

Griffith University

Robyn Sheahan-Bright

Touting for Business: The Manufacture of Appeal in the Publishing and Marketing of Children's Books in Australia

Abstract:

Publishing structure and agency, and children's publishing in particular, have received scant attention from researchers. Most research focuses on reception or creation, when the factors of production also yield valuable insights. Industry analysis has been impeded by the concentration upon the cultural or literary agenda implicit in publishing, creating the sometimes dangerous divide between so-called "literary", and "commercial or mass market" publications. Publishing has often denied to "literature", access to the mass market, and similarly has taken a high moral ground in refusing to acknowledge literary value to extremely popular works. This paper will, using the theories of Joseph Turow and Lewis Coser, examine the factors which influence the marketing and production of children's books, suggest some of their manifestations in the Australian industry, and propose some possible future developments.

Introduction

In a world which made HRH Princess of Wales into a supermodel and opera into a form of mass entertainment, it is not surprising that the "manufacture of appeal" is a prevalent and necessary marketing technique in selling children's properties as well. This fact though, does not preclude frequent denials of such blatant opportunism by those with vested interests in this beleaguered industry. Honesty in relation to children's book promotion is always tinged with an awareness that most of the audience addressed in purchasing these properties are in fact adults with agendas which are anything but transparent. To be found to be "touting for business" is curiously, in an industry suffering such a high level of risk, almost regarded as an infringement of regulations, all the more powerful for not having been written down.

"Culture versus commerce" is an axiom suggested by arguments contained in Coser, Kadushin and Powell's (1982) *Books the Culture and Commerce of Publishing* and Michael Lane's (1980) *Books and Publishers: Commerce against Culture in Postwar Britain*, describing the uncomfortable interplay between notions of value and appeal. It has created the sometimes dangerous divide between so-called "literary", and "commercial or mass market" publications - by which I mean that publishing has often denied to so-called "literature" access to the mass market, and similarly has taken a high moral ground in refusing to acknowledge literary value to extremely popular works. As Long has suggested, this divide may stem from an "elite withdrawal from the implicit threat of loss of cultural authority...which 'has ensured the separation of...culture into rather firmly drawn categories of high and popular, or mass, culture, transcended only by the rare appearance of what Escarpit calls 'blockade runners' that break the boundary of the cultured circuit." (Long 1992 111) In the Australian children's market, Paul Jennings and Morris Gleitzman might be defined as such blockade runners, who have consistently been ignored or at least passed over, in the CBCA awards. John Marsden, despite being a frequent nominee, has with his enormously successful "popular fiction" series *Tomorrow When the War Began* and its many sequels, not yet been nominated. There is often, in fact, a suspicion in literary circles of those who appear to be "touting for business". Sonya Hartnett made this clear in an article in *Viewpoint* recently in which she refuted a presumption made by a fellow writer that her novel *Black Foxes* was released in an adult mass market packaging as a romance with gold lettering and "crunchingly awful copyline" without her consent. She comments: "any writer who imagines publishing as anything other than a business is not INNOCENT but NAÏVE, and at all times the writer must work around this fact, and sometimes he or she can make use of it..." (Hartnett 33)

Hartnett describes the transition she made from initial horror at the concept to blatant complicity. And even says that she: "regretted having no opportunity to write and include the scenes of coy sex, hysterical swoonings and heaving breasts that the buyer of such a book might expect." (Hartnett 33)

Taking such an attitude in the children's market, however, is bound to inspire all sorts of outrage. We are still beset by the Victorian idea of childish innocence; of the child in need of protection. But who is the child reader anyway? Is it

this innocent abroad, in need of adult protection? Or is it someone like the child left "home alone", played by Macaulay Culkin - one who is fully conversant with adult mores and able to give as good as he gets?

Media coverage of the child reader consistently strays towards the former view in editorials such as the article written by Kate Legge entitled "Life Sucks Timmy":

Instead of romping home ravenous from an outdoor adventure to hot scones with lashings of cream and jam, the nineties version of Enid Blyton's Famous Five would perhaps trudge back from the CES office to find Mum's new boyfriend shooting up in the kitchen and the baby nursing bruises and a black eye. Young adult fiction is carving up the literary nature strip and hanging wheelies on the hard-baked bitumen of realism, and it is not just nostalgic fogies and Christian fundamentalism wrinkling their noses at the smell of burnt rubber. (Legge 1997 10)

These sorts of attitudes make the publishing of children's books something like entering a war zone, in which the combatants are parents, teachers and easily offended critics and journalists who feel that it is their mission in life to defend their small charges and to act as arbiters of good taste, where they wouldn't presume to make such decisions on behalf of their peers. It is an undeniable fact that the CBCA awards, for instance, are premised on the notion that quality is superior to readability, and that it is an adult view that is driving the selection of what is deemed good.

It is only just over a decade ago that Walter McVitty wrote in *Children's Literature and Television*: "Writing books for children is likely to be a labour of love; writing material for children's television is more a matter of commerce." (McVitty 1984 4)

There would be few writers for either medium who would not now be somewhat nonplused by the inferred dichotomy between the two, though of course he was referring to the very real disparity between earning capacities available to writers who then did not have so much access to supplementary incomes via the very profitable touring and teaching circuits now available to them. There is in this statement also an implied value judgment preferring written to televised discourse, an attitude which denies the fact that books are in fact a form of media, not in opposition to it. This view, moreover, seems to be still prevalent, perhaps because the book has always been considered an artifact rather than a product. A work created by a team of artists, rather than a team of manufacturers. This view however, is threatened immediately when we examine the real nature of the book industry, and the other conflict, often discussed in Pierre Bourdieu's research, which exists between *structure and agency*:

Structure consists of the myriad of organisational forces which determine the marketplace - economic, cultural and social eg government policy, educational trends and societal changes, aspects of which I will address later in this article.

Agency consists of the various partners involved in negotiating these forces and producing books or literature in other multimedia formats. eg authors, illustrators, editors, readers. Because the books they produce are not generally bought by their readers, these makers try to "second-guess" their readership, by assuming one of the three roles prevalent amongst the children's book buying public - the protective role of the parent; the didactic role of the teacher; or the empathetic role of the reader.

The making of books for kids is hence a somewhat fraught activity influenced by these often contradictory approaches. The agents involved in making books are often beset by "schizophrenic" behaviours in trying to adopt all three roles at once, and the readers may suffer as a result. They may:

...find their libraries full of issue-based books which seem too teacherly. They may not have access to the books they like because of censorship or parental control. Or they may buy books which have been hyped up and find them disappointing. (Sheahan-Bright, R. 1997 6)

It has led to the bibliotherapeutic approach to literature - a movement which categorises books according to how they "meet needs" or "answer problems" for their readers. It may also lead to a blurring of the line between fiction writing and the role of the writer as sage or advocate on behalf of his or her readers. This is nowhere more obvious than in John Marsden's recent release of a non-fiction work entitled *Secret Men's Business* (Pan 1998) which as the *Australian* reported is by a "man who is so preoccupied by the ongoing tragedy of male teenage suicide that he was driven to write a male adolescent survival guide." (Yallop 1998 2)

It has thus forced writers into the role of self-appointed gurus of literary fashion and opinion - speaking at literary festivals and propounding theories of fiction and predicting trends, instead of doing what they might perhaps prefer to do - staying at home to write.

Australia's Market

So, in short, any analysis of *Children's Publishing* must take into account all these forces, which in recent decades might be summarised as :

- Monopoly - Publishing, Distribution, Bookselling, Media
- "Name" Publishing
- Power of CBC Awards
- Schizophrenic Buyer Market
- Electronic media influencing the "visually literate" reader.

Australia's market is, for better or worse, determined by the same forces which have shaped overseas markets. Attitudes which decry the influence of media are missing the point. For they deny the importance of the mass market in framing the shape of the media world in which we live. The book market has an immense problem in that it is highly segmented. Books are as Lewis Coser suggested "random access devices" (Coser et al 1982 200). "Books are inherently a medium that provides information in a highly selected way to a selected audience of persons interested in particular information." (200) He points out moreover that: "Getting people to try the product through the use of mass-market tactics for consumer goods is a worthy goal, except for one problem: in most cases, each book is a new product with a new message." (201)

Publishers have sought solutions to this problem by three distinct marketing techniques: 1. "marketing 'staples' - books that are unchanging, or relatively so." (210), a technique used by reference and encyclopaedia salespeople, and also by book club organisers; 2. "brand marketing" suggesting that the flavour and image of a series are unchanging; or 3. Thirdly, they concentrate on "blockbusters".(202).

The marketing of the "other" books - i.e. those which don't fit into these categories is tackled somewhat differently by publishers. Because of the "inexplicability" of the market for these specialist products, publishers have historically relied on "inspiration, intuition and experience." (203) 'Word of mouth ' (Coser 203), despite its somewhat unscientific nature as a marketing concept, is viewed as the most decisive technique in selling. Lane points out that "a house's interest in a book declines as it moves from the editor's desk" ... "the book trade has always placed a great emphasis on indirect promotion." (Lane 1980 26), and that "the typical book's passage starts with a bang and ends with a whimper." (27) Many a writer has been bemused when, after months and even years of close work with an editor, and a few initially intense weeks of publicity, she hears virtually nothing about the fate of the book thereafter. If the pessimistic view purported by publisher Richard Walsh, that publishing "is an inherently unprofitable human pursuit" (Burn & Tredinnick 85), is as prevalent as it appears to be, then publishers generally are relying on faith rather than on observations of the market which, like any other, needs to be researched, and in which "opinion leaders" (Coser et al 1982 202) and influential "networks and circles" (205) can provide a key to where promotion is best directed.

What generally happens is that the books which need the least promotion, i.e. those which fit into the three categories above, attract the most targeted marketing strategies, whilst the others are left relying on, if not guesswork, then strategies akin to magic or a belief in alchemy which will miraculously bring the gold to the surface. When there are exceptions to this rule, there are spectacular successes - eg the recent success in the adult market of *Cold Mountain* by Charles Frazier, a literary work which sold more than a million copies in its first months of release and, in the children's market, the targeted campaign conducted by Random House in the US to sell Philip Pullman's *The Golden Compass* in multiple imprints - Audiobooks, Ballantine Books Fantasy Imprint, and Knopf Books for Younger Readers at the same time "with a \$250, 000 marketing budget." (Alderdice 1995 1) In Australia those literary children's writers who have achieved success have done so because their titles have been sold as "brand names", rather than as works in their own right - Jennings, Marsden and Gleitzman are three very good examples, whose popularity has often obscured their talents.

These are the exceptions though, rather than the norm, for most quality books are traditionally sold by a polite circle of book people in traditional trade departments who Coser says are now on the "periphery" - "are quietly being torn apart by the different mode of operation required for the new market" (Coser et al 1982 212) The partners in this new market are multifarious and almost all non-book-people - Oprah Winfrey has more influence than the editor on whether a book will sell. Instead of relying on locating a small group of potential readers, the new marketing world relies on penetrating a mass audience. The success of works like Stephen Hawking's *Brief History of Time*, bought by millions, if not read by them, is a classic case in point. Publishing has always been about business no matter how the cultural agenda has been promulgated, but now it's more about show business than ever before.

It is little wonder then that in order to negotiate this risky territory publishers are also now more likely to see themselves as property owners - if the content can be linked to other media formats its promotion in these other media sectors is assured. It's a global world, in which the size of the potential market is enormous - and its penetration relies on a knowledge of how it works.

THE CHANGING FACE OF THE BOOK MARKET

Why is it necessary to study the book market? "Because media literacy should be about helping people to become sophisticated citizens rather than sophisticated consumers." (Lewis & Jhally 1998 109) and because "the unravelling

of media texts takes place in the context of their production and reception" (111). There are three key points I would make about the market:

1. It has always consisted, as Joseph Turow points out, of two sectors:

...children's nontext book publishing contains two separate segments with distinct, generally nonoverlapping production and distribution outlet organisations... The library market...of nonprofit patron institutions....and the commercially oriented mass market...dominated by department, chain and bookstore patrons. (Turow *Getting Books* 3)

This definition based on two separate "client" relationships with a producer, creates an assumed distinction between the type of publishing often described as literary, and credited with a cultural agenda; and the type of mass market publishing which has been conversely deemed somewhat inferior, meeting a market driven agenda. But what Turow further points out is that the boundaries in the schema are breaking down, that the library market is losing its influence, and that in fact all publishing is part of the mass media or mass communication arena. "Mass communication is the industrialised production, reproduction, and multiple distribution of messages through technological devices." (Turow 1992a 10) Duke further comments that the juvenile industry's biggest future challenge will be "combating rising costs and penetrating the retail market." (Duke 1979 193) In justification for what follows I'd like to point out that the little investigation which has been done into the production of children's books has generally been done from a library market perspective, effectively ignoring the powerful external market forces which exist and which are growing stronger every day.

2. The second important feature of the market is that most power roles in mass media industries are filled by organisational players. This fact is graphically illustrated by Joseph Turow who demonstrates in his *Media Systems in Society* (1992b 22), that only 2 of the partners in the process are not organisations - the "creator" and the "public" - the individual buyer. The other power roles include the "producer, authority, investor, client, auxiliary, union, distributor, exhibitor, linking pin, facilitator, and public advocacy." (Turow 1992b 22)

3. The third and final point is that the various institutions or organisations with a stake in book publishing are all similarly influenced by "three interrelated phenomena - fragmentation, globalization and conglomerization." (Turow 1992a 160) Globalisation can loosely be defined as the "expansion of the fragmentation and conglomerization phenomena across national borders." (Turow 1992a 161) i.e. the consolidation or merger of several national companies into huge international conglomerates.

It is worth noting here that though much media and publishing commentary has traditionally focused on American influences; on US cultural domination via mass media. It is now a very different marketplace. The reasons are :

...the entry of huge firms from other countries into the international media scene. The other is the increased determination by governments around the world to restrict American mass media products. (Turow 1992b 214).

Though American companies like Time Warner and Disney still have immense power, others such as Bertelsmann, News Corp, Sony and Matsushita have entered into the marketplace. Thus, "global mass communication might best be described as a First World activity".(Turow 1992b 220)

Globalisation has the effect of concentrating power over three significant areas of mass communication: "1. Mass Media Content, 2. Mass Media Structure, Mass Media Technology". (Turow 1992b 211)

Under these three broad headings, I have classified the common characteristics of global control of the production of the "symbolic and material products" which constitute the children's industry as follows:

I. Mass Media Structure

The world market has grown enormously. In the U.S. "no one estimated that the children's market would double and double again in fifteen years" and be worth an estimated "\$2 billion" (Dunleavy 1995 1) in 1995. There have been spectacular takeovers and mergers. eg Paramount's takeover of Macmillan in 1993 - a huge swallowing by "The nation's biggest publishers" (Dunleavy 1993a 1), of one of the most prestigious and oldest "traditional" companies. Similar trends can be isolated in the Australian industry (Sheahan-Bright 1998). "There's been a shift away from institutional to individual buyers". (Latrobe 1996 2) Those who belong to the traditional library market are concerned that:

the emphasis on producing books that attract the attention of inexperienced book purchasers will cut down on the number of titles of lasting value published. (Fasich 1991 20)

It is nevertheless an indisputable fact, that:

The conglomeration of children's books has moved into the implementation phase- the mass merchandising of children's books. ..The publishing model for children's books based on serving the libraries has been replaced by the "media" industry model, selling "entertainment to the masses". (Roxburgh Front Street Books in The Road Ahead 1)

The Key Structural Features I have isolated are:

Vertical Integration

This practice creates "Synergies" for mass market organisations. There are two key factors involved in such synergies, which either allow companies to extend their profits by creating related materials via Creative or Subsidiary Rights or to increase the product's attractiveness by offering Value-Added Incentives. (Turrow 1992b 245-251.) Examples of synergies between products are evinced by the following:

Vertical Integration (a) Cross-Merchandising

As the *Horn Book Magazine* has pointed out "merchandising is... not new. Think of the toys John Newbery sold with his little pretty Pocket Book, Kate Greenway's almanacs, and Beatrix Potter's many enterprises." (Sutton 1997)

What is new however, is the growing supremacy of the merchandising property over the book, and the fact that sometimes the book is itself only a form of merchandise spawned by another media property, eg. Power Rangers, Ninja Turtles, Star Wars, Bananas in Pyjamas, Teletubbies, Nickelodeon's Rugrats, Jim Henson's puppets. Jim Henson Productions is an example of the power of cross merchandising. It grew from a publishing arm with one employee in 1979 and early successes like the 700,000 copies of Miss Piggy's calendar sold in 1980, to the development of 75 titles in 1997, including product not generated by Muppets eg Dr Seuss related titles in partnership with Random House. (Lodge 1997b)

One of the benefits of cross merchandising to publishing is that they have learned from toy manufacturers how "to capitalise on short term trends" and on "cross-promotional opportunities", (Raugust 1997b). Where formerly they relied on more predictable series, and on slow but steady selling properties, now they are more aware of techniques enabling them to capitalise on "fads". The type of products generated by such cross marketing are (apart from film, audio and TV tie-ins) : *Paper engineering, dolls, toys, board books, domestic accessories (eg crockery) and clothing items* which are created to complement the book.

Paper Engineering:

Pop-ups, lift-the flaps, cut-outs - the variety in such products is seemingly endless, but they require specific expertise and are costly to make, so again their production has been concentrated. One company Intervisual Communications Inc in Los Angeles was estimated in 1991 as "the world's major producer of pop-up books - 'over \$500 million' ...- about 60% of the total world market in pop-ups." (Taylor 1991 1) They package for 30 majors but over half their product is owned by ICI. They estimate that "from 1850 to 1965" only "10 million pop-ups" were produced, but by 1991 "10-15 million ...produced each year." (Taylor 1991 1) They have set about diversifying and expanding the product lines available, so that ICI, by 1991, had "introduced 27 different formats during the past 10 years. These range from electronic books like Twinkle Twinkle Little Star (Aladdin) with music and twinkling lights, to books with cloth finger puppets, carousel-shaped books, revolving and disappearing picture books, etc." (Taylor 1991 3)

Dolls:

Winnie the Pooh, Paddington Bear, Jemima Puddleduck are all immensely popular, and now a whole new breed of dolls has appeared eg Angelina Ballerina celebrated her tenth birthday in 1993, by which time "there were nine picture books, two board books and doll-and-book package" (Bodin 1993 1). Other book related dolls are *Linnea in Monet's Garden* and Tomie De Paola's *Strega Nonna*. There are other TV and personality related properties which have produced books and dolls too e.g. Wiggles and Bananas in Pyjamas.

Toys:

One prevalent trend is the growth of "toy-related imprints" i.e. books generated by the toy rather than vice versa. e.g. Power Rangers, Star Wars etc.

Board Books:

The board book market has grown to include "board book adaptations of picture books: which first appeared on the market in the fall of 1991, when Harper Collins published a Goodnight Moon board book." (Raugust 1998 1) Those which work are obviously the well-loved and those suitable for under three year olds, and whose artwork can be converted to the format, but marketing has dictated that titles for older readers have also been produced. Slowing sales will reduce the inappropriate proliferation of these books for non-existent readers.

Domestic Accessories:

Tomie De Paola, the US illustrator releases his own catalogues and does proprietary deals with department stores eg Christmas coffee mugs etc; Winnie the Pooh has his own exclusive collectable crockery and stationery lines. Goosebumps is a "lifestyle" choice: "Colorful packaging mixes images of licky bugs, bulging eyes and clattering teeth. Sneakers feature 3-D soles that allow wearers to make skeleton footprints." (Benezra 1996 2)

Clothing:

Peter Rabbit and Paddington Bear are used as "branding" labels on clothing for babies and toddlers.

Some books generate all these spinoffs. One of the most successful of blanket promotions has been in conjunction with *Guess How Much I Love You* by Sam McBratney (Walker) which has now generated dolls, calendars etc. DK Ink's Neal Porter summed up Bologna 97: "It's guess how much I love my teddy bear who's missing his button eye and looking for a new owner, with Sara Fanelli-like art and a value-added plush toy." (A Sharper Focus at Bologna Fair 1997 2)

Vertical Integration (b) Supermarket and "Non-Traditional Book Sales Outlets"/Versus Traditional Outlets e.g. Bookstores

In 1996 an American survey estimated that "independent and chain book stores accounted for only 15% of the total consumer market for children's books" (Rosen 1997d 6) Discount stores (K-Mart and Wal-Mart) were reported in 1996 to be selling 30% of all children's books in the US (Latrobe 1996 12). Vertical integration is evident in the fact that these outlets sell all the properties relating to the book - clothes, toys, stationery, crockery etc. (Bookshops can rarely take the risk in stocking such a variety of non-book materials.) In essence, this is another instance of how "The dividing line between trade and mass market as product is blurring." (Lodge 1997a 7) This has implications for the publishing trade, because of the different buying patterns of what one buyer described as "impulse buyers", so that "low-end" products with recognizable names are sought. "I go out of my way to look for the unusual. I've got several vendors from whom I buy only one book." (Rosen 1997a 3) The market potential of these new selling outlets is large, but requires a different concept of what might constitute viable product. Donovan reports that "some firms with strong institutional lists have also entered mass-market publishing." (Donovan 1991 2) and further that:

It is a mistake to conclude that if a book is part of a mass market publishing program, it is not a very good book...some of the best titles have come from (mass market) lists...and...some of our foremost talents, such as the Provencens, have published comfortably for both. (Donovan 1991 2)

In Australia, publishers have been targeting, quite deliberately for some time, this wider market with writers such as Christine Harris and Margaret Clark (Macleod 1998), and illustrators such as Craig Smith (Watts, From Little Acorns).

Vertical Integration (c) Food and Product Packaging and "Joint" Book Promotions

Food is the ultimate consumer product and book producers have latched onto the synergies which might be made between food and "brain food". e.g. "Each box of Kix (cereal) contains an offer of one of three preselected Little Golden Books." (Get Your Kix with Golden Books 1997) Pritchard Marketing met with Smith's and Scholastic in 1997 with an idea which led to the creation of "a 100 piece Goosebumps lenticular series" to be inserted in Smith's Snack Foods and which led to "the 59.8 % increase in snack-food sales" in 1997.(Pritchard 1997 39) Scholastic said they were "the best licensing application they had for their product, the hottest children's property in the world." (39) and has since introduced it across the globe. More commonly known as "Tazos" they appear in a range of packaging for crisps and corn chips, and are linked to properties as diverse as Star Wars heroes and heroines to Disney cartoon characters. Goosebumps has also been marketed in the US in Taco Bell Fast Food restaurants, and in joint promotions with "Pepsi, Hershey Chocolate and Frito-lay." (Goosebumps 1996)

The idea of such "value added incentives" leads to unusual book and other media promotions eg *S & S*: "for Rugrats, we have a sweepstakes in conjunction with Nickelodeon where the winner gets to ride to school in a limousine for a month." (Rosen 1997d 5)

2.) Lack of Competition

The second structural feature of globalised production is the aim to reduce competition. Companies focus enormous promotion on a limited number of products, a fact bemoaned by opponents of monopolies, though a reduction in a surfeit of mass media properties may not, in itself, be necessarily such a bad thing. More serious, however, than a reduction in the range and variety of products, is that prices in a monopolised market tend to be less subject to market forces. They may actually rise, and ultimately increase the gap between the information rich and poor in our society. Thus companies selling essential services in a technological society (e.g. subscriber fees for access to the internet, or to on-line databases), have greater control over individuals' freedom of access to information, than should rightfully be available to them.

3.) Market Penetration

The third feature of the structure is the aim to completely penetrate a market via synergy. e.g. Disney's 1995 \$19 billion takeover of Capital Cities/ABC in the US gave it ownership of "all four key distribution channels: filmed entertainment, cable television, broadcasting and telephone wires" ('Media Monopoly Makers' 1995) This sort of practice is evinced, in part, in Australia by companies like Scholastic and ABC Books, of which I have written at more length in another paper. (Sheahan-Bright 1998)

4.) Territorial Rights The fourth structural feature is the advent of the influence of worldwide ownership and technology in changing patterns of access to copyright, and making exclusive licensing difficult. "While technology is helping to spur global growth it is also contributing to the breakdown of traditional publishing practices." (Milliot 1998 3) This has been an ongoing issue for countries like Australia and Canada, traditionally at the mercy of UK trade practices regulations (Sheahan-Bright 1998):

...the next couple of years will probably see the biggest change in territorial rights since the world was carved up by the Brits and the Yanks after World War II. By the turn of the century, the world will be an open market for English-language publishing, with only the U.K. and the U.S. and Canada as exclusive markets. (Milliot 1998 5)

Many will view as ominous the comment made in the US recently that "there is a growing sense among publishers that Australia could very well become an open market before too long." (Milliot 1998 4)

5.) Niche Marketing

One very significant aspect of structure is the growing practice of niche marketing. "The concept of niche refers to a distinct combination of resources that can support organisations with similar goals, boundaries and activities." (Turow 1992b 25) Because of the increasingly fragmented nature of our media industries, each appealing to differing audiences, media producers are increasingly attempting to target niche groups. The face of future publishing may lie in this sort of targeted marketing, which at its best can give each and every one of us what we want in the exact format we request it to be delivered in. "We're still in a mass media society- but what we're trying to do is to find ways of targeting within the context of the mass media world." (Chipperfield 1996 20) There are dangers inherent in such targeting, though, for "market segmentation and targeting may accelerate an erosion of the tolerance and mutual dependence between diverse groups that enable a society to work." (Turow 1997 7) because it relies on construction of an audience which is always false. Nevertheless it is clear that the publishing industry has adopted this approach in its increasingly age-based and audience-based approaches to children's publishing. e.g. "Golden Books... has formed Golden Value Books and Special Markets, a unit that... 'will develop value lines and pursue other specialty publishing opportunities outside of traditional retail channels.'" ('Golden Books' 1997)

Examples of *Niche Markets* currently prevalent in the book industry are :

Niche Markets a) Book Club Marketing

In the US there are three big players - Scholastic, Pages and Troll with Scholastic the biggest. Its success can be attributed to the fact that it "became part of the school fabric in the country where we were located" with "Sales growing 20% in 1997 alone." (Milliot 1998 3) It sometimes also forms "strategic partnerships" (Sanislo 1995 2), with other publishers and produces special products for the book fair markets. Pages Book Fairs has also begun to create "niche fairs" (Milliot 1996a 2) to suit (for example) schools with a particular ethnic clientele.

Niche Markets b) Proprietary Deals

These are special deals struck with non-traditional outlets (e.g. Target) to produce an edition solely for their market. While most agree that it is a useful way to supplement sales, one publisher at Bologna this year called it "a relatively terrifying development. When bookstores start creating their own imprints, it's not too far a stretch that it might affect our core business." (Lottman & Roback 1998 3) Often these deals are non-exclusive i.e. the book is available elsewhere but not in the special format created for the deal. eg "A Rainbow Fish journal (created by North-South) for Barnes and Noble" (Rosen 1996) The advantage, as with book clubs, is the exposure to large markets frequented by non-book buyers.

Niche Markets c) Targeted "Brand" Publishing for Age or Interest groups e.g. horror series

As Karen Raugust has pointed out:

...the term brand connotes many things in the children's book industry. It can refer to a more traditional corporate brand, such as LEGO, which has become associated with a book series. It can be used to describe a licensed property, such as the Muppets. It can even be a synonym for a character, imprint or series, such as DK's Eyewitness line. (Raugust 1997a)

To her list I'd add that even an author's name can assume the nature of a 'brand'. Not only is Goosebumps a brand, but so is their creator, R.L. Stine, and so in Australia, are 'Jennings' books.

The market has become increasingly segmented with narrower and narrower age categories and interest groups being assigned their own series and publishing programs:

Despite concerns that series can be less challenging, the "up" side is that "the right touch" can bring out bookworms in any market...especially for boys who are so often disenchanted with reading, horror is doing the job." (Dunleavy 1993b 3)

Stine's *Goosebumps* and *Fear Street* books have spawned a whole plethora of series e.g. *Bonechillers*, *Dead Time*, *Animorphs*, *Spine Tingers* (Lodge) and in Australia *Dark House* et al.

The library market is also influenced by such market-oriented segmentation, which has also (for example) influenced awards e.g. the recent move towards adding another award to the CBC awards for older teenagers.

Another outcome of this sort of segmentation is the potential for capturing dual or multiple markets by targeting each market with the same product packaged in different ways e.g. Philip Pullman's *The Golden Compass* was released by Random House Audiobooks, Ballantine Books Fantasy Imprint, and Knopf Books for Younger Readers at the same time with a \$250,000 marketing budget.(Alderdice 1995 1)

Niche Markets d) Magazine and Newspaper Niche Market

The nature of magazines, too, has become increasingly niche-oriented e.g. Teenage girls, sports, computers etc. One commentator believes that: "...print will increasingly play a role as a mass market branding tool, which will provide advertisers with a vehicle to reach highly targeted audiences when they need to communicate more complex information." (Chipperfield 1996 25)

There are magazines in the US being produced in different editions for different target markets. This view radically extends the notion that magazines carry advertising - they may actually become a branding vehicle in themselves, reaching out to very specific markets with very specific products, in effect, a form of direct marketing.

Niche Markets e) Direct Marketing

We live in a society which despite electronic technology, is increasingly resorting to direct market mailouts. Many advertisers, tired of the vagaries of an increasingly segmented market, are actually targeting niches via such direct mail. e.g. "Time Life education ... mails its catalogues to 100, 000 librarians and 50,000 school administrators" (Milliot 1995 1) and some send newsletters, as Dymocks chain of booksellers does in Australia.

II. Mass Media Content

Such structural features influence content, and indeed are designed to control content. There is no doubt that many of the buyouts by media moguls of publishing houses are an acknowledgment of the importance of content. "Many times, the book is the beginning in the content chain that leads to other products." (Milliot 1998 1)

Key Content Features are:

1.) "Global" Views "It's a Small World After All"

The most overwhelmingly likely outcome of globalisation in terms of content is what is often described as the "coca-colarisation" of the book. If one company owns and markets its product into a wide range of markets it is unlikely to produce culturally specific product but more likely to try to develop a global taste for culturally non-specific product. "Disney products are popular in many international markets because they shy away from political controversy and are easily dubbed into foreign languages." ('Media Monopoly Makers' 1995 1)

Moreover, most mergers endeavour to provide the company with control over all forms of media, across international boundaries. Disney's \$19 million takeover of Capital Cities/ABC gave it desirable access to multiple markets. Such homogenous programming will inevitably "diminish entertainment localism and broadcasting diversity" ('Media Monopoly Makers' 1995 1)

There is a possibility that the regional and local may be fortuitously celebrated, though, in this huge marketplace. If a book reflecting the unique aspects of Australian life has gone global it has had enormous national promotional spinoffs eg *Possum Magic*, *Animalia* and *Where the Forest Meets the Sea*, but these have been few.

2.) Content "Unknown" - Catalogues and Contracts

Publishers are in a state of flux, with product being produced for an increasingly complex marketplace, and new forms of media being developed, which may present a challenge to both their sales and copyright control. Instead of the book itself having primacy, it is the exposure the book receives in other non-print marketing mediums, and the possible translation of it into other media which are driving book production :

For the moment, no new form is on the horizon, only the anxiety that precedes it...traces of today's anxiety-ridden mood can be found in publishing's ur-documents, which are not books but book catalogues and book contracts.(Engelhardt 1997 2)

This sort of second guessing about a book's likely future leads to some books not being published at all, to some very opportunistic promotion, and to some scurrilous contracting of authors, aimed at protecting publishers' rights rather than exploiting them on behalf of an author. "Catalogues", as one pundit put it very aptly, "bear a growing resemblance to The Midday Show guest list." (Haigh 1996 55) in that they are "offering almost-movies, soon-to-be-riveting television performances, market-blanketing radio interviews, interactive Web site moments and charismatic personalities." (Engelhardt 1997 4) . Content is no longer enough e.g. in a recent Australian advertisement for Puffin Books, headlines shout, "Pick of the Pack! Hook Into a Book With Puffin. Don't miss the chance for your students to

win Puffin books for themselves and their school...Closes Oct 16, 1998" (Magpies September 1998 2), and the plot summary is in small print!

Contracts, too, indicate how fraught with uncertainty the area is. Electronic rights present an enormous problem to publishers:

The texts of these clauses have a certain pathos in their exhaustive, and exhausting, attempts to imagine the unimaginable - any future "mediums" into which a text could be manipulated ... Such mediums, as a Random House contract puts it, "shall include, but not be limited to, electronic, magnetic, digital, optical and laser-based information storage and retrieval systems, floppy diskette-based software, CDROM, interactive software and compact discs, floptical disks, ROM card, silicon chip, on-line electronic or satellite-based data transmission and other such systems, and any other device or medium for electronic reproduction, publication, distribution or transmission, whether now or hereafter known or developed. (Englehardt 1997 5)

The essential fact is that the nature of the product is becoming increasingly difficult to describe, and that its potential for transformation is next to limitless.

3.) Censorship

The power of these global companies can also lead to blatant censorship. e.g. "Marc Eliot's Walt Disney: Hollywood's Dark Prince" was aborted suddenly by Bantam in 1991 just before Bantam's Disney Library series for sale in supermarkets..."a deal worth far more than his book would have been."(Miller 1997 6) Similarly Harper Collins reneged on a contract to publish Chris Patton's memoirs earlier last year because it was said that Rupert Murdoch feared a decrease in Chinese purchase of Murdoch publications.

Most censorship, though, is of the less overt, more subtle kind, though equally the result of the nature of the client relationships between producer and buyer, e.g. the NSW Government "targeted for removal or non-purchase" Judy Blume's *Forever* in 1989. (Williams & Dillon 1993 77) Schools often "non-select" material which is likely to upset conservative parent populations.

4.) Exploitation of Intellectual Property and Copyright

The risk for writers in this new environment is enormous. Content is often regarded as fair game for spectacular exploitation. How to protect, in particular, their intellectual property, in a world which makes Pocahontas into a simpering B grade movie starlet, who looks no more a Native American than Aladdin betrayed his Middle Eastern origins? How do they ensure that bland, and unsympathetic treatment is not meted out to their precious products as it has been to several recent notable misinterpretations. (There are those who would disagree, but Robin Williams' high-camp Mrs Doubtfire is to my mind a pale shadow of the character created in Anne Fine's book *Madame Doubtfire*.)

5.) Minimising Risks (Balancing Change and Continuity)

Because producers of books are in the business of producing one-off items whose sales rely on a degree of "innovation" - "a balancing act...between a need to search for novelty and a need to limit that search in the interest of efficiency and success." (Turow 1992b 184), publishers, in order to respond to these forces, turn to measures which assist them in coping with the vagaries of the market they service, e.g. formulas, track records, stereotypes, series and serials, market research (albeit limited), and book sales statistics. In order to minimise the risk of production, publishers choose "Products" with proven track records:

Minimising Risks a) The Author as "Product"

Authors who are consistently popular are chosen as "saleable" because of their personal track records. They become the subject of intensive publicity campaigns e.g. signings, tours, media saturation. The name on the cover assumes more importance than the title, the blurb, or the image, e.g. R.L. Stine.

Minimising Risks b) Best Sellers

Topics, genres or formats with proven track records, generate the powerful bestseller lists, which are used as marketing tools in themselves. These lists are often the subject of specialised promotion, e.g. TV personalities such as Rosie O'Donnell, or Oprah Winfrey's Book Club are known to "increase sales by more than 1,000 percent." (Miller 1997 4) Mark Macleod was a regular presenter on the Australian Midday Show in the eighties, before he became a publisher, and was known to influence sales markedly.

Minimising Risks c) Special Event/Personality Promotions and Tie-ins

Some books rely on specific marketing or sales points which may be either:

Short Term and Opportunistic e.g. Lady Diana's death; Current Celebrity profiles eg Leonardo di Caprio and the Spice Girls; Current Celebrity authors eg Fergie's infamous Budgie books, and the two new children's books which were released last year by Michael

Bolton and John Travolta . Warner books picked up Travolta's 'Propeller One-Way Night Coach' and printed 250,000 copies. (Luscombe 1997)

Longer Term, Predictable or Anticipated events e.g. Olympics, end of Millennium, Christmas. A glance at each month's bestseller lists will always reflect the current fads and more lasting public preoccupations.

Minimising Risks d) Awards

Award-winners very often fit this no-risk category too. This extends beyond response to awards by reprinting, to actively seeking to "second guess" the winners and to produce "award-winning style" books based on the choices made in selecting previous years' winners. The influence of the CBCA has often been critiqued from this point of view.

Minimising Risks e) Classics and Re-Prints

Re-issues of classics suit both the aspirations of baby boomer parents to introduce their children to the canon and meet the economic needs of publishers, since no royalties are involved. Often they suffer from the *inferior reproduction* of original illustrations. Or as Peter Hunt pointed out in relation to a new edition of *The Phoenix and the Carpet* at the 1998 Children's book Council of Australia conference, in the interests of a less text-based reading audience, they may be abbreviated and be minus several thousand words! Books have also been censored, i.e. offensive racism, sexism etc excised, effectively destroying much of the historical value of the works. *The Story of Little Black Sambo* (1899) has been re-released in several versions and has gone from being "One of the most controversial books in existence...to the interpretation by different creators." (Hochwald 2) The longevity of Australian classics like *Little Mother Meg* by Ethel Turner, is partly reliant on their re-packaging in eye-catching new covers, and even on some revision, e.g. the Mary Grant Bruce books were edited by Collins/A&R some years ago to erase their more racist passages.

Sometimes it is the publisher's *imprint and style* which is promoted as the unique feature of a classic reprint e.g. "Knopf's Everyman's Children's Classics" re-release were described as:

...books to own rather than merely read. Each book has a silk ribbon bookmark. ..two-colour illustrated endpapers, and printed bookplates. ..unjacketed cloth covers, spines are gold stamped...Each volume has one colour illustration from a classic edition on the front. (Schwartz 1992 2)

There have more recently begun the re-release of "*modern*" classics eg *Madeleine*, *Babar*, *Thomas the Tank Engine* books have all re-appeared with dolls and other items to accompany them. Tomie de Paola has re-illustrated his *Nana Upstairs and Nana Downstairs* for the 30th anniversary (when it was first done, 4 colour printing was not available!)

Minimising Risks f) The Teacher/Literature Based Market

One of the safest of markets to target has been the ever-regenerative educational market. "Promotions people want information about the ways books are used with children and children's reactions to old and new titles." (Van Orden 1997 26) But the schools or educational market can also be a minefield of variant demands and practices.

Its power is evinced by the rapid growth in the production of *teachers' resources* to complement books and other media. The market is recognised as lucrative, and therefore extra efforts are made to market the product by the production of supplementary *Teachers' Notes, Materials and Kits*. *Big Books* are another phenomenon which has resulted from the recognition of teacher needs and was driven by education department policies. (Rosen 1998 1) The power of the "*Bibliotherapeutic*" approach often taken to books, in using them as "tools", can be seen in the *influence on reviews* ; books are described as being "useful" for various purposes. *Textbooks* are often rigorously defined in order not to offend particular parent groups [See "Confidential Textbook Guidelines" in Turow 1992b 94]

Schools may be forced to discard materials, at the behest of powerful parent groups. *Censorship* therefore, often occurs even before the selection of material. Such censorship occurs in the preparation of textbook and reading materials, e.g. Irene Trivas described the rigid prescriptiveness of the final illustration assignment she did, before she gave up frustrated with publisher's efforts to be everything to everybody:

It's etched in acid in my mind. They sent 10 pages of single spaced specifications. The hero was a Hispanic boy. There were black twins, one boy, one girl; an overweight Oriental boy, and an American Indian girl. That leaves the Caucasian. Since we mustn't forget the physically handicapped, she was born with a congenital malformation and only had three fingers on one hand. One child had to have an Irish setter, and the setter was to be female. The Hispanic had two parents. The father has a white collar job. The mother is an illustrator and she works at home. At one point, they are seen through the kitchen screen door making dinner, having spaghetti and meatballs and a salad. The editor appended a note that said, "Make sure it's not iceberg: it should be something nice like endive." They also had a senior citizen, and I had to show her jogging. I can't do it anymore. (Turow 1992b 93-4)

Minimising Risks g) "Books Without Authors"

This phenomenon is outlined by Coser, Kadushin and Powell who isolate several categories of books without authors i.e. manufactured to order for a specific market, e.g. mail-order, fiction factories, novelisations, packaging, managed texts (Coser et al 1982 Ch 10) This sort of conservatism is an extreme example of how publishers seek to minimise risk in markets which they research. Also a form of niche marketing, these examples show how the act of targeting can lead to excessively rigid content control.

III. Mass Media Technology

If structure influences content it is also reflected in technology - in the efforts made by media owners to control technology, and in the media's effect on products.

Key Technology Features are:

1.) Convergence of Media

This aspect is best understood by the following definition:

...the media of carriage (telecommunications, computing, the electromagnetic spectrum), and media of content (newspapers and other print media, broadcasting) are being brought closer and closer together.... Media of carriage are characteristically point-to-point media (electronic communications such as telephony, facsimile). Media of content are typically point-to-multipoint in nature (television and broadcasting). (Turner 324)

Convergence of Media a.) "Bundled" Media

The aim of most mass communication purchases is to produce a work capable of being converted into as many other forms as possible, i.e. to be delivered in the format required by the user. "A digital convergence is going on - that is, delivery of content begins digitally and can be completed through any form." (Hilts 1997 3) In future the marketer "will demand a media package that promises to deliver his target audience - not just an audience." (Levine 1990 1) This is related to the structural concept of synergy which has already been covered. "Content is King...Books are the seeds in the sod from which other projects spring." (Milliott 1996b) But it is becoming increasingly the case that the aim of such mass media is not to reach a wider audience, but an increasingly narrower one.

Convergence of Media b) Film and TV Tie-ins and Re-Releases The most obvious form of technology related to the book is the film or TV "tie-in". Movies are often jointly released with new or re-releases of books featuring the stars, e.g. Leonardo DiCaprio, Spice Girls, Teletubbies, Classic TV and film etc. Books create movies and often now, the book of the movie is written.

2.) Other Electronic Media and the Book

In both content and in every aspect of its production and distribution, the book has been changed by electronic media:

Starting with the arrival of the manuscript on disk, computerization has transformed book production, billing, distribution and bookstore management. With Amazon.com, the online bookstore, it has even changed the way books are bought. (Engelhardt 1997 1)

There are many aspects of the book which have changed, from its form to its marketing. Publishers have viewed the influence with some disquiet, though they have also begun forays into establishing electronic divisions in their companies, with the awareness that:

For the first time in half a millennium, publishers may lose control of their own package...for any new, booklike electronic format will not be invented by a publisher. What, then, will a publisher control? Perhaps,...only a holder of copyrights, a "content provider" for others. (Engelhardt 1997 2)

After an initial flurry, though, some publishers are pulling back from the media area and have actually closed some media divisions. This is an expensive and difficult area to predict. Mistakes are costly and the use by date of new technology is often mercilessly imminent. Particular instances of the effect of technology on the book are:

Other Electronic Media a) Internet Selling -Booksellers

With the phenomenal growth of Amazon Com and Barnes and Noble's bookselling sites, publishers ignore the power of the internet to their future peril. One British view is that "London's demise as a major English language book publishing centre" (Kiely 1994 2) is imminent if publishers and booksellers do not begin to embrace electronic marketing methods. Australia must be even more vulnerable. I recently met an American who cheerfully confessed that she buys everything direct from the US over the internet, because it's cheaper, and you don't have to pay any sales tax that way.

To combat this development some sellers have resorted to the creation of superstores, with "about 100,000 titles compared with an average independent's range of between 8000 and 12,000" the first of which Collins opened in Sydney in March (McGuire 1998 32). The idea is that an enormous range will counteract the independents' range by offering instant delivery of the product.

Other Electronic Media b) Internet Promotion - Publishers & Authors

Publishers' and authors' sites have proliferated, particularly in the last few years. They are used for a range of functions including: *Catalogue information* - it's better than the print format because it allows consumer to "sample" product, via text and illustrations; cheaper "*targeted*" promotion aimed at special interest audiences; *individual writer promotion* with sites featuring biography or chapters online, or even characters from their books, e.g. *The Paw* by Natalie Prior; *searching facilities* e.g. Scholastic allows kids to search by title or character and to read samples of *Babysitter Club* titles; *Teachers' Notes* are offered by companies too, e.g. Bantam Doubleday Dell has a site including interviews with authors and illustrators; and the interactive nature of the internet makes a lot of *publishing functions* more efficient and responsive - many publishers and authors now get direct feedback from their readers via email. For example, Eric Carle's site (www.eric-carle.com) allows those readers and booksellers to interact with each other. Unsolicited manuscripts are also being accepted by publishers via the internet. Some publishers and even authors are using it to direct sell their books. Finally, for those wishing to *research children's book publishing and literature* there is a wealth of resources available (Morris 1997). Future Developments should include more direct communication with booksellers, and faster connections, which will make the internet even more effective.

Other Electronic Media c) Influence on Topics in Fiction

From the appearance of Gillian Rubinstein's *Space Demons*, we knew that the future offered a range of books which might use technology as both plot and thematic device. Other works like Toby Forward's marvellous re-telling of Peter Pan in *Neverland* pre-empted the appearance of phenomena such as Cyber fiction.

Other Electronic Media d) Electronic publishing

Tim O'Reilly, from a leading US multimedia publisher, says that "publishing is going to be the most significant industry of the 21st century. The new internet environment - the demand for intellectual property in lots of different guises." (Hilts 1997 5) The electronic book, despite isolated examples, is not yet really with us, though the technology is. It may look like the product developed by MIT Media Lab, which looks like a book - with blank pages made of an "electronic paper":

You charge it with text in a few seconds, unplug it and take it away to read... When you've finished, plug it back in, suck out the text images and download new text. (Hilts 1997 6)

Printed with "electronic ink" these books will be convenient: "...you could for instance make the type larger for easier reading." (Vizard 2)

Random released an online book before hardcopy *The Lurker Files* series began as a "cyber soap" before it was printed. (Rosen 1997b 97) Some see the potential for producing "hard to publish" books such as translations with a limited market on the net, e.g. Dutton (www.penguin.com) Dual publishing - the hardcopy with either an online or a CDrom version has been applied successfully, particularly with picture books, "The most successful are those that make the best use of the medium's potential for movement, action, sound and music - a potential it shares with video." (Butler 1997 1) But, the president of a multimedia company says that "The CD has had its day already. It's static." (Hilts 1997 4)

"Electronic encyclopedias have been the fastest growing segment of the multimedia industry" (Milliott 1995 3), e.g. Dorling Kindersley Encyclopedias; and Scott Flanders of Macmillan says that "70% of their computer titles have an electronic component now." (Hilts 1997 2) and:

One of the most exciting things about the internet is that a reader can get not only the content of a book online, but its context as well. The context is created by hyperlinking the book's content to related sources... (Hilts 1997 5)

Other Electronic Media e) Influence on Packaging and Production of the book

Covers must compete with ads and computer games. One veteran graphic artist calls it "Attention Deficit Design" (Stevenson 1997 2), e.g. Covers are brighter bolder, more sophisticated and hipper; new techniques such as computer graphics, and embossing, foil, matte laminations, holograms; photographic images; series designs to make whole series readily identifiable; more like mass market covers to widen appeal; ambiguous in age of market targeted to widen appeal. The interior of the illustrated book has changed too- typography, layout, design, structure, mixed media. There seems to be an infinite range of variables now, and fewer rules governing what can and can't be done within a picture book's confines.

3.) Influence of Media on Literacy

The visually literate reader is undeniably changed:

We cannot ignore VR and related technologies... We must seek to influence them for the good and counteract their potential for encouraging at their simplest level, passive involvement and reception, and at their most sophisticated level, an ability to immerse youngsters in worlds created by large entertainment corporations. (Somers 1995 208)

There is a range of aspects of the media which influence young people's reading habits. One is the concept of:

Influence of Media On Literacy a) Virtual Reality

"With the development of VR worlds, the boundary between 'real' and 'virtual' experiences will disappear." (Somers 1995 203) This makes this new generation very adept at entering into and even inventing their own stories.

Influence of Media on Literacy b) Media -Visual Literacy

New readers are used to "reading" and to concepts such as interactivity, mixed media, complex visual texts and "scriptlike" texts. Therefore their reading demands are different, e.g. as Morris Gleitzman has pointed out:

...the discipline in screenwriting is to reveal the thoughts and feelings of characters through speech and action primarily, and secondarily through photography and through the expressionistic presence on the screen of certain visual and aural moods. (Gleitzman 1992 5)

These are skills which he and other writers have translated into their writing of books for young people, so that the book itself is changing in a range of ways: "Kids today spend their leisure time reading highly illustrated magazines, playing video games, watching music and being assaulted by sophisticated advertising campaigns." (Sheahan-Bright Magpies Vol 11 No 3 July 1996 20)

Dave McCaughan a former children's librarian who now works as a market researcher for McCann-Erickson says that:

Their education and their media experience are framing their view of the world and of the products being marketed to them. (McCaughan 1994 16)

Our study of 16 to 17 year olds...found that most treated the television, VCR, PC and Gameboy as extensions of their social group. Kids don't so much watch the box as interact with it...(15)

They don't turn it off when visitors arrive because, "It would be like telling one of my friends to shut up and sit in the corner." (15) All this watching means that;

Child consumers are sophisticated beings. Their reality is one that involves actions, issues and experiences that even five years ago were never something you would "worry the kids with". (57)

Another commentator points out how difficult it is to target the important youth market because of its rapid change:

Teenagers have a cultural cycle of between four and six months... They are impulsive... But they ...have disposable dollars and they are willing to spend.("From Homeys to Cool Bitches" 1994 36)

They cannot be fooled easily and are the most brand conscious, image conscious consumers around ... they are highly visually literate. (38)

And another says that:

If you're selling things to teenagers, get to know the popular TV program "Beavis and Butthead"... There's a fine line between what "rules" and what "bites" and the latter is relegated to media purgatory with a blast from the remote control. (Brightman 1994 1)

This sort of awareness led Harper Collins to produce the Master Piece series in 1995 and Gary Crew to produce a graphic novel entitled *Tagged*. In general, then, the book market has changed and has led to the changing face of the book, and to changes in the way publishers and writers interact with the market..

Conclusion

For corporate managers, publishing is unusual... It is very difficult to monitor the performance of employees and products when each title is unique, few authors have reliable track records, market research is scorned (or in a primitive state), profits are frequently dependent on the sale of subsidiary rights rather than the sale of the product, your brand name

means nothing to the consumer, and no one can even agree on the definition of a 'good' book. Small wonder that new management becomes so attentive to the bottom line! Everything else is too slippery to grab hold of.
(Luey 1992 6)

It is my premise that not only are there some people involved in the selection of books who are not fully cognizant of the fact that books are saleable media products, but that there are thankfully, some publishers who are relying on it. This is not to say, of course, that there are not some opportunistic usages to which the book has regrettably been put. The infamous Budgie Books by one Duchess of Wales, are a good case in point. This sort of "brand name" publishing by celebrities, whilst enterprising enough, has Kathryn Lasky worrying that publishers "are artificially creating books, in the way packagers do, to sell certain numbers." (Lasky 709) She cites the celebrity books written by Carly Simon and Paul Simon. This is one of the trends which are developing, not surprisingly in an industry which gave us the enormous success of Naomi Campbell's no doubt intensely gripping life story. Why should children's books be any different?

The so-called mass market title has even been known to cross the great divide and become literary, e.g. *Haunted House*, a pop-up book by Jan Pienkowski, as Janet Schulman reports (Schulman 1982 218), won the Kate Greenaway Medal in 1979. Popular culture has changed the way we view things. For instance, the now legendary ALA campaign featuring Miss Piggy on the cover of Booklist and other industry publications(219), has been succeeded by recent posters featuring Antonio Bandaras.

For better or worse it is no longer de rigeur for an author to confess to being a personality. It's considered de rigeur *not* to be one. These "narratives" of authors' lives are often, though based on fact, just as much a fiction, in that fact is enhanced by marketing imperatives. Faction would be a more apt descriptor for some of the biographies used to sell an author's work in the nineties. Authors assume not only interesting pastimes and pasts but assume roles and responsibilities to their readers. For instance, Marsden as seer to angst ridden teenagers; Fox as celebrity author of *Australiana* for pre-schoolers; Crew as guru of literary trends in visual literacy and postcolonialism. The latter has actually been responsible I believe for single-handedly pioneering a genre in Australia - the so-called picture book for older readers. It is no accident that his books were followed by a rash of similar publications by others among our better-known writers - Kelleher, Marsden, Hathorn et al. It is worth questioning though, whether the picture book has not always been for a range of readers, and acknowledging that artists like Maurice Sendak have been challenging readers of all ages for decades. Demand amongst older readers for picture books must certainly have been influenced by the effect of the media, and has been immensely developed by Gary Crew's innovative works, but the success of the genre is perhaps also indicative of the demands of the teaching classroom, as much as it is a product of these other influences. It is just as much a "manufactured" genre, I would propose, as grunge fiction is in the adult market. And no less impressive for that.

According to a recent article on the Australian book trade, "The four main reasons to stock a book, in order of importance, are cover, title, publicity and author." (Moodie 1997 27) As writers and publishers, we need to be aware that much as this seems a simplistic analysis, it is derived from the very complex range of influences I've summarised here. We need to be aware of its origins in the interplay between structure and agency in the book industry. Mass media influence has determined that producing and marketing children's properties is now a complex mixture of commerce and culture. Selling children's properties involves the negotiation of a blurring in the distinction between trade and institutional selling; a rapidly growing and bewildering range of technological developments; and the supremacy of marketing over the actual production of the work. The industry structure, content produced, and technologies employed have changed the face of publishing and those who produce or market these properties must "tout for business" like never before. If we don't, we may very well find ourselves "left on the shelf".

*Robyn Sheahan-Bright was founding Executive Director of the Queensland Writers Centre (1991-7), a Director of Jam Roll Press(1987- 94) and has co-edited several anthologies. Currently she operates **justified text**, a writing and publishing consultancy service, from Gladstone. She tutors at CQU, and is enrolled in a PHD at Griffith University, Gold Coast.*

References

- Alderdice, Kit (1995) "RL Stine: 90 Million Spooky Adventures" in *Publishers Weekly*, Vol 242, No 29, 17 July, p208(2). Return to article
 Attwood, Alan (1997) "The Monster Bestseller" in *Good Weekend*, 5 April, pp 32-7.
 Benezra, Karen (1996) "Scholastic's Cool Ghouls" in *Brandweek*, Vol 37, No 23, 3 June, p46(2). Return to article
 Bodin, Madeline (1993) "Angelina Ballerina Leaps Into Bestsellerdom" in *Publishers Weekly*, Vol 240, No 45, 8 November, pp25(2). Return to article
 Bourdieu Pierre (1993) *The Field of Cultural Production*, Cambridge, Polity Press. Return to article

- Brightman, Joan (1994) "What Smells Like Teen Spirit" in *American Demographics*, Vol 16, No 11, November , p10(2). Return to article
- Butler, Payne Terri (1997) "Tale Spinning: Children's Books on CD-Rom" in *Horn Book Magazine*, Vol 73, No 2, March-April, pp191(6). Return to article
- Chipperfield, Mark (1996) "In Pursuit of Print" in *Marketing*, October, pp14. Return to article
- Coser, Lewis, Kadushin, Charles & Powell, Walter (1982) *Books the Culture and Commerce of Publishing* NY: Basic. Return to article
- Curtain, John (1993) Book Publishing in Cunningham, Stuart & Turner, Graeme, *The Media in Australia* Sydney, Allen & Unwin.
- "Doing it By the Book" (1993) in *Marketing*, August 12, pp21, 23.
- Donovan, John (1991) "Children's Book Publishing on the Ascent" in *Publishing Research Quarterly*, Vol 7, No 3, Fall , p7(8). Return to article
- Duke, Judith S (1979) *Children's Books and Magazines: A Market Study* White Plains, NY, Knowledge Industry Publications. Return to article
- Dunleavy, M.P. (1993a) "Children's a Lot to Swallow", in *Publishers Weekly*, Vol 240, No 51, December 20, pp43(2). Return to article
- Dunleavy, M.P.(1995) "The Squeeze is On" in *Publishers Weekly*, Vol 242, no 2, January 9 , pp44(3). Return to article
- Dunleavy, MP (1993b) "Things That Go Bump in the Night" in *Publishers Weekly*, Vol 240, no 27, 5 July , pp30(2). Return to article
- Engelhardt, Tom (1997) "Gutenberg Unbound: Publishing execs no longer feel the book, as a freestanding entity, is sustainable" in *The Nation*, Vol 264, No 10, March 17 , pp 18(9). Return to article
- Fasich, Adele (1991) "Relations between Children's Libraries and Children's Publishers" in *Emergency Librarian*, No 18, No 5, May-June, pp14-8. Return to article
- "From Homeys to Cool Bitches" (1994) in *Marketing*, May, pp 34-6, 38. Return to article
- "Get Your Kix with Golden Books" (1997) in *Publishers Weekly*, Vol 244, No 42, 13 October, pp28(1). Return to article
- Gleitzman, Morris (1992) "Writing for Children" in *Magpies*, Vol 7, No 1 March, pp5-10. Return to article
- "Golden Books Launches New 'Value' line..." (1997) in *Publishers Weekly*, Vol 244, No 32, 4 August , pp20(1). Return to article
- "Goosebumps with Every Gulp" (1996) in *Publishers Weekly*, Vol 243, no 36, 2 September, pp41(1). Return to article
- Haigh, Gideon (1996) "Bloody Publishers" in *The Independent Monthly*, March, p50-5. Return to article
- Hartnett, Sonya (1998) "In Defence" in *Viewpoint*, Vol 6, No 1, Autumn, pp 33-4. Return to article
- Hely, Sally (1998) "The Unfunny End of Kids' Stuff" in *Australian Author* 30, 2, August-November, pp19-25.
- Hilts, Paul (1997) "The Road Ahead: Publishing Visionaries look at the changes that digital technology might bring" in *Publishers Weekly*, Vol 244, No 31, July , pp125(4). Return to article
- Hochwold, Lambeth "Little Book, Big Controversy" in *Publishers Weekly*, Vol 243, no 31, July 29, pp32(2)
- Hunt, Peter (1991) *Criticism Theory and Children's Literature* Oxford, Blackwell.
- Jefferis, Barbara (1998) "Writers in a Commodity" in *Market* 30, 1, April-July, pp10-13.
- Kiely, Michael (1994) "Big Money in Ethnic Marketing" in *Marketing*, June, pp10-14. Return to article
- Kelly, Steven (1998) "Everybody's Going Postal-Postal USA" in *Bookends Magazine*, 14 March.
- Lane, Michael (1980) *Books and Publishers: Commerce against Culture in Postwar Britain* Lexington, Mass: Lexington. Return to article
- Lapini, Barbara(1997) "The US New Media Show..." in *Business America*, Vol 118, No 6, pp20-1.
- Latrobe, Kathy & Schwartz-Porter (1996) "Bodies Corporate: The New Face of Children's Publishing" in *Emergency Librarian*, Vol 24, no 1, Sept-Oct, pp14. Return to article
- Legge, Kate (1997) "Life Sucks Timmy" in *The Australian Magazine*, March 8-9, pp10-18. Return to article
- Levine, Joshua (1990) "The Last Gasp of the Multi Media?" In *Forbes*, Vol 146, No 6, September 17, pp176(4) Return to article
- Lewis, Justin & Jhally, Sut (1998) "The Struggle Over Media Literacy" in *Journal of Communication*, Vol 48, No 1, Winter, pp 109-120. Return to article
- Lodge, Sally (1995) "A Baby-Sitter Birthday" in *Publishers Weekly*, Vol 242, No 36, September 4, pp28(2).
- Lodge, Sally (1997a) "Children's Mass Market Business" in *PW Online*, 1 December . Return to article
- Lodge, Sally (1995) "Life After Goosebumps" in *Publishers Weekly*, Vol 242, No 36, September 4, pp28(2).
- Lodge, Sally (1997b) "Jim Henson Publishing Adds Staff, Expands List" in *Publishers Weekly*, Vol 244, No 15, April 14, pp30(2). Return to article
- Lodge, Sally (1995) "Paper Shortage Easing, but Prices Climbing" in *Publishers Weekly*, Vol 242, No 40, 2 October, pp18(2).
- Lodge, Sally (1997c) "Surfing the Cyber Wave of Books for Kids" in *Publishers Weekly*, Vol 244, No 38, 15 September, pp25(2).
- Long, Elizabeth (1992) "The Cultural meaning of Concentration" in Kobrak, Fred & Luey, Beth (eds) *The Structure of International Publishing in the 1990s*. New Brunswick, Transaction Publishers. Return to article
- Lottman, Herbert & Roback, Diane (1998) "A Buzz-less Bologna" in *Publishers Weekly*, Vol 245, No 17, April 27, pp31(4). Return to article
- Luey, Beth (1992) "Introduction to the Impact of Consolidation and Internationalisation" in Kobrak, Fred & Luey,

Beth (eds) *The Structure of International Publishing in the Nineties* New Brunswick, Transaction, 1992. pp8-9.

Return to article

Luscombe, Belinda (1997) "Not Your Regular Pulp Fiction" in *Time*, Vol 150, no 4, 28 July, pp77(1). Return to article

McCaughan, Dave (1994) "Kids Stuff" in *Marketing*, October 1994, pp14-17, 21, 57. Return to article

McGuire, Michael (1998) "Buy the Book" in *The Australian*, Friday 5 June, p32. Return to article

Macleod, Mark (1998) "Marketing Books for Young People" in *Viewpoint* 6(3) Spring, pp 5-7. Return to article

McNeal, James U (1992) *Kids as Customers* NY, Lexington, 1992.

McVitty, Walter (1984) *Children's Literature and Children's Television: Some Assumptions and Differences*

(Information Papers No 4. Nth Melbourne The Australian Children's Television Foundation.) Return to article

Maryles, Daisy A (1998) "Ship-Shape Windfall" in *Publishers Weekly*, Vol 245, No 6, February 9, p18(1). Return to article

Maughan, Shannon (1997) "Children's Books Get a Rosie Reception" in *Publishers Weekly*, Vol 244, No2, 2 June, pp33(2).

Maughan, Shannon (1998) "Oh Come All Ye Shoppers" in *Publishers Weekly*, Vol 245, No 4, 26 January, pp30(2).

Maughan, Shannon (1998) "Teen Fan Frenzy" in *Publishers Weekly* Interactive, March 30,

"The Media Mess" (1992) in *The Economist*, Vol 322, No 7748, February 29, pp179(2).

"Media Monopoly Makers" (1995) in *Multinational Monitor*, Vol 16, No 9, September, p7(2). Return to article

Miller, Mark Crispin (1997) "The Crushing Power of Big Publishing" in *The Nation*, Vol 264, No 10, March 17, p11(7). Return to article

Milliott, Jim (1996a) "Battle of the Book Fairs" in *Publishers Weekly*, February 19, Vol 243, No 8, p134(4). Return to article

Milliott, Jim (1996b) "It's All About Content" *Publishers Weekly*, Vol 243, No 26, June 24, p28(3).

Milliott, Jim (1995) "Libraries Opening Up Again" in *Publishers Weekly*, Vol 242, No 22, May 29, pp58(3). Return to article

Milliott, Jim (1995) "Paper Crunch presages Higher Book Prices" in *Publishers Weekly*, Vol 242, No 18, 1 May, p10(3).

Milliott, Jim (1998) "Scanning the Globe for Growth" in *Publishers Weekly*, Vol 245, No 1, 5 January , pp36(3).

Return to article

Moodie Ann-Marie (1997) "Of Covers, Titles and Oprah Winfrey" in *Australian Author*, 29, 1, pp26 -30. Return to article

Morriss, Maureen (1997) "Children's Literature Possibilities on the Web" in *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy*, Vol 20, No 4, November, p321(8). Return to article

Pritchard, Bob (1997) "Enough To Give You Goosebumps" in *Marketing* July, pp38-9. Return to article

Raugust, Karen (1998) "Board Book Editions Approach Saturation" in *Publishers Weekly*, Vol 245, No 19, 11 May, p30(1). Return to article

Raugust, Karen (1997a) "Branding: Benefit or Buzzword?" in *Publishers Weekly*, Vol 244, No 19, May 12, p34(2). Return to article

Raugust, Karen (1997b) "Managing Fads: What the Toy Industry Can teach Book Publishers" in *Publishers Weekly*, Vol 244, No 35, August 25, p34(2). Return to article

Raugust, Karen (1996) "New Toy Related Imprints Experience Growing Pains: Publishers Face Challenges Selling to Bookstores and Consumers" in *Publishers Weekly*, Vol 243, No5, December 9, p30(2).

Raugust, Karen (1997c) "Science Fiction Tie-ins on a mission to attract kids" in *Publishers Weekly*, Vol 244, No 16, 21 April, p33(2).

Raugust, Karen (1997d) "Sports Leagues Target Young Fans with Books" in *Publishers Weekly*, Vol 244, No 8, 24 February, p34(2).

Raugust, Karen (1998) "TV Tie-ins target teen and Pre-teen Girls: publisher/ entertainment company synergy produces steady sales" in *Publishers Weekly*, Vol 245, No 3, January 19, p243(2).

Rosen, Judith (1997a) "Beyond the Bookstore: Buyers Describe the Expanding Role that Children's Books are Playing in their Merchandising Mix" in *Publishers Weekly*, Vol 244, No 7, February 17, p134(2). Return to article

Rosen, Judith (1996) "Books Made to Order" in *Publishers Weekly*, Vol 243, No 2, June 24, p26(2). Return to article

Rosen, Judith (1997b) "Children's Books Make Strong Internet Showing" in *Publishers Weekly*, Vol 244, No 2, 13 January, p32(4). Return to article

Rosen, Judith (1997c) "Breaking the Age Barrier: Many Children's Books also Appeal to Adults, and Booksellers are Looking for Ways to get the Word out" in *Publishers Weekly*, Vol 244, No 37, September 8, p28(4).

Rosen, Judith (1996) "Handselling Without the Hands" in *Publishers Weekly*, Vol 243, No 34, August 19, p30(4).

Rosen, Judith (1997d) "They're Everywhere You Look" in *Publishers Weekly*, Vol 244, no 29, 21 July, p120(4). Return to article

Rosen, Michael (1998) "Big Books" in *Bookends Magazine*, 14 March. Return to article

Sanislo, Glenn (1995) "Scholastic Inc. : 75 years Strong" in *Publishers Weekly*, Vol 242, No 46, p29(2).

Saxby, Maurice (1996) "Challenging the Young Reader" in *Orana*, Vol 32, No 2, May, pp76-91.

Schiller, Robert I (1989) *Culture Inc.: The Corporate Takeover of Public Expression* New York, OUP.

Schulman, Janet (1982) "A Look Inside Those Shiny Covers: Mass-Market Children's Books" in *Top of the News*, Vol 38, No 3, Spring, pp216 -20. Return to article

Schwartz, Judith (1992) "Alfred Knopf Revives the Classics of Children's Literature" in *Brandweek*, Vol 33, No 45,

November 30, p26(2). Return to article

"A Sharper Focus at Bologna Fair" (1997) in *Publishers Weekly Interactive*, May 12, pp1-9. Return to article
Sheahan-Bright, Robyn (1996) "Australian Children's Books 1985-1995" five part series in *Magpies*, Vol 11, Nos 1-5.

Sheahan-Bright, Robyn (1997) "How Real is Too Real?" in *Viewpoint*, Vol 5, No 3, Spring, pp5-6. Return to article

Sheahan-Bright, Robyn (1998) "This Little Piggy Went To Market: Some Perspectives on Australian Children's Publishing Since 1945" Paper delivered at ACLAR Conference, Wagga Wagga, 27 September 1998. Return to article
Somers, John (1995) "Stories in Cyberspace" in *Children's Literature in Education*, Vol 26, No 4, pp197-207. Return to article

Stevenson, Nanette (1997) "Hipper, Brighter and Bolder: Publishers Struggle to Make the Book Jackets stand Out on Ever More crowded Shelves" in *Publishers Weekly* Vol 244, No 7, February 17, pp139(3). Return to article

Sutton, Roger (1997) (Editorial) "Children's Books and Merchandising" in *Horn Book Magazine*, Vol 73, No 5, Sept-Oct, p500(2). Return to article

Taylor, Sally A. (1991) "Intervisual Communications" in *Publishers Weekly*, Vol 238, No 33, 26 July, p217(2).

Return to article

Tulich, Katherine (1994) "Kids With Cash" in *The Bulletin*, 12 July, p23-6.

Turow, Joseph (1997) "Breaking Up America: the Dark Side of Target Marketing" in *American Demographics*, Vol 19, no 11, November, p51(4). Return to article

Turow, Joseph (1997) *Breaking Up America: Advertisers and the New Media World* Chicago: Univ of Chicago Press.

Turow, Joseph (1978) *An Exploration of Publisher-Market Relations* Chicago: ALA.

Turow, Joseph A (1992a) "Mass Communication Perspective on Entertainment Industries" in Curran, James & Gurevitch (eds) *Mass Media and Society* London: Edward Arnold, pp160-177. Return to article

Turow, Joseph (1992b) *Media Systems in Society* London: Longman. Return to article

Turow, Joseph (1977) "Publishing and Distributing Children's Books for the Mass Market" Paper presented at the 1977 American Library Association Conference.

Turow, Joseph (1982) "The Role of the Audience in Publishing Children's Books" in *Journal of Popular Culture*, Vol 16, No 2, Fall, pp 90-7.

Van Orden, Phyllis (1997) "Librarians and Publishers" in *School Library Journal*, Vol 24, No 4, December, pp24-6.

Return to article

Waldren, Murray (1998) "Written Off?" in *Weekend Australian*, Focus, March 28-9, p29.

Williams, Claire & Dillon, Ken (1993) *Brought To Book: Censorship and School Libraries in Australia* Port Melbourne: ALIA in association with Thorpe. Return to article

Yallop, Richard (1998) "Sage of Adolescence" in *Weekend Australian Review*, March 28-9. Return to article

TEXT

Vol 3 No 1 April 1999

<http://www.griffith.edu.au/school/art/text/>

Editors: Nigel Krauth & Tess Brady

Text@mailbox.gu.edu.au