The history of the twentieth-century book is one bound up in global change. As Marshall McLuhan presciently noted, the twentieth century witnessed a seismic shift from “when business was our culture to one in which culture is our business.” The impact of such a shift was felt in particular by former European colonies such as Canada and Australia, whose late starts in developing indigenous-based print-culture frameworks and structures, and continued dependence on overseas-produced print material, created tensions in national appraisals of cultural worth and concern about viability of local print networks.

The third and final volume of the History of the Book in Canada concludes the project’s epic race to publication. In just three years we have seen the successive issue of three major tomes charting the flow of texts and people across Canada from its infancy to the end of the twentieth century. This final volume picks up where the second volume concluded, thoroughly burrowing through the complex narrative of Canadian print after the conclusion of the First World War through to the protectionist era of the 1970s and 1980s, when Canadian book and print publishing seemed on the verge of disappearing in the face of buyouts by multinational media conglomerates, dominance of large bookstore chains in sales and distribution, and long-term effects of U.S., U.K., and French dominance of Canadian markets.

The story of how Canada belatedly realized the problems inherent in being beholden to external players in the production, marketing,
and selling of its print-culture heritage forms a small but important section in this volume. Major inquiries into the fate of its publishing sector, effected in the early 1970s, made plain what had been known but often ignored by generations of commentators—namely, that Canadian print culture was dominated by and dependent to a great extent on imports from the U.K., the U.S., France, and Belgium. In fact, as one survey demonstrated, by the 1970s in absolute-value terms Canada was the greatest importer of books and pamphlets in the world, buying 9–16% of the world’s total book exports, and also the world’s greatest importer of newspapers and magazines, buying 14–18% of the world’s total in this category. The manner in which the Canadian government responded to this cultural threat, offering cultural subsidies via grants to publishers to support and protect Canadian printing and publishing interests, is a model that other nation states with similar concerns have sought to emulate since.

But this volume does not offer such material in isolation of more general issues and themes. In keeping with its predecessors, it addresses cultural, social, and political trends behind particular classes of Canadian texts, from the didactic to the political and the popular. This is supported by a great deal of empirical evidence, which grounds the material very carefully and solidly. The volume also provides space for evaluating the intersections and links between First-Nations oral traditions and print-culture activity, as for example Blanca Schorcht’s chapter exploring the manner in which aboriginal artists and storytellers adapted oral material for presentation in written form throughout the century, culminating in the “renaissance of Native Literature” that began in the 1960s and came to fruition in the 1980s.

Not neglected either are the reading spaces of Canadians, from public libraries and bookstore-chain espresso bars to “wheat pool libraries” started by farmers in Manitoba and Saskatchewan in the 1920s and 1930s. Amidst the facts, figures, and datasets that underpin the energy and weight of scholarship in this volume are superb, quirky items waiting to waylay the casual reader. I particularly enjoyed encountering the titles stocked by the wheat pool librarians in the Prairie provinces: who could resist the Winnipeg-published An International Treasury of Leftwing Humour (1945), or the co-operative retelling of the “Three Little Pigs,” Porky, Rorky Goes Co-op? In addition there are some delightful visual gems, such as the 1972 image of the flamboyant publisher Jack McClelland, giving away books in Saskatoon, attired in a full-length fur coat. The accompanying
caption casually announces that this was a mild prelude to one of his more outrageous stunts, undertaken in blizzard conditions in March 1980: dressed in a toga, McClelland drove a chariot down Toronto's Yonge Street to promote Sylvia Fraser's *The Emperor's Virgin*; when a broken axle derailed the procession, undaunted he strode the rest of the route reluctantly accompanied by the author and two shivering centurions.

More could be said about the in-depth attention paid to all aspects of print culture, from convincing discussions about the economics of Canadian textual work, to studies on the absorption of print into the activity of other media. Space does not permit further commentary about the strength with which this volume completes the general narrative charted by its predecessors, but in general it is to be commended for offering the reader a complex, multi-layered study of twentieth-century Canadian print culture, vividly told, often compelling, and demonstrative of the complex, multi-disciplinary research work needed to understand the place of books and print in national and international contexts.

In contrast, the latest work from the History of the Book in Australia project takes a different approach to the question of print-culture history and heritage. Focusing on the post-Second-World-War period, the volume draws together material dependent mainly on oral history, personal memoirs, and trade-history publications. The reader is thrown into the deep end from the very start, as there is no introduction of substance to offer an overview on the material to come. Instead, one plunges directly into chapters consisting of case studies on subjects related to the Australian book trade, solicited mainly from key participants in the industry. The tone is anecdotal in nature, reflecting a desire to make this volume of interest to the general reader. A wealth of personal experience is offered in the way of short case-study memoirs and reminiscences of publishing businesses built up or demolished, anecdotes of eccentric and key personnel in Australian publishing history, and impressionistic recollections of changes in business practices over the past half century.

The volume does offer useful entries, on occasion: thus Louise Pollard's survey and history of the founding and survival of Allen and Unwin's Australian branch, established in 1926 and turned into an Australian owned company in 1990, delineates how a branch office was able to become independent of its British origins. Or there is the very personal reflection by the Lonely Planet founder on the start and success of this distinctive travel guide series, begun
in 1972 and built up into an international brand branching out into other media. But symptomatic of this reliance on personal memoir is a lack of reflection and discussion about the wider issues such examples offer. In the latter case, more could have been said about how this Australian firm in particular transformed the travel-guide market, producing unorthodox texts that catered to the new breed of budget-conscious travellers uninterested in traditional tourist material offered by imitators of the famous Baedeker’s guides. Lonely Planet in effect codified a new travel-guide formula, stressing the pleasure of cultural encounters in non-traditional tourist spaces. It would become an extremely successful formula imitated on a global scale, yet the opportunity to bring this to our attention is not taken up by the editors or contributors.

Other lacunae exist, which leaves this volume suffering in comparison to its Canadian counterpart. The volume offers a narrow definition of Australian book history, one concentrated specifically on book publishing and the book trade. Little is said about other areas of print: six pages only are dedicated to Aboriginal publishing, with little on the complex issue of translating or integrating indigenous oral and visual culture into mainstream cultural spaces. There is little extended discussion about cartographic publishing, religious publishing, literary journals, newspaper competition, libraries and archives, or media competitors and their effect on reading habits. The volume ignores the manner in which print was absorbed into or buoyed by use in the visual and aural media of television, radio, and film. One question unanswered: what were the reviving effects of popular film on the fortunes of Australian popular texts? The answer is not available here, though in the latter subject alone one could spend a great deal of time discussing such examples as Nevil Shute’s 1957 nuclear holocaust novel *On The Beach*, which enjoyed a second lease on life on an international level after adaptation into a film starring Gregory Peck and Ava Gardner in 1959, or Miles Franklin’s 1901 classic *My Brilliant Career*, turned into an award-winning film in 1979 that subsequently sparked a major revival in interest in Franklin’s general work.

Things pick up in the sections dedicated to the future of the book, and readers and reading. In these areas the editors and contributors seem to be on firmer ground, excited by the possibilities and challenges of new technology in book publishing, and offering some sophisticated studies on multinational media conglomerates and the repackaging of print within new media contexts. The section on
readers and reading is the most thought out and consistent section of the work, where one sees strong, empirically informed analyses of Australian reading habits and trends mixed in with intensive case studies on contemporary readership and reading material.

One final point to note is the frustration engendered throughout the Australian volume by the lack of footnotes or endnotes to identify sources quoted, and the minimal account of sources cited at the conclusion of most contributions. This does the series a disservice by hindering readers from pursuing material offered for consideration. It suffers in contrast to the more balanced and satisfyingly complete model of inquiry presented by its Canadian counterpart.

DAVID FINKELSTEIN
Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh


This year, new bibliographic reference guides on two of Canada’s most popular and critically acclaimed writers, Alice Munro and Margaret Atwood, have appeared from Scarecrow Press. They will be a boon to young scholars, who might not be aware of how far back the scholarly record goes, but also to veteran researchers because the proliferation is bound to outrun the purview of even the most vigilant scholars.

Because Alice Munro’s preferred genre is the short story, tracking her output is a formidable task. She has not only published in many different periodicals but has revised and republished some pieces (sometimes in translation), and her collections often appear under different titles in the United Kingdom and North America. Moulder and Mazur’s work is painstakingly done, and their bibliography is comprehensive. It covers the years from April 1950, when Munro’s first published story, “The Dimensions of a Shadow,” appeared in Folio, to December 2005, when the New Yorker published “Wenlock Edge.” (Recent Munro works like The View from Castle Rock (2006)