
In her introductory essay to *Reconstructing the Book*, Maureen Bell writes that it was the intent of this distinguished group of editors to produce a useful book for both teachers and students “by showing what it is to study literature in exactly the way that John has taught his colleagues and students.” The career of John Barnard, Professor of English at the University of Leeds for whom this festschrift is written and to whom the book is dedicated, is being celebrated upon his retirement. And if one reads to the concluding essay, as one should do, one finds an interesting coda to the whole in Christopher Ricks’s inquiry into the transmission of meaning in the word “congratulations,” the variations and permutations possible in the reading of a single word is in many ways indicative of the contents of this text.

This is a thought-provoking book; the essays written variously, as celebration and emendation, while identifying a new area of formal study now finding a place in some larger universities in North America and in the United Kingdom. As Bell writes, this book is intended as both argument for, and demonstration of, the potential of the realignment of literary criticism, textual criticism, and the history of the book. What follows are seventeen essays studying texts chronologically ranged from the seventeenth century to the present day, each piece exploring the premise that new meaning can be gleaned from any given text if one looks at the ways and means that text has been transmitted to the reader. What is particularly attractive is that many of the texts or authors selected here have been much studied in university English department curricula. We encounter Inga-Stina Ewbank on how and why mid-nineteenth century French and German language texts differed from those published in London in “Reading the Brontës Abroad,” Hermione Lee “Re-reading
Elizabeth Bowen," and David Fairer looking at the conversational aspects of Coleridge's *Sonnets from Various Authors*. Part of the point here is the idea that even texts studied to the point of exhaustion can find regeneration in this new field.

*Reconstructing the Book* moves easily through time and texts, through brief and mainly accessible essays, beginning with Lynette Hunter's piece on *Romeo and Juliet*. Hunter's essay contends with the textual differences between each of the early quartos, and what the changes between the quartos and particularly Quarto Four suggest about the intelligence of the editor of that later text. The collection folds back in upon itself neatly with a return to the Bard towards the conclusion with Martin Butler's "Prospero in Cyberspace," an examination of the Peter Greenaway film *Prospero's Book*. As the text moves into the later seventeenth century, Paul Hammond writes on the very different meanings that can be ascribed to Marvell's "To His Coy Mistress" from its first decidedly rough appearance in a 1672 manuscript, and what it was eventually to become in the 1681 Folio collection of Marvell's *Miscellaneous Poems*. Hammond suggests that the emendations that occurred between 1672 and 1681 were part of Marvell's attempt to quell rumours of his homosexuality. In consequence, the published text was modified to soften the misogynistic tone perceived in the manuscript version. That Marvell might have had to edit his text for as politically correct times that we live in presently, makes him appear practically contemporary. Though perhaps Hammond is reading Marvell too much from a present-day perspective.

What if, as James L. West poses in his piece on Theodore Dreiser's private papers, the text was not ready-made for the reader at all? Through editing Dreiser for publication, West found intrinsic dilemmas posed by the author's diaries and unpublished fragments. What can be read into the gap between private and public writing, what questions do the differences in the writing of the diarist and that of the published author give rise to, and how do we recognize, textually and bibliographically, the contributions of an editor or amanuensis to a published version of a text? These are some of the matters grappled with by West. There is much to recommend this book in terms of the issues it raises and the ideas it generates.

This is not to say that the text does not occasionally falter in its transmission. The essay on Muriel Spark's *The Driver's Seat* by Alistair Stead is one of the weaker links in the collection: impenetrable due to its heavy use of critical jargon, it does not facilitate so much
as stall the onward motion. Lynette Hunter’s contribution on *Romeo and Juliet*, noted earlier, requires that the reader have intimate knowledge of the textual differences between Quartos Three and Four. To follow the line of argument at all, one should have both texts laid out nearby for consultation. By the essay’s end, one is only inclined to want to agree with Hunter, if only to escape from the dizzying motion employed throughout the piece as she moves between the evidence supporting her premise in each Quarto.

As *Re-constructing the Book* nears its conclusion, it becomes clear that the contributions of this particular collective are only the beginning. Martin Butler alludes to possibilities for further study by bringing in the idea of cyberspace and the ability of film to make a text look less like a book than a network in which meaning circulates unpredictably. However, Butler limits his use of the concept to the filmic text, leaving the integration of the book with the internet as impetus for another study; in essence, bespeaking the opportunities and anxieties of the new electronic age. There is much to be grateful for in this collection. This new area of study is cause for celebration indeed.

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Le cédérom du *Dictionnaire biographique du Canada (DBC)* contient le texte des 14 volumes parus, avec en prime, les photographies d’environ 700 des 8000 personnages qui figurent dans le *DBC*. Ce cédérom, dont la production a été financée par le Bureau du Canada pour le millénaire, le *National Post*, Hollinger Inc., et Historica, a été expédié gratuitement aux bibliothèques publiques, d’écoles secondaires, de collèges et de CEGEP et d’universités du Canada. Ses possibilités d’interrogation et de recherche en font un véritable événement éditorial dans le domaine de l’histoire du livre et de l’imprimé.

Le cédérom donne accès aux textes anglais et français du *DBC*. La recherche peut se faire dans les deux langues sans que l’usager ne