Preface

The People of Print is a series that profiles understudied figures in the historic book and print trades. It underscores the centrality of people, starting from the premise that the personnel of the book and print trades were the driving force of print culture. Except for a few key figures, the work of the people of print remains insufficiently understood and overshadowed by the scholarly focus on literary and other cultural producers. This is particularly the case in relation to female labour and creativity. This series is conceived as an entry point for researchers and readers needing a concise and accessible introduction to a particular figure. Each volume comprises ten short essays that describe the life, work, and significant achievements or networks of individuals. However, while it necessarily offers an overview, the series is an intervention rather than a comprehensive assessment. Therefore, each volume will feature at least five female figures. In this, the intention of *The People of Print* is to rebalance attention towards occluded, hidden, and neglected female labour, and the archival lacunae around that labour.

1 Introduction: The People, Publics, and Commerce of Print by Adam James Smith, Rachel Stenner, and Kaley Kramer

The eighteenth-century transformation of the print trade is inseparable from the startling transformations that took place over the course of the century in Britain, and, for this book's purposes, England specifically. These social, legal, and economic developments produced a highly self-aware print culture keen to promote an image of itself as a cornerstone of emerging national values at home and abroad. However, that image often marginalised the histories and subjectivities of groups beyond its male, middling, white, educated mould. While studies of readers and writers have flourished into nuanced perspectives on the complex nature of these activities, work on the diversity of people involved in the print trades is less common. In a century of intense public wrangling over the nature of copyright, the morality of publishing, and the role of print in a rapidly changing nation, the people of print were crucial figures of influence and impact.

Like the century before, the eighteenth century in England closed with a radically altered set of political and economic frameworks from those with which it had begun. Overseas expansion, colonial growth, and final consolidation of 'the United Kingdom' wrought changes to England's self-conception within 'Great Britain' as well as its position on the global stage. These changes, which brought new ideas about nation, citizens, and individuals, developed in tandem with a commercialised society throughout the eighteenth century. Markets were flooded with commodified colonial products, such as chinoiserie and coffee, buoyed on a sea of rampant marketing and publicity, populist politics, and an increasingly 'popular' culture.[1] A dramatic increase in national income took place: during the Glorious Revolution of 1688, the combined income of England and Wales was around £48 million; by the time the fledgling state of Britain incorporated Ireland in 1801, the national income was £232 million.[2]

[1] See Mullan and Reid, eds, *Eighteenth-Century Popular Culture*.
[2] Crouzet, 'Toward an Export Economy', p. 78.

Energised by technological advances, cultural change, and increasingly complex internal and external structures, the print trade was one engine in this period of metamorphosis. Mechanisation, as Christopher Flint notes, was crucial: by the end of the eighteenth century, as Clive Siskin argues, it governed the printing processes 'from papermaking to typesetting to the press itself'.[3] The concomitant spread of railways meant that, by the mid-1840s, the dissemination of print was mechanised as well.[4] Practically, print made trade easier, enabling merchants, traders, and entrepreneurs to operate on a scale hitherto unimaginable. It provided a medium for sharing new practices, documenting innovations, debating strategies, and, in theory at least, holding traders accountable. As James Raven notes, 'investors were informed and encouraged by new modes of printed communication; brokers were given new tools to evaluate risk and exchange; agricultural markets were serviced by print stationers; [. . .] early commercial projects flourished and industrial schemes were organized by document and form'.[5] Printed ledgers, account books, certificates, blank forms, and pocketbooks enabled more consistent and trustworthy bureaucratic and logistic systems. The flurry of documentation also gave rise to new forms of advertisement, which in turn fostered the 'general growth of the service sector in a thriving consumer economy'.[6] In short, as Raven argues, print culture, by 'chronicling, evaluating and instructing, helped effect a business revolution'.[7]

The people of print were a key part of these developments. Print trade professionals, Elizabeth Eisenstein argues, should be viewed as pioneering 'early capitalists'.[8] She characterises the printer as an 'urban entrepreneur' who 'had to recoup large investments and source financial aid; who pioneered in early mass production and extended trade networks [. . .] who experienced labour problems, including early strikes, and who confronted constant competition from profit driven rival firms'.[9] Guides, manuals, and commentaries explicitly addressed the phenomenon of printing and other technologies. Printing manuals were produced in Europe from the sixteenth

[3] See Flint, *Appearance*; Siskin, *Work of Writing*, pp. 11–12.
[4] Siskin, *Work of Writing*, pp. 11–12. [5] Raven, *Publishing Business*, p. 38.
[6] Porter, *Disease*, p. 35. [7] Raven, *Publishing Business*, p. 1.
[8] Eisenstein, *Printing Press*, p. 21. [9] Ibid., p. 21.

century onwards, but their volume increased exponentially in the eighteenth. All of this bespeaks the self-consciousness of the book and print trades and, often, of their products. 'The changes in the eighteenth century were by no means confined to advances in manufacturing', David McKitterick writes; 'they were also changes in outlook, in ways of thinking not just about printing [. . .] but also about ways by which many other aspects of human activity and knowledge were to be ordered'.[10]

Thus the eighteenth century is often characterised as a period in which the cheaply printed word permeated every facet of what Jürgen Habermas famously termed the bourgeois public sphere. Habermas' formulation is largely based on the accounts of activity recorded in Joseph Addison and Richard Steele's weekly periodical, *The Spectator* (1711–1712).[11] However, periodical historians such as Brian Cowan recognise such publications as, to some extent, works of publicity in and of themselves, explicitly prescribing a vision of coffee house sociability as much as – if not more than – they describe a historical reality.[12] Eighteenth-century print culture did not merely reflect but fashioned the intellectual and social currents of the day.[13] The booming print trade expanded the imagined community of 'the public' that had begun in earlier centuries, inviting readers to imagine themselves as part of a community of well-informed citizens and discerning tastemakers.[14] That community was not, however, restricted to the capital. The urban nexus of print, coffee-houses, and trade in London, all geographically centred on the Royal Exchange, provides a temptingly rich ground for examinations of economy, culture, and regulation. However, while networks of distribution meant that London news circulated widely throughout Britain, regions beyond the capital developed their own audiences and markets, and comparable connections between print trades, coffee-houses, and networks of distribution existed in and between regions throughout the country.

[10] McKitterick, *Print*, p. 166. [11] Habermas, *Structural Transformation*.
[12] Cowan, 'Mr. Spectator', p. 361.
[13] See, for example, Downie and Cornes, ed., *Telling People*.
[14] This is evident in sixteenth-century pamphlet debates. See Shrank, 'Trollers and Dreamers'; Nebeker, 'Broadside Ballad'.

The regional city of York, for example, had a flourishing print trade that was also centred on coffee houses as models of sociable public spaces. 'Coffee Yard', which lies just outside the Minster Gates, had by 1700 been a site of printing for several decades.[15] Lying between Stonegate and Grape Lane, Coffee Lane housed a press and a coffeehouse throughout the eighteenth century. Elsewhere in the city, news and coffee could be had at over thirty coffeehouses that sprang up in quick succession: Sunton's Coffee House on Coney Street hosted the gatherings of the 'Good Humour Club', a social club for professional men that at one time included Laurence Sterne as well as several printers and booksellers; Farnhill's Coffee-House on Ousegate staged travelling shows; Kidd's Coffee-House, 'next to the George Inn' on Coney Street, became the site of Ann Ward's press and the *York Courant* – and continued to provide a public space for concerts (see Chapter 7). The connections between trade and print that are so apparent in studies of eighteenth-century London are equally evident outside of the capital and shaped regional and local public spheres.

The vision of public life conducted in the bustling coffee shops is not, though, as egalitarian as it might at first sound. Brian Cowan explains that 'the coffee-house is portrayed as a social space dedicated to high-minded discourse on a wide range of affairs; it is also assumed to be open to any *man* who wanted to participate in the discussions conducted therein, regardless of social rank'.[16] Periodicals tend to describe the public sphere as being predominantly urban, white, bourgeois, and male – and they frequently assume that readers meet these criteria. Take, for example, the first number of *The Spectator* (1711), a periodical orchestrated by Joseph Addison and Richard Steele.[17] Here Addison writes as the paper's fictional editor, Mr Spectator. He posits that a reader will assess a writer by deducing their identity, particularly, their race, gender, social standing, and marital status:

> I have observed, that a Reader seldom peruses a Book with Pleasure 'till he knows whether the Writer of it be a black or a fair Man, of a mild or cholerick Disposition, Married or

[15] Sessions and Sessions, *Printing in York*, p. 24. [16] Cowan, 'Mr. Spectator', p. 345.
[17] See Ellis, 'Sociability'.

> a Batchelor, with other Particulars of the like nature, that conduce very much to the right Understanding of an Author.'[18]

As Mr Spectator proceeds to assure his readers that he is a property-owning gentleman of some standing, the hierarchy implicitly underpinning this catalogue of characteristics becomes clear. Mr Spectator simultaneously draws the character of the reader, repeatedly complementing 'his' discerning judgement. For instance, he explains, 'I have given the Reader just so much of my History and Character, as to let him see I am not altogether unqualified for the Business I have undertaken'.[19] As Kathleen Wilson argues, 'the national community constructed by the newspaper and the periodical press [was] imagined to consist of free, flourishing, and largely, though not exclusively, white male British subjects'.[20] The existence of 'women, slave and free Africans, Jews, servants, Catholic, labourers, and so on' was barely registered, and could at best be 'extrapolated through the claims made by the male middling sorts or their betters'.[21] This stratified notion of who mattered characterised the growth of Georgian culture, which was, as Pat Rogers points out, 'dictated by the consumerism of the few as much as the commercialism of the many'.[22] Combined with the inference that the reader must be of the male middling sorts, a 'logic of sameness' is discernible in eighteenth-century publications.[23] Such a logic obscures or even erases any subjectivities beyond this narrowly prescribed vector of identity. Since periodicals provided the source material for subsequent histories of the period's print culture, this early omission of identity groups outside white, male, and middle has had a significant and distorting impact on the narrative of who print personnel actually were.

Habermas' foundational account of the emergence of the public sphere is now subject to extensive qualifications and counter-arguments.[24] Rachel Carnell draws attention to Habermas' 'ostensibly universalising humanism',

[18] Addison and Steele, *The Spectator*, No. 1, p. 1. [19] Ibid., p. 2.
[20] Wilson, 'Citizenship', p. 73. [21] Ibid. [22] Rogers, *Literature*, p. 6.
[23] Carnell, 'It's not easy', p. 207.
[24] For examples, see Mackie, *Market*; Carnell, 'Protesting', p. 153.

arguing that this impulse has negated attention to historically marginalized groups.[25] Feminist scholarship in particular has addressed the Habermasian model's failures to take account of women's contributions to the literary marketplace. Anthony Pollock and Manushag Powell, for example, each put gender at the centre of their respective projects.[26] In doing so, they foreground the complex ways in which social, discursive, and gender norms interact. Rather than unified standards of social or textual behaviour, print enacted multivalent fictionality and contingent performativity. *The People of Print: Eighteenth Century England* makes a similar adjustment, with reference not to the print that fuelled this public sphere but to the people who produced it.

Established models of the book trade mirror the assumptions of normative masculinity that characterise earlier generations of eighteenth-century scholarship more widely. By focusing on individual lives, this collection adopts micro-history as a method and contributes to the collective endeavour to write a more inclusive printing and publishing history of the period. Here, it joins a groundswell of recent studies which reveal the occluded histories of women of print, overturning long-standing myths about their lack of participation and influence, and promoting new methodologies for doing so.[27] The questions of who these people of print were and even how researchers should define the category 'print personnel' are central to the *People of Print* series, and are the ones we continue broadening with the biographical essays collected here. Micaela Rodgers has recently argued that the Western scholarly reliance on white, hetero, Eurocentric thought and knowledge-production and the power structures embedded within these things have historically discouraged new methods of scholarship within the field of book history.[28] The eighteenth century presents an especially intriguing case study, as this print culture's surviving accounts of itself so explicitly skew towards the male, urban, and bourgeois. This, twinned with galvanisation of the figure of the author as a celebrity figure

[25] Carnell, 'Protesting', p. 153. [26] See Pollock, *Gender*; Powell, *Performing*.
[27] See Martinez and Roman, eds, *Female Printmakers*; Wayne, ed., *Women's Labour*; Alexiou et al., eds, *Women in Print*.
[28] Rodgers, 'Deconstructing', p. 517.

during the eighteenth century, has left untold many of the stories of those individuals engaged in the physical, entrepreneurial, and – as Helen Williams argues here – at times domestic labour of producing the printed word (Chapter 2).[29] By focusing on the work of individuals, the commercial networks and social coteries in which they operated and existed, and the decisions they made, this volume, and the series as a whole, furthers David Zaret's assertion that fully understanding the development of print culture necessitates granting 'equal importance to the social and technical aspects of print'.[30] Following this McKenzieian paradigm of the sociology of the text, the *People of Print* series directs attention towards the lives, agencies, cultural and political contributions of book, and print trade personnel themselves.

In selecting our case studies, we also continue to counter the historical bias which, as John Hinks argues persuasively, has traditionally privileged London in scholarship on the book and print trades.[31] At the same time, we actively contribute to the recovery of women's work in the trades which, despite recent moves, still remains comparatively neglected. Here, alongside the story of John White Jr (1689–1769), Newcastle's first modern printer (Chapter 5), readers will meet a range of women taking a leading role in the regional trades, such as Anne Ireland (1751–1843), an entrepreneurial printer based in Leicester (Chapter 10); Ann Ward (1716–1789), publisher of *Tristram Shandy* and proprietor of the *Yorkshire Courant* for thirty years (Chapter 7); and Elizabeth Nutt (1666?–1746), a highly networked matriarch of the print trade and the main supplier of news to London from the regions for three decades (Chapter 2). Anne Fisher (1719–1778), based in Newcastle (Chapter 8), and Sheffield's Winifred Gales (1761–1839) (Chapter 11) each offer insights into the varied and active roles undertaken by women. The case of Catherine Sanger (1687–1731), a newly recovered London publisher, showcases the methodological strategies available for reconstructing female agency in the face of archival absence (Chapter 4), while that of Mary Cooper (1707–1761) enables a reassessment of 'trade publishing' and a recovery of her cultural contributions (Chapter 6).

[29] See Griffin, *Authorship*. [30] Zaret, *Origins*, p. 134. [31] Hinks, 'History'.

John Rippon (1751–1836) and John Nicholson (?–d.1717) are included to counter a further bias in book history, identified by Raven, towards literary publishing. 'Non book, or jobbing printing', writes Raven, 'not only supported printers in those periods when they were not printing book, pamphlet and periodical publications, but jobbing itself redefined what was meant by publication'.[32] Jobbing printing might involve 'guides, advice manuals and commentaries [. . .] printed bills, tickets, receipt forms, commercial and financial blanks, promissory notes, warrants, indentures and authorisations'.[33] In the case of John Rippon, this included hymnodies and related ephemera, for which he successfully created a formidable monopoly while operating from the vestry of his Baptist meeting house (Chapter 9). The chapter on Londoner John Nicholson explores not his life but the curious incident that followed his death: the first documented case of a bookseller's copyrights being sold at auction (Chapter 3).

Like *The People of Print: Seventeenth-Century England*, this collection is a starting point rather than a survey. It recommends new ways of untangling the roles of those print personnel whose lives were so tightly woven into this uniquely prolific print culture: a print culture, which, in publicising a specific version of itself, has so often obscured the agency and labour of the people who made it possible.

[32] Raven, *Publishing Business*, p. 8. [33] Ibid.

2 Elizabeth Nutt: Print Trade Matriarch (1666?–1746)
by Helen Williams

2.1 Book Trade Connections

Elizabeth Nutt née Carr (1666?–1746) ran one of the most important wholesale businesses of the early eighteenth-century book trade. Nutt's cluster of shops near the Royal Exchange functioned as the foremost supplier of news to the City of London for three decades.[34] Paula McDowell describes her as one of the 'most influential mercury-women in this period', the others being Anne Dodd and Nutt's and Dodd's daughters.[35] As a mercury, a (usually) female seller of news and ephemera either on the street or from a pamphlet shop, Nutt was a product of a distinct cultural moment: by 1750, mercuries had almost all been replaced by 'newspaper men'.[36] They were significant in being well placed to dodge the law and thereby represent a fully oppositional politics of the period. As Margaret Hunt has demonstrated, mercuries like Nutt paved the way for an enlightened liberal culture of speaking truth to power which provided a foundation for the development of progressive theories of democracy, feminism, and revolutionary politics.[37] Nutt is an interesting exemplar case study of mercury-women in the eighteenth-century book trade partly because the archival record that represents her frequent dealings with the law is so full. Knowing more about her reveals much about women's relationships and business networks in the period as well as the fine line between business and family in enterprises like the Nutts'.

While little is known about Nutt's birth and early years, Margaret Hunt has charted her remarkable rise in the historical record from mercury (newspaper or pamphlet seller) to patented law printer and bookseller.[38] Nutt worked as a mercury before her marriage to printer John Nutt in 1692. This marriage combined her networks and expertise with his technological skills and apparatus, and enabled Nutt to become a printer as well as a seller of books. They set up home and work in the Savoy, off the Strand, in 1705.

[34] McDowell, *Grub Street*, pp. 56, 26. [35] Ibid., p. 56.
[36] Hunt, 'Hawkers, Bawlers', pp. 63, 64. [37] Ibid., p. 41. [38] Hunt, 'Nutt'.