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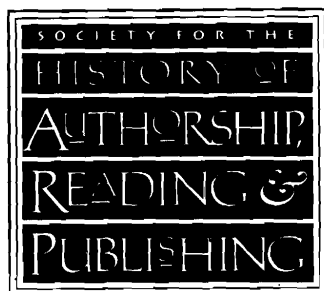
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SHARP News

Volume 7, Number 1

Winter 1997-98

The Eliot-Phelips Collection Cataloguing Project

The University of London Library has just completed the first phase of a project to catalogue and conserve the Eliot-Phelips Collection of publications printed in or relating to Spain. The collection consists primarily of approximately 3500 books, pamphlets, and official documents, supplemented by smaller numbers of maps, manuscripts, and prints. Over 50% of the printed material is from the hand-press period. Of the 971 items catalogued up to July 1997, 139 were printed before 1600, 195 between 1600 and 1699, and 213 between 1700 and 1830.

A fuller account of the project, together with a more detailed description of the material in the collection, is now available on the Web. It can be seen via the University of London Library home page (URL: <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/ucl/>) or directly at URL: <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/ucl/EP/EPIntro.html>). (NB. The address is case-sensitive.)

For further information by Email, contact Julia Walworth, Head of Special Collections (jwalworth@ucl.ac.uk) or Patricia Noble, Project Officer (pnoble@ucl.ac.uk), or address enquiries to them at the University of London Library, Senate House, Malet Street, London WC1E 7HU, England.

Students Into Scholars – Sort of

In an age of theory and wavering academic standards it can be difficult to motivate Masters students to conduct sound historically and culturally based research that relies largely on the records of the past. In this paper I'd like to report on my own experiment in teaching a graduate-level research methods class to students of different disciplines in which the primary assignment requires extensive research utilizing periodicals. But first, a bit of background on where I teach.

I don't teach at an elite institution where basic competence and preparedness is a given, even at the graduate level. Roosevelt University in Chicago, founded in 1945, is a comprehensive university with a large population of graduate students. Most are non-traditional: average age of 30, attending part-time, often members of minority groups. They take courses evenings or weekends. Many don't have solid research skills which places added importance on our course in research methods.

For several decades the English Masters program had the only required research methods course. For the past six years I have been the primary instructor of that course (even though I failed bibliography at the University of Edinburgh when studying for my doctorate some years ago). Recently, however, faculty in history and women's studies agreed to cross-list the research

methods course and require it of newly-admitted students to their programs. The faculty in these disciplines didn't devise their own courses because our humanities Masters programs are small. We all felt the course would be stronger by combining our disciplinary forces. Secondly, my colleagues aren't that interested in teaching research methods, and find my enthusiasm for it a bit odd. They happily send their students to me.

When I taught the methods course as an English course my focus had been both historical and cultural. Ideally students gained strong familiarity with wide varieties of reference materials, now increasingly available on-line; learned to evaluate evidence more carefully as they built their own and evaluated others' scholarly arguments; grew more capable of detecting flawed logic or improper use of evidence; learned something of the history of the book; and discussed a variety of scholarly and academic issues ranging from plagiarism, scholarly ethics, the job market and tenure. With the cross-listings in place, the course needed, in a formal way, to encompass similar research methodology and scholarly issues in related, yet distinct disciplines.

A chief dilemma in a research methods course is whether or not to require a research paper. I have always done so. The chief argument against them is that the time the papers take could be better spent gaining comprehension of the methodology and resources for the sorts of papers students would write in future classes. Yet this has always seemed to me a denial of my responsibility as a teacher and scholar. My colleagues don't necessarily require research papers in their courses, preferring, in literature, applications of critical theory to texts or close readings relying primarily on students' evaluative ability. So students in English at least might very well not apply the techniques I try and impart in other courses. Students also should learn by doing. If I preach about the importance of scholarship, then don't require students to go and do likewise, I'm not being a very good advocate of my principles. To me a course in research methods needs to practice what it preaches.

However, my insistence on a research paper added difficulties to a course appealing to distinct, yet overlapping disciplines. When the course focused on literature students wrote on incidents in an author's life influencing their writing, or else engaged in identifying and evaluating historical sources of literary works. This wouldn't work for history and women's studies students. Another goal of mine for the new course was that the writing and research the students engaged in have common elements that they could share with each other in class.

The solution I hit upon – and the chief point of this paper – required that students write on periodicals. Here's how I organ-

ised the assignment: First, I identified and listed all runs of periodicals in the Roosevelt library stacks that preceded 1945. This list contained a variety of news, literary and general interest magazines, and more specialised journals focusing on education, political science and the hard sciences. A few more general interest periodicals predated the twentieth century including the *Atlantic Monthly*, *Scribner's*, *Sewanee Review*, the *Forum* and the *North American Review*.

I explained to students that they would need to identify a periodical that they would be working with throughout the semester. They would also need to identify an issue that they would investigate using the periodical they chose. Students would search out references pertaining to that issue, read and summarise the relevant articles, formulate a thesis suggesting how the periodical responded to the issue identified, and then present the evidence supporting the thesis in the paper they would write. Ideally students would undertake additional investigation in relevant primary or secondary historical works covering the period of time they were investigating. They would use this historical information to give some context to their findings, and perhaps to help explain how the view stressed in the periodical was similar to popular understanding of that issue in the country at large. Or, more excitingly, students would learn that their periodical findings went against the grain of standard scholarship on their topic.

A handout on this assignment read in part: 'Assume you were interested in the construction of women in 19th century America. Using this as a starting point of investigation you would need to pick a periodical that has a good deal of writing by or about women. A magazine dealing with labour and work might regularly examine women in the workforce, or whether they should be there, what jobs they should have, what work they are fit for, etc. A magazine dealing with women and education (women as teachers and/or students) might look at women in the teaching profession. A more general interest magazine might utilise a good deal of fiction and poetry dealing with women, as well as include occasional editorials or feature articles. Such a magazine might also editorialise or report on women in and out of the home, or engage in discussions about women in political or social realms. There are numerous and extensive possibilities from which you will need to choose. In the time allowed you will only be able to focus on one aspect of a major issue as it is discussed in a single periodical.'

Students were strongly advised to begin the assignment early and to work at it steadily. I arranged for them to be able to borrow bound volumes from the library if that would aid their research. I also stressed the formulation of a topic of interest that would eventually be resolved into a thesis. For example, and again I quote from my syllabus, suppose 'I were interested in the status of freed blacks in the 1870s and 1880s. A magazine like *Atlantic Monthly* or *Scribner's* might, over a ten or fifteen year period, include a number of articles on this topic.' In fact I know that they do, having reviewed these magazines in search of information on other topics. 'Students need to look at tables of contents, indexes, titles of articles and learn to scan articles quickly in order to gain some sense of content. The possibilities, as more experienced scholars know, are virtually endless; hence, as experienced scholars also

know, the need to narrow a topic as quickly as possible is paramount.'

The greatest difficulty I had in carrying out the assignment was in getting students to start with a topic early, stick with it and work at it steadily. Most students didn't cover enough ground in their samplings or were slow to zero in on their ultimate topic. This meant there was a longer period of time they were uncertain of what information was most important to them. When I teach the course again I will probably engage in conferences early on in which I work with individual students and their chosen periodical and issue of investigation. I would try and help them find some articles by training them in efficient scanning of what are often huge numbers of pages. As probably all of us know, it is very easy to get sidetracked in periodical research by looking at interesting, yet non-germane articles and advertisements. Students who have never done this sort of thing will clearly feel overwhelmed.

Also, I stressed the need for a working thesis that nonetheless had to be malleable based on the evidence uncovered. This proved a surprisingly difficult concept to convey to students. Of course, I tried to explain, one couldn't start with the working thesis that the *Atlantic Monthly* was a racist publication, then search for evidence to prove the thesis and ignore evidence to the contrary. One might have a hunch that this was so, but needed to be guided by the evidence. Budding scholars had to be willing to modify and enrich their theses based on evidence they uncovered. Beginning students though were uncomfortable with this concept. They seemed to want to be certain of their conclusions from the start so grew frustrated when the evidence wasn't as plentiful as they hoped – but this also was a sort of learning experience.

Another problem came in getting students to contextualise their findings. I wanted students, as they were investigating their periodical's attitude towards a particular issue, to try and find out also how modern historians viewed that particular issue. To take the issue of freed blacks after the Civil War as an example, how did positions the periodicals set forth compare with the interpretations of contemporary historians? Students might come across a divergence in what their primary sources told them and historians' interpretations of the period and thus learn a valuable lesson

SHARP News is the quarterly newsletter of the Society for the History of Authorship, Reading and Publishing, inc. Annual membership in SHARP, which includes a subscription to *SHARP News*, is \$35 in the United States and Canada, £25 in Britain, \$40 elsewhere. Address editorial correspondence to the Editor, David Finkelstein, PMPC Department, Napier University, Craighouse Road, Edinburgh EH10 5LG Scotland Email: d.finkelstein@napier.ac.uk Send membership dues and changes of address to the Associate Editor, Linda Connors, Drew University Library, Madison, NJ 07940, USA Email: lconnors@drew.edu The Book Review Editor is Fiona Black at Information Services, Regina Public Library, PO Box 2311, Regina, Saskatchewan S4P 3Z5 Canada. Email: fblack@rpl.regina.sk.ca

in working with evidence. However, as noted, not all students were able to put in the necessary time to carry out this sort of investigation. Looking towards a future manifestation of this course, I would likely spend more time in conferences with students working on finding and identifying appropriate secondary works so that comparisons could proceed more smoothly. It would also be a means of holding students' feet to the fire, something increasingly necessary at the graduate level.

During the course of the semester I had students give brief in-class updates of their research. If they hadn't done any work they had to say so. Students also were required to report to me regularly about their progress and in particular about problems they encountered and couldn't overcome. Throughout the process I kept reminding them that they were performing original research, that their topic was unique, that they were doing something that very likely no one had ever done before.

Final results were mixed. On the negative side, one student, clearly not up to the challenge, failed the course and was dropped from his Masters program. Another scored at mediocre levels because of language difficulties. Another, with the promising topic of the US government's relations with Indian tribes in the early 19th century as reported in the *North American Review* never mastered the art of paraphrase and summary, or the intricacies of journals of the day drawing liberally on the contents of other journals. (He is now studying for a Masters in **geography** at another university!) This suggests to me more time is needed working on issues of summary and paraphrase, although this is already something heavily stressed in the course.

On the more positive side, many students performed very well and took to their topics with great enthusiasm. An African-American student who earns his living as a journalist examined the 1930s *Life* magazine on race and did an excellent job of evaluating both article texts and photographic images, although his topic initially seemed highly pedestrian. Another student compared *The New Yorker's* contents to the Depression-ridden country of the 1930s, noting that one could scarcely tell the country was experiencing economic difficulties based on the magazine's content. Another woman, also working in the 1930s, compared the critical principles, standards and techniques of American literary journals to emerging Fascist ideology. A fourth student, whose work is still in progress, is exploring how a socialist publication of World War I era Chicago viewed women.

I will teach the same course again in the Spring of 1998 and, with some modifications, plan on keeping this assignment of working with periodicals. I am considering requiring more written assignments in connection with the research project, in order to keep students on track. Also, I am thinking of limiting the number of periodicals, or possibly the era from which they must come, as a means of bringing even more cohesion to the class, and providing a more common historical focus to the research students are undertaking. Since all students would be working on some aspect of the same period, their research would likely be more relevant to each other. Such a design would also stress the inter-relationships of history, literature and gender studies more thoroughly. Students would likely be able to provide more assistance and encouragement to each other given this more common focus.

My experiment in turning Masters students into scholars was a qualified success. It did provide students from different disciplines with some common ground inside the classroom. Yet with common ground there was also a necessary diversity in the research assignment that allowed students to carry out projects in their fields. The assignment provided a practical setting in which students sharpened research skills and to some degree learned from each other. They experienced the successes and frustrations that always come with original research into primary documents. Equally important for me as instructor, assignments focused on a general area I was comfortable with and where I could confidently give students direction when they needed it. For both students and teacher this was a cohesive assignment and also course, largely because of its focus on the careful, precise study of periodicals, their contents and contexts.

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Call for Essay Proposals

Abstracts are invited for a planned collection of essays on eighteenth-century periodical literature. *Periodical Literature in Eighteenth-Century America* aims to re-examine the historical and cultural contexts for colonial, Revolutionary, and early national periodical writing and to gain further insight into the material and literary processes which affected authors, editors, publishers, and readers from approximately 1741 to the end of the century. Send submissions by 15 February 1998 to: Sharon M. Harris, Dept. of English, 202 Andrews Hall, University of Nebraska, Lincoln NE 68588-0333 (sharris@unlinfo.unl.edu), or to Mark Kamrath, Dept. of English, University of Central Florida, Orlando, FL 32816-1346 (mkamrath@pegasus.cc.ucf.edu).

Call for Papers

The **Midwest Modern Language Association** Bibliography and Textual Studies Section solicits papers for their panel at the fall meeting 5-7 November 1998 in St. Louis. Papers may address a number of issues related to bibliography and reception studies, including bibliographical methods and what they can illuminate about a literary work's reception, the ways in which bibliographers and editors have influenced a work's reception, or the presentation of information about reception in edited texts and in the classroom. We are also open to a wide range of approaches to bibliography, editing, and book history. All time periods and genres are welcome. Please send titles and short proposals by 4 April 1998 to: Jim Crowley, Department of English, University of Michigan, 3187 Angell Hall, Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1003 Email: jcrowley@umich.edu

For the 1998 MLA annual convention, to be held in San Francisco, the **William Morris Society** seeks proposals for the following topic: 'The Late Victorian Book: In Honor of Beardsley, Burne-Jones, and Morris'. This year marks not only the centenary of Burne-Jones's death but also the passing of his one-time protégé

Aubrey Beardsley. To mark the occasion – and to deal with a subject of increasing interest – a session will be dedicated to these figures. Ideas that go beyond the confines of ‘literature’ to encompass bibliography, publishing history, illustrations (of course), and cultural studies are welcome. Proposals for this session should be sent no later than 15 March 1998 to: Mark Samuels Lasner, William Morris Society, P.O. Box 53263, Washington, DC 20009, Email: Biblio@aol.com.

The **Tenth International Congress on the Enlightenment** will take place at University College, Dublin on 25–31 July 1999. Over one hundred and twenty sessions, round tables and plenary sessions are scheduled. Calls for papers are being issued for sessions in various areas of relevance to SHARP members. Papers should be in English, French or Irish, and designed to take not more than 20 minutes to deliver. Summaries of 100 words should be sent before 31 March 1998 to the organisers of the relevant sessions as listed below:

- ‘Money, Culture, and London Newspapers in the Eighteenth Century’, Professor Rosamond McGuinness, Dept of Music, Royal Holloway College, University of London, Egham, Surrey TW20 0EX, England. Email: r.mcguinness@rhbc.ac.uk
- ‘Renouveau culturel et traduction manuscrite: l’aube des Lumières dans le Sud-Est de l’Europe’, Professor Dr. Anna Tabaki, The National Research Foundation, 48, Vas. Constantinou Av., Athens 116 35, Greece. Email: antabaki@eie.gr
- ‘Economics and Literature in Eighteenth-Century England’, Professor Dr. Ulrich Broich, Institut für Englische Philologie der Universität München, D-80799 München, Schellingstr. 3 RGB, Germany
- ‘Pope, Print, and Property’, Jim McLaverty, English Dept, Keele University, Keele, Staffordshire, ST5 5BG, England, Email: ena00@cc.keele.ac.uk
- ‘Publishing Music -Reading Music’, Dr. Dorte Schmidt, Musikwissenschaftliches Institut der Ruhr-Universität Bochum, GA 04/49, D-44780 Bochum, Germany
- ‘George Faulkner and the Irish Publishing Community,’ Professor Beverly Schneller, Dept. of English, Millersville University, P.O. Box 1002, Millersville PA 17551-0302, USA Email: bschnell@marauder.millers.edu
- ‘L’édition clandestine et la contrefaçon dans le monde français: état des recherches’, Professor Daniel Droixhe, Universités de Liège et de Bruxelles, rue d’Erquy, 38, B-4680 Oupeye, Belgium Email: daniel.droixhe@ulg.ac.be
- ‘Les Pamphlets, une littérature en marge’, Professor Muriel Usandivaras, Département de Français, Université Laurentienne, Chemin du Lac, Ramsey, Sudbury, Ontario P3E 2C6, Canada
- ‘Revue culturelle et critique littéraire au XVIIIème siècle, après 1750: autour du *Journal encyclopédique*’, Professor Jacques Wagner, Faculté des Lettres, Université Blaise-Pascal, 29 boulevard Gergovia, F63037 Clermont-Ferrand Cedex 1, France
- ‘The Dublin Imprint in the Eighteenth Century’, Dr Helene Solheim, c/o Andrew Carpenter, English Dept, University College, Dublin 4 Email andrew.carpenter@ucd.ie
- ‘The materiality of writing in the eighteenth century’, Dr Aileen

Douglas, School of English, Trinity College, Dublin 2 Email: adouglas@tcd.ie

- ‘The Third Edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*’, Professor Kathleen Hardesty Doig, Dept of Modern and Classical Languages, Georgia State University, Atlanta, Georgia 30303-3083 USA Email: forkhd@panther.gsu.edu
- ‘Eighteenth-Century Translation(s) and Translators’, Ellen Moerman, Flat 4, 67 Cornwall Gardens, London SW7 4BA Email: E.R.Moerman@icssl.ac.uk
- ‘Nouvelles perspectives de recherches sur les périodiques du XVIIIe siècle (journaux, gazettes, almanachs)’, Professor Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink, Universität des Saarlands, Fachrichtung 8.2 - Romanistik, Postfach 15 11 50, D-66041, Saarbrücken, Germany Email: luesebrink@rz.uni-sb.de
- ‘Press and culture in the eighteenth century’, Professor Jeremy D. Popkin, Dept of History, University of Kentucky, Lexington, 40506-0027 USA Email: popkin@ukcc.uky.edu
- ‘Female Authorship during the Enlightenment’, Dr Michaela Mudure, Str Almasului nr 3, ap 5, 3400 Cluj, Romania Email: mmudure@lett.ubbcluj.ro
- ‘Women Writers at the Margins of European Literature’, Dr April Alliston, Associate Professor, Dept of Comparative Literature, Princeton University, 318 East Pyne, Princeton, 08544 USA Email: alliston@aragon.princeton.edu

Job Announcements

American History. The Graduate School of Drew University is seeking candidates for a two-year renewable position in Modern American Intellectual and Cultural History (any period) at the Assistant/Associate Professor level to begin in the Fall 1998-99 semester. He/she will be primarily responsible for teaching on the MA/PhD Modern History and Literature program and MLitt/DLitt Arts and Letters program, with some undergraduate teaching. PhD in American history or American studies required. Preference for candidates with teaching experience, publications, and strong interdisciplinary interest in American literature. Desirable subfields include History of Print Culture, Women’s Studies. Position dependent on budgetary approval. The Drew University Graduate School, with 470 students in eight fields in the humanities, is committed to interdisciplinary graduate study in the humanities. Deadline for consideration is 15 February 1998. Submit letter of application, vita, and three letters of reference to: William Rogers, Assistant Dean of the Graduate School, Drew University, Madison, NJ 07940, (973) 408-3285. Drew University is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer.

Lectures and Seminars

The **Printing Historical Society** announces its 1998 programme of meetings, to take place on Wednesdays in the Exhibition and Lecture Room of the St Bride Printing Library, Bride Lane, Fleet Street, London. The lectures begin at 6.30 pm and are open to the public.

- 25 February 1998: Peter Bower, ‘Paper and print’
- 22 April 1998: Caroline Archer, ‘Kynoch Press: the quiet type’
- 17 June: Dr Mirjam Foot, ‘From treasures for the privileged to

general commodity: changes in bookbinding structure and design'

The following papers will feature in the third annual **From Text to Book** seminar series, 'From Text to Book: New Studies in Literature and History', to be held on Fridays, 5 pm in the North Lecture Room at St. John's College, Oxford. All are welcome.

– 23 January: Dr Claire Warwick, Dr Michael Fraser, Dr Stuart Lee (Oxford University Computing Services), 'The Electronic Text and the Future of the Codex'

– 30 January: Dr Kathryn Sutherland (Reader in Bibliography and Textual Criticism, Oxford), 'Revised Relations? Material Text, Immaterial Text, and the Electronic Environment'

– 6 February: Dr David Finkelstein (Napier University), 'From Print to Popular Culture: Tracing the History of the *Battle of Dorking*'

– 13 February: Dr Peter McDonald (St Hugh's College, Oxford), 'Reading Books: *The Lake Isle of Innisfree* through the 1890s'

– 20 February: Ian Gadd (Pembroke College, Oxford), 'From Barker to Blagden: Anthologizing the Stationers' Company, 1582-1960'

– 27 February: Dr Nigel Smith (Keble College, Oxford), [To be announced]

– 6 March: Dr Marcus Walsh (Univ. of Birmingham), 'Relations of text and editorial matter in eighteenth-century literary editing'

– 13 March: Scott Mandelbrote (Hertford College, Oxford), 'Textual and Production History of the English Bible, c. 1610 to c. 1850'

For further information, consult the regularly updated History of the Book at Oxford web-site [<http://users.ox.ac.uk/~pemb0049/bkintro.html>], or contact the organisers, Michael Suarez, St John's College; Dr Peter McDonald, St Hugh's College, Oxford.

The Scottish Centre for the Book announces its Spring term 1998 series of Edward Clark Seminars on the history of the book and sociology of texts. All seminars take place in NC516, Craighouse Campus, Edinburgh at 12.15.

– 18 February 1998: Professor Peter Isaac (Past President, Bibliographical Society), 'Pills and Print: Proprietary Medicines and the Book Trade'

– 25 March 1998: James P. Danky (Co-Director, Center for the History of Print Culture in Modern America, University of Wisconsin-Madison), 'Print Culture in a Diverse America: Towards a Historical Sociology of Print Culture History since 1987'

For further information, contact Dr. David Finkelstein, Scottish Centre for the Book, Napier University, Craighouse Campus, Craighouse Road, Edinburgh EH10 5LG Email: d.finkelstein@napier.ac.uk

Scholarly Liaisons

SHARP co-sponsored a panel at the annual meeting of the American Society of Church History, which was held concurrently with the meeting of the American Historical Association in Seattle, Washington on 8–11 January 1998. The session, 'Toward the History of the Religious Book: Boundary Crossings', included the following speakers and paper topics: 'Boundaries and Appropriations', Joan Shelly Rubin; 'Print to be Damned: The Atheist Assault

on Print Culture in Victorian England', David S. Nash; 'The Preacher, the Peddler, and the Holiness Reaction: Afro-American Religion and Reading in the New South', John M. Giggie. A response was given by Timothy D. Hall of Central Michigan University.

We are delighted to announce that Robert Darnton has been elected President of the American Historical Association. Prof. Darnton is a member of the SHARP Board of Directors and is an advisory editor for the SHARP journal *Book History*. We all join in congratulating him on this well-earned honour. Likewise we congratulate SHARP member Professor Peter Isaac, Past President of the Bibliographical Society, on being awarded a DLitt from the University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne for published work on the history of the British Book Trade.

The History of the Book in Canada project has recently announced that its editorial team is now in place. The General Editors are Patricia Fleming (University of Toronto) & Yvan Lamonde (McGill University), with the following acting as volume editors: Vol. I (to 1840) Patricia Fleming (University of Toronto) & Jean-Pierre Wallot (Université d'Ottawa); Vol. II (1840-1914) Fiona Black (Regina Public Library) & Yvan Lamonde (Université McGill); Vol. III (1914-present) Carole Gerson (Simon Fraser University) & Jacques Michon (Université de Sherbrooke). For further information on the development of this national project, you can contact the General Editors by Email at either fleming@fis.utoronto.ca or ef17@musica.mcgill.ca

About twenty members of the **SHARP/American Studies Association Caucus** met over coffee at the ASA Convention in Washington, DC in early November 1997 to discuss caucus-sponsored sessions at next year's conferences. A session on print culture and the American lyceum to be sponsored by Caucus has been accepted for the 1998 SHARP conference in Vancouver. Wayne Wiegand has submitted another session proposal, this for next year's ASA convention in Seattle on public library as cultural institutions, to be co-sponsored by the SHARP/ASA Caucus and the ASA's Material Culture Caucus. The SHARP/ASA Caucus has also submitted a second session proposal on ante-bellum print culture and is hoping to sponsor a roundtable discussion focused in some way on the Cambridge multi-volume history of the book in America now in progress. The roundtable would address those substantive issues which have arisen or proved most thorny in creating such a text as well as the expected impact of such an 'institutionalized' history on the fields of authorship, reading and publishing studies and the teaching of the same.

Also discussed were other ways the Caucus might serve to promote relations between SHARP and the ASA, including serving as a central data bank for scholarship in American print culture and related topics, and to this end all Americanists in SHARP are encouraged to contact the caucus coordinator with details of their current projects and interests. The coordinator is Richard Fine, Chair, English Department, Virginia Commonwealth University, Box 842005, Richmond, VA 23284, who can also be reached via Email at rfine@vcu.edu

The program for the area of **Reading and Publishing Popular Literature** at the national conference of the Popular Culture Association, to be held 8–11 April 1998 in Orlando, Florida, includes the following sessions that may be of particular interest to SHARP members. SHARP members who wish to attend the sessions listed here may do so without registering for the conference by contacting Lydia Schurman via Email at schurman@erols.com

• **Wednesday, 8 April**, 5–6:30 pm

‘Reading/Publishing Popular Literature: 19th Century’ Chair: Clark W. Evans, Rare Book & Special Collections Div., Library of Congress:

– ‘Nineteenth-Century Paper Covered ‘Library’ Series Read by an Upper Class New Jersey Family, 1881-1979’, Lydia C. Schurman;

– ‘The Economics of a Pulp, or A Pulp Is Born’, Kristin Ladnier, American Studies Program, Bowling Green State University;

– ‘Read No Evil: Sanitizing Contemporary Historical Figures in the Dime Novel’, Clark W. Evans.

• **Wednesday, 8 April**, 6:45–8:15 pm

‘Reading/Publishing Popular Literature: Self-Identification, Translation, Popularization’, Chair: Robert Hendrick, History, St. John’s University:

– ‘Popular Stories and Political Identity: A Case Study in Nineteenth-Century Reading’, Alison M. Scott, Popular Culture Library, Bowling Green State University;

– ‘A Case of Cultural Imperialism? English Translations of Zola in Australia’, Deana Lee Heath, History, University of California, Berkeley;

– ‘Science for Everyone: Gaston Tissandier’s Popular Science Books in Late-Nineteenth Century France’, Robert Hendrick..

• **Thursday, 9 April**, 8:30–10 am

‘Reading/Publishing Popular Literature: 20th Century’ Chair: Ellyn Lem, English, University of Illinois:

– ‘A Classic in Your Pocket: The Loeb Library and the Popularization of the Dead Languages in the Twentieth Century’, Kevin B. Sheets, History, University of Virginia;

– ‘Publishing and Marketing a Trade Book in Modern Japan’, Kinko Ito, Sociology, University of Arkansas;

– ‘In the Public Eye: Mystery Readers and the Social Uses of Reading’, Judy Solverg, Government Documents, Gelman Library, George Washington University;

– ‘Reading and Eating: The Transmission of Culture through Cookbooks’, Ellyn Lem.

Web Watch

With the Research Society for Victorian Periodicals (RSVP) joining SHARP in Vancouver (the RSVP conference will follow SHARP on 21–22 July), this issue of *Webwatch* takes a look at the Web resources available for the study of 19th-century British and American periodicals. These are not far to seek. Because these magazines are such a fine tool for teaching students about the period, a number of websites represent the culmination of innovative classroom projects. Students in the 19th-century British History seminar taught by Anthony Wohl at Vassar, for example, created a site devoted to the political cartoons of *PUNCH*, the

Victorian comic weekly. The site features historical analyses of selected cartoons alongside scanned images of the engravings themselves [vassun.vassar.edu/~victstud/punchpage1.html]. Similarly, Michael Hancher’s course at University of Minnesota on illustrated Victorian magazines – a course whose valuable syllabus, with bibliography, is also online at umn.edu/home/mh/prosvip.html – led two of his graduate students to create a site devoted to the *Penny Magazine*, an influential attempt to make learning accessible to working people. Laurie Dickinson and Sarah Wadsworth provide extensive resources for learning more about Charles Knight and his magazine, including a digitized and annotated copy of an early article, ‘The Commercial History of a Penny Magazine’, that makes a fine introduction to important aspects of early 19th-century English printing [english.cla.umn.edu/lkd/pm/PennyMag.html]. As it happens, a non-academic site created by Roger Corrie of the Electronic History Foundation offers online copies of a dozen issues of the *Penny Magazine*, including the first number [www.history.rochester.edu/pennymag/]. Likewise, Corrie’s site devoted to *Godey’s Lady Book* [www.history.rochester.edu/godeys] nicely complements Hope Greenberg’s Godey’s site at the University of Vermont, which offers commentary, tables of contents, and sample illustrations from issues of the magazine from the 1850s. A much more obscure but no less interesting magazine aimed at Victorian women, *The Ladies*, is the subject of Virginia Cope’s engaging site at the University of Virginia [etext.lib.virginia.edu/ladies/ladyhome], which uses excerpts and illustrations to explore aspects of the lives of middle-class Englishwomen of the 1870s.

Steven Jones at Loyola, in the course of his extensive Web-based work on British Romanticism, has put online an introduction to the study of the gift annuals that were such a publishing phenomenon in the 1820s, and has made available the prefaces to the 1828 and 1829 editions of one of the most popular of these, *The Keepsake* [www.uc.edu/depts/english/lm/keepsake.htm]. At the University of Iowa, Kathleen Diffley’s Fall 1997 course on ‘American Literary Magazines of the 19th Century’ has already resulted in a fine website featuring a detailed syllabus, links to online resources, a bulletin board, and a chat room [twist.lib.uiowa.edu/8-247-f97/resources.html]. A linked online index to Iowa’s extensive collection of American periodicals on microfilm, covering magazines ranging from 1741 to 1990, makes for a useful counterpart to Michael Hancher’s checklist of 19th-century British periodicals at Minnesota [umn.edu/home/mh/britper.html]. Similarly, the Scottish Centre for the Book web site [<http://www.pmpc.napier.ac.uk/scob/scob.html>] features in its web resources section a web page dedicated to *Blackwood’s Magazine*, which includes an essay chronicling its history, as well as a bibliography of material available on the magazine and its authors.

Finally, what is perhaps the most ambitious periodical-related site on the Web is at the time of writing, alas, offline – we hope temporarily. This is Jonathan Cutmore’s *Quarterly Review* Project, which aims to provide abstracts of all articles appearing during the editorship of William Gifford (1809-24) while incorporating information about contributors as well as links to related material on the Regency period [infomatique.ie.iol:8080/gifford/overview.htm]. Offering excellent lists of research resources for

literary and historical study, this site, like the others touched on here, represent just a few of the ways in which scholars studying the 19th-century periodical are using the Web to share their enthusiasm and research with students and colleagues alike.

Book Reviews

As John Feather points out in his review, the history of reading is a rapidly expanding field. The inclusion, in this issue, of reviews of four titles on this theme reflects this growth. (Review Editor)

John O. Jordan and Robert L. Patten, eds. *Literature in the Marketplace. Nineteenth-Century British Publishing and Reading Practices.* (Cambridge Studies in Nineteenth-Century Literature and Culture, no. 5). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995, repr. 1996. xiv, 338 p. ill. ISBN 0 521 45247 3 (cloth). \$59.95/£40.00.

James Raven, Helen Small and Naomi Tadmor, eds. *The Practice and Representation of Reading in England.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. xviii, 313 p. ill. ISBN 0 521 48093 0 (cloth). \$54.95/£37.50.

These two collections of papers exemplify the rapid growth of the history of reading as a subject of scholarly investigation in which SHARP itself has had a significant role. Although neither book is a product of a SHARP activity, the contributors to both will be familiar to many readers of SHARP News. It is all the more pertinent therefore that one of the contributors poses this challenge: '...historians of reading should continue asking themselves what theirs is a history of, and what it is for' (Adrian Johns in Raven et al, p. 161). In both books, we can see the beginnings of a response, but it is not yet fully formulated or entirely coherent. The more broadly based of the two books (in which, indeed, this comment appears) perhaps comes the closer of the two to suggesting lines along which Johns's challenge might be faced.

The most striking feature of *The Practice and Representation of Reading in England* is the diversity of academic traditions and theoretical frameworks which are brought to bear on the subject. They range from post-modern textual criticism to the history of science, informed by a diversity of approaches from medieval palaeography to feminism. Individually, the papers are of great interest and distinction, and, for the most part, of the highest standard. In their introduction, the editors convincingly explain this diversity, and themselves provide a fascinating analysis of a discipline still in its formative stage, while taking the view that "the history of reading is also the history of the culture in which it takes place" (21). That alone explains why so many different approaches and topics are legitimate in pursuit of this rather elusive subject, and explains Johns's comment. From this collection, it would seem that the history of reading is concerned with how the reader physically perceives the text, how s/he understands the words of which it consists, how s/he reacts to it, who s/he was, why s/he read, where reading matter came from, and even how those who cannot read can gain access to a written or printed culture.

Some genuinely common themes emerge from all of this. First, the transition from public to private reading was a long and

slow process, and the survival of orality was a significant element in British cultural life at least until the late seventeenth century (and arguably for a century and a half after that). Secondly, we need to understand how the words of a text come together under the influence of the publisher, the editor and even the reader as well as the author. Thirdly, the study and understanding of the availability of books, through bookshops, libraries and private collections, is inseparable from the study of reading itself. Finally, no studies of groups or classes (women or peasants for example) can fully inform us about the reading practices of individuals.

Some conceptual confusion may remain, but there is not a single paper in this book which does not enlighten and inform, and there are several (most notably those by Jardine, Kerrigan, Fox and Johns) which take us into new areas of understanding as well as adding to our knowledge. This book does help us to understand what the history of reading is or at least what it is becoming: the history of how authors communicate to readers through recorded language and images, and of the cultural, economic and political impact of that process.

Literature in the Marketplace is a more conventional collection of essays around the single theme of its subtitle: *Nineteenth-Century British Publishing and Reading Practices*. Indeed, several of the contributions are studies in the history of publishing rather than of reading *per se*, although publishing history is, of course, a crucial element in the study of reading. This is not to detract from their quality, or indeed the value of the book, but precisely because we are on rather more familiar ground there is less sense of intellectual excitement than is provoked by *The Practice and Representation of Reading*. This is perhaps exemplified by the editors' own introductory chapter. Its subtitle 'Publishing history as hypertext' raised hopes and expectations which were somewhat disappointed. The essence of hypertext is that ease with which we can move from one subject to another through a series of connections developed by the information provider. All we have here is little more than an account – interesting and accurate but essentially familiar – of the recent development of the history of the book in general and publishing in particular as an academic discipline. There is little of the thought-provoking reflection which pervades the Raven, Small and Tadmor volume.

Nevertheless, there are some individual contributions of great interest. Stephen Gill's essay on the posthumous history of the Wordsworth copyrights draws some interesting lessons and minor ironies from the consequences of a law which was, to a great extent, a product of the poet's own obsession with the subject in his later years. Jonathan Rose revisits the superficially familiar ground of 'favourite authors' (with Altick as his starting point) but poses some distinctly unfamiliar methodological questions to historians and literary critics who study how readers respond to texts. There are some good studies of periodical literature, a welcome sign that book and journal publishing are rightly seen as part of a whole rather than two separate subjects. And in *Sam Weller's Valentine* J. Hillis Miller opens up some important issues about authorial intention and the understanding of the reader.

Both of these books will find their places on the shelves of libraries, for both contain some excellent work. Both indeed open some new ground, and both illustrate the great and still growing

diversity of this field of study.

John Feather, Loughborough University

Robert DeMaria, Jr. *Samuel Johnson and the Life of Reading.*

Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997. xviii, 270 p. ill. ISBN 0-8018-5479-2 (cloth). \$39.95/£33.00.

Seemingly transparent, reading resembles a fugitive activity, occurring in a specific cultural and political milieu, its contours conditioned by textual practices, technological innovations, and material conditions. Reading varies from reader to reader, changing over time and place, often expressing social trends or psychological dispositions. Analyses of reading based on these factors generally describe particular classes of readers, occasionally in terms of statistical or economic summaries. The record of reading is tantalizing and curious. There are noteworthy autobiographical accounts of reading (Montaigne, Hazlitt, and Sartre, among others). For Paul Valéry, reading is the "third capital event in our life" after learning to see and learning to walk, the means "by which we enter into possession of universal knowledge ... and live an entire existence in an hour" (*Occasions*, 1970, p. 87). In addition there are Virginia Woolf's intriguing essays on readers and reading, and history-memoirs such as that by Alberto Manguel. These and similar texts offer striking, close-up glimpses of readers and reading that complement socio-historical studies, but their angle of vision inevitably lacks the biographical depth of books devoted exclusively to a single reader (usually a well-known writer).

In *Samuel Johnson and the Life of Reading* Robert DeMaria gives us an engaging account of a significant post-Augustinian reader. Johnson had a voracious appetite for conversation and reading and because of his larger-than-life persona he has not lacked appreciative commentators. James Boswell depicted him as an unsurpassed quipster and verbal polemicist. Walter Jackson Bate has shown that Johnson's prose works assure him a permanent place among the essential humanistic moralists in Western literature. Johnson the dictionary-maker is well-known. In *Samuel Johnson & the Impact of Print* (1987) Alvin Kernan offers a portrait of Johnson as a representative figure – a highly visible professional writer – at a point when the role of the author, English copyright law, and printing practices were all emerging in their modern form. Kernan informs us too that Johnson's private library of 3,000 volumes was significantly larger than the libraries of Swift (657), Pope (600-700), and Congreve (659).

Samuel Johnson is a useful model in the context of eighteenth-century English print culture because, in addition to being an important writer, he "was a reader of such profound range and talent that his life of reading touched on virtually every possible aspect of the practice" (p. 220). To get at Johnson-the-reader DeMaria examined Johnson's own books for their marginalia, physical characteristics and condition (Johnson, we learn, could be rough on books and was selective about annotating texts). He surveyed lists of Johnson's library, noted Johnson's reading habits at different points in his life, and culled the record for his comments on books, readers, and reading. DeMaria assesses this material in terms of four primary reading modes. These, in

descending order of seriousness and intellectual focus, are: "hard study" (the Bible and certain classical authors); "perusal" (self-help books and William Laws's *Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life*); "mere reading" (newspapers); and, "curious reading" (light erotica, exotic travel literature, and Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*). Johnson did more "hard study" in his teens and an abundance of unsustained "curious" and "mere" reading throughout his life. But he engaged in all four modes intensely, depending on circumstances and the psychological needs of the moment. For a period, Johnson joined others in the guild of professional writers by engaging in "coterie" reading of neo-Latin poets, but he hated compulsory and professional reading or reading that was socially disengaged. Johnson would not be dutifully bored, and he frequently ransacked books to extract what he wanted and simply ignored the rest.

DeMaria stresses that Samuel Johnson was a reader in constant conflict with himself and with the popular print culture of his day. The author's account of eighteenth century newspaper reading and the rise of popular fiction is especially illuminating. As the owner of a considerable library, Johnson occasionally got caught up in the debate between those whose valuation of books includes their aesthetic properties and others whose exclusive focus is on substance, a cultural tension that DeMaria traces to the Romans. Johnson never fully resolved this particular tension, but he finally came to an ambivalent resolution about his preferred reading style by adopting the "perusal" mode, or a synthesis of desultory reading and "hard study" into purposeful, attentive, yet relatively easy reading (105). Burly Sam Johnson, aggressively proud and frequently awkward, emerges in the course of DeMaria's book as a hero of the spirit. A reader of life, Dr. Johnson bears an uncanny resemblance to Nietzsche's image of the "perfect reader ... a monster of courage and curiosity, also something supple, cunning, cautious, a born adventurer and discoverer" (*Ecce Homo*, 1979, p. 73). Overcoming stretches of poverty, physical infirmities, and mental turbulence, Johnson formed himself through expansive reading into an accomplished writer and a man of deep humanity.

Robert N. Matuozzi, Washington State University

David N. Bell. *What Nuns Read: Books & Libraries in Medieval English Nunneries.* Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1995. 300 p. ISBN 0-87907-558-9 (cloth). \$49.95.

David Bell, Professor of Religious Studies at Memorial University in Newfoundland, has given us another fine contribution to the study of medieval libraries and books. Though at first one might conclude that this is a small, well-focused project that could easily be researched, it is in fact an extraordinarily difficult subject; there is not a single library catalogue extant from an English nunnery and very few extant books that can be traced to any nunnery. It is to Bell's great credit that he has managed, in spite of such a paucity of primary materials, to produce such a rich and valuable study.

The book is divided into two large sections. Part I offers the conclusions of the study, and Part II consists of the data from which those conclusions are drawn. Let us consider Part II first.

The major section is 'A List of Manuscripts and Printed Books from English Nunneries'. A total of 144 manuscripts and 17 printed books are included in this list. They date from the ninth century to the sixteenth (the majority being fourteenth century or later). A little more than half are liturgical volumes. Of the others a small number are Latin, mostly religious works, a smaller number are French, again mostly religious works, but the large majority (over two-thirds) are English, and while again religious works predominate, this group contains many interesting works. Forty-six religious houses (out of a total of 144) are represented. In addition, Bell has included records (cartularies) in his list which brings the total number of houses to 65. When compared to similar lists for men's houses, this seems far too little, but Bell admonishes us not to make too much of these differences, and instead to work with what we have. Indeed he follows his own admonition to great profit. The entries are full of useful information. They are not, as Bell points out, traditional manuscript catalogue entries; their purpose is different, and Bell certainly provides references to traditional descriptions. Entries include the manuscript's current location, its shelfmark, date, contents and provenance, which tends to take up most of the entry as Bell lays out the evidence for including each book in the list. An appendix of cartularies and related documents follows the main sequence of entries. Following that are seven special indices: Works in English; Works in French; Works in Latin (excluding biblical and liturgical material); Biblical and Liturgical Works in Latin; Names Relating to Inscriptions; Incipits; and, Manuscripts. Finally there is a General Index to Part I which considers all of this data in three analytical chapters.

The first chapter considers the cost of books and how they were acquired. The second chapter presents an analysis of the books listed in Part II. In the third chapter, Bell suggests what this data can tell us about the literacy and education of nuns. Throughout, he cites a wide range of secondary sources that many readers will find very useful. He concludes that the educational level of English nuns was somewhat higher than has generally been accepted, and that there were probably more nuns who were authors than has been recognized. He also notes that some nunneries used Anglo-Norman long after it had disappeared from the men's houses. That nuns were not generally literate in Latin is well known, and the high percentage of vernacular texts supports this, though Bell also reminds us that many in the male houses were equally ignorant of Latin. He concludes modestly: "but enough, I think, has been said to demonstrate a need for greater caution in dealing with the questions of libraries, learning, and literacy among later medieval nuns" (p. 79).

David Bell has given us a stimulating and convincing analysis of books and libraries in medieval English nunneries based on the minutiae of evidence found in the books themselves. His method is impeccable and serves as a model for us all.

Richard W. Clement, University of Kansas

A. Gabriel Melendez. *So All is Not Lost: The Poetics of Print in Nuevomexicano Communities, 1834-1958*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1997. xiii, 268 p. ill. ISBN

O-8263-1776-6 (cloth). \$50.00. ISBN 0-8263-1806-1 (paper).\$24.95.

This book is the latest to emerge from the University of New Mexico series on the Nuevomexicano literary heritage Paso por Aqui. It is one of a number of recent works to explore the early efforts of the Mexican-Spanish speaking communities of the Southwestern areas of the United States (the portions carved out of former Spanish domains in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries), to preserve and express their cultural heritage and traditions in face of the influx of Anglo-American based traditions. Writing in English but quoting extensively in Spanish from original source material, A. Gabriel Melendez brings a political and personal fervour to his particular topic, the development and subsequent subsumation of a unique print culture into the Anglo-American dominated 'melting pot' of the American union. Melendez, inspired in part by his family's past role in fostering Nuevomexicano print traditions (his great uncle and grandfather were prominent turn-of-the-century editors and journalists), sets out to trace the movement from oral to print culture traditions in Southwest Nuevomexicano culture. He also provides detailed background information on and analyses of the activities of the 'periodiqueros' or journalists, editors and writers, who became the cultural guardians of Hispanic culture, particularly during the "golden age" of 1880-1935.

During this period, over 1,900 newspapers were founded in over thirty communities in New Mexico, Colorado, Arizona and Texas. The result was a stimulation, preservation and promotion of a wide mixture of cultural expression and identity distinct from the norm. Melendez draws on a variety of theoretical work, including Bakhtin, Hayden White and Robert Darnton's well known "communications circuit", to provide the rationale for his analyses in these areas. He also examines the language used in these journals, noting the use of vernacular idioms and literary styles and patterns adopted from oral culture. One of his main arguments is that these early editors and journalists consciously adopted roles as cultural guardians previously held in oral based Spanish communities by singers, troubadours ('trovadores'), and orators ('oradores'). The editors composed and printed poems, stories and news features using highly stylised language drawn from such oral traditions. This argument at times seems over determined by Melendez's paeans to such stylised forms of textual expression, particularly as one of the difficulties which this work does not adequately address is whether its readers wanted or appreciated such oratorical flourishes, which in other contexts might have been held up as examples of poor journalistic purple prose.

Melendez is to be commended for attempting to shed light on a previously ignored area of print culture studies. He seeks to confound the assertion that Mexican-American cultural forms ceased to exist with the arrival of Anglo-American cultural and political domination in these territories in the mid-nineteenth century. While this is a valid point, which the author addresses quite effectively at times, it proves also to be one of the work's weak points. Melendez's political and cultural agenda at times obscures potentially useful discussion of the early days of Nuevomexicano print. It would have been interesting to explore whether all 'periodiqueros' actively resisted cultural assimilation, which

Melendez is particularly keen to emphasise, or whether, as Melendez hints at but does not follow through on, there were elements of collaboration and cooperation between Mexican and Anglo-American communities, particularly during the early establishment of printing in the 1820s and 1830s, illustrative of a two-way "communications circuit" between two competing cultures. Nevertheless, this book is an important step towards re-evaluating early Southwestern USA print culture history.

David Finkelstein, Napier University

Charles A. Johanningsmeier. *Fiction and the American Literary Marketplace: The Role of Newspaper Syndicates in America, 1860-1900.* (Cambridge Studies in Publishing and Printing History, no. 10). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997. xii, 284 p. ill. ISBN 0-521-49710-8 (cloth). \$57.95/£35.00.

In this volume, Johanningsmeier provides the first systematic account of the operation of fiction syndicates in North America, and their role in the professionalisation of authorship and the commodification of fiction. After outlining the rapid growth of the American periodical publishing industry in the second half of the nineteenth century, Johanningsmeier offers a descriptive history of the rise of the syndicates, which occurred in two stages. Firstly, the appearance of ready print services, most notably that of A.N. Kellogg, offered "patent insides" which provided recycled literary material alongside general news, mainly to smaller rural journals. Secondly, "plate service and galley-proof" syndicates emerged, dedicated to the provision of original short or serialised stories, increasingly by mainstream authors such as Rudyard Kipling or Mark Twain, in the form of stereotype columns or sheets of flimsy. These were sold predominantly to urban newspapers with larger circulations. Here the principal operators were S.S. McClure, Irving Bacheller, and the British-based Tillotson and Sons.

The originality of this study lies not only in its wealth of detail, based on extensive archival research in the USA and Britain, but also in its compelling revisionist argument. In the later chapters Johanningsmeier offers an analysis of the complex economic and ideological relationships emerging between syndicators, authors, editors, and readers, in terms of freedom and control. He argues that the era of the fiction syndicates forms an important but overlooked transitional phase between the gentlemanly publishing of mid-century with its cloth-covered volumes and literary monthlies, and the paperbacks and mass-market magazines of the turn of the century. During this period the size and social range of the novel-reading public expanded considerably, but the divide between quality and popular modes of production and reception had not yet hardened. Johanningsmeier rejects as prejudiced the conventional, uniformly negative view of the syndicators as philistines and exploiters, who were to the author as the factory owner was to his hands. Instead he demonstrates that the agencies were under-capitalised, economically unstable, and thus unable to wield hegemonic power. He argues that the decentralised mode of production of newspaper fiction for a brief period increased the range of outlets available to authors and created "unique sites of interaction" with readers (p. 3). The final chapter explains the

decline of the fiction syndicates after the turn of the century.

Having been given all this it may seem ungrateful to ask for more. The account might perhaps have benefitted from the inclusion of one or two more detailed case studies of particular newspapers or authors. Given the diffuse nature of the process of syndication itself and the fragmentary nature of the surviving evidence, the consistent choice of a general rather than a particular focus makes reading this volume something of a switchback ride. Perhaps also more space could have been devoted to evoking for the reader "the visual and ideological smorgasbord of intertwined texts that made up the American newspaper of the late nineteenth century" (195); some of the illustrations, for example, might have offered typical or striking newspaper pages rather than the syndicators' offices.

It would be absurd rather than ungrateful to have expected Johanningsmeier to have covered the topic of fiction syndication in British provincial and Colonial newspapers as well. His work does, however, note the precedence of those developments and demonstrates how pressing is the need for such a study.

Graham Law, Waseda University

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Sharpend

The start of a New Year, with much to look forward to, including what promises to be a busy conference in Vancouver this summer. Following the trend of the past few years, the sample programme for Sharp '98 looks large and varied. It should be reaching SHARP members in the near future. I hope to report on various initiatives planned for discussion at this conference in the next issue.

In this issue, we feature another course experiment using

Victorian periodicals and print culture as tools for teaching research methods. Dale Trela from Roosevelt University outlines how he cajoled graduate students into tackling the bibliographical, cultural and historical issues surrounding the production of Victorian print media, and notes the difficulties attendant in using such material for such courses. As a useful corollary to this piece, Patrick Leary's Web Watch column highlights various sites dedicated to Victorian print culture that repays visiting. Our book review section also overflows this issue with the results of various readers' forays into publications of the past year. We hope you find them of interest.

Due to printer error, the last issue was sent out with the wrong date, for which much apologies. In order to correct this unfortunate incident, we have decided to reprint the first sheet with the correct date and so cancel the previously printed sheet. You will find the correct one inserted in the middle of this issue. Those of you wishing to maintain your SHARP News in strict bibliographic order may want to replace the offending page with the correct title page. Or you may want to leave it as it is, with the thought that the irregularity will add value to your SHARP News collection in some distant future, perhaps leaving a bibliographic puzzle for book historians to mull over as they ponder the early history of this organisation. So that such puzzles do not become a standard feature of the newsletter, we will be taking steps to ensure that correct headers are present and accounted for in future issues.

Finally, in the next issue I shall feature correspondence received from SHARP News readers over the past few months. If you have any comments to make, please send or Email me before mid-April, and I shall endeavour to include a sampling of your views in this issue.

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