

REVIEWS

David McKitterick, ed., *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain: Volume VI: 1830–1914*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009. xxvi + 808 pp. ISBN 9780521866248. £100/US \$199.

Reviewed by Nathan Garvey

The *Cambridge History of the Book in Britain* series is shaping up as one of the monuments of the emerging discipline of ‘book history’. This, the sixth volume of the series, is the fourth to be published, arriving slightly ahead of the volume covering the immediately preceding period (*Volume V: 1695–1830* [which is also now published]). As in previous volumes, *Volume VI* assembles a distinguished list of scholars to provide an authoritative statement on the book and its contexts in the chosen period. But the nineteenth century—or the slightly shorter span here under examination (the Long Victorian Era?)—is a difficult period to be authoritative about. In the preface to this volume, editor David McKitterick describes the work here as “tentative,” and highlights the fact that scholarship on the later nineteenth century lacks the kind of bibliographical infrastructure that exists for the hand-press period, noting also that much archival material has yet to be analysed, or even quantified. The problem is not one of a lack of surviving evidence—the evidence is copious, perhaps too copious, as much of it remains unassimilated and under-researched. In the age that spawned the concept of mass-production, the book and print in general was produced in vast quantities, and reading was an increasingly ubiquitous experience; the scale and nature of this phenomenal expansion of print culture, however, remains in important respects uncharted.

This book goes quite some way to rectifying this, and in many respects represents a wonderful achievement. It must also be counted as a significant personal milestone for David McKitterick, who besides editing this volume (and being one of the series editors) contributes the introduction and no fewer than four individual chapters. His introduction establishes the volume as an exploration of the history of the book in the liberal sense, as part of a print culture intrinsically linked to wider social and cultural institutions, demonstrating in particular the extent to which the history of the Victorian book is linked to the progress of many other facets of nineteenth-century British economic, social and cultural life. If the introduction sometimes reads like a potpourri overture, skipping through themes in curious sequence, McKitterick excels in showing how an unexpected array of emerging technologies and shifting cultural formations provided publishers with new sources of revenue, fostered new ways of reading, and ultimately redefined the traditional shape of the book.

McKitterick addresses the central question of technological change in the first chapter, “Changes in the Look of the Book.” Circumspect here with the use of the term ‘revolution’—often liberally applied to this era—McKitterick instead

highlights the uneven pace of change, and the graduated and contingent uptake of new technologies. He demonstrates that different sectors of the book trades changed in contrasting ways and at different rates, and shows that the deployment of new technologies was dependent on a variety of cultural, political, and economic factors. The period 1830–1914 emerges here as a time of great energy and experiment (not all of it effective) in book technologies and design, where publishers, printers, paper makers, binders and the host of associated trades were continually striving for better, faster and cheaper ways to produce books—with particular enterprise being devoted to illustrated works and to new methods of producing cheap books. The importance of the illustrated book as a characteristic product of Victorian publishing is further underscored in Michael Twyman’s chapter, “The Illustration Revolution.” The sheer variety of illustrative styles and techniques is well charted here, from wood engraving to the new techniques of photomechanical reproduction, and Twyman highlights how the use of a significant number of different techniques managed to persist simultaneously—sometimes in the same publications. The increasing importance of illustration as decoration is also noted, as is the development of new relationships between text and image. After documenting the ever-increasing ambition shown in the methods of nineteenth-century illustration, Twyman concludes that the Victorian illustrated book “was a major factor in defining publishing in that period, [and] changed the concept of the book for good.”

The third chapter, “The Serial Revolution,” interrogates two related features of Victorian print culture: the rapid and sustained expansion of the periodical press, and the publication of books in parts. Dividing the 1830–1914 era into three smaller periods, authors Graham Law and Robert L. Patten chart the rise and fall of part-issued publications, and the expansion of the market for newspapers and magazines, with particular interest in the stratification of the market into different readerships. The serialisation of fiction, whether in periodicals or parts, is a key focus of this chapter, and particular attention is paid to the careers of authors such as Charles Dickens, and publishers such as G. W. M Reynolds, trailblazers associated with one or both of these practices. In the following chapter on “Authorship,” Patrick Leary and Andrew Nash look at the emergence of writing as a profession, of sorts, in Victorian Britain. Dickens features prominently again here, but as a unique, talismanic figure among Victorian authors. Indeed, Leary and Nash compile a good deal of judiciously deployed evidence to indicate how fragile and unstable the identity of ‘author’ was for the majority of writers in this period. Charting the different kinds of literary, journalistic and general work that Victorian writers engaged in, the authors suggest that the later period saw the development of a more favourable climate for writers—noting increased opportunities in writing for the press, the rise of professional bodies such as the Society of Authors, and an improving copyright situation—but still conclude that very few authors in this period could have subsisted from their writing alone. Catherine Seville’s chapter on “Copyright,” which follows this, charts the various attempts—generally unsuccessful—to reform Britain’s “fragmented and

complicated" copyright law. The international context of British publishing in the nineteenth century emerges strongly here: the inability to negotiate a reciprocal copyright agreement with the United States provided a source of discontent for British publishers and authors throughout the nineteenth century, and the status of publishing in British dominions (especially Canada) provided further complications. Genuine copyright reform, in the form of the 1911 Copyright Act, did not originate from Britain but was largely achieved through international diplomacy.

Stephen Colclough's chapter on "Distribution" examines the roles of the "cultural middlemen" whose labour helped shape a rapidly changing print culture. He pays particular attention to the emergence of large wholesale distributors from the mid-nineteenth century: the business of W. H. Smith is given much attention here, with the Scottish firm of John Menzies providing something of a counterweight. The development of the rail network and improvements in the postal system are shown to be central in what Colclough calls the "continued speeding up of British print culture," and the lengths that publishers and wholesalers went to in their constant quest to make the distribution of print ever faster, cheaper and more efficient are charted in some detail. Perhaps inevitably, there are blind spots: while there is some discussion of the role of 'little' people such as sales "travellers," and "newsboys," there is very little on how the ordinary retail bookshop operated. The rise and fall of the railway bookstall, a business more or less unique to the period (and strongly associated with the initial growth of W. H. Smith), is given substantially more attention than, for example, circulating libraries. But the macro view—the interrelations between the various branches of the trade and their situation within the wider Victorian economy—is well defined. Colclough also collaborates with David Vincent in the chapter on "Reading," which revolves particularly around one of the archetypal figures of print culture scholarship, the "common reader." The authors provide here a mature and nuanced discussion, carefully sifting the evidence relating to reading in Victorian Britain, raising new questions and perspectives on a subject that has often been at the centre of recent historical debates. Colclough and Vincent identify the period as one of steady growth towards the universalisation of the "ability to decode texts"—a phenomenon they closely connect with the spread of state-supervised schooling. The oft-quoted statistics that appear to indicate a remarkable burgeoning of literacy in the nineteenth century are qualified here with a well-thought-out analysis of the limitations of such data. Colclough and Vincent show that while reading was an experience that became more and more pervasive, as a practice it was highly variable and heterogeneous; "reading" emerges here as a blanket term for an array of different practices, even of different concepts.

In the middle of the volume are four chapters dedicated to investigating different "Mass Markets," bearing the subtitles "Religion," "Education," "Children's Books," and "Literature." Michael Ledger-Lomas contributes the very cogent and interesting chapter on religious publishing, illustrating the conflict that arose between the "evangelical, conversionist imperative" of many nineteenth-century religious groups,

and the worldly business of turning a profit. Ledger-Lomas surveys the publishing activities of religious organisations such as the British Foreign Bible Society and the Religious Tract Society, showing the difficulties these organisations had reconciling their evangelical missions with their enormous power in the market. The different forms of religious publishing are discussed in some detail, and the vast scale of the market for religious books—with a capacity for profit equalled only by capacity for controversy—is well delineated. Christopher Stray and Gillian Sutherland's chapter on "Education" revolves mainly around the development of the textbook in the context of an increasingly formal education system. The problem of balancing the interests of rival religious denominations in what was essentially a pluralist society is shown to have been a barrier in the development of the school system, but something of a catalyst for publishing activity; Stray and Sutherland illustrate the close links that developed between different organisations and publishers and particular denominations, and even particular schools. Brian Alderson and Andrea Immel's chapter splits the period into three phases, and surveys the major developments in the publishing of children's books, another style of book that came into its own in the Victorian period. The authors seem to conclude that the British children's book reached a kind of creative peak at the end of the nineteenth century, and at times the argument is more teleological and less subtle than it could be. Simon Eliot and Andrew Nash contribute the chapter on "Literature," which looks, in broad outline, at the variety of published manifestations of fiction, drama and poetry. Significant attention is given to the competitive field of publishing of books in series—the "classic library" beloved of Victorian publishers—and its "canon building" function.

The following three chapters address other kinds of specialist publishing. James A. Secord's chapter on "Science, Technology and Mathematics" explores the relationship between scientific work and publication, investigating the long-standing anxieties over the publication of scientific research and noting particularly the influence of popular print in shaping how scientific knowledge was represented. Victoria Cooper and Dave Russell investigate "Publishing for Leisure," surveying the main categories of book produced mainly for middle-class audiences with increasing leisure time and a burgeoning interest in such subjects as cookery, gardening, sport and travel. McKitterick's chapter on "Publishing for Trades and Professions" shows how the books and periodicals played a central role in solidifying the identity of the Victorian professional, and provided a focal point for various trades. The chapter deals especially with the relationships between publishers and the traditional "learned professions," particularly medicine and law.

The fifteenth and sixteenth chapters are designed as complementary: McKitterick's "Organising Knowledge in Print" leads into Aileen Fyfe's "The Information Revolution." McKitterick's chapter provides a selection of the ways in which information was communicated, looking particularly at the great upsurge of government publishing, the cataloguing practices of libraries and museums, and the publishing activities of learned societies and clubs. A powerful sense is constructed

here of books and periodicals becoming more and more important as the most reliable and efficient means of identifying and comprehending a vast assortment of phenomena—as McKitterick puts it, “the world was organised by print.” Fyfe’s chapter looks more particularly at “popular information,” the ubiquitous publishing of facts great and small—from blue books to train timetables—which reached its characteristic modern form (at least prior to the computer age) in the Victorian era. Dividing the broad term “information,” into the smaller categories of “news,” “general knowledge,” “practical knowledge,” and “statistics,” Fyfe surveys the rapid increase of data collection in nineteenth-century Britain, and, emphasising a corresponding drive to disseminate information to as wide a section of the public as possible, characterises the technological advancements in printing and related fields as intrinsically linked to this “information revolution.” The subject is vast and unwieldy, but this investigation, even though preliminary, is of great value—as Fyfe points out, the study of print as a medium for expressing the endless streams of facts and figures generated by modern life is “an ocean into which scholars have not yet dipped more than a toe.”

The increasingly international character of the British book in the nineteenth century is explored in the chapter “A Place in the World,” co-written by John Barnes, Bill Bell, Rimi B. Chatterjee, Wallace Kirsop, and Michael Winship (each author has contributed a section to this chapter, rather than writing by committee). It is only here, in the seventeenth chapter of this volume, that the complicated geo-economics of British publishing are shown in more or less global context. Bell comments on the growing importance of the colonies as book markets and also as subject-matter for the British book, and examines the relationship between British publishing and various “indigenous” book trades. Winship describes the coming to maturity of the U. S. book trade, its willingness to engage with and innovate in new technologies, and its growth as a book exporter. Barnes traces the development of books on Australia, commenting on the British connections of a number of major Australian writers of the late nineteenth century. Kirsop outlines the history of the distribution of British books in Australia and New Zealand in the nineteenth century, from the consignments of largely unwanted stock and auction sales that dominated before 1850, through to the more organised era of Australian bookselling and the heyday of the “colonial edition” in the late nineteenth century. Finally, Chatterjee writes on the development of the print trades in India, noting particularly the close links between print industry and the spread of elementary education.

The next chapter, McKitterick’s fourth in the volume, details the trade in “second-hand and old books.” Characterising the “appreciation of old books [as] a self-consciously modern occupation,” the chapter charts the development of the second-hand book trade towards increasing importance in the Victorian era, as antiquarian bookselling became more firmly established and increasingly respectable as a business, and related occupations such as book-collecting and bibliography reached maturity. The final two chapters present something of a departure. Simon

Eliot and Richard Freebury present a close analysis of the year 1891, giving a thorough account of various aspects of the British publishing industry in that year. The year chosen lies somewhat in the ebb tide of British empire, but the detailed information provided by Eliot and Freebury reveals the frenetic activity and energy in the British book trades at this time: British publishing by then was virtually an empire of its own. In the final chapter, more keynote address (or apologia) than envoi, William St Clair reflects on the future of book history. His polemical tone feels out of place here—and his call to book historians to show more ambition seems faintly ironic coming as it does at the end of the 800-page sixth volume of the *Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*—but there is merit in his view that the history of the book might profitably widen itself into a history of “mentalities,” where the ideas and beliefs of specific communities and individuals, represented through print and in reading practices, might be historicized and reconstructed in terms of a “political economy of knowledge.”

Inevitably, there are areas of overlap between the chapters—but inconsistency is minimal, and the overlap generally serves to reinforce some key points. The sustained expansion of the periodical and newspaper press, where many new print technologies and distribution techniques were pioneered, was of vast importance to the history of the book proper in the nineteenth century. Print became more and more plentiful as the period wore on, and progressively cheaper and better value: the penny that might buy a rudimentary broadside ballad in 1830 could buy your choice of “classic” novel, or a range of other texts, in the early years of the twentieth century. The market for books was highly stratified, and the more successful publishers tended to exploit its different levels. Print distribution went hand in hand with technological developments and industrial progress in a wide variety of fields, and in turn, the book and the periodical provided a crucial medium for sharing knowledge and information through a dispersed empire.

One might wish for other topics, other chapters to have been included in this volume. While there is a chapter on authorship, there is no corresponding chapter on the many other professions and trades which revolved around the Victorian book. A dedicated chapter on circulating libraries and related institutions might also have been in order, though it is true that a generous amount of information is scattered through the volume, and the preface directs the reader to the complementary series, the *Cambridge History of Libraries in Britain and Ireland*. In the end a great deal of credit must be given to McKitterick for organising this volume so as to give such a well-rounded picture of the constitution and contexts of the Victorian book. A frequent criticism of print culture scholarship is its tendency to extrapolate the wider history of the book from an investigation of literary publishing alone—but if some contributors here occasionally over-rely on the novel, this is balanced by the generous space devoted to other publishing fields—and in general those writing on ‘umbrella’ topics do so with an eye for the sheer variety of Victorian print. Moreover, there are chapters which deal with complicated questions, affecting vast swathes of

historical space, quite brilliantly—Colclough and Vincent’s chapter on reading and Fyfe’s on the “information revolution” spring first to mind—and these deserve to be widely read and discussed in their own right. As a whole, considering its breadth and depth of detailed information, *Volume VI* of the *Cambridge History of the Book in Britain* should remain an essential resource for book historians and general students of the Victorian era alike.

David Allan, *A Nation of Readers. The Lending Library in Georgian England*. London: British Library, 2008. xiii + 281 pp. ISBN: 978 0 7123 4967 3. £45.00.

Reviewed by Patrick Spedding

Allan’s study of lending libraries in Georgian England is as widely and deeply researched as anyone could hope for. He seems to be familiar with every book club, reading society, subscription, circulating and parochial library in every hamlet in England. Allan’s footnotes consist of references to a myriad of manuscript book- and membership-lists, to minutes of meetings of long-defunct clubs and institutions, and to printed catalogues held in long-overlooked libraries and archives. He has very clearly travelled the length and breadth of England and examined every surviving record of collective book ownership.

Allan’s acquaintance with the scholarship in this area is almost as impressive as his familiarity with the primary material. The pioneering scholar of this subject is Paul Kaufman. Allan is generous in his praise of Kaufman. Where he differs in his interpretation of evidence from Kaufman, Richard Altick and others, he does so with respect and caution. Allan appears to be equally familiar with the ever-growing number of detailed studies of clubs and libraries published by an astonishing variety of local-history societies in journals with readerships as limited as their geographical purview.

Allan considers, in successive chapters, “Readers and Reading in Georgian England,” “Book Clubs and Reading Societies,” “The Subscription Libraries,” “The Circulating Libraries,” “Other Institutional Collections”—such as parish and cathedral libraries, civic, literary- and philosophical-society collections—and “Reading and the Making of a Polite Public.” Each chapter is broken up into numbered sections, making the structure of Allan’s narrative admirably clear.

Allan’s thesis is that the consumption of texts was “integral to social standing” (2), but that print runs were short, books were expensive (25, 45, 93) and rare in the eighteenth century (25, 127) and that bookshops, particularly regional ones, kept few books in stock. He discusses the financial resources of readers, and the economies that result from the collective purchase and use of books (32). Allan argues that book clubs—and lending libraries—evolved partly to overcome these difficulties. I do not agree with this thesis and if

so many members of the libraries Allan mentions were rich (32, 33, 35, 45, 210 etc), and had substantial book collections of their own (54), then it is not clear to me how the putative rarity and high price of books can explain their membership of such institutions.

Allan argues more plausibly that readers were also prompted to come together out of a genuine desire for social interaction. Most of the libraries Allan considers were “fundamentally associational both in ethos and in formal structure” (189). Some library structures were dominated by those with serious intellectual or religious interests (50–51, 54), others by those with frivolous or convivial interests (54, 88). Allan argues that all types of associational structures, from book clubs with no permanent collection to substantial lending libraries that endure to this day in fine stone buildings, were far more numerous and diverse than any previous account has suggested. In this he is undoubtedly correct.

The strength of Allan’s book is his account of, and the evidence he provides for, the numerous and diverse libraries he mentions, as well as the “extensive and energetic book borrowing experiences” (217) of the many readers who populate his history. By bringing together a wealth of primary material and scholarship previously known only to a few scholars he has provided a handy reference work that is likely to facilitate both the rapid proliferation of detailed case studies in this area and the writing of competing surveys such as his own.

Since my own shelves and filing cabinets are full of heavily-annotated copies of the books and articles by Kaufman, I ought to have loved Allan’s book. Unfortunately, however, *A Nation of Readers* has a number of serious flaws. I will mention only four of these.

Allan’s subtitle—*The Lending Library in Georgian England*—is simultaneously a misleading and a painfully accurate representation of this book. Allen says, concerning the various club- and institutional-libraries that he examines, that “variation rather than uniformity is the only rule that seems to have been generally observed by the eighteenth century” (172). Not surprisingly, therefore, Allan includes a variety of non-lending libraries in his discussion: book clubs with no permanent library, chained parochial libraries and a variety of non-circulating reference collections. Likewise, though the Georgian period extends from 1714 to 1830, the *vast* bulk of Allan’s book concerns libraries and evidence from the early nineteenth century. Indeed, since the material record seems to become exponentially richer in the years leading up to 1830, this book seems to be much more a study of *The Lending Library in Early Nineteenth-Century England* than in *Georgian England*.

The first of these observations is a mere quibble; and Allan is, in fact, quite consistent in excluding coffee-house libraries, university libraries and the libraries of the Inns of Court, etc., since none of these are *lending* libraries, as such. Likewise, the justification that Allan mounts concerning the second objection is plausible enough: material evidence is so sparse for the eighteenth century that, if we were to ignore the evidence of the early nineteenth century there would be little to say

at all. Neither of these objections would be worth mentioning if it were not for the fact that Allan is *so* very inflexible in his interpretation of the final word of his title that the title as a whole is actually misleading, because Allan is *only* interested in England, not *primarily* England or even Britain, nor England and its colonies, nor England and its neighbours, nor England and its trading partners, nor England and anywhere else at all.

If Allan were to explain or attempt to justify this limitation, other scholars might regret or question his decision, but this unyielding accuracy of interpretation only becomes clear as one anticipates and then misses familiar examples of each category of library. So, for example, Allan rehearses (125–26) a handful of provincial examples of commercial book lending in the early eighteenth century as a prelude to “the sudden rash of circulating libraries that arose in the capital itself during the 1740s” (126). Missing from Allan’s list of examples is the well-known circulating library run by Allan Ramsay in Edinburgh in 1728. By the time the reader finds Allan regretting that “mechanics’ institutes’ library collections have never been explored in their own right” (195) it is clear that Allan *only* means mechanics’ institutes’ in England. Mechanics’ institutes’ library collections elsewhere could be the subject of unremitting academic attention, based on rich archival sources, but this statement would stand.

In fact, Allan regularly regrets the lack of information, and “the grossly uneven distribution of surviving” evidence, concerning different types of libraries (211), yet he totally ignores the evidence for the cultural phenomenon that he is examining if that evidence derives from examples outside of England. He is the proverbial man, with a candle in his hand, cursing the darkness. It is difficult to understand why, while Allan is prepared to gather evidence for what occurred in eighteenth-century York from London in the 1830s, he rarely even bothers to *dismiss* relevant examples from across Hadrian’s Wall (59 n43).

As readers become aware of this parochialism they might be tempted—as I was—to start looking for any mention of anywhere on the face of the globe outside of Allan’s sceptred isle. I only found two; more observing readers might find a few more. But nowhere does Allan consider examples of lending libraries outside of Britain: in British colonies, in Europe, or in North America. The reason seems to be his conviction that London was “the epicentre of English book trade and the point from which fashions and innovations most easily radiated outward across the rest of the country” (126) and England was “at the cutting edge of cultural change during this period” and, as a consequence, is “always a crucial test case” (227). Even when making such claims Allan seems unable to mention by name anywhere else—I cannot say “any other country” since Allan ignores two-thirds of Britain—that such “fashions and innovations” might have originated. This article of faith remains unexamined.

Another problem with this book is the failure of its author to discuss and adequately define any of the sociological categories he uses so frequently. On almost every page

Allan attempts to make sense of evidence for the ownership and consumption of books in terms of individual and collective biography, broad social movements and emerging political philosophies. He discusses the varied characteristics of formal associations—convivial and commercial—in terms of financial resources, class markers, behaviour and aspirations. Allan says of the Liverpool Library, for example, that it “almost immediately became the creature of the polite and respectable professionals, traders and manufacturers who were such an important part of middle-class society in its host community” (66); four pages later he discusses “the obvious attractions of urban subscription libraries to the old professions and propertied classes in particular” (70); a few pages later we are told of a subscription library “supported by a large proportion of the parish’s commercial and professional elite.’ Accordingly it can be classified as unambiguously ‘middle class’ in character” (72). On the same page, Allan discusses “the perceived needs of a strongly urban-focused bourgeoisie, as opposed to landed and titled readers” and an “urban and strongly middle-class form of culture.”

Although Allan does not explain what he means by any of these terms, his working definitions become clearer as the reader continues. The “old professions” are, it seems, the clergy, lawyers and doctors (not prostitutes and thieves); urban professionals are mercantile and industrial in character, etc. But in a study that is at least as much sociological as historical, and concerned with purchasing power and *social* movements such as associationalism, the failure to adopt and maintain a clearly-defined social schema is a serious flaw. (Compare Allan’s work to Joost Kloek, “Reconsidering the Reading Revolution,” *Poetics* 26 (1999) 289–307, and other publications emerging from the Utrecht research group on “Reading Culture”.)

Two other problems that I found with this book are at least partly the responsibility of the publisher: the copy-editing and the physical book itself. *A Nation of Readers* is elegantly printed on a very heavy art-paper; though it is only 280 pages the book weighs 1.1kg (the same as my *Bibliography of Eliza Haywood*, which is three times as long). If *A Nation of Readers* were full of beautiful illustrations then the decision to use a heavy art-paper might well have been justified, but there are only eighteen figures (and eight tables) in the book and these are so poorly reproduced that they could have been reproduced on newsprint (figure 2 is particularly poor).

Finally, *A Nation of Readers* would be a lot easier to read if Allan had been asked to break up some of his more convoluted sentences. Consider the following two examples:

By 1820, after little more than twenty years of operation, this institution too—whose origins lay ironically in some members’ apparent dissatisfaction with the expanded Liverpool Library and their desire to create a more congenial institution of their own, comprising a reference library and newsroom rather than a full circulating collection—had achieved an impressive membership of 502 men, among them several members of the soon-to-be-famous Gladstone family, and was already circulating duplicates to borrowers. (66)

Of seventy-three words in this sentence, only twenty belong to the main clause, twenty-five belong to a secondary clause, and twelve and nine to a further two passing observations. Over a hundred pages later, the reader is still ploughing through such sentences as this:

At Manchester, meanwhile, the Cross Street Chapel Library, established by the Unitarians three years later, informed its readers, many of whom were drawn from the town's mercantile and professional elites—like the Heywood's who were also heavily implicated in the Portico Library—that 'The books will be delivered every Sunday, half an hour after service, both in the morning and in the afternoon.' (179)

Here we have eleven clauses, only four of which constitute the main thread introducing the quotation ("At Manchester ... the Cross Street Chapel Library ... informed its readers ... that ..."). Jammed in between these sentence-fragments are two tangential observations, one of which sports a tangent of its own ("like the Heywoods ..."). Too many such tangles occur throughout the text.

It is a shame that some of these minor observations are not more fully developed, and that others were not placed in appropriate footnotes. Unlike the text, however, the footnotes are spartan, almost gnomic. The reader is often left either wondering exactly what a particular citation is for, or looking for more information. Allan tells us that "James Leverton ... successfully argued that twenty-one important items should be acquired immediately from the London wholesalers" (86), but the footnote (114 n83) does not list any of these titles. Instead, the curious reader is greeted with three references, one of which is for a manuscript minute book. It is not clear whether the other two references contain a list of the items concerned, and only a resident of Truro, Cornwall, has the option of popping down to the Records Office to check the third. A few extra words in these footnotes could save scholars—at least those not resident in Truro—considerable labour.

Given the enormous research involved in producing this study, the richness of the evidence examined, and the importance of this evidence to our field, it is a shame that these issues were not identified and dealt with before publication.

Nathan Garvey, *The Celebrated George Barrington: A Spurious Author, the Book Trade and Botany Bay*. Hordern House, Sydney, 2008. viii + 327 pp. ISBN: 978 1 8755 6754 6 (hardcover). A\$64.00.

Reviewed by Des Cowley

Author Nathan Garvey notes at the outset to his book that while George Barrington was an international celebrity in his own day, and a famous name throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, he had been all but forgotten in recent years.

For much of the twentieth century, historians relegated those books published under Barrington's name to the status of "literary curios," a heady brew of plagiarism and novelistic fancy that provided scant insight, when placed alongside genuine first-hand accounts by Watkin Tench, John Hunter or David Collins, into the convict settlement in New South Wales. Aside from an occasional walk-on part in popular works on Australian history, Barrington primarily remained the preserve of a handful of collectors, from David Scott Mitchell through to Rodney Davidson, intent on amassing comprehensive collections of books and pamphlets relating to the foundation years of the English colony at Port Jackson.

Garvey is to be congratulated, then, for bringing a fresh eye to a well-worn story. While he does not shy away from the obvious task of disentangling the real from the fictional Barrington, Garvey's real interests lie elsewhere. What, for instance, does the Barrington story tell us about European publishing practices in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries? And what, specifically, is the textual relationship between the many books and pamphlets linked to his name?

Garvey's book divides itself neatly into these various investigations. His opening chapter, "The Prince of Pickpockets," provides a brief account of the somewhat shadowy life of George Barrington, drawn from contemporary sources, as distinct from the many myths that have grown up around him. Garvey carefully analyses newspaper reports of Barrington's arrests and trials, sensitive to the bias inherent in popular print media at that time. Is it any wonder that Barrington's tale provided such fodder for publishers and printers, touching as it does upon so many aspects of late eighteenth-century English society: the criminal underworld, the judicial system, the media, prison hulks, convict transportation, Botany Bay?

The real strength of Garvey's book, however, lies in its investigations into the publishing phenomenon that effectively traded on Barrington's popularity with the reading public. Garvey firstly looks at the twenty-five or so works issued between 1790 and the 1840s that purportedly told the life of Barrington. In doing so, Garvey establishes that all editions are variants derived from two foundation works, both published in 1790, within a fortnight of Barrington's final trial. These two distinct and fundamentally divergent biographical texts, issued in London by "Bird and Symonds" and "Kearsley," provided the prototypes from which subsequent biographies freely plundered. Garvey's judicious reading of this corpus of Barrington biographies enables him to create a stemma that distinguishes, at a glance, the textual and printing relationships of each work to the "Bird and Symonds" and "Kearsley" prototypes. Garvey also examines the way in which these biographies conformed to the conventions of eighteenth-century criminal biography, and the process whereby publishers appropriated these texts, refashioning them into inexpensive chapbooks and other printed forms.

Barrington's transportation to Botany Bay in February 1791 could well have brought an end to the English public's fascination with his criminal tale. However, printers and publishers were loath to forgo the profits they had already made on

the strength of his notoriety, and in 1795 the first of Barrington's spurious accounts *A Voyage to New South Wales* made its appearance in London, later followed by the *Sequel to Barrington's Voyage*, issued in 1800, and *The History of New South Wales*, in 1802. Over the next forty years, some fifty books, pamphlets, and chapbooks, published as far a field as Moscow, Stockholm and the United States, were issued carrying Barrington's name. Not even the inconvenient fact of his death in New South Wales in 1804 could stem the tide of new Barrington publications.

Garvey pays close attention to the texts of these works, again creating a stemma of the relationships between the many editions. Though they included fictional sequences, and plagiarized texts as diverse as La Vaillant's African travels and even George Staunton's account of China, the Barrington accounts were predominantly culled from two key sources: for *A Voyage*, from John Hunter, and for the *Sequel*, from David Collins. The *Monthly Review* failed to notice such obvious borrowings, thereby helping legitimize the titles to an eager reading public. These books thus avoided the fate of *The Letters of Fletcher Christian*, also published by Symonds, which was quickly identified as a fraud. Though Garvey is understandably cautious about attributing authorship to the works, given the lack of firm evidence, he does hazard some well-argued assumptions about likely candidates.

The final part of Garvey's book is reserved for his detailed bibliography—by far the most definitive to date—of editions of works by and about Barrington. For each work, Garvey provides a bibliographic description, along with extensive notes, references to Ferguson's *Bibliography of Australia* and other bibliographies, and a guide to available institutional holdings. Where practicable, he has consulted multiple copies of each work, noting minor variants, and other relevant physical evidence, such as the presence of advertisements or original wrappers.

It is inevitable that printed bibliographies begin to go out of date from the moment they are published. In recent weeks, for example, Melbourne antiquarian dealer Douglas Stewart listed an unrecorded 1807 French edition of *Voyage et Transportation du Fameux Barrington*, thereby giving currency to the new bookseller's phrase: "Not in Garvey." In recognition of this inevitability, publisher Hordern House has signaled its intention to maintain "a digital addenda and corrigenda" to ensure Garvey's bibliography remains as up-to-date as possible. As publisher, Hordern House also deserves to be complimented on the fine production qualities of Garvey's book, which is a pleasure both to read and to handle.

It is not possible, in such a brief review as this, to do full justice to Garvey's painstaking research into Barrington's works. His investigation into the printing and publishing industry that yielded these books provides us with new ways of reading a body of work long since deemed by historians "inauthentic source material." Rather than perceiving these works as an "homogenous fraud," Garvey instead views them as a series of events—"acts of fabrication, intellectual transgression and commercial opportunism"—that shed light on "the changing nature of print culture in the late Georgian era."

Leonard S. Marcus, *Minders of Make-Believe: Idealists, Entrepreneurs, and the Shaping of American Children's Literature*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2008. 402 pp. ISBN: 978 0 395 67407 9 (hardcover). US\$28.00.

Reviewed by Rebecca-Anne Do Rozario

Leonard S. Marcus's book on American children's literature initially situates the reader in its seventeenth-century genesis. He traces this genesis to *The New-England Primer*, representing Puritan ideas about education and sin, particularly sins of lying, of which fiction was a prime example. The ongoing didactic and moral debates that preoccupy much discussion of children's literature are thus woven through the history of American children's literature itself.

One of Marcus's many strengths, his own sympathies to such sinful fiction evident in his title, is the depth of social and historical contextualisation he provides for this fledgling publishing industry. The first chapter, for instance, provides a fascinating account of the incredible Isaiah Thomas (1749-1831), who was producing books including *The New-England Primer* while his age was still in single digits, and who on branching out into pro-revolutionary material, escaped to Worcester, Massachusetts "just days before Paul Revere made his famous ride," later becoming an important and very wealthy figure in America (6-7). Thomas's career is just one example of the often exciting histories that intersect with the early years of children's literature in the colonies.

As the book progresses, the accounts of mixed maverick and idealistic personalities and eccentricities give way to a somewhat drier survey of a rising multinational industry. The bulk of the book is concerned with the early twentieth century, where the increasing professionalisation of children's literature highlights the formation of the genre, but the depth achieved here is somewhat countered by the unwieldy late twentieth century, where the ever-expanding scope of children's literature permits only a somewhat rapid account that becomes less distinctively American, particularly with the impact of British author J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series. This is hardly the author's fault. The personalities that developed children's literature begin to fade from the scene in a series of, in effect, obituaries that Marcus provides with legitimate respect.

One of the fascinating aspects of Marcus's history is that each of the first three chapters, while largely dominated by the men who were busy shaping children's literature, ends with an intriguing aside to a female figure. Caroline M. Hewins, Mary Mapes Dodge, and Louise Seaman, respectively, make appearances at the end of these three chapters, cleverly foreshadowing the prevalence of female editors, librarians, booksellers and educators in the fourth chapter, "Sisters in Crisis and in Conflict: The 1930s." The book then comes full circle with men again entering children's publishing in greater numbers in the 1960s. The importance of gender in the industry is obvious. Marcus notes the often appalling professional treatment of early female editors, who had to perform many more administrative tasks in often

substandard office conditions. Assumptions of children's literature as "women's work" problematised early professionalisation in the industry, while at the same time, Marcus notes that in "the 1920s, the identification of juvenile publishing with woman's work gave American women their first entrée into the upper reaches of a profession long regarded as an all-male domain" (78). The tensions created from this paradoxical situation continue to be evident to the present day and are aptly communicated in this book.

The changing nature of America is also reflected in the analysis of the business and reception of American children's literature. Marcus takes substantial space to explore the lack of inclusiveness of books for African-American children and gives a good account of the outrage that accompanied Garth Williams's *The Rabbits' Wedding* (1958), for instance, in which a black and white rabbit were thought to represent a biracial couple. Marcus is less detailed about other cultural or social absences in the body of literature, though he does provide a wonderful description of the political storm that erupted over Munro Leaf and Robert Lawson's *The Story of Ferdinand* (1936). The latter chapters note the increasing trend towards censorship in the 1980s, largely on moral and religious grounds.

Marcus's account of the business itself is extensive, covering not simply the advances in publishing techniques and the process of specialisation that resulted in children's literature departments, beginning with Macmillan's Department of Books for Boys and Girls, but also the activities of book promotion through book fairs, magazines and prizes. He tracks the ever present, often vehement, debates between librarians, publishers and educators over what should be published for child readers, at the conclusion of the book wryly noting that in the *Harry Potter* phenomenon, "The gatekeepers of culture and commerce had been taken by storm. Children, it seemed, had once again made their choice" (315). The wrangling over the "ownership" of children's literature is frequently offset by the authors' and illustrators' own frustrations, such as E. B. White's vexed response to librarian and columnist Anne Carroll Moore's negative assessment of *Stuart Little* (1945).

The underlying theme of *Minders of Make-Believe* is, in the end, the tension between competing calls for didactic and fun books. The latter call benefits from the greater wit, exemplified by Simon & Schuster's early irreverence in promoting *Pat the Bunny*, published in 1940 with the campaign slogan "For Whom the Bell Tolls is magnificent – but it hasn't any bunny in it" (147), and Nancy Larrick's assertion, "If we had faith in the children to choose their own books and revel in the pleasures of reading ... the future could be radiant. The children are ready, but most adults will have to be recycled" (251). Nonetheless, changes in educational and moral thinking have played the greater role in determining what books have been published for American children and these are lucidly covered in the book.

Marcus's book is a pleasure to read. He balances detail with narrative, and first-hand accounts are plentiful, providing energy and colour and insight into the people who developed the body of work that is American children's literature. His book is a wonderful introduction for any scholar investigating the growth of this literature.