst; 'A Different Sort of Legal Education: Nineteenth-Century Self-Help Law Books and the American Middle Class', Ann Fidler, Ohio University

Comment: James N. Green, Library Company of Philadelphia, and Louise L. Stevenson

At the same conference, SHARP will also be cosponsoring the following joint session with the American Society of Church History: *'Doctrine and Beyond in the Nineteenth-Century Evangelical Periodical'*

Chair: Joseph A. Conforti, University of Southern Maine; 'The Poetics of Piety: The Nineteenth-Century Aestheticization of the New Divinity', Jayne Devens Willingham, University of California at Los Angeles; 'Publishing Piety/Printing Infidelity: Theological Journals and the Cultural Relocation of Moral Discourse in Antebellum America', Neil Brody Miller, Rutgers University; 'Gender and Late-Edwardsean Calvinist Dogma

in the Antebellum Religious Press', Genevieve E. McCoy, University of Washington at Bothell

Comment: David D. Hall, Harvard University

SHARP is now soliciting proposals for panels or individual papers for the next AHA convention, which will meet in Chicago 6–9 January 2000. We also seek candidates for chairs and commentators. Please send a one-page abstract and a short vita **by 15 January 1999** to Jonathan Rose, Department of History, Drew University, Madison, NJ 07940, jerose@drew.edu

Seminars and Lectures

The **Scottish Centre for the Book** at Napier University announces its Fall 1998 lunchtime series of Edward Clark Seminars dedicated to the history of the book. All seminars take place at 12.30 in room 516, New Craig, Napier University, Craighouse Road, Edinburgh.

4 November 1998, 'Procuring Books and Consuming Texts: The Reading Experience of a Sheffield Apprentice 1797–1800', Dr Stephen Colclough (Open University)

11 November 1998, 'The History of the Book, Text and Image, and the New Cultural History', Ian Willison (CES, University of London)

The Centre for the History of the Book at the University of Edinburgh announces its **Fall 1998 Seminar Programme**. All seminars take place on Fridays 1–2 pm in the Edinburgh University Library, George Square.

13 November, 'Nelson's Victory: the French Collection', Peter France (University of Edinburgh) and Sian Reynolds (University of Stirling)

27 November, 'Fugitive Sources: Library History as Archaeology', Robin Alston (London University)

11 December, 'The Paxton House Library', John Renwick (University of Edinburgh)

The third lecture in the James Thin Series, sponsored by James Thin Booksellers, delivered by Professor D.F. McKenzie on 'Metropolitan Culture after 1700: Congreve's *maestricke vision*', will take place on 10 November at Old College, The University of Edinburgh at 5.15pm. Reception to follow.

Webwatch

The balance-sheet of online resources for the history of women's authorship, reading and publishing is one of those good news vs. bad news situations. Let's begin with the good news, which is considerable. The last few years have witnessed an explosion in the availability of electronic texts of women's writing, much of it not readily accessible in any other form. Novels, short stories, essays, poems, and pamphlets that have long moldered unread on the shelves of a few research libraries are now reaching new audiences on the Web – audiences, we may fairly conclude, many times larger than those for whom many of these writings were originally intended. Scholars, teachers, students, and ordinary readers now have an ever-increasing wealth of texts by women to choose from, most of them in electronic form, thanks to a host of well-funded, collaborative academic projects.

The grandmother of those projects is the *Brown Women Writ-*

ers Project at Brown University (www.wwp.brown.edu). Begun in 1986 – the primordial age, in Internet reckoning – the BWWP has worked to assemble a varied collection of texts written by women before 1830, and now has some 200 of these from which readers can choose to order printed copies at a nominal fee of \$5 to \$10 apiece. Only twenty of these, strangely enough, are freely available on the Web, while plans are afoot for a licensing arrangement for Web access to the others, with print copies being published in association with Oxford University Press.

A similar initiative tailored specifically to the world of the Web is the *Victorian Women Writers Project* (www.indiana.edu/~letrs/vwwp/) put in motion by Perry Willett at Indiana University Libraries. Though barely more than two years old, the VWWP has already carefully edited and encoded some 150 texts by Victorian women authors, all of them accessible for free on the website. Like almost every such project with scholarly aims, this one follows the Text Encoding Initiative (TEI) to reproduce printed matter in a format that allows scholars to discern its structural components. An even newer project inspired by the success of the VWWP is *British Women Romantic Poets, 1789–1832* (www.lib.ucdavis.edu/English/BWRP/) at the Shields Library at the University of California at Davis; begun last year, the project already has assembled over twenty texts. At the University of Nebraska at Lincoln the *19th-century American Women Writers Web* (www.unl.edu/legacy/19cwww/), associated with the journal *Legacy*, allows visitors to perform electronic searches of its collection of prose texts by fifteen authors, ranging from Lydia Maria Child and Harriet Beecher Stowe to lesser-known writers, and also includes over fifty poems. Narrower in focus, the digitisation project overseen by Miranda Remnek at the University of Minnesota (www.lib.umn.edu/erc/womtrav.htm) is devoted to *Women's Travel Writing, 1830–1930*, and aims to include both biographical material and brief publication histories.

The pedagogical uses of the the Web form the basis of the *Emory Women Writers Resource Project* (chaucer.library.emory.edu/wwrp/index.html), which gives students the opportunity to edit selected texts themselves. The EWWRP currently features four such edited texts from the seventeenth century, complete with scholarly introductions and notes, while also making available over twenty unedited texts, most of which are also from the seventeenth century. A site that invites participation by scholars and amateur enthusiasts alike is the *Celebration of Women Writers* site originated and maintained by Mary Mark at Carnegie Mellon (www-cgi.cs.cmu.edu/afs/cs.cmu.edu/mmbt/www/women/sriters.html). Covering the whole range of women's authorship from the dawn of writing to about 1920, the 'Celebration' features the largest number and widest range of links to women's texts on the Web, browsable by period and country, and offered in formats from HTML to plain ASCII. This site asks for volunteer editors and donations of suitable out-of-print books, and is currently seeking more texts by Canadian women. Finally, there are more single-author websites – many of them the literary equivalent of 'fan' pages – for women authors than a short review can possibly encompass; to view one popular example, visit the *Jane Austen Info Page* at <http://www.pemberley.com/janeinfo/janeinfo.html>

So what's the bad news? The bad news is that none of these e-text sites, for all their undeniable usefulness in literary study, makes a sustained attempt to situate women's authorship in its material, social, economic, and cultural contexts, or to explore how the texts being reformatted and transmitted anew through such sites were originally produced, reproduced, circulated, and read. Fortunately, there are a few bright spots just beginning to appear on this particular Web horizon. *The Orlando Project* at the University of Alberta (www.ualberta.ca/ORLANDO) aims to contribute to what it calls 'an integrated history of women's writing in the British Isles' by compiling biographical information, chronologies, and other basic research materials and making these available in both print and electronic form – an ambition that has the potential, at least, of addressing some of the SHARPist issues just indicated. Even more pertinently, the *Corvey Project* at Sheffield Hallam University (www.shu.ac.uk/corvey/homefset.htm) hopes to 'reconstruct the climate of professional women's writing' between 1790 and 1840 by creating a database and supporting websites like the associated pages devoted to Letitia Landon. Curiously, the fascinating career of L.E.L. is also the touchstone for another relevant website, the extraordinary recreation of the 1829 annual *The Keepsake* put together by Terence Hoagwood, Kathryn Ledbetter and Martin Jacobsen (<http://tamuj3293/keepsake.htm>). Though not explicitly devoted to women's writing, this site takes great pains to fill in the background of the 'annuals' boom as a cultural and publishing phenomenon, with particular attention to how those contexts illuminate Landon's Verses as they appeared in *The Keepsake*. Finally, Katie King's *Feminism and Writing Technologies* site at the University of Maryland (www.inform.edu/EdRes/Colleges/ARHU/Depts/WomensStudies/wmstfac/KKing/F&WT/f&wt.html), though skimpy on detail and still awaiting updating and expansion, is one of the very few sites to begin to address some of the issues of how women's writing was mediated by print.

All of these projects are heartening beginnings to a wider use of the Web in providing contexts for women's writing, but so far they are dwarfed in scale and accomplishment by the e-text projects now underway. Much more integrative historical work on the Web is needed, for all of the same reasons that more research on the contexts of women's authorship is needed in the wider world of scholarship. Nor are these issues all that remain to be addressed. Entirely absent from the current assembly of Web resources are any projects or pages devoted to the other enormously important roles, apart from authorship, that women have played in the history of print culture – as readers, editors, proprietors, librarians, publishers' readers, illustrators, print-workers, and publishers. Surely those histories cry out to be rescued from obscurity as much as do non-canonical poems, essays, and stories. As scholarship in these areas progresses the Web should have a critical part to play in making such histories available to teachers, researchers, and students. And that will be good news indeed.

Patrick Leary, Indiana University

Book Reviews

Lynne Pearce. *Feminism and the Politics of Reading*. London: Arnold, 1997. 274 p. ISBN 0-340-70062-9 (cloth). £45.00/\$59.95;

ISBN 0-340-61413-7 (paper). £14.99/\$19.95

Understanding how people read is a peculiarly difficult part of the study of the history of reading and many SHARP members must, like me, have registered a sense of fracture in reflecting on our own reading practices. On the one hand there is that total immersion in and zestful engagement with a book which is experienced as sheer pleasure or indulgence; on the other hand a more 'professional' reading of a text (perhaps the same text) is experienced as cooler, rational, analytical and is informed by our training in criticism. Focussing on the feminist reader, whose pleasure in reading can seem misaligned with feminist politics, Lynne Pearce explores the difficult territory of the affective. Arguing that modern critical theories of reading incline to the cognitive, so that reading is most often approached as a hermeneutic practice, concerned with interpretation rather than 'feeling', she makes the case for her investigation of reading as a 'felt' and implicated process.

Part I, 'The Politics of Gendered Reading', consists of three essays in which the author works through experiments with texts and with theories about the power-relations between text and reader: demonstrating, in effect, the process of reading and writing from which the project of the present book springs. Part II, 'The Emotional Politics of Gendered Reading', is the heart of the book in that it mines the author's own experience of reading four texts from different media to investigate the structural relationship between reader and text. Using Barthes' description of the romance trajectory as a journey from 'ravisement' to 'sequel' she inspects her own relationship to Olive Schreiner's *The Story of an African Farm* (1899); Angela Grauerholz's photographic exhibition (1995); Jeanette Winterson's *Written on the Body* (1992); and Jane Campion's film *The Piano* (1993). The choice of Barthes' typology for romance is entirely appropriate when the relationship being investigated is an emotional one, and in sections entitled 'Enchantment', 'Devotion', 'Fulfilment', 'Anxiety', 'Frustration', 'Jealousy' and 'Disappointment' Pearce deftly scrutinizes her 'original' readings, her re-readings and written memories of the texts, as well as the texts themselves, so as to test her theory of dialogic engagement between reader and text. In Part III, 'The Politics of Feminist/s Reading', the implications of the autobiographical previous section are tested by turning to other readers: Chapter 7 surveys reviews and articles written by the professional readers and critics of *The Piano* and Chapter 8 supplies a small ethnographic survey of the responses of groups of feminist readers, based in Britain and Canada, to Margaret Atwood's 'Death by Landscape'.

This is an intelligent and brave book and will no doubt irritate those who dislike the jargon of modern critical theory; but its language is necessarily technical in striving for precision and I was impressed by the patience and lucidity of the exposition and the careful explanation of terms used. It is also a courageous and honest book in its autobiographical approach, and in its scrupulously critical view of its own argument. Its model of reading deserves to be taken up, tested and refined. I plan to introduce it to post-graduate students working on women as readers of medieval and early modern texts as well as modern romance. As a reader of this particular text I am still at the 'Enchantment' stage.

Maureen Bell, University of Birmingham

Marianne Tidcombe. *Women Bookbinders 1880–1920*. London: The British Library; New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press, 1996. 240 p. ill. ISBN 0-7123-0411-8 (cloth). £35.00; ISBN 1-884718-23-X (cloth). \$58.00

So scrupulously does Marianne Tidcombe work to avoid connecting her book with any specifically feminist interest in book history that she tends to understate the importance of both the work of women bookbinders and of her own work in documenting them. This is indeed a marvellous book and one which delivers exactly what it promises: a thorough, detailed study of women as binders which will surely rank as the standard work on its topic for decades to come. The first chapter, an historical introduction, is one to which students should be directed for its concise account of the evidence for women's binding from the time of Edward IV to the 1920s. It is supplemented by a useful Appendix (VII) which lists 'Women in Charge of Bookbinder's Shops 1648–1901'. The second chapter, on the position of women within the trade at the end of the nineteenth century, helpfully describes (with illustrations) each stage in the binding process, the restrictions placed on women's work and wages by male trade unionists and attempts at the unionisation of women themselves. Chapters 3 and 4 are engagingly informative about binding styles and methods: embroidered, painted vellum, Vernis sans Odeur, vellucent, Sutherland bindings, metalwork including clasps and bosses, Cosway bindings, fore-edge painting, modelled leather bindings and pokerwork.

The core of the book comes in Chapters 5 to 8, studies of individual women: Sarah Prideaux, the members of the Guild of Women Binders, Katharine Adams and Sybil Pye. The depth of research here is impressive and the studies are augmented by appendices listing their tools and bindings and the women and groups associated with the Guild of Women Binders. Most glorious is the generous provision of colour plates, enabling readers to see for themselves the textures, colours and effects, often intricate and dramatic, of the bindings discussed. From the metal thread embroidery of Esther Inglis's *The Booke of the Psalms of Davide in Prose* (1624; plate 4) to the vibrant inlaid bindings of Sybil Pye (plates 32–40), these are above all artefacts to be seen, and the price of this book is well justified over and above the quality of the research contained in it by the indispensable and abundant use of illustration throughout.

The cool magisterial tone of this book occasions, however, a slight unease about its valuation of these women's work. While the narrative recounts some of the reasons for contemporary disparaging remarks about 'lady bookbinders' (p.7), such as the potential economic threat of female amateurs undercutting an established and predominantly male trade, and hostile comments that women fraudulently 'pose[d] as actual binders' or were merely 'binders in name' are quoted (22–23), the writer seems at times to absorb that view rather than to interrogate it. Consequently there is a somewhat defensive tone in characterising women's bindings: 'not of a very high standard' (176), 'rather pathetic attempts' (20). The elevation of a handful of exceptional women is thus partly at the expense of the rest, incompetence being generally assumed, as in the case of Edith Gedye, some of whose 'bindings of about 1915 are very professional, suggesting she may have employed a trade binder' (172). And though there is much evidence here for

the investigation of class and gender (the 'lady' amateur versus the male workman; the female low-paid worker and the male trade union hierarchy) a sharper political reading is needed to mine the rich implications of this excellent study.

No two books could be more different in their approaches than these (Pearce and Tidcombe); both will appear on my reading lists for students of 'Women and text'; both will inform, enthuse and (in their very difference) stimulate debate about the relations between feminism and the history of the book.

Maureen Bell, University of Birmingham

Douglas Gifford and Dorothy McMillan, ed. *A History of Scottish Women's Writing*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997. xxiii, 716 p. ISBN 0-7486-0742-0 (cloth). £60.00/\$85.00 ISBN 0-7486-0916-4 (paper). £19.95/\$35.00;

Histories of Scottish writing have frequently marginalised women writers; anthologies and histories of women's writing have sometimes inexplicably excluded Scottish writers. (*The Norton Anthology of Literature by Women* (1985), for example, includes no Scottish writers at all.) This volume, therefore, fills a long-standing gap, providing a critical analysis of Scottish women's writing from its recoverable beginnings to the present day. The book includes forty-three essays, some focusing on individual writers such as Joanna Baillie, Margaret Oliphant and Liz Lochhead; others discussing groups of writers or genres of writing. A significant proportion of the volume is devoted to non-fiction writing, including diaries, travel, biography, polemical writing, journalism and literary criticism.

The contributors and editors are interested in 'women writing within history ... responding ... to the specific circumstances of their historical moment' [xv]. Many of the essays deal specifically with the history of authorship and of publishing and will certainly be of interest to readers of this newsletter, offering a specifically Scottish perspective on circumstances which in some cases differed considerably from those prevailing in England and America. Of particular interest are Dorothy McMillan's articles on eighteenth century non-fiction writing and on early travel writing; Ralph Jessop's article on women and the nineteenth-century periodical press; Beth Dickson's piece on the popular 'Kailyard' novels of Annie S. Swan and O. Douglas; and three essays on women's contribution to Scottish songwriting and the music publishing industry. The majority of the essays, however, contain material relevant to those working on the history of authorship, reading and publishing.

Two of the essays survey women's writing in Gaelic, much of which was still being transmitted orally in the second half of the nineteenth century. Meg Bateman's article explores the definition of 'writer' in a largely oral tradition and looks at the impact of an education system which rendered most nineteenth-century Gaelic speakers (and authors) incapable of writing in their mother-tongue.

Much of the volume's pleasure lies in the discovery of new voices, but all the major figures in Scottish women's literature are covered. Popular writing for and by women receives serious attention from several of the contributors. Elizabeth Waterston's essay looks at Scottish women writers living in and writing from Canada during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Parallel

pieces on Scottish emigrant writers in other parts of the world would have been welcome.

Thirty pages are devoted to 'Select Bibliographies of Scottish Women Writers' prepared by Fiona Black [no relation to SHARP News Review Editor] and Kirsten Stirling. Although these provide a useful springboard for further exploration, they are limited and, in some cases, incomplete and inconsistent. (For example, the listing for Anne Grant fails to list her *Letters concerning Highland Affairs* or make any mention of her published songs; the entry for Margaret Calderwood does not include the 1848 publication of her journal, mentioning only later editions.) I was also disappointed by the lack of a subject index; only a name index is provided. Nevertheless, the uniformly high standard of the essays in this ambitious volume render it an extremely useful tool for anyone with an interest in either women's or Scottish writing.

Elizabeth Hagglund, University of Birmingham

Donald C. Mell, ed. *Pope, Swift and Women Writers*. Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1997. 252 p. ISBN 0-87413-590-7 (cloth). \$39.50/£32.50

In his introduction Donald Mell points out that both Pope and Swift 'have been lightning rods for feminist hostility' (p. 15) and how this collection of eleven essays is an endeavour to challenge the stereotypes with which Pope and Swift have become associated. Nine of the essays originated as papers read at the 'Pope, Swift, and Women Writers' seminars during three successive meetings of the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies (1991–1993). The title of the collection is limiting because several essays are not so much concerned with women writers as with gender issues within Pope's and Swift's works. Collections of reworked conference papers can be mixed in terms of quality, and this book is no exception; the wide interpretation of the topic is both a strength and a weakness, and some essays rise to the occasion better than others.

While in a collection of this sort each essay should be judged on its own merits, the best essays, taken together, share an emphasis on similarities between the discussed authors as opposed to an enumeration of contrasts which serve a narrow thesis based on an assumption which dictates what authors should write as opposed to what they actually did write. All essays share the idea that Swift and Pope, like the women writers they are associated with, were at odds with the dominant notions and values of the society they lived in. Caryn Chaden, Valerie Rumbold and Linda Veronika Troost establish connections between Pope and Mary Leapor, Judith Cowper and Mary Chandler respectively, with Troost in particular providing a rich canvas of reference in terms of genre and geography. Peter Staffel focuses on the notions of honour and reputation in *The Rape of the Lock* and provides us with a dynamic reading of the word 'termagant'. Claude Rawson writes about *Cadenus and Vanessa*, David F. Venturo about similarities between Mary Wollstonecraft's and Swift's ideas about women's education and virtue; Ellen Pollak gives a rather forced comparison between Dorothy Parker and Swift, and Nora F. Crow offers a survey article about women scholars' perceptions of Swift.

As contributions to the history of authorship and print culture three essays stand out. Barbara McGovern's discussion of the

literary relationships among Finch, Pope and Swift in the light of their shared 'bond of displacement' (105) corrects the record on the Pope-Finch relationship and convincingly portrays the encouragement and approaches to publishing which these three authors shared. (They all appeared in the sixth volume of Jacob Tonson's 1709 poetical *Miscellanies*). Melinda Alliker Rabb argues that Swift and Delariviere Manley, in the larger picture of print and censorship, have much in common, and by lifting Swift out of the traditional context of the Scriblerians she draws attention to these two headstrong individuals. Finally, Carole Fabricant's lucid essay on the 'shared worlds of Manley and Swift' moves away from Manley's reputation as a 'hack who also served as mistress to the printer John Barber' (154) to an author whose contributions to the *Examiner* were at times difficult to differentiate from Swift's. Fabricant examines the construction of authorship by questioning assumptions about authority in the writing of political propaganda, notions about career or non-career, and judgments about the characterisations of authors' careers in terms of failure or success. Overall, this collection convincingly demonstrates the need for full studies about Swift and Pope in their relationships with women writers, and it serves as an appealing appetizer for scholars who intend to work in this field.

Heidi Thomson, Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand

Eva Hemmungs Wirtén. *Global Infatuation: Explorations in Transnational Publishing and Texts, The Case of Harlequin Enterprises and Sweden*. Uppsala: Section for Sociology of Literature at the Department of Literature, Uppsala University, 1998. 272 p. ISBN 91-85178-28-4

Don't be taken in by the fact that this book is Eva Wirtén's doctoral thesis: it is a clearly written, highly original, research monograph. Firmly in the field of publishing studies, Wirtén's work shows the possibilities of appropriating theory for the discipline. She combines her empirical research, based largely on interviews with staff at Harlequin and annotated manuscripts which reveal the translating and editing processes, with theoretical frameworks from Bourdieu to globalisation. Harlequin is a category publisher issuing monthly romances. Based in Canada their market is global, though Wirtén's principal interest is in how they expanded and took over the market in Sweden. Publishing practices in the Toronto office are compared with those in Stockholm to reveal how cultural signifiers become encoded in the text through the in-house editing and translating process -- 'trans-editing'.

Through a discussion of Harlequin's place as a transnational publisher, the author explores the role of the romance, making a clear distinction between category and mainstream romances. The category publisher works to a different schedule, in a distinctive format, and has a clear indication of readers' reactions through monthly sales figures. Wirtén's work identifies the imagined communities of readers who consume these romances and also of the would-be writers who aspire to the production of the texts.

This work has a larger readership than its current format and limited availability suggest. If re-written for students it will have a market in literature, publishing, popular culture, translation studies and, possibly, women's studies. A broader perspective, linking

the experience of Harlequin with other sectors of the industry, and further drawing out the theoretical implications, would improve its usefulness as a teaching tool. As it stands it is certainly a useful case study for these disciplines and an interesting read.

Alexis Weedon, University of Luton.

Otto Rauchbauer. *The Edith Oenone Somerville Archive in Drishane: A Catalogue and an Evaluative Essay*. Dublin: Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1995. 263 p. ill. ISBN 1-874280-05-3. £IR17.50

Otto Rauchbauer is well aware that the Archive he catalogues in this volume represents an opportunity not to be squandered: 'Drishane appears to be the only Irish literary big house still intact, replete with memorabilia of the author and still lived in by the family' (p. 155). The Archive contains nearly four thousand items, including letters, photos, clippings, diaries and ledgers. Copies of this material have been deposited with the National Library in Dublin, making this catalogue more than an index to a privately-held collection. As its title suggests, the book is divided into two major sections: the cataloguing of Archive material, and nearly 100 pages of 'evaluative essay'. These are supplemented by an interesting selection of illustrations (including photographs and art of Somerville's, some in colour) and a useful chronology and family tree.

The catalogue itself is separated into two sections. The first catalogue indicates the physical order of Archive material, with each item numbered according to a rather elaborate system devised by Rauchbauer. Once mastered by the reader, this system can be used efficiently, and Rauchbauer provides sufficient explanation and a list of abbreviations. The second catalogue section is an alphabetical list of letter recipients and writers, and refers its user to the principal catalogue. In both catalogue sections, the subheadings are the same: 'Letters from Somerville', 'Letters to Somerville', 'Letters to and from Violet Martin', 'Letters about Somerville and her works', 'Extracts from Somerville Family papers', and a thematic catalogue. The thematic catalogue groups 'rather heterogeneous material' (7) under 26 categories, some physical (such as sketchbooks) and others topical (such as material on their travels). An unusual and valuable feature of the first catalogue section is its listing of subjects treated in each item.

Rauchbauer's goal for the evaluative section is to provide contexts and connections. He does so admirably, drawing in threads from other Archive material, from published works by and about Somerville and Ross, and from other printed sources concerned with Somerville's correspondents. It is astonishing how much information Rauchbauer packs into some of his discussions. He refers to Somerville's 'impressive' reading, then observes in a footnote that 'no biographer has so far taken the trouble to check the evidence in letters and Diaries' (231–232, n. 143). Not content to rest there, he provides a detailed discussion of the manuscript evidence about her reading and what she thought about it, quoting her opinions, naming titles, and citing sources for all.

The evaluative essay provides not only an overview of the Archive materials, but also offers critical interpretations of segments of Archive material, existing biographical work, and Somerville's work and ideas. Some of Rauchbauer's decisions are idiosyncratic

for example, he dismisses the letters from her long-time suitor, Herbert Green, as being of limited 'value for the biographer' (156, n.1) but he is upfront about those decisions. Rauchbauer's emphasis on context generates the sort of cultural-material work valued by feminist scholars, and he is always mindful of Somerville's position as a woman *vis a vis* education, social status, and financial security. Finally, by quoting extensively from material unique to the Archive, Rauchbauer provides not only a tool for scholars wishing to consult the Archive but also a usable resource for scholars interested but unable to make the trip to Ireland. This volume, embodying immense labour, meticulous attention to detail, and a firm grasp on the overall picture, constitutes a significant achievement, which offers potential applications by feminist, women's studies and book history scholars.

Rosemary E. Johnsen, National Coalition of Independent Scholars

Jane H.M. Taylor and Lesley Smith, ed. *Women and the Book: Assessing the Visual Evidence*. London: The British Library; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996. 288 p. ill. ISBN 0-7123-0498-3 (cloth). £45.00; ISBN 0-8020-4216-3 (cloth). \$75.00; ISBN 0-8020-8069-3 (paper). \$29.95

It is now clear that the St. Hilda's conference on 'Women and the Book in the Middle Ages' in 1993 was a very significant event in furthering our understanding of almost every aspect of life which linked women to books in the pre-print culture of medieval Europe: women as authors, scribes, illuminators; manuscripts written as gifts for women; books bequeathed to women; texts written to instruct and edify women; texts commissioned by women; the representation of women in manuscript illuminations; women and literacy. Two volumes of essays have already been published: *Women, the Book and the Godly* and *Women, the Book and the Worldly* (both Boydell and Brewer, 1995). With this volume, which includes both papers delivered at the conference and some additionally commissioned essays, publication of the project is completed. It is good to welcome this long-awaited and valuable volume.

Because of the long gap between the conference and the publication of its papers, contributors have generally taken the opportunity to update their material. The title page and publication details differ about the date of publication; presumably the later date (1997) is correct; in either case I assume that Joyce Coleman, *Public Reading and the Reading Public* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) and Veronica O'Mara's work on women scribes (*Leeds Studies in English* (1996): 87–130) appeared too late to be of use.

Fourteen essays are divided into three sections ('Images of Women', 'Images and Books by Women' and 'Images and Books for Women') but the boundaries between the sections are fluid. Similarly, the range of disciplines and approaches employed is diverse (history, art-history, codicology, feminist theory) and there is a great deal of cross-fertilisation between them. Central to the whole book is a number of essays which combine precise contextualisation of individual manuscripts with a reading of the symbolism of their illuminations and drawings to assess what evidence they may afford of the real lives of women in the middle ages.

Several essays deserve special mention. Martha Driver's essay

combines history, art-history and iconography in a wonderfully judicious argument which first points out the difficulties in distinguishing symbolic pictures of female activity from historically accurate ones and then points to the power of twentieth-century presuppositions which lead scholars to assume that a picture of women involved in building construction or metal-working necessarily has no basis in fact; documentary evidence for such activity apparently exists. Lesley Smith's account of images of women reading offers an inventory of such pictures and a thoughtful scrutiny of the difficulties inherent in interpreting the evidence in a culture in which the 'Word' and the 'Book' carry a wide range of symbolic meaning. Anne Rudloff Stanton addresses the Queen Mary Psalter, arguing from codicological evidence for a royal patron (possibly Queen Isabella, wife of Edward II) but also using iconography to interpret the drawings in the manuscript, arguing persuasively that they present the crucial nature of women's actions, especially the role of mothers. In contrast, Sandra Penketh argues that the female owner-portraits in Books of Hours (books prepared for women by men) foster the domestic role of women. Judith Oliver, Marie-Luise Ehrenschenwender and Kate Lowe all produce evidence of women's involvement in book-production.

There are two indices, one of manuscripts cited and another general index, which includes medieval persons and texts and some topics. For ease of use and indeed for cross-reference within the volume it would have been useful to have included modern scholars within this index or, even better, to have included a bibliography of secondary works cited. The volume is lavishly illustrated, well-presented but not quite error-free. Lesley Smith refers to her own edited volume as *Women, the Book and the Holy!*

Valerie Edden, University of Birmingham

Doris Alexander, *Creating Literature Out of Life: The Making of Four Masterpieces*. Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996. 253 p. ISBN 0-271-01549-7 (cloth). £35.00/\$39.50

Ronald Reichertz, *The Making of the Alice Books: Lewis Carroll's Uses of Earlier Children's Literature*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997. 251 p. ISBN 0-7735-1625-5 (cloth). £29.95/\$55.00 Can

In *Creating Literature Out of Life* Doris Alexander sets out to analyse how four 'very dissimilar masterpieces' were shaped by what she terms the 'life experience' of their authors. She thus examines Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice*, Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*, Edward FitzGerald's *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*, and Leo Tolstoy's *War and Peace*. No similarity in period, genre or theme is seen to exist between these works, and Alexander argues that this lack of connection endorses her thesis. It is Alexander's contention that 'Somewhere in each particular great work, in the particular mind that brought it into being, is hidden the series of clues to how the seemingly unique miracle of a masterpiece of literature came about' (p. 1). Thus we are told that *Death in Venice* arose out of Mann's sister's suicide, the recognition of a deeply buried will-to-death within himself, his own homoerotic impulses, a trip to Venice in 1911, and the influence of Gustav Mahler. Steven's masterpiece, it is argued, achieves its originality because it is the result of the author's struggle with his

'life-problems': his chronic tuberculosis and his famous quarrel with W.E. Henley. *The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám* remains FitzGerald's only memorable work because this translation of the Persian poem allowed him to exorcise his agony over a disastrous marriage and to express his suppressed love for a close friend, William Kenworthy Browne. The longest, and probably the most successful, chapter is that on *War and Peace*. Here Alexander gives a convincing account of how Tolstoy's family and friends provided models for the characters in his epic novel.

There is an impressive amount of original scholarly research in this volume which contributes significantly to our understanding of the lives of these four writers. At times the evidence Alexander has unearthed compels us to accept her proposition, and the ease of her style carries the reader along with the fascinating stories she has to reveal. However, there are too many weaknesses in the argument for us to accept it unreservedly. Alexander makes a virtue out of the fact that her 'approach has nothing in common with what is understood as psychoanalytic criticism, biographical criticism or traditional source studies' (2). Yet this very lack of theoretical grounding serves to undermine her central argument. We are asked to accept generalisations that can really only be speculative. For example, she claims 'As the writing histories of Thomas Mann, Robert Louis Stevenson and Edward FitzGerald show, the creative impulse can live only as long as the stress of unresolved problems propels it, and as long as it is nourished by blended memories' (84).

Occasional lapses in expression such as using 'Scotch' instead of Scottish are irritating (43). A similar problem, for this reader at least, is Alexander's apparent ignorance of feminist criticism: the assumption that all readers and all writers are male (160) is distinctly dated and she perpetuates many patronising attitudes towards the women in the lives of these male writers: Henley's objection to Fanny Stevenson, for example, receives little scrutiny. *Creating Literature Out of Life* is both entertaining and enlightening in its rigorous attention to detail, but Alexander's rejection of any theoretical argument compromises the force of her argument. In the end, the book falls uncertainly between biography and literary criticism, offering useful insights into both but failing to provide a cohesive, convincing argument in either genre.

The Making of the Alice Books by Ronald Reichertz is, by contrast, a highly referential study of the literary conventions and allusions to children's literature in Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking-Glass and What Alice Found There*. The six chapters that form the core of this volume develop a context for Carroll's fantasies by tracing how the Alice books 'incorporate an extensive literary tradition that ranges from conventional kinds of children's literature (for example moral and informational didacticism, nursery rhyme and fairy tale) to general literary topoi and forms (such as the 'world turned upside down', the looking-glass book, and dream vision) that had been assimilated into children's literature before the Alice books were written' (p. 4). The second half of this volume is dedicated to five appendices that provide rare and fascinating examples of early children's literature. The fifth appendix reproduces in its entirety a nineteenth-century children's story *Elsie's Expedition* (Warne and Co, 1874) by Frederick E. Weatherly, and extracts from two

other stories from the same period that were heavily influenced by the Alice books. Some of this representative material includes fine line drawings that suggest Tenniel's famous Alice drawings.

Reichertz's research is exhaustive, and he draws upon numerous scholarly studies of the Alice books, giving a theoretical weight to his argument. A full and useful bibliography is given on pages 243–8 that will prove invaluable to anyone interested in undertaking further research into Carroll's work. Chapter 4, 'The World Turned Upside Down' and chapter 5, 'The Looking-Glass Book' are rich intertextual studies, providing original and insightful examples of the type of literature and ideas alluded to by Carroll. Chapter 3, however, 'The Battle Between Religious, Moral and Informational Didacticism and Imaginative Literature for Children' will have most appeal for those researching book history, authorship and readership. Indeed, this chapter could usefully be supplemented by a discussion of the history of the readership of children's books and of Carroll's book in particular. Although such an investigation may be outside Reichertz's scope, this chapter suggests that work in the area of readership and gender issues in children's literature is ripe for exploration. One minor quibble is that the critical argument of the volume covers only 78 pages, whilst the appendices take up over 150 pages. The representative texts will be of great interest to SHARP readers, but some of this material could, without diminishing the overall impact of the book, have been omitted in favour of more of Reichertz's perceptive commentary on the Alice books themselves.

Both books reviewed here are absorbing studies in the history of, and influences on, enduring works of literature. Whilst Alexander's volume lacks a theoretical grounding it is, nevertheless, an engaging study of the bibliographical details that helped shape the novels under discussion. Reichertz's volume is more important in that it pushes forward the boundaries of the history of children's literature in general and, more particularly, in that it offers an original and insightful reading of Carroll's work. *The Making of the Alice Books* is a welcome contribution to the burgeoning study of the history of children's literature and will be a requirement on the bookshelf of any researcher in that area.

Linda Dryden, Napier University, Edinburgh

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Sharpend

I am very pleased to present to you a bumper issue centred on the theme of 'Women and Book History'. The interconnections between women's studies and book history are not often confronted and explored. As the interesting articles in this issue suggest, the synergy to be gained from bringing the two together can lead to some fascinating and important advances in teaching and research activity. At the same time, it is clear that we are only at the beginning of considering the role of book history in such contexts. Much remains to be done, and it is hoped that the points raised in these pages will be discussed and considered by Sharp members. Feedback, of course, is welcomed for featuring in future issues.

That book history is gaining a student following in my department was made manifest to me this month as I prepared to start another semester's teaching. Among the modules I teach is an undergraduate course on the History of the Book, an option for our fourth year students. Last year I had a modest class size of 15. I was staggered to find 45 eager students in the room on the first day of class, who of their own volition and without threats on my part had opted to take the course. Is this a record for undergraduate attendance of a book history course? I'd like to know.

Speaking of increasing interest, I've been asked to issue a call to Sharpists to help in a campaign to boost SHARP membership. Posters and flyers about SHARP are currently being prepared. If you are planning to go to a conference in the near future and can help by distributing information about SHARP, or want flyers and posters to put up in appropriate departmental areas, please get in touch with Jim Kelly (email: jrkelly@library.umass.edu), who would be delighted to send you a wee package of appropriate material.

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