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E-Books, Book History, and Markers of Place
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Abstract:	This article considers how markers of place function differently in the print book ecosystem vs. the e-book ecosystem, using books associated with Australia and Western Australia as a case study. While book historians have mostly failed to engage with e-books as subject matter, they have considered in some detail the way in which markers of place function in the print book ecosystem. By surveying the scholarly output of book historians working with mapping technologies, it is possible to conclude that, in the print book ecosystem, there exist a handful of markers identifying the following categories: places associated with a book's setting, its author, its publication, its purchase, and its marketing and publicity. The latter three markers look substantially different in the e-book ecosystem as compared to the print book ecosystem. Furthermore, in the e-book ecosystem, changes to these three markers can mediate setting and author as markers of place.
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E-Books, Book History, and Markers of Place

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Biography
Dr Per Henningsgaard is a lecturer in professional writing and publishing at Curtin University. Prior to arriving in Perth, he was the director of the master's degree in book publishing at Portland State University in Portland, Oregon. He recently authored a book chapter titled "Types of Publishing Houses" to be included in the forthcoming *Companion to Publishing and Literature*. His research interests include editing and publishing, especially by independent publishers outside London and New York City, even though he used to work for a multinational, educational publisher in New York City.

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This article considers how markers of place function differently in the print book ecosystem vs. the e-book ecosystem, using books associated with Australia and Western Australia as a case study. While book historians have mostly failed to engage with e-books as subject matter, they have considered in some detail the way in which markers of place function in the print book ecosystem. By surveying the scholarly output of book historians working with mapping technologies, it is possible to conclude that, in the print book ecosystem, there exist a handful of markers identifying the following categories: places associated with a book's setting, its author, its publication, its purchase, and its marketing and publicity. The latter three markers look substantially different in the e-book ecosystem as compared to the print book ecosystem. Furthermore, in the e-book ecosystem, changes to these three markers can mediate setting and author as markers of place.

Keywords: e-books, digital publishing, book history, bibliography, maps

In the first and, to date, only article on the subject of e-books that has been published in the pages of the academic journal *Book History* – the standard-bearer for scholarly writing about the history of the book and literary culture – Alan Galey (2012, 214) makes the offhand observation that "bibliography and book history do their work better together than apart." Galey (2012, 214) then explains how he plans to combine these two apparently discrete entities in his article: "We will turn first to an overview of textual scholarship's engagement with digital textuality, and then to the controversy surrounding *The Sentimentalists'* publication." Though he never offers definitions of the terms "bibliography" and "book history," it is clear from his explanation that Galey (2012, 225) understands bibliography as the province of "textual scholars" (a term he frequently employs) engaged in textual criticism, while book history "proceed[s] from an understanding of a book's social context." Certainly, there are alternative ways of understanding the limits of these two terms, such as understanding "book history" to be the more inclusive (and, by default, less specific) term encompassing the practice of bibliography and so much more, but in the interest of expediency this article proceeds on the basis of Galey's implicit definitions.[1]

Later in the same article, "The Enkindling Reciter: E-Books in the Bibliographical Imagination," Galey (2012, 216) writes, "It is fair to say that e-books have caught textual scholars by surprise, with bibliographical studies of e-books remaining in their early stages even in 2012." The article convincingly demonstrates textual scholars' neglect of e-books as subject matter, in spite of the fact that it is notoriously difficult to demonstrate the absence of interest in something. Betraying his focus on bibliography at the expense of book history, however, Galey says nothing of book historians' engagement with e-books as subject matter. Or, virtually nothing: he discusses how *The Late Age of Print: Everyday Book Culture from Consumerism to Control* by Ted Striphas (2009, 22) "admirably achieves its goal of demonstrating the e-book's 'embeddedness within the … history of consumer capitalism and property relations,'" only to point out that "e-books as bibliographical objects remain largely absent from [Striphas's] account" (Galey 2012, 216). Arguably, Galey's failure to say anything of substance about book historians' engagement with e-books as subject matter is emblematic of book historians' mostly absent engagement with the same issue.

Of course, there are notable exceptions, including several chapters in the excellent anthology *From Codex to Hypertext: Reading at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century* (Lang 2012); Andrew Piper's (2012) scholarly memoir *Book Was There: Reading in Electronic Times*; Michael Bhaskar's (2013) *The Content Machine: Towards a Theory of Publishing from the Printing Press to the Digital Network*; and the anthology simply titled *The Unbound Book* (Kircz and van der Weel 2014). This list leaves off a number of sources mentioned in Galey's article, as well as others who have made important contributions to "the recent debates that have energized the editorial theory community" (Kirschenbaum 2002, 19). Matthew G. Kirschenbaum (2002, 19) has this to say of the "recent debates":

> *A selective list of participants in these debates might include D. C. Greetham, Joseph Grigely, Jerome J. McGann, D. F. McKenzie, James McLaverty, Randall McLeod, Peter Shillingsburg, and G. Thomas Tanselle, among the many others who have published in* Studies in Bibliography, TEXT, *and the anthologies that have appeared since the mid-1980s.*

Indeed, the absence of, at the very least, McKenzie's (1986) highly influential *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts* from the above survey of book historians' engagement with e-books as subject matter may, at first glance, appear to border on blasphemy. After all, McKenzie's book has been an aid to many scholars looking to make a case for the "expansion of bibliography across media," including from print books to e-books (van der Weel 2005, 100). When Adriaan van der Weel (2005, 102) makes this case, for example, he quotes directly from McKenzie's (1999, 12) book:

> *The diachronic development from the oral transmission of texts to their manuscript, print and digital transmission forms a thick and continuous strand in the history of human communication. There is no reason why, in studying "texts as recorded forms, and the processes of their transmission," we should suddenly stop when one medium gives way to another.*

However, McKenzie's book – like so many of the sources contributing to "the recent debates that have energized the editorial theory community" – does not use the term "e-

book." It is worth remembering that before Amazon "made its mark on the book industry … with its vast ebook selection and the Kindle ereading device, introduced in 2007," even the *term* "e-book" was unfamiliar to most readers and critics, much less the *object* that term is currently understood to represent (Colbjørnsen 2012, n.p.). Earlier writings (and even much of what has been produced since) are "interested in electronic textuality primarily from a theoretical standpoint," rather than, to adapt Galey's phrase, proceeding from an understanding of an e-book's social context (Kirschenbaum 2002, 43). It is, therefore, largely a matter of timing that excludes so many sources from the above survey of book historians' engagement with e-books as subject matter; only those articles and books published in the last decade or so are even candidates for consideration.

Among the sources that remain, it is worth noting that, with the exception of some of the chapters in the anthology *From Codex to Hypertext*, all of these sources are focused on macro-level developments; they are surveying the entirety of the e-book landscape and, as a consequence, cannot afford the time or space to delve into particular features of this landscape. In the absence of textual scholars and book historians engaging deeply and in detail with the subject of e-books, "other fields have responded to e-book devices by focusing not on texts as mediated artifacts, but on the act of reading and its viability on these devices" (Galey 2012, 215).

This article considers e-books as "mediated artifacts" and, in doing so, acts as a necessary corrective. In this regard, it is similar to Galey's article, though where Galey's article employs research methodologies most often associated with bibliography, this article uses those associated with book history. More specifically, this article considers the way in which markers of place function differently in the print book ecosystem vs. the e-book ecosystem. In order to further focus this examination, only English-language publishing in the last decade or so – during which period it is possible to say that there existed an e-book ecosystem to supplement the preexisting print book ecosystem – will be studied for the way in which markers of place function.

Before proceeding any further, it is perhaps important to consider this term "place." As renowned geographer Yi-Fu Tuan (1977, 54) would have it, place is "humanized space." And arguably the most common way in which space is humanized is by establishing a place's difference relative to other places and/or to the whole. In the absence of this sort of relational and comparative thinking, there is only space, which is an abstract concept – in other words, unhumanized – representing the areas of movement between places. Consequently, places are often thought of as areas with boundaries around.

However, another geographer, Doreen Massey (1994, 154), cautions against exactly this definition of place: "Instead … of thinking of places as areas with boundaries around[,] they can be imagined as articulated moments in networks of social relations and understandings." She goes on to say that place is "formed out of the particular set of social relations which interact at a particular location" (Massey 1994, 168–69). Massey's definition of place is remarkably similar to Canadian sociologist Ralph Matthew's (1983, 17–18) claim that a region can be defined by "a sense of 'identification' or 'consciousness of kind' which the inhabitants of a particular regional area feel for that region and/or for their fellow inhabitants of that region." According to both definitions, a place (or region) is defined by the social relations of those allied with the place (including, most obviously, residents of the place) rather than as an area with boundaries

around. It should be noted that the social relations of these residents "are constructed on a far larger scale than what we happen to define for that moment as the place itself, whether that be a street, or a region or even a continent" (Massey 1994, 154–55). As Massey (1994, 155) notes, "This in turn allows a sense of place which is extroverted, which includes a consciousness of its links with the wider world." Massey sees this connection whereby the social relations of individuals and groups who are allied with other places inform the social relations of those allied with a given place as a net positive – integrating the global and the local. However, another possible – and arguably more common – result is that this connection supports the construction of a set of social relations that define places as areas with boundaries around. In other words, even if it is acknowledged that place is "formed out of the particular set of social relations which interact at a particular location," it is still possible for a particular set of social relations to arrive at its own commonsense (or popular) definition of place as an area with boundaries around. If the particular set of social relations in the remote mining town of Karratha, Western Australia, for example, leads residents (and even nonresidents) to see that place as different from other places in Western Australia and beyond, then their understanding of place is based on the kind of relational and comparative thinking that typifies the definition of places as areas with boundaries around.

When the social relations of those allied with a place give rise to a definition of that place as an area with boundaries around, perhaps the most commonly employed boundaries for this purpose are political boundaries, such as city, state, or national lines, but also neighborhoods and regions, which often serve a political function, as well. Of course, if the author of this article were to venture an observation here about the profound effects of political boundaries, he would not be the first to do so:

> In his analysis of the terms by which nations originally became significant political communities, Benedict Anderson notes that nations are constructed through an imagined organic connection between people, culture, and place. Historically, this imagined organic connection was achieved through the development of maps, museums, and the census, all of which helped delineate a "people," and narrate its cultural and historical connection with the territory claimed by the nation-state. (Cerwonka 2006, 5–6, referencing Anderson 1983)

However, the nation-state is not the only possible "imagined community" (Anderson 1983). Indeed, a powerfully "imagined organic connection between people, culture, and place" can also exist on the levels of the city, state, neighborhood, region, and so forth. Similar to the connection with the nation described above, this connection is "achieved through the development of maps, museums, and the census," but it is enhanced by a variety of other factors, including those as various as "physical geography, regional administration and functional land-use" (Bennett 1984, 79). Also, sports teams can play a significant role in the establishment and reinforcement of a connection between people and place.

To put it as simply as possible: if places are "articulated moments in networks of social relations and understandings," then for the individuals implicated in these "networks of social relations," political boundaries often act as a convenient tool for their articulation. Therefore, this article uses political boundaries – in particular, the national borders of Australia and the borders of the state of Western Australia – as a stand-in for

place. In this context, Australia and Western Australia are exemplary rather than exceptional; they were chosen because they are places with which the author is familiar, and because, like so many other places the author could have chosen, there is a "sense of 'identification' or 'consciousness of kind'" shared by those allied with these places.

But how, then, does a book come to be associated with a place such as Australia or Western Australia? Of course, given this article's previously established definition of place, it should be clear that what this question is designed to uncover is the way in which a book is implicated within the social relations of those allied with Australia and/or Western Australia; after all, it is these social relations that establish place in the first place. Furthermore, with this question, this article approaches the issues that are of vital importance to determining the way in which markers of place function in books – on the way to answering how markers of place function differently in the print book ecosystem vs. the e-book ecosystem. Of course, these two ecosystems are not discrete. As previous research has demonstrated on numerous occasions, the print book ecosystem and the e-book ecosystem overlap: "Our research revealed that as perceived by Australian publishers, the two formats [print and e-book] tend to operate in coexistence, providing mutual support and reinforcement for each other" (Tian and Martin 2010, 72). Nonetheless, the remainder of this article will clearly demonstrate that markers of place function differently in the print book and e-book ecosystems.

While book historians have mostly failed to engage with e-books as subject matter, they have considered in some detail the way in which markers of place function in the print book ecosystem. Among the book historians who have tackled this topic, many of them seem be responding to a call made by Fiona A. Black, Bertrum H. MacDonald, and J. Malcolm W. Black (1998), in the inaugural issue of *Book History*, for "A New Research Method for Book History" (the subtitle of the article in question) that relies on mapping technologies. By surveying the scholarly output of book historians working with mapping technologies, it is possible to conclude that, in the print book ecosystem, there exist a handful of markers of place functioning in clearly differentiated ways. It is also evident, however, that these markers of place share a functional similarity: to implicate a book within the social relations of those allied with a specific place.

Foremost among the ways in which a book is implicated within the social relations of those allied with Australia and/or Western Australia is, of course, the setting of the book in question. The setting of a book is a marker of place that plays a significant role in determining whether or not that book comes to be associated with a place such as Australia or Western Australia. This begs the question, "Is an Australian or Western Australian setting *necessary* to implicate a book within the social relations of those allied with either Australia or Western Australia, thus leading these individuals to consider it a work of Australian or Western Australian literature?" The annual controversy over Australia's most prestigious literary award, the Miles Franklin Literary Award, is relevant here. The terms of the award specify that it should be presented to "the novel of the year of the highest literary merit that presents Australian life in any of its phases" (Trust Company n.d., para. 1). Whether this means a novel must be set in Australia to qualify for the award has been a subject of much debate.[2]

This first marker of place in the print book ecosystem is clearly evident in the scholarly output of book historians working with mapping technologies. Among the many book history projects that address setting as a marker of place, one of the most

ambitious and interesting is a project based in Switzerland titled "A Literary Atlas of Europe" (Ein Literarischer Atlas Europas 2015a). The homepage of the project's website features the following statement: "It all starts with the supposedly simple question: Where is literature set and why there?" (Ein Literarischer Atlas Europas 2015a, "Towards a Geography of Fiction," para. 1). Clearly, this is a project concerned with setting; in particular, it is concerned with "three differently endowed model regions: an Alpine landscape (Lake Lucerne/Gotthard in Switzerland), a coastal border area (North Friesland in Germany), and an urban space (Prague, Czech Republic)" (Ein Literarischer Atlas Europas 2015b, para. 1). By studying works of fiction set in these regions, and which were produced anytime between the mid-18th century and the present, the researchers associated with "A Literary Atlas of Europe" hope to better understand the ways in which a book is implicated within the social relations of those allied with a specific place. Doing so will enable them to answer their aforementioned question: "Why [is a book set] there?"

Other notable book history projects addressing setting as a marker of place include "Palimpsest," a project that "use[s] natural language processing technology, informed by literary scholars' input, in order to text mine literary works set in Edinburgh and to visualise the results in accessible ways" (Osborne n.d., para. 1). One does not have to travel far from Edinburgh to discover another project mapping the settings of books: David Cooper and Ian N. Gregory (2011, 90), in their article "Mapping the English Lake District: A Literary GIS," set out to map "two Lake District texts: Thomas Gray's account of a tour of the region in autumn 1769; and Samuel Taylor Coleridge's documentation of a 9-day walking expedition in August 1802." Clearly, book historians are in agreement that setting functions as one very important marker of place in the print book ecosystem, or they would not be studying it.

Second to setting as a marker that commonly implicates a book within the social relations of those allied with Australia and/or Western Australia, there is the author. However, which place or places matter most in relation to the author – whether it is the author's place of birth, the author's current residence, some arbitrary length of residence by the author, or a mere visit by the author to the place in question – is a subject of some debate. Here is where there arise questions about the status of books by, for example, Peter Carey, who was born and raised in Australia and spent much of his professional life there but for the last two decades has resided in New York, and J. M. Coetzee, who was of course born and raised in South Africa and spent much of his professional life there but has resided in Australia since 2002. Are works by these authors considered examples of Australian literature? And are Robert Drewe's books considered examples of Western Australian literature, though he has not resided in Australia's westernmost state since the 1960s when he was 21 years old?

The most convincing evidence that book historians consider the author to be an important marker of place in the print book ecosystem can be found, not in the form of individual research projects giving rise to journal articles and scholarly books, but rather the construction of entire databases organized around the author as a marker of place. For example, the "definitive virtual research environment and information resource for Australian literary, print, and narrative culture" is a bibliographic database that goes by the name "AustLit" (2002a, "Welcome to AustLit," para. 1). The AustLit (2002d, para. 1, italics added) database bills itself as "a searchable, scholarly source of authoritative

biographical, bibliographic, critical, and production information about *Australian writers and writing*." Of course, in order for AustLit to fulfill this self-prescribed mandate, it is important to understand what exactly is meant by "Australian writers"; the great care and deliberation with which AustLit (2002c, "Who Is an AustLit Author?" para. 1) attends to this matter is readily apparent in the following:

> *AustLit defines "Australian" authors as:*
> - *born in Australia, e.g. Norman Lindsay*
> - *born in Australia and a formative period of their lives spent here, e.g. expatriate authors such as Clive James*
> - *born elsewhere but Australian by "adoption," e.g. Ethel Turner and May Gibbs*
> - *born elsewhere but now resident in Australia, e.g. 李明晏 and Colin Thompson*

The author is clearly the foundational unit of the AustLit database. Moreover, AustLit, which is the brainchild of book historians, bibliographers, and librarians, is premised on the belief that the author is an important marker of place. There are even specialist datasets that "make use of the AustLit infrastructure to organise, analyse and present research findings" on the basis of geographical regions within the larger geographical region (i.e. Australia) that organizes the database (AustLit 2002b, "Research Projects in AustLit," para. 2). These datasets include "South Australian Women Writers," "Northern Territory Literature," "North Western Australian Literature," "Western Australian Literature," "Writing the Tropical North," and "Tasmanian Literature" (AustLit 2002b, "Regional Literature and Writers"). It should be clear from this example that book historians consider the author to be an important marker of place in the print book ecosystem, to the extent that an author can implicate a book within the social relations of those allied with Australia and/or Western Australia. Furthermore, book historians working with mapping technologies make abundant use of AustLit and similar databases to produce the datasets underpinning important scholarly analysis such as that found in Jason Ensor's (2008) "Reprints, International Markets, and Local Literary Taste: New Empiricism and Australian Literature."

It is worth noting at this juncture that, in addition to book historians attending to these two markers – setting and author – that commonly implicate a book within the social relations of those allied with a specific place, there is a great deal of so-called "popular" interest in these markers, as well. There are, for example, many maps designed for a "popular" audience that use a book's setting as a marker of place, including "A Literary Map of Manhattan" created by Randy Cohen and Nigel Holmes (2005) for *The New York Times Book Review*, and "Infinite Atlas," William Beutler's (2012, "Infinite Atlas," para. 1) "Google Maps-based guide to 600+ global locations" described in David Foster Wallace's novel *Infinite Jest*. There are, furthermore, many maps designed for a "popular" audience that use the author as a marker of place. For example, Edinburgh, the world's first UNESCO City of Literature, produced an interactive literary map highlighting "writers' homes and haunts," alongside literary monuments and other places of interest (Edinburgh City of Literature 2013, para. 1). The "Oregon Literary Map" (n.d.) also connects author and place.

Following on from these two markers – setting and author – that commonly implicate a book within the social relations of those allied with a specific place, there is a

huge drop in "popular" interest in the remaining markers of place. Among these are the places associated with a book's publication, its purchase, and its marketing and publicity. The "popular" perception seems to be that these markers have significantly less ability to determine whether or not a book comes to be associated with a place such as Australia or Western Australia, as evidenced by the complete absence of maps designed for a "popular" audience that display the places associated with a book's publication, its purchase, or its marketing and publicity. The same cannot be said, however, for book historians working with mapping technologies. Indeed, there seems to be at least equal interest among book historians in these three markers of place as compared to the aforementioned markers.

In surveying the scholarly output of book historians working with mapping technologies, it quickly becomes apparent that there is an abundance of book history projects addressing publication as a marker of place in the print book ecosystem. For example, "The Atlas of Early Printing" documents the printing trade in Europe in the second half of the 15th century via an interactive website, which was created by Greg Prickman (2013) with support from the University of Iowa Libraries. "Geography of the London Ballad Trade, 1500–1700," by Eric Nebeker (2011) in association with the English Broadside Ballad Archive at the University of California at Santa Barbara, is another excellent example that shows the locations of printers who produced ballads in the early modern period.

There are, furthermore, several projects that combine an interest in publication as a marker of place with an interest in purchase as a marker of place. For example, "The Atlas of the Rhode Island Book Trade in the Eighteenth Century" is a carefully constructed research project that "attempts to map as many members of the book trade as possible – printers, booksellers, and many more"; this project is being undertaken by Jordan Goffin (n.d., "Background," para. 1) with support from the Rhode Island Historical Society. Arguably the most sophisticated of all the examples surveyed in this article is "The French Book Trade in Enlightenment Europe, 1769–1794: Mapping the Trade of the Société Typographique de Neuchâtel," which documents both publication and purchase as markers of place in relation to the activities of the Swiss publisher and bookseller (Burrows 2014b). In the wake of project leader Simon Burrows (2014c, para. 2) moving from the University of Leeds to the University of Western Sydney, the "project and database are now owned and hosted by the University of Western Sydney" and are set to undergo a dramatic expansion.

As part of the planned expansion of "The French Book Trade in Enlightenment Europe" (FBTEE) project, "a series of carefully selected further datasets drawn from other archives will be added to the FBTEE database across the next few years" (Burrows 2014a, para. 12). Among the benefits of these "further datasets" is that they will supplement the project's current use of publication and purchase as markers of place with a third marker of place: marketing and publicity. Burrows (personal communication, May 23, 2014) indicated that, in its expanded form, the project would show the locations of the periodicals in which books were advertised and reviewed.

Having established, via a survey of the scholarly output of book historians working with mapping technologies, five clearly differentiated ways in which markers of place function in the print book ecosystem, it is possible to now ask, "What becomes of these markers of place in the e-book ecosystem?" Clearly, some of the markers that in the

print book ecosystem play a significant role in determining whether or not a book comes to be associated with a place such as Australia or Western Australia will continue to operate in a similar fashion in the e-book ecosystem. For example, in the print book ecosystem, the setting of a book plays a significant role in determining whether or not that book comes to be associated with a specific place, and there is no reason to expect this to change in the e-book ecosystem. Indeed, if one considers the many book history projects addressing setting as a marker of place, such as "A Literary Atlas of Europe," "Palimpsest," and "Mapping the English Lake District: A Literary GIS," there is nothing about these projects that limits them to the print book ecosystem; the researchers behind these projects could just as easily (and, in some cases, more easily) generate their spatial data from e-book versions of the books in question as from print versions.

Something similar can be said for the author as a marker of place: authors in the print book ecosystem are regularly associated with their place of birth or residence, and there is nothing intrinsic to the e-book ecosystem that would seem to interfere with this marker of place. After all, the author biography that appears in the print version of a book (usually on the back cover of the book, though sometimes as part of the front or back matter, or on a jacket flap) is typically the same one that is used in the e-book version.

However, this is where things start to get complicated. In order to fully understand the way in which authors function as markers of place in the e-book ecosystem, it is necessary to first think about the remaining three markers that commonly implicate a book within the social relations of those allied with a specific place. These three markers – that is, the places associated with a book's publication, its purchase, and its marketing and publicity – look substantially different in the e-book ecosystem as compared to the print book ecosystem. For example, the place associated with the publication of an e-book is both more difficult to establish as compared to a print book and less relevant to the e-book's future prospects. Additionally, e-books are not typically purchased from a bricks-and-mortar bookstore with a physical address; instead, they are sold via deliberately placeless, virtual storefronts. Marketing and publicity in the e-book ecosystem charts a similar trajectory: migrating from, for example, print newspapers whose very name ties them to a place, to websites organized around shared interests rather than location.

David Wright (2012, 110) observes, "Changes in technologies of production and distribution are themselves likely to imply changes in the nature of relationships between books, their producers, and their readers." That phrase – "changes in technologies of production and distribution" – casts a wide enough net to encompass the acts of publication, purchase, and marketing and publicity. Since these acts have been shown to function as markers of place very differently in the e-book ecosystem as compared to the print book ecosystem, according to Wright this difference is "likely to imply changes in the nature of relationships between books, their producers, and their readers." One such change in "the nature of relationships between books … and their readers" is that readers' relationship to markers of place in their books looks very different in the e-book ecosystem as compared to the print book ecosystem. Indeed, one could say that the e-book ecosystem changes so dramatically the way in which a book is implicated within the social relations of those allied with a specific place that it threatens the very possibility of books being associated with places such as Australia or Western Australia.

Of course, in order to justify this assertion, it is necessary to reckon with setting

and author – that is, the two markers that in the print book ecosystem play a significant role in determining whether or not a book comes to be associated with a place such as Australia or Western Australia, and which it was previously asserted will continue to operate in a similar fashion in the e-book ecosystem. The author biography, which appears in both the print version of a book and the e-book version, was used as the primary evidence for this assertion that authors in the e-book ecosystem will continue to be associated with their place of birth or residence. In addition to the author biography, however, there are other important paratexts in which the author functions as a marker of place. Of course, any respectable definition of the term "paratext" begins by acknowledging that

> *a good deal of a book's meaning is produced by what the French critic Gérard Genette calls paratext: that is, the "heterogenous [sic] group of practices and devices" that mediate a book to its readers, ensuring its "presence in the world," its "reception" and "consumption." These comprise both peritext (the devices located inside the book, such as chapter titles, prefaces and epigraphs) and epitext (the devices located in the physical and social space outside the book, generally with the help of the media and the web, such as interviews, promotional dossiers, and weblogs). (Dixon 2005, 246, quoting Genette 1997, 1–5)*

While the author biography as an example of peritext will most likely remain the same in the print and e-book versions of a given book, there is a great deal of diversity in the epitext that circulates in the print book ecosystem as compared to the e-book ecosystem. Moreover, the way in which markers of place function in the epitexts that circulate in these two ecosystems is very different. It is hardly surprising that epitexts featuring markers of place associated with a book's publication, its purchase, and its marketing and publicity function differently in the two ecosystems. But so, too, do epitexts featuring setting and author as markers of place because the three aforementioned markers mediate them. For example, a prospective reader is unlikely to know that an author is local unless the marketing and publicity surrounding the book's publication communicates this information, or the bookseller displays the book in a particular way that says, "Look here! This is a book by a local author." Both the author biography that appears on the back cover of the book and the way in which the bookseller displays the book are examples of paratexts, but their relative influence can differ dramatically, as Genette (1997, 9) explains in the following excerpt:

> *Of these contextual factors, certain paratextual elements are actually addressed to (which does not mean they reach) the public in general – that is, every Tom, Dick, and Harry. This is the case ... of the title or of an interview. Other paratextual elements are addressed (with the same reservation) more specifically or more restrictively only to readers of the text. This is typically the case of the preface.*

Because the author biography that appears on the back cover of the book is addressed more restrictively than the way in which the bookseller displays the book (a prospective reader has to pick up the book in order to interact with the former, whereas the latter is plainly evident at a distance), this explains how the markers of place associated with a book's publication, its purchase, and its marketing and publicity can mediate setting and author as markers of place.

In the context of an e-bookstore, of course, the way in which the bookseller displays the book is very different from a bricks-and-mortar bookstore. Many of these differences are covered by what scholars are calling "new forms of consuming practice" (Wright 2012, 113). A key moment identified by several of these scholars is "the shift from word-of-mouth recommendations to algorithms recognized by software, in which criteria of similarity and difference – the forms of 'value' identified and exchanged by reviewers – are coded and automated" (Wright 2012, 113). Julian Pinder (2012, 76), a contributor to the anthology *From Codex to Hypertext*, elaborates on the dynamics of this shift:

> *Online recommendations and algorithms are post-filters: they rank and order what is already out there, and thereby channel and amplify consumer behavior rather than trying to predict it (or even to preempt it). In contrast, other sources of recommendation – such as editors, advertisers, managers of physical bookstores, and even academics setting reading lists – act as pre-filters, predicting and delineating what the market will be. ... We are currently undergoing a shift in the underlying structure of the market from one shaped by the emblematic figure of the gatekeeper (who predicts taste) to that of the adviser (who measures it).*

Pinder's observations (and those of other scholars including, most notably, Chris Anderson [2006]) about the changing nature of the literary field are not specific to the e-book ecosystem, but they are further enhanced in this environment. In the e-book ecosystem, as compared to the print book ecosystem, "post-filters" exert an even greater influence as "online recommendations and algorithms" mediate absolutely every interaction.

These "new forms of consuming practice," in which "the emblematic figure of the gatekeeper (who predicts taste)" is replaced by "that of the adviser (who measures it)," affect the paratexts that provide markers of place associated with a book's publication, its purchase, and its marketing and publicity, thus affecting setting and author as markers of place. Even those who are committed to discovering books associated with places such as Australia or Western Australia are stymied in an e-bookstore, since a search for "Australia" or "Western Australia" turns up mostly guidebooks; e-bookstore search engines are not optimized to search by setting, the author's birthplace or current residence, and so forth, because this information is not typically included in a book's metadata. And for those readers who are not specifically committed to such books – which is almost certainly the majority of readers – the likelihood of them stumbling upon these books in a deliberately placeless digital environment is dramatically reduced, especially if one is talking places like Australia and Western Australia, which are minor players in the global, English-language literary marketplace. While an independent bricks-and-mortar bookstore in Perth, Western Australia, might choose to present a book by a first-time Western Australian novelist in a tall stack in a prominent position near the front of the store, or by turning it face-out on the bookshelf, Amazon is unlikely to afford such a book a comparable digital position.

Nonetheless, there are attempts to develop surrogates in the e-book ecosystem for those "gatekeepers" that have traditionally promoted markers of place in the print book ecosystem. The most significant of these attempts are the Australian storefronts of various e-book retailers. For example, Amazon's Australian e-bookstore launched in

2013, catering to Australians who own a Kindle e-reader or use the Kindle app on another device. Books by Australian authors, with Australian settings, and published by Australian publishing houses feature much more prominently in this e-bookstore than they do in the American version of the Amazon e-bookstore. Kobo, a major competitor of Amazon in the e-book and e-reader marketplace, also has a virtual Australian storefront. On an even more local level, ReadCloud (n.d.) allows booksellers across Australia and New Zealand the opportunity to enter the e-book market by providing a white label e-bookstore. In a white label e-bookstore, each bookseller curates his or her own e-commerce site, which means each bookseller selects which titles get featured on his or her own e-bookstore home page, what categories of books to highlight, and so forth. Many of ReadCloud's associated booksellers choose to highlight Australian titles in their e-bookstores. Apparently, more than 100 Australian and New Zealand booksellers have already taken advantage of ReadCloud's (n.d., para. 2) services.

Even in the Australian storefronts of various e-book retailers, however, markers of place are more difficult to ascertain than they are in the print book ecosystem. Moreover, where they exist and can be ascertained, they are constructed almost exclusively on the level of the nation (in order to align with copyright territories), as opposed to the city, state, neighborhood, region, and so forth.

David Carter (2013), in his article "Traduit de l'américain: Thomas Keneally and the Mechanics of an International Career," appears to agree with this point about the persistence of the national as a category. But first, he takes to task the notion of "transnational literatures," which he observes "have become almost irresistible in literary studies in recent times, just as book history has been reconfigured by the 'transnational turn' following its major investment in national histories of the book" (Carter 2013, 365). Carter (2013, 382) then writes, "The national remains a significant threshold. … Despite its international reach and mobility, [Keneally's] career is still marked by the place of Australia within international literary space and within global publishing." Clearly, Carter sees those markers of place that function on the level of the nation as particularly significant (at least within the print book ecosystem that he is studying; Carter has nothing to say on the subject of e-books). Yet, when Carter (2013, 366) gets more specific about the role of the nation within the print book ecosystem, it becomes apparent that the markers of place relevant to the nation are difficult to apprehend, especially for the general public:

> *Both world literature and transnational perspectives find their energy in images of mobility or border-crossing, which now seem to make much better sense of a book culture such as Australia's than a national perspective alone. But at this point, book history also sounds a cautionary note, for "transnational" all too easily becomes an ethical or aesthetic category, a mode of transcendence, the latest in a long line of such terms. From the perspective of publishing history, by contrast, we are confronted at every point by the unequal distribution of power in the "literary world system," by material obstacles to border-crossing, by the insistent presence of national legislative or market regimes, both protecting local production and administering cultural flows. Transnationalism in this sense is less a higher form of literary being than the result of a mundane, if sometimes conflicted cluster of institutional arrangements involving*

publishers, agents, copyright laws, distribution networks, and so on.
The "obstacles to border-crossing" that Carter mentions – in other words, those obstacles that maintain the national as a source of meaning in the face of transnational pressures – are things such as "national legislative or market regimes." Carter also mentions "publishers, agents, copyright laws, distribution networks, and so on," all of which are opaque to the general public. In this regard, they are similar to the aforementioned Australian storefronts of various e-book retailers, in which the few markers of place that persist are particularly difficult to ascertain. The national undoubtedly remains a significant threshold, but it is also an increasingly invisible one, thus impeding the ability of books to implicate themselves within the social relations of those allied with a specific place.

   However, in Wendy Griswold's (2008) highly recommended scholarly treatise *Regionalism and the Reading Class* – which Tara Brabazon (2008, para. 14), writing for *Times Higher Education*, said "deserves the influence and impact of Anderson's [1983] *Imagined Communities*" – Griswold (2008, 1) convincingly demonstrates through a variety of sociological studies that "cultural regionalism, and regional literature in particular, is flourishing." Griswold's findings would seem to contradict the aforementioned claim that the ability of books to implicate themselves within the social relations of those allied with a specific place is threatened in the e-book ecosystem. Indeed, one of Griswold's (2008, 1) most interesting (and potentially challenging) findings is that "people refashion external cultural inputs to conform to local sensibilities. Specifically, people use the very elements of globalized, electronic culture to rediscover, invent, fashion, promote, and celebrate their place-specific distinctiveness." In other words, Griswold asserts that people use technologies (such as e-books) to deepen their relationship to a specific place. People who engage in this sort of behavior Griswold (2008, 90) terms "cowbirds" – that is, "parasitic birds that invade the nests of other birds and make themselves at home there." So, for example, she writes, "Literary regionalism is persisting, and … mobility itself is helping to reproduce it through the 'cowbirds' who move into a region and catch up with those born there in terms of their local cultural knowledge" (Griswold 2008, 71).

   Griswold (2008, 160) also demonstrates that reading – especially heavy reading – "is an elite practice." Griswold (2008, 160) writes, "Members of the reading class are socially powerful, with influence disproportionate to their numbers." Among this small but influential and highly educated group, movement between regions is more common than it is among other groups. Following a move, then,

> *members of the reading class become regionalists and supporters for regional literature not because they have to, but because they chose to. Unearthing the cultural roots of a place is a way members of the reading class put down their own roots. Cowbirds move into the local cultural nest and make themselves at home. (Griswold 2008, 167)*

Clearly, Griswold, whose book was published in 2008, makes a convincing case for the contemporary relevance of regional literatures.

   Nonetheless, based on her study of regional cultures in the United States, Italy, and Norway, Griswold (2008, 128) adds one rather significant concession to her claim: "Literary regionalism flourishes only where there are both regional collective identity and institutional support." She goes on to write, "State support increases the sheer volume of

literary activity in a region, encourages the formation of regional organizations, and sets up communications networks that can develop the relational dimension of collective identity" (Griswold 2008, 157). Certainly, there is a lot of evidence to support the relevance of this claim in an Australian and Western Australian context, including the author's own research (citation suppressed to preserve anonymity during the peer review process) on Western Australian book publishing and its role in the production of a regional literature, Kathleen Ann McLean's (2002) *Culture, Commerce, and Ambivalence: A Study of Australian Federal Government Intervention in Book Publishing*, and so forth. Yet, by limiting her understanding of "institutional support" to that support which is provided by local, state, and federal governments, Griswold overlooks an important reality of contemporary book publishing. Surely, the institutional support of the publishing, bookselling, and media industries is equally (if not more) important to the fate of place as a marker in the book ecosystem. Griswold's claim that regional literary cultures need institutional and/or state support is reminiscent of the aforementioned need for gatekeepers who predict taste, rather than mere advisers who measure it – and, as has already been demonstrated, there are fewer gatekeepers invested in the promotion of markers of place in the e-book ecosystem as compared to the print book ecosystem.

Near the conclusion of his article "The Enkindling Reciter: E-Books in the Bibliographical Imagination," Galey (2012, 241–42) writes, "All of these conclusions point to the need for more bibliographical research on e-books." The same is, of course, true for the conclusions offered within this article, though they are indicative of a need for more book history research on e-books rather than bibliographical research. Still, a strength of both Galey's article and this one is that they suggest specific directions for that research; previous contributions have been mostly of the "Go forth and research e-books!" variety, without much in the way of specifics. Moreover, the decision to focus this article on *place* as a specific direction for research on the subject of e-books is neither arbitrary nor a mere reflection of the author's preexisting research interests. Rather, this decision was a response to a larger trend that has been referred to as "the so-called 'spatial turn' in the humanities and social sciences" (Keighren 2013, 746). Innes M. Keighren (2013, 747), a historical geographer, has pointed out that this trend is a prominent feature in the current landscape of book history research:

> *That historians of the book have responded enthusiastically to the spatial turn in their discipline ... is evidenced perhaps most strongly ... by the fact that the Society for the History of Authorship, Reading and Publishing – the leading professional organization in book history – chose "Geographies of the Book" as the theme for its 2013 Annual Conference.*

Furthermore, the Digital Projects Showcase at this conference featured several examples of book historians working with mapping technologies, including Jordan Goffin and Michael Putter's "Atlases of the Rhode Island and Dutch Book Trades"; Sydney Shep, Flora Feltham, and Sara Bryan's "Mapping Printers' Lives and Letters"; and Rebecca Pomeroy Shores's "Geographical Content, Geographical Context: Mapping the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle(s)" (University of Pennsylvania 2013). Clearly, if *place* is such an important feature of book history scholarship as it is practiced today – that is, as it is practiced by today's book historians, who study the print book ecosystem – it only makes sense to focus on *place* as a specific direction for research on the subject of e-books.

At this point in the development of e-books and the e-book ecosystem, specifics are essential if book historians and bibliographers are going to make the kind of contributions Galey (2012, 241) believes they are capable of:

> *Academic book historians, though arriving somewhat late to the discussion of e-books, can contribute theoretical frameworks to interpret the meaning of evidence, and historical perspectives to situate that meaning in the long continuities and discontinuities that make up the book's history.*

In addition, book historians and bibliographers are able to watch the e-book ecosystem take shape, which is to say they are able to watch the history of the book unfold. Or, as van der Weel (2005, 108) puts it, "Bibliography can, and I think ought to, take full advantage of the special opportunity afforded by the fact that this digital revolution is happening right here and now." The students of these book historians and bibliographers are also witnesses to this transformation – and, indeed, are perhaps more immediately impacted by its rapidly changing shape – thus affording a rare opportunity to connect the past and the present in a way that students will immediately recognize. In other words, the study of e-books may afford book historians and bibliographers the opportunity to make their preexisting research interests suddenly more relevant. It is an opportunity not to be missed.

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[1] For an example of a scholar who defines "book history" as the more inclusive term encompassing the practice of bibliography, see Robert Darnton (1982, 66).

[2] See, for example, Bethanie Blanchard (2014).

Biography

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