

supports European culture and invention and that advertising (in these media and on the Web) can be problematic, given the naïveté of some users. Jeanneney does not reject public-private partnerships out of hand but clearly is in favor of giving primary control of intellectual capital to public institutions and governments. In a chapter entitled "Hyperpower," Jeanneney links Google's potential dominance with U.S. political hegemony. He comments on the Bush presidency, American support for the death penalty, the invasion of Baghdad and the looting and loss of Iraq's cultural treasures, and the United States' general go-it-alone attitude on issues such as the environment and the international criminal court. Jeanneney is wearing his politics on his sleeve here, I think, but he uses all this to suggest that the United States and Europe are fundamentally different, and that a similar dominance of the Internet by Google will lead to "unilateral control over the thinking of the world," and even censorship. Europe must present some competition to Google and to the dominance of the English language across the globe, not just through digitization but also through the creation of a European search engine.

Another of Jeanneney's prime concerns is Google's "apparent indifference to ... long-term preservation and conservation." This, he says, has long been the mission of public institutions, and Jeanneney challenges them to take on what Google cannot or will not. Google and, by extension, the Internet are experiencing the "arrogance" of all new media, which believe that they will sweep away all that came before. What Jeanneney offers is a "cultural and industrial project" that builds upon the existing strengths of our cultural institutions and the people who work in them. Instead of mass digitization, Jeanneney suggests careful selection of materials; instead of "massive amounts of disorganized information," he proposes the Ariadne's thread of classification of some sort. National libraries, publishers, government funding agencies,

and all book people need to be involved in this effort.

Some readers of this book will not be convinced by Jeanneney. Some readers will fail to see any nuance in his argument. At times, he is too Eurocentric (and perhaps a bit defensive?); at times, this reader wondered whether we have the time, money, and luxury to proceed in the ideal fashion Jeanneney proposes. But Jeanneney's book invites librarians and the library profession to consider the ways in which the Google project has the potential to transform research, reading, and notions of intellectual property for good or ill. Will Google become a version of Borges' "Library of Babel," or make information universally available to those whose call it is to shape information into knowledge?—*Cecile M. Jagodzinski, Indiana University.*

**Markham, Sheila.** *A Book of Booksellers: Conversations with the Antiquarian Book Trade 1991–2003.* 1st pbk. ed. London: Sheila Markham Rare Books; New Castle, Del.: Oak Knoll, 2007. 323p. \$29.95 (ISBN 1584562072). LC 2007-18615.

There is a long tradition of anecdotal histories of British booksellers, a profession which from the beginning seems to have attracted eccentrics in inexhaustible variety. An early specimen of the genre was the autobiographical *Life and Errors of John Dunton, Late Citizen of London*, published in 1705, a gossipy and highly diverting look at the world 300 years ago through the eyes of a widely traveled London bookseller. Recalling his visit to colonial Boston in the 1680s, Dunton by turns praises and lambastes the booksellers, printers, and other merchants he meets there. Typical of Dunton's mixture of praise and invective is his note about Minheer (=Mr.) Brunning, "a Dutch bookseller from Holland":

He never decries a Book, because 'tis not of his own printing; there are some Men that will run down the most Elaborate Pieces, only because they had none of their MID-WIFERY to bring 'em into publick

view, and yet shall give the greatest Encomiums to the most *Nauseous Trash*, when they had the hap to be concern'd in it.

In other older works on the trade, we discover that London booksellers of the 17th and early 18th centuries were as obsessive about their calling as they still are today. In Chambers' *Book of Days* (1862–64), we read this characterization of Dunton's second wife, Sarah: "She seemed to be his first wife in a new edition, corrected and enlarged, or rather, in a new binding."

The genre lives on—as does the profession, the Internet notwithstanding. The present volume is a collection of fifty interviews with mostly English antiquarian booksellers (though Americans and Japanese are also represented) conducted between 1991 and 2003 by Sheila Markham, herself a prominent rare book seller in London. Peculiar anecdotes and unconventional personalities abound in this volume, no less than they do in Dunton's work of three centuries ago. If there were any doubt in the reader's mind as to what is in store upon opening this book, it is dispelled on the first page of the volume's very first interview, a conversation with the curmudgeonly Peter Eaton (1914–1993), one of London's most successful and influential postwar booksellers. Talking about the good old days, when the "pickings" were good and

the life of the bookseller was easy, Eaton recalls a conversation he had with

...the librarian of Rochdale, where they had a statue of Hitler in the town square, and people used to throw books at Hitler for a waste paper drive. This librarian picked out one or two incunabula like that. There were a lot of pickings in those days.

Or in the interview with Norfolk bookseller Simon Gough, who claims he "left school somewhat under a cloud after blowing up the sewers." Later, at another school, Gough "brought the safety curtain down on the Principal's head," for the man "was being an intolerable bore and asking for worse." Can all these stories possibly be true? But more to the point: does it really matter? If they help us capture the personalities of these fifty remarkable individuals? *Si non è vero, è ben trovato*, and weaving a good tale is part of the bookseller's craft. One is reminded of Geraldine McCaughrean's 2001 novel *A Pack of Lies*, in which a mysterious man helping out in an antique shop persuades customers to buy old pieces of junk by embedding them in fascinating stories. It's the stories that the customers take with them as they leave the shop: the artifacts themselves are almost incidental to the aura that surrounds them.

Several of those interviewed considered librarianship at some point—and chose not to pursue it. Anthony Rota (whose 1998 book *Apart from the Text* I reviewed on these pages several years ago) reveals that a couple of library posts have "tempted" him over the years: "I would enjoy building a collection with someone else's money." (Is that what we librarians do?) And apparently Barbara Grigor-Taylor's mother urged her to become a librarian rather than embark on a risky career in the bookselling trade. But "I wouldn't, because I'm a confirmed retailer." Almost everyone interviewed emerges like John Dunton does from his memoirs:

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as impassioned, opinionated, devoted to the trade and, with few exceptions, blessed with narrative abilities and an extraordinary sense of humor. With Eric Moore—founder in 1965 of Eric T. Moore Books in Hitchin, Hertfordshire—readers of these interviews will probably agree “that bookselling is the most humane, sociable, ill-organized, yet absorbing form of commerce to be found anywhere.”

So, is “ill-organized” a distinguishing characteristic of the bookseller profession and even a source of pride? In one of the funniest but also most illuminating interviews of this highly enjoyable volume—Markham’s conversation with Eric Korn, the London bookman once known for his “Remainders” column in *The Times Literary Supplement*—we come to understand that “ill-organized” may in fact be just the self-deprecating way in which the very best booksellers describe how they lead a customer from book to seemingly unrelated book, often based on only a single minor physical or textual detail the books have in common—“minor,” that is, except in the eye of the prospective customer. Korn, asked about the “unusual degree of free association” that seems to characterize his thinking and writing style, suggests that this is “the one advantage of having an undisciplined mind.... If you’re heavily structured ... it’s harder to find profitable cross-fertilization.” Peter Eaton celebrated his own powers of association by creating whimsical exhibits of curiosa in his bookshop, displaying things like “the clock that belonged to the people who put the engine in the boat Shelley drowned in.” (Or was this example just made up?)

Crisscrossing associative filaments link the thousands of books on the bookseller’s shelves in a dense net of intertextuality, a net that may exist solely in the bookseller’s mind and can be only inadequately represented or replaced by catalog searches or even keyword searching in a full-text environment. This may explain, at least in part, the disdain many antiquarian booksellers have for computers and the Internet. It’s not primarily the economic

survival aspect that is at work here. (Though Korn does quip that admitting computers into bookshops is “rather like turkeys cultivating cranberries.”) In the end, it’s the particular kind of wilderness guide service that only a truly knowledgeable bookseller can provide that explains the resistance of the guild to “embrace” change. This refrain is heard throughout Markham’s book. Nigel Burwood, owner of Any Amount of Books on London’s Charing Cross Road, asserts that it “would have been better for the book trade if the Internet had never been invented.” Yet all the same, Burwood and other booksellers interviewed on the pages of this book have leapt into the new environment with both feet, since “because it has been invented, you have to join in.” And they have done so very successfully, while still seeking to attract customers to their shops in the physical world, where many of the most fascinating conversations—and exciting discoveries—still take place.

This book was self-published in a hardbound edition limited to 500 copies in 2004. It may still be available through Sheila Markham’s Web site, but it is hard to find through the usual online ordering channels. The new paperback edition, by contrast, is both available and affordable. Those who want to read the interviews but place no value on owning the book may find many of them at the Sheila Markham Rare Books Web site, including the interviews with Peter Eaton, Eric Korn, Nigel Burwood, and Simon Gough. Though they are unlinked, Google knows they are there; and librarians, using passages quoted in this review, should have no problem finding them. Nothing beats owning the printed book, however, for pulling all of this material together and keeping it conveniently and reliably in one place for a very long time. Physical books are like that.—*Jeffrey Garrett, Northwestern University Library.*

**Wiegand, Shirley A. and Wayne A.**  
**Wiegand.** *Books on Trial: Red Scare in the Heartland.* Norman: University