

tive American alternatives to the Western page. "Subversives" abound, including a Canadian artist, Edison del Canto, whose contribution is a mini-artist's book that takes aim at the traditional page and its guardians: "Academic expert culture is a culture of command.... It achieves command and authority by subjecting you to institutionally legitimated intellectual and sociological power structures." Whatever the future of the page, its past and present are anything but innocent to many of the contributors.

However, the page itself is not really the focus of this volume. The concerns of most of the contributors are with the larger issues of print versus digital communication. Whatever overall coherence "the page" may have given this volume was lost as contributors pursued their own agendas. The result is not a reconsideration of the durable page but, rather, a series of slimly connected speculations about the promises and perils of online formats.

Although the volume feels at times ponderously PC and dated, it does contain some useful pieces. Jerome McGann's "Visible and Invisible Books" is a valuable chronicle of how the evolution of digital technologies has forced him to reconsider the very nature and meaning of editing text and image archives. For McGann, technology has a long way to go before it catches up with the needs of those who see texts as more than informational sites. A similar note is struck by Michael Groden recounting his experiences in editing Joyce's *Ulysses* online. Joseph Tabbi has a provocative piece on the potential of digital technology to facilitate the understanding of writing as a procedure (as opposed to a project) and in particular to capture the complicated self-referencing of what he terms "cognitive fictions." Allison Muri provides an interesting diagnostic of those who fear for man's very identity, his humanity, in an age of unembodied communication.

Stoicheff and Taylor launch their volume with a smart and brisk introduction

to the history of the page in the West. If they ever collaborate on *that* topic, I will be sure to make a return visit. Otherwise, the future is best left where it is—ahead of us, somewhere.—*Michael Ryan, University of Pennsylvania.*

Against the Law: Crime, Sharp Practice and the Control of Print. Ed. Robin Myers, Michael Harris, and Giles Mandelbrote. New Castle, Del.: Oak Knoll; London: British Library (*Publishing Pathways*), 2004. 184p. \$45 (ISBN: 158456153X, Oak Knoll); (0712348964, British Library). LC: 2005-544193

The eight essays in this handsomely printed volume constitute the published proceedings of the 26th annual book trade history conference held at the St. Bride Printing Library and Birkbeck College of the University of London. The list of approximately sixty attendees included scholars from England, Wales, France, Italy, and the United States. All these essays are concerned with historical aspects of the book trade and, specifically, its role as one of the gatekeepers to social status, reputation, money, and power. The editors state in their introduction that the contributors of essays "explore the underside of the book trade, revealing the ways in which laws and regulations relating to books have been exploited and manipulated, or evaded and broken, over many centuries."

Christopher de Hamel's "Book Thefts in the Middle Ages" cites examples of medieval book thefts and the measures taken by book owners and monastic librarians to protect their literary property, including curses or anathemas on the person or persons who would steal their books. De Hamel shows that the very fact that book thefts were not uncommon is evidence of an active books market and furthermore that the book trade often was either consciously or unwittingly an accomplice of the thieves, making it easier for thieves to ply their sharp practices, deceptions, and frauds.

Adri K. Offenbergs "The Censorship of Hebrew Books in Sixteenth-Century Italy" focuses on the efforts to control print by the papal authorities, who persecuted Jewish printers and owners of Hebrew books for ideological and religious reasons. Offenbergs, who recently retired as curator of the Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana at the University of Amsterdam, has completed a substantial catalog of the Hebrew incunabula in the British Library. Illustrations accompanying the text include black-and-white photographs of the signatures of five revisers, between 1575 and 1640, on the verso of the final leaf of David ben Joseph Kimhi's *Sefer ha-shorashim* ("Book of roots"—Hebrew dictionary) (1529) and of the title page of the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* of 1564.

Alastair J. Mann's (author of the 2000 book, *The Scottish Book Trade, 1500 to 1720*) "Some Property Is Theft': Copyright Law and Illegal Activity in Early Modern Scotland" highlights the history of copyright in Scotland before the statute of 1710 and "the essential role of print as the conduit of nonconformist religious and political ideas [that] made print culture the focus for illegal activity." Black-and-white illustrations include the title page of the genuine John Forbes's *Aberdeen's True Almanack* of 1685 as contrasted with Robert Sanders's "counterfeit" almanac *A New Prognostication* of 1684; title pages of two Bibles printed by Agnes Campbell in 1707, one version a genuine Edinburgh Bible, the other being a counterfeit London Bible; and the title page of Andro Hart's "pirate" edition of Frances Bacon's *Essaies* of 1614.

Maureen Bell's "Offensive Behaviour in the English Book Trade, 1641–1700" details what "offensive behaviours" meant to the later seventeenth-century authorities, including rudeness, insubordination, deliberate malpractice, and theft.

Helen Berry's (author of the 2003 book, *Gender, Society and Print Culture in Late-Stuart England: The Cultural World of the Athenian Mercury*) "Crimes of Conscience: The Last Will and Testament of John Dun-

ton" explores the sharp practices of the late seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century book trade through the eyes of the bookseller John Dunton. In his detailed will, Dunton pours out his feelings of guilt and his desire to make amends for making profit through the overvaluing of collections. Black-and-white illustrations include a declaration of Dunton's goods at the time of his death, dated 16 March 1732/3, and the first page of his original will, dated 21 June 1711, and the last page of his last will, showing his signature and those of the witnesses.

Nicholas Pickwood's "The History of the False Raised Band" recounts the history and construction of false raised bands. Binders regularly followed the fashion of sewing on false raised bands, a less time-consuming, more profitable practice that gave book owners what they wanted esthetically and binders more profit.

Anthony Hobson's "Guglielmo Libri," tells the tale of the mid-nineteenth-century Count Libri, who abused his official position and scholarly reputation by stealing some of the treasures from French and Italian libraries. Black-and-white illustrations include a photographic print of a lithograph of Libri's portrait by A. N. Noel, and photographs of title pages of various catalogues of Libri's library.

Bill Bell's (general editor of the *History of the Book in Scotland*) "Bound for Botany Bay; or, What Did the Nineteenth-Century Convict Read?" is based on his own research as well that of others on the topic of reading and literacy and their effect on English convicts bound for Australia. He refers to Charles Bateson's observations from *The Convict Ships, 1787–1868* (Glasgow, 1969) that "the average level of literacy on a convict ship was higher than among the free emigrant population of Australia during the period of transportation." In his *Convict Workers: Reinterpreting Australia's Past* (Cambridge, 1988), Stephen Nicholas discovered that "three quarters of the English convicts who arrived in New South Wales could

read and/or write." Bell concludes that for those English convicts who arrived in Australia with a level of education and a valuable trade, a minority would take their places in the highest echelons of the emerging Australian colonial elite. Black-and-white illustrations include a photographic print of convicts boarding the prison ship *York* in Portsmouth Harbor from E. W. Cooke's *Sixty Five Plates of Shipping and Craft* of 1829; photographic prints of the hulk *Justitia* and convicts at work near Woolwich and a team of Woolwich convicts near Blackfriars Bridge (both from *The Malefactor's Register; or, New Newgate and Tyburn Calendar* of 1779); a convict broadside; and convict love tokens.

The front book jacket illustration features a sepia-toned illustration, "The Order of Prayer for the Visitation of Prisoners," from *The Book of Common Prayer* (1843), and the back features a sepia-toned illustration of the royalist author and editor Sir John Birkenhead, who was put in the pillory for libel (1644–1645). Copious endnotes and a detailed index complement the text of the volume, making it useful for any academic library collection, especially libraries with collections on copyright and other legal issues affecting print culture, or as an appropriate text for courses on the same content.—*Plummer Alston Jones Jr., East Carolina University.*