distinctions between “bad” and “good” questions, non-professional and professional modes of reading, are not nearly as neat as academics insist, and that the “the graduate seminar and the encounter group [ie. book club] threaten to merge rather easily” 177. The final chapter by Sedo, Danielle Fuller, and Claire Squires looks at the relationship between book club readers and publishers through the crucial process of a book club’s decision of what to read next. They study publishers’ marketing practices, websites, and author promotions, and interview booksellers and readers to conclude that publishers’ recognition of the purchasing power of book club members may not be wholly cynical. Instead, they conclude that this may construct a reader-centered publishing model in which book consumption may have an influence on book production.

Reading Communities: from Salons to Cyberspace is an excellent collection of essays on reading groups that builds on the landmark scholarship of Janice Radway and Elizabeth Long to study specific instances of shared reading in relation to gender, genre, and cultural debates over taste and value. My only complaint is that the book’s definition of “community” seems limited to organized, self-recognized, and self-contained reading societies, clubs, and groups, primarily of women reading fiction. The next step in the scholarship will be to analyze other shared reading demographics (the most obvious in terms of organized reading clubs being adolescents and working-class men) or genre-specific reading clubs (such as comic books, mysteries, or non-fiction). As well, we need to see more elastic definitions of reading communities, organized less by self-subscription than by subculture (e.g., what were 1970s punks reading?) or social spaces (e.g., prisons). This is not to diminish the important work of these scholars but to point to the exciting possibilities their research opens up.

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A marketing tool, the book-jacket is part of the bookselling business today. Yet the alternative name, dust-jacket, indicates the original function of the cover: it was protection for the bound book. The vast
majority of even late nineteenth-century books were issued without jackets. Readers who did buy a covered volume would usually have discarded the wrappers. Keeping a book in its jacket would have been the equivalent of permanently keeping your shoes in the shoebox from the store. Jackets were mere packaging. A jacket was an extra, often the medium for publishers’ advertising, though that was more usually printed in the final pages of the book itself or on the endpapers. Nineteenth-century bookbinding has been, as it were, well covered in bibliographies, essays, and more extensive studies, and there are many books and articles on modern book covers. But bibliographers of even twentieth-century subjects have been slow to offer full descriptions of jackets; libraries vary in their policies on preserving jackets; and it is perhaps only the premium placed on fine quality jackets by booksellers and collectors that has drawn wider attention to the importance of the jacket as part of the whole publishing event that a covered book represents. Tanselle clearly indicates the value of the description and analysis of nineteenth-century book-jackets. Indeed he says that the scrutiny and description of jackets is a responsibility for bibliographers if they are to be concerned with the whole book.

The appeal of book-jackets to collectors is obvious. That the book is in its jacket, that its condition is fine, and that it may represent a variant, all add to the thrill of the chase. Finding these early jackets in any condition is rare, if they even existed. Given the passage of time and their perceived ephemeral nature, it is hardly surprising that many have not survived. For scholars of book history the importance of the jacket lies in the light it may throw on the publishing process. Tanselle cites examples of jackets that contain material not in the book proper – illustrations, details of illustrators, blurbs about the text, biographical material on the author, comments by critics, excerpts from reviews, prices, and more. The eight black-and-white plates in this book nicely illustrate his point. They include the 1907 jacket that originated the word, “blurb,” Gelett Burgess’s Are You a Bromide? There is a handsome black-and-white illustration of Theodore Roosevelt’s 1888 Ranch Life and the Hunting Trail. It is an attractively bound book, often illustrated in accounts of early American bookbinding, but rarely found with the jacket that repeats the yellow-and-green binding with cactus, cowboy hat, knife, and lasso.

The other sixteen plates are in colour, illustrating printed wrappings, book-jackets, sheaths, and shelves of covered books. With a few exceptions they are quite plain, simply printed, with titles, authors’ names, and publishers’ logos. The dull, dun colour of
many of these nineteenth-century jackets shows why readers might easily have discarded them to reveal the more attractive binding they covered. The dust-jacket of Tanselle’s book nicely illustrates this. It is a photograph of shelves of the author’s own collection of nineteenth-century jacketed books, the occasional red-and-green standing out sharply in a sea of beiges and browns.

The first half of this book consists of revised versions of three of Tanselle’s previously published articles, “Book-Jackets, Blurbs, and Bibliographers” (1971), “Dust-Jackets, Dealers, and Documentation” (2006), and “Coda: News and the Nineties” (2010). These are well-known, landmark essays in the field, and it is good to have them collected together in this volume. That two of the essays are from the past decade is an indication of the increased importance now attached to the study of book-jackets. As Tanselle says, the three essays give a sense of the development of the field of study. The second half of the book is a list of pre-1901 examples of printed jackets and detachable coverings. There are 1888 entries, a record of every jacket Tanselle has documented since 1969. Although he makes no claim to its comprehensiveness, it is a huge achievement that may well draw out other examples. Of course the story does not end in 1901, and Tanselle points out the importance of the scholarly consciousness and documentation of jackets right up to the present day. As we know, by the late twentieth century jackets had become bright, attractive additions to the physical pleasure of a book. What happens next, in the era of the e-book reader, is not clear. Bibliographers will face new challenges.

The list of examples in the second half of the book is of publishers’ detachable coverings. These include conventional paper book-jackets, envelopes and all-over wrappings, cloth jackets, boxes such as slipcases and boxes with lids, box and paper jackets, and box and cloth jackets. The list is arranged chronologically, beginning with a 1779 atlas in a sheath with a printed label. The oldest illustrated item, plate 9, entry 01.1, is The American Ladies & Gentlemens [sic] Pocket Almanac and Belles Lettres Repository for 1802 and its sheath. It appears to be that dull, dun colour. But overleaf is a brilliantly coloured pair of books and sheaths, plate 10, Lyre des Demoiselles for 1825, which I have to confess I was unable to find in the chronological list, and the 1828 Forget Me Not, entry 28.1. Both have bright covers and printed sheaths, the first a fuchsia pink, the second a striking green.

The items in the list, clearly separated year by year, are then arranged alphabetically by publisher, with place of publication, author, title,
and a range of useful notes about the covers. These include colours, advertisements, the relationship to the binding and title page, location of the copies Tanselle has seen, and recent sale prices. The entries are short, usually only three or four lines, but they are packed with information, and with enough detail to enable a user with a copy in hand to identify differences and similarities. Tanselle’s eye for the importance of detail is clear both here in the list and in the index. There he lists selected features with a note that they are “incompletely indexed”: but who would know! In addition to the features noted above, he includes advertisements on front; back panels with printing; blurbs; copies in print; extra flaps, labels on boxes; openings to allow titles to show through; printing on reverse side; and variants. Other sections of this index include authors, editors, illustrators, and translators; publishers; libraries; collectors; dealers and auction houses; and scholars. The latter, along with the footnotes to the three essays, provide an extensive further reading list on related subjects.

Tanselle breaks new ground in drawing attention to an overlooked aspect of nineteenth-century book production. His book should encourage the collection and analysis of further examples of book-jackets.

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With the publication of his magisterial multi-volume work about Thomas Bewick (1753–1828), Nigel Tattersfield has cemented his reputation as a Bewick scholar par excellence. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine how anyone could know more about the famed wood engraver, but Tattersfield gives credit where credit is due; his acknowledgements pay tribute to Iain Bain, the “doyen of Bewick scholars,” for “indulging and encouraging” his research, and taking responsibility for the publication’s design, layout, and typography. Tapping into an enormous wealth of research material from two archives, Tattersfield uncovers a wealth of biographical and bibliographical details that are new to Bewick scholarship.