

The underlying strength of Dillon's analysis is his sophisticated view of the complex of activities associated with the act of reading. Much of this volume is devoted to a discussion of previous research from many fields, such as cognitive science and psychology, on the act of reading. It is clear that basic technical aspects of reading electronic text, such as image quality and organization of on-screen displays, are as important as print fonts and page formatting are to printed documents. There are many subtle aspects of textuality and reading, such as the ability of readers to grasp and retain the overall structure of a document and an argument, which have been rarely discussed in examinations of reading of either print or electronic text. In Dillon's view, no single discipline, such as cognitive psychology or information retrieval, adequately explains the reading process. Thus, his discussion attempts to draw points of contact between a number of different conceptions of reading or, perhaps more accurately, information consumption.

It is to Dillon's great credit that he sees broad lines of continuity between print and electronic text. The organization of print and electronic reference materials, such as encyclopedias and dictionaries, are rather similar. Dillon suggests that proponents of hypermedia have failed to grasp the degree to which users of print documents rarely read in purely sequential fashion. While it may be slightly less convenient to jump from place to place in a printed document, there are many cues to entice the reader to break the linear order of the printed book, including indexes, tables of contents, foot- and end-notes, not to mention cross-references and other points where authors recall or anticipate related discussions. Finally, Dillon warns us in several places, electronic resources will *not* completely supersede print media at all. It is obvious, he suggests, that few people would want to read a lengthy text of any kind in its electronic rather than print form. Thus, "one should avoid seeing electronic text as a competitor to paper in some form of 'either-or'

challenge for supremacy." The two forms of text will exist as complements to each other, distinguished by the tasks best performed by each medium: "The strengths of the computer will enable cheap storage and rapid access while the intimacy and familiarity of paper will be retained for detailed studying and examination of material."

The degree to which electronic text becomes an important distributive media, alongside print, largely depends on the degree to which electronic text design can make information responsive to the requirements of readers and the demands of particular kinds of textual information.—Mark Olsen, *University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois.*

A Potencie of Life: Books in Society. Ed. Nicolas Barker. London: British Library, 1993. 206p. \$40 (ISBN 0-7123-0287-5).

The title of this collection is from Milton: "Books are not absolutely dead things but doe contain a potencie of life in them to be as active as the soule whose progeny they are." This animistic credo nicely epitomizes a volume which brings together under the editorship of Nicolas Barker an admirable set of articles on the history of the book. Based on lectures given at UCLA in 1986-87, the collection provides a useful introduction to the range of topics and methodologies that coexist under the rubric of "the history of the book." In fact, Barker contends that the history of the book is more than a field of study; it is a genuine discipline in its own right. Thus Barker and his collaborator, Thomas Adams, begin the volume with a founding manifesto, a "new model for the study of the book," one which seeks to provide a more defined and functional conception of the new discipline than Robert Darnton's earlier "communications circuit" did: "Our scheme is designed to encompass all the topics that would properly be included in the history of the book. . . . What we offer is a map." Models are, I suppose, necessary evils; we chafe at their pretensions and confinements but find their

architectures reassuring. Barker and Adams' model is thoughtful and inclusive, and it has a heuristic value that should make it valuable to instructors and their students. Where Darnton's model stressed individuals and communication as a process, the Barker-Adams version emphasizes functions in the material production of "the book." It is, they state, about books rather than communications. One can quibble with its claims, elements, and patterns—I always thought that books were about communications—but this model, like Darnton's, is useful in bringing focus to a still amorphous field of research.

The pity of it is that the volume took so long to appear. Nearly a decade old at this point, Barker and Adams' concerns are part of an earlier conversation on the history of the book, and some of the contributions to the volume have appeared elsewhere. Tom Tanselle's escaped altogether. Nonetheless, better late than never. Crafted by a distinguished group of scholars and librarians from Britain and America, the contributions are uniformly solid. They offer something to specialists and generalists alike, and in brief compass they cover the terrain from the Middle Ages through the nineteenth century, from the written to the printed word, from author to bookseller.

Richard and Mary Rouse document the rise of an organized book trade in late medieval Paris, then the bibliocenter of Europe. Fueled by demand from the new University of Paris and from an emerging market of lay readers, the trade operated according to an increasingly specialized division of labor. Lotte Hellinga reminds us that as the printed word came into its own in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the manuscript codex did not die or disappear. Rather, it was revalued, its roles and functions redefined as a transmitter of texts.

Two contributions offer case studies in the business of the book. John Bidwell's excellent piece of research on the fortunes of the papermaking business in early nineteenth-century America integrates the history of book production

into the larger economic history of the new nation. "Nothing succeeds like success," might well have been the tag for Thomas Adams' inquiry into the eighteenth-century publishing firm of Mount and Page. Acquiring a virtual monopoly of maritime imprints in Britain for over one hundred years, Mount and Page succeeded not because of their bold entrepreneurship but rather because of their conservative approach to a utilitarian market, their care in adding new titles, their acumen in building a stable backlist, and their reluctance to diversify.

Two other contributions are broadly suggestive of different routes into the history of the book. Mirjam Foot offers an enticing menu of approaches to the history of bookbinding and its relationship to the history of the book in general. If you can't tell a book by its cover, you can surely say a lot about it, especially, argues Foot, its relationship to an intended market or reader. One of the most interesting contributions of the history of the book to the study of literature has been its dismantling of the notion of the solitary, monolithic, proprietorial author. W. B. Carnochan notes that before we started hearing funeral orations from France about the "death of the author," scholars working on bibliography and the history of the book had charted the effective "depersonalization" of the notion of authority which printing's division of labor introduced. While an author may write a text, it takes many "authors" to produce a book. At the same time, printing helped foster the mythology of the proprietorial author, creating markets large enough to permit the liberation of the author from a patron and making the author the owner of his labor.

If approached as an introduction to the study of a field—complete with its own paradigm—this volume holds together reasonably well. The one egregious omission is a historiographical overview that would have given the reader a general sense of the evolution of the field over time. The fact that so much has happened in the field since 1986 blunts the urgency that Barker seems to want to impart to the volume, but li-

brarians who either teach the history of the book or who are called on to do occasional presentations to classes on book history, have here a useful collection to consult. Graduate students should find most of its articles suggestive of any number of topics and approaches to help them sort out methods and design their research. More illustrations would have been welcome, and I am sure that many will wonder as to the professional identities of the contributors: they are nowhere identified. Nonetheless, like other volumes in this British Library series, the present one is well worth perusing by anyone interested in the history of the book.—*Michael T. Ryan, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.*

Antiquarian Books: A Companion for Booksellers, Librarians, and Collectors. Ed. Philippa Bernard with Leo Bernard and Angus O'Neill. Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Pr., 1994. 461p. \$79.95 (ISBN 0-8122-3268-2).

There are a great many published aids for booksellers, book collectors, and librarians, guiding them through the maze of buying and selling books, describing and preserving them, calling attention to their most arcane attributes, and otherwise providing aid and comfort to bibliographical tyros as well as to those more seasoned in the art of bibliophily. Others are more specialized in subjects such as bibliography, the use of rare book catalogs, the practice and management of rare book and special collections in libraries, directories of booksellers, book collectors and librarians, and so forth, all claiming some expertise in guiding the knowledgeable and the gullible alike.

The latest contribution to this field is *Antiquarian Books: A Companion for Booksellers, Librarians, and Collectors*. This volume is organized alphabetically with comparatively short entries for most subjects, but with longer, more discursive contributions by a variety of experts for the more important topics, as selected by the editors. For example, there are contributions by Mirjam Foot on fine

bookbinding, John Kerr on book auctions, Anthony Rota on bookselling in a changing world, and H. R. Woudhuysen on bibliography. The coverage is wide-ranging, but with special focus on entries broadly relating to bookbinding, bookplates, and collecting English books on any number of topics.

Several articles are aimed specifically at assisting booksellers as business people, particularly those on cataloging (with a charming section on the "personal touch"), and booksellers as publishers. A piece on computers for booksellers is unhelpful to those hoping to automate their business, take advantage of electronic cataloging, or in any other way adapt to the rapidly changing world of electronic data management and applications to the antiquarian book trade. There is also very little on autographs and manuscripts, and the entries on the broader topics of techniques of book illustration, copy-right, and incunabula, provide adequate, if not authoritative, coverage that a reference guide of this nature might be expected to provide.

The editorial policy concerning selection of entries for repositories and individual collections of rare books (especially those in institutions) seems inconsistently applied. There is, for example, an entry for the Osborne Collection of children's books at the Toronto Public Library, but not for the Opie Collection at the Bodleian Library at Oxford, or the Ball Collection at the Pierpont Morgan Library; there is an entry for the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, but not the Newberry Library in Chicago. The presence of bibliographies, or the lack of same, at the end of entries seems also curiously inconsistent. Readers of the volume will appreciate several useful appendixes, including one for Latin and other foreign place names, an explanation of the system of Roman numerals, a list of the earliest surviving imprints by place, and a selected list of booktrade directories. The proofreading is good, with a minimum number of the inevitable errors.

With the exception of a creditable entry for American first editions (especially