

search for library resources instead of using the Internet for academic research requires innovative ideas and a thorough understanding of student culture on the college campus. Academic librarians must reach out to students where they are and assure them that the library is a place where they want to be—to hang out, read their e-mail, drink coffee, and, along the way, gather with classmates to pick out a book or find a few articles for a research paper or project.—*Elizabeth M. Williams, Appalachian State University.*

*The Commonwealth of Books: Essays in Honour of Ian Willison.* Ed. Wallace Kirsop. Victoria, Australia: Monash University, Centre for the Book; New Castle, Del.: Oak Knoll, 2007. 271p. \$70 (ISBN 0732640024).

While there is probably no scholarly labor more difficult than organizing a festschrift and finding a publisher for it, surely reviewing one must rank a close runner-up. Especially when the career of the honoree is broad, diverse, and not readily pigeonholed. Which leads us to the present volume. Ian Willison, now pushing past four score, has been a major, if underappreciated, figure in the world of 20th-century librarianship. From his post in the British Museum and then the British Library, he helped launch and contributed to everything from *Printing and the Mind of Man* (1963 and subsequent editions) to the *Eighteenth Century Short Title Catalogue*. He was and remains an exemplary figure, one who managed to preserve and nurture the best traditions of research librarianship at a time of major transition throughout the profession. He did the impossible: he served institutions and scholars equally well. He knew everyone on both sides of the pond and beyond and never lost his zeal for promoting international projects and partnerships.

Thus it was with a sense of pleasant expectation that I approached the present volume. Some ten years in the making, it includes contributions from major figures in scholarship and librarianship, includ-

ing David McKitterick, J. Paul Hunter, Warwick Gould, Keith Maslen, Simon Eliot, Bernhard Fabian, Terry Belanger, and Wallace Kirsop, among others. Moreover, a "Comité d'honneur" of more than sixty notables presides over the enterprise. Few projects of this ilk could have come with better credentials. Alas, the results are disappointing. Even by festschrift standards, the volume lacks coherence. The contributions are wildly uneven, from the routinely scholarly to the miscellaneous and anecdotal. Each piece seems to have a different implied reader, making the audience for this anthology impossible to define, outside the circle of the honoree's friends and colleagues. In some cases, it is not even clear what the connection with the honoree is.

The best pieces stay close to their author's academic and scholarly turf. Thus, J. Paul Hunter contributes a smart piece on the ways in which "book history" can help reshape to advantage the practices of genre studies of literature in the 18th and 19th centuries. Hunter's observations on the use and abuse of title pages are well worth consulting. Michael Suarez introduces us to the notorious "freethinker" Thomas Woolston, whose running battles with Church and State in 18th-century Britain make for a fascinating case study in the ways in which the Enlightenment triumphed in spite of determined adversaries and zealous prosecutors. Warwick Gould has been working on W.B. Yeats for many years now, and his editorial forays have resulted in some important observations on the nature of texts and the relationship between bibliography and biography, above all about the contributions that the serious study of bibliography can make to the craft of biography.

Three articles look broadly at "book history" and offer their own guidance for future directions. Simon Eliot argues the need for a broader integrating context for book history, one that locates it in a total communications environment and draws on a variety of disciplines and fields. He is particularly concerned to get beyond

national histories of the book and to look more closely at business practices and business history. Bernhard Fabian, by contrast, wants to rehabilitate the 19th-century notion of "Kulturwissenschaft" and create a new synthetic approach to the artifactual legacies that constitute the foundations of book history. (Why the editor chose to publish Fabian's piece in German is an annoying mystery.) Keith Maslen offers an overview of the history and present state of book history in New Zealand.

The anecdotal and autobiographical contributions are a mixed bag. Peter Davison unpacks a long jeremiad about his star-crossed attempt to bring out an edition of Orwell's works. The point of the piece was never clear to me. Robin Alston chronicles his adventures with the *Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature*, a project he promises to finish

within his lifetime. Terry Belanger wisely decides not to settle old scores in his brief review of his years in Columbia's School of Library Service. Wallace Kirsop ends the volume thinking he has to correct a view "we" (?) have of Australians as culturally impoverished bobos and so charts his life as a bibliophile and scholar within the larger context of the ebb and flow of the higher learning Down Under.

*The Commonwealth of Books* seems to have been a difficult and complicated project, which may account for the very disparate nature of its contents. The olio also includes essays by Richard Landon on two unrelated British book collectors, by Sarah Tyacke on archives, and by Graham Shaw on the origins of the British Library's South Asian collections. It would take the genius of Hegel to find the higher unity here.—Michael Ryan, Columbia University.

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