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# Client Relationship and Mass Media Policy: A Comparative Case Study of Mass Market and Library Market Production And Distribution In Children's Book Publishing

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# Client Relationship and Mass Media Policy: A Comparative Case Study of Mass Market and Library Market Production And Distribution In Children's Book Publishing

## **Abstract**

### CHAPTER I: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY AND ITS METHODOLOGY

Analysts of the mass media tend to agree that the organizational nature of mass communication has important consequences for the shaping of those messages which are distributed to large, dispersed audiences (see, for example, Wright, 1975, p. 8). Many scholars have commented, as well, upon the importance which mass produced, widely shared, message systems have for individuals and society. One especially persuasive perspective on the significance of mass communication has been articulated by Gerbner (1972) and is encapsulated in the following passage:

## **Degree Type**

Dissertation

## **Degree Name**

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

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Communication

## **First Advisor**

Gerbner, George

## **Subject Categories**

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CLIENT RELATIONSHIP AND MASS MEDIA POLICY: A COMPARATIVE  
CASE STUDY OF MASS MARKET AND LIBRARY MARKET PRODUCTION  
AND DISTRIBUTION IN CHILDREN'S BOOK PUBLISHING

Joseph Turow


A DISSERTATION

in

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Presented to the Graduate Faculty of the University of Pennsylvania  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor  
of Philosophy.

1976

  
Supervisor of Dissertation

  
Graduate Group Chairman

ANNENBERG

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Joseph Gregory Turow

1976

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Hindsight can sometimes be a frightening thing. I realize now that when I started this project, about a year and a half ago, I did not fully comprehend the magnitude of the work I was undertaking. The intimidating immensity of the job fortunately continued to be masked by the help which tens of individuals gave me during the course of my research. Because space does not permit naming them all, and because the generous people in the organizations I have studied prefer to remain anonymous, I must content myself with a general expression of deep gratitude.

Certain individuals, however, must be publicly thanked. Without them I could never have accomplished this task. Esther Hautzig, a cherished relative and an award-winning children's book writer, was the original reason for my interest in the children's book industry. Her unstinting generosity with journals, contacts, and solace has been of immeasurable help during the past 18 months. Moral and intellectual support has also been forthcoming from my friends at The Annenberg School of Communications and The School of Education, University of Pennsylvania. I would especially like to single out Peggy Petrino, Professor Norma B. Kahn, and my teacher and friend Professor Robert Lewis Shayon. Jan Terrell and Pat Leburg's rapid and accurate typing has made the final stages of this drama much calmer than they might have been.

Warm thanks are also due to the members of my dissertation committee--Professor George Gerbner, Professor Neal Gross, Professor Larry Gross, and Professor William Melody. Their firm insistence on rigorous planning and conceptualization at the start of this project made the road to its conclusion much smoother. Professor Gerbner, the committee chairperson, has been my adviser for the past four years. My great philosophical debt to him can be seen throughout this work.

The concern and help of my family has been the greatest encouragement of all. Sol, Masha, Jerry, Mark, and Debbie Gabry--my uncle, aunt, and cousins--have always been interested. My brother, Victor, has been very helpful with good ideas and good conversation.

The role which Abraham and Danuta Turow have played in the development, execution, and completion of this study has been profound. In many ways, they have been my collaborators. To them, my parents, I would like to dedicate this work.

JGT

Brooklyn, New York  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
West Lafayette, Indiana

September 25, 1976

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## CHAPTER 1: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY AND ITS METHODOLOGY

Analysts of the mass media tend to agree that the organizational nature of mass communication has important consequences for the shaping of those messages which are distributed to large, dispersed audiences (see, for example, Wright, 1975, p. 8). Many scholars have commented, as well, upon the importance which mass produced, widely shared, message systems have for individuals and society. One especially persuasive perspective on the significance ~~on the significance~~ ~~of~~ of mass communication has been articulated by Gerbner (1972) and is encapsulated in the following passage:

The organs of mass communication--printing, television, and radio--provide the means of selecting, recording, viewing, and sharing man's notion of what is, what is important, and what is related to what else. The media are the cultural arms of the industrial order from which they spring. They bring into existence and then cultivate a new form of consciousness--modern mass publics. (p. 155)

Such an approach to mass communication has many ramifications for research, one of which is especially relevant here: Because the production of mass media material has societal significance, a need to understand the organizations which produce such materials is evident. This need also applies to the study of mass media complexes, the informal conglomeration of organizations (including production organizations) that consistently interact in the process of producing



and distributing mass media content. Of particular interest, though rarely scrutinized, is the impact which the continual interaction between certain key organizations in these complexes has for mass media material. Gerbner has designated the most prominent of these interactions--those between "media managements" that produce mass media content and "patrons" that invest in or subsidize material--as "client relationships."

The purpose of this study is to examine such relationships and their consequences in a particularly interesting and important area of the American mass media--the children's book industry. As Lanes (1971, pp. 135-139) has noted, general "children's" (non-text) book publishing contains two separate segments with distinct, generally non-overlapping production and distribution outlet organizations. The library market segment consists mostly of non-profit patron institutions whose (usually publicly employed) selectors buy books from library-oriented publishing firms. The commercially-oriented mass market for children's books is dominated by department chain, and book store patrons who support a different group of publishing firms. It will be noted that in both sets of client relationship, the patron organizations are also important ultimate distributors of managements' books to the children and/or their parents.

The concern of this investigation is to delineate the manner in which these different client relationships help structure the spectrum of choice for new books which await children (and their parents) in book and department stores as compared to those that await them in

public libraries. From a more theoretical perspective, the study is concerned with the consequences different client relationships have for the process of producing and distributing content directed towards the same purported audience. In order to accomplish these goals, a comparative case study was conducted. One important management (or production) organization from each segment and one important patron (or distribution outlet) organization from the library market--two from the mass market--were studied with the goal of charting the influences upon the selectors of content within each organization and, extensionally, of gauging the impact of the client relationships on various aspects of book selection at both the production and distribution outlet levels. These aspects included guidelines relating to the size and diversity of the selection list (the number and types of titles selected); the choosing of authors and illustrators; and the plot, style, characterization, illustrations, moral perspectives, and physical characteristics of the books. It should be noted that the patron organizations were chosen from the same city so that the consequences of the different client relationships from the distribution of a sizeable number of juvenile books within the same area could be examined.

Interviews with 62 people connected with the 4 focal organizations, a questionnaire survey of 50 librarians, and analyses of the new titles which the production and outlet organizations released during approximately the same period led to the finding that the library market and mass market client relationships have broad--and

differing--ramifications for the production and distribution of juvenile books in each segment. The forthcoming analysis will show that the differences between the major client relationships in the mass market and library market segments of the children's book industry are rooted in differences between the two segment's distribution outlets. These differences relate to the reward systems under which the distribution outlet selectors operate as well as to the environment in which the books are displayed to the public. The distinctiveness of the two segments (which stems from crucial differences in the client relationships) has an historical basis. It is perpetuated through the influences of publishers on outlets and of outlets on publishers, because of their compatible--though not congruent--interests in maintaining the traditional selection perspectives of each segment.

The different client relationships within the mass market and library market segments of children's book publishing were observed to have significant consequences for both the publishing firms and distribution outlets that were examined for the study. Moreover, despite important differences in the specific impacts of the relationships in each segment, the same "client relationship dynamics" could be seen to operate in both segments. With regard to the publishers, the different relationships could be seen as major influences in bringing about and perpetuating differences in 1) the structure of decision-making (the channels and direction of communication) regarding the books to be published; 2) the process of selecting the books to be published (in terms of the actual powers of

(page 5 missing from original hard copy)

The client relationship of each segment, then, was seen to bring about systemic consequences that guided very different book production and distribution policies in each segment and that resulted in very different final spectra of choice.

### Background

The consequences of different client/producer interactions for the production of content directed towards the same purported general audience within the same mass media complex have never been investigated. Extent research has shown, however, that factors other than the purported ultimate audience are often most immediately important to those people within mass media production organizations who are responsible for the selection of content, though audience images do sometimes pay a significant background role (see, for example, Breed, 1955; Cantor, 1971; Epstein, 1973; Gieber, 1959; Sigelman, 1972; Tuchman, 1972; and White, 1950). Organizational goals and requirements; colleague and co-worker rapport and pressures; the need to routinize tasks; technological and logistical constraints--these have been cited as more salient than the audience.

While such studies are quite important for the light they shed upon some of the determinants of content, their frames of analysis are often too narrow to focus upon certain types of questions regarding influences. For example, even when a researcher has gone beyond the study of an individual position within a mass media production organization to investigate the interactions of several positions and get a fuller picture of how the organizational structure and

processes affect content selection, the investigator still has not addressed (and, by the nature of his study, cannot address) the larger question of the influences which have shaped the focal organization's structure and decision-making process. In order to approach this problem, one must study the extra-organizational and supra-organizational impingements upon the entity, a task which few researchers have tried. Studies which have scrutinized extra-organizational influences upon mass media production organizations to some degree (e.g. Powdermaker, 1947 and Denisoff, 1976) tend to lack a theoretical focus that will suggest the possibility of generalizing some of the findings to other mass media complexes. Allied to this failing has been a failure to conduct, in as far as possible, comparative analyses of mass media complexes with the objective of determining how different characteristics within otherwise similar complexes influence the production of content, its distribution, and the final spectra of choice which are presented to consumers. The present investigation is an example of such a systemic, comparative analysis.

### The Theoretical Framework

A systematic theoretical framework for performing this type of research is provided by Gerbner (1969). Called "institutional process analysis," the framework rests on the notion that

the systematic exercise of powers resides in institutional roles and in relationships to centers of power. A scheme designed to analyze this process needs to identify power roles [of organizations or groups], suggest some sources of their powers, and specify those functions that affect what the media

communicate. Power and its applications become relevant to this scheme as they affect what is being communicated to mass media publics. (Gerbner, 1969, pp. 242-243.)

Gerbner outlines nine types of "power roles" which organizations or groups may take on within a mass media complex--authorities, patrons, managements, auxiliaries; colleagues, competitors, experts, [public interest] organizations, and publics--and notes the types of leverage and typical functions of each. For example, functions of "managements" include setting, supervising, and carrying out policies regarding the selection of content as well as regarding public relations. The mass media materials which "managements" produce is supported by "patrons," who directly invest in or subsidize media operations in exchange for economic, political, or cultural benefits and which, in doing so, set conditions for the supply of capital and operating funds.

"Publics" are, in effect, the products of mass media output. They are loose aggregations of individuals who, through activities which are often separate and individualized, share common media experiences. While publics are usually too amorphous to act as entities, the individuals who compose them can affect the availability of mass media content by individual patronage signals (for example, by watching or refusing to watch particular films or by buying or refusing to buy particular books). Note should be taken, however, that these signals are usually based on the spectrum of choice which has been made available by media managers. It might also be noted that the term "public" as Gerbner uses it is different from the more commonly used word, "audience." While the latter generally has referred to collective

characteristics of those who attend to an event or to media materials, "public" refers to the people who have entered into a loose community of meaning as a result of that event or those media materials.

By focusing attention on the relationships between entities in a mass media complex (that is, on the sustaining interactions of those entities over long periods), Gerbner's framework encourages the examination of those relationships and the consequences they have for "what the media communicate." Because a relationship is, in a sense, a supra-organization concept (that is, it points not merely to the individual organizations involved but to the dynamic interaction that has evolved between the organizations over time), it is quite useful for approaching the question of influences which shape the structures and decision-making processes of organizations within mass media complexes. Of particular interest are the relationships between certain key organizations within a complex for such relationships would seem to have the most impact on the selection of mass media material.

Because the producers of mass media material are dependent upon their subsidizers for their solvency, it would seem that the most important relationship within a mass media complex would be the one between media "managements" and "patrons." Gerbner calls such relationships "client relationships."

Client relationships can be said to vary in their degrees of patron influence and, thus, in their levels of importance. A "major" client relationship within a complex is one in which the complex's



most important class of patrons is involved. In view of the preceding discussion, it would follow that this kind of relationship would have a crucial influence on the structures and decision-making processes of both managers and patrons and, ultimately, on the actual mass media material which is released to the consumers. Moreover, it would follow that different client relationships would influence the production of different spectra of content, even if the purported audience were the same in both cases.

#### The American Children's Book Complex

The general children's (non-text) book complex in America is a good area in which to explore this hypothesis because, unlike most media complexes, it contains two distinct segments with separate, generally non-overlapping client relationships and the same purported audience (Lanes, 1971, pp. 131-139). What might be called the "library market" segment contains publishers who sell the overwhelming majority of their books to school and public (i.e. non-school related) libraries. By contrast, what might be called the "mass market" segment contains publishers who market their books overwhelmingly to a large variety of non-library outlets--particularly discount, department, and book stores. The library market distribution outlets ("the patrons") generally contain publicly sponsored selectors--librarians--who purchase the books, both fiction and non-fiction, from which the audience may ultimately choose. In the mass market segment this function is performed by privately sponsored agents--buyers--from such outlets as department, discount, and book stores as

well as from outlet servicers such as jobbers and wholesalers.

It should be emphasized that mass market distribution outlets stock relatively few library market books and libraries stock relatively few mass market materials. This separation obtains at the publishing level as well: Mass market publishers are rarely also library market publishers and visa versa.

Another aspect of the children's book complex is important to note at this point: The patrons of the publishing firms in each segment are also the ultimate distributors of their books to the readers. In essence, then, an examination of the client relationships within the mass market and library market areas of the children's book industry would be an examination of the influences upon organizational structures and decision-making processes which result in the selection of mass media material at two levels--that of the producer and that of the distribution outlet.<sup>1</sup>

#### Statistical Information on Children's Book Publishing

Investigation of current literature on children's books reveals little concern with the organizational questions raised in the previous section. In fact, there are no sources which attempt to even delineate the children's book complex in terms of the books produced and distributed. That is, no study can be found which tries to break down the relative sales of, the number of books produced for, and the number of books distributed in, the library market, the mass market, the home "book club" and the school "book club" markets which make up the complex. The statistics which are available must be culled from

what little research there is on the general market for books; these figures are invariably selective or estimated, since some publishers refuse to divulge their sales figures.

Table 1 presents data compiled for the Association of American Publishers (AAP) that estimate book publishing industry sales by AAP Survey categories. The figures found under "juvenile" do not include either home or school book club sales; almost no public information is available with regard to those two segments. The juvenile statistics in Table 1 thus refer to the library and mass markets. Unfortunately, however, the 117.2 million dollars worth of juvenile book sales that is reported for 1974 does not include the sales of an extremely important mass market juvenile book producer, Western Publishing, which is not a member of the AAP. Moreover, the nature of the survey report is such that an AAP member might have reported its adult but not its juvenile sales. Because of the fiercely competitive nature of the juvenile mass market, such a failure to report is a distinct possibility. Indeed the sales manager of a mass market firm speculated to this writer that his company did not report its juvenile sales to AAP. It must thus be concluded that Table 1 seriously underestimates total juvenile sales.

The AAP statistics do not allow a clear differentiation between the library and mass market segments; nor does any other study follow juvenile books from publishers to outlets in an attempt to accurately note the size of each segment and the degree to which they are distinct. A conception of the magnitude of sales to school and

Table 1

Estimated Trade Book Publishing Industry Sales  
by AAP Survey Categories

Millions of Dollars

	1971	1972	1973	1974	1974	
					Percent Change From '73	Percent Change From '72
	\$	\$	\$	\$		
Trade (Total)	422.7	442.0	460.1	522.7	13.6	23.6
Adult Hardbound	242.0	251.5	264.8	308.2	16.4	27.3
Adult Paperbound	69.6	79.6	86.7	97.3	12.2	39.8
Juvenile	111.1	110.9	108.6	117.2	7.9	5.5

public libraries can, however, be found in a study of "the library market" commissioned by Publisher's Weekly (June 16, 1975, pp. 3-30). The study estimates that during the 1974-75 school year, school and public libraries bought 46.2 million dollars worth of juvenile books and public libraries bought 32.9 million dollars worth. These figures cannot strictly compared to the AAP total estimate of 117.2 million presented earlier because of the somewhat different time frames used; the difference of 45.1 million dollars can only, in any event, be taken as a rough estimate of book sales to classrooms combined with some of the sales to the mass market.

It should be noted that a comparison of library market and mass market juvenile book sales would not, at any rate, be an accurate comparative indicator of books sold. Because some mass market books tend to be quite a bit less expensive than books for the library market, relative dollar amounts are not good reflections of relative units produced. Unfortunately, no report of the number of juvenile books printed in 1974 or 1975 could be found. It is known that approximately 3,000 new children's book titles were published in America during each year and that 85% of these were destined for school and public libraries (School Library Journal, January 16, 1976, p. 109). The general number of children's books that have been circulating through American school and public libraries in recent years is not available. This figure would be most appropriately compared to the number of units sold in the mass market to gauge the relative number of children who are being reached in both segments.

The most recent statistic of this sort, compiled in 1962, is that the total number of juvenile books which circulated during that year through public libraries serving over 35,000 people (there were 860 such libraries) was 215,594,239 (Drennan and Hollady, 1962, p. 4). Although this figure and the others that have been presented do not really contribute specifications regarding the size and reach of the mass market segments in 1974 and 1975, they do give a general idea of the magnitude of both those areas.

#### Writing and Research on Children's Book Publishing

It has been seen that statistical information on the children's book complex is quite rare. Literature on the operation of publishing firms in the complex, though available, is not very extensive and does not speak to the concerns of the present study. One text which is devoted entirely to the children's book field, Jean Colby's Writing, Illustrating, and Editing Children's Books (1967) is, despite its age, a handy introduction to the routines of the trade. However, Colby is almost exclusively interested in library market books, and the influence of client relationships even in this segment is not one of her concerns.

Of the general guides to book publishing (Bailey Jr, 1970; Dessauer, 1975; Grannis, 1967; Kujoth, 1971; Lippincot, 1967; and Smith 1966), only the Grannis and Kujoth anthologies delve into juvenile publishing in any detail. In the former book, an especially interesting article by Karl (1967) presents an overview of the basic activities involved in producing and marketing children's books and

devotes several paragraphs to the differences between mass market and library market juveniles, noting that quick sales and high-powered merchandising by subject and publisher names are the hallmarks and fortes of the former. Lanes (1971), in a wide-ranging, generally literary analysis of children's literature, also distinguishes between the two markets; she praises the library market products as creative and condemns mass market output as hackneyed and non-literary.

The amount of sociological research which has been conducted on the publishing industry in general has been quite small, although there is a growing recognition of the importance of this area as a field of study. In the September, 1975, issue of The Annals, which was devoted entirely to book publishing (mostly of the academic and scholarly sort), Lewis Coser comments that "curiously enough, no major sociological study of the modern publishing industry is available" (Coser, 1975, p. 22). One of the few published pieces of research about the children's book industry does, interestingly enough, touch upon the importance of the client relationship for the library market. William Jenkins, in a 1964 survey of juvenile book editors, found that the editors, when asked to rank "the factors affecting publishers' decisions to publish a given children's title," tended to place "librarians' requests or comments" and "teachers requests or comments" first and second, while "market analyses of children's reading habits," "patterns in adult reading habits," "trends in other mass media" and "publishing trends in other countries" were ranked 6th through last respectively (Jenkins, 1965, pp. 331-333). Unfortunately, no published updating or extension of this study could be found.

### Writing and Research on Children's Book Distribution Outlets

No research at all could be found regarding mass market outlets for children's books. At the same time, the greatest amount of writing about the children's book complex undoubtedly concerns the selection of particular books for public and school libraries. Magazines such as School Library Journal, The Horn Book, Publisher's Weekly, and others evaluate many new titles for juveniles in every issue, primarily as an aid to librarians in choosing books for their shelves. Virginia Kirkus Reviews, Booklist, and Bulletin Of the Center For Children's Books are major reviewing operations aimed at critiquing an enormous number of children's books for the benefit of subscribing librarians. The New York Times Book Review, which has a more general audience, publishes weekly reviews of a few juvenile titles. Most of the reviews in these media are short statements about the quality of book and its appropriateness for children at certain age or grade levels. Lengthier pieces of reflective literary criticism are rarer but can be found in such journals as The Horn Book, Bookbird, Phaedrus, Elementary English, and College English and in the works of such critics as John Rowe Townsend (1965, 1971). Articles on book selection regularly appear in the trade press and in productions of more radical voices like The Carnegie Quarterly, The Interracial Books For Children Bulletin, Feminists on Children's Media, and Women on Words and Images. Some of the trade articles have been collected in anthologies (see, for example, Field, 1969; and Gerhardt, 1974).



Most of those who write on children's books would probably agree with the concern which Weitzman and her colleagues (1974) evidence regarding this mass medium:

Through books, children learn about the world outside of their immediate environment; they learn what other boys and girls do, say, and feel; they learn about what is right and wrong; and they learn what is expected of their age. In addition, books provide children with role models--images of what they can and should be.

General guidelines for the selection of children's books which reflect this concern can be found in introductory texts on library work with children (for example, Broderick, 1965; Gross, 1967) and in works on the world of children's literature (Arbuthnot and Sutherland, 1972; Hazard, 1960; Karl, 1970; and Meigs, et. al. 1969). When discussing selection, these books basically articulate a view of children and childhood and then attempt to set forth generalizations about the types of books which should be chosen for different ages so that, in the words of one writer (Gross, 1967, p. 21), they "will find in the library sources for everlasting growth, wonder, and delight."

Most studies of library selection (see, for example, Broderick, 1962; Busha, 1971; Eakin, 1948; Fiske, 1959; Moon, 1962; Pope, 1974; and Tamblyn, 1965) are surveys directed towards the question of library censorship, a sanction that is only one facet of the overall organizational selection process. Moreover, of the seven studies mentioned above, only Marjorie Fiske's research was conducted through interviews; the rest used questionnaires and concentrated on quantifiable conclusions about opinions of large librarian populations rather than on particular pressures which influence them. Fiske's sixteen year old

study contains many important and interesting insights into the pressures on librarians, although her study suffers somewhat from the fact that the interviews were conducted with head librarians and school principals only (not the rank and file who select books for the branches) as well as from her failure to confront squarely the meaning of "censorship." In addition, Fiske only mentions children's books incidentally.

#### The Research and Its Methodology

It can be seen, then, that this study focuses upon an organizational complex which is virtually ignored in systematic academic research. Because the aim of the investigation has been to compare the consequences of different client relationships for the selection of content at production and distribution outlet levels of library market and mass market, an in-depth, case study approach which allows for organizational analysis was been used. "Management" (or publishing) and "patron" (or distribution outlet) organizations from the library market and mass market were studied with the goal of charting the influences upon the selectors of content within each organization and, extensionally, of gauging the impact of client relationships on various aspects of book selection at both the production and distribution levels. The patron organizations were chosen from the same large city so that the consequences of the different client relationships for distribution of a sizeable number of juvenile books within the same area could be examined. In order to obtain a broader understanding of the environment in which the chosen

firms are operating (and which helps shape their operation), this comparative case study was supplemented by interviews with key figures from throughout both segments of the complex and by an historical analysis of the origins of the client relationships. The following sections will introduce the objects of study and outline the research methodology more specifically.

#### The Organizations and Positions That Were Studied

Two factors guided the choice of organizations within each segment--importance and availability. The latter factor did not, however, compromise the former. On the publishing level, the firms selected are large corporations which publish children's books that are known to have strong sales and good reputations in their segments. On the distribution outlet level, the juvenile division of a municipal public library system was examined, as were two mass market distribution outlets in that same area--a book store chain and a department store chain.

The public library system was chosen over the city's school library system as an object of analysis because of the important national, regional, and local significance it has, an influence that extends to its school-based counterpart. An initial feeling that book stores might have very different requirements and selection guidelines from other kinds of mass market outlets led to a decision to choose two types for analysis: A book store chain that operates many stores throughout the country (including 4 in the area studied) was chosen, as was a nationally known regional department store with

11 branches in the city. The small number of selectors in the mass market outlets made this double examination feasible. These small numbers were not found in the public and school library systems; consequently only one of those organizations could be studied.

The focus of a large part of the research was on those positions in each organization that have responsibility for determining which books are to be accepted. A position can be designated as a "production" or "distribution outlet" selector, depending on whether the position belongs to a management or patron organization in the segment.

Two types of selectors in each organization can be usefully defined. A direct selector is one who has direct power over the selection, timing, withholding, or repetition of particular messages. An indirect selector is one who controls the resources (information or money) which are needed by direct selectors in order for them to perform their duties. For example, children's book editors are usually direct selectors while children's book salespeople and promotion people (who inform the editors of the types of books which outlets want) are usually indirect selectors.

Chart 1 presents a schematic diagram of the research design and notes the direct and indirect selectors who were contacted. The objective was to reach all direct selectors in each organization. The number of direct selectors in the publishing firms of both segments and in the mass market distribution outlet organizations was small enough so that an attempt could be made to interview all of them. However, the large number of librarians (45) necessitated the

CHART 1

SCHEMATIC DIAGRAM OF RESEARCH IN FOCAL ORGANIZATIONS<sup>a</sup>

	"LIBRARY MARKET"	"MASS MARKET"
	<u>Library Market Publishing Firm</u>	<u>Mass Market Publishing Firm</u>
"MANAGEMENT"	The juvenile division's publisher* 3 senior editors* 2 of 4 associate editors* 1 of 3 readers* The firm's vice president (vp) for finance The firm's vp for marketing The juvenile marketing director The juvenile/adult library promotion and advertising director The juvenile/adult publicity director The paperback division's sales director The assistant production manager (juvenile) The firm's director of foreign rights The juvenile division's director of subsidiary rights 4 of 19 trade salespeople 1 of 7 paperback salespeople	The juvenile division's publisher and the firm's marketing directors* 2 of 3 Division vice presidents* The managing editor* The senior editor* The editor-art director* 1 of 2 art directors* The firm's vp in charge of finance The firm's trade sales directors The juvenile production supervisor The juvenile/adult library promotion and advertising director 4 of 54 trade salespeople
"CLIENT RELATIONSHIPS"	<u>The Public Library</u>	<u>The Book Store Chain</u>
"PATRONS"	15 children's branch librarians interviewed plus a questionnaire survey of 45* 4 juvenile library coordinators (interviewed and given questionnaire)* The library system's director	The central book buyer* The 4 branch store auxiliary buyers* <u>The Department Store Chain</u> The central book buyer*

<sup>a</sup>All were interviewed, except where noted

\*These are direct selectors; the others are indirect selectors

distribution of survey questionnaires to them after a 1/3 sample was interviewed. It was also decided that key indirect selectors who were closely connected to the juvenile book selection processes in those organizations (and who were mentioned by direct selectors in their interviews) should be approached, since their input might be crucial to selection decisions. These selectors were especially prominent in the publishing firms; interviews with them as well as with a small number of salespeople (most of whom worked in the outlets' city) were carried out.

#### Entering the Organizations

Some words should, perhaps, be said about the manner in which entry was made into the organizations. The procedure varied depending on the organization involved. In all cases, however, the people contacted were told only in general terms that the study related to book production and distribution within the juvenile book industry. The notion of client relationships was avoided so as not to bias their answers; nor, for the same reason, was any mention made of a comparison between the mass market and the library market segments. A conversation on this basis with the head of the public library's juvenile division and the division's head of book selection led to a complete access to files as well as the permission to interview the 4 juvenile coordinators and 15 branch librarians (in an accidental sample of those who were scheduled to visit the System Coordinating Office during a certain period of time for new book ordering) and to survey all of them. In the case of the book store chain, the firm's

central book buyer and the focal area's 4 branch store auxiliary buyers were contacted and interviewed. With regard to the department store, only one person coordinates juvenile book selection for all 11 branches; he was contacted and interviewed.

The publishing firms presented the greatest complexity with regard to interviewing. In order to avoid alienating the principals of the firms with large plans to interview many people, direct and key indirect selectors were contacted and interviewed without the coordinated help of management. This approach was possible because of The Literary Marketplace annual, a tome that lists the names and titles of important figures in all American publishing houses. In some cases, where a position was not listed in Marketplace or where selectors seemed difficult to approach individually, previous interviewees were helpful in arranging a meeting. This "hop-scotch" approach, though to a large degree very successful, did have its drawbacks. One editor who was contacted (at the mass market firm) refused to submit to an interview, and in a few cases potential interview arrangers made clear their feelings that meetings with more people in the same organizational roles were redundant and would take too much valuable time from the juvenile department as a whole. Consequently, only 1 of 3 readers and 2 of 4 associate editors were interviewed in the library market firm, and only a number of salespeople could be interviewed in both publishing houses.

Prominent figures with the children's book complex or individuals in the areas of the complex (such as book wholesaling or jobbing) about which more knowledge was desired were contacted directly. In

most cases, the same questions that were posed to the focal organizations' selectors were asked of them. In a few cases, however, the discussion of broad issues, problems, and hypotheses which were being grappled with by the researcher was thought to be more useful.

### The Interviews

Essentially the same interview questions were asked of all selectors. Since the focal library system has two stages of book selection, some of the questions had to be asked twice. A comparison of the two interview schedules in Appendix A will show, however, that the library version is modeled after the four-part schedule used for the other focal organizations.

In the first part, the selector is asked to describe the activities which he (or she) performs in his position and the objectives that he has. The second part deals with questions relating to the interviewee's role regarding specific aspects of book selection. The subject is asked to note the degree of influence he has in his organization regarding each aspect of book selection, the importance that aspect has for him, the guidelines he holds with respect to it, and the reasons for those guidelines. Specific probes of the influence on the selector which emerge from the latter question are used to explore why those influences are important and how their requirements are discovered. A question regarding controversial issues and one regarding controversial issues and one regarding the selector's image of his audience and the way he arrives at that image further illuminates specifications of selection and influences.



The third part of the interview schedule examines the activities and perspectives which the selector has with respect to the organizations opposite to his in the client relationship (the distribution outlets for the publishing selectors). Both the publishing and distribution outlet selectors are asked if there are any types of books which they feel outlet selectors want but which are not being published. Similarly, selectors from both types of organizations are asked about the extent and nature of their contacts with representatives from the opposite organizational type. Here the intention is to gauge the manner in which the selectors either are influenced by or attempt to influence selectors on the other side of the client relationship. Specific probes also query the mass market and the library market outlet selectors about the desirability of books from the two focal publishing firms; selectors from the latter, in turn, are asked about the importance of those outlets for their books. The final part of the interview schedule is comprised of questions designed to explore the interviewee's professional background and his previous experience in the industry.

The open-ended nature of the questions allowed the interviewer to clarify and pursue in more depth interesting comments by the respondent. Most interviews ranged from 45 minutes to an hour, though several were longer and some were shorter. Direct selectors usually had longer interviews than indirect selectors; interviews with librarians were the longest of all. Some interviewees were more open than others, though none was diffident or unresponsive. Naturally,

selectors dwelled on some areas of the interview schedule more than others, depending on their areas of professional responsibility. For example, the publishing firms' marketing and sales people spent most of their time in Parts I and III, while the editors and librarians were more talkative in I and II.

In many of the interviews with direct selectors a tape recorder was used and the results transcribed. When a tape recorder was not present, quick notes were taken and fleshed out immediately after the meeting. Analysis of the interviews was performed by grouping the responses in terms of organization and segment and by comparing the answers of the selectors to each question. By piecing together the various respondents' comments about their own and others' responsibilities and duties from Part I (as well as from comments scattered throughout the interview), a picture of each focal organization's structure as it relates to juvenile book selection was obtained. The specifications which were described by respondents from each focal organization regarding the aspects of book selection in Part II were listed and compared, as were the influences which the respondents said brought about those specifications. Categories of specifications and related influences were formulated, and the relative saliences of these categories across selection aspects and across respondents were noted.

The answers in Part III were similarly sifted and analyzed with the aim of clarifying some of the more formal mechanisms by which organizations that make up the client relationship attempt to learn

about and influence each other. The background data in Part IV was grouped by organization and position in order to compare the professional experience of selectors in each segment and to determine the extent to which the two segments exchange personnel. Through synthesizing the interview responses in this manner and comparing the findings in each segment, a picture of the various fashions in which different factors--especially the major client relationship--exert influence upon the structure and process of content selection in each organization was obtained.

#### The Question of Response Bias in the Interviews

A concern in any study based to a large extent on interviews is the degree to which there exists a pattern of interview response bias that makes suspect any relationship between the answers given and the respondents' actual activities. It is probably impossible to prevent self-aggrandizing talk on the part of interview subjects. However, by the firm promise to the respondents that personal and organizational anonymity was assured, an attempt was made to minimize pressures conducive to outright prevarication.

It should also be noted that the answers which were collected in the five organizations did not yield a simple consistency that would imply publicity-oriented responses. Rather, as will be seen, the varied responses revealed different facets of the same activities from different points of view that could be seen to converge, yielding a mosaic of the children's book industry which could be analyzed in a

systematic fashion. This convergence of responses, plus the consistency with which responses did match certain findings about the actual books produced and distributed in each segment, lends a strong confidence in the validity of the research.

### The Questionnaire Survey

It was noted above that a decision was made to interview a one third sample of the 45 branch librarians (plus the four coordinators) and the distribution of a survey questionnaire to the entire population afterward. The questionnaire was designed to test certain hypotheses that had been formulated about the library book selection process as a result of the interviews. As seen in Appendix B, the questionnaire (which was completed by 35 librarians) is similar in thrust to the interview schedule. In the first part the respondents are presented with a list of particular influences which were mentioned as important in the interviews and are asked whether each interview is very important, somewhat important, or not important at all in their thinking regarding the selection of books. The second part queries respondents about particular influences upon them in their branches. The third part presents questions regarding activities and perspectives which the selector has with respect to the organizations opposite to his in the client relationship. The final part asks for information about the librarians' branch and her professional background.

### Analyses of New Books Produced

Although a systematic analysis of the interviews and questionnaires yielded a picture of the consequences that the different client

relationships had upon the selection structures and processes of the focal outlets and publishing firms and upon the specifications which the selectors said they had for their children's books, the surveys could not show that the impact of the client relationships was actually felt in the end products, the mass media materials which were produced. In order to determine if such a connection exists, at least on the broadest level, the new books which were selected by each organization approximately during the period of the research (1974-75) were analyzed in terms of general content categories. The findings were then related to the organizational research to present a fuller picture of the comparative impact of the different client relationships.<sup>2</sup>

#### An Historical Analysis

An even broader perspective on the importance of client relationships in differentially shaping the selection structures and processes in the two segments' production and distribution outlets was obtained through an analysis of the historical records available on the origin and evolution of these relationships. Although the present case study cannot possibly deal at length with the history of the juvenile book industry, it can provide a short overview of the profound developmental influence that the client relationships have had on the entire children's book complex and, by extension, on the focal organizations.

#### A Glance Ahead

The parts and chapters that follow will delve into the particulars of this study and explore its findings. Part I will deal with

the consequences of the major client relationship in the library market segment, with the preface outlining the historical origins of the relationship, Chapter 3 examining the focal publishing organization, and Chapter 4 discussing the focal distribution outlet. Part II's preface and two chapters will do the same regarding the mass market segment and will compare the findings with those in the library market. A concluding chapter will summarize and explain the findings, comment on some theoretical and practical ramifications which they imply, and suggest directions for further investigation.

### End Notes

<sup>1</sup>It is clear that one important difference between the library market and the mass market is that while in the former books are borrowed by the ultimate readers, in the latter books are bought. This difference will be seen to have some consequence for the production of titles in both segments. It is important to emphasize however, that the focus of the present investigation is not on the buying or borrowing habits of consumers but, rather, on the forces that influence the spectrum of books which are made available for lending or selling.

<sup>2</sup>It will be noted that the emphasis in the surveys as well as in the analyses of book content was on new book selection at the production and distribution level (that is, on titles published for the first time during the research period). However, the importance of backlisted hardbacks and of paperback reprints was also recognized, especially as they affected the new title selection process.

PART I:  
THE LIBRARY MARKET SEGMENT



## CHAPTER 2: AN HISTORICAL PREFACE TO THE LIBRARY MARKET

A comprehensive chronicle of the children's book industry in America has yet to be written. However, historical surveys are adequate for tracing, at least in bold outline, the origin of the major client relationship that exists between libraries and large groups of publishing firms with regard to juvenile books. The development of this relationship can be seen as a culmination of the public library movement for children in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

There were isolated examples of public libraries for American youth as early as 1803 (when Caleb Bingham, a bookseller, donated a library to his town of Salisbury, Connecticut for use by children ages 9 to 16--Meigs, et. al. 1967, p. 384). However, the need for public library service to children was not generally recognized during the first three quarters of the 19th century, when the adult public library movement was making such impressive progress. As late as 1890, the great majority of public libraries barred everyone below the ages of 12 or 14; some even posted notices reading "no dogs or children admitted" (Long, 1969, p. 84; Tebbel, 1975, p. 519). During this period of neglect, the agency that reached more children than any other, with books that it considered suitable for them to read, was the Sunday School. From the beginning of the 19th century, such one-a-week

schools circulated material on a reward system, with pupils who had shown good behavior or attendance receiving tickets to borrow books that were to be returned the following week. The first Sunday Schools demanded tracts of a highly religious, moral character for their libraries, and general book publishers did not seem interested in supplying books of this nature. Consequently, the American Sunday School Union, an umbrella organization, undertook the publication of what came to be known as "The Sunday School Book" of the 19th century--"a type of book filled with evangelical zeal and sentimentality" (Long, 1969, p. 48). Different denominational publishing firms also contributed to the output. In 1831 the American Sunday School Union could boast 300 volumes for every Sunday School in the United States (Long, 1969, p. 48).

The character of the Sunday School book collections changed as the years passed, with the general tenor becoming somewhat more secular as time went on (Long, 1969, p. 49). By 1870 the Union no longer existed, and Sunday School librarians were turning to the open market to purchase their books. This development--and the juvenile literacy which the public and Sunday school movements had spawned--precipitated a flood of quarto children's preface books such that, in 1889, one bookmaker complained that the quartos were being manufactured at so small a margin of profit that it scarcely paid to promote them. They were meant only for the cheapest market, he said the drygoods counter, where they were selling for anywhere from a quarter to 60 cents, scarcely ever going as high as a dollar. The competition in bookstores and other outlets was so savage that the larger houses, forced into it, were barely holding their ground (Tebbel, 1975, p. 597).

Sunday school librarians, having had no training in book selection, were not judged competent to select wisely from among the materials available. Long (1969, p. 85) notes that "a few of the religious denominations sought to remedy the situation by issuing approved buying lists, but Sunday School librarians, even so, were easy prey. Some of them, indeed, would simply send an order for so many dollars worth of books to some leading publisher, leaving the selection to his judgement or interest. Book collections were also often augmented by gifts when families weeded out their home libraries."

#### The Movement Toward Public Library Service to Children

At the same time that the Sunday School libraries were experiencing selection problems and the publishing community was in turmoil over the numbers and prices of juvenile books, a movement to establish children's rooms in public libraries, with supervision and book selection to be carried out by professionals, was gaining momentum. It would be a movement that would bring about the gradual disappearance of the Sunday School Library and would create a relatively stable, predictable market for materials that would allow some publishers to escape the savage competition which the recent inundation of juveniles had brought.

Landmark events began to occur in fairly rapid succession. In 1894 Lutie Stearns, of the Milwaukee Public Library, presented a report at the American Library Association conference which detailed the paucity of adequate library service for children and is credited with arousing the librarians present to a clear conviction of the

desirability of abolishing age limitations in the public library and providing special rooms for children with special attendants designated to serve children (Meigs, et. al. p. 386). In 1896 Anne Carroll Moore introduced lectures (and, later, a course) on library work with children at Brooklyn's Pratt Institute, an activity that was emulated in other library schools. In 1898 Francis Jenkins Olcott organized the first children's coordinating department in a public library--the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh--and developed a pattern for reaching children through the children's rooms of branch libraries, through schools, and through the homes. Other such departments followed, and with them came the establishment of policies and objectives, the determination of criteria for book selection, and the development of methods of work. In the words of Elizabeth Nesbitt, "as the twentieth approached the end of its second decade, library work with children had become an important and established phase of public library work" (Meigs, et. al. 1969, p. 388).

#### The "Quiet Revolution": Consolidation of a Major Client Relationship

The stage was set by the end of the twentieth century's second decade for what John Tebbel has called "the quiet revolution in children's book publishing" (Tebbel, 1975, p. 601). Until that time, publishing firms had been handling children's books as part of their adult trade activity; no special effort had been made to create a juvenile department with a separate identity and line. The increasing number of juvenile libraries requiring an increasing number of books that would meet their selection objectives and guidelines encouraged

such a development, however. In 1918 the Macmillan Company pioneered in creating a Children's Book Department with Louise Seaman, a former school teacher and an employee of the firm, as its head. In 1922, May Masee, a librarian and editor of the American Library Association Booklist, became the first children's book editor at Doubleday, Page, and Company; Marion Fiery, from Anne Carroll Moore's department of the New York Public Library, was appointed to that position at E. P. Dutton three years later. Other companies followed so that by 1928, a decade after the Seaman appointment, there were juvenile divisions at eight publishing houses (Horn Book, August 1928, pp. 74-76). The ensuing years brought many more.

The flavor of the client relationship that had thus developed between the publishing houses that had juvenile divisions and the public libraries is reflected in reminiscences by the distinguished children's book editor Margaret K. McElderry. Her remarks are worth quoting at length:

Before entering the publishing profession, I had been a fascinated observer of children's books from a rather special vantage point. A beginning children's librarian just when the country was starting to pull out of the Depression, I first worked in the office of Anne Carroll Moore, who had been, since the inception of the position in 1906, Director of Work With Children in The New York Public Library. As junior assistant, I reported ten minutes before opening time each day to dust, sharpen pencils, and straighten--but never to rearrange--the great piles of papers and books on Miss Moore's desk. Into Room 105, as the office was known, came almost everyone interested in or connected with children's books--editors, authors, illustrators, reviewers, educators, and librarians--seeking advice or imparting information. Since Miss Moore's desk was separated from the rest of the office only by a leather screen, it was impossible not to hear nearly everything that went on--though one would sometimes have preferred not to.

The children's book editors who came were, with a few exceptions, those who had first established children's book departments. ...

In retrospect, it is clear that one of the great strengths of children's book publishing has been the stability and continuity of its leadership. Strong-minded, dedicated women they were, all of them. (Until 1935, when Vernon Ives and Holiday House arrived on the scene, there were no male editors of books for children.) ...The precepts and principles they established--and, in most cases, continued to practice for years to come--provided the strong foundation on which children's book publishing still stands.

....These editors and librarians naturally formed strong friendships of great mutual benefit. Such a relationship has never existed to any degree between adult editors and librarians. It continues to be a particular strength of the children's publishing and library world. (Horn Book, October 1974, pp. 84-87.)

#### The Client Relationship Today

The "children's publishing and library world" has changed quite a bit since the early 1930's. By 1975, the Children's Book Council, an organization of publishers most of which sell primarily to libraries, had 52 members. Moreover, the types of libraries which were important to the publishers had broadened. In the days of the first juvenile Divisions, the principal patrons within the children's library market were the public libraries; school libraries were too few and too weak to have much influence. By the late 1960's, however, school libraries had become powerful elements of the client relationship, a development that had been precipitated largely as a result of the 1965 passing of the Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act, which made available one billion dollars for school library materials, textbooks, and other instructional materials (Meigs, et. al. 1967, p. 410). Although this funding was cut drastically during the early 1970's, the broadened client

base still remained. By 1975, the number of school and public libraries in the United States had reached 72,676 ( R. R. Bowker, 1975, p. 1).

Margaret McElderry's remarks indicate that though the library market segment of children's book publishing has changed since the days of "the quiet revolution," the major client relationship has been institutionalized and its surface manifestations--the interactions between editors and librarians--are generally recognized as an integral part of the juvenile library market. Even the large scale introduction of paperback reprints of popular juvenile library titles into classrooms, book fairs, some book stores, and some department stores (as well as into libraries)--an activity precipitated by non-juvenile publisher Dell in the late 1960's--has done little to change the essential foci of the library market client relationship, though it has broadened the availability of that relationship's product.

The following two chapters will explore the consequences of the library market client relationship for one publishing firm and one public library system within the library market segment during 1974 and 1975. It will be seen that the impact of the major client relationship goes beyond surface manifestations and reaches to the core of the publishing operation by structuring--and thus delimiting--the range of necessary and desired activities for a publishing firm when it chooses, produces, promotes, and markets books for the library market. Similarly, though perhaps more subtly, the relationship will be shown as having strong and important influences upon the public

library system, both in terms of reinforcing certain library market perspectives towards children's books championed by the dominant publishers and in terms of perpetuating the power of those firms to set new trends and define important issues for the system's librarians.



### CHAPTER 3: THE LIBRARY MARKET PUBLISHING FIRM

The focal library market firm for this study, to be called LM, is a very large company operating under a "federal system" of publishing, wherein different divisions--adult, trade, juvenile, college, school, medical, adult paperback, and international--are held responsible for the discovery, production, and marketing of their own books. Under such an arrangement, the firm's top management oversees the financial condition of each division, apportions the yearly budgets, and initiates or oversees major policy or price changes. Day to day operations and decisions, however, are carried out by the divisional publisher and staff.

LM began publishing children's books over a century ago as part of its regular trade book activity, and its specialized Children's Book Division was founded relatively early in the "quiet revolution." LMCBD (as LM's children's book division will be called) is recognized today as one of the sales leaders within the juvenile book industry and is widely respected throughout the library market for its output.

Like all library market firms, the overwhelming percentage of LM's children's book sales is to school and public libraries. According to the company's marketing director, 85% of the LMCBD is hardbound books end up in the institutional arena. However, the Division is unusual

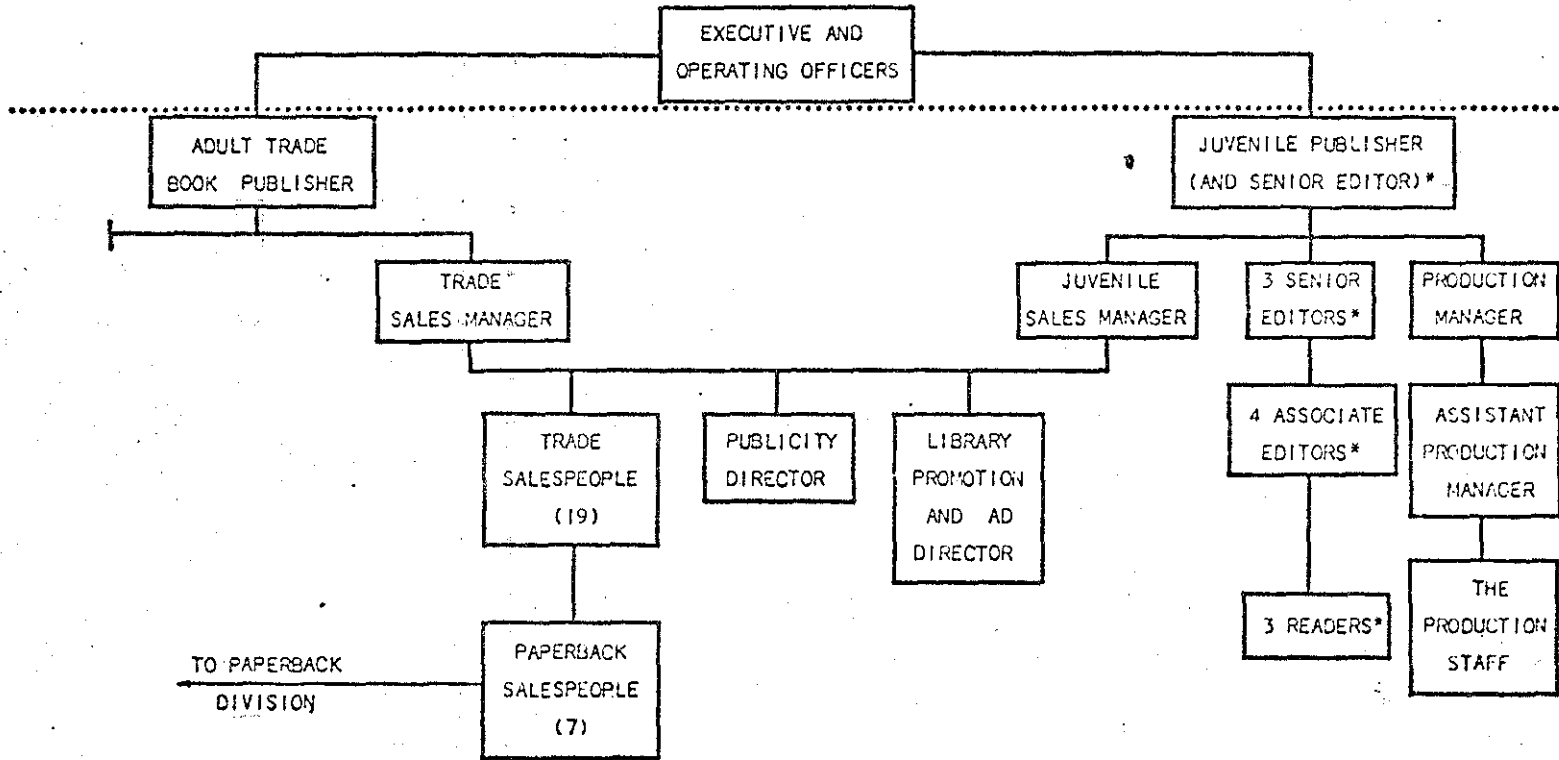
in that a fair number of its hardbound titles (mostly those which have already gained popularity in the library) can be found in book stores and a significant minority of its juvenile paperbacks (reprints of some LMCBD hardbacks) have been getting into both book and department stores.

Chart 2 depicts the organizational structure of the juvenile division. It will be noted that LMCBD's marketing department (consisting of promotion, sales, and publicity sections) is shared with the adult book division. LM's marketing director explained that this arrangement is most efficient since the divisions essentially share the same marketplace--libraries and bookstores. The juvenile paperbacks are represented by salespeople from the adult paperback division as well as by the trade marketing force.

Among the "direct selectors," four different positions can be seen--the publishers (who oversees the Division), four senior editors (who choose manuscripts and guide them to completion), four associate editors (who, less experienced than the senior editors, perform the same tasks, but with more oversight from the publisher and senior editors), and three readers (who read and critique all manuscripts arriving at the Division before they are sent for further consideration to the editors or associate editors). It will be noted that LMCBD's publisher is also an editor. While this situation seems to hold true in "federally" organized publishing firms throughout the library market, such is not the case in the mass market, as will be seen. The significance of this and other structural variances will have to await

CHART 2

MAJOR ELEMENTS OF LMCBD'S ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



\*These are direct selectors

a direct comparison of the focal library market and mass market firms. Here it will only be said that the differences will be found to be intimately related to--and reflective of--the different activities shaped by the client relationship in each segment.

The more immediate task, however, is to explore the consequences of the selectors' continual interaction with librarians for the process and product of juvenile book publishing. This task must logically begin with an examination of the manner in which LMCBD selectors conceptualize the signal requirements and opportunities of their major client relationship. As will be seen, it is the acting in accordance with this conceptualization that structures the Division's responses to requirements and opportunities from throughout the children's book complex and, extensionally, shapes the activities that its selectors carry out, the influences they exert and which are exerted upon them, the selection guidelines and audience images which they articulate, and the books they produce.

#### Conceptualizing the Requirements and Opportunities of the Client Relationship

The significance of libraries and librarians to the continued economic well-being of LMCBD was well understood by everyone who was interviewed. "Librarians are extremely important to us because libraries of all kinds constitute the major markets for our books," noted one editor when asked about her contacts with representatives of their distribution outlets. The publisher, essentially saying the

same thing, phrased it in terms of the ultimate spectrum of choice presented to the readers: "Librarians are very important to us because they are the ones who bring books to children."

This realization of the bottom-line importance of libraries and librarians has naturally led selectors to attempt to understand their major market and its operations with respect to LMCBD. Interviewees' remarks about the factors impinging upon their activities revealed an underlying conception of crucial requirements and opportunities which are mandated by the division's dealings with clients. Further analysis shows that this conception has itself been shaped by 3 major considerations: 1) The tradition of the publishing house and the proclivities of the Division's direct selectors; 2) the environment of selection in, and economic nature of, the marketplace; and 3) the feedback and promotional environment. The following sections will outline these considerations and show how they interrelate and merge to form a conception of the major requirements and opportunities posed by the library market client relationship.

#### The Tradition of the House and Proclivities of the Direct-Selectors

A strong pride in LM's tradition with regard to juvenile books seemed to mesh well with the proclivities of the editors within the organization. Both an editor and a salesperson referred to the presence of several LMCBD books on the American Library Association list of the best children's books of all time; a reader spoke reverentially of a selection policy that had been set by an early LMCBD publisher. The editors and reader could also be seen to pride themselves on the

editorial control exercised by their division. Interviewees from throughout the firm agreed that LMCBD is freer from the interference of LM marketing and sales personnel than any other division within the company. A related thread that ran through the comments of all the direct selectors was the desire to publish books that are departures from the ordinary. An editor summed up these feelings well:

We love to do something fresh. We don't do it just for novelty's sake. We do it because we like it. If somebody comes up with a fresh idea, it's wonderful. We would like to consider ourselves doing innovative books. They're the most fun to do. But we do a mix. We do all kinds of books.

One interviewee tied a specific heritage of the past to activities of the present: An associate editor explained that LMCBD tends to publish mostly fiction partly because the Division has a tradition of being strong in that area and partly because most of the current editors are partial to fiction. This preference was admitted by all the interviewed editors, though the publisher followed the admission with the statement that the Division's commitment was actually and more importantly to what she and the other selectors consistently characterized as "good books."

#### The Environment of Selection In, and Economic Nature of, the Marketplace

The LMCBD selectors presented a view of their marketplace that emphasized the prudence of their book publishing perspective from the standpoint of sales. The editors, reader, and marketing director were quick to indicate that the librarians through whom their books must pass are professionals who want to introduce high "quality" titles to

children and to create a library environment favorable to the selection of "good books." "It's my impression they'd like good books, you know, and the more good books the better, "MCBD's promotion director remarked when asked about the types of books which outlets want but which are not being published.

The LMCBD selectors were also seen to respond to economic considerations with their clients in mind. The general consensus among the selectors regarding book prices was that increases in costs of supplies and manufacturing have made higher prices inevitable but that, in the words of an associate editor, "right now there isn't much price resistance on the part of librarians." A tone of uncertainty also ran through the comments of the interviewees, however; the just-quoted associate editor, for example, qualified her statement by saying that she does not know "what's going to happen in the future" with respect to price and that the Division, like the rest of the industry, must try to keep its prices as close to pre-inflation levels as possible.

The promotion director, while agreeing, contended that in times of budgetary crises and limited book-buying funds, a library's first priority is for "what they think is very good," not for what is inexpensive. When asked if he thought librarians' need for "good" books ever conflicts with a need for "popular" books, the director responded in the following manner: "Well, Dr. Seuss has never been terribly popular with librarians even though he's popular otherwise. See, since at least 80% of our business is to the institutional market we've always tried to combine popularity with quality."

The need to produce books which are "popular" with librarian-buyers is a requirement that echoed through the remarks of all the interviewees. A few of the editors also pointed out that they are concerned about the circulation of their books among children once it gets onto the shelf, since the librarians continually rebuy titles as books become worn, are stolen, or lost. In fact, they said, the general library policy of replacing worn books that are considered worthwhile has made a company's backlist of titles very important in juvenile book publishing. Interviewees from throughout the library market were in agreement that the backlist tends to be the steadiest and most lucrative source of a juvenile division's income. The focal editors were quick to point out, however, that simply imitating past successes is a sure way to failure, since librarians shun formulaic material, even if the original was considered a "good book." Thus, the LMCBD selectors implied, the client relationship encourages a predilection for "fresh" ideas.

#### The Feedback and Promotional Environment

The LM selectors' understanding of the primary feedback and promotional environment in which they operate made them more secure in their ability to successfully publish "fresh," "innovative" literature. That environment encompasses both direct and indirect avenues of contact with the library world. Indirect avenues include review media and journals, which provide information about trends, grants, and activities, as well as book critiques and advertisements.



Direct avenues include the interactions of LMCBD's publicity director, promotion director, and seven person promotion staff with librarians and library school teachers (who form the opinions of incipient librarians), both where they work and at conferences. The directors write periodic reports of their impressions and attend the Division's weekly editorial meetings, in which new editorial and promotional ideas are often discussed. The editors themselves sometimes attend library conferences, often to appear on discussion panels or give addresses.

It will be noted that the thrust of the promotional and feedback activities are aimed at the librarians, not at the purported ultimate audience. LM's marketing director stated that the Division simply does not have the money to advertise or promote its books heavily through the general mass media, to parents or children. Since librarians are by far the major purchasers, they are the major targets to be reached with funds that are available. And, indeed, the avenues of contact with the library world serve a dual purpose for LMCBD. From the standpoint of feedback, they allow the editors and promotion people to keep in touch with trends in circulation, librarian interest and librarian perception of children's abilities--and to use that knowledge when selecting manuscripts. The promotion director was emphatic in underscoring that his input into the editorial process is strictly informational. When asked about how influential he is with regard to the selection of the particular content characteristics listed on the interview schedule,

the director consistently answered "not influential" and, when asked about "the subject of the book," said the following:

I really don't have any say. I think that one reason that [LMCBD] has such a good reputation is that they [i.e. the editors] take the books which they feel are the best. And nothing is to order here. I would no more presume going up and saying "We've gotta have some books on such and such a subject"--and they'd tell me to go to Hell!

The tenor of all the LMCBD interviews tended to support the promotion director's remarks. In fact, that director and an editor specifically pointed out that acquaintances with librarians and knowledge about their needs are often more forcefully and specifically used by LMCBD to promote books rather than to select them. Through the distribution of catalogs, LMCBD subject booklists, trade ads; through selective circulation of complimentary copies of new books to influential librarians and library systems; through the frequent promulgation to conference audiences by LMCBD editors and editors from similarly inclined publishing firms of their perspectives on books and book publishing; through the visiting of library systems by LMCBD authors and illustrators; and through the friendly and close relationships between publishing people on the one hand and leading librarians and library school teachers on the other, a favorable environment for the reception of the Division's books is created.

Routine promotion sometimes gives way to more intense promotion of particular titles (agreed upon by promotion and editorial people), as in the cases of the prestigious and monetarily significant Caldecott and Newberry awards. One editor pointed out that acquaintances with important librarians can also be quite efficacious in facilitating the

acceptance of a particularly novel or avant garde book which LMCBD has produced or in getting libraries to publicize among children an important project with which LMCBD is connected (such as a film version of a Division book). The mentioning of such capabilities (which was also done by another editor and the promotion director) signifies the belief that the publishing community (and even an individual prestigious house such as LM) can initiate new trends and, within limits, shape the view of the library community as to what "good" is.

It should be noted that the cultivation by LMCBD of a reputation for producing "good books" and always searching for "fresh" ideas might also help the firm's titles which are designed to capitalize on trends, those from the "all kinds of books" mentioned by the above-quoted editor which are not so "imaginative" and "innovative." That most of the interviewees preferred to dwell on the most creative aspect of their work indicates their predilection for this area and, perhaps, the influence of the promotional stance upon their responses.

#### Selecting and Producing Books for the Library Market

The previous discussion has shown that LMCBD selectors' conceptualization of the demands and opportunities of their client relationship encourages a particular orientation towards their selection and publication of books. In the following sections, the selectors' conceptualization of the client relationship will be shown to have consequences for the firm's actual publishing process as well--from the responsibilities and activities of the principals involved to their

guidelines regarding the formulation of seasonal lists and the choosing of titles.

The Influence of the Client Relationship on the  
General Responsibilities and Activities  
of the Selectors

Several subtle influences of the client relationship upon the responsibilities and activities of the editors and reader are most effectively highlighted through a comparison between the two focal publishing firms, a task which will be carried out in Part II. One responsibility of the principals involved in the selection of titles for LMCBD that can be immediately connected to the client relationship is the Division's aforementioned editorial autonomy from the firm's trade marketing and sales departments. In view of the close connections between the editors, their small promotion staff, and the library market--as well as the absence of any substantial role of the firm's trade sales force (since the librarians order the books themselves directly from institutional jobbers)--it is easy to understand why LMCBD is allowed to be so independent.

Another broad responsibility on the part of the LMCBD selectors that can be seen as stemming from their perceptions of demands and opportunities in the client relationship is their commitment to read every manuscript and examine every illustration that is offered to the house for publication. This commitment, which was seen to have broad implications for the book selection process, was described as a

logical extension of the selectors' commitment (and requirement) to uncover untapped writing and illustrating talent.

A chief mechanism for uncovering new sources of "good books" is the group of three readers, whose job it is to read all of the approximately 6,000 manuscripts that are received (including those by previously published authors) and to refer them to an editor with critiques and recommendations for acceptance or rejection. The interviewed reader stressed the egalitarian image which this policy exudes and the exciting serendipity which it injects into the manuscript reviewing process:

...We try to give equal chance to everyone--housewives, husbands, whatever comes in. [A former publisher of the Division] used to take great pride in this. In a way, it's more exciting to discover someone unknown. I shouldn't say discover. That's too pompous. But to discover something new! And, also, an astonishing number of young people--particularly artists--come in all the time. We used to have someone who interviewed artists--an editor who has a little more knowledge about that area would do that. But now artists just make appointments with various editors. And there's an incredible number of young people who are gifted. I mean, 18 year olds, 17 year olds. And they bring their portfolios and we keep them on hand, and if a book comes along that's right for them, we use them.

A major aim of such an all-inclusive review (which is carried out in many library market firms) is undoubtedly promotional--showing librarians that the Division is indeed actively searching for the best in children's literature wherever it can find it. However, one editor pointed to somewhat more concrete demands of the marketplace for going to such great lengths to review books: Because the vogues of children's fiction in the library market are quite changeable, because the emphasis is on new directions as well as on replacing old books,

an editor is expected to cultivate new writers and illustrators and, in the process, to help ensure that the Division's overall backlist will continue to be filled with writers and illustrators whose books circulate in the libraries and who have a reputation for quality. It might be noted that the burden of discovering new faces falls particularly upon the newer, associate, editors, who feel obliged to search for new names because, unlike some of the senior staff, they are not comfortably ensconced with still-popular old ones.

#### The Cultivation of Talent

As the preceding paragraph implies, the introduction of new writers and illustrators (and especially writer-illustrators of picture books) is a time-consuming process. Although interviewees (both in LMCBD and in other firms) agreed that attention by review media and librarians to books by new talent makes it easier in the juvenile than in the adult trade book market to succeed with a critically-lauded first work of fiction, none seemed willing to count on such quick success. One LM editor stated that the Division will rarely publish only one book by a new author, even if it loses money and doesn't draw acclaim; moreover, she said that the organization might even publish a mediocre first book if the editor and publisher feel the creator has potential. When they decide to launch a relationship with an unknown writer, she explained, they do so with an eye towards the future, towards helping that person develop his/her talent and become an important figure in the library world.

The decision to use an unknown illustrator, though perhaps not involving such long-term commitment, does, however, involve risk. One particularly vexing problem with regard to novice illustrators is the question as to whether they can satisfactorily perform the difficult technical and artistic tasks demanded of them (including hand-separation of colors with a 3-color picture book) in coordination with the publishing time schedule. Delays in this area can add substantially to a book's costs. An additional danger--the raiding of artists by competitors--was pointed out by an associate editor: "It's quite risky. We get ripped off a lot. We take the risk, and then other people use our artists."

While the amount of time and energy that the cultivation of new talent consumes does not encourage its frequency, the interviewed editors insisted that they felt obliged to take chances on unknowns. One associate editor said that "every new list that we have seems to have a couple of new people, artists or authors." The most usual risk which LMCBD takes, however, is in the publishing of authors and illustrators who have published previously--either for other firms or for LMCBD. While illustrators tend not to be identified with particular houses and are pursued by editors who see their pictorial style and expertise as complementing a particular manuscript, writers (and writer-illustrators) generally stay with one publishing firm, usually because of the relationship they have developed with an editor. In fact, it is often the case that when an editor moves to another firm she takes some "house authors" with her.

### The Cultivation of "Good Book" Ideas

The relationship between an author and editor was seen by the direct selectors who were interviewed as an important contributor to new and successful works. No LM editor admitted to conceptualizing a work of fiction and finding a house author to carry it out; such activity is not considered conducive to "good books," although it is acceptable in non-fiction. However, two LM editors did comment upon the importance of a continuing interaction between writers and their editors. Such closeness, one commented, "breeds new ideas." The editor, having gotten feedback about the types of subjects that are becoming popular among librarians, might guide her author in certain directions, encourage certain "fresh" ideas and discourage others. What makes this activity fruitfully interactive from the standpoint of the editors is that most experienced juvenile book writers have quite a facility for keeping up with the trends. One LMCBD editor recounted how she told an author with whom she had worked that more books are needed on the Holocaust. The writer replied that he had, by chance, been intermittently working on a manuscript dealing with the subject. From that conversation a book was born.

One general impression that was gained from interviews, conversations, and observations throughout the focal library market firm is that the more immersed an individual is in the environment of the library market segment and its literature, the more likely that person will be to get a book published. This need to understand the "type" of work



which is desired as a library market children's book and to be in touch with the segment's ongoing literary tradition is perhaps best expressed in the following comment by an LMCBD editor: "If I were giving advice, as I frequently do, to beginning authors, I would advise them to familiarize themselves with what is available in the library and what seems to have the most movement." Such an approach, particularly when combined with a close relationship with an editor, would seem to greatly increase the chance of producing a "good" manuscript that will be accepted for publication.

### The Editorial

#### Book Selection Procedure

The LMCBD selectors' perceived mandate from their marketplace to produce titles with a "fresh," non-formulaic stamp has been seen to translate into their division's commitment to weigh all incoming manuscripts and illustrations for publication. This commitment was itself seen to have a concrete manifestation in the activities of the LMCBD readers. The concrete consequences of the perceived mandate were also seen to extend beyond the initial screening of works to their final selection for publication by the editors and publisher. Consistently underlying the remarks of all the LMCBD editors was the notion that the primary focus of their work is upon producing an "artistic creation" (as one interviewee phrased it), a book in which all the elements make aesthetic as well as economic sense. The editors preferred to see themselves as working with individual titles or with individual authors rather than with a certain book categories.

Although every interviewed direct selector admitted to certain likes and dislikes with regard to developing manuscripts, all stressed a preference for working on different kinds of books to vary their routines and expand their creativity. Moreover, all agreed that the Division's book selection procedure allows this freedom.

The LMCBD editorial book selection procedure takes place throughout the year in the following manner: After their initial examination by a reader, all manuscripts (whether recommended for acceptance or not) are distributed by the manuscript supervisor to an editor (or associate editor). If the editor decides that she would like to produce a book from the manuscript, she presents her case to the publisher, including a "preliminary manufacturing estimate," which is a general evaluation of the cost of the book against its potential sales. When dealing with an unpublished author, potential sales might be gauged by examining sales of recent books on similar subjects by first-time authors. With an author whose work has been published previously by the house, the projection is considered to be more accurate. In either case, the sales manager and production director might be asked to lend their expertise to the estimate.

If the publisher's approval to sign the contract is forthcoming, the book is tentatively given a publication date (the year and season-- Spring or Fall--that the title will be released) and the editor and author begin a journey through the intricacies and overlapping activities of the pre-production process. How long that journey will take depends on the type of book under consideration and the stage it is at

when the contract has been signed. If the "manuscript" is only a few sample chapters or an outline, the writer (who may have gotten an advance) will be committing himself to completing the work by a certain time. During that period (or while revisions are being carried out by the author on an entire manuscript), the editor must fulfill an elaborate "blue-sheeting" task in which she obtains specific figures from production and sales regarding every aspect of the book's costs and likely earnings. Much more elaborate than the preliminary manufacturing estimate, "blue-sheeting" takes into consideration the specific royalties to be awarded to author and artist (if there will be one); the production costs of the book in different "trim sizes"; its warehousing costs; and the Division's overhead (including payments to the marketing department to cover its promotional and other costs). Special formulas based on computerized marketing data are used to project sales at different prices. Final decisions are then made about the price of the book, its size and length, and the number of colors to be used in the illustrations (if they are needed).

If the book is to have illustrations, extra time will be consumed in deciding upon what one editor called "the perfect artist" (a task carried out by the editor, usually in consultation with the author); waiting for and accepting (or rejecting) his sketches and "dummies;" and separating the completed artwork. Even if a book will not be illustrated, an artist must usually still be chosen for the cover's jacket. Decisions must also be made by the editor (and artist, if the work is a picture book) in conjunction with the production manager and

staff designer about the nature and size of the typography to be used in the book; about the number of type-lines to a page; about the presence of paginations; and about the front matter, front piece, and chapter opening designs. Concurrently, the completed manuscript might go through its final examination by the editor, who must forward it to a "copy editor" for stylistic corrections. At some point in this schedule, the editor must also find time to write the promotional copy for the jacket flaps.

When the manuscript and artwork are completed, the actual manufacturing process can begin. Here, too, the editor watches over the progress of the work--from the correctness of the galleys to the insertion of jackets upon the bound books.

Without an appropriate frame of reference, it is difficult, perhaps, to evaluate the extent of individualized attention to every title's selection and production which the LMCBD procedure encourages in response to the client relationship. This frame of reference will be presented--and the differences brought out in stark relief--through a comparison of the LMCBD book selection procedure with its mass market counterpart in the first chapter of Part II. The preceding paragraphs have shown, however, that the LMCBD interviewees themselves saw the selection process as encouraging the production of "artistic creations," of books that conform to the perceived requirements and opportunities of the client relationship. The next section's examination of the guidelines followed while these procedures are carried out will show that the desire to conform to the mandate of that relationship can be seen

to shape the direct selectors' comments regarding the selection of content as well.

#### The Client Relationship and Selection Guidelines

LMCBD's direct selectors had some difficulty responding to questions regarding particular content characteristics. In fact, two key interviewees--the publisher and a senior editor--were quite exasperated by the numerous queries along these lines. The publisher spoke for both of them when, after insisting that her division doesn't have any formal criteria for book selection, exclaimed: "We just choose good books. If it's a good book, we'll do it."

The insistence that the direct selectors perform their work without any formal guidelines can, in itself, be seen as a reflection of the client relationship, since admitting to specific guidelines might be construed as taking a formulaic approach to what the interviewees liked to portray as an artistic endeavor. Despite their general denial of formal guidelines, the publisher, other editors, reader, production director, and finance director did articulate certain policies, general rules, and criteria for dealing with the literary and economic considerations of the book selection and publication process.

Two broad directions regarding selection were particularly evident in the selectors' comments: 1) A commitment, mitigated only under special circumstances, to the primary importance of literary, artistic, aesthetic qualities in the selection characteristics; and 2) a notion, not articulated very often or very explicitly, that the nature, extent, and complexity of the artistic endeavor should vary with the expected

age of the reader according to some general conceptions of childhood and childhood interests. These general markers can clearly be seen as shaped by the selectors' conceptualizations of the demands and opportunities of their major client relationship. It is to the more specific guidelines which the markers underlie and structure that this discussion will now turn.

### The Formulation of Seasonal Lists

Mention has already been made of the lists which LMCBD formulates every year and which represent the total number of new titles that the Division will publish during the year. These lists are timed to coincide with the two traditional book publishing seasons--Fall and Spring; the titles on the lists are released over the months of those seasons. With regard to the number of books on the seasonal lists, a few editors mentioned that a triennial assessment of the firm's economic situation, the economic situation of the marketplace, and the firm's strength within the marketplace has produced the guideline that they should produce approximately 25-30 books per list under current conditions. All the interviewees stressed, however, that because their book selection procedure is based on the notion that in-house conceptualizing of titles is not conducive to the production of "good books" and that the editors must rely on the manuscripts authors send in, they are unable to dictate the exact number of publishable manuscripts which should arrive in time to be placed on a particular list.

The recognition of a necessary flexibility and slight relinquishing of control which was seen with regard to the number of books on a seasonal list (and which was traced to the client relationship) can also be seen with regard to specifications for the types of books which make up a list. One associate editor, responding to the question about any guidelines she has regarding the relative number of "fantasy" and "reality" books, said the following:

We just do the books that look good. It would be nice--wonderful--to have on each list a wonderful design of this [content category] and that. But you rarely can control it. Authors work at their own pace and you can't plug them in and say "you do a fantasy you---" You just can't."

While two of the editors steadfastly maintained that they have no requirements regarding the making of the Division's new book lists, three others and the reader did point out some general guidelines that editors try to follow in selecting books for the lists. Two words used by the interviewees to characterize these guidelines were "variety" and "balance." Both terms refer to the idea that many titles belonging to a particular category of books are ill-advised for one season's list. The editors said they try to avoid selecting too many manuscripts that would lead to such an imbalance.

A primary reason for the varied assortment of new books is the feeling that librarians might be loath to buy several books on the same topic or directed at the same age group from one company's list. The editors also articulated the belief that since the editors know that librarians have to serve different age groups and interests, the Division should try to parallel these interests, at least in terms of

broad categories, in the hope that librarians will need all the books on the list.

#### "Balancing" the List in Terms of Grades and Ages

The LMCBD selectors' emphasis on the idea of the list's "balance" centered upon the areas of age and grade groupings. In fact, the reader and an associate editor dolefully pointed out the difficulty of getting "good" manuscripts for children in the "middle grades" (3-5). The interviewees were quick to admit that such groupings (which are determined by each book's editor) are only suggestive, with the age indications generally directed at parents and the grade markings listed to aid librarians. Three interviewees added that an editor's decision to affix particular age and grade groupings to a title usually derives from some general notions about the vocabulary and number of pages appropriate for a child at a particular age as well as from ideas about the experiences and interests of a child at a particular stage of life. One rule of thumb regarding the latter concern is that a book with youthful protagonists will appeal to children at around that age.

#### "Balancing" the List Through the Varying Interests of the Editors

An impetus toward a "varied" list in terms of grade/age levels as well as in terms of subject matter lies in the different interests of the Division's editors. Of course, to some degree the manuscripts that cross an editor's desk are determined by the "house authors" with whom she works; by the manuscripts which readers and their supervisor



decide to forward to her; by the kind of material sent to her because of personal contacts and soliciations that she makes in the course of meeting with writers, agents, and librarians; and (in the case of an associate editor) by the assignments which are sometimes delegated to her. However, these factors will themselves be influenced a great deal by the particular expertise and aesthetic leanings of the person involved.

Although no particular interview questions were designed to explore this area, a few editors touched upon the subject in passing. One associate editor noted that, although she has worked on novels, most of the titles which she edits are picture books because that is the area which she does best. Another associate editor stated that while she does not have any particular preference with respect to fiction or non-fiction, most of the editors in the Division are fiction-oriented, some preferring to work on books for younger children while others enjoying the editing of novels directed at older juveniles. This range of predilections pretty well ensures that the seasonal lists will include a variety of age/grade groupings, at least in the fiction area.

It has already been noted that LMCBD has a heritage of fiction and that the Division as a whole has continued in this path, assured that the marketplace allows it. However, as implied in the associate editor's comments, not all the editors in the division are inclined towards fiction. One editor is considered the house's science expert, and, according to the associate editor, a feeling "by the editors" that the Division should publish more non-fiction led to the hiring of an

editor with predominantly historical interests. Both the science-oriented and history-oriented editors have taken to editing fiction as well, however, and the interviewees generally denied any requirements or intentions to strictly balance their lists along fiction and non-fiction lines.

#### The Easy Readers and the Formulation of the List

One clear-cut specification which three of the editors mentioned with regard to each seasonal list is that it should include about two books from the Division's "easy reader" lines--the "early easy readers" and the regular "easy readers." These related lines (each being a group of titles uniform in size, 3-color process, typography, general type layout, number of pages, and price--with the last two characteristics defining the format differences between "early easy readers" and "easy readers") comprise the only new books on the division's seasonal lists which have a fair sale to bookstores as well as libraries, primarily because of the decisions of some major stores to carry them. The standardization of the easy reader format is the result of the Division's attempt to keep the unit costs of the titles at a level where their trade prices can compete successfully with those of mass market juveniles. A first printing of 25,000 copies (high by library market standards) also helps them keep costs down, as does the printing of the small books two at a time on the same printing sheets.

LM marketing and salespeople who were interviewed pointed out that the presence of easy readers on the juvenile list sometimes lends an air of commercial attractiveness to the rest of the new books in the

eyes of store agents and increases the possibility that they will buy them. A consequence of this marketing need for a few easy readers each season is, according to one editor, that the direct selectors are constantly on the look-out for manuscripts which will adapt naturally to the easy reader format; they trade notes on potential candidates in and out of editorial meetings. Because the lines are well-known, writers sometimes send in manuscripts addressed to those formats. However, the need to sell at least 25,000 copies in first printing tends to narrow the editors' choices to notable library market authors and illustrators.

The somewhat standardized approach to the easy readers (precipitated by an attempt to maintain and extend a foothold in the bookstore market) represents a departure from the Division's extremely individualized approach to books. Realizing this, three direct selectors went out of their way to stress the points of compatibility of the easy reader titles with the mandate of the major client relationship. One associate editor, when asked if she has any guidelines regarding vocabulary control, referred proudly to the easy reader lines in the following manner:

We don't have any guidelines. On the [easy reader] books you can tell. I mean, you [i.e. the editor] have to eliminate four syllable problems and very difficult sentence construction, but you do that after the story is written. You do that as organically as you can--without handing an author a list of words and saying "write a story using those words." That's why the books are artistic. That's why they work as stories, because their impulse is the story, first, with a writer who can naturally write simply and directly.

The Selection of Plot Subject Matter,  
Style, and Characterizations

The perceived mandate of the client relationship to produce books that are "artistic" was clearly reflected in the direct selectors' responses to questions about their guidelines for the content characteristics of the titles they select. Few concrete positive specifications were forthcoming in response to these questions, since the selectors insisted that they have no formal guidelines and implied that formal guidelines would not be conducive to the production of "good books." Nevertheless, their comments about plot, subject matter, style, and characterization reveal their priorities with regard to elements of "good books" as well as their confidence with regard to successfully presenting their personal predilections to their clients.

Guidelines for Plot and Subject Matter

All the interviewees agreed that a fiction title's plot is important but noted that since each book is looked at in individual terms no specifications can be given regarding this content characteristic. An associate editor echoed her colleagues when she spoke about plot in the following manner (capitalized words are those of the interviewer):

A plot has to be successful on the terms that it's trying to be successful. It has to be convincing. It can't be too contrived. It sounds simple, but it's true. DO BOOKS HAVE TO HAVE A PLOT? No. We have plotless books. We have books that have a thread of emotion that binds them together. Picture books especially. [An editor's own] books, especially. It just has to have an overall design to it. It doesn't have

to have a literal value. DOES IT HAVE TO HAVE ACTION? If it keeps our interest, it has action. Some books have emotional action rather than plot action.

When asked about subject matter, the LMCBD direct selectors reflected their admitted proclivity and spoke about fiction. The particular subject, they said, is really not important. The above-mentioned associate editor again phrased the consensus feeling most succinctly when she pointed out that the handling of the subject is what really counts:

As long as it's [that is, the subject] is honest, straightforward, and done artistically. My books are on every theme and subject. IS THERE ANYTHING YOU'RE LOOKING FOR? No. ANYTHING TOO OVERDONE? No. There's no taboo. Even if a book has been overdone. If it's done well, then it can be done again.

The other associate editor, while concurring with her colleague in speaking about subjects, chose to emphasize that she follows two fundamental criteria in gauging the acceptability of a manuscript-- the interest it holds for her ("If I'm bored, a child will be bored") and her conception of the ability of children who will read the book. With regard to the latter criterion, the associate editor said she must be careful that a manuscript's subject is within the realm of experience of the age group that would be indicated by the prospective book's vocabulary and format.

#### Guidelines for Style and Characterization

The connection that was made by the first-quoted associate editor between the acceptability of subject matter and its execution was particularly stressed by the selectors when asked about their guidelines

regarding style. All the interviewees agreed that a personal style that complements the story is important. No relative preference was voiced for poetry or prose, though two interviewees did note that "good" poetry for children is hard to find. Interestingly, one of the editors referred to the "series" as a book form that combines subject and style in a manner that is generally of unacceptable quality for LMCBD. "Our books do not follow formula-type ideas like 'Nancy Drew' or 'The Hardy Boys,'" she stressed.

The importance of individual, non-formulaic style and approach could also be seen in the interviewees' comments regarding characterization. The need for the "convincing," "non-exploitive" delineation of protagonists was generally stressed, with one editor adding that "they [i.e. the characters] have to be characters that children respond to." A primary literary-aesthetic orientation towards characterization was seen in the remarks of all the interviewees, one that is embodied in the following remarks by an associate editor:

The same standards of judgement apply that apply to adult fiction. Quality of writing. Strength of development. Honesty and believability of portrayal. This is absolutely true from the lowest to the highest ages. We generally look for characterization over plot. I suppose this is true for good literature in general. The important thing is that the story comes out and reveals the character.

The primary emphasis on the literary, artistic nature of characterization is also evident in the comments by the reader and the two interviewed senior editors on the racial and sexual mix of their books, as well as to Part II's question regarding guidelines on the division of their seasonal lists into books for general audiences as contrasted

with books for particular racial and/or ethnic groups. In the case of the latter question, all the direct selectors denied any guidelines, with the reader saying that while such books are actively sought, they

try not to make that a primary factor, because you start thinking less in terms of quality and more in didactic terms, which is fine except that generally it means you're publishing inferior fiction. Which is not even going to fulfill a good social purpose.

With regard to the appearance of racial characters as minor figures in books, the refrain of "no guidelines" was heard from all the direct selectors but an associate editor, who noted that there have been cases where, in an attempt to "make sure there are Blacks and Third World people...if they fall naturally into a book," editors have suggested to artists to include more minority representatives in the illustrations. That same interviewee also pointed out that she and her colleagues "try to inform an author if he's doing something sexist. We don't force him to make any changes he doesn't want to make. We just try to see if he's giving a roundedness in his portrayals."

Another area of characterization in which the absence of guidelines was uniformly contended was in the use of animals or people as central characters. Two interviewees--the reader and an editor--did admit a wariness of anthropomorphic portrayals. Regarding such characterization, the reader noted that "there's a fine line between making it good and making it horrible. We do get terrible manuscripts,

like 'Patsy Paper Plate'--a plate that comes to life and bemoans her fate as a paper plate. I mean, we get a lot of garbage. It's easy to write garbage."

#### The Acceptance of a Title's Moral Point of View

The perceived mandate of the client relationship to be primarily concerned with the literary "quality" of a manuscript and the artistic vision of its author was seen to ramify to the selector's remarks regarding the moral point of view of the works they publish. One prominent manifestation of this influence was a denial of any intention to inculcate morality. The following comments of an associate editor are representative in this regard:

We don't look for a moral. We look for a story that has meaning. Any story that's well-written has a statement somewhere in it, but we don't look for stories that are written to have a statement. We look for literary works. Period.

The publisher and the two full editors took a somewhat different tact in their replies and, in doing so, hinted at some of the tensions that exist between the desire to publish innovative books that reflect an artist's unique style and the recognition that some ethical lines should not, perhaps, be crossed. One editor commented that the question regarding moral point of view was very ambiguous and difficult to answer in short. The publisher managed to state the collective viewpoint quite concisely:

We feel that a book should be a reflection of the author's own consistent morality. Beyond that, it's a very difficult question to answer. Certainly, if the book is evil we won't publish it, no matter what its literary merits.



LM's reader, emphasizing the special importance of moral point of view in the case of juvenile books, elaborated on the tensions that this aspect of content can create:

[Moral point of view] is important, particularly since you're dealing with kids. And it's not always easy. I mean, that's the hardest thing. If a book is beautifully written and you think that the author's mind and values are disturbed, that can be tough. A few times we've published books that I've felt violently opposed to the ethics. But, obviously, the editor and the head of the department who passed judgement upon it didn't agree, because we'd never publish anything that we thought was perverted because we thought it might sell or was dazzling writing. Sometimes it's hard to know. Sometimes that can happen even in the younger area, where the portrayal of a relationship between a mother and a child might cause one person to think "Gee, this is really sick," and another person might think "This is really charming."

Although the direct selectors did reveal some self-doubt and conflict regarding the moral point of view in some manuscripts they select, they exhibited a strong sense of confidence on the subject of controversial issues. The interviewees pointed out that since the 1960's there have been very few areas of life which have not been dealt with in children's literature. Drugs, abortion, racial discrimination, gang warfare, homosexuality, and lesbianism--these and other controversial subjects have been dealt with in LMCBD books.

Replying to a question about controversial issues that had affected her work during the past year, LMCBD's publisher contended that no issue is too controversial for editorial selection: "I don't think there should be any taboos, if handled properly." While she did not elaborate on what this proper handling entails, her remarks regarding "moral point of view" and comments by other LMCBD

editors did indicate that the books dealing with sensitive personal and societal problems are expected to contain some positive moral uplift, although they need not, and often do not, contain happy endings. In actuality, the selectors raised only one issue that has consistently drawn a lot of protest recently--curse words. Two editors and the promotion director noted that such protests have not deterred the use of four-letter words where applicable, since (in the words of one interviewee) "if it's true to the spirit of the book, it has its place."

The confidence of the editors in dealing with these sensitive areas can be traced to an aspect of the client relationship which has not yet been highlighted--the support which libraries give the publishers by acting as protective buffers between them and complaining community groups. Significantly, it was the promotion director who explained this situation most explicitly:

...I find most librarians so terrific, really. They care, and they're in the forefront, obviously. I can sympathize with what a lot of them put up with. From parents around the country. But librarians around the country have, on their own, established guidelines on how to handle such things.

### The Selection of a Title's Illustrations and Format

Although the focal direct selectors considered illustrations and format very important to the creation of a title (particularly a picture book), these content characteristics were not discussed together with writing style, plot, subject matter, and characterization because an additional aspect relating to the client relationship could

be seen to influence those two non-written elements--cost.

#### Guidelines with Regard to Illustrations and Cover Art

As in the case of the other content characteristics, the direct selectors contended that no specific guidelines could be presented with regard to illustrations or cover art, since the choices of both the illustrator and illustrations depend on the nature of the individual manuscript under consideration. Certain kinds of work were, however, deemed unacceptable by the LMCBD interviewees. One editor pointed out that while a book's cover art is required to be impressionable, "so that when you look at it, you feel you want to open the book," it should not be as arresting as mass market paperback covers, which "flash things up" and are "as noisy as possible." The reader and an editor disparaged "cartoonish" illustrations as being "cheap" and not "artistic," while all the respondents noted that the Division has not followed a prominent library market trend to incorporate near-abstract art into the LMCBD picture books. The editors agreed that such illustrations "lack meaning for children" and represent "art for arty's sake."

While the interviewees' remarks on selection represent their quite consistent aesthetic interpretation of the perceived mandate

from the client relationship to produce "good books," other major decisions regarding artwork--the use of color and even the selection of artists--are intimately connected to economic, not aesthetic, judgements about the firm and its marketplace. A key factor is the cost of color illustration. The assistant production director pointed out that there is a substantial difference in cost between a 3-color and a 4-color book. Moreover, while the Division can sell around 8,000 copies of a title illustrated in black-and-white or around 10,000 copies of a 3-color picture book at an acceptable library market price and still have a chance to break even or make a profit, the 4-color process that LMCBD uses (in which the colors are separated by camera rather than by hand) has mandated a printing of about 25,000 if the book is to be realistically sold for below \$8, the limit which the Division has set on all but extremely unusual books.

The required first printing of at least 25,000 copies of a 4-color picture book has, as in the case of the 3-color easy readers, dictated a situation whereby only extremely popular authors and illustrators (or author-illustrators) whose sales can be reliably predicted at the 25,000 level, will be used. The production director noted that the Division has been doing fewer and fewer 4-color books each year because of the difficulty of meeting that criterion in the crowded and highly competitive library market. She and the direct selectors were quick to emphasize, however, that librarians have shown a great appreciation for 3-color and even black-and-white picture books, and that evidently children like them, too.

### Guidelines with Regard to Format

Rising costs were also seen as having consequences for the sizes and lengths of the Division's books. Several respondents pointed to the movement throughout the library market segment towards standardized trim sizes and folio lengths, a result of rising manufacturing costs and diminished library funds in the 1970's. The assistant production director noted that the Division is currently trying to fit its books into 7 trim sizes; the 7 sizes are most economical because, during printing, the pages cover the entire printing sheet and leave no wasted space. Unusual sizes and shapes are sometimes produced, but only in cases of author-illustrators who are popular in the library market, where a large first printing is justified. In general, the higher the anticipated sales (and the lower the unit costs), the more ideosyncratic a book can be in terms of size, length, and paper type.

One area of overall design which direct selectors contended still has no budget-related guidelines surrounding it is typography. They said that the LM designer, in consultation with the editor, has free reign in choosing the most aesthetically appropriate type face to use. A few respondents noted, however, that the type face must be big enough for children of the anticipated age group to want to read it. Certain measurements (which are designated by "points") have become accepted for certain ages. For example, easy readers have 18 point type, regular picture books tend to have type faces with 14 points, and books for older children might be printed in 12 or 11 point type face. With all books except the easy readers, however, these points are not

standard because design variations in type faces a peculiarity involved in measuring "points" might cause one face to actually be smaller or larger than another with the same point value.

While the choice of typography is relatively unspecified, the choice of bindings is completely determined. LMCBD designates three types of bindings for its titles--two "trade" bindings, which are placed on the small number of new books sold to the book stores (with titles having 32 or fewer pages getting one kind and those having more than 32 pages getting the other) and a "library binding." All three bindings are sewn, though the techniques used in library bindings ("side sewing") is more durable and expensive than the "saddle stitched" or "symthe-sewn" bindings on trade editions. The assistant production director explained that "library bindings" are produced in response to librarians' willingness to pay more than store personnel for a book that will stand up to high circulation and wear.

The LMCBD selectors' assessments of economic and aesthetic requirements, predilections, and leverages of both the "management" and "patron" sides of their client relationship have been observed to shape their guidelines with regard to both the frequency and diversity of certain types of illustrations and formats. In the next section, a brief analysis of the new title lists which LMCBD produced during two seasons will be carried out to see if the influence of the client relationship can be seen to ramify to the actual books Division published as well.

### The Client Relationship and the Seasonal List

Table 2 presents several breakdowns of the types of new hardbound books on LMCBD's Spring 1974 and Fall 1975 lists. The breakdown were formulated from capsule summaries of the titles in the Division's seasonal catalogs. (Categories which are not self-descriptive are explained in a "key" at the end of the table.) A perusal of Table 2 reveals remarkable consistencies--and some variances--with guidelines that the selectors articulated. The total number of books falls somewhat short of the 50-60 figure indicated by a few respondents, though the difference in output between the two seasons supports their claim that the list size is variable, depending on the number of "good" books that can be published at that time.

The focus of the lists--as could be predicted--is on fiction, the Division's forte. Moreover, the need for easy readers and the particular predilection of two editors for picture books can be seen in the finding that they account for 40% of the Division's output. Titles aimed predominantly at children over 10 years old account for the highest percentage among the broad age categories, however, with titles for the 6 to 10 year old set--a group which an editor admitted is difficult to find "good" books for--being the lowest in representation. It will also be noted that fantasy books, another area which editors noted as problematic--is also quite low in representation.

Regarding characterization, it is interesting to note the paucity of anthropomorphic characters, that males and females seemed to have a fairly equal representation as main characters, and that one title--

Table 2

Categories Relating to New Books on LMCBD's  
Fall 1974 and Spring 1975 Lists

	#	%Total	% Category
<b>A. NUMBER OF BOOKS ON LISTS</b>			
# of Books on Fall List	28	60	
# of Books on Spring List	19	40	
	<u>47</u>	<u>100</u>	
<b>B. FICTION/NONFICTION/MIXED (SEE KEY)</b>			
<u>Fiction</u>			
Fairy and Folk Tales	1	2	3
Chronicles	1	2	3
Picture Book Adventure Stories	15	33	38
ABC and Concept Books	-	-	-
Joke Books	-	-	-
Mystery-Adventure Novels	7	15	18
Sports	-	-	-
Problem/Realism Novels	3	6	8
Other Novels	10	22	26
Poetry	2	4	5
	<u>39</u>	<u>84</u>	<u>101<sup>a</sup></u>
<u>Nonfiction</u>			
Nature	3	6	43
Crafts	1	2	14
Biography or Autobiography	3	6	43
	<u>7</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>99<sup>a</sup></u>
<u>Mixed</u>			
Nature	1	2	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>C. AGE OF INTENDED AUDIENCE</b>			
Predominantly 6 years or younger	16	34	
Predominantly between 6 years and 10	5	11	
Predominantly over 10 years	26	55	
	<u>47</u>	<u>100</u>	



Table 2 (continued)

	#	%Total	% Category
<b>D. HUMAN/ANIMAL/ANTHROPOMORPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF CHARACTERS</b>			
Human	37	78	
Animal	3	6	
Human and Anthropomorphic animal	-	-	
Human and Animal	1	2	
Undetermined	2	4	
	<u>47</u>	<u>99<sup>a</sup></u>	
<b>E. FANTASY/REALITY (EXCLUDING NON-FICTION)</b>			
Fantasy	6	15	
Reality	33	86	
	<u>39</u>	<u>101<sup>a</sup></u>	
<b>F. SEX OF MAIN CHARACTER(S)</b>			
Male	18	38	
Female	19	40	
Male and female characters	4	9	
Undetermined	6	13	
	<u>47</u>	<u>100</u>	
<b>G. FORMAT TYPE</b>			
Picture Book	16	34	
Easy Reader	3	6	
Typical Book	28	60	
<b>H. PRICE (TO NEAREST DOLLAR)</b>			
\$3	3	6	
\$4	1	2	
\$5	22	45	
\$6	18	38	
\$7	3	6	
\$8	-	-	
	<u>47</u>	<u>97</u>	

Table 2 (continued)

	#	%Total	% Category
<b>I. PICTORIAL CHARACTERISTICS</b>			
Full (or 4) color	2	4	
3-color	11	23	
Black and white pictures	10	21	
Brown and white pictures	1	2	
Drawings	2	4	
Black and white photos	3	6	
None	18	38	
	<u>47</u>	<u>98</u>	
<b>J. ETHNIC/RACIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF MAIN CHARACTER</b>			
American Black	1	2	
Not mentioned	46	98	
	<u>47</u>	<u>100</u>	

**KEY**

Fairy and folk tales: Traditional tales from throughout the world.

Chronicles: Books that describe the events in a young child's experience throughout the course of an average day (such as a trip to the supermarket).

Picture book adventure stories: Picture books with plots that are neither folk and fairy tales nor chronicles.

Problem/realism novels: Novels which have as main theme a "sensitive" social and personal problem, such as alcoholism, homosexuality, and pre-marital pregnancy.

a biography--is about a Black man. Generally, these findings can be said to be consistent with--even predictable from--the guidelines which the interviewees articulated.

The format and price categories are also generally a reflection of the considerations and guidelines that the selectors noted. The number of 4-color books is very small, with many 3-color and 2-color alternatives. Another corroboration of the interviews is that the books are priced below \$8, with the great majority hovering around \$5 and \$6.

Two findings regarding format--both not seen in the table--did not conform to expectations. Contrary to the assistant production director's statement that the firm is trying to hold the number of trim sizes to 7, 15 different sizes can be found on the lists. Another discrepancy between the interviewees' statements and the lists is the fact that no easy readers were found on the Spring list, despite the fact that selectors noted a need for about 2 per season. One explanation might be that this specification regarding the book store-marketable easy readers really only applies to the Fall, when the commercial outlets tend to increase their juvenile stocks in anticipation of Christmas shopping.

#### The Client Relationship and Images of the Ultimate Audience

Despite the minor inconsistencies just mentioned, the influence of the library market client relationship has, then, been seen to extend beyond the guidelines which the LMCBD personnel articulated to

the actual books which were produced during two seasons. One area which has not received enough attention from the standpoint of the client relationship, however, is the image which the selectors said they have of their purported ultimate audience--"children."

Actually, the selectors' implicit image of that audience has already been shown to be a consequence of their feedback from librarians with respect to generalized conceptions and predilections of children as well as with respect to their recognition that balancing seasonal lists by age will make it more likely for librarians to buy all the titles. This final section will examine the more explicit images which the editors and reader were seen to have of their audience; that image, too, will be seen as reflection of their perceptions of and approach to the major client relationship.

In reply to the audience-related question on the interview schedule--"What image do you have of the people who read your books?"--all of the interviewed editors either implied or admitted that they are not concerned with thinking in such terms. The publisher stated concisely that "we don't have an image. Every author writes for the child inside himself." One of the editors echoed the publisher on this score but added the opinion that children who visit the library still get "what they really want," since librarians choose the books they feel children will like. When asked whether she feels mass market or library market books come closest to giving children "what they really want," she opined that library market titles fulfill juvenile desires best, since in libraries children can choose their books and thereby

communicate their true likes and dislikes to the librarians, while in book stores parents who "don't know what they're buying" often purchase books without consulting their youngsters.

While two of the interviewees were categorical in denying the espousal of an audience image, three respondents did suggest some characteristics of their ultimate readers. An editor, after indicating that she really has no information about her audience, speculated that "I suppose we reach all kinds of children. A multi-faceted audience, you might say." An associate editor was more expansive in her reply:

I have no image. They're the great invisible face out there. No, we don't have an image. HOW DID YOU ARRIVE AT THAT IMAGE? By ignorance. [laughing] There are certain books you know will appeal to kids who don't read as well as do other kids. And there are certain books that you know have more sophisticated ideas, who have introspective heroines, and you know the average kid isn't going to read all those books. But they are quite vague little notions. They're not rigidly defined.

This associate editor's tendency, towards the end of her response, to infer the nature of her audience from the nature of the books which the Division publishes can be seen in even more pronounced form in the remarks of LM's reader:

I think readers of our books tend to be not necessarily the average child. Probably pretty good readers. We try not to be too overweighted on this side because you don't want to be publishing books for little rarefied prima donnas, but a lot of our books are more sensitive or quiet. Books for the unusual child. HOW DO YOU ARRIVE AT THAT IMAGE? Well, it's just that we go for books that conform to high literary standards and a lot of emotional depth. And those are not going to be runaway bestsellers with all kids. We try not to be too fastidious and demanding, because children have a right to light fiction as much as adults. And good, well-written nonfiction. Not everything serious.

Clearly, when the direct selectors have an image of "the people who read their books," it is one that merely reflects their views on the types of books which they publish. The "probably pretty good readers" which LM's reader mentioned are a reflection of her realization that the Division's direct selectors "go for high literary standards and a lot of emotional depth." Different types and sizes of audiences with different literary interests were also implied in part of the reader's remarks, however, as well as in comments by the above-quoted associate editor and editor. This notion of a "multi-faceted audience" can be seen as a reflection of the "varied"--though literarily and aesthetically inclined--list which, the preceding sections have shown, the editors feel they should create. Extensionally, then, the LMCBD audience image can, at root, be seen to reflect the direct selectors' conceptualization of the demands and possibilities implicit in their major library market client relationship.

#### Chapter Summary

The purpose of this chapter has been to examine the influence which the library market client relationship has on the selection and publication of books by the juvenile division of a large publishing firm (LMCBD) whose sales are, to a great extent, dependent upon school and public libraries. It has been shown that a realization of the clients' importance and a conceptualization of the requirements and opportunities which derive from interacting with librarians consistently undergird the approach which the firm's selectors have towards their activities. The feeling that they can, indeed must,

produce "good books" has been seen as shaped by three major considerations--the tradition of the publishing house and the proclivities of the Division's editors; the environment of selection in, and the economic nature of, the marketplace; and the feedback and promotional environment.

"Good books" have, in turn, been described in terms of the various procedures, guidelines, criteria, and opinions which the selectors brought up while discussing the number of titles published each season as well as the selection of authors and illustrators, general types of books, and individual titles for the juvenile lists. Specific considerations of the library marketplace have been seen to ramify importantly through all these activities; only book stores among other sales arenas have been seen to make any notable impact upon the process (and they only with regard to the production of "easy readers"). Regarding the selection of individual titles, a commitment to the primary importance of literary, artistic, aesthetic qualities (within the limits of general ideas about a child's understanding and interests) has been noted along with a feeling that dependence on feedback to dictate specific selection decisions is not conducive to the publication of "good books" and that the promotional environment allows for the successful introduction of new--and even innovative--authors, illustrators, and/or subjects.

Factors from throughout the children's book complex that impinge--directly or not--upon the selectors' activities regarding book selection and publication are, it has been shown, interpreted

by selectors in terms of their Division's interactions with that major class of distribution outlets. LMCBD's courses of action with regard to such problems as rising printing costs, material costs, and anger over the use of curse words primarily reflect an assessment by the selectors of the requirements, predilections, and leverages of both the "management" and "patron" sides of the client relationship. Even the images which the reader and editors project about their audience are ultimately a reflection of the direct selectors' conceptualization of their major client relationship.

Chapter 3, then, has shown how the library market client relationship exerts a crucial systemic influence upon one important firm's juvenile book selection and production process. The impact of the continual interaction between libraries and publishing companies has not yet been examined from the perspective of an important library market distribution outlet organization, however. This task will be taken up in the next chapter.



#### CHAPTER 4: THE LIBRARY MARKET DISTRIBUTION OUTLET

The focal children's library division, to be called LMCLS, is composed of 50 sections including 46 branch libraries, bookmobile service, a service which deposits books in schools that have no libraries and which lends books to the handicapped, a regional branch, and a central branch--all overseen by a System Coordinating Office (SCO). The branches are meant to serve specific neighborhoods within the city; the three special service areas are designed to make the library more accessible to children who cannot easily use it; and the regional library is equipped to serve the broad and specialized needs of a large district far from the central branch. The SCO's purpose is to direct planning and policy; to coordinate the selection, processing, and purchasing of children's books, records, and filmstrips; and to initiate and carry out various entertainment programs for children throughout the year. In addition, LMCLS, through its Coordinating Office, has been mandated to preserve "special collections" such as the "Folklore and Fairy Tale," "Historical," and "Illustrators" collections.

The Head of the System Coordinating Office oversees the entire range of the juvenile library division's activities, many of which go beyond the book selection domain which is this chapter's concern.

Although she is ultimately responsible to the director and associate director of the entire library system (which supports an Adult and Young Adult Services Division as its other major book-buying unit), the head of SCO is a nationally known figure who has been at her position for over a decade and, at the admission of the director, has quite a bit of autonomy when it comes to policies within the juvenile division.

The head of SCO delegates much of the day-to-day responsibility of the book, record, and film selection process to her head of book selection who, in turn, has two coordinators of lower rank to help her, one for book and the other for non-book materials. The regional library's "area coordinator" also has an active role in the selection of books, particularly in the regional library and the branches surrounding it. The coordinators are former branch librarians who took special civil service tests to work in the SCO and to advance to one of three levels there.

Branch librarianship also has three levels. Beginners (who must have a master's degree in Library Science) start at Level 1 and may advance by taking (and excelling on) competitive exams to become assistant branch head (Level 2) or branch head (Level 3) when an appropriate position is vacant. It should be noted that not every branch has a children's librarian. Insufficient funding and the necessity to staff the Central branch with two librarians has set the number of sections with children's librarians to 44 (out of 50) and the number of individuals in such positions to 45. In view of the

Preface's discussion of the traditional female domination of this profession, it should not be too surprising that all the coordinators and children's librarians are women.

The present chapter will examine the activities of these librarians with the aim of delineating the consequences of their continuous interaction with their major suppliers upon selection of books for the LMCLS branches. The client relationship has already been shown to influence the entire structure and operation of the focal library market publishing firm (LMCBD) so that it fulfills the demands of library market outlets. The following discussion of LMCLS book selection will show that the relationship has an impact upon the focal distribution outlet organization as well: It functions to ensure that the output of library market suppliers such as LMCBD will remain the primary predilection of the LMCLS selectors and helps to perpetuate the power of already dominant firms to set trends and define issues.

### The Client Relationship and the Book

#### Selection Procedure

The impact of the client relationship upon LMCLS was not seen to be as all-encompassing as was noted with regard to LMCBD. The fundamental selection goals could be seen to stem not from the client relationship but, rather, from the position of the organization as a publicly-funded entity ultimately responsible to city and state officials. Nevertheless, the librarians' answers to interview and survey questions reveal explicit and implicit approaches to their major client relationship which help guide their choosing of particular organizational

selection guidelines and, consequently, influence the types of books which are accepted and rejected, the titles which are heralded by librarians as worthy of special attention, and the innovations which they are willing to introduce.

Not surprisingly, the most direct impact of the client relationship can be noted among those librarians continually in contact with representatives from publishing firms--the coordinators. Since it is this group that sets juvenile library policy and ensures that that the branch librarians are guided by that policy, it is significant that the interaction with major suppliers has the most effect upon them. Yet, as will be seen, the resulting imbalance in impact of this interaction upon coordinators on the one hand and branch librarians on the other does cause some tension between the two groups and mitigates the full potential effect of the client relationship somewhat.

The approaches of the coordinators and branch librarians to their major client relationship and the resulting influence of those approaches upon book selection can be most specifically seen through examining two broad considerations which were noted as shaping the selection procedure--the perception of general requirements with regard to selection material and the manner in which such material is introduced to the organization. This examination will be carried out in the following sections.

The Perception of General Requirements with  
Regard to Selection Material

Because the focal juvenile library system is a publicly (city and state) sponsored agency and is not expected to sell goods or services and make a profit, it is difficult to pinpoint a fundamental requirement which might be said to supercede or pre-date the client relationship. This difficulty is made even more apparent by the fact, which the Preface noted, that the formulation of selection guidelines aimed at guiding children toward "acceptable" literature (and not simply stressing circulation) actually preceded the advent of juvenile divisions in publishing houses. Despite the problem of disentangling the fundamental goals of the focal library market outlet from the direct or indirect influences of major suppliers upon those goals, the following "General Statement of Objectives" in SCO's handbook on selection policies (which is given to all new children's librarians) will be taken as a broad organizational requirement with regard to children's book selection:

The library's primary objective is to develop in children an enjoyment and appreciation of reading for "reading's sake" and to provide books of literary quality as well as other materials (films, records, etc.) which will satisfy a child's recreational needs and natural curiosity, thus contributing to his growth as an intelligent world citizen.

This quote, which was referred to by the coordinators and by a few of the branch librarians who were interviewed, was seen to be quite compatible with answers which all the interviewees gave when asked about their goals. As written, the passage might be said to represent a "public interest stance," a perspective that links the

requirement of "literary quality" to an interest in the readers developmental abilities and a concern for their personal well-being and social integration. It is important to note, however, that while the interviewees did not contradict each other or the "General Statement" in the enunciation of their goals, they did differ in their relative emphasis upon "literary quality" and "enjoyment" as the primary selection requirement. Moreover, differentiation along these lines could be seen between the coordinators and the branch librarians, with the former group of four emphasizing high "literary quality" and the latter group tending to stress the importance of a book's potential "enjoyment" and (more particularly) its "popularity." The following statements by the head of SCO and a branch librarian, respectively, about their goals exemplify this variance:

Our objective is to promote communication between the child and thinkers of the world. To present to the child writers and illustrators of quality materials.

My objective is to introduce children to books; to help them enjoy reading. I work in an inner-city area where the reading level is extremely low. I'm particularly interested in reading motivation programs, using storytelling and book talks.

A quantitative indication that "popularity" is indeed more important to the branch librarians than to the coordinators can be found in the fact that 29 (91%) of the 32 branch librarians who responded to the questionnaire said that their general impressions of what children like is "very important" in their selection of books for their branches. By contrast, the three responding coordinators (who answered the questions relating to branch selection in their capacities

as book buyers for outlets without children's librarians) all answered that children's predilections are only "somewhat important."

The purpose of this section will be to explore some of the influences which have served to structure these different emphases. It will be shown that while organizational considerations (budgetary and situational) shape and reinforce the branch librarians' tendency toward and definitions of "popularity," influences largely traceable to the client relationship reinforce the coordinators' primary predilection for high "literary quality," the current definitions of which they try to transmit--with some success--to their branch personnel.

#### The Influence of Budgetary Considerations on the Perception of Requirements

Although compatibility with the non-economic "public interest stance" was seen to be the pre-eminant requirement perceived by selectors with regard to book selection, budgetary considerations were noted as very important, most specifically with regard to choosing titles for the various branches. The amount of money which a librarian is given to spend on the purchase of new books could be expected to have an important influence on her specific book choices; indeed, 29 (89%) of the questionnaire respondents said it is "very important" for that purpose. However, from the standpoint of librarians' perceptions of general selection requirements that shape selection guidelines, the importance of the budget lies not in the amount of money which is doled to particular librarians but, rather, in the manner by which that money is allocated.

Approximately 30% of the money which is apportioned by the head of book selection to the branches for book-buying is distributed evenly among the branches; another 30% is divided in direct proportion to each branch's book circulation figures; and about 40% is doled by the heads of SCO and book selection at their discretions. Both coordinators, in their interviews, tended to downplay the importance of circulation for a branch's monetary allotment and stressed that the discretionary cash is often used to provide extra funds to chronically low circulation branches so that they might improve their collections.

Some branch librarians, however, were not so sanguine about their chances of maintaining or increasing their budgets without maintaining or increasing their circulation statistics. Of the 35 survey questionnaire respondents, 8 (23%) said that current circulation figures are "very important" considerations when they select books for their branches, while 14 described this information as "somewhat important" (11 answered "not important" and 2 stated no opinion). The regional library's area coordinator gave the impression that concern over circulation is more widespread than these numbers indicate when she opined that "everyone [i.e. every branch librarian] is under pressure to a certain extent to keep circulation up." This pressure was translated into a book selection requirement among the four branch interviewees who emphasized it: They viewed the allocation of funds according to circulation as a mandate to consider only the minimum standards of "literary quality" in their search for books which promise to "turn over" most quickly.



It should be noted, however, that a desire to maintain or increase circulation cannot be suggested as the only reason for the branch librarians' lesser emphasis than the coordinators on high "literary quality" in their articulation of selection requirements. When asked whether they would buy more "quality" books for small potential audiences if they did not have to report circulation statistics (but did have their current book-buying budgets), 23 (72%) of the 32 branch librarian respondents to the survey questionnaire said "no," while only 7 (22%) said "yes" (3 were "not sure"). The high percentage of negative answers would seem to indicate that another factor, perhaps more important than the perceived need to increase circulation, is impelling the branch librarians towards "popularity."

#### The Influence of Interaction with Children on the Perception of Requirements

The other factor which seems to be at the root of the lesser emphasis by the branch librarians on high "literary quality" and greater emphasis on "popularity" (compared to the coordinators) is their close, continual interaction with children, an interaction which the SCO librarians, because of the administrative nature of their positions, do not enjoy.<sup>1</sup> Several branch librarians, in interviews or informal discussions, noted that "working on the floor," listening to children's requests, helping students with school assignments, and dealing first-hand with the low reading abilities of many of them, yields a perspective which shifts the foremost emphasis of book selection from "quality" to "popularity." One long-time librarian echoed many of her branch

colleagues when she noted that the coordinators "don't get out [on the branch floors] that much. So there is sometimes a gap in what the librarians on the floor perceive and what they [i.e. the coordinators] think is going on. I think there is a tremendous gap sometimes."

### The Influence of the Client Relationship on the Perception of Requirements

The difference between the coordinators and branch librarians with regard to the former group's primary emphasis on "literary quality" was seen to be reinforced through their differential contact with the extra-organizational activities which the focal library market publishing selectors noted are used by firms to influence librarians' perceptions of "good books." Data from the questionnaire survey supports interview findings that while all the coordinators frequently attend library conferences, are often in contact with editors and other publishers' representatives, and know quite a bit about current happenings within the children's book industry, the majority of branch librarians rarely go to conferences, speak to publishing selectors, or know very much about the industry or its imprints.

All of the branch interviewees did, however, recognize the strong connections between the coordinators (particularly the head of SCO) and the major book producers. The head of book selection characterized the relationship in the following manner:

[The links are] very strong. Because [the head of SCO] is very prominent and has been working with children's books for a long time and is respected highly. So she really knows book publishers--the ones who've left and the ones who

are there now. And she does a lot of work through the American Library Association which involves promoting books in general and publishers whom she likes [italics added for emphasis].

WHAT ABOUT YOUR INTERACTIONS WITH PUBLISHERS' REPRESENTATIVES? I don't get to know all of them. But yes. I'll meet someone, say, at an American Library Association meeting, and I'm a representative of the liason committee with the Children's Book Council, which is half librarians and half children's book editors and promoters. SO THERE IS A LOT OF INTERACTION? A fair amount.

The head of SCO pointed out that she is well aware of promotional tactics that impinge upon her and her associates during these and other interactions with publishers' representatives. She contended however, that such influences are two-way, that by allowing publishers to ask favors of her (such as the review of manuscripts) and promote books through her, she receives the opportunity to make a mark on their selection activities.

The chief coordinator also noted that some promotional operations are valuable from the standpoint of her own library system. Invitations to sales conferences, she said, give her advance knowledge about books, knowledge which she can use to evaluate titles on similar subjects which are already being considered by LMCLS librarians for selection. If she feels that the previewed book is better, she will make her views within LMCLS in the hope that the selectors will wait for the superior title.

Even such an obvious promotional practice on the part of publishers as an author's (or illustrator's) visit to the library system was seen by the SCO head as a vehicle to selectively spotlight those "thinkers of the world" whom she would like her branch librarians to

favor in their book-buying and their presentations to children. She understood quite clearly that she and her Office act as promotional agents for the publishers in this activity. Far from feeling defensive or used, however, SCO's head welcomed the opportunity and power to promote those who are producing "quality" literature. She pointed out that it is through the recognition and purchase of books by such authors that LMCLS has achieved its reputation as a repository of "quality" children's literature, a reputation which, she and the other coordinators stressed, is important to maintain.

#### The Client Relationship and the Need to Maintain a High "Quality" Collection

The importance of cultivating LMCLS' reputation for having a "quality" collection can, interestingly enough, be traced to the client relationship--specifically to the coordinators' desires to be influential in that relationship. Two of the SCO interviewees suggested that the knowledge that a large library system such as LMCLS will purchase "quality" titles might assure juvenile publishers interested in producing such books that their output is likely to find an influential outlet. It might also be observed that the influence of the coordinators in promoting the cause of "quality" books to publishers is likely to be stronger, and their positions more credible, if it is known that the system which they oversee emphasizes books that are esteemed by publishers, review media, and other influential librarians.

The coordinators maintain the "quality" image of the LMCLS collection by turning to the library market environment, both to ensure that they are choosing "quality" and to participate in the defining of "quality." The first purpose can be seen to underlie the coordinators' use of review media for comparison with their own critiques. Although titles are often considered for acceptance at SCO before any published reviews appear, all the rejected books are held for a year in order to gauge the general critical reaction. While both coordinators and branch librarians indicated that they often disagree with reviews regarding acceptance or rejection, the four SCO interviewees gave examples of cases where favorable consensus on the part of important media had brought them to change their verdicts from negative to positive. "We make mistakes," said the assistant-to-the-head of book selection, adding that LMCLS is an important library system and should have all the important children's books in the collection.

With regard to defining "quality," the System Coordinating Office participates with one of the city's library schools in organizing programs and conferences around themes in children's literature. Drawing attention to "quality" materials is also the purpose of various book lists which SCO (with the help of branch librarians) assembles and releases to the LMCLS branches, to other library systems, and to publishing firms. Perhaps the most important list in terms of publicity and impact is the annual review of the best new books. Compiled by the heads of SCO and book selection, the chief central branch librarian, and the regional area coordinator, the approximately 100 titles are

exhibited and described by them every Spring to an audience of about 300 to 400 people, mostly the city's school librarians, publishers' representatives, and librarians from other municipalities (although non-professionals are invited and some do come).

#### Influences Which Shape Branch Librarians' Commitment to Quality

It should, perhaps, be stressed that while the SCO librarians were seen to differ from the branch personnel in their primary emphasis on "quality" instead of "popularity," the difference between the attitudes of the two groups was noted as a matter of degree, not kind. The branch librarians showed their commitment to the literary-aesthetic aspect of children's books in their interviews and questionnaire responses. Regarding the latter, 14 (44%) of the 32 branch librarians who were asked about the "extent to which the book [they are considering] is of very high quality" has importance for them when choosing books for their branches agreed with the coordinators that it is "very important"; 16 (50%) said it is "somewhat important," and only 1 person said it is "not important" at all. While the strength of attachment to this area was, in many cases, superceded by an articulated desire to give children "what they like to read" (which, as noted, 91% thought "very important"), it was, nevertheless, seen to be pretty strong.

Evidence that the branch librarians have a lower limit regarding acceptance that is based on conceptions of "quality" can also be seen in the unanimously negative response which all the interviewees gave when asked if they would buy mass market books for LMCLS. (Question 7b

of the Interview Schedule defined "mass market" books as those which are most commonly found in book, department, chain, and variety stores.) Even seven interviewees who had explicitly decried what they saw as SCO's over-emphasis on "quality" at the expense of "popularity"-- and who, it will be seen, did covet some mass market titles which the coordinators had barred--were repelled by the idea of indiscriminately opening the doors to this class of books, regardless of its potential popularity. The following justification is representative:

I don't think they [i.e. mass market books] are as good as our books. Otherwise we'd be buying them. But I think that anything that will get a child to read in the home--yes, let them use it...A child can read all these books which we don't buy. Fine. But once he gets into the library, he can realize that there is something more, that is just as interesting. All you have to do is convince him of that. All you have to do is get a good librarian between the book and the child.

The branch librarians' perspective on the importance of and the guidelines for "literary quality" could be seen to have been shaped by two major, complementary influences. The relevance of library school training was spontaneously noted by a few interviewees; though it was considered "very important" for branch book selection by only 7 (20%) of the survey respondents, 19 others (57%) though it "somewhat important." Remarks by most interviewees showed a continual reinforcement of the "literary quality" orientation of library school by the System Coordinating Office, though periodic reminders by the coordinators (in the "promotional" activities mentioned earlier, in bi-monthly talks to the entire staff, in personal interactions) and through rotating service on the book selection committee (which, it will be seen, makes emphasis on "quality" particularly salient). It

might also be noted, as did a few branch and all the SCO librarians, that a pragmatic incentive for buying titles of high "literary quality" is found in the coordinators' annual inspection of every branch and scrutiny of all large book replacement orders with the purpose of maintaining control over the reputation of the overall collection.<sup>2</sup>

#### The Manner in Which Material is Introduced to the Organization

The preceding paragraphs have indicated how the influence of the library market client relationship serves to reinforce the emphasis on high "literary quality" among the SCO librarians and to encourage them to transmit the marketplace's current definitions of "quality" to their branch personnel. Remarks by all the LMCLS interviewees showed that the dominance of the library market client relationship--as well as the approach to books which it shapes--is also reinforced through the manner in which books are introduced to the organization.

The practice by almost all children's book publishing firms of sending review copies to large library systems with the tacit understanding that the books will be reviewed with regard to acceptance or rejection is one promotional activity which was mentioned by all the interviewed coordinators. Many major firms (including LMCBD) offer a "contract plan," in which new children's titles are shipped to a library at one-third their regular cost. LMCBD subscribes to most of these plans, an activity which, together with incidental review copies from other firms, inundates the SCO with new books every month.



Aside from fulfilling the obvious purpose of getting librarians to recognize the availability of particular titles, the publishers' review copy activity has the cumulative effect of reinforcing among librarians the need to make decisions on the acceptability of a book's content after reading it (or careful reviews of it) and not simply after superficially judging the title by author, publisher, and general subject. The "literary quality" (or "good books") perspective which is consequently cultivated in LMCLS reinforces the influence of publishers who adopt that perspective. Interestingly, because of its silent message about the importance of an individual title's content, the review copy activity also increases the chances that a new publisher with a very small list will find acceptance. In this respect, the review copy promotional activity interestingly weakens the dominance of large library market juvenile divisions and serves as a counter-balance to what one long-time professional observer of the juvenile book industry has called the "incestuous" relationship between key library coordinators, review media personnel, and representatives of major publishing firms.

#### The Client Relationship and the LMCLS Book Selection Process

The inundation of the System Coordinating Office with the new titles (and the consequent inability of any small group of coordinators to critically review all of them) has fostered the routinization of book reviewing and selection through a two-tiered operation. The operation is structured in such a way that the SCO librarians are in ultimate control, though considerable freedom within usually-agreed-upon

acceptance boundaries mitigates the tension between them and branch personnel regarding the two groups differential emphasis on "literary quality" and "popularity."

In the first level of book selection, books are examined for general acceptability to the system as a whole. Every month of the year, the branch librarians and the coordinators choose (or, more rarely, are assigned) newly arrived books to review for the next book selection committee meeting, which is held monthly from September to June. That committee of 11 (which is chaired by the head of book selection and is comprised of her two assistants, the regional area coordinator, and an annually rotating panel of branch librarians) decides whether any reviewer's recommendations on system acceptance or rejection of titles (including just placing them in the regional and/or central branches, or in a special, non-circulating collection) should be contested. If so, the book is often sent out for another review. The majority decision by the committee must be approved by--and can be vetoed by--either the Head of Book Selection and the Head of SCO.

After these selection decisions are made, a list is drawn up which indicates the final status of each book. Thereupon, the branch librarians come to the SCO to decide which of the accepted books they would like to buy for their particular branches. Branches without children's librarians have their books bought for them by SCO librarians, the regional area coordinator, or the additional librarian in the central branch. During this branch selection process, the librarians are encouraged to examine the books, as well as to peruse

the staff review(s) of each. When all the branch orders are completed (at the end of the month), they are sent to the library system's acquisitions department, where they are consolidated and assigned to a jobber (or jobbers). The book selection head estimated that most books end up on branch shelves approximately six months after publication date.

#### Sources and Surceasers of Tension Regarding Selection

Each level of the two-tiered procedure was seen to call attention to one of the competing primary requirements for selection. The questionnaire survey corroborated as widespread the opinions of several interviewees that their main concern when reviewing a book for system-level selection is "the extent to which the book is of very high quality": 23 (72%) of the 32 responding branch librarians thought this factor "very important" at this stage of reviewing while only 11 (34%) felt that way about their "general impressions about what [the city's] children want to read. In striking contrast, when asked about branch-level selection, 30 (94%) of the branch personnel felt that their "general impressions about what the children in [their] branch area like to read" is "very important," while only 13 (41%) thought the "high quality" statement rated that designation.

The three interviewees who explained these different approaches to books at the branch and system levels pointed out that since reviewers do not have to purchase the books they laud, and since they are not familiar with the capabilities and predilections of children in the many neighborhoods throughout the city, they conform easily to the

general reviewing pattern of writing predominantly literary-aesthetic critiques. When it comes to actually purchasing, they said, individual librarians evaluate a reviewer's synopsis of the story and judgement with their particular branches in mind.

Despite their acceptance of the "literary quality" perspective as the basis for system-level selection, several branch personnel evidenced some annoyance with the coordinators regarding that reviewing tier: Four librarians noted instances in which the head of SCO superceded their unfavorable reviews (as well as the Book Selection Committee's concurrence) and accepted titles, allegedly because of her friendship with or personal esteem for an author or illustrator. The librarians pointed out that such situations--which do not arise frequently--are not really problematic: Because of the two-tier nature of the selection process, they do not have to buy those titles for their branches.

More distressing, the interviewees noted, are the somewhat more frequent cases where titles that they and the Book Selection Committee have reviewed favorably are vetoed by the book selection head or the head of SCO for reasons of unacceptable quality. Seven of the 14 interviewed branch librarians were particularly vocal regarding this tension between the two groups of librarians when asked about books which they want but cannot get. In the following representative response, one of them can be seen to echo her colleagues in disagreeing with the coordinators' primary emphasis on "quality" and,

most particularly, with the influence of the latest publishing trends upon their selection concerns:

I'm not sure [if there are any types of books we're not getting but need]. ...I can't think of a specific category right now. But I think they're [i.e. the people at SCO] too quick to reject some things. And a lot of things are rejected for no good reason--only because there may be something a little better around that month or just because nobody cares about it enough say, "well we should buy that." I think they're concerned a little too much with quality over popularity. Not just quality, but name authors and publishers and illustrators and things like that. Out in the branches, we don't think about publishers but in [SCO] they do and they know what kinds of publishers are doing what kinds of stuff.

Generally speaking, however, the LMCLS book selection process was seen as flexible enough to ensure coordinator control over the minimum requirements for acceptance (which are ordinarily agreeable to branch personnel, too) while also mitigating much of the tension between the two groups with respect to the primacy of "literary quality" and "popularity." The tension regarding titles of very high "quality" which branch personnel feel will not be "popular" in their branches is alleviated by allowing them to decide which particular books to purchase for their branches. At the same time, the chance that a book which is clearly unacceptable to coordinators will be deemed acceptable by branch librarians reviewers (and expose this undercurrent of tension) is reduced somewhat through a superficial screening of books on the part of the head of book selection before they are put up for review. The book selection head explained this activity, in which she excludes titles which obviously do not meet her standards, with a rhetorical question that points to her expectation of "literary

quality" from certain publishing firms and not from others: "Why waste someone's time with something from a cheap press that I know we don't need?"

It can be seen, then, that the library market client relationship operates to reinforce the primacy of "literary quality" as a requirement in LMCLS and to shape coordinators' (and, by extension, branch librarians') understanding of that requirement so that major library market (rather than mass market) suppliers are evaluated as best meeting it. These findings also seem to validate the LMCBD selectors' perceptions that librarians demand "good books" and that publishing firms can guide them towards defining those types of books. The following sub-chapters will show how the influence of the major client relationship (and the compatibility with LMCBD) extends beyond the librarians' articulation of requirements to the particular guidelines they hold, the actual books of the images they have of their ultimate audience, and of the actual books which they purchase.

#### The Client Relationship, Audience Images, and Book Selection Guidelines

As might be expected in view of the previous discussion, the branch librarians (and even, to a lesser extent, two of the coordinators) emphasized different guidelines when reviewing books for system-level selection and when selecting books for their branches. Moreover, as might be expected, the guidelines articulated with regard to first tier (and seen in analyses of review cards) were more similar to those articulated in LMCBD than were the predilections expressed for branch

choosing. Although tensions between coordinators and branch librarians over selection boundaries (tensions defined, in part, by the client relationship) were observed, the guidelines at the two tiers--like the perceptions of requirements at those levels--were generally not inconsistent, as the following sections will show.

#### System-Level Selection

A comparison between the guidelines that were noted in the focal publishing organization and those articulated in LMCLS with regard to the reviewing of books at the first tier reveals strong compatibilities between the two groups of selectors. LMCLS' spectrum of selection was observed to be somewhat broader than that of LMCBD: While the editors and readers noted that they have tended not to concentrate on non-fiction, the librarians evidenced a good deal of interest in procuring non-fiction titles that could be used by children to complete school assignments or for recreational reading.

With regard to fiction, however, the two groups of selectors were in tune. As in LMCBD, the focal outlet selectors noted plot, writing style, characterization, and illustrations (in picture books) as the most important content characteristics. Moreover, both emphasized similar guidelines with regard to these characteristics. The non-formulaic, individual nature of each title was stressed: Broad leeway was allowed with regard to plot (required to be successful "on its own terms"), a personal style was demanded of the author and/or illustrator, depth and believability were required in characterization. Interestingly, the book selection head and others admitted that these

guidelines are less stringently observed with regard to non-fiction. Accuracy and subject need were seen as paramount in that area. It will be recalled that while these guidelines were recognized by the editors who spoke about non-fiction, they tended to stress the importance of judging such titles for their literary "quality."

Turning to books about minority groups, the two groups of selectors indicated the same approach: They said such books are actively sought, but noted that candidates would, in all but exceptional cases, have to meet the same "quality" standards used to judge all the entrees. It might be noted, too, that the focal library and publishing interviewees pronounced the same desire to improve the portrayal of women in children's literature, though without engaging in an activist campaign on the issue; for example, none of the librarians could remember the rejection of a book from SCO because it was judged "sexist."

The selection decisions which LMCBD interviewees were seen to have made in consideration of the economics of publishing were also seen to correctly predict the predilections of the LMCLS librarians. The pragmatic guideline of building the seasonal lists around "names" that have "track records" within the library market was mirrored in the librarians' admissions that, while they try to treat each title individually and would reject a "name" author if the material were poor, they do have predispositions towards books by generally esteemed figures.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, the publishing selectors were seen to be correct (at least in the case of LMCLS) regarding librarians' predilection for a



broad range of illustrations--not just those in color--and their willingness to pay for a handsomely produced book despite somewhat higher costs. In fact, when asked about price, the head of SCO almost precisely quoted the LMCBD promotion director: "It [i.e. price] doesn't matter because we're a public library. If it's a good book, we'll buy it."

It might be noted that on the more general level of format, LMCBD and LMCLS were seen as compatible with respect to paperbacks. Interestingly the guideline of the Library in this area shifted in response to the "juvenile paperback revolution," at around the same time LMCBD began to produce its softcover line. Before the late 1960's, paperbacks could be bought for LMCLS branches if only they were originals; the rule was subsequently changed to include all books that have already been bought in hardback (and have thus gone through the evaluation process).

#### Content Unacceptable to LMCLS and LMCBD

The strength of the library market client relationship between LMCBD and LMCLS was even more solidly evidenced in the aspects of content which they both found unacceptable. It will be recalled that one LMCBD editor and one reader noted a general (though not categorical) dislike for anthropomorphic characterization, a position taken by 7 of the 18 LMCLS interviewees. All the focal publishing selectors and focal outlet selectors indicated grave reservations regarding series books and easy readers produced from word lists. Both groups justified their attitudes by designating such works as hopelessly formulaic

in characterization, plot, and/or style. Cartoonish illustrations were similarly seen to be generally unacceptable to the editors and librarians; "flat, noncommittal" books with Walt Disney characters were a particular target of attack by librarian interviewees. The latter had mixed opinions about "abstract" illustrations in juveniles, a pictorial approach usually avoided by LMCBD selectors.

#### LMCLS, LMCBD, and Moral Point of View

Compatibility between publishing and outlet selectors was also seen in their guidelines regarding a title's moral point of view. Like the reader and editors, the librarians decried books which are obviously dogmatic or moralistic. They were quite willing to accept curse words, as long as they fit the context in which they are used. Differences in discussing particulars of "moral point of view" were evident, however. The formal policy and systematic reviewing procedure of system-level selection encouraged the outlet selectors to articulate their guidelines in a much more specific manner than was seen in the case of their publishing counterparts. Several interviewees recalled that certain types of books are specifically prohibited by the selection policy handbook: "How-to" manuals on subjects (such as judo and hypnotism), which "can cause serious injury to the reader unless carefully supervised by an expert," are barred, and titles relating to specific religious teachings or practice are excluded, since "the library considers the child's spiritual development as primarily the responsibility of his home and church."

The non-written guidelines espoused by the librarians were also more specific than those seen in LMCBD. It will be recalled that while the editors and reader generally followed the publisher in articulating such vague statements as "of course, if it's evil, we won't publish it." By contrast, the librarians found it easier, because of their "public interest stance" and training in writing critiques, to review the positive and negative points they look for with regard to moral point of view. The following remarks by a branch librarian are typical:

Well, we try to point out the themes in our review, not just give a capsule summary. What is the book getting at, what are its points. I think we try to point out if the book is straight out dogmatic and moralistic. We're not trying to moralize, I hope, or give books for children that we think will be "good" for them; but, on the other hand, we do like to emphasize positive values, you know? Values like "belief in yourself." Children need that kind of self confidence to grow and learn how to handle things. And I think certainly we would like books about kindness more than books about people kicking other people in the face. So I think it comes through, although I hope it isn't that we just pick something that is a good value and no story.

The above-quoted librarian also echoed other respondents in pointing out that themes involving drugs, heterosexual activity, homosexuality, abortion, racial discrimination, race relations, and gang warfare have--along with curse words--been found in books which the Library has accepted. She (and they) noted, however, that such topics have been confined generally to titles for middle and upper-level juvenile readers (grades 4 through 8) and that books dealing with such problems should contain thoughtful, positive moral uplift even if they do not contain happy endings. A few librarians also mentioned that the portrayal of explicit sexual activity is also unacceptable.

Exceptions to these guidelines are sometimes allowed. The head of SCO recalled that LMCLS accepted a book for older children called The Chocolate War, which has a very depressing ending, because of the book's critical acclaim and its literary quality. She emphasized, however, that she instructed librarians who bought the book for their branches to read it and to recommend it only to emotionally mature readers. Parenthetically, it might be added that the influence of the client relationship in broadening the Library's acceptance boundaries regarding "moral point of view," an influence implicit in this example, can be seen quite explicitly in the following remarks by the book selection head about the advent of "problem books":

...There are problem books--about what do you do when your parents are divorced, or conflicts of sexual feeling--that have come into books [within the past ten years], but it hasn't seemed to have affected us, because we've seemed to grow with it. I mean, it's fine, it's here, people are writing it, it's a good book, we'll buy it.

#### Branch-Level Selection

The librarians' emphasis on selection characteristics with regard to the second tier was seen to shift from a primary focus on the artistic aspects of content to a perspective which minimized the importance of critical acclaim and centered on the projected popularity of a title's subject matter or (more rarely) its author. The potentially drastic consequence of this shift for the client relationship, however, was mitigated by the branch librarians' general commitment to "literary quality" and, particularly, by the fact that the system-level selection procedure structures the spectrum of choice for

librarians at the branch level. In fact, no guidelines were articulated by the interviewees regarding branch selection which were incompatible with those seen in LMCBD; on the contrary, some similarities in criteria not found at the first level were even observed. For example, the librarians' preferences regarding typography, binding, covers, and book size were identical to those of publishing selectors. In addition, the LMCBD promotion director's comment about librarians acting as buffers between publishers and communities were illustrated in their remarks about not avoiding the purchase of books passed by SCO which have curse words or deal with aspects of the "new realism." Although the LMCLS interviewees agreed that complaints from parents are infrequent, they all outlined a specific procedure that has been developed to cope with such incidents at the branch level. Interestingly, three interviewees (including the head of SCO) mentioned that a primary reason for the Division's written guidelines is to defuse the strength of extra-organizational criticisms by allowing the librarian to point to official policy as justification for a title's acceptance.

#### Conceptualizing the Audience (and the Guidelines) for Branch Selection

Intertwined with the librarians' discussions of their branch selection guidelines--and helping to shape those guidelines--was their image of the ultimate audience of children. Actually, two perspectives on that audience--encouraged by the two fundamental requirements of "popularity" and "quality"--could be seen, with the coordinators emphasizing one view and the branch personnel stressing the other.

Predictably, it was the coordinators' image which was seen to be most consonant with the approach of the major client relationship.

#### The Branch Librarians' Approach

The view that was most articulated by the branch librarians saw the children in terms of audience categories that had to be met during selection. As the LMCBD selectors predicted, the librarians used grade categories in their formal reviews; in their interviews and informal discussions, however, they tended to speak of both age and grade. Sex, reading ability, and (in some cases) racial and ethnic background of the children were prominent to the librarians. It will be recalled that while these categories were also mentioned by the publishing selectors, they were much more generally and vaguely stated by the latter, who did not seem concerned to acquire specifics about their ultimate audience.

The librarians were seen to use their range of specified categories for selecting books through the notion of "balance"--the choosing of titles from a new book list so as to cover a wide range of audience slots. "Popularity" was often defined with "balance" in mind: It was taken to mean the high circulation of a title among the particular audience category for which it is intended. The following answer by a moderately funded librarian to a question about the guidelines she follows with regard to choosing from the SCO selection list is representative of responses by other librarians and shows how audience categories, conceptions of "balance," and notions of

"popularity" combine with budgetary considerations to shape selection at branch level:

....Despite the fact that we've gotten more money, the books have gone up in price, so you're where you were in the beginning. So you have to be very selective with regard to the books you buy. Very selective. You don't want to neglect one area to the exclusion of the other. You want to get books for the younger children. You want books for the boys. And there is a difference between the ages of, let's say, 8 and 12. No matter what people say, there is a very great difference in the likes and dislikes of boys and girls. So we have to get books which will satisfy the boys--say the sports books and so forth; they do like those kinds. Girls also like a special kind of story, which we call a "girl's story." Like Little Women and so forth. And then we have to get books for the pre-schoolers. We do have a lot of pre-school books. But as I said before, that takes a lot of money. We're required to buy two copies of every picture book and easy reader. Which does make the budget a little difficult to manage....

We also try to balance the fiction and non-fiction titles. Not to have too many fiction to the exclusion of the non-fiction. I think most librarians try to get a balance. Of course that depends on the books that are up for order, to see if the balance is there. Of course, we do buy as we need. If we need books on social studies and history--for example, this is a Bicentennial year--we buy more to cover that area because we get questions from children and teachers who come in.

All the librarians who were interviewed tended to prefer the same types of books for branch purchase--picture books and easy readers for the pre-school and early grade children; monster books, joke books, sports books, automobile books, motor bike books, and books about World War II for older boys; modern romances and some fantasies for the older girls. Books with foreign (e.g. British) dialects, taken place in foreign countries, or dealing with ethnic and racial groups not found in the branch area were eschewed. Several interviewees, noting the low reading level of the children in their branch areas, said that they tend to skew their purchases towards the picture book

and easy reader areas in spite of the need for "balance." Generally speaking, the lower a librarian's budget and the poorer the reading ability of the area's children, the more she characterized as difficult the adherence to the "balance" guideline and to the requirement of purchasing unusual books which are risky from the standpoint of popularity. One interviewee who was extremely concerned with circulation statistics noted in frustration that sometimes only the awareness of SCO scrutiny keeps her from buying "all joke books," since those titles tend to move the fastest and be the most in demand.

The great majority of LMCLS interviewees did not aspire to take their concern for "popularity" to these ends, however. It is true that when the surveyed librarians were asked how often they "feel a conflict between the goal of maintaining a high quality and balanced collection and the goal of providing children with popular books which will constantly circulate" 14 (40%) said "often" and the rest (including the 3 responding coordinators) said "sometimes." But, when asked to choose between four ways that they would prefer to resolve that tension (ranging from "a resolution fully on the side of popularity" or "quality" to "a compromise between the two goals but leaning towards the side of quality" or "popularity"), all the respondents chose the compromise, with 40% (including the coordinators) leaning towards "quality" and 60% leaning towards "popularity."

When articulating their concern for "quality," the branch librarians subdued their demographic image of the audience somewhat and stressed a conception of children as having a particular generalized need--the need to be enriched with different types of special aesthetic



experiences. Showing the influence of the coordinators (and the client relationship's) primary emphasis on aesthetics, many of the branch interviewees said that they might purchase a title that the coordinators or the SCO reviewers judge as being of particularly high "literary quality," even if it does not promise to be immediately popular. Most added, however, that their decision would hinge upon the number of other titles that they want to purchase that month and their estimation of whether they can "sell" the book to a fair number of their library regulars through individual recommendations (to children and/or parents) or through book talks. Some librarians made the influence of the client relationship upon their second tier selection activities even clearer by noting that most branches routinely purchase the annual Newberry and Caldecott award winners, even though those titles have a reputation of not being terribly popular with children.

#### The Coordinators' Preferred Approach

While the branch librarians tended to only secondarily and implicitly conceptualize children according to the need for aesthetic enrichment, the SCO librarians, as a logical outgrowth of the client relationship's greater influence upon them, were quite explicit about this perspective being the most important one. Since they had worked in the branches at one time and were continuing to order books for outlets without children's librarians, they did see a pragmatic necessity for audience categories. However, the specificity with which librarians discussed their branch children in terms of these categories was lost upon the coordinators, who admitted that they do not "get

out on the floor" very much any more and must rely on feedback from branch personnel for information about what is "popular."

Interestingly, the head of SCO downplayed the importance of specific information about what subjects and authors are most popular for what types of children in the branches when she interpreted the branch personnel's penchant for clearly "popular" titles as simply indicating that they prefer to choose "what seems to be what children want by what they say they want or take out," in view of the choices they have at the time. She went on to emphasize that the coordinators encourage the librarians to tap some of the less obvious possibilities for child literary enjoyment. High "quality" titles, she said, can be successfully introduced to children, especially if a good librarian is doing the introducing. This primary perspective on the ultimate audience would seem to favor the acceptance of titles from editors (such as those in LMCBD) who have a view of their child readers as "sophisticated." Similarly, the perspective would seem to reinforce the coordinators' ties to the library market client relationship in general by making them more likely to be receptive to and comfortable with new literary-aesthetic experiences which editors attempt to define as "quality" through the market's promotional apparatus.

### Conflict Between The Two Levels

#### With Regard To Selection

It has been shown that the guidelines which librarians use for the SCO and branch selection procedures are, though quite different, usually not incompatible and sometimes actually quite similar to those

articulated by the focal publishing selectors. During the course of the research for this study, however, certain incidents arose which illustrate how the contrasting primary emphases of coordinators and branch librarians upon "quality" and "popularity," respectively, can lead to conflict between the two groups over the boundaries of acceptability. Significantly, the books which were the source of controversy--the "Nancy Drew" series, picture books by Richard Scarry (currently the most popular children's book illustrator in the mass market), and easy readers with fixed word lists--had been consistently rejected by SCO while being constantly requested of the branch librarians by many children and/or parents who had become familiar with them through non-library sources.

The heads of SCO and book selection dealt with each of the three areas in a somewhat different manner. Since knowledge about the requests for word list easy readers had not yet pervaded the system, the book selection head felt that explanatory action was pre-mature. She seemed confident, however, that such books, which she felt have a consistently stilted style, will continue to be rejected. In the case of Richard Scarry's books, which the coordinators considered repetitious and cluttered, demand on the part of branch librarians had become so strong that, after two years of routine rejection, the coordinators agreed to accept one of his titles as a "trial," ostensibly to gauge children's reactions to the much-vaunted books. Such a "trial," it will be observed, serves to circumscribe the acceptance of the title with an implicit notice that it is an exception, not a redefinition of

the boundaries of "quality." The labeling of the action as a "trial" also serves notice that it should not be taken as a precedent with regard to the evaluation of other Scarry books.

The coordinators refused to allow such a test with regard to the "Nancy Drew" fiction series, since the individual titles are numbered and to accept one would be to invite children to ask for the others. During an interview, the SCO head related that an angry letter from a large number of librarians petitioning her to allow her to buy "Nancy Drew" books had precipitated her action to defuse the conflict. Convinced that the petitioners had not read a book from the series since their childhood, and evidently aiming to show the librarians that the newer editions are even worse than the older ones, the head of SCO told all of them to read at least one old and one new "Drew" book (preferably the same title) before they met as a group to air their grievances. During the part of a bi-monthly meeting which had been set aside for the "Drew" discussion, the head of book selection (who was substituting for the SCO head because of the latter's illness) asked each librarians to state her opinion about the books she had read.

The tone of the collective comments approached that of a muted religious revival. One by one, the branch librarians stood, confessed that they had forgotten how poor the "Drew" books are, how much worse the new ones are than the old ones, and how the books do not belong in the library. It is, of course, impossible to know whether the format of the gathering influenced the comments of the librarians. Be that as it may, none of them spoke in favor of "Nancy Drew," at the

meeting or in the later survey questionnaire. The head of book selection, who had admitted her nervousness before the meeting, was genuinely relieved and thought it had gone well. The head of SCO later predicted that the conflict would arise again in a few years. However, it seemed quite clear to her that she had been successful at disposing of the popular mass market fiction series as a major subject or argument with her current group of branch librarians.

In answer to questions that specifically dealt with the differences of opinion between her Office and the branches, the SCO Head indicated that every organization has some tensions, that these particular ones are cyclical occurrences precipitated when some young branch librarians are at their jobs long enough to "think they know it all." Speaking about the "Nancy Drew" series, she gave a pragmatic monetary reason for wanting to reject those books: If the system accepted them, the branches would continually be buying the series' many titles and replacing them as they wore out. The substantial money invested in this activity, she pointed out, would preclude branches from buying high quality books which deserve to be bought. It can be seen, then, that the "quality" guidelines championed by the System Coordinating Office and LMCBD--and reinforced by the client relationship--were triumphant in this revealing critical incident.

#### The Client Relationship and the LMCBS'

##### Book Lists

The influence of the client relationship was seen to extend beyond the guidelines which the librarians articulated to the actual books

which they selected during the May 1974 to April 1975 period that was studied.<sup>4</sup> Perhaps the clearest example of the preference which LMCLS reviewers gave to library market products can be seen in the fact that while 48% of the 1927 titles from library market firms were accepted for general branch circulation and 37% rejected (with the rest being allowed exclusively in the central and/or regional libraries), only 29% of the 96 mass market titles was fully welcome while 59% was rejected. This difference becomes even more significant in view of the head of book selection's remarks that the mass market firms send to the SCO only those books which they feel are potential "crossover" material. Moreover, the acceptance of the mass market titles was predominantly (80%) in the realm of non-fiction, an area which the librarians admitted is judged less stringently than fiction from a "literary quality" standpoint and which, indeed, was seen to have a higher acceptance rate among the books coming into the Division (45% for the 1,050 fiction and 51% for the 970 non-fiction titles).

Interestingly, the percentage of acceptance by LMCLS of the 53 LMCBD titles it received during the period studied was very close to the general acceptance percentage of fiction, the firm's avowed forte and area of concentration. A breakdown of the SCO's rejections reveals that while 42% of the 50 fiction titles was accepted and 28% rejected, 2 of the 3 non-fiction books which reached the Book Selection Committee were turned down. These results would seem to indicate that LMCBD has been correct to concentrate on fiction.

A comparison of the titles which the focal publishing firm released during Fall, 1974 and Spring, 1975 with those that the juvenile library division accepted during approximately the same period reinforces the preceding discussions about both organizations. Table 3 presents a breakdown of categories derived from an analysis of the review cards for all the titles accepted by SCO in May, October, December, and March of the year studied. (Since no books are judged during August and September, this sample represents approximately every second month's list.) When the table is juxtaposed to Table 1 in Chapter 2, it can be seen that while LMCBD covered LMCLS' accepted range of fiction books in a fairly balanced manner, it did not approach the variety of non-fiction which the Library accepted.

Other differences and similarities between the two organizations are notable: The higher percentage of LMCBD titles for children predominantly 6 years or younger is explained by the avowed predilection on the part of some editors for the picture book format as well as by the librarians' reception of many non-fiction books which are designed to help older students with their studies. The overwhelming interest of the publishing selectors in choosing books rooted in reality is tempered somewhat in LMCLS, though the reality orientation is still strong. With regard to more pronounced similarities, the distaste of both library and publishing selectors for anthropomorphism can be seen clearly, as can the choosing by both firms of books which cost around \$5 and \$6. Generally, then, it can be said that the LMCBD selectors' self-assurance regarding their firm's

Table 3

Categories Relating to a Sample of the  
Accepted New Books on LMCLS' 1974-75  
Lists

	#	%Total	% Category
A. NUMBER OF BOOKS ON LISTS	316	100	
B. FICTION/NONFICTION			
<u>Fiction</u>			
Fairy and Folk Tales	25	8	16
Chronicles	7	2	3
Picture Book Adventure Stories	19	6	12
ABC and Concept Books	3	1	2
Joke Books	5	2	3
Mystery-Adventure Novels	44	14	27
Sports Novels	12	4	8
Problem/Realism Novels	26	8	16
Other Novels	17	5	11
Poetry	2	1	1
	<u>160</u>	<u>51</u>	<u>99a</u>
<u>Nonfiction</u>			
History	23	7	15
Geography and Social Studies	31	10	20
Archeology	2	1	1
Astronomy	2	1	1
Nature	10	3	6
Other Physical Science	29	9	19
Biography	14	4	9
Sports	14	4	9
Crafts	23	7	15
Occupations	6	2	4
Reference	2	1	2
	<u>156</u>	<u>49</u>	<u>101<sup>a</sup></u>
Total	316	100	
C. AGE OF INTENDED AUDIENCE			
Predominantly 6 years or younger	43	14	
Predominantly between 6 and 10 years	63	20	
Predominantly over 10 years	200	63	
All Ages	10	3	
	<u>316</u>	<u>100</u>	



Table 3 (continued)

	#	% Total	% Category
D. HUMAN/ANIMAL/ANTHROPOMORPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF CHARACTERS			
Human	283	90	
Animal	2	1	
Anthropomorphic animal	4	1	
Anthropomorphic inanimate object/non-animal	13	4	
Human and anthropomorphic animal	3	1	
Human and Animal	11	3	
	<u>316</u>	<u>100</u>	
E. FANTASY/REALITY (EXCLUDING NON-FICTION)			
Fantasy	64	40	
Reality	96	60	
	<u>160</u>	<u>100</u>	
F. SEX OF MAIN CHARACTER (WHEN MENTIONED)			
Male	61	19	
Female	43	14	
Male and Female Characters	5	2	
Undetermined	207	66	
	<u>316</u>	<u>101</u>	
G. FORMAT TYPE			
Picture Books	38	12	
Easy Readers	18	6	
Typical Book Format	260	82	
	<u>316</u>	<u>100</u>	
H. PRICE (TO NEAREST DOLLAR)			
\$3	3	6	
\$4	1	2	
\$5	22	45	
\$6	18	38	
\$7	3	6	
\$8	-	-	
	<u>47</u>	<u>97</u>	

Table 3 (continued)

	#	%Total
I. PICTORIAL CHARACTERISTICS		
(Not Determined)		
J. ETHNIC/RACIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF MAIN CHARACTER		
American Black	17	5
American Indian	6	2
Resident of Foreign Land	59	19
Not Mentioned	234	74
	<u>316</u>	<u>100</u>

<sup>a</sup>Percentage totals greater than or less than 100% are due to rounding errors.

acceptance in the library market was well-founded, at least with regard to the first level of LMCLS selection.

### Branch Selection and the Client Relationship

LMCBD's books--particularly the firm's easy readers--were well-received at the branch level. While only 55 (31%) of all the sampled titles were purchased by more than 30 (57%) of the branches at one time, 11 (53%) of the accepted LMCBD titles had this distinction.

A closer look at the diverse purchasing patterns reveals that librarians did conform to their articulated guidelines regarding branch selection. The desire for "popularity" is seen in the fact that picture books and easy readers were, despite the higher prices of the former, purchased by more branches than other books. By the same token, fiction titles with foreign locales (which, the librarians agreed, children avoid) were quite a bit lower than the norm in terms of the number of branches purchasing them. Further analysis indicates, however, that at least one of the titles with foreign locale was chosen by almost every branch, presumably because of the librarians' attempts to conform to the guideline of "balance." The same need for "balance" could be attributed to the purchase of 1 or 2 or the 17 books with Black characters by branches in predominantly White (and racially mixed) areas. It is noteworthy that almost all of the 17 titles were bought for the outlets in predominantly Black neighborhoods.

Interestingly, in these cases of "balance"-motivated purchasing librarians tended to lean towards "high quality" more than with books that would obviously be popular: To a greater degree than with the general sample, the titles with foreign locale or Black main characters that had reviews coded as "excellent" tended to be bought by more branches than titles with "good" or "fair" reviews. It appears, then, that the guideline of "balance" became a vehicle for introducing books that were judged as having very high "quality" but doubtful immediate "popularity." Here too, then, the influence of the SCO and, by extension, of the client relationship, can be seen quite clearly.

#### Chapter Summary

The purpose this chapter has been to explore the influence of the library market client relationship upon an important distribution outlet organization. It has been shown that just as that relationship has a significant influence upon a major publishing organizations, so it influences the operation of a major outlet to which that firm sells its books. In other words, the influence of the relationship has been observed to be two-directional, causing the production firm to gear its production around perceived demands and opportunities posed by its major outlets and, at the same time, bringing the outlet organization to be reinforced in the dominant perspectives of the library market and to be guided in trends and issues by suppliers who, having organized their activities and power base around the rules of the relationship, are determined to maintain their power by maintaining those rules.

While the library market client relationship could not be seen to dictate the primary organizational requirements which shape the selection requirements (a dynamic which was seen with regard to the focal publishing firm), it could be seen to direct both the coordinators and branch librarians (despite some tension between these two groups) towards the fulfilling of those requirements in ways that tend to reinforce the selection perspectives--and thus the power--of the market's dominant firms. Interestingly, the dominant library market perspective was also seen to have important ramifications for the manner in which the librarians conceptualized their ultimate audience. This situation, which was also seen in LMCBD, points to the notion that selectors' image of their audience is, to a large degree, molded by their perceptions of organizational demands and opportunities. While judging what is "popular" and "unpopular" is important, such judgements are determined within the confines of a spectrum of choice constructed because of the particular audience images which the selectors hold.

The library market client relationship, then, has been seen to mold certain (compatible) guidelines, activities, and audience images with respect to "children's books" in both the focal production and outlet organizations. Part II of this dissertation will examine how the very different mass market client relationship shapes very different guidelines, activities, and audience images regarding what selectors in that segment also call "children's books."

End Notes

<sup>1</sup>It might be noted that while a full 80% (28) of the 35 surveyed questionnaire respondents said that parents "generally help" children ages 3-5 choose books and 60% (21) said the same is true for children 6-8, only 2 interviewees considered parents an important additional factor to think about separately from the child, except in cases of complaint (which were not characterized as frequent). Perhaps the interviewees' ignoring of parents as separate considerations in book selection can be explained by the fact that 43% (15) of the surveyed librarians felt parents know "very little" about "what their children really like" while another 29% (10) felt they know "something, but not much" about the subject. It is interesting to note that the 10 librarians who said parents know "a lot" were from areas where the children have "excellent" reading abilities and where, according to the two interviewees, parents watch their children's reading habits--and librarians' buying habits--closely.

<sup>2</sup>The reader will note that extra-Library and extra-Divisional bodies (PTAs, the city and state governments, the library director and trustees) have not been noted as structuring the librarians' perceptions of general requirements. This omission is in accordance with the failure of any interviewee to mention them (except with regard to the routine doling of funds) and in line with the fact that they were among the factors considered "not important" by over 70% of the survey respondents. It should be pointed out, however, that these answers do not reflect the implicit, encompassing influences of the above-mentioned entities as LMCLS' key patrons (the city and state governments), as the pressure groups which impinge upon the patrons (PTAs and others), or as LMCLS' managerial links between its patrons and its operations (the director and the trustees).

In other words, it may be speculated that if these and other key establishment figures became vocally displeased with LMCLS' approach to book selection, their displeasure would, at the very least, be taken as an invitation to a serious re-examination (and perhaps revamping) of the entire process. The library director did note when interviewed, however, that the reputation and expertise of the head of book selection has led him to devolve virtual autonomy in selection matters upon her. And, since there has not been a critical incident in the recent past in which an extra-organizational factor has significantly challenged the boundaries of the Division's "public interest stance," the librarians have had no cause to consider patrons or pressure groups when reviewing and choosing books.

End Notes (continued)

<sup>3</sup>The fact that the librarians can select books they want to review means (as many interviewees noted) that they often choose titles by authors whom they like. This situation would seem to strengthen the chances of acceptability of library market figures and, also, perpetuate the strength of certain firms in that market.

<sup>4</sup>It is evident that not all the books which were received by the Division during this period were published during Fall, 1974 and Spring, 1975 (the seasons that were focused upon for the LMCBD books). However, the time frames do overlap closely enough to make the findings comparable.

**PART II:**  
**THE MASS MARKET SEGMENT**



## CHAPTER 5: AN HISTORICAL PREFACE TO THE MASS MARKET

Non-text books for children have been sold to non-library outlets since the early days of the American colonies. It was not until the middle 19th century, however, that such books began to be produced in large numbers and sold to different kinds of outlets (what has been called "the mass market"). As Part I's Preface noted, one important impetus for this large-scale production of juveniles was the folding of the American Sunday School Union and the consequent decision by Sunday School librarians to purchase books on the open market. This development precipitated a flood of extremely inexpensive picture books which were sold to the public (usually unpromoted because their low profit margins did not make that feasible) through book stores and dry good emporia. The Preface to Part I followed the turmoil which these cheap books had created among publishing firms to its resolution for many of them in the relatively stable library market for juvenile books. The mass market continued to grow, however.

### From "Dime Novels" to Modern Series Books

At the same time that the above-mentioned picture books for the very young were deluging stores, "dime novels" for adolescents were also extremely popular. These paperbacks were part of a general "dime novel" industry that had begun with the supply of inexpensive books to Union Army soldiers during the Civil War. Aside from selling the

titles through magazine and newspaper outlets, the publishers took advantage of low postal rates to market them by mail as "libraries" (Tebbel, 1975, pp. 481-488).

The production of adolescent series books reached its 19th century climax in the firm of Street and Smith which, in addition to publishing many of Horatio Alger's works, released such extremely popular "libraries" as the "Frank Merriwell Series," "Nick Carter," and "Buffalo Bill." Each series was created by one of the firm's regular writers or editors under a pseudonym and was often continued by a staff of ghostwriters. Among the firm's most prolific personnel were Alger, William Gilbert Patten, and Edward Stratemeyer. The latter, after he left Street and Smith, created the enormously popular "Rover Boys" series--thirty adventure stories which, beginning around 1908, Grosset and Dunlap sold for about fifty cents each and had sales that ultimately reached a total of five million copies (Tebbel, 1975, p. 365, p. 498). The "Rover Boys" series was the forerunner of others which Stratemeyer and his ghostwriters produced in a similar style (and between "respectable" hard covers), including "Tom Swift," "The Hardy Boys," and "Nancy Drew." The production of mass market adventure series books (by the unit which Stratemeyer set up at Grosset and by others) has continued into the present.

#### Recent Developments in Picture Books

The production of picture books for the mass market and the library market was profoundly affected by the adoption of new techniques in photo-offset lithography during the early 1930's which made possible books in full color at lower cost than ever before. Publishers in the

two segments reacted very differently to the new developments. The library market firms emphasized the artistic possibilities which had now become economically feasible at library market prices and which its clientele would appreciate, while the goal of mass market firms was to lower the price of color picture books to such a degree that a multitude of commercial outlets would feel that, if bought, the books could be sold to their Depression-ridden customers. Viguers has portrayed this difference from a decidedly library market perspective;

The most spectacular development, then, between 1930 and 1940, was the great number and variety of picture books, and the profusely illustrated story books. There was no precedent for the latter, the very original picture-story books published during the first decade of lower reproduction costs. In a very few years, in the field of books for younger children, the artist attained a place of equal importance with the writer. In many cases, this necessary partnership of artist and author stimulated an artist to experiment in writing his own stories.

An avalanche of merchandise, in lieu of literature, was to come, but not until after 1940....It was not until a few years later, after the new developments were taken for granted, that sometimes a printer "turned publisher," and the mass production of picture books followed--bright in color, cheaply put together, with pictures and stories made to specific order. (Meigs, et.al., 1967, p. 402).

Actually, it seems that, contrary to the above quote, production of mass market picture books in color (typically selling at 15 or 20 cents as contrasted with around two dollars for the library market books) was quite vigorous during the 1930's. Two of the more notable firms that were active in this area (and which had their own printing plants) were Rand McNally and Western Publishing.<sup>1</sup> Of the two, Western was the most aggressive with respect to mass market picture books and by the beginning of World War II had cornered about 90% of the market through its Whitman imprint.

The virtual control which Western had on the sale of juvenile picture books in the mass market precipitated an interesting series of events in the 1940's which illustrates the influence of the client relationship on the product innovation process. The officers of the firm had become concerned that they were reaching the limits of expansion with regard to the 15 and 20 cent Whitman books and that retailers were beginning to feel as if they were being forced to buy Whitman because the competition in the field was so weak. At the same time, some book stores and other outlets were not carrying the Whitman line because its very low prices made their profit margin unacceptable or because they were not returnable if unsold.

Consequently, in an attempt to expand its market and set up its own competition, Western Publishing entered into an agreement with Pocket Books, Inc. to initiate a new imprint--Golden Books. Western agreed to create and publish the line while Pocket Books assented to market it. Because the intention was to expand the market rather than to compete directly with Whitman, the firms agreed that the new imprint should signify higher "quality" than the older one and that all Golden Books would retail at twenty five cents (a nickle more than the most expensive Whitman books). And, in order to further induce stores to carry the Golden line, the books were sold with a "returnable" provision.<sup>2</sup>

### The Mass Market Today

The expansion of Golden Books into many kinds of outlets, some of which had not carried the Whitman line, and the books' consequent success at the consumer level, changed the complexion of the mass market segment. By 1965, when Western took over the sales apparatus of Golden Books from Pocket Books, several firms had directly emulated or modified what had become the major juvenile book company's basic marketing procedure--orienting a wide range of titles and prices to a panoply of commercial distribution outlets (from book stores to supermarkets). Interestingly, however, the particular nature of the client relationship which Western (along with Rand McNally and a few others) had cultivated during the 1930's and 1940's--a relationship based on the capabilities of large publisher-printers, on the general lack of advertising to the public about juveniles, and on the particular interests of the retailers with regard to quick, efficient, productive purchasing--has severely limited the ability of publishing firms to enter the field. As a result, fewer than 10 firms can be said to have significance in the mass market juvenile area. Moreover, the expansion of the market precipitated by the success of Golden Books has actually created several sectors within the mass market based on types of outlets, distribution routes used, and prices charged for the books. Some firms have chosen--or have been forced by economic circumstance--to concentrate on only a few of these areas.

The following two chapters will examine the consequences of the mass market client relationship for one important mass market publishing firm and two important mass market outlets--a book store chain and

a department store chain. As in Part I, it will be found that the impact of the major client relationship reaches to the core of the publishing operation by structuring--and thus delimiting--the range of necessary and desired activities for the firm when it chooses, produces, promotes, and markets its books. Similarly, though perhaps more subtly, the relationship will be shown as having strong and important influences upon the book store and department store chains with regard to the books they choose, the manner in which they choose them, and the manner in which they sell them. While the same fundamental dynamic will be seen as operating in both the mass market and the library market, a primary point in this thesis will be underscored: The crucial differences between the two client relationships play an important role in bringing about quite different publishing perspectives and quite different definitions of a juvenile book among the selectors--along with images of the ultimate audiences that reflect those different perspectives and definitions.

End Notes

<sup>1</sup>Unfortunately, very little has been written on this aspect of publishing history. Tebbel (1975, p. 293) notes that "In the 1930's, Rand McNally was the first publisher to go into the mass production and distribution of children's books, introducing quality [sic] into such lines, to be sold in chain stores at prices from fifteen to twenty five cents." The rest of the information in these paragraphs has been obtained through interviews with principals at Western Publishing and Rand McNally.

<sup>2</sup>As Golden Books grew in popularity and price, this policy was changed so that only the more expensive Golden titles are returnable-- and only partially so.

## CHAPTER 6: THE MASS MARKET PUBLISHING FIRM

Like LM, which was examined with regard to the library market, the focal mass market publishing firm (to be called MM) is a large company operating under a "federal system"; children's books are published by a separate division (MMCBD). In the more than thirty years during which the company's children's books have been produced, the primary orientation has been towards the non-library (predominantly book store) market, although the percentage of its books that have crossed over to school and public libraries has been higher than most of the other mass market firms. During the past decade, however, a decision was made by the firm's executives to direct the juvenile division's activities much more clearly towards the mass market.

Two factors seem to have been most important in precipitating this conscious shift. MM's acquisition of the two publishing firms which have small but prestigious library market juvenile divisions led to the realization that a more aggressive specialization by MMCBD in the mass market (with books that could not cross over into the other segment) would allow the overall company to be in the enviable position of being successful in both juvenile segments. In addition, the budgetary problems of the library market in the early 1970's reinforced the growing opinion among MM's executives that expandability for MMCBD lay in the direction of commercially rather than publicly sponsored outlets. At present, only about 10-15% of their new books end up in libraries, according to the publisher.

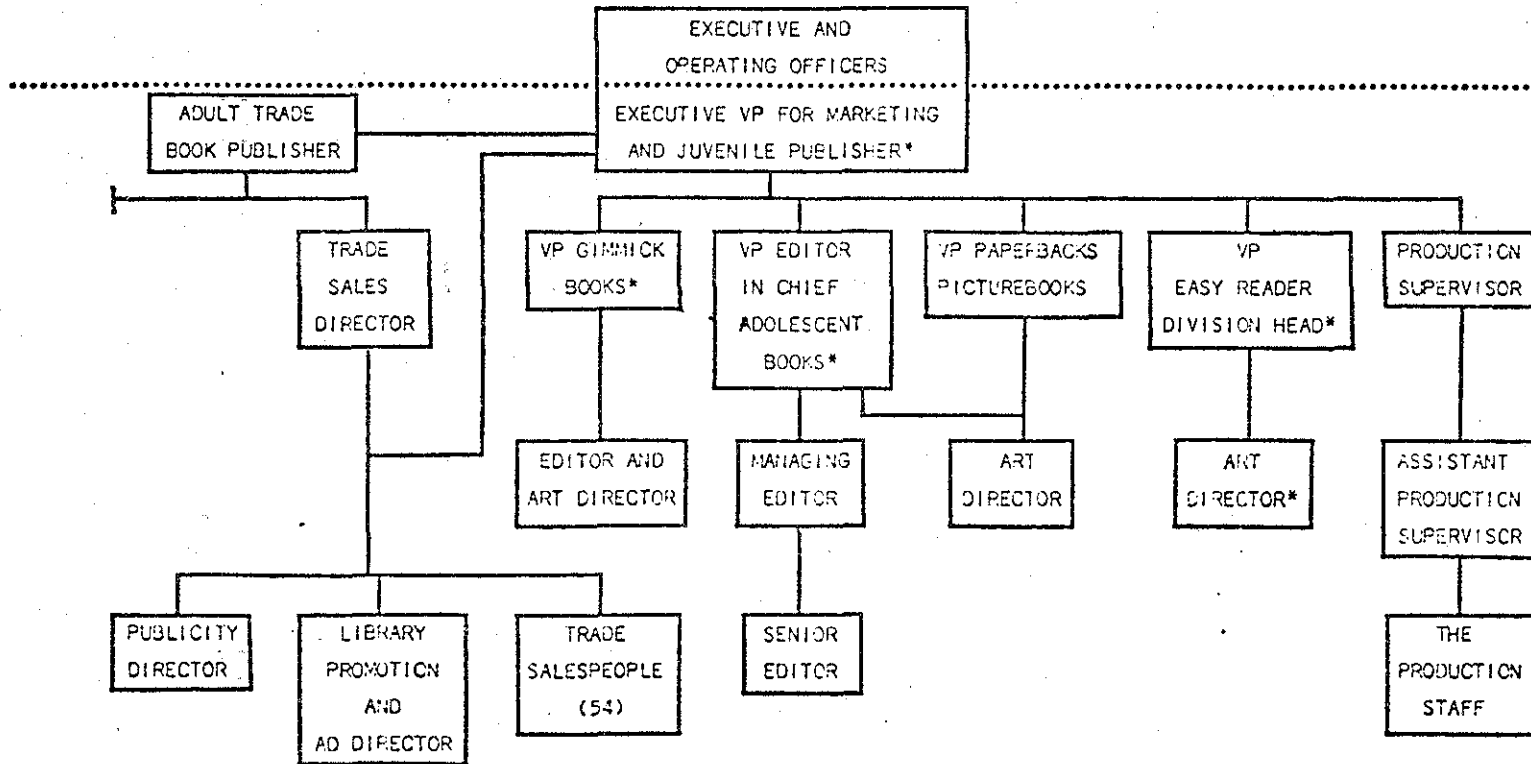


### The Division's Organizational Structure

Chart 3 depicts the organizational structure of MM's juvenile book division. Although the scheme presented is similar to that of LMCBD in the sharing of library and sales services with the adult trade department, some very important differences outweigh the similarities (see Chart 2, page 44). The most striking difference, perhaps, is that whereas the library market publisher is also an editor, her counterpart at the focal mass market firm doubles as the company's executive vice president in charge of marketing. Although MMCBD's publisher said that this dual position is "an historical accident," the sales manager and others mentioned the importance of the publisher's marketing expertise in helping the Division respond quickly and properly to the mass market environment. It might also be added that interviews with editors and publishers from several mass market and library market juvenile divisions revealed that in virtually all cases the latter are headed by editorial people while the former have marketers in positions of ultimate control.

Other important structural differences between LMCBD and MMCBD relate to the compartmentalization of creative assignments. LMCBD personnel, ranked under the publisher as editors, associate editors, and readers, are not assigned to produce particular types of books (although some do have particular predilections). By contrast, MMCBD's direct selectors under the publisher belong to four separate sections (called here "gimmick books," "adolescent books," "Paperback picture-books," and "easy readers") which are designated to produce different "lines"--groups of titles in similar formats. The marketing control

CHART 3  
 MAJOR ELEMENTS OF MMCBD'S ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



\*The direct selectors

at the publisher level is matched in two of the sections by the presence of non-editor heads who, when interviewed, characterized their roles in terms of marketing rather than literary expertise.

It will be the purpose of this chapter to show that these structural differences between the mass market and library market firms--along with the presence of readers in the latter but not the former and of art directors in the former but not the latter--reflect appropriately different responses to very different conceptualizations of the major client relationship. The different responses, in turn, will be seen to have fostered very different approaches to the definition and production of juvenile books. As a logical first step towards this goal, the MMCBD selectors' conceptualizations of the requirements and opportunities of their major client relationship must be examined. This task will be taken up in the next section.<sup>1</sup>

#### Conceptualizing the Requirements and Opportunities of the Client Relationship

The decision of MM's executives to position MMCBD more clearly and aggressively in the mass market has already been noted. The importance of this orientation for the Division's production of books was well understood by the 8 interviewed direct selectors who, much more than the LMCBD editors and reader, invoked particular aspects of their major marketplace to explain their book selection activities. Taken together, their comments--and the comments by the other focal selectors--reveal an underlying conception of crucial requirements and opportunities mandated by the Division's dealings with clients. Further

analysis shows the broad considerations shaping this conception to be the same as those which were seen to guide the LMCBD selectors' understanding of their client relationship--the tradition of the publishing house and proclivities of the Division's direct selectors; the environment of selection in, and the economic nature of, the marketplace; and the feedback and promotional environment. The following sections will show, however, that because the particulars subsumed by these four considerations in the case of MMCBD are quite different from those that were seen with regard to LMCBD, the conception of major requirements and opportunities posed by the client relationship is also quite different.

#### The Tradition of the House and Proclivities of the Direct Selectors

The history of the Division and the strengths and weaknesses of the entire company have been of crucial importance in positioning MMCBD with regard to its client relationship and directing its expansion. Of primary significance has been the trade book tradition of the entire firm. It will be recalled from the "Preface" that Western Publishing and Rand McNally both initially aimed their extremely low-priced juvenile lines at non-book outlets and only later produced books at higher "price points" to sell to "the trade" (the book store trade). MMCBD, by contrast, started out in the book store market, taking advantage of the firm's very effective sales force to introduce book store buyers and their jobbers to juvenile titles along with MM's extremely popular adult books. Instead of following other mass market firms in creating titles at a spectrum of price points that would be

attractive to various types of retailers and wholesalers, MMCBD reflected its book store orientation by generally limiting the range of its prices and marketing its juvenile lines through "names"--either the names of author-illustrators who had spontaneously caught the fancy of consumers (and had even crossed over into the library market) or names of popular characters from other mass media which would be instantly recognized by store customers.

This trade-oriented marketing approach has been very successful for MMCBD's books at the intended (book, department, and large chain store) level. Moreover, the Division's particular success in the fantasy-adventure picture book and easy reader area (using its popular author-illustrators and characters from film and television cartoons) has involved it in the non-institutional book club area of the mass market. Since the early 1960's MMCBD has been party to a royalty arrangement to supply a large mail order book company with six to eight titles each year for two book clubs. At the same time, however, the cost structure engendered by its trade-oriented approach has generally precluded the firm from expanding into the lower-priced sector of the market. In that sector "independent distributors" (who, through their rack-service operations, are the principal wholesale buyers for smaller outlets) demand a higher discount rate when purchasing than do the traditional trade book jobbers, a rate MMCBD cannot afford.<sup>2</sup>

The past and present strengths and weaknesses of the juvenile book division, then, have oriented MMCBD away from the sector which is primarily served by independent distributors toward areas in which its

large (59 person) sales apparatus can function most effectively (book, department, large variety, and discount stores, plus any retailers served by jobbers) and toward the non-institutional book club market. The hiring of two marketing-oriented vice presidents within the past five years (one of whom had worked for Western Publishing) to set up and head the "gimmick books" and "paperback picture book" sections of MMCBD reflects the intentions of the publisher/marketing chief and the rest of the MM executive committee to expand the mass market operation of their juvenile division.

Interestingly, however, a bit of MMCBD's tradition of purposefully crossing over into the library market with some of its books remains because of the interests of staff members (including the long-time editor-in-chief) in the "adolescent books" section. One interviewed member noted that the publisher, recognizing that they would like to produce a library market book once in a while ("a book book," she called it), allows them that pleasure for morale purposes with one or two titles a year.

The Environment of Selection in,  
and Economic Nature of, the Marketplace

In reviewing the publishing tradition of MMCDB, some economic aspects of the marketplace which helped shape selectors conceptions of requirements and opportunities posed by the major client relationship have been discussed. These considerations have been shown to direct the firm's planners toward areas within the mass market where the Division can have maximum control over its chances for success. The present section will outline some of the particular considerations

within MMCBD's chosen marketplace which the interviewees saw as structuring certain requirements and opportunities with regard to the client relationship.

One important similarity between the mass market selection environment and that of the library market is the general lack of sustained advertising and promotion by publishers to their potential audience. MMCBD's sales manager was referring to this situation when he noted that in book publishing there are three areas which are competitive at their points of purchase--dictionaries, bibles, and children's books; generally consumers come upon such books with few, if any, preconceived notions of the particular editions they want. The library market selectors were seen to deal with this situation by placing their trust in librarians to review, search out, and highlight "good" books and introduce appropriate titles to children and their parents. The MMCBD selectors, in sharp contrast, emphasized that no potential agent of the publishing firm is present in the book or department stores to introduce books to customers.<sup>3</sup> All the marketing-and sales-related interviewees, in fact, stressed that clerks in most of the distribution outlets which carry MMCBD books have little knowledge about juveniles and are not prepared (nor do they have the time) to introduce particular titles on particular subjects to curious browsers.

Related to the presumed "point of purchase" character of much children's book choosing and to the lack of knowledgeable agents to suggest choices to children and/or their parents is the display pattern

of the juveniles. In order to catch the potential customer's eye, most distribution outlets display their picture books on racks or "flat out" on tables. (The racks are walled or free-standing, with the latter sometimes supplied as a promotional device by the publisher. Due to lack of space (and on the idea that their readers will search them out), non-picture books for adolescents have generally been shelved "spine out," although there has been a tendency in some places to rack these with their covers showing, thus making them more visible to impulse shoppers. A few selectors pointed out that while adolescent titles--particularly those in series--sell quite well, pre-school materials are the most important items in the mass market. The head of the "gimmick books" section opined that "young adults who read read adult books."

MMCBD's marketing and sales interviewees--as well as several of the direct selectors--noted that the absence of effective personal in-store aid for potential book customers has brought about a demand on the part of "buyers" (representatives of distribution outlets or jobbers who buy books from MMCBD) that books which they purchase essentially "sell themselves." Lines and individual titles that have proven their abilities in this regard are bought repeatedly by outlets; a good backlist is therefore a valuable commodity for a mass market publisher.

MMCBD's selectors agreed, however, that new books are welcomed by buyers, on the chance that the new titles might sell themselves more successfully than the older ones. The interviewees noted that the buyers judge the potentials of new books by gauging their



similarities to those which are currently successful within the mass market environment in terms of format, cover attractiveness, subject, illustrative style, and (in a very limited number of cases) the author-illustrator. The importance of a book's similarity to others with good mass market "track records" was underscored in their pointing out that it is much easier to sell a new title to a store or jobber representative if it is introduced as an addition to a popular line. One salesman said that the concept of a "line" is at least as important as a device for getting books into stores as it is for achieving recognition and sales at the ultimate consumer level. And, in the words of the "pictureback" section head, "if you can get them in [stores, particularly enough stores to justify the necessarily low price of the book] you can sell them."

#### The Importance of Prices

Economic considerations of MMCBD's clients were also noted by marketing and sales interviewees as creating demands and opportunities with respect to their client relationship. Retailers have found, they said, that customers are extremely sensitive to the prices of children's books. The publisher opined that people probably do not even look at the number of pages they get for their price; they simply look at the price. Moreover, he said, comparative sales figures have shown that customers prefer picture books with full-color illustrations over those which are not in full color.

MMCBD's sales manager agreed with a suggestion that these presumed predilections of customers might well be a consequence of the

presumed "point of purchase" ignorance on the part of parents and children as to what constitutes a good children's book. Perhaps because they have few, if any, preconceptions regarding definitions of "quality" in juveniles, color and price become major considerations. The "novelties/book club" section vice president suggested that low price is especially important to parents with very young children, since they tear and eat their books. Of more concrete and immediate significance to the selectors, however, was the fact that store buyers judge full color and competitively low price points (from under \$2 to a maximum of about \$4.95 except in unusual cases) as crucial factors for salability.

The publisher and two interviewed salespeople noted that, even within their chosen sector of the mass market, different retailers require different price points with respect to juveniles. "Lower ticket" items (usually \$2.50 or less) are preferred by variety chains and less expensive department stores because the buyers feel their customers will not pay more. On the other hand, bookstores and department stores with book sections tend to shy away from MMCBD's lower priced products because the titles will not, they feel, bring in a high enough per unit profit (even with brisk sales) to justify the use of space that could carry higher profit items that moved at a similar--or even slower--pace. As an example, one salesperson pointed out that the Division's 95¢ picture book paperbacks which were designed as "low ticket items" for the variety stores, are not bought by some bookstores despite their good sales records in various

outlets. He noted that New York's Brentano's puts the M/CBD picturebacks (as the paperbacks will be called) in the basement, away from the main juvenile section. Scribner's, another prestigious New York book store, refuses to stock the picturebacks during the pre-Christmas season (an especially high turnover time when space is very precious) but does carry them at other times of the year.

#### The Feedback and Promotional Environment

M/CBD's selectors' understanding of the primary feedback and promotional environment in which they operate amplified and extended their conceptions of the limits of their marketing and creative opportunities with respect to the Division's client relationship. Advertising in trade journals such as Publisher's Weekly was judged a routine necessity to prepare buyers for new titles and reinforce the firm's name. However, the promotional and information-gathering activities of most consequence were seen as carried out by the company's 54 salespeople--the Division's most direct link to its outlet buyers. Assigned to particular territories throughout the country, these "publisher's representatives" call upon their store and jobber clients at least twice a year to sell them the new MM adult and juvenile titles for the Fall and Spring seasons. Their formal feedback is present in periodic reports they send to the sales manager.

Several selectors noted that buyers, who often have only minor interest in children's books, do not want to be bothered with considerations of single titles and prefer to deal with a firm that has a well-developed assortment of juvenile "lines" (books grouped around

similar formats). The high cost and difficulty of initiating such a program pretty much ensures that MMCBD will continue to have only about three or four major competitors in its market sector. Interviewed marketing and sales personnel observed proudly that a salesperson who visits a jobber or store buyer has "the full weight of the company's name" behind him, a promotional asset that is enhanced by the impressive track records of the Division's variously priced lines. In fact, they said, salespeople who service major accounts (such as jobbers and large department stores) do not usually talk to buyers in terms of individual titles. Rather, they deal in terms of "programs"--packages of MMCBD books which the salesperson has tailored to the turnover and profit requirements of the store and keyed to the previous year's success in terms of sales and returns.

An interviewed salesperson who services minor accounts indicated that she, too, fills out MMCBD order lists for buyers who know and have learned to trust her, although in the case of forthcoming titles she might be asked to exhibit the cover and other samples which the production department has supplied. Gaining buyer confidence, she noted, is a consequence of successfully "servicing" an account--knowing the requirements of the store in terms of "turns" (the amount of time required to sell out the stock profitably), knowing what mix of books will move quickest, knowing how to reorder and what books to "pull" because they are not "turning."

MMCBD's publisher noted that it is very difficult for him to rely on the feedback of salespeople with regard to the marketability of major proposals for new lines and formats, because the vagaries of

individual salesperson temperament make it difficult to determine how realistic their predictions are with regard to buyer reactions in their territories. Consequently, when important, large-scale decisions are made, the publisher contacts the buyers from some of the firm's major accounts to determine their receptivity to the new ideas. Those buyers are routinely cultivated by inviting them to the annual company-wide sales meeting, often held at a resort location, in which all the firm's new Fall titles are introduced to the sales staff and invited outsiders. In the case of an expensive new project, if the buyer is enthusiastic he might even be asked to guarantee the purchase of the titles after they are produced.

In general, however, salespeople are the most important vehicles for getting MMCBD books into the stores and to the jobbers. This situation places the marketing executives (the publisher and his section vice presidents) in the interesting position of having to convince their sales force of the self-salability of the Division's new juvenile titles. And, generally speaking, the close contact between salespeople and buyers--and the commitment of the former to maximize the latter's sales--seems to lead to caution on the part of these publisher's representatives with regard to new books. A few of the direct selectors as well as one salesperson noted that new titles and lines are welcomed only if they are solidly anchored to popular subjects, illustrative styles, and author-illustrators. The salesperson conceded that he and his colleagues might sometimes be more conservative in this regard than

the buyers themselves. This situation would seem to be a further incentive for MMCBD's marketing and creative people not to stray too far from the elements of previous successes.

A comparison between LMCBD and MMCBD interviewees' conceptualization of client relationship requirements and opportunities reveals striking differences. The focal library market selectors saw themselves as working within a vaguely definable "good books" tradition which emphasizes individuality and "literary quality" and will accept unusual productions that editors with the proper reputation and promotional apparatus fancy. By contrast, the focal mass market selectors drew a picture of a marketplace which is more explicit in its demands, much less open to unusualness or idiosyncrasy. While both groups of selectors articulated the importance of "track record," the LMCBD interviewees saw it as helping to ensure a book's favorable reception, while the interviewees from MMCBD saw the notion as virtually the sine qua non of selection. And, whereas the emphasis in the library market was seen to be on singles titles (encouraged by thriving review media), the emphasis in the mass market was seen to be on lines, programs, and lump monetary sums.

These strong--seemingly fundamental--differences begin to explain the structural differences that were seen between the two firms (see page 146): The "literary" perspective and promotional techniques encouraged by the library market would seem to guide the choice of juvenile publisher in that market to someone who is conversant with the literary tradition of that market (and when to break it) and whose reputation will help her promote her Division's titles. At the same

time, the "merchandising" point of view and promotional techniques of the mass market would seem to most qualify as publisher a marketer--someone conversant with the tactical considerations which led jobbers to accept new books and lines, and store buyers to put them on their shelves. It would also seem that when lines rather than individual titles are the preoccupation of a juvenile division, the most efficient approach would be to assign individuals to specialize in producing books that conform to particular types--a situation found in MMCBD.

The following sections will expand upon the differences between the two focal firms by showing how their different conceptualizations of client demands and opportunities led to very different procedures and guidelines in their selection and production of books.

#### Selecting and Producing Books for the Mass Market

It has already been suggested that the MMCBD selectors' conceptualizations of requirements and opportunities in their client relationship set the stage for a publishing process which attempts to create books that will be welcomed by salesmen, store buyers, and jobbers alike. It has been further suggested that the structure of the Division (in terms of occupational designations and their hierarchical positions) can be seen as a response to these conceptualizations, a proposition supported by the observation that differences between the structures of the two focal firms seem to parallel (and thus be rooted in) fundamentally different perceptions by the firms' selectors of the demands and freedoms of the marketplace.

The ensuing discussion will support these suggestions by showing how the MMCBD selectors' conceptions of their client relationship requirements and opportunities can be seen to ramify through the firm's publishing process--from the responsibilities of principals involved to their guidelines regarding the formulation of seasonal lists, lines, and titles.

#### The Influence of the Client Relationship Upon the Activities and Responsibilities of Selectors

It is a significant indication of the fundamental differences in approach between LMCBD and MMCBD--and the different influences of the client relationships--that the degree of these divisions' dependence on their firm's marketing and sales departments was characterized in polar opposite terms. LM's marketing director noted that LMCBD is most independent of these forces, while MM's trade sales manager said that MMCBD is most dependent upon them. This difference is quite understandable in view of the fact that the main spur to sales in the library market lies not in the initiative of the sales force but, rather, in the initiative of the editorial and promotional staff (who create an



environment of acceptance) and of the librarians themselves (who read the books--or the reviews--and then send specific orders to jobbers).

An understanding of the firms' different approaches to their client relationships also helps explain why the two groups of selectors articulated different attitudes towards the size of their seasonal lists despite the fact that in both divisions list size was seen as a function of the general economic conditions in the trade and size of the divisional budget. Because their books are often sold in "programs" based on previous sales and without reference to specific new titles, MMCBD selectors indicated quite a bit of concern with tying the sizes of their lists to particular reports of the money which buyers are willing to outlay for juveniles. They also noted that they produce a greater number of books for their Fall rather than Spring list because store buyers tend to order quite a bit more juveniles for the pre-Christmas season. By contrast, LMCBD's list size is approximately the same for each season, since library budgets are not dispersed in any systematic semi-yearly pattern. And, library market selectors, convinced as they were that their traditional quota of "good books" will sell under a wide latitude of economic circumstances, noted that fluctuations in library revenues have not shortened their seasonal lists.

#### The General Selection Procedure

When looked at from a broader perspective, the different client relationships could be seen to bring about important differences in the firms' book selection activities. LMCBD's procedure--described in Chapter 3 as a response to perceived demands and freedoms posed by

its client relationship--is literally a selection process, in which readers and editors choose manuscripts written by "house authors," known talent, or even "over the transom" discoveries, with the publisher/editor acting as confirmer (making sure that a manuscript is a feasible "good book") and overseer (making sure that the list is "balanced"). In MMCBD, by contrast, the client relationship could be seen to encourage a selection process whereby the overwhelming number of titles are not selected from those proffered to the Division. Rather, the works are originated "in-house" at the specific requests of the publisher/marketing director, by the editors, section heads, and the publisher himself. Moreover, in the cases where the books are not conceptualized by MMCBD's direct selectors they are usually originated by the firm's "name" author/illustrators, who are under long-term contract with the firm and whose names bespeak "track record" to salespeople and buyers alike. The editor/art director in the "gimmick books" section explained the in-house initiation of titles in terms of the marketplace:

....We almost always come up with ideas [for books] ourselves. Occasionally someone will come to us with an idea. It's not that we're closed to it. It's that we know what we want and what sells.

MMCBD's book selection procedure generally takes place in the following manner: At a particular time during each season, the publisher will ask his section heads to present proposals for their sections' contributions to a list a few seasons away. Sometimes he might tell them how many books from each of their lines he needs; at other times he might wait for their suggestions and then decide. In either case, the section head will solicit ideas from his editors, art director,

or both and, after screening suggestions he does not favor, will present his choices to the publisher.

After an idea for a title is tentatively accepted, the book must be "justified" as to its profitability at a projected competitive price. This justification procedure involves the sales and production departments as in LMCBD. However, whereas the competitive prices in the library market (reaching \$7 and \$8 for slim full-color picture books) allow the last-mentioned firm to project sales of 10,000 copies for a 3-color book (except easy readers) and 20,000 copies for one in full color, MMCBD's virtual requirement of full color with prices below \$5 mandate sales projections which are quite a bit higher, usually ranging from 35,000 to 100,000 (the latter for the 95¢ picturebacks).<sup>4</sup> The existence of lines of books in MMCBD makes the justification procedure somewhat easier than in the library market, because a new title retains the same format (and costs, accounting for inflation) of the others in the line and, it is hoped, a similar sales potential.

When the ideas are approved for publication, the section heads, editors, and art directors must carry out the projects. Their particular activities vary depending on the section and line involved and can range from the editor's writing the book herself while she or the art director finds the appropriate (or customary) artist to a section head's informing one of the firm's name author/illustrators that a book in a particular format is needed from him and directing the course of that work to publication. The purpose with regard to all activities is to conform to the perceived mandates of the client relationship as

efficiently as possible, as the following examination of the guidelines and procedures followed in the four sections will show.

#### The Client Relationship and Selection Guidelines

It is interesting to note that MMCBD's publisher observed while talking about the firm's two library market subsidiaries that "by decreeing their books will sell only 10,000 copies [and thus pricing them out of the mass market] we are committing a self-fulfilling prophecy. It's kind of strange, really." However, he later reversed this sentiment by opining--as did several other juvenile book personages--that library market books could not really "sell themselves" in the mass market and, in most cases, would not get past the buyers to be given the chance; thus the projected higher sales could not materialize. Other experienced observers and participants from both segments of the industry added that library market royalty rates and production standards (particularly with regard to format flexibility and binding) impose higher costs on library market books that would not make them price competitive even if the same quantities could be sold.

The present section will explore the influence of the mass market client relationship upon the selection guidelines which the interviewees articulated with regard to the lines and titles they produce. In the process, differences other than price which separate the two segments will become quite clear.

### The Client Relationship and the Existence of "Lines"

The concept of a "line" of books, which is at the core of MMCBD's selection and production process, has been related to considerations of client relationship. The crucial importance of lines for successfully introducing new juvenile books to buyers has already been noted (see page 154). Lines are also deemed important for aiding the Division's titles to sell themselves in the stores, since a customer who is familiar with previous books of a line might more readily purchase a new one from that line. With regard to the economics of publishing for the mass market, lines have already been mentioned in connection with "justification," which is made easier if a proposed book is fit into the same format and same potential sales track as previous titles. It might further be observed that the production of books in similarly formatted groups is also meant to conform to the mandate of the client relationship for a competitively "low price": The fact that a similar size, binding, paper quality, typography, and general lay-out are associated with each line means that much less design work is required and saves these quite expensive start-up costs. It is interesting to

note that these standardizations--and the cost rationale--were also seen with regard to LMCBD's easy readers, which are aimed towards a healthy book store sale.

Unlike the focal library market firm, however, where any editor can work on an easy reader, MMCBD has separate sections devoted to different lines of books. Each section actually produces more than one line; the lines are assigned to (or originated by) the sections because of their similarities in format to existing specialities of those sections. Thus, the "gimmick books" section vice president and editor/art director originate a "pop-up books" line, a "mix and match" line, "cut-out" books, and, in the words of an art director, "all those books which are the middle ground between toys and books." The "paperback picturebook" section head, with the help of an art director, produces the Division's "pictureback" and "board book" lines; the "adolescent books" section originates a non-fiction sports line (assigned exclusively to the senior editor) and a mystery-adventure series (assigned exclusively to the managing editor);<sup>5</sup> and the "easy readers" section produces two lines of easy readers, one of which is a fantasy-adventure series.<sup>6</sup>

The fact that these nine lines encompass the great majority of books produced by MMCBD each season and are pegged at prices ranging from 95¢ to about \$4 reflects the observation by the selectors that buyers tend to purchase from firms with an assortment of differently priced lines. The orientation of most of the lines towards the pre-school age is also understandable in view of the interviewees' claim that young children and their parents are the predominant audience in the

mass market. The focal division does put out some "unattached" titles, books that do not fit into these lines; they usually have elements which will bring buyers to feel that they will "sell themselves" in the stores.<sup>7</sup>

In this connection, the following important questions naturally arises: What are the characteristics of content which MMCBD selectors perceived as making their lines and titles most likely to succeed in the mass market, and what guidelines do they have with regard to those characteristics? In attempting to answer these questions, it is important to recall that the buyers' requirement that a book "sell itself" was related by interviewees to two factors--a competitive "low price" and content characteristics that bespeak "track records" to outlet selectors. As will be seen in the following examination of guidelines and their connection to the client relationship, different lines and different "unattached" titles rely on different selection characteristics for their principal "track record" elements. Moreover, those selection characteristics which are not highlighted are invariably manipulated so that the product will comply with the other important mass market element--"low price."

#### The Selection of Subject Matter

The subject of a book was deemed important by all the selectors in MMCBD, as was the case in the focal library market firm. However, while the LMCBD interviewees refused to indicate specific preferences for subjects and stressed that they lean towards the "unusual" and "innovative," MMCBD respondents found it quite easy to set forth their

guidelines, which emphasize the most traditional juvenile subjects. Nonfiction sports books about heroes or famous moments and adventure-mystery stories about continuing characters are the primary adolescent material (directed at ages 10 and up), while "unattached" activity books are aimed at middle aged juveniles (ages 8 and up). With regard to the mass market's most important area, picture book fare for young children, the "gimmick books" editor/art director echoed her colleagues:

Cats and dogs are always going to go. Children prefer animal books--cute cuddly animals; they prefer Mother Goose, fairy tales. [The "paperback books" section head added that the fairy tales should be the most commonly known.] The standard juvenile fare are the best sellers.

As the above quote implies, the editors and marketers felt that the subjects chosen for their Division's books should be "pre-sold" to the consumer: The parent or older child walking down the store aisle should not have to read the book (or a long review of it) to find out what it is about. Subjects which do not have this instant appeal--notably poetry (beyond short rhymes) and whimsical fantasy--are not produced. "They're harder to get through. They're harder to get through to the house here, through the salespeople, the buyers--everybody," one art director explained.

Another fairly evident aspect of picture books which is that is thought to help the titles sell themselves to parents is the blending of educational information into the material, to make its value for the child quite explicit. Most often this blending is done at the book rather than the line level. For example, the "gimmick books" editor, who writes that section's works herself, mentioned that in scripting a "pop-up" book about trains she had decided to combine



"a little of fact and a little of fancy" on the subject. In the case of the Division's easy readers, however, the instructional approach is built into the line: The authors are required to use a fixed word list prepared by MM's educational books division. It will be recalled that the focal production and distribution outlet selectors from the library market articulated their dislike for easy readers with predetermined vocabulary.

At the same time that they attempt to build their lines around "pre-sold" subjects which invite point of purchase interest, the selectors are also extremely careful not to inject any elements into their books which might possibly turn potential customers (and potential buyers) away. In striking contrast to LMCBD's products, curse words are unknown to MMCBD's titles. The "gimmick books" editor echoed her colleagues noting that "we try not to do anything [in questionable taste], even such words as "aint!." She also opined regarding the library market's "new realism" vogue that such books "are unnecessary. A lot of it is sort of proving they [i.e. the library market authors and publishing firms] can deal with topics that have not been dealt with."

#### Writing Style, Authors, and Plots

The above remarks imply that writing style, considered extremely important in the library market, was not deemed important in MMCBD. Indeed, the focal mass market selectors seemed to feel that since style is not evident to the buyers (who, unlike librarian reviewers, do not read the books) nor probably to the customers (who are "sold"

immediately on the subject or other visible "track record" elements), it could be used to help lower the books' costs. This feat is accomplished by getting the editors to pen picture books which are not created by the firm's four "name" author-illustrators. With regard to the lengthier adolescent titles, cost-cutting is accomplished by providing formulas for writers so that they can turn them out quickly for a fee rather than a royalty, or for a very small royalty.

The adventure-mystery editor, in characterizing the formula for her line (which revolves around the activities of "three adventurous young sleuths"), noted that its creator died several years ago and that the books are being written by two ghost writers. She said that she tries to make sure that stylistic differences are not detectable. The editor also observed that the protagonists' ages are never presented "so that the readers will more easily identify with them." Format requirements of the line mandate that the story be told in either 160 or 192 pages. Moreover, each book contains a list of the other books in the series. The hope is that a child who buys one title will go to a store and ask for another from the list even if neither the line nor the book is prominently displayed.

The senior editor was also quite specific about the formulas used in his non-fiction, 160 page sports books; for which he commissions reliable professional sportswriters:

It's been our practice since the beginning to put into a book several profiles of players, or several great moments-- a group of maybe 6, 8, 10, or 12 in a book. It gives us the opportunity to achieve some geographical distribution. We've discovered over a period of time that that's a smart thing to do in a mass market book, because it gives it a certain amount of appeal everywhere....

The formula for a profile is usually this: It will begin with sort of a dramatic lead. A game situation in which our hero has won the game, or maybe a heartbreaking situation in which he has lost the game. Something that kind of provides the theme, the peg on which to build. And then, usually, there's a line space or some kind of a break, and then you go back to his early life. And you end up his last season. And, because of the unhappy way that the sports and publishing seasons don't get along, we like to have the last season up near the end so that we can add to it at the last minute.

A list of other books is also found in each sports line title.

### Choosing Illustrations and Illustrators

While distinctive writing style was considered only minimally important with regard to MMCBD's books, illustrations, which are highly visible selling points, were considered extremely important. In fact, the standout importance of pictorial presentation helps explain why there are separate art directors in MMCBD. By contrast, the fairly balanced importance of writing and illustrating with regard to picture books in LMCBD is reflected in the fact that its editors also perform the traditional art director's role of evaluating potential talent and guiding a book's artwork to its completion.

Not only was the relative emphasis of the pictorial and the literary seen to be different in the two focal firms, but the actual guidelines for illustrations were quite different as well. Although the mass market interviewees contended they are looking for individual styles (as did the library market selectors), the styles they preferred as "mass market" would, by their own admission, be generally unacceptable to many librarians--cartoonish, bright, bold, and direct, with the cover "like a poster." When asked to compare their guidelines to

those of LM's library market subsidiaries, both interviewed art directors added "slightly less sophisticated" and "perhaps more humorous" to the above list.

As a consequence of these guidelines, the art directors noted that they generally look for artists with different styles from those who work in the library market, although their preferences for artists who are reliable with regard to scheduling and completing work are similar. Most desirable, of course, is the small number of author-illustrators whose names are synonymous with popularity to buyers to the extent that the names become principal track record elements for titles. (One library market salesperson might have even overestimated the number of "name" mass market author-illustrators at 12.) In view of the insignificant amount of non-trade related advertising allocated to the Division, MMCBD's marketers do not attempt to create publics by widespread promotion of particular talents whom they favor. They rely, instead, on sales reports and salespeople's observations to determine which author-illustrators are considered "self-salable" by buyers and attempt to capitalize on those successes through the release of more titles by those talents and highlighting their names on the covers. Because of MMCBD's tradition of cultivating "name" author-illustrators, the Division actively pursues important talent, offering them royalties which are high by mass market standards. Illustrators who are not so well known are usually contracted per book and offered typical mass market royalties or fees.

(page 174 missing from original hard copy)

illustrators imitating the licensing studio's artists. Pre-sold characters are additionally used in "unattached" productions such as activity books and calendars; the objective is to get those relatively common subjects of the middle-aged juvenile area to stand out from their competitors in the eyes of buyers and consumers. The MMCBD sports line follows the character identifiability notion by emphasizing "stars" in the books, while the adventure-mystery line does so by using a famous name from film mysteries in the line's title and through the series device of maintaining continuing characters in all the episodes. It should be noted, however, that while character identifiability was considered important among MMCBD selectors, depth and subtlty of portrayal--crucial among library market selectors--was not mentioned as a guideline by the focal mass market division's interviewees and was specifically denied by the mystery-adventure series editor.

Another predilection of LMCBD's selectors--unusual, non-mainstream characterization--was also not found among the MMCBD interviewees. The latter group, like the former, did indicate a sensitivity to portraying women in a manner that balances traditional and non-traditional roles and to including Blacks among the characters in picture books. Moreover, the senior editor noted that although he tries to balance the race of atheletes in his sports books, the predominance of Blacks in basketball sometimes necessitates a predominance of them in a book and on the cover. However, the focusing upon racial or ethnic group members in a non-sports framework--and particularly at the picture book level--was

considered quite rare. The "adolescent book" section's art director spoke for her colleagues when she explained this situation by saying "because we're aiming at the mass market, we sometimes turn down a book everybody likes because we feel its appeal is too narrow."

Interestingly, the fear of injecting into books elements which might turn potential customers (and buyers) away was related by the "gimmick books" editor to the predominant use of animals as main characters in picture books:

It's easier. You don't have to determine if it's a girl or boy--right? That's such a problem today. And if it's a girl, God forbid you put her in a pink dress. Also, it's very hard to draw children in--how can I put it? Here, for example, in this book the children are cartoony. Now, if you were to draw more realistic children, the whole book would somehow get a little heavier, a little more serious. You have to keep your characters a little lighter, a little more whimsical. And animals lend themselves to that.

### Book Format

A final area of content which will be discussed from the standpoint of the client relationship is the format of the book. It has already been noted (see page 156) that the production of books in lines (similarly formatted groups) is deemed important by MMCBD selectors for introducing books to buyers, achieving "self-salability" with customers, and lowering production costs. The purpose of this section is to review the influence of the client relationship on the actual format guidelines.

The "adolescent books" art director was concise in explaining how the client relationship's "low cost" mandate has influenced decisions regarding different facets of format:

Over the years, if you want to print mass market, you try to cut every penny you can and print more than one book at a time for economy at the production end of it. And they [the publisher, appropriate section head, and production department] have evolved certain formats which are economical as far as the kind of press it's going to be on, the kind of paper, and the size of the paper.

Other production procedures which are intended to lower costs while not impairing the "point of purchase" marketability of the books include avoiding unusual (and expensive) typography; dispensing with cover jackets by using laminated or "kivar" covers to achieve the same promotional effect; and providing cemented ("perfect") or stapled bindings rather than regular trade bindings.

The dimensions and number of pages of the books in an MMCBD line are arrived at by attempting to optimize both production cost efficiency and the contribution of size as a "track record" element. The "gimmick books" editor observed that store buyers and their customers become accustomed to seeing certain types of books in certain sizes. An example which she and others gave is that the firm's two lines of easy readers are, at 6 1/2" by 9" and 6 5/8" by 9 1/4", small relative to most picture books because such titles are "expected" to fit easily into the hands of children. By contrast, the Division's standard picture books (called "flats") are quite a bit larger than its easy readers because they have been found to sell better if larger. An MMCBD salesperson said that the large size of these flats is due to the trend-setting and competition-inciting activities of Western Publishing, which uses "oversized" presses especially designed to produce books that command attention.



Interestingly, the competition for attention on the store racks among large picture books was confronted directly by MMCBD's marketers when they decided to create the pictureback line. They were convinced that original picture books with "name" author-illustrators and track record subjects would be attractive at 95¢ to the buyers for lower-priced variety and chain stores but were unable, because of production costs, to produce a size larger than 6" by 6". Consequently, they decided to follow the fairly common procedure of convincing buyers to accept the books with spinner racks. The free-standing, round racks are aimed at separating the pictureback line from the larger hardback juvenile crowd and giving it a much better chance to sell itself to store customers.

It can be seen that MMCBD's guidelines regarding format, like those regarding other important areas of content which have been reviewed, are quite at variance with the guidelines reported with respect to LMCBD, the focal library market firm. There, in what was seen to be a process shaped by selectors' perceptions of the requirements and opportunities of a different client relationship, titles were discussed as individuals--as the most "artistic" economically feasible package of subject, story, writing style, illustrative style, and format elements. Only the easy readers were seen to have some aspects of the "line" concept in their production procedure.

With regard to LMCBD, the impact of the major client relationship was seen to ramify beyond the articulation of guidelines by the selectors to the very images they have of their ultimate audience and the actual books they release in the seasonal lists. The closing sections

of this chapter will show that a similar dynamic was observed in MMCBD, though with different results that reflect the different nature of the client relationship.

### The Client Relationship and Images of the Ultimate Audience

The general notion of "pre-selling" a book to parents or children that was found in the remarks of MMCBD interviewees and the particular comments they made regarding aspects of content children or parents like or don't like might, on the surface, be taken to imply that the selectors have concrete images of their ultimate audience based on direct audience data. Actually, however, when the direct selectors were asked about the images they have have of "the people who read" their books, all uniformly denied any knowledge of their ultimate audience. The "gimmick books" section head observed that no market research is done for reasons of cost and that "we're really flying by the seat of our pants." The senior editor characterized as "parlor wisdom" the MMCBD selectors' assumption that a parent usually chooses the book for a younger child (with or without the child present) and that adolescents have more access to the books on their own.

Nevertheless, the selectors articulated guidelines and operated as if they had clear impressions of their ultimate audience. As in LMCBD, that implicit impression could be seen to reflect the MMCBD selectors' perceptions of the requirements and opportunities of their client relationship. The requirement by store and jobber buyers of "low price" and high turnover is interpreted by MMCBD selectors as a mandate to reach the widest possible audience.

Moreover, the content elements used to reach this audience are usually chosen from the spectrum of materials which has already been successful--the buyers' concept of "track record."

Because of the healthy sales of their Division's books, the MMCBD selectors indicated their feelings that the books which they publish are generally the books which children want. MM's library promotion and trade publicity director (who also deals with the firm's subsidiary library market juveniles) even opined that mass market books are more likely to give children what they want than library market juveniles:

....The book has to be designed for the child. What's happened in the library market is that frequently people are directing themselves in creating fine fine literature which appeals to adults, who are the intermediaries in the libraries. Because the ultimate consumer is kind of unknown, hidden. In the bookstore, the ultimate consumer is not hidden. If the kid didn't like the book, the mother is not going to come back.

It will be recalled that an almost exactly opposite opinion was stated by a focal library market editor.

#### The Client Relationship and the Seasonal Lists

That the mass market client relationship affected the actual books which MMCBD released during the Fall of 1974 and the Spring of 1975 can most easily be seen in a comparison between Tables 4 and 2, which present breakdowns of broad content categories from the lists of MMCBD and LMCBD respectively. (Table 2 can be found on page 80.)

Certain expectable differences are clearly evident. The mass market firm's realization that its buyers are more likely to order new

Table 4

Categories Relating to New Books on MMCBD's  
Fall 1974 and Spring 1975 Lists

	#	% Total	% Category
<b>A. NUMBER OF BOOKS ON LISTS</b>			
# of Books on Fall List	44	83	
# of Books on Spring List	9	17	
	<u>53</u>	<u>100</u>	
<b>B. FICTION/NONFICTION/MIXED</b>			
<u>Fiction</u>			
Fairy and Folk Tales	6	11	19
Chronicles	5	9	17
Picture Book Adventures Stories	9	17	28
ABC and Concept Books	8	15	25
Joke Books	1	2	3
Mystery-Adventure Novels	3	6	9
Sports Novels	-	-	-
Problem/Realism Novels	-	-	-
Other Novels	-	-	-
Poetry	-	-	-
	<u>32</u>	<u>60</u>	<u>101<sup>a</sup></u>
<u>Nonfiction</u>			
Nature	4	8	23
Sports	13	24	76
	<u>17</u>	<u>32</u>	<u>99<sup>a</sup></u>
<u>Mixed</u>			
Calendar	1	2	25
Crafts and Activities	3	6	75
	<u>4</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>100</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>100</b>	
<b>C. AGE OF INTENDED AUDIENCE</b>			
Predominantly 6 years or younger	32	60	
Predominantly between 6 years and 10	6	11	
Predominantly over 10 years	16	30	
	<u>53</u>	<u>101<sup>a</sup></u>	

Table 4 (continued)

	#	% Total	% Category
<b>D. HUMAN/ANIMAL/ANTHROPOMORPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF CHARACTERS</b>			
Human	26	49	
Animal	4	8	
Anthropomorphic Animal	17	32	
Anthropomorphic Animal and Human	4	8	
Animal and Human	1	2	
Undetermined	1	2	
	<u>53</u>	<u>101<sup>a</sup></u>	
<b>E. SEX OF MAIN CHARACTER(S)</b>			
Male	24	45	
Female	2	4	
Male and Female Characters	8	15	
Not Mentioned	19	34	
	<u>53</u>	<u>98<sup>a</sup></u>	
<b>F. FORMAT TYPE</b>			
Picture Book	20	38	
Easy Reader	7	13	
Pop-Up	4	8	
Board Book	4	4	
Calendar	1	2	
Activity Books	3	6	
Mix and Match	1	2	
Typical Book	13	25	
	<u>53</u>	<u>98<sup>a</sup></u>	
<b>G. PRICE (TO NEAREST DOLLAR)</b>			
\$1	6	11	
\$2	12	23	
\$3	26	49	
\$4	7	13	
\$5	2	4	
	<u>53</u>	<u>100</u>	

Table 4 (continued)

	#	% Total	% Category
H. PICTORIAL CHARACTERISTICS			
Full (or 4) Color	37	70	
Black and White Photographs	13	25	
Black and White Illustrations	2	4	
None	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	
	53	101	

## I. ETHNIC/RACIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF MAIN CHARACTER

None are mentioned in the catalog synopsis. The sports books, however, do deal with several Black athletes.

<sup>a</sup>Percentage totals greater or less than 100% are due to rounding errors.

books before Christmas--a consideration only important for the library market firm with regard to its easy readers--explains the numerical imbalance between the former company's lists and the relative balance between the lists of the latter. The MMCBD products' lower prices and full-color illustrations in picture books reflect differences that were articulated by interviewees regarding these selection characteristics. And, the perceived requirement by MMCBD selectors that they provide buyers with a wide variety of track record formats and subjects (compared to the library market interviewees' denial of rigid guidelines in favor of a general concept of age-group oriented "balance") explains the mass market firm's greater range of selection in these areas and its more evenly distribution of fiction and non-fiction. It will also be noted that MMCBD's books are, predictably, skewed towards the lower age ranges, with 60% of its books predominantly directed at children 6 years or younger; in LMCBD only 34% of the titles fit this description.

With regard to characterization and subject matter, the smaller number of females in MMCBD's books compared to that in LMCBD might be most directly attributed to the fact that most sports and cartoon heroes (the "presold" characters which the mass market selectors said they prefer) are male. A similar explanation might be given for the higher percentages of "fantasy" and "mixed" fantasy/reality titles as well as of anthropomorphic main characters in the focal mass market compared to library market books.

The book with no pictures is a "morale maintaining" library market novel for adolescents published by the Division.

#### MMCBD Titles and the Library Market Outlet

The striking differences between the lists produced by MMCBD and LMCBD and especially the evident incompatibility between the guidelines set forth by MMCBD interviewees and those articulated by both publishing and distribution outlet selectors in the library market raise the question of the extent to which any of the focal mass market publishing firm's titles successfully "crossed over" to LMCLS. Before this question is answered, it should be noted that although MMCBD's selectors rarely consider the libraries in making decisions about lines and titles, the Division does fit library bindings to a certain percentage of the titles which MM's library promotion department feels might sell to school and public libraries (an addition which raises the retail price by a little over a dollar). Certain lines are automatically excluded from consideration for the library market because their formats are too fragile (e.g. pop-ups), self-destructive (cut-outs), or too unlike traditional books to be acceptable to librarians (board books). Interestingly, the promotion director observed that the principal "cross-over" buyers are school rather than public librarians. She said that the former are less concerned than the latter with "literary quality" and more concerned with using the interests which the "pre-sold" books engender among children for remedial reading and vocabulary skills.



Table 5 presents a breakdown of the statuses of MMCBD books that were received by the focal library market outlet between May 1974 and April 1975. The MM library promotion department's screening procedure is reflected in the fact that only 29 of the Division's approximately 50 books were received at LMCLS' System Coordinating Office. Of those 29, 11 (38%) were given "full acceptance" status by the Book Selection Committee. This acceptance record is only 4 points lower than that of LMCBD, though it will be recalled that the number of judged and accepted titles was quite a bit higher.

Although the "full acceptance" record of the two firms is comparable, LMCLS' quite a bit lower outright rejection of MMCBD and LMCBD books reveal that librarians had distinctively different attitudes towards the divisions' products. It will be recalled that comments regarding acceptance and rejection of LMCBD books by LMCLS reviewers emphasized the success or failure of the individual works as "quality" juvenile literature. MMCBD books, by contrast, were designated "full acceptance" when they met SCO's most minimal literary acceptance standards, admittedly because of "pre-sold" characteristics that would likely draw children to them and make them very popular. In this connection, it is interesting to note that of the 11 books that were accepted 9 were non-fiction, an area about which the Head of Book Selection conceded that her Office is more lenient from a literary standpoint. The MMCBD fiction titles were more likely to be thought of as having "stilted, blunt, monotonous sentences and cheap illustrations."

Table 5

Statues of MMCBD Titles  
Received by LMCBD

	#	% Total	% Category
<u>Fiction</u>			
Full Acceptance	2	7	12
Regional and/or Central Branch only	5	17	29
Full Rejection	10	35	59
	<u>17</u>	<u>59</u>	<u>100</u>
<u>Nonfiction</u>			
Full Acceptance	9	31	75
Regional and/or Central Branch only	-	-	-
Full Rejection	3	10	25
	<u>12</u>	<u>41</u>	<u>100</u>
Total	29	100	100

Also interesting is that the 9 accepted non-fiction titles were about sports, a subject which librarians noted as eagerly sought by middle aged and older boys. A typical review noted that the title, part of a line from which several had been rejected for "quality" reasons, "is unexceptional but it should fill the demand. Typical sportswriting style." It might be added that the two MMCBD works of fiction that were accepted were by a "name" author-illustrator who has been with the firm since MMCBD's more library market days and has been accepted by LMCLS despite his somewhat "cartoony" drawings. The popularity of that talent's titles and the librarians' perceived need for sports books help explain why 63% (7) of the MMCBD acceptances were bought by 30 or more of the 51 branches; one picture book was purchased by all of them.

It can be seen, then, that some "pre-sold" aspects of MMCBD's titles were even attractive to librarians. The next chapter will deal with two mass market outlets--a chain book store and a chain department store--and it will be interesting to observe the extent of cross-over by the focal library market firm's new books.

### Chapter Summary

The purpose of this chapter has been to examine the importance which the mass market client relationship has for the selection and publication of books by the juvenile division of a large publishing firm (MMCBD) the sales of which are, to a great extent, dependent upon book, department, and chain stores. An additional aim has been to contrast these findings with those relating to the focal library market

firm (LMCBD) with the aim of understanding the differential impact.

With respect to MMCBD, it has been shown that perceptions by the selectors of requirements and opportunities of their client relationship has led them (and the firm's chief executives) to position their Division's activities toward a sector of the market in which they would be maximally able to comply with the requirements and take advantage of the opportunities. The general perception that the client relationship requires a strict "merchandising" orientation towards books produced that must "sell themselves" without advertising, was seen to have consequences for the structure of the Division (where marketers are in direct and ultimate control of selection), for the selection activities (where books are mostly conceptualized "in house" and where efficiency dictates that certain sections and editors always work with certain types of books), for the guidelines regarding selection (where a preoccupation with "track record" and "low costs" leads to the concept of "lines" and an admittedly formulaic approach to publishing), for the direct selectors' images of their audience, and for the actual books which are produced for the seasonal lists.

Wide-ranging significance of the major client relationship was also seen with regard to LMCBD. However, as direct comparisons of findings regarding the two focal firms have shown, the two different client relationships have brought about very different impacts upon the focal publishing organizations. It stands to reason that differences will also be seen among the focal distribution outlets of the mass and library markets. Whether the same client relationship dynamic that

was seen operating in the library system was also seen in the two focal mass market outlets--a chain book store and a chain department store--will be a subject for the next chapter.

End Notes

<sup>1</sup>One structural difference may be suggested at this point as traceable to the client relationship. It cannot be seen in the charts of LMCBD and MMCBD, but while all of the 9 direct selectors in the former are women, 5 of the 9 MMCBD direct selectors (including the section heads and publisher) are men. While no general cross-segment comparisons are available on this issue, it is tempting to suggest that the observed editorial domination by women in library market publishing firms seems to have been sustained, at least in part, by the fact that the library population with whom they interact is overwhelmingly female. This situation does not seem to be true in the mass market. Buyers for stores do not seem to be predominantly female. Moreover, mass market editors, unlike their library market counterparts, have very little contact with outlet selectors, as will be seen.

<sup>2</sup>The reason for the inability of MMCBD to compete with the other mass market firms' discount rates relates to its philosophy of selling through popular names. While Western and Rand McNally pay a flat fee outright to creators of books which retail at under \$1 and give extremely low royalties (less than 5% of wholesale price sales for their more expensive titles), MMCBD has paid the "name" author-illustrators of its picture books trade book royalties (10% and more), to the point where royalty charges can encompass 25% of a book's unit cost. Under such conditions, the traditional trade jobber discount of about 48% is the highest the firm can offer to wholesalers, while other mass market firms (some of which unlike MMCBD; also have their own printing presses to lower costs) offer 51%, plus 10% if a certain number of units are bought. Trade jobbers buy from MMCBD because they are geared to operate at the 48% discount level and because of the Division's proven success in the outlets which they serve. IDs, however, feel they cannot make a profit with the discount which MMCBD offers and refuse to carry its lines no matter what their potential popularity.

<sup>3</sup>It might be noted here that the interviewees uniformly assumed that parents with or without their children were the usual ultimate customers for their books. They stated, however, that no research has been carried out to verify this assumption; the managing editor characterized it as "an accepted piece of parlor wisdom."

End Notes (continued)

<sup>4</sup>The price competition in both the library and mass markets often forces decision-makers who feel a book will be most successful only if sold at a particular price to set that price even though it will not return their production costs in the first printing. The hope is that its popularity will necessitate more printings, allowing the firm to recoup costs and desired profits over a slightly longer term. It will be noted that because the more limited nature of LMCBD's market (in that books are circulated, not sold) and the larger number of competing books and firms (in that MMCBD's salespeople, who compete with only a handful of juvenile publishers can often decide which of their Division's titles should be racked against the particular books or lines of particular rivals) the library market firm cannot project as large sales for as long a time as its mass market counterparts. The price differentials of the two markets compensate for this difference, however.

<sup>5</sup>She is called "managing editor" because she also has the chore of coordinating certain production and publicity activities within the department.

<sup>6</sup>At the time this study was conducted, the editor of the "easy readers" section had resigned and the editor-in-chief had taken his place. This move, which made the editor-in-chief head of two sections, was expected to be temporary.

<sup>7</sup>In the production of "unattached" titles, sectional jurisdiction might not be observed. For example, the editor-in-chief usually edits the "unattached" picture books by the firm's "name" talent, and the "gimmick books" editor has edited a large-format activity book. It might also be noted that the vice president of the "gimmick books" section is the liason with the two book clubs and in charge of developing the Division's own mail order apparatus based on the small, lightweight picturebacks.

## CHAPTER 7: THE MASS MARKET DISTRIBUTION OUTLET

The feasibility of examining two mass market distribution outlets for this study stems, to a large degree, from the extremely compact nature of their organizations and selection procedures. Unlike the focal library market outlet, which was seen to have a complex two-tiered selection process involving approximately 40 selectors, the focal book store chain (to be called MMBSC) and department store chain (to be called MMDS) have central buyers for most (in the department store, all) of the books which are placed on the shelves in their branches throughout the area served by LMCLS.

Only in the book store chain is juvenile book selection separate from adult book-buying: The firm, which has over 400 stores around the country (4 in the city under study) divides its stock into four categories administered by four buying departments--adult hardbound, adult paperback, adult promotional materials (remainders and reprints), juveniles (including juvenile hardbound, paperback, and remainders), and non-book materials (such as bookmarks and cards). Each department has one or more buyers who are responsible to the firm's executive officers. The juvenile buying department is comprised of a buyer and his assistant who review all new children's books and decide which should be introduced to the chain. They compile a semi-annual checklist for all hardbacks and decide, with the help of computerized sales



information, how many of each title should be sent to each store. New paperbacks are also reviewed by the buyers and ordered centrally, as are some extremely popular backlist titles. However, most backlisted paperbacks, because of their smaller number and because some branches might decide to allocate more wall space than others for their juveniles, are ordered by the individual stores with the aid of an initial stock title list distributed by the central office.

In the four locations investigated for this study, the paperback ordering activity is carried out by an interested clerk, appointed by the store manager, who also racks incoming children's books and cares for the juvenile section's presentability. If customer demand warrents, store clerks are allowed, with the approval of the manager, to purchase hardbacks which are not on the checklist. Too much indulgence in this activity is frowned upon, however, since it undermines the firm's aim of getting maximum discount from the publishers through the large quantity purchases which accompany centralized ordering. More acceptable is the store clerk's advising the central buyer to send her more or less than the computer-assigned quota of a particular title, depending on her estimation of the popularity of that title.

The department store's clerks have no responsibility at all with regard to juvenile books. MMDS, a large, moderately priced chain that sells everything from gardening tools to clothes, employs one buyer to purchase the stock adult and juvenile books for the main store and its 10 branches throughout the city. Like the buyers of MMBSC, the chain store buyer is responsible to the executive officers of the firm.

The fundamental purpose of this chapter is to explore the influence of the major client relationship upon the selection procedures of these two distribution outlet organizations. In view of the patterns which have been identified thus far in this thesis, it should not be surprising to find that the same client relationship dynamic that was seen with respect to the focal library system can also be seen with respect to MMBSC and MMDS, albeit with different particulars that reflect the different market philosophies. In other words, implicit approaches by the buyers to the major client relationship can be seen to operate in both outlet firms tend to reinforce the prevailing selection perspectives and the power of already dominant firms. At the same time, the particulars which are embodied in these approaches are very different from those seen in LMCLS, since the major client relationships are so very different. In this connection, it will be seen that although some differences in organizational requirements (and thus in existing guidelines) exist between the focal mass market outlet organizations, the similarities are far more visible and important than the variances and underscore the differences between the mass market and the library market.

#### The Client Relationship and Book Selection Procedure

One difference between the LMCLS selectors and those for MMCBD and MMDS is that while the library market interviewees had some perception of the influence which the publishing firms of their segment have upon their choice of books, the buyers from the two mass market organizations generally considered themselves quite autonomous from

their suppliers with regard to selection: the chief buyers stressed in their interviews that they, not the "publishers' representatives" (the salespeople), make all the decisions regarding the books which their stores will or will not buy. Nevertheless, as in LMCLS, the buyers' answers to the interview questions reveal implicit approaches to their major client relationship which guide conceptualization of their selection procedure and, consequently, have important influences upon their favoring of particular selling procedures, and their introduction of particular innovations. Also as in LMCLS, the approaches to the client relationship and its impact can be most specifically seen by examining the two considerations that shape the selection procedure-- the perception of general requirements with regard to selection material and the manner in which such material is introduced to the organization. This examination is carried out in the following sections.

#### The Perception of General Requirements With Regard to Selection Material

Still another similarity between the library market outlet and the focal mass market outlets with regard to the influence of the client relationship should be noted: While the interaction with suppliers could not be said to dictate the primary organizational requirements which shape the primary selection requirements, the relationship could be seen to reinforce a perspective which directs the buyers towards the fulfillment of those requirements in ways that strengthen the links between the major suppliers and the outlets. Because somewhat different perceptions of organizational requirements lead the chief buyers of the department and book store chains to perceive that guiding

perspective in a slightly different manner and, consequently, to hold different attitudes towards the need for innovations in selection, their approaches to this area will be discussed separately.

### The Chief Book Store Buyer's Perceptions

The primary source of information about children's book selection in MMBSC was the chief juvenile buyer. It is he (and his assistant, who could not be interviewed) who deals constantly with salespeople from different publishing firms and passes on the books which are found in the juvenile department of every MMBSC store. By contrast, the five interviewed store clerks (who order paperbacks mostly) said they have little contact with salespeople: Only two clerks said they had been visited by publishers' representatives during the past year, and even those interviewees admitted that such interactions are infrequent.

The centralized buying procedure was deemed by the chief buyer to be a fundamental organizational requirement upon which much of the success of the book store chain is based. Centralized buying allows the firm to demand maximum discount with regard to every book it purchases, thus guaranteeing the highest possible profit margin per book. In order to guarantee the largest possible traffic into the stores, the great majority have been located in malls, where browsers as well as people who have specific books to purchase are likely to enter.

Space for different product categories in each of the MMBSC stores (which are always the same size) is also allocated centrally, according to the firm's overall sales figures for those categories.

Juveniles, which ordinarily account for about 10% of the store sales thus account for about 10% of the floor rack ("gondolla") space plus the wall rack space around it (which may vary). This approximate 10% maximum places a limit on the number of books the juvenile buyer can assign to his section and often makes the introduction of new books necessarily coincident with the excision of others. With space at a premium--and the goal of the organization oriented towards the large scale movement of the same childrens books throughout the country--each title which is placed in the juvenile area must be justified in terms of its ultimate profitability. This justification is carried out by noting or projecting the "salability" of a title (the frequency in which its stock "turns") in relation to its per unit profit and the cost of the gondolla or wall rack space it occupies. The interviewee refused to reveal his usual "turn" requirement but noted that he can be somewhat more lenient than adult book buyers because of the somewhat higher discount received on most juvenile books.

#### The Influence of the Client Relationship

It is important to observe that the juvenile buyer saw the organizational requirements which have been described with respect to his work as applicable to the other departments as well. However, the buyer pointed out that while adult "trade" and paperback titles are bought in anticipation--or as a result--of advertising and publicity supporting them (with the ad costs sometimes shared by the publishers and the chain), juvenile books are expected to sell themselves without any such help.<sup>1</sup> The buyer seemed to accept the dearth of children's book

promotion by publishers and the ignorance of store clerks on the subject of juveniles--as traditional "givens" to be taken into account rather than as factors to be changed through a concerted effort of both publishers and outlets. The influence of the major client relationship is clearly evident in this attitude, which is not mandated by any particular requirements of MMBSC. In view of the approaches of the buyer's major--and most successful--suppliers, the "mass market" perspective simply represents the path of least resistance.

Of course, this "path of least resistance" continued to direct the buyer towards those firms which reinforce the validity of this perspective, those firms which in hardback and paperback have a "track record" of supplying him with books that "sell themselves." Moreover, dependence on the "line" concept as an aid to achieving this goal helps further solidify these firms' dominant positions, since it is quite expensive and risky for a publisher without a mass market track record to create a line of books for that arena. An additional barrier to entry was indicated when the buyer noted that lines currently in the stores are only dropped "for good reason" mainly if their sales begin to drop.

The MMBSC buyer did insist, however, that he is quite eager to place new titles in his store and even new lines if he feels that they will help increase the sales figures of his department. He mentioned that mass market juvenile firms often solicit his advice with regard to particular subjects they are planning to publish or new lines they want to create. The buyer said that he usually hesitates to give advice

with regard to subjects for fear that the firms will start sending him manuscripts to read. He is eager, however, to advise publishing companies on prospects of new lines they are considering. In unusual circumstances, if he really likes an idea, he might even guarantee the purchase of a group of books before they are published. More commonly, he might agree to test a new line in 25 stores to determine if its popularity warrants introduction throughout the chain (and the concomitant removal of books which are presently sold).

The case of MMCBD's pictureback line is particularly interesting in this connection. It was noted in the previous chapter that the focal mass market publishing company has, in large measure, tied hopes for success of its small books on the spinner racks which it supplies. The use of such racks is generally prohibited by MMBSC policy because their introduction on a large scale would either force the reduction of general gondolla space or block aisles in violation of fire regulations. However, the MMCBD salesperson convinced the buyer to test the books on the publisher-supplied equipment. The test produced excellent results--all racked books were sold out in three months--and, at the time of the interview, the buyer was petitioning his bosses for permission to use the MMCBD spinner racks. It seems that in this unusual situation no books will have to be withdrawn if the pictureback line is accepted.

### The Department Store Buyer's Perceptions

The requirements which the MMDS buyer articulated with regard to his work were quite similar to those that were seen in MMBSC: The limited space mandates a turnover in books which justifies the value of the space that they occupy. Because the space allocated to his department varies in the different branches (with the size of the branch store and the management's opinion of the book department's value), the buyer must stock the different stores with different quantities of juveniles. Like the book store buyer, the MMDS interviewee refused to state the minimum number of turns required by a typical juvenile book to maintain its berth on the department store racks. He did say, however, that while he examines the adult best sellers every week to project the number that will be needed in every store, he does not conduct this activity in the juvenile area, since there are no "hits." In the case of children's books and the other "stock titles" of the collection, he examines the sales figures cursorily every six weeks to "pull" the titles which have hardly moved at all. Every twelve weeks he surveys the collection more closely to delete books which have not been selling well enough and to augment titles or lines which have exceeded expectations.

Like the MMBSC buyer, the department store buyer implicitly approached the fulfilling of these organizational requirements with a basic acceptance of the traditional mass market "rules of the game" with regard to juveniles--little, if any, advertising and the choosing of books mainly from firms which have shown that they can produce books



that "sell themselves." Unlike his book store counterpart, however, the buyer articulated a general indifference to new titles and formats in the juvenile book area, even within a mass market perspective. He stressed several times during the interview that all the department stores in town carry the same juvenile titles and that the same books always sell; hence, he noted, he feels no need to change his stock either in response to fashion or competition.

When asked whether he has bought the MMCBD picturebacks, the MMDS buyer shrugged and said that he had initially bought some but does not anymore. He explained that since his department store's policy prohibits the use of promotional racks from publishers (for aesthetic reasons more than because of fire regulations), he placed titles from the line with other juveniles on the store racks and when they failed to sell he returned them to the publishing house. Although the circumstances surrounding this situation might be considered unusual (because of the firm's policy against racks), the buyer's lack of enthusiasm or interest for this new line compared to the interest of the book store buyer is reflective of a general difference in their attitudes with regard to innovation.

A large part of this difference seems to be rooted in the fact that while juvenile books comprise the book store buyer's entire purchasing domain, with his value to the company indicated by his ability to increase the juvenile category's percentage of total sales, the department store buyer is responsible for the book store as a whole and sees the adult area--the area of greatest movement and highest

profit--as deserving the most intense concentration. In fact, MMDS' buyer could not even say what percentage of space or books in any store is devoted to juveniles; he indicated that he has simply kept approximately the same floor space for children's books that he found when he joined the firm three years ago.

#### The Manner in Which Selection Material is Introduced to the Organization

The preceding paragraphs have indicated how the influence of the mass market client relationship serves to illuminate and reinforce a mass market perspective for the book and department store buyers to follow in their conceptualizations of selection requirements. Remarks by the two chief buyers indicated that the dominance of the major client relationship--and the approach to books which it influences--is also reinforced through the manner in which books are introduced to the organization. Interestingly, this reinforcement seems to derive indirectly from juvenile library market firms as well as directly from juvenile mass market publishing companies. Both buyers noted that salespeople representing firms that publish for school and public libraries (and whose primary aims are to sell adult titles to the book and department store chains) expect that they will not sell their juveniles and so do not pitch their wares or do so only half-heartedly. Although both buyers pointed out that the salespeople are generally correct in this expectation, it seems clear that a cumulative consequence of this self-inhibition is to clear the field for the mass market publishers' representatives, perpetuate the correctness of the

mass market perspective in the eyes of the buyers, and aid in the continued dependence of the stores upon four or five firms for the bulk of their juveniles.

It should be added, however, that these firms do not supply the chain and book store buyers with the relatively small number of library market paperbacks which both distribution outlets carry. As was noted on page 40, it was largely through the efforts of Dell, a large publisher of adult "mass market" paperbacks, that such books (primarily aimed at the adolescent and pre-adolescent) were accepted. The successes of Dell and, later, LMCBD (along with the inability of most library market juvenile firms to maintain the sales organizations needed to make the publication of paperbacks financially feasible) was an invitation to four other large paperback firms to enter the children's book arena by buying subsidiary rights to the most popular library books and selling them to institutional and non-institutional outlets (with the former being the principal market).

The involvement of these paperback firms with children's books might augur competition for the still-dominant mass market firms if the paperbackers expand successfully into the picture book and easy readers areas (where the bulk of juvenile sales resides). At the time of this study, the chain and department store buyers did not seem to see the library market paperbacks as being in competition with the

products of the juvenile mass market firms. The impression that the buyers viewed those paperbacks rather as augmenting children's book sales is supported by the book store chain's separate ordering procedures for hardbacks and paperbacks and paperbacks. It is interesting to note that a few of the juvenile mass market firms (including MMCBD) have already begun to capitalize on the now-accepted paperback format-- for picture book lines and activity books. An example of the ability of these firms to maintain their dominance through the manner in which books are introduced can be seen in the fact that while the great proportion of library market paperbacks must be purchased by the clerks of individual stores, the mass market publishers' paperbacks are purchased centrally for all MMBSC stores. The central purchasing approach virtually assures a larger order.

#### Dependence and Innovation in the Department and Book Store Chains

Although the department store buyer seemed quite satisfied with the products that he buys as a result of this dependence upon a small number of firms for the bulk of his books, his book store counterpart evidenced annoyance with respect to certain aspects of price and format which, he said, sometimes hinder him from deriving maximum benefit from his limited juvenile space. For example, he accused one mass market firm of raising its prices under the guise of inflation merely to increase profits. He said that the importance of that company virtually forces him to buy its books, although he predicted that the higher prices will ultimately hurt the publisher house by slowing title movement and causing him to cut back on the purchasing of its books.

The buyer also noted that juvenile publishers, following Western Publishing, have been producing large-sized picture books in attempts to achieve more impact from book covers than their competitors and to crowd the latter off the shelves. He opined that if all juvenile picture books were somewhat smaller in size, they would still sell well and the buyer would be able to stock more books in his juvenile area. In another complaint about size, the buyer pointed out that "trade"-sized adolescent paperbacks (such as those produced by Dell and LMCBD) occupy the space of about two "mass market" paperbacks and thus reduce the number of books the store can carry. Consequently, in order to justify placing a \$1.95 juvenile "trade" paperback on a wall rack, he has to be sure it will turn twice as quickly as two \$1.95 juvenile paperbacks in the "mass market" format--a tough requirement.

The MMBSC buyer's interest in innovations which will help him expand the sales of his juveniles plus his annoyance at some aspects of his major suppliers' products has led him to be more eager than the department store buyer to consider the products of non-dominant firms that conform to the mass market perspective. The acceptance of titles from such firms is, however, not common, both because relatively few firms attempt to compete in the mass market arena and because the buyer tends to make room for new lines only when a significant reduction in the sales of an already entrenched line is occurring. One case in which a line was partially dropped in order to make room for another of a non-dominant firm dealt, interestingly, with the MMCBD and LMCBD easy readers. The buyer said that visits to branches, reports from store managers, and computerized sales records showed him that MMCBD easy

readers, which had until then been the sole easy reader line which the store carried, had begun to drop quite strongly and consistently. Reasoning that perhaps he should introduce another easy reader line, the buyer tested one firm's titles for several months, with mediocre results. Rejecting those, he then tried LMCBD's competitively priced easy readers. They have sold quite well, and the buyer has reduced his purchases of the MMCBD titles to make room for the LMCBD line. It might be noted that, consistent with the differences regarding innovations that have been drawn between the book and department store buyers, the MMDS interviewee has not even experimented with the LMCBD readers in his stores.

The differences which have been delineated between the LMCBS and MMDS buyers with regard to their conceptualizations of book selection requirements have been traced to differing perceptions of their organizational responsibilities. At the same time, it has been seen that the major client relationship has operated in both cases to reinforce the mass market perspective while discouraging the buyers from considering--and encouraging suppliers to consider--alternative approaches. The final sections of this chapter will show how locking into the mass market client relationship--and into the perspective which it shapes--has ramifications for the buyers' images of their audience, their guidelines of selection, and the actual new books which they purchase.

Client Relationship, Audience Images,  
and Book Selection Guidelines

The mass market perspective's injunction to supply books that "sell themselves" carries with it an implicit assumption about the audience as generally uninformed in the juvenile area and consequently interested only in superficial aspects of the titles which are displayed. The two chief buyers of MMBSC and MMDS indicated their acceptance of this assumption, though they freely admitted that they really know very little about the people who purchase juvenile books in their stores. The buyers and the MMBSC clerks did contribute the impression that while many juveniles are often bought as gifts by parents grandparents when children are not present, many books are purchased by adults who are accompanied by children. One clerk pointed out that the juvenile section is usually placed at the rear of an MMBSC store and that children are often sent by their parents to the section to play and look at books while their parents browse. Children's book purchases often result from this activity, the clerk said. Turning to the subject of older children, she echoed the other mass market outlet interviewees in saying that adolescents are likely to choose and pay for books themselves.

It will be recalled that these notions about relative parent-child participation in choosing books from mass market outlet shelves were also articulated by the MMCBD selectors. The comments by librarians about the parental role in selecting titles for young children from the library shelves were different--reflecting librarian participation and

somewhat greater child autonomy--but not drastically so. At striking variance with the comments of branch librarians, however, were the remarks by both chief buyers that they are not concerned with characteristics of particular neighborhoods when selecting books. The buyers noted that such considerations are irrelevant since their stores are generally located in large shopping districts or malls that are frequented by people from different areas of the city. As will be seen, however, two of the interviewed book store clerks did attempt to stock some supplementary juveniles aimed at particular groups living in the community around their stores.

With regard to audience characteristics, two of the clerks stated the impression that a large percentage of the juvenile book purchasers are well off in terms of income and education. This speculation, which was echoed by a few interviewees from mass market publishing firms (other than MMCBD) cannot be strictly compared to the questionnaire survey that librarians in middle class areas where children have "excellent" reading abilities tend to feel that parents who visit their branches know "a lot" about children's books. Nevertheless, such a comparison does suggest a possible clash between these librarians' opinions and the mass market presumption that the audience generally has little sophistication with regard to juveniles and raises many questions about the actual nature of their predilections. At any rate, the clerks' view of the dominant audience's socioeconomic status could be seen to have the same negative affect they had on publishing selectors--that of justifying the absence, in their selection, of titles that are set in deprived areas or have children of minority races as main characters.



### Book Selection Guidelines

The espousal by the chief department and book store buyers of the mass market perspective's fundamental assumption about audience knowledgeability with regard to juvenile books could also be seen to have ramifications for the guidelines which they and the MMBSC clerks had for the titles which they buy. Not surprisingly, both buyers set forth the two criteria which the MMCBD selectors articulated with regard to choosing material that "sells itself"--"low price" and "track record."

"Low price" meant books from about 95¢ to \$4.95 (for the MMDS interviewee) or \$5.95 (for the MMBSC buyer). The book store principal noted that a 69¢ line was rejected because it would not pay for its space even according to the most optimistic estimation of its turn frequency. However, beyond this border of non-profitability, he refused to see the importance of price in relative, competitive terms. He insisted that people are extremely price sensitive in the case of juveniles: If prices rise, they simply stop buying as many books. The department store buyer noted that remainders, which are very low-priced (usually somewhat over \$1), are popular sellers in the children's area because people feel that one children's book is as good as another; consequently, price is their distinguishing characteristic.

As for "track record," the buyers emphasized the importance of a publishing house's previous success (a self-perpetuating aspect of the client relationship) and the "pre-sold" nature of the books in terms of line, character identifiability, author, illustrator, or subject. With regard to these areas, a remarkable similarity between the guidelines of the outlet selectors and those of the focal mass market publishing

selectors was seen. Books for pre-school and early grade children were noted as most popular. Full color was deemed essentially for picture books; the book store buyer said that customers choose full-color books over others, that as long as some companies turn out full color at low prices these will get priority on the racks. Both buyers were also fond of adolescent series books since, if popular, they can be racked "spine out" and still sell. Interestingly, the book store buyer confirmed the MMCBD senior editor's observation that the sales of hard-back juvenile sports books are on the decline because children have been buying adult sports paperbacks.

The buyers also noted that cover art and illustrations are very important in the evaluation of most juveniles, but neither could articulate the criteria by which he judges these areas. The department store buyer pointed to picture books with Walt Disney characters and illustrations as examples of books which always move well. The book store buyer, when asked to specify his predilections regarding illustrations, said "I don't play critic" and pointed to two new, brightly illustrated titles which he had recently selected. Similarity to previously successful titles seemed to be the implicit criterion, along with a reliance on the judgement of the successful mass market publisher.

#### Crossovers From the Library Market

Both buyers indicated (and perusal of juvenile departments in their various branches confirmed) that they carry some books which were originally intended for school and public libraries. The department store buyer characterized these more expensive titles as "gift books"

which he stocks with a collection of hardbound "classics" (such as Little Women and Heidi) purchased from a mass market publishing firm. The buyer said that he buys very few library market titles; he only picks them up if it is clear they will have an audience. As an example, he mentioned ordering Maurice Sendak's In The Night Kitchen after it was highlighted on the "60 Minutes" television program because of a controversy among librarians and parents surrounding an illustration of a naked child. The interviewee noted that most "gift" books are only placed in the chain's main store. The more limited space of the branch departments precludes the introduction of all but the books which will sell most quickly and profitably. Different price points do seem to do better at different branches, he said.

The book store buyer, who has a larger, more permanent collection of these titles in each store, also spoke of their use as gifts and said that the titles are purchased after they have won awards or have achieved a large following in libraries. A clerk said that she might order a title if some customers who have seen a newspaper article or "Today" show review request it. It might be noted that these library market titles--including picture books--are generally racked "spine out" in the stores, making it necessary for them to be sought out or discovered and thus preventing them from "selling themselves" most effectively. Another interesting point is that most of the library market books bought are from firms (such as LMCBD) with which the book store has extensive dealings in the adult area.

## The Library Market Paperbacks

Library market paperbacks are somewhat different from the library market hardbacks or the mass market juveniles which have been discussed since they can be said to have been promoted by librarians, teachers, and institutional book clubs among the (mostly adolescent or pre-adolescent) children who buy them. The MMBSC and MMDS chief buyers indicated that children's paperbacks (usually novels) are chosen for indications of "pre-sold" popularity--either because they are immediately recognizable "classics," because they relate to films or television shows, or because they have recently become very popular in the library and/or institutional book club spheres. The department store buyer said that he carries several LMCBD paperbacks which have been adapted for other mass media, a group of "classic" Dell paperbacks, and scattered titles from other firms--most in "trade" format. The four interviewed MMBSC clerks pointed to larger paperback sections with both "mass market" and "trade" sized titles.

It is important to note that three of the four clerks who order most of the paperbacks for the focal outlets did not seem to have a wide knowledge of the juvenile field. Although they claimed an interest in the area, their knowledge of hardback titles and authors seemed generally to be confined to the books which the book store receives through the central buying process. Since the library market hardbacks from which paperbacks derive do not, in the great majority of cases, appear in book stores, the buyers are not familiar with the titles on the publishers' paperback lists. Ordering paperbacks, therefore, is generally

done by choosing from among the books which sold best of those in stock when the clerks started working, by picking authors who have "track records" in other paperbacks, and by responding to children and teachers who occasionally ask for certain titles.

In striking contrast with the librarians, the three clerks admitted that they do not read the paperbacks that they buy and often do not know what kind of books they are really getting until they arrive. None of them could remember any controversies generated by the sale of popular "new realism" titles (by Judy Blume, Norma Klein, and others) in paperback. One said she tries to screen the incoming books for objectionable titles, but noted that her lack of knowledge about their content makes this task difficult.

The knowledgeable exception among the clerks is a former elementary school teacher who has been purchasing paperbacks in consultation with teachers in the area who want to assign them to students. She pointed out that the store's manager allows her to keep a paperback section quite a bit larger than most, even though its sales are not commensurate with its size. The clerk also noted that in response to complaints that the children's books in her store do not include minority group members as main characters, she deviated from the hardback check list and bought several books about Black, Puerto Rican, and Chinese children. Like the juvenile titles in the store, the books were simply placed on the racks and expected to "sell themselves." They did not "turn" adequately, however, and, after several months, the clerk removed them.

The initiative, knowledgability, and deliberate community orientation which the former school-teacher displayed in her paperback and hardback purchases was, as noted, an exception to the other clerks and, more importantly, to the buyers of MMBSC and MMDS. Their guidelines and activities more clearly and thoughtroughly reflected the mass market perspective. It will be the task of the final subchapter to show how that perspective could be seen to have consequences for the actual books which are presented to store customers.

#### The Client Relationship and the MMBSC Seasonal Lists

As noted in the heading of this sub-chapter, the lists that will be examined belong to only one of the focal mass market outlet organizations; unfortunately, new book lists could not be obtained from the MMDS buyer. Also unfortunate is that the lists only include the hardbacks which the chief buyer orders and encompass different seasons from the 1974-1975 lists that have been analyzed in other chapters of this work. Whereas an analysis of new hardbacks purchased by the library outlet could be said to cover all new books (since all paperbacks were originally purchased in hardback), such a statement cannot be made about either the book or department store chains.

In spite of these drawbacks, an attempt has been made to ascertain the extent to which the influence of the mass market client relationship ramifies to the actual books which the mass market outlets carry, in terms of the general purchasing patterns, the particular purchases from MMCBD and other mass market firms, and the extent of crossover from the

library market. The discussion will center upon the book store chain; in order to detail the impact of paperbacks upon the customers' spectrum of choice, the juvenile paperback rack in a representative MMBSC store will be described. With regard to the department store, it might be noted that an impressionistic, but lengthy, examination of the juvenile books in the main store and two satellites reveals a general picture very much like the one that will be described with regard to MMBSC. However, consistent with the preceding discussions of perceived selection requirements and guidelines, the MMDS juvenile collection was seen to be somewhat smaller in the main store (much smaller in the branches), with fewer new titles, and a main store paperback rack that held only a little over half the number of titles as in the MMBSC rack that was audited.

#### The Hardbacks

Table 6 presents a breakdown of the new hardbacks which MMBSC purchased for all its stores during the Fall 1975 and Spring 1976 seasons. (Information about the titles was gleaned from their publishers' catalogs.) A comparison of this table with Table 4 in Chapter 6, which presents a breakdown of MMCBD's output, can, despite the seasonal differences, help to illuminate the influence of the client relationship upon both organizations.

Perhaps the most encompassing--and important--statement that can be made with regard to a juxtaposition of the two tables is that, despite the book store chain's somewhat larger selection of new nonfiction titles and titles with pictorial characteristics, there is a rather

Table 6

Categories Relating to New Books on MMBSC's  
Fall 1975 and Spring 1976 Lists

	#	% Total	% Category
<b>A. NUMBER OF BOOKS ON LISTS</b>			
# of Books on Fall List	54	100	
# of Books on Spring List	--	---	
	<hr/> 54	<hr/> 100	
<b>B. FICTION/NONFICTION/MIXED</b>			
<u>Fiction</u>			
Fairy and Folk Tales	13	24	37
Chronicles	3	6	9
Picture Book Adventure Stories	8	15	23
ABC and Concept Books	10	20	29
Joke Books	--	---	--
Mystery-Adventure Novels	1	2	3
Sports Novels	--	---	--
Problem-Realism Novels	--	---	--
Other Novels	--	---	--
Poetry	--	---	--
	<hr/> 35	<hr/> 67	<hr/> 101 <sup>a</sup>
<u>Nonfiction</u>			
Sports	5	9	33
Magic	1	2	7
Prehistory	4	7	27
Biology and Development	1	2	7
Automobiles	3	5	20
Prayers	1	2	7
	<hr/> 15	<hr/> 27	<hr/> 101
<u>Combined</u>			
Calendar	1	2	25
Craft and Activities	2	4	50
Nature	1	2	25
	<hr/> 4	<hr/> 8	<hr/> 100
<b>Total</b>	54	100	



Table 6 (continued)

	#	% Total	% Category
<b>C. AGE OF INTENDED AUDIENCE</b>			
Predominantly 6 years or younger	25	47	
Predominantly between 6 and 10 years	12	22	
Predominantly over 10 years	17	31	
	<u>54</u>	<u>100</u>	
<b>D. HUMAN/ANIMAL/ANTHROPOMORPHIC CHARACTERISTICS</b>			
Human	15	38	
Animal	--	--	
Anthrophomorphic Animals	17	45	
Human and Anthropomorphic Animal	4	10	
Human and Animal	--	--	
Undetermined	2	5	
	<u>54</u>	<u>98</u>	
<b>E. FANTASY/REALITY (EXCLUDING NONFICTION)</b>			
Fantasy	21	54	
Reality	12	31	
Mixed	6	15	
	<u>39</u>	<u>100</u>	
<b>F. SEX OF MAIN CHARACTER(S)</b>			
Male	20	37	
Female	2	4	
Male and Female Characters	16	30	
Undetermined	16	30	
	<u>54</u>	<u>101*</u>	
<b>G. FORMAT TYPE</b>			
Picture Book	28	52	
Easy Reader	4	7	
Activity Books	3	6	
Oversized Adolescent Books	7	13	
Mix and Match Books	1	2	
Typical Book	11	20	
	<u>54</u>	<u>98</u>	

Table 6 (continued)

	#	% Total	% Category
H. PRICE (TO NEAREST DOLLAR)			
\$1	2	4	
\$2	14	26	
\$3	11	20	
\$4	11	20	
\$5	10	19	
\$6	4	7	
\$7	--	--	
\$8	2	4	
	<u>54</u>	<u>99<sup>a</sup></u>	

## I. PICTORIAL CHARACTERISTICS

Full (or 4) Color Illustrations	43	80	
Mixed Full Color and 2 Color illus.	2	4	
Black and White Photographs	3	6	
Black and White Illustrations and Photos	1	2	
Mixed Black and White and Color Photos	1	2	
Unmentioned	1	2	
	<u>54</u>	<u>102<sup>a</sup></u>	

## J. ETHNIC/RACIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF MAIN CHARACTER

None are mentioned in the catalog synopses. The sports books, however, do deal with several Black athletes.

<sup>a</sup>Percentage totals greater than 100% are due to rounding errors.

close correspondence between the two organizations in terms of the categories accepted. It will be recalled that when the outputs of LMCBD and LMCLS were compared, the rather narrow scope of the focal library market publisher's titles was seen as further evidence for the notion that the library market client relationship's impact upon both producers and outlets serves to support firms such as LMCBD that publish within the areas of the editors' predilections--as long as the editors choose "good books." These tables show that the mass market client relationship has a very different influence: It has brought the publishing selectors (who have noted the necessity of choosing varied lines along a mass market perspective) and the outlet selector (who has been seen to be dependent on a handful of firms and their lists) to select a very similar spectrum of titles.

An examination of the number of new titles which the MMBSC buyer purchased from the focal publishing firms and from their competitors further illustrates the role of the mass market client relationship in influencing the spectrum of choice for the ultimate audience. Of the 54 new titles accepted by MMBSC (all in the Fall), 53 (98%) were from the three largest mass market publishers (MMCBD among them). Interestingly, the one library market book bought was from an MMCBD subsidiary. With regard to MMCBD itself, of the 45 titles (29 Fall and 16 Spring) which MMCBD itself published during the Fall 1975 and Spring, 1976 seasons, MMBSC accepted 20 (55%).

It will be noted that the acceptance rate for MMCBD in the book store chain was higher than its 38% acceptance rate in the library. Moreover, 16 of the 25 rejections can be seen as automatic in view of the buyer's evident refusal to buy any new titles in the Spring (the non-Christmas season). When juxtaposed to the focal library market outlet's acceptance of a small percentage of new mass market products, the failure of the book store chain to accept all library market titles but one can be seen to support the notion--also indicated in a comparison of LMCLS and MMBSC interviewees' perceived selection requirements and guidelines--that the mass market client relationship induces the outlet selectors to be less flexible and more dependent upon the segment's dominant suppliers than does the library market client relationship.

#### The Paperbacks

The dominance of the mass market juvenile suppliers was mitigated somewhat by the presence of paperbacks in the MMBSC stores on wall racks titled "Young Readers." Even here, however, the formulaic, "pre-sold" dictum of the mass market perspective could be seen. In the representative store that was audited, 105 non-picture book paperback titles were found--62 in "mass market" paperback format and 43 in "trade" size (the former usually being for somewhat older readers). Only 9 (8%) of the 105 were paperback originals; all those were in "mass market" format and had "presold" character identifiability because of tie-ins to television programs ("The Waltons," for example) or Disney films. Moreover, only 42 of the 105 (40%) were actually derived from contemporary library market hardback titles.

Aside from the paperback originals, the rest of the 62 paperbacks in "mass market" format were either instantly recognizable "classics" (e.g. National Velvet and Little House On The Prairie) or, in somewhat lesser number (25--40%), sure-fire library market romances or "new realism" titles (such as those by Judy Blume or Norma Klein). The 43 "trade" paperbacks consisted of 26 "classics" (60%), with the rest being very popular contemporary library market titles. Ironically, then, the only paperbacks that were not in the store because they could clearly "sell themselves" as "classics" or because of character identifiability from other mass media were those with titles that had been produced, accepted, and promoted as a result of the usually incompatible library market client relationship.

#### Comparing the LMCLS and MMBSC Selections

Perhaps it should be stressed that the paperback audit which has just been presented is an audit of all the titles in a representative store, not just the titles received for the first time during the 1975-76 seasons (which were impossible to determine). Because of the absence of paperbacks in the overall analysis of new books selected by MMBSC, it is strictly inappropriate to compare Table 6 with Table 3, which categorizes the new books bought by the focal library system. However, some differences may be discussed which would undoubtedly not be affected by the addition of paperbacks to the book store chain's lists.<sup>2</sup> Immediately striking, for example, is the variance between the number of titles accepted by LMCLS and those selected by MMBSC. This difference is obviously due partly to the much more limited amount

of space in the book stores compared to the libraries and partly to the manner in which the books are released to the ultimate audience (in the library the same book will be circulated and returned while in the book store it will be removed permanently and replaced by another copy).

The difference in selection between the two outlets does not end with the number of titles bought, however. As might be predicted from previous discussions of these outlets, the selection differences reflect both differences in their organizations' requirements and the influence of their major client relationship. For example, the librarians' perceived organizational requirement to select non-fiction which, while also providing pleasure reading can help children with school assignments, accounts for the much higher percentage and variety of non-fiction titles selected by LMCLS than by MMBSC, where the adherence to the mass market perspective locks the buyer into a smaller spectrum of "proven areas" such as sports, monsters (dinosaurs in this case), magic, and automobiles. Of course, the impact of the client relationship upon both the librarians and the book store buyer can also be seen in their dependence on the choices which their market's suppliers publish for them. As has been seen, the library market client relationship encourages a proliferation of many more firms and, thus, a wider spectrum of choice (within the "good books" perspective) than does the mass market client relationship.

The two-directional influence of the client relationships with respect to outlets and production organizations also explains the small overall percentage of picture books found in LMCLS relative to MMCLS (even without paperbacks). It will be recalled that no negative feelings were exhibited by librarians with regard to such books; on the contrary, they (like the MMCLS buyer) welcomed them as most circulatable. However, the high costs of producing picture books (and the uncertainty of a particular titles' outlet acceptance) have brought many juvenile market publishers to take advantage of school and public libraries' acceptance of other types of books (particularly curriculum-oriented non-fiction which might also be bought by schools for classroom use) and reduce their production of the more expensive form. The mass market publishers, by contrast, have a much more captive market in their outlets and thus can more reliably predict and guide the success of their picture books. Consequently, the initial expense is a much smaller consideration to them and a much larger list of picture books and related formats can be produced.

Other variances between the two tables which have been seen to reflect different impacts of the client relationships and are not drastically distorted because of the absence of paperbacks are the higher prices, the much smaller percentage of anthropomorphic characters, and the smaller variety of formats for younger children in the titles selected by LMCLS. While these differences are sufficient to point to the differential influence of the client relationships, they cannot, of course, uncover the myriad incompatibilities in content

and production values which have kept the two segments separate. At various points in this work, examinations of the selection requirements and guidelines of interviewed selectors have contributed to the understanding of these incompatibilities. In the process, the crucial importance of the library market and mass market client relationships to the separation of the two segments and to the drastically different approaches towards "children's books" at both the production and distribution outlet levels has been seen.

#### Chapter Summary

Like Chapter 4, this chapter has been concerned with exploring the influence of the major client relationship upon the distribution outlet arena. In this case, two distribution outlet organizations were examined--a book store chain and a department store chain. As in Chapter 4, the client relationship, while not seen to dictate the primary organizational requirements which shape the primary selection requirements (a dynamic which was seen with regard to the focal publishing firms), could be seen to reinforce an approach that directs the buyers towards the fulfillment of those requirements in ways that tend to perpetuate the prevailing selection perspectives--and power--of the market's dominant firms.

Specifically with regard to the mass market client relationship, this dynamic was found to reinforce the mass market perspective--with its emphasis on "low cost" and "track record"--among the book buyers of the department and book store chains. That perspective, which actually represents the "path of least resistance" in view of the



virtual absence of advertising or promotion of juveniles and the dominance of the mass market firms, was seen to ramify to the guidelines of the buyers, to their audience images, and to the actual books which they selected. Different attitudes towards "innovations" on the part of the primary interviewees were traced to differences in their perceived organizational requirements.

The client relationship was seen to operate much more "effectively" in the mass market than the library market to the extent that the focal outlets in the former were almost fully dependent on many fewer firms (all of them from the mass market segment) for their new hardbacks. The dominance of the mass market juvenile suppliers was mitigated somewhat by the presence of paperbacks in the MMBSC stores, though the mass market perspective was seen to dominate even the selection of those books. A comparison of the new books which the book store chain accepted with those that the focal library system selected served to graphically illustrate that the differences in their client relationships, which were seen to bring the focal production organizations to produce different books, were also seen to separate the focal outlets with regard to the types of books they selected. The two-directional influence of the client relationships and their crucial significance to the spectrum of choice with regard to what are presented in libraries, book stores, and department stores as "children's books" was thus made quite clear.

End Notes

<sup>1</sup> Interestingly, MMCBD does offer some juvenile cooperative advertising money to outlets, but it is rarely used.

<sup>2</sup> Of course, here, too, the differences in seasons are being ignored. Knowledge of the organizations suggests that these differences are inconsequential for the purpose of this comparison.

## CHAPTER 8: A GENERAL SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

The two-directional impact of the client relationship which has been discussed in the preceding pages has only been observed with regard to the organizations that were scrutinized for this study. However, interviews with personnel from several mass market and library market firms have suggested quite strongly that the crucial, systemic influences that have been delineated in this dissertation can be seen in the other organizations within the segments as well. Moreover, it is possible that the production and distribution dynamics that have been seen to operate in both segments for this case study might be generalizable beyond children's book publishing to other mass media complexes.

The purpose of the present chapter is to facilitate the discussion and exploration of these possibilities by reflecting in a general manner on the results of this study. First, a general analytical framework will be presented to summarize--and explain-- the findings. Then, the utility of this framework for understanding and predicting the activity of mass media organizations will be suggested. Although some attention will be paid to the use of the notion of client relationship for research on mass media complexes

in general, the focus of the discussion will be on the particular implications of that notion for the production and distribution of children's books and, ultimately, for the children who read them.

#### The Client Relationship As A Communication System

Certain words which recur throughout this study--"two-directional," "systemic," "interaction"--point to the idea that the key to understanding the influence of the client relationship may lie in conceiving of it as a communication system involving the patron and media management organizations of a mass media complex. The function of such a communication system for each organization in the relationship is suggested by a prominent strain of writings on the sociology of work which stresses the importance of routinizing tasks within organizations to allow the control of work (Tuchman, 1971; March and Simon, 1958). Such routinization assumes--indeed requires--a certain minimum level of predictability with regard to aspects of the organizations' environment which are essential to the organization's success. Therefore, it can be seen that one important goal of an organization would be to achieve a predictability level with respect to its environment that would maximize the profitability of organizational routines. Such a goal, it can be suggested, would lead an organization to try to coordinate its activities with those of extra-organizational entities that are relevant to its success, while, at the same time, attempting to exert as much control as possible over the activities of those relevant organizations.

Although the routinization of activities by selectors has not been a major theme of this dissertation, the notion that they engage in relatively predictable patterns of operation has been implicit throughout. For example, the discussions of the book selection processes (and of the actual guidelines that are used when these processes are carried out) imply similar, systemic approaches to these activities by the members of each organization. Because many of the questions on book selection and other topics were designed to plumb the reasons behind the selectors' activities (in order to ascertain intra- and extra-organizational influences which shape them), the answers which the respondents gave might seem to reflect a very self-conscious approach to their responsibilities. However, it is likely that, in the normal course of carrying out their routinized activities, the selectors take those reasons for granted and concentrate, primarily, on getting their work done in the most efficient, effective way possible.

In view of the necessity for stable organizational operations, it is significant that the client relationship--and the production and distribution dynamics which characterize it--has been seen in this study as the primary factor in initially shaping and subsequently perpetuating the routinized activities of the patron and media management organizations in each segment. The crucial influence of the client relationship upon these processes can be seen to derive from the continuous patron-management interactions which are the manifestations of the relationship: Those interactions comprise a stable communication system through which the requirements and opportunities

of each member with regard to its opposite in the relationship can be perceived, conceptualized, and acted upon.

With respect to the shaping of organizational activities, the client relationship has been seen as the source of historical and functional explanations regarding the existence of particular structures and processes in the organizations that were examined. The two publishing firms' continual interactions with different client types and the consequent different conceptualizations of the client relationships by the two groups of publishing selectors have been seen to bring about different structures of decision-making; different processes of selecting the books to be published; different guidelines with regard to the selection of content characteristics; different images of the "people who read" the books; and different types of books which were actually published.

Such a ramified influence of the client relationship has not been seen in the distribution outlets, where fundamentally different perspectives on book selection have been observed as rooted in reward systems that preceded interactions with suppliers. However, the different client relationships have been noted to influence the adoption of procedures in each outlet which have solidified and operationalized these different perspectives. For example, the book review and selection process in LMCLS (the library system) has been seen to be influenced by the library market publishers' practice of sending the System Coordinating Office complimentary copies of new books. Similarly, a general acceptance by the

department and book store buyers of the dearth of children's book advertising to the public and of the notion that children's books should be thought of in terms of lines, not individual titles, has been traced to their constant interaction with representatives of mass market publishers over a long period of time.

The client relationship has also been seen to be the instrument through which the patron and media management organizations carry out the operations of coordination and control which, it has been suggested, are crucial to the successful perpetuation of routinized activities. These operations have been observed in attempts by the most important outlet selectors to collect feedback about the books which are to be published (to coordinate their buying plans with publishers' plans) and in their attempts to influence the direction of publication. While these activities have been most clearly seen among the library coordinators and the main book store buyer, even the department store buyer, who saw juvenile books as a fairly minor area of his work, was quite conscious that in following the "path of least resistance" and purchasing from only a few large mass market firms, he was helping to perpetuate the production of the types of books which were most useful to his store.

The intensity and breadth of the coordination and control operations have been seen as greater among the publishing firms than among the outlets. Not only are the publishing selectors much more concerned with receiving feedback about the predilections of their opposites in the client relationship, they were also more concerned

about using the client relationship to reinforce certain selection perspectives in the marketplace and to guide their opposites (the outlets) in certain directions with regard to children's literature. The difference in the intensity and breadth of the feedback and control operations on the parts of the patron and management organizations in both segments can be attributed to the extent to which the organizational types are of primary relevance to the survival of their opposites in the client relationship: While the solvency of the publishing firms in both segments is directly dependent upon the continued patronage of their clients, the solvency of those clients (the distribution outlets) is not directly dependent upon the publishing firms. The need of the publishers to maintain control over their outlets' selection perspectives can also be understood in view of the fact that their routinized processes and stable structures are based, to a much larger extent than those of the patrons, on the demands of their opposites in the client relationship. In other words, having organized their activities and power bases around the rules of that relationship, the producers are determined to maintain their power by maintaining those rules. The client relationship/communication system helps them achieve this aim.

#### On The General Significance of the Client Relationship

Throughout the preceding chapters, and in the brief review and interpretation of the findings that have just been presented, similar patterns of client relationship influence were seen with



regard to the production organizations that were examined in both segments, although the specific findings differed. In like manner, similar patterns of client relationship influence were seen among the mass market and library market distribution outlet organizations that were scrutinized. It has already been noted that these production and distribution dynamics, as well as the segment-specific influences that have been found, seem to be generalizable to other organizations within the segments.

A tentative claim of generalizability, of course, does not mean a claim of identical influence or activity. One important finding of this study is that the manner in which a firm responds to its client relationship is, in large part, determined by the manner in which the firm's principal selectors conceptualize that relationship. Difference perceptions of requirements and opportunities based upon different perceptions of organizational demands and, in the case of publishing selectors, marketplace characteristics will necessarily lead to somewhat different approaches to book selection. At the same time, this study's findings imply that a client relationship tends to structure certain boundaries of conceptualization beyond which a firm cannot succeed in its chosen marketplace. Thus, the findings suggest that a comparison of firms from the same segment that have different "personalities" would yield greater similarities in structure, process, and product than would a comparison of firms from different segments.

Generalizing beyond children's book publishing, it can be suggested that the perspective on client relationship that has been developed in this dissertation--along with a method for studying

it--might have applicability to research on many mass media complexes. The approach taken in the preceding chapters illustrates how it is possible to link three traditional levels of analysis regarding producers and distributors of mass media content and, in doing so, to yield more explanatory and predictive power than any level alone would have.

### Linking Three Levels of Analysis

Three levels of analysis--organizational, multi-organizational, and societal--have been used in the attempts of various researchers to come to grips with the forces that mold the production of mass media content. Each level has encompassed several methodologies and perspectives. The organizational frame--the most common--allows the scrutiny of the individuals who work within mass media organizations; studies in this area can range from a narrow focus upon one key individual (for example, White, 1950) to a broad focus upon the relationships that shape the routines of organization members who together produce the content (Cantor, 1971). A multi-organizational approach allows the researcher to step back from the particular operations within an individual organization to examine how different organizations or classes of organizations interact in the production of content. Analyses at this level have ranged from the setting forth of detailed semi-theoretical diagrams of the entities that operate within a mass media complex (DeFleur, 1966) to the investigation

of the impact of various conglomerates upon the flow of mass media content (Guback, 1974).

Research that takes place at the societal level attempts to step back even further than the multi-organizational frame and ask about the impact of political, economic, or cultural conditions in a society on its mass media. The diverse questions relating to this area might be directed at elucidating the forces which have led to the particular configurations of mass media complexes (Williams, 1975) or at determining the relationship between the societal forces and the content which mass media complexes produce (Lowenthal, 1944).

Research conducted from the standpoint of these three levels of analysis have yielded important and interesting findings regarding the specific questions that have been asked. Unfortunately, however, observations about particular media have often not been generalized into concepts and hypotheses which could be applied and tested with regard to other mass media. More distressingly, these levels of analysis have frequently been treated as disconnected.

This disconnectedness is particularly evident with regard to studies at the multi-organizational and organizational levels. Examinations of the relationships between mass media organizations have not attempted to investigate the consequences which the findings have for the particular structures and processes of the organizations under examination and for the particular content which is produced. Nor does research on the particularities of mass media organizations generally also include an attempt to explain the organizational activities in terms of broader, extra-organizational or historical,

dimensions. The difficulty seems to have been that none of the findings or concepts generated at the organizational level of analysis has been seen to be related to structure and process at the multi-organizational level, and visa versa. The discovery of such connections is necessary if a wholistic understanding of the relationship between a society, the operation of its mass media complexes and organizations, and the production and distribution of particular content is to be achieved.

The supra-organizational concept of client relationship is useful in this connection, since it specifically focuses attention not just upon the activities which to organizations perform with respect to one another, but upon the consequences which the activities of one has for those of the other. An analysis of mass media complexes guided by the concept of client relationship could certainly deal with the interactions of organizations (or classes of organizations) on the molar level, without investigating the inner-workings of those organizations. However, the concept does, almost by its very nature, point to a fundamental question which bridges the multi-organizational and organizational levels of analysis: Does the dynamic interaction which has evolved between patron and management organizations within a mass media complex and has brought about the continual impinging of one type of organization on the other have any influences upon the structures and processes of those organizations and, by extension, upon the content which is ultimately selected?

The research presented in this volume has shown that it does, at least with respect to the comparative case study of two segments of the children's book industry which has been performed. Moreover, the findings regarding those two levels have been linked (though very briefly and only suggestively) to the societal frame of analysis by an outline of the historical evolution of the focal relationships from the standpoint of the publishing industry and the world around it. The clear importance of the historical examination to understanding the present-day operation of the mass market and library market segments, together with the elegant and consistent dynamics which have been found in both segments to describe and explain their internal operations and their interactions with other organizations, point to the utility of using the concept of client relationship as a guide for the investigation of other mass media complexes.

#### Dealing With "Audience" As A Reflection Of The Client Relationship

The examination of library market and mass market client relationships has also cast new light upon the approaches of focal selectors towards their purported audience, children. This research tends to support previous conclusions that factors other than the ultimate audience are more immediately salient to people who select mass media content, though impressions of the audience do play a significant role--and not always merely a background role (as those conclusions often imply). However, the findings of this study go beyond the others in revealing that the audience impressions which

the selectors maintained were, to a large degree, actually transformed reflections of the spectra of choice they helped establish and, at root, of their publishing perspectives. These perspectives were found to be shaped by perceptions of organizational demands and opportunities which, in turn, were observed to have been structured and/or reinforced by major client relationships. Not only were such reflections seen with regard to the publishing firms and mass market outlets (management and patron organizations where selectors admitted to having very little, if any, information about their readers), they were also noted in the focal library system (a patron organization where selectors were seen to have first-hand information about the children). It is true that judgements of "popularity (by what sells and circulates) were seen to be important among all the selectors as indicators of "what the audience wants." However, such judgements were observed to be determined within the confines of spectra of choice created because of already existing audience images.

These observations regarding the audience highlight its abstract nature of the word as it refers to groups who are ultimate targets of messages. In theory, there is an infinite number of ways to look at the people who come into contact with mass media content; in this sense, there is an infinite number of audiences. Unfortunately, most writers on mass media organizations have tended to reify the concept of audience, to accept demographic or other data presented by those organizations as actually referring to "the audience" for that mass medium.<sup>1</sup> The suggestions here is that "audience" is a useful construct

and should be viewed as such. Moreover, it is suggested that the audiences which are "constructed" (that is, the audience categories that are focused upon) by selectors within mass media patron and management organizations are influenced by the reward systems under which the patron selectors operate, are ascertained and adopted by management selectors who want to be subsidized by those patrons, and are perpetuated by both sides of the client relationship because of compatible--though not congruent--interests.

#### Suggestions For Further Research and Analysis

The preceding paragraphs imply several avenues for further research. Additional studies of the children's book industry to determine the generalizability of the present findings, both with regard to the segments studied and with regard to the book club segments, are needed. In addition, exploration of the consequences of supra-organizational relationships ("client" or otherwise) for other mass media complexes is a basic and wide-ranging task. The goal should be to ascertain if any principles can be formulated which will explain and predict the relationship between a society, the structure and operation of the organizations within a mass media complex, and the production and distribution of particular content.<sup>2</sup>

#### Examining Pressures For Stability and Change

##### In Children's Book Publishing

One example of a prediction that can be made from studies of supra-organizational relationships can be derived from the present study. It is interesting to speculate what would occur if publishers

from one of the segments that were studied tried to expand into the outlets of the other segment. Such speculation is not idle, since the precipitous loss of funds among many school and public libraries during the early 1970's has led to suggestions by editors that library market publishing firms lessen their dependence on libraries by increasing their attention to book stores (see Publisher's Weekly, February 24, 1975, p. 63). The analysis presented in this volume would suggest that any such cross-overs of new titles could only be realistically attempted by large firms which have functioning "trade" sales apparatuses that could help their juvenile imprints make the transition from one promotional environment to another. Even in such cases, however, the often incompatible differences between the mass market and library market perspectives on children's books would seem to dictate major changes in the types of books produced and, ultimately, in the manner in which they are produced. LMCBD's relatively standardized production of easy readers, while still a fairly peripheral activity for the Division, is one example of the shift in organizational perspective which even a minor orientation towards the mass market will yield. The increased compartmentalization of book selection activities in MMCBD as it veered more consciously towards the mass market a half-decade ago is a further illustration that the decision to follow the orientation of another market place has ramifications for the entire production organization, ramifications which might yield books that are incompatible with the previously held perspective.



Of course, another way to approach the problem might be to try to persuade the mass market outlets, particularly the book stores, to adopt a library market perspective. Again, however, because the espousal of this viewpoint has ramifications for an entire range of organizational activities, it would probably not be implemented, especially in view of the efficient and profitable nature of the dominant mass market client relationship. A juvenile buyer from a large book store chain (other than MMBSC) did, in fact, dismiss the suggestion that his firm train clerks to, in effect, act as librarians and introduce children and their parents to unfamiliar library market titles, characters, and authors by saying that his firm pays clerks so little, and the turnover is so high, that it could not afford such specialized personnel.

One way in which library market publishers might make their new titles more desirable to book stores would be to advertise and promote them as they do their adult books so that they would, in effect, be "pre-sold" to parents and children walking through the store. When asked about this possibility, interviewees from the library market claimed a lack of funds to adequately publicize such titles and a bias of the popular reviewing channels against children's books that would take much effort to overcome. To simply exhort people to buy "children's books," they noted, would only help the books already in the stores. These observations about the client relationship lead, then, to the conclusion that the separation between the two segments with regard to new titles (and most old ones, despite the increased sales of paperback reprints in the mass market) is bound to continue.

Linking Research On Mass Media Complexes  
To Research On Effects

It is important to note that the discussion thus far has not concerned itself with the desirability of a separation or a mixing of the two segments. Indeed, the question of the consequences which books produced in the mass market and those produced in the library market have for the children who read them has not been broached.

"Consequences" in this case can be understood to cover a wide range of effects upon children who read the books--concept and vocabulary learning; expansion (or diminition) of aesthetic sensibility and creativity; broadening (or narrowing) of world view and critical faculties; increasing (or decreasing) eagerness to read; and more. In addition, the fact that library market books are most often borrowed by or for the child while mass market books are most often bought raises the question of the psychological benefits of book possession as opposed to book borrowing--and the difference, if any, that mass market and library market books make in this regard.

These questions are not, of course, within the purview of the present study. However, they can be seen as closely complementing the theoretical and practical findings of this work, since knowledge about the structure and operation of the complex which produces children's books can be joined to conclusions about the relative merit and desirability of different kinds of juveniles to yield a more thorough understanding of the forces which influence young readers. Unfortunately, much of the writing on children's books and

children's book publishing lacks a critical perspective which will allow the discussion of this issue on a plane that is removed from the biases of the library market. Disagreements usually revolve around issues (such as censorship) that do not challenge the fundamental assumptions of selectors. Many of the articles are quite self-congratulatory in tone and imply that the sole goal--and ultimate influence--of all those connected with the production and distribution of juveniles is to create a reading environment for the child which will be the source of "everlasting growth, wonder, and delight" (Gross, 1967, p. 21).

It is hoped that by challenging this implication, the present study will aid in de-mystifying general conceptions about the publication and distribution of children's books in both the library market and mass market. With de-mystification can come more critical and novel questions, controversy, and--hopefully--an intensive public interest in the subject of juveniles. Public debate on children's books, stimulated by research on the organizations that produce them and the consequences they have for children, can lead to new insights and sophisticated blueprints for constructive change.

The research approach which has been suggested--attempting to combine findings about the consequences of mass media content with theoretically-based understanding of the forces which operate to produce that content--should actually be carried out with regard to the entire spectrum of mass media that people encounter in their daily activities. The task will doubtless be a long and difficult one; in

many cases, new research techniques will have to be devised. However, it is only through a multi-faceted, broadly creative approach to mass media research that a society can ever hope to obtain the ability to knowledgably assess the factors that shape--and the messages that comprise--a large part of its symbolic environment.

End Notes

<sup>1</sup>See, for example, McQuail's (1969) review of this area. McQuail's suggestions about the consequences that a lack of information about "the audience" has for the approach of BBC selectors to their work parallel some of the findings of the present study. However, he attributes those attitudes simply to the difficulties confronted by members of a mass media organization in "knowing" their audience. Because he reifies the concept, he does not consider that the implicit audience images which are revealed in the BBC approach to programming might reflect objectives which have evolved through and are reinforced by intra- and extra-organizational considerations. Nor, for the same reason, does he predict that any audience that the selectors might try to "ascertain" would probably also reflect those objectives.

<sup>2</sup>It should be noted that while the patron organizations were the same as the outlet organizations in the present study, this identity does not hold in every mass media complex. In the American commercial broadcasting system, for example, advertisers are the patrons, while broadcasting organizations which hold transmitting licenses are the outlets, and "networks" are often management organizations. It might be predicted, however, that despite the differences in specific organizational details with regard to the impact of client relationship forces upon outlet and non-outlet patrons, the same client relationship dynamic that has been seen in the case of this study's patrons will be observed in the cases of all patrons. The fact that American commercial broadcasting networks frequently "farm out" the production of material to other production organizations (and, in essence, become patrons of that management group with funds in essence, become patrons of that management group with funds secured from the advertiser patron group) raises the notion that even so-called primary patrons (such as the library and book store chain) have patrons (the city and state, the banks) which might have consequences for their structures and operations. This area, too, is profitable for investigation.

## APPENDIX A:

## The Interview Schedules

Interview Schedule for Librarians

## PART I:

1. Would you please describe briefly the activities you perform in your position of \_\_\_\_\_?
2. What objectives do you have in that position?

## PART II:

1. In studying the selection of the books for [LMCLS], I have observed that there are two stages of book selection--the selection of books by the [SCO] Book Selection Committee and the selection of books for each particular branch by the branch's librarian. Right now, I'd like you to think about your reviewing of books for [SCO] or your serving on the monthly SCO Book Selection Committee. [The following questions are asked with regard to each of the 19 book selection characteristics listed below. Question A is asked with regard to characteristics 1-5; A' is asked with regard to the rest.]

A) How influential (very, somewhat, not) are you in decisions regarding \_\_\_\_\_ at the [SCO] level? In what ways?

A') How influential (very, somewhat, not) are you in decisions regarding whether \_\_\_\_\_ is appropriate for acceptance at the OWC level? In what ways?

B) How important is \_\_\_\_\_ to your thinking when you make decisions regarding book selection at the [SCO] level?

C) What general ideas and guidelines do you have with regard to \_\_\_\_\_? Why do you have these guidelines?

The characteristics:

- 1-The size of the selection list.
- 2-The relative selection of fiction and nonfiction titles.
- 3-The relative selection of fantasy and reality titles.
- 4-The relative selection of books for "general" audiences vs. titles for particular particular ethnic and/or racial groups.
- 5-The relative selection of books for different ages and/or grades.
- 6-The author and illustrator.
- 7-The subject of the book.
- 8-The plot.
- 9-The illustrations.
- 10-The characters and the way they are portrayed (racial mix; animals vs. people; sexual mix).
- 11-The moral point of view.
- 12-The style (poetry vs. prose; first or third person narration; use of curse words; vocabulary difficulty control).
- 13-The accuracy.
- 14-The size of the book (dimensions; length).
- 15-The binding of the book.
- 16-The cover art of the book.
- 17-The overall design (typography; margin sizes; frontpiece design; quality of paper).
- 18-The price.
- 19-The paperback format.

2. Now I'd like to turn to the particular selection that you do for your branch. [The following questions are asked with regard to each of the above-listed book selection characteristics. Question A is asked with regard to elements 1-5; A' will be asked for the rest.]

A) How influential are you (very, somewhat, not) in decisions regarding \_\_\_\_\_ at your branch? In what ways?

A') How influential (very, somewhat, not) are you in decisions regarding whether \_\_\_\_\_ is appropriate for acceptance at your branch? In what ways?

B) How important is \_\_\_\_\_ to your thinking when you make decisions regarding book selection for your branch?

C) What general ideas and guidelines do you have with regard to \_\_\_\_\_? Why do you have these guidelines?

3. Have there been any controversial issues regarding children's books that have affected you and your work during the past year?
4. Do you have any image in your mind of the people who read your books? How did you arrive at this image? [This question, though logically belonging to Part II, was actually asked after Part III, because it fit better into the flow questioning.]

#### PART III:

1. Are there any types of books which you feel librarians want but which are not being published? If yes, what types?
2. Are there any books or types of books which have not been accepted by [LMCLS] but which you wish would be accepted? Please explain.
3. How important (very, somewhat, not) are your contacts with representatives from the publishing industry? Why? Please describe the nature of these contacts.

#### PART IV:

I'd like to finish with just a few background questions:

1. What is your librarian rank?
2. How many years have you worked for LMCLS?
3. What did you do before than?
4. What was your most recent degree?
5. What was your undergraduate college
6. Do you belong to any professional associations? (If yes) which?
7. Did you attend any conferences or book fairs during the past year? (If yes) How many?

Thank you very much.



## General Interview Schedule

### PART I:

1. Would you please describe briefly the activities you perform in your position of \_\_\_\_\_?
2. What objectives do you have in that position?

### PART II:

1. I would like to ask you some questions regarding your role in the actual selection of [name of firm's] juvenile books: [The following questions are asked with regard to each of the 20 book selection characteristics listed below. Question A is asked with regard to characteristics 1-5; A' is asked with regard to the rest.]

A) How influential (very, somewhat, not) are you in decisions regarding \_\_\_\_\_? In what ways?

A') How influential (very, somewhat, not) are you in decisions regarding whether \_\_\_\_\_ is appropriate for acceptance?

B) How important is \_\_\_\_\_ to your thinking when you make decisions regarding book selection?

C) What general ideas and guidelines do you have with regard to \_\_\_\_\_? Why do you have these guidelines?

### The characteristics:

- 1-The size of the juvenile list.
- 2-The relative selection of fiction and non-fiction titles.
- 3-The relative selection of fantasy and reality titles.
- 4-The relative selection of books for "general" audiences vs. titles for particular ethnic and/or radical groups.
- 5-The relative selection of books for different ages and/or grades.

- 6-The author and illustrator (how chosen).
- 7-The subject of the book.
- 8-The plot.
- 9-The illustrations.
- 10-The characters and the way they are portrayed (racial mix; animals vs. people; sexual mix).
- 11-The moral point of view.
- 12-The style (poetry vs. prose; first or third person narration; use of curse words; vocabulary difficulty control).
- 13-The accuracy.
- 14-The size of the book (dimensions; length).
- 15-The binding of the book.
- 16-The cover art of the book.
- 17-The overall design (typography; margin sizes; frontpiece design; quality of paper).
- 18-The price.
- 19-Subsidiary rights possibilities [only asked of publishing selectors].
- 20-Paperback format.

2. Have there been any controversial issues regarding children's books that have affected you and your work during the past year?

3. Do you have any image in your mind of the people who read your books? How did you arrive at this image? [This question, though logically belonging to Part II, was actually asked after Part III because it fit better into the flow of questioning.]

### PART III

1a. [Asked of publishing selectors] Do you feel there are any types of children's books which your outlets would like but which aren't being published? (If yes) What are they?

1b. [Asked of outlet selectors] Do you feel there are any types of books which you would like your outlet to carry but which aren't being published? (If yes) What are they?

2. Are there any books which have not been selected by [name of selector's organization] but which you wish would be accepted? (If yes) Which ones? Why?

3a. [Asked of publishing selectors] How important (very, somewhat, not) are the contacts with representatives from the outlets that buy your books? Why? Please describe the nature of these contacts.

3b. [Asked of outlet selectors] How important (very, somewhat, not) are your contacts with representatives from the publishing industry? Why? Please describe the nature of these contacts.

#### PART IV:

I'd like to finish with just a few background questions:

1. How many years have you worked for \_\_\_\_\_?
2. What was your previous job?
3. What was your most recent degree?
4. What was your undergraduate college major?
5. Do you belong to any professional associations? (If yes) Which?
6. Did you attend any conferences or book fairs during the past year? (If yes) How many?

Thank you very much.

## APPENDIX B:

## Survey Questionnaire

Note: This questionnaire has been re-typed to block out the actual names of the city and organizations that were focused upon in this study.

Questionnaire for Librarians

## PART I -

In studying the selection of books for [LMCLS], I have observed that there are two stages of book selection--the selection of books by the [System Coordinating Office (SCO)] Book Selection Committee and the selection of books for each particular branch by the branch's librarian. Most librarians are involved in both stages of selection.

The following is a list of people, groups, facts, and feelings which may or may not influence your thinking when you review books for [SCO] or when you select books for your branch. I would like you to compare the influence of each of these factors on your decisions to accept or reject books for [SCO] (as limited or general) and on your thinking about what books to buy or not to buy for your branch. Is the factor usually very important (VI), somewhat important (SI), or not important (NI) for each level of selection? Please circle the appropriate choices. For example, if the total book-buying budget of [LMCLS] is not important to your thinking about acceptance or rejection when you review for [SCO] or when you purchase books for your branch, circle "NI" under both the [SCO] LEVEL column and the BRANCH LEVEL column. If you feel otherwise, please circle the choice most appropriate for the [SCO] level and the choice most appropriate for the branch level.

	SCO LEVEL			BRANCH LEVEL		
1. The total book-buying budget of [LMCLS]	VI	SI	NI	VI	SI	NI
2. Your branch's book-buying budget	VI	SI	NI	VI	SI	NI
3. The opinions of [SCO] librarians who read the book	VI	SI	NI	VI	SI	NI
4. The <u>Kirkus</u> review of the book	VI	SI	NI	VI	SI	NI
5. <u>Reviews</u> of the book in professional review media other than <u>Kirkus</u>	VI	SI	NI	VI	SI	NI
6. Your opinion of the librarian who wrote the [SCO] review (applies to branch level only)	VI	SI	NI	VI	SI	NI

	SCO LEVEL			BRANCH LEVEL		
7. The reputation of the author	VI	SI	NI	VI	SI	NI
8. The reputation of the illustrator	VI	SI	NI	VI	SI	NI
9. The reputation of the book publishers	VI	SI	NI	VI	SI	NI
10. The Head of [SCO]	VI	SI	NI	VI	SI	NI
11. The Head of book selection at [SCO]	VI	SI	NI	VI	SI	NI
12. Your personal likes and dislikes	VI	SI	NI	VI	SI	NI
13. Your branch's current circulation figures	VI	SI	NI	VI	SI	NI
14. Your general philosophy about what children ought to read	VI	SI	NI	VI	SI	NI
15. Your general impressions about what [the city's] children like to read	VI	SI	NI	VI	SI	NI
16. Your general impressions about what children who come to your branch like to read	VI	SI	NI	VI	SI	NI
17. Ethnic and racial minorities from around the city	VI	SI	NI	VI	SI	NI
18. Ethnic and racial minorities from your branch area	VI	SI	NI	VI	SI	NI
19. Older children who are slow readers	VI	SI	NI	VI	SI	NI
20. Advanced readers	VI	SI	NI	VI	SI	NI
21. The potential popularity of the book in terms of circulation	VI	SI	NI	VI	SI	NI
22. The extent to which the book is of very high quality	VI	SI	NI	VI	SI	NI
23. The size of the month's selection list	VI	SI	NI	VI	SI	NI
24. The cost of the book	VI	SI	NI	VI	SI	NI
25. The extent to which the book will balance your collection	VI	SI	NI	VI	SI	NI
26. The moral point of view in the book	VI	SI	NI	VI	SI	NI
27. The library's trustees or directors	VI	SI	NI	VI	SI	NI
28. Parent-teacher organizations	VI	SI	NI	VI	SI	NI
29. Library science students who borrow books	VI	SI	NI	VI	SI	NI
30. Parents who borrow books	VI	SI	NI	VI	SI	NI
31. Teachers who borrow books	VI	SI	NI	VI	SI	NI
32. School assignments given to students	VI	SI	NI	VI	SI	NI
33. The books which school libraries carry	VI	SI	NI	VI	SI	NI
34. The potential use of the book in a book talk	VI	SI	NI	VI	SI	NI
35. The use of the book in a book fair	VI	SI	NI	VI	SI	NI

	SCO LEVEL			BRANCH LEVEL		
36. Potential complaints from parents	VI	SI	NI	VI	SI	NI
37. People or pressures from city or state government	VI	SI	NI	VI	SI	NI
38. Publishers' book fairs	VI	SI	NI	VI	SI	NI
39. Your training in library school	VI	SI	NI	VI	SI	NI
40. Promotional material from the publisher	VI	SI	NI	VI	SI	NI
41. Of all the factors which have been listed, which <u>one</u> do you think is most important to you when you are deciding whether to accept or reject a book for [SCO]?						
42. Of all the factors which have been listed, which <u>one</u> do you think is most important to you when you are deciding whether or not to buy a book for your branch?						

## PART II -

The questions in this section relate to the choosing of books for your branch and to some of the activities which go on in your branch.

- How would you compare your overall book-buying budget with those of other branches? a) Better than most b) The same as most c) Worse than most
- How would you describe the adequacy of your overall book-buying budget to cope with your needs in the branch? a) Better than adequate b) Adequate c) Less than adequate
- How often do you feel a conflict between the goal of maintaining a high quality and balanced collection and the goal of providing children with popular books which will constantly circulate? a) Often b) Sometimes c) Never
- If you did feel this conflict and you had to choose between one of the following ways of resolving it, which way would you prefer to choose? (please circle one)
  - A resolution fully on the side of providing popular books which will constantly circulate
  - A resolution fully on the side of a high quality, balanced collection
  - A compromise between the two goals, but leaning towards providing popular books which will constantly circulate
  - A compromise between the two goals, but leaning towards the side of a high quality and balanced collection
- If you did not have to report circulation statistics for your branch (but did have your current book-buying budget) do you think you would buy more "special" books--quality books with very small potential audience--than you do now? a) Yes b) No c) Not sure

6. How often do you not buy a book for your branch which you have recommended as "limited" for [SCO]? a) Very often b) Moderately often c) Once in a while d) Never
7. Do you personally wish you could have "Nancy Drew" books in your branch? a) Yes b) No
8. What age or ages are the children whose parents generally help them choose books in your branch? (please choose as many as apply)
  - a) Early age (3-5)
  - b) Young age (6-8)
  - c) Middle age (9-11)
  - d) Older age (over 11)
  - e) Few parents tend to help children choose
9. Do you think the children who borrow books from your branch comprise a high percentage, a medium percentage, or a low percentage of all the children in the branch area? a) High percentage b) Medium percentage c) Low percentage
10. Approximately what percentage of your daily time on the branch floor do you usually spend trying to encourage children to read certain books they might not pick up otherwise? a) Under 25% b) Between 25% and 50% c) Between 51% and 75% d) Over 75%
11. How much would you say the parents who come to your branch generally know about what books their children really like? a) A lot b) Something--but not much c) Very little

### PART III -

In this next-to-last section, I'd like to ask some questions about your contact with and feelings about the children's book publishing industry.

1. How important do you think [LMCLS] as a whole is in influencing the kinds of children's books which are published? a) Very important b) Somewhat important c) Not important
2. During the past year, have you ever written to or spoken to a children's book editor about the types of books you think need to be published? a) No, never b) Yes, once c) Yes, a few times d) Yes, often
3. During the past year, have you ever written to or spoken to an editor of a children's book publishing firm about your opinion of a book his/her company has published? a) No, never b) Yes, once c) Yes, a few times d) Yes, often
4. During the past year, have you ever spoken to a children's book salesperson? a) No, never b) Yes, once c) Yes, a few times d) Yes, often

5. The following is a list of children's book publishers. Please indicate whether, from your experience, you think that your chances of desiring a book by that publisher for your particular branch are good, fair, or slim. For example, if you think that the chances are good that you would want a book from Abington Press, circle the appropriate choice. [These are not necessarily the firms on the original questionnaire.]

a) Abington Press	Good	Fair	Slim
b) Atheneum	Good	Fair	Slim
c) Crewell	Good	Fair	Slim
d) Doubleday	Good	Fair	Slim
e) Farrar Strauss, and Girous	Good	Fair	Slim
f) Four Winds	Good	Fair	Slim
g) Golden Press	Good	Fair	Slim
h) Grosset and Dunlap	Good	Fair	Slim
i) Harper and Row	Good	Fair	Slim
j) Lippincott	Good	Fair	Slim
k) Macmillan	Good	Fair	Slim
l) Parents' Magazine Press	Good	Fair	Slim
m) Platt and Munk	Good	Fair	Slim
n) Rand McNally	Good	Fair	Slim
o) Random House	Good	Fair	Slim
p) Seabury	Good	Fair	Slim
q) Watts	Good	Fair	Slim

#### PART IV -

Some final "background" questions:

1. How long have you worked for [LMCLS]? \_\_\_\_\_
2. How long have you worked at your current branch? \_\_\_\_\_
3. What level of librarianship (rank) do you hold? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What did you do before starting to work for [LMCLS]? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What is your most recent educational degree? \_\_\_\_\_
6. What was your undergraduate major? \_\_\_\_\_
7. What term best describes the socioeconomic level of the area in which your branch is located? a) Upper class b) Middle class c) Lower class
8. How would you describe the reading abilities of most of your juvenile patrons compared to others in the city? a) Excellent b) Good c) Fair d) Poor
9. Did you attend any library conferences during the past year? a) Yes b) No If yes, how many? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Do you belong to any professional associations? a) Yes b) No If yes, which ones? \_\_\_\_\_



11. Please circle the age group into which you fall:  
a) Under 25 b) 25-35 c) 36-45 d) 46-55 e) 56-65  
f) Over 65
12. Do you consider yourself to be  
a) White b) Black c) Oriental d) (Some other; please  
specify) \_\_\_\_\_

THANK YOU VERY MUCH. I SINCERELY APPRECIATE YOUR HELP.