



Jessica DeSpain. *Nineteenth-Century Transatlantic Reprinting and the Embodied Book*. Farnham, UK & Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014. xiv, 210p., ill. ISBN 9781409432005. £60 (hardback).

*Nineteenth-Century Transatlantic Reprinting and the Embodied Book* centres on the transatlantic book trade from the 1840s through the 1890s, looking at the circulation of British books in the United States and American books in Britain. Basing her argument on extensive archival research into multiple editions of reprints, as well as on reviews, advertisements and readers' letters, Jessica DeSpain details the "indiscriminate nature of transatlantic transmission" (11), offering an analysis of the different ways that books were reframed for various American and British audiences. The book aims to represent the transformations books underwent as they crossed the Atlantic and were packaged and presented differently for new audiences, which were not always the ones imagined by the authors and original publishers of the works. As she writes in her introduction, "reprinting was coupled with an ever-mounting anxiety about the stability of individual and national identity, as readers, publishers, and authors alike realized that there was no pure, undefiled,

disembodied text" (11).

DeSpain's book unfolds chronologically, beginning with a chapter that considers the reprinting of a British text in America (Charles Dickens's *American Notes for General Circulation*), moving to the reprinting of an American text in Britain (Susan Warner's *The Wide, Wide World*), moving back to a British writer's text, this one reprinted in pamphlets in both America and Britain (Fanny Kemble's *Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation in 1838-1839*), and ending with an American text in Britain (Walt Whitman's *Democratic Vistas*). The conclusion looks at transatlantic publishing by the Arts and Crafts movement after international copyright between Britain and the United States had been established by the Chace Act in 1891. This transatlantic alternation - an equal number of books by British and American authors - allows for a structure that emphasises reciprocity. The book's structure also creates opportunities for DeSpain to notice shifts in the business and technology of reprinting over the decades, as well as differences among publishers and audiences within each nation and across the period.

Each chapter focuses on "bodies" of texts, the controlling metaphor DeSpain uses to look at the different forms books assume in the literary marketplace. So, for example, in the first chapter on Dickens, DeSpain considers the mass reprinting of *American Notes for General Circulation* and argues that Dickens believed "his proper relationship to his readers had been usurped" by the mammoth weeklies that had reprinted his work (50). The chapter on Warner's *The Wide, Wide World* advances an incisive argument about the various remakings of the book for British audiences, arguing that Ellen, the protagonist, is put in "English dress" (69), but that she also comes to represent Americanness to British audiences. This chapter's argument is enriched by multiple illustrations (18 in all) from British reprints of Warner's novel. The next chapter examines how Kemble's work appeared in disposable pamphlets, abridged and excerpted differently by the Union League of Philadelphia and by the Ladies' London Emancipation Society to support their antislavery efforts. The last chapter looks at cheap British reprint editions of *Democratic Vistas*, aimed at working-class readers, which made Whitman "part of a wider British social movement to be consumed by the future of Anglo-culture" (172) and placed his work alongside British authors such as Robert Burns and Thomas Carlyle. Throughout these four chapters, DeSpain not only offers a detailed analysis of the reprints as material objects (examining bindings, frontispieces, illustrations, prefaces, editorial changes, and so on) but also engages in close readings of each text. Moving thus



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both inside and outside the texts enables her to do valuable interpretive work and produce new readings of the four main works considered in the book.

While the book's structure serves DeSpain's purposes well, highlighting as it does the complexity of the transatlantic reprint trade across the nineteenth century through the cases of very different books, the depth of detail on occasion buries the arguments of individual chapters. That said, *Nineteenth-Century Transatlantic Reprinting and the Embodied Book* brings together an impressive array of sources and considers transatlantic reprinting from many different angles. As such, this book should be of interest to book historians of reprinting and transatlantic publishing and also to scholars of the transatlantic careers of these nineteenth-century British and American authors, as well as of the publishing firms that reprinted their works.

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