of indexers who worked wholly on the printed word, so we must turn elsewhere for an account of whether indexers will continue to play a role in the emerging electronic universe. This is a matter of considerable concern to the future of the profession, but perhaps Bell feels that the golden age of indexing has long passed. One wishes the book the widest possible audience, though I suspect that many readers will wish to know more about the indexers and their work, but to attempt to present so many lives in such a slim volume encourages a certain partiality and superficiality. What there is for the interested reader is a treasure trove of information about indexers and their habits that is not easily found elsewhere.

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There are many ways to tell the story of the emergence of the idea of modern literature and these days, bolstered by a self-reflexive interest in the shaping influence of the disciplinary formations within which our work is inscribed, we tell them a lot. The complex history of the idea of literature has become a central aspect of our critical debates. Many critics have traced the rise of literature as an aesthetic category to the defeat of a more politically engaged version of literature in the years after the French Revolution. Others link it to the emergence of the broader idea of culture as a realm free from acquisitive desires in an age consumed with getting and spending. Mark Rose has famously traced the rise of Romantic ideas of literary genius back to strategic positions adopted in the copyright trials of the mid-eighteenth century. Still others have focussed on the ways that modern literature evolved as a supplement enabling the emergence of the category of fact-based inquiries that became known as science. What is striking about all of these models is the extent to which they situate the rise of modern literature in a relational history with the various fields with which its modern definition supposedly had nothing in common – politics, commerce, and science.

Mary Poovey’s Genres of the Credit Economy: Mediating Value in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Britain offers a challenging and
very different account that nonetheless builds on these versions in crucial ways. Blending historical depth and theoretical suggestiveness, *Genres of the Credit Economy* offers a fresh instance of Poovey’s interest in what she described in *Making a Social Body* as a study of historical epistemology or “the production of what counts as knowledge at any given time” (3), or, as she put it in *A History of the Modern Fact*, the question of “the organizational principles inherent in the kinds of knowledge by which subjects of the modern world manage our relationships with each other and with society” (xv). Poovey’s various books have insistently focused on a history of invisibilities, not because her topics have been in any way peripheral but, on the contrary, because she has focused our attention on the histories of those cultural formations that have become so central that we have stopped noticing them. *Genres of the Credit Economy* pursues this interest by turning its attention to the ways that the demands of a credit economy as it evolved from the late seventeenth century have shaped our broader cultural self-understanding.

None of this is completely new; critics influenced by the groundbreaking work of J.G.A. Pocock have for a long time emphasized the broad cultural impact of England’s transition to a credit economy. What distinguishes Poovey’s argument is the particular ways that she understands these connections. At the core of *Genres of the Credit Economy* is a single fundamental argument about what Poovey calls “the problematic of representation,” or, as literary critics have come to understand it in a post-Saussurian world, an epistemological instability that applied to both finance and fiction (5). As a result of their mutual implication in this problematic, Poovey suggests, the supposedly very different fields of economics and literature actually have a shared historical location, though this only becomes apparent during times of crisis, whether it be the South Sea Bubble or the subprime mortgage fiasco. Nor is the invisibility of this shared history purely coincidental. In many ways, the central theme of her book is the ideological work that needed to be done in order to render the differences between these fields convincing. “During the course of the eighteenth century, practitioners of both writing about financial matters and imaginative writing began to renounce their shared function” (7). This apparent distinction between fact and fiction served both sides well, underwriting particular forms of cultural authority within each field. Only through this cleavage could money be fully naturalized as something that “seem[ed] to be rather than simply to represent value” (61). Those works that would come to be
known as literature, on the other hand, increasingly aligned their own aesthetic value with a self-conscious awareness of their own fictional character. It is, in other words, ultimately a tale about genre.

The theoretical shift to a primary concern with style rather than content (the ways these different genres either flaunted or concealed their representational nature) as the central criteria of genre difference frees Poovey to pursue unexpected alignments such as her reading of James Steuart’s *Inquiry Into the Principles of Political Economy* alongside Henry Fielding’s *Tom Jones*. Her real interest, however, is less with mid-century novelists such as Fielding and Richardson, by whose time this fact/fiction distinction had largely naturalized itself, than with earlier writers whose work bears the traces of the need to consolidate this new cultural topography. Chief among them is Daniel Defoe, whose novel *Roxana* Poovey reads as “an exercise in the social process of evaluation that made the credit economy work” precisely because it could not yet align itself with the narrative features that would soon become associated with fiction (120). As throughout the book, Poovey’s line of inquiry does not concern itself so much with the substance of Defoe’s writing as the ways that he developed his position on the level of narrative form. Focusing on Defoe’s relatively unknown tale, *A True Relation of the Apparition of One Mrs. Veal the Next Day after her Death to One Mrs. Bargrove at Canterbury, the 8th of September, 1705*, Poovey emphasizes the discursive force of the disjunction between the phrase, “A True Relation,” and the layers of narrative deferral which distance the reader from the actual events.

*Genres of the Credit Economy* offers an ambitious argument about a fundamental historical shift and will doubtless provoke alternative accounts. Its focus on fiction largely sidesteps the many genres such as history, biography, and travel writing whose narratives do not fit this pattern of a growing separation between fact and fiction quite so easily. Eighteenth-century periodical writers often revelled in their confusion (rather than separation) of fact and fiction as a necessary response to the interpretive demands of a credit economy, training readers to be good interpreters of a transactional world where modern notions of value seemed to muddy this distinction. These reservations may help to complicate her central argument, but they will in all likelihood enrich rather than disqualify her version of these changes, nor do they diminish the suggestiveness with which she tracks the evolution of these important forms of knowledge. Blending intense close-readings with much larger accounts of changing social structures, and stylistic accounts of particular texts with detailed materialist assessments of
evolving financial arrangements enables Poovey to retell the story of this history of genres, and of the rise of literature as we have come to know it, in valuable ways. It offers a very different version of literary history, and a very different model of cultural materialism, than one normally sees among book historians today, but it is precisely these differences that will ensure its significance for those critics interested in understanding more clearly the shared and sometimes turbulent history of these apparently distinct cultural phenomena.

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Outside of the privileged university presses of Cambridge and Oxford (founded in 1534 and 1586 respectively), the House of Longman comes closest to being coeval with the development of modern print culture in Britain – a development in which it played no small part. It was founded in 1724 with a purchase from the estate of William Taylor, who had published *Robinson Crusoe* five years earlier: acquiring Taylor’s house in Paternoster Row complete with press, stock in trade, and the famous sign of the ship, the twenty-five-year-old Thomas Longman – first of five by that name – began publishing with a partner as “J. Osborne and T. Longman.” By the end of 1800, Longmans had published, independently or in consortia, “at least 2,797” titles; the house accounted for “12.6 per cent of all books published in England between 1824 and 1827” (144); and by 1989, “worldwide sales of Longman books had reached more than £160 million” (21). A list of “Longmans authors” would include Isaac Watts, Samuel Johnson, William Wordsworth, Robert Southey, Sarah Trimmer, Sir Walter Scott, Thomas Moore, Jane Marcet, Thomas Babington Macaulay, Benjamin Disraeli, Matthew Arnold, Anthony