

Publishing and Culture

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Edited by

Dallas John Baker, Donna Lee Brien
and Jen Webb

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CHAPTER ONE

PUBLISHING AND CULTURE: AN INTRODUCTION

DALLAS JOHN BAKER, DONNA LEE BRIEN
AND JEN WEBB

What is Publishing Studies?

Publishing Studies is a discrete scholarly discipline focused on the culture, practice and business of publishing: the production, distribution, publication and reception of books, journals, magazines and other publications. The focus is not on the written word, as it is for those sibling disciplines, English Literature and Creative Writing, but on the various social, cultural and economic practices associated with the processes and products of publication.

Although publishing in one form or another is almost as old as human culture,¹ and although it has dealt with processes of standardisation since the fifteenth-century Gutenberg Revolution, both the nature of Publishing Studies and the methodologies it uses are still evolving.² To date, the focus of Publishing Studies has been on industry factors such as readerships, markets, work practices within the industry, the history of books and new technologies. These aspects of publishing are important, but recently Publishing Studies has evolved to embrace a wide range of other concerns, including the social and cultural aspects of publishing, and its place and value in communities as well as economies. Publishing Studies is now also

¹ According to Nicolas Barker, “there are more books surviving for every period of the world’s history than of all other objects put together” (Barker 1993, 179).

² Several key texts are useful references in approaching Publishing Studies. Examples include: John B. Thompson 2010; John Thompson 2005; Jacob Epstein 2002; Kelvin Smith 2012; Michael Bhaskar 2013; Giles Clark and Angus Phillips 2014.

exploring publishing as both a creative practice and a research activity. This new approach to publishing enables scholars to exploit creative practices, including publishing, in building new knowledge about a subject or activity, and in exploring how *making* can equal *knowing*. Publishing scholars who are also academics in universities have, in addition, begun to consider the pedagogy of publishing: how the subject area might best be taught, and what research methodologies might be best for tertiary study in publishing, at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

This volume touches on topics as diverse as the histories of specific aspects of publishing, the economy of publishing, associated legal domains, the affordances of contemporary technology, modes of publishing, book design, communities of interest and of practice, and both traditional and alternative publishing processes and practices. The aim of this book, as of Publishing Studies in general, is to explore and rethink publishing as a commercial and cultural practice, and as a field of study, an academic discipline. The sections of the book introduce, and reflect upon, the various themes and methodologies emerging in contemporary Publishing Studies, including its social and cultural significance, its histories, economic and theoretical contexts, and the professional and creative practices associated with this domain.

An outline of the history and processes of publishing

Publishing has been facing dramatic changes over recent decades, spurred on by globalisation and the digital revolution. Among the most significant transformations are: the democratisation of publishing through self-publishing; significantly expanded commentary on publishing through social media; the rise in the popularity of writers' festivals and events; the evolution of literary awards and prizes as public and media events; the emergence and rapid growth of online book review and fan communities; and increased polarisation of the book industry (see Sapiro 2010). The emergence of a whole culture of events, practices and processes around books and writing means that scholars of publishing need to understand it as a social and cultural practice as much as a business. For those in the industry the scope of the change can be described as occurring in three domains that have been undergoing simultaneous and ongoing transformation for a decade:

- the product—that is, the advent of e-books and other digital formats;
- the process—that is, the shift in publication workflow from a linear to a more dynamic and technology driven process;

- the business model—that is, changes in the relationships, sources of revenue, regulation, profit margins and the composition of those involved in the industry (Hewitt 2015, 2).

In attempting to understand these broad changes to publishing, Pamela Hewitt (2015, 2) suggests considering the following questions: “What’s the best way to understand and discuss such rapid and massive change? How can we keep track of the changes when they are happening on so many different fronts?” The premise of this book is that these questions are best answered by gaining a sense of how the processes and practices of publishing, and published materials themselves, are inflected by, impacted on, and reflected the culture in which they are produced and circulated. Though the publishing sector is becoming increasingly commercial, it has a long history of being directed to other ends—personal, social, cultural—and thus has always been “a part of exchange culture” (Webb 2009, 29) in the broadest sense. Consequently, for publishing studies, no matter whether a text is read on paper, a computer screen, a tablet or a smart phone, consideration of the social, cultural and economic context of the publication remains central.

What is publishing?

As Baker (2013, 1) notes, when

“we think about publishing, most of us think immediately of books, of objects made of paper with glossy covers. Then we might think about the various tasks publishers undertake to transform a raw manuscript into the beautiful and pleasurable tactile objects that we find on library or bookstore shelves, or on our eReaders”.

A purely functional definition of publishing would be that it is a process by which information, ideas and stories are made public, by packaging them as text and visuals in some kind of artefact or object such as a book, magazine, or electronic reading device (Davies and Balkwill 2011). The physical object, and the places associated with them such as libraries, universities and bookstores, “often give us a picture of publishing as an understandably, and even admirably, “bookish” profession” (Baker 2013, 2). Many see publishing as a quiet, reflective, creative and artisanal process (Baker 2013), and this picture is not altogether inaccurate. However, the contemporary publishing environment encompasses a range of tasks, skills and roles well beyond these more obvious, traditional ones. Indeed, a large number of the books produced today are composed of digital information and bytes, and

not of paper at all. Publishing, and the roles associated with it, have changed dramatically in the last decade or so (Davies and Balkwill 2011; Guthrie 2011; Epstein 2002).

Given these dramatic changes, it is worth asking a somewhat philosophical question: “What is publishing?” Over the past decade, answering this question has become more complex. The simplest possible definition of publishing is “making public”: that is, disseminating information to an audience. The *Macquarie Dictionary Online* (2013) states simply that publishing is:

1. to issue, or cause to be issued, in copies made by printing or other processes, for sale or distribution to the public, as a book, periodical, map, piece of music, engraving, or the like.
2. to issue to the public the works of (an author).

Professional publishing used to mean preparing printed material for sale, an activity largely carried out by publishing houses that chiefly sold books to bookstores and libraries (Hewitt 2015). This model is still the mainstay of the industry, and though it is rapidly changing to incorporate digital publishing and distribution, and the process of delivering words printed on a readable surface remains current (Hewitt 2015). Consequently, it is important to understand traditional publishing practices and processes because they represent the core of publishing production and distribution, even as it goes through a technology-driven metamorphosis. This volume therefore includes traditional terms, but those terms now often refer to a dramatically different context: namely, a publishing sector and book culture that is dynamic and technology-focused. In the collection of essays published in this volume, Nick Canty’s chapter sets out key principles of publishing in a digital age; Xiang Ren discusses the profound transformations in the Chinese publishing sector, with the rapid expansion of e-books and other digital formats; and Zoe Sadokierksi explores the question of book design in a post-codex context.

Art, science or business?

Davies and Balkwill (2011) pose the question “Is publishing an art or a science?” They outline the shifting perception of the publishing industry over the last half century or so, from one of the publishing industry as a “gentlemanly [sic] and leisurely affair, devoid of crude commerce, and a refuge for creative and sensitive people” to one of publishing as a business on a global scale (Davies and Balkwill 2011, 2). The definition of publishing

from the *Macquarie Dictionary Online*, quoted above, similarly does not really address what publishing *is* in a philosophical sense, which relates less to what publishing *does* (producing and disseminating ideas in print and online) and more to what publishing *means* to us, or how we might engage with publishing as a practice.

Discussions and debates about the ontology of publishing arises from the systemic changes that the industry is undergoing. Some of the more recent of these changes are driven by technological innovation (Davies and Balkwill 2011), particularly the advent of the Internet and the rise of the e-book. These technological innovations challenge the very nature of publishing as an industry that produces physical objects that are sold in stores (Hewitt 2015; Baker 2013). Other changes are social and economic in origin and have led to an industry that is simultaneously more diverse (there are many more publishers and only some of them fit the convention of middle-class white men) but also narrower in focus (profit is now often the primary goal of commercial publishing). Irrespective of the various changes that sparked this debate, the question of what publishing might be in the future is pertinent.

The changes outlined by Davies and Balkwill (2011), along with other shifts brought about by the globalisation of the book industry (Galliand 2011), have produced a publishing environment that has been described by some working in the field as in a state of decline, principally in terms of paper book sales (Nawotka 2013). Other industry commentators see these changes as a challenging situation that forces publishers to reinvent themselves in order to survive, often in ways that disadvantage writers (Brauck, Höbel and Voigt 2013). Other commentators, notably in academia, see these changes, particularly those driven by new technologies and the greater access to publishing processes that these technologies enable, as opportunities. Galliand (2011, 8), for instance, argues that:

The practice of reading, use of content, and finality of writing are all in a state of flux. The various media used for reading replicate and sometimes “distort” content to make it conform to their standards, but they can also give rise to original creations. The space and time given to books are shrinking; books are forced to compete with an increasingly-diverse supply of cultural products and social practices (e.g., social networks). There are without question fewer points of contact between consumers and books. Nonetheless, books seem to retain their symbolic weight and capacity to influence. They still represent the world of ideas—the public sphere. Now consumed on various media, books generate vast cultural universes that influence the collective imaginaries of entire generations on a global scale (think here of the Harry Potter saga)—which is a new phenomenon, perhaps the beginnings of a “global culture”.

The current state of flux of the publishing industry need not be interpreted as a totally negative situation, as is noted by a number of scholars (Hewitt 2015; Baker 2013). It is possible to discern in this situation a range of opportunities for smaller, non-corporate publishing entities whose focus is creative rather than financial (Baker 2013). Galliard's (2011) view of publishing suggests that, although usually seen as a business, can be approached as an art. This book approaches publishing in this way, as a communicative art that connects readers with writers. More to the point, the book frames publishing as a series of social and cultural practices. In this way, as creative writing academic Graeme Harper (2012) argues, publishing can be seen as a human-focused event. Tess Brady's chapter about the passion of a local community for book culture, Caren Florance's discussion about art, and Roanna Gonsalves' work on the cultural field of publishing in India, point out the gaps in the logic of publishing-as-industry, and reinforce understandings of its importance to culture and everyday life.

Even so, it is clear that publishing is an art that is often managed as a project and undertaken as a business (Baker 2013). Publishing requires a business-like approach to the various stages required to bring a raw manuscript to completion as a book. Part of this project management approach does include financial management and marketing, even if profit is not the end goal of the process (Baker 2013). Such issues are taken up by Paul Crosby and David Throsby in their chapter, which focuses on the Australian book industry; and Shane Strange discusses the role of small publishers especially for that most "uneconomic" mode of publishing—poetry.

What can publishing be for me?

How the publishing industry is conceived will inform how individuals and institutions engage with it, not only in terms of the kind of role they seek to play but also the end objectives of the whole process. Given that ideas about publishing inform the questions asked about publishing and how it is discussed, they will also inform the kinds of knowledge produced through analysis (Baker 2013). If publishing is conceived of purely as a business then, obviously, the questions asked and answered by those studying it will focus on its economic features. But if publishing is positioned as a communicative or language-based art, then analysis and discussion is likely to focus more on the social and cultural significance of publishing and its products in terms of how humans create, engage with, consume and understand books and other published materials, whether physical or digital

(Baker 2013). This is examined in chapters by Dallas John Baker and by Robin Freeman, who address the cultural aspects of publishing with particular reference to gendered identity and to editing of Aboriginal writing, respectively. It is also examined by Sharon Bickle, who traces the creative interaction between editor and text in her discussion of the “Michael Field” story; and by Emmett Stinson, who discusses the relationship between reviewer and text.

If a goal in learning about the publishing industry is to understand how and why certain texts—“blockbusters”—make huge profits, we might approach publishing from its position as a business and develop the appropriate questions and methodologies to answer those questions. But social and cultural factors are equally important in understanding why people buy books, and why they choose certain books in particular (Baker 2013). Two of the authors in this collection take up these questions, with Donna Lee Brien exploring truth and celebrity in contemporary publishing, and Shayla Olsen attending to fan culture and fan fiction writing and publishing.

Tracking changes: Recent events in publishing

According to Davies and Balkwill (2011, 23), in “less than 100 years publishing has changed from a craft industry led by individuals who owned their publishing houses and followed their interests and enthusiasms, to one now dominated by giant international publishing corporations”. This shift towards a corporate publishing model has had profound effects on every aspect of the book industry and book culture. Before examining this shift more closely, it is important to acknowledge a sense of the book history that preceded it.

Writing, and the production of books and other texts, has a very long history. The history of books covers more than five thousand years, but most of that history has little influence over modern publishing, and therefore our coverage of it will be brief. In this volume, Laurie Johnson tackles a specific aspect of book history: early/modern stationers, discussing an era of significant change in publishing models. But book history extends back to the ancient world, when writing was done on solid surfaces—clay tablets, stone—or more malleable materials—papyrus, bark, vellum (Webb 2009, 31). For most of that history, writing and publishing was the output of a single individual or small collective, but woodblock printing, developed before the Common Era, introduced a technical innovation between the author and the surface. The oldest extant printed book, and the first indication of printing produced for reading rather than for ritual or record-

keeping, is the Diamond Sutra, a woodblock-printed work which, according to its colophon, was completed in 868CE (Soeng Mu 2000). The quality of the printing in this work suggests to scholars that there was already a well-established production process in this mode, but only fragments of texts predate this script (Brokaw and Kornicki 2013, xxi).

What we now think of as the book came into being in the second century of the Common Era, with copies being made by hand; but, at least for scholars who adopt an expanded definition of the book, it begins very early in history. That history is traced in a number of key texts that record, analyse and discuss the making of documents, from the cuneiform texts of the Sumerians (around 3,500 BCE)—which was primarily a record of financial transactions (*ibid.*, 112), through the Egyptian hieroglyphic documents from c3,000BCE, to the Gutenberg revolution of 1450 that ushered in the modern age of publishing.³ Since then, the term publishing has come to encompass the production of printed materials such as fiction and non-fiction books, periodicals including popular and specialist magazines and scholarly journals, and also the issuing of literature and other works in digital form.

Arguably, the most significant influence on contemporary publishing has been the process of globalisation (Baker 2013). Globalisation is a term that has been in use for at least half a century, but the underlying concepts and impacts are much older than that. Initially it was a descriptor for the increasing economic and political networks that required nation-states and geographical regions to collaborate on (usually) trade and security. Subsequently, attention was directed to communication and cultural practices that were inflected by, or that served to shape, globalisation (Schirato and Webb 2003, 8). There remains disagreement among scholars as to whether it is a “real” effect and, if so, the scale of its reach and impact (Held and McGrew 2000, 2). There is also deep scepticism about the apparently positive aspects of globalisation, with scholars pointing to the associated employment shocks, ecological crises, and financial collapses, as well as the risks to national sovereignty (Beck 2015). But for governments, informational specialists, and financial and economic institutions, the networks afforded by digital technology, and the related radically increased speed of communication (Schroeder 2018), mean that it must be taken into account.

In terms of publishing, a very significant impact of globalisation is the problem of how to manage intellectual property (Forsyth 2017). Copyright and moral rights are governed by national legislation, but also involve

³ Useful accounts are found in: David Finkelstein and Alistair McCleery, eds. 2002; Solveig Robinson 2013; Nicolas Barker 1993; Robert Darnton 1982; Igor Kopytoff 1986.

international treaties and globally-oriented production practices, which is addressed in the chapter by Francina Cantatore, who traces the pattern of legal frameworks and legal decisions about publishing in the contemporary context. This congeries of law and practice also governs readers' access to published materials, since the books found at a local bookstore arrive there as a result of a complex system of relationships, legal and commercial contracts, and both linguistic and cultural factors that facilitate, or alternatively inhibit, exchanges between individuals and entities across the globe. Those involved include authors, literary agents, editors, book designers, translators, publishers, printers, reviewers, marketing specialists, distributors, wholesalers and then, finally, the retailers and buyers. It is quite common for a book to be written in one part of a country; represented by an agent living somewhere else in that country or in another country; edited by another person in yet another location; contracted by a publisher based in one or many locations; and then printed in one or several countries, possibly by a number of independent printers. Once printed, the book is then distributed by a series of separate companies, in various regions, that transport the books for sale to local retailers (many of which are national or multinational chains). This means that seemingly "free choice" reading habits are influenced by corporations and commercial networks that are located at a great distance from each other, and from readers.

Some in the publishing industry argue that globalisation has been a negative force that undermines the capacity of small, independent publishers to produce books of aesthetic value (to them) that can compete commercially in a globalised marketplace (Epstein 2002). Others argue that globalisation as a process brings people together, irrespective of what Australians refer to as "the tyranny of distance". When viewed from this perspective, globalisation can be considered a powerful initiator of positive cultural, social and economic exchange between individuals and nations (Galliand 2011). However, many scholars dispute this; for Zygmunt Bauman (1998, 2–3), "Globalization divides as much as it unites, it divides as it unites", and its effects mean that across all national and social categories, the condition is one of radical inequality. Inequalities are growing, with the gap between the wealthy and the poor—whether considered on an individual, community or national scale—expanding year by year (Held and McGrew 2007).

In the world of publishing, one negative effect of globalisation is that it has produced inequalities between large, multinational commercial publishers and small, local publishing houses with a more artisan-like approach (Baker 2013). Globalisation in publishing has also meant that the greatest number of books that are published in the West are written, and

produced in, a few English-speaking countries, mostly the United States and the United Kingdom (Bode 2012). It could be argued that the globalised publishing system is geared primarily to provide profit for corporations in the USA and Europe, rather than to contribute to local book cultures or to satisfy local writers or readers' needs (Baker 2013). This is indicative of one of the most significant changes to the publishing industry as a result of globalisation, which is outlined by Jen Webb and Paul Munden in their discussion of the global publishing industry and the responses some writers (particularly poets) have made in reaction, or resistance, to the business model that has resulted in the swallowing up of smaller independent publishing houses by large, multinational media corporations.

At this point, the greater majority of all publishing activity in the world is controlled by just five or so multinational corporations, which are major media companies whose core business is typically television and cinema, not books. The Australian publishing environment reflects this global trend. Recent statistics (Bode 2012) show that multinational publishers made up 74 per cent of all fiction publishing in Australia in the decade between 2000 and 2009. The trend towards multinationals has also swept through the retail book sector (Epstein 2002). As Epstein writes:

The retail market for books is now dominated by a few large bookstore chains whose high operating costs demand high rates of turnover and therefore a constant supply of best-sellers, an impossible goal but one to which publishers have become perforce committed (2002, 6).

The negative effects of this corporate publishing trend include the disappearance of small, independent publishing houses and bookstores; the flooding of the book market with books written by American or British writers; and an increasing difficulty for writers outside of the USA and Britain to find a publisher for their writing (Carter and Galligan cited in Bode 2012, 80). David Carter and Millicent Weber's chapter explores what this means for Australian fiction publishing, while Rosemary Williamson and Donna Brien turn their attention to magazine publishing in the contemporary environment.

To date, the internationalisation of the book industry has depressed the number of books available from outside the two dominant publishing nations (USA and UK), which could have occurred had publishing remained in the hands of smaller, more regionally-based publishing houses (Bode 2012). This is certainly true for Australian books. With the advent of the multinational publisher, it has become "harder in general for Australian books to find a major publisher" (Carter and Galligan cited in Bode 2012, 80). Even so, the digital publishing revolution has begun to make a positive

impact on the numbers of Australian books entering the market. But, as Marie Lebert (2009, 3) notes, the “book is no longer what it used to be”. The electronic book (or e-book) came into being in 1971 with the initiation of Project Gutenberg, an Internet-based digital library for books from the public domain (Lebert 2009, 3). Public domain books are those whose copyright has expired. The e-book has been called both the death knell of traditional publishing, because web-habituated readers increasingly want their books for little or no cost (Dionne 2011), and the saviour of independent publishing because technological change has made it possible for small presses to release work, secure global distribution and garner a worldwide audience.

The publishing industry’s response to the advent of the e-book was similar to its response to the Internet: a mixture of curiosity, reluctance and, in rare cases, passion (Lebert 2009, 3). Booksellers began online trading, often without regard to national borders, cautiously at first, merely selling hardcopy books for delivery to the buyer’s home (Baker 2013). The one concession retailers made to the opportunities opening up due to digital technologies was to provide excerpts of books on their websites (Lebert 2009, 3). Amazon was the first major online bookstore to wholeheartedly embrace the e-book and has come to be the most dominant force in the online retailing of books in digital format, controlling fifty-five per cent of the e-book market (Milliot 2013).

Publishers are now so routinely releasing e-book versions of their books that it is rare today for a book to be published solely as a hardcopy. The advantages of digital publishing to multinational publishing corporations are many, including: reduced production cost (no paper, typesetting or printing); rapid global distribution; no warehousing costs; and no need for physical stores or bookstore staff (Hewitt 2015; Baker 2013). The advantages on the editorial side of the publishing process are also significant, and include aspects such as the ease of indexing, making corrections and updating editions (Hewitt 2015). Another advantage is that e-books need never go out of “print” (Epstein 2002), making them almost “eternal”, which echoes Sherman Young’s argument about the “heavenly library”: a “searchable, downloadable, readable” collection of all books (Young 2007, 151), making communication and exchange of ideas, images and information available to all.

Despite these advantages, commercial publishing houses remain wary of the digital publishing of new, original writing, and most have not fully embraced it (Edidin 2013). This is probably because, as Hewitt (2015) argues, digital publication raises some difficult questions: how will publishers maintain profit margins in a digital environment, in which

readers expect inexpensive content? What is the role of the publisher in such an environment, in which printing and distribution have been jettisoned? One of the key challenges to traditional publishing that the digital revolution poses is the fact that, in a digital environment, writers (and their agents or managers) can cut out the publisher and sell directly to readers (Epstein 2002). This direct-selling model has already been embraced by a number of successful authors who have jettisoned their publishing contracts and embraced self-publishing (Epstein 2002). For instance, Stephen King has experimented with this model, offering his book *Riding the Bullet* (2000) directly to readers from his own website (Epstein 2002). This model of publishing must send a chill down the spine of corporate publishing CEOs, especially because it is a model supported by some of the major online retailers (such as Amazon) and is gaining momentum (Epstein 2002). It must be acknowledged, however, that authors such as King already have an established readership to which to sell. Attracting such readers and, thus, “breaking into” the (digital) market remains a challenge for new authors (Baker 2013). This is discussed further below.

Despite the death knell sounded by some industry commentators, the e-book has not brought traditional publishing to its knees. As John Thompson argues, “few industries have had their death foretold more frequently than the book publishing industry, and yet somehow, miraculously, it seems to have survived them all—at least till now” (2010, vi). It is indisputable, however, that the e-book has contributed to a general decline of hardcopy book sales in the commercial publishing sector (Publishers Weekly 2012). The drop in commercial book sales aside, digital publishing offers many opportunities and benefits to book culture, mainly in the realm of independent, non-corporate publishing.

Self-publishing

Perhaps the most significant change to the publishing landscape as a result of technological change is the phenomenon of self-publishing (Baker 2013). The chapter by Nick Canty discusses this in the context of the digital revolution and democratisation. Books by self-published authors made up 7 per cent of all Australian novels published in the 1990s and 4 per cent of all those published in the 2000s (Bode 2012). Over the past few decades, a number of self-publishing commercial success stories have emerged, with some American self-published authors achieving sales in the millions, far outstripping the modest sales of many literary works published in the conventional way (Baker 2013). As an example, take the self-published books by Amanda Hocking (who writes in the teen paranormal romance

genre) which achieved sales exceeding 1.5 million in just eighteen months (Pilkington 2012). Sales like these totally eclipse those made by some esteemed literary figures over their entire careers.

One of the reasons behind the success of self-published books, especially e-books, is the marketing opportunities available as a result of the Internet, such as online writing and book communities including so-called “fan sites”, blogs, games and social media; as considered by Nick Earls in his chapter on non-print formats. Communication between readers and authors has become easier through email, online chat forums, blogs and social media networks (Lebert 2009), enabling self-published authors to create and/or connect with substantial online communities through which they distribute, market and promote their writing (Lebert 2009). If anything can be taken from the commercial success of self-published works, it is the importance of marketing to a book’s success in the digital age (Baker 2013).

An ongoing criticism of the self-publishing phenomenon is that it floods the market with low quality, poorly edited books (Taylor 2013). Although rarely supported with evidence, it can be argued that most traditionally published works undergo a more rigorous process on their way to publication than do many self-published works (Baker 2013). Even so, commercial publication—especially in the contemporary environment—does not necessarily guarantee quality, with some commercially published works poorly edited and containing spelling, syntactical and grammatical errors.

A persuasive counter-argument to the position that self-published works are of lesser quality than traditionally published ones is the simple fact that some of the greatest works in literature were self-published (Baker 2013). Charles Dickens published his novels chapter by chapter in his own magazine (Epstein 2002), Walt Whitman’s ground-breaking *Leaves of Grass* was self-published, and many (if not most) of Shakespeare’s plays were self-produced (Epstein 2002, 29). Other significant literary figures whose writing was self-published include Jane Austen, Emily Dickinson, Nathaniel Hawthorne and Marcel Proust (Baker 2013). This shows that self-publishing does not necessarily equate with careless publishing. Some highly regarded writers have left publishing houses to self-publish in order to regain greater creative and financial control, one such example being David Mamet (Taylor 2013). Many authors who choose to self-publish employ editors, proofreaders and book designers who are just as qualified as those working in corporate publishing houses. The one notable and somewhat irrefutable advantage that traditionally published books have over carefully self-published works is the considerable marketing power held by large multinational publishers (Davies and Balkwill 2011). This

advantage, though key to commercial success, has nothing to do with quality: a topic taken up by Le Lievre, in her chapter on peer review and editorial processes in the independent or self-publishing of academic monographs.

Conclusion

This book approaches publishing as a cultural practice, and as a communicative art, although recognising that this is an art that is often also a commercial undertaking. Publishing, despite usually being seen as a business, can be considered as a cultural practice in the same way that sport, food and music are cultural practices. Publishing is in a state of flux. Technological change means that people can decide for themselves how to engage with book culture and often can do so without publishing houses acting as intermediaries. This means that the role publishing plays in many people's lives is different from how it once was, and often now allows more direct participation. As a result, contemporary publishing is significantly more diverse and a much more fertile field of research focussed on mapping these changes and their influences.

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CHAPTER TWO

PUBLISHING AND TRUTH
IN THE 21ST CENTURY:
TRUTHINESS AND CELEBRITY PUBLISHING

DONNA LEE BRIEN

Introduction

Although truth and falsity have been issues of contention and debate in relation to publication for as long as written works have been circulated, discussions about postmodernist relativity together with a series of high-profile deceptions and hoaxes in the later decades of the twentieth century and early years of the new millennium ushered in new waves of anxiety around the idea of “truth” in publication. The most prominent of these include Misha Defonseca’s *Misha: A Mémoire of the Holocaust Years* (1997), James Frey’s *A Million Little Pieces* (2003) and Margaret B. Jones’s *Love and Consequences: A Memoir of Hope and Survival* (2008), all of which were published as non-fiction, but found to be exaggerated or wholly fabricated. The revelations that what were published as “true stories” were, instead, fraudulent, underscored the wide understanding of the “pact” that exists between a published author and his or her readers—and upon which the reputation of publishers, and publishing as an institution, is largely built. Recent descriptions of this pact—that the author of a published work was who they purported to be and, when writing non-fiction, that such authors would be “telling the truth” in their narratives to the best of their abilities (Brien 2002, 2004, 2006, 2009)—are based on Philippe Lejeune’s similarly described and enduringly influential “autobiographical pact” (1975). For instance, Geoff Dyer, author of a 1997 speculative biography of D. H. Lawrence, stated:

Each time a writer begins a book they make a contract with the reader ... A contract for a work of non-fiction is ... precise ... The writer says, I am telling you, and to the best of my ability, what I believe to be true. This is a

contract that should not be broken lightly ... Break the contract and readers no longer know who to trust (2015, online).

This suggests that this sentiment is enduring. However, other developments have added to this discussion. American humorist Stephen Colbert's 2005 re-coining of the nineteenth-century word "truthiness", which had originally been used to denote "truthfulness", to signify how something could "seem" or be "felt" to be true, even if was clearly not so, and despite contradictory relevant evidence, facts or the use of logic (Rogak 2011), encapsulates a new complexity around truth in twenty-first century publishing. The most extreme aspects of this are perhaps best signified by the phenomena of falsehoods being purposely posted on the Internet, and then repeatedly republished, to both attract and misinform readers.

Truth in publishing

As noted by Dyer above, truth in publishing is related to the sense of trust readers, as consumers, have in the products of the publishing industry. Debate about whether literature can, or should, represent life in any "real" or "true" way have raged since the days of ancient Greece in the work of Plato and Aristotle, who raised arguments of whether literature is representative (Plato) or mimetic (Aristotle). This topic has been reprised through the ages until, in 1998, Fleming proposed that, the very:

Question of whether written works are true, false, or in between, as well as the question of what we should make of our answer to that question, are central to Western considerations of the arts (1998, 334).

Influentially, post-structuralist and other prominent twentieth century literary theorists suggested that ideas of the "author" and any authority they held over the text's meaning once it is in the hands of readers were slippery, and even outmoded, ways of thinking. Yet, despite the wide adoption of many aspects of such theorisation, the concept of "truth" and its representation remains the subject of much deliberation.

Such discussion seems to become most inflamed when addressing the so-called "literature of fact"—non-fiction and its various sub-genres—where telling the "true" story of an actual event or life remains the most widely accepted definition of what, as has been observed, one of the few literary forms which is defined by what it is not; that is, not fiction. Although, like Dyer, most non-fiction writers attest to following this definition, when questioned, most also acknowledge that they utilise various narrative strategies which could be described as "fictional" or "literary".

These stylistic approaches are not, however, usually seen to contradict, or conflict with, the “truth-telling” goals of non-fiction narratives. Their use, instead, recognises that all non-fiction narratives have to be rendered—that is, life has to be translated into text. This is vividly described in the important work of Hayden White on how reality is shaped in narrative (for example, 1980) and Natalie Zemon Davis’s work on crafting stories from historical records. About using French sixteenth century letters of remission, for instance, she noted that “the artifice of fiction did not necessarily lend falsity to an account; it might well bring verisimilitude or a moral truth” (1987, 4).

This issue has been much reprised in the following decades and has been at the forefront of discussions about the genre of creative nonfiction. Despite using literary devices (such as description, dialogue and the creation of a series of scenes), creative nonfiction is uncompromising when it comes to dealing with factual data and seeks to be both “scrupulously accurate” (Gutkind 1997, 15) and “verifiable” (Gutkind 1996, 16). To achieve this, the creative nonfiction writer must not falsify factual elements—names, dates, places, descriptions, quotations and so forth—and must, moreover, strive not to “misconstrue the inherent truth of the experience” (Gutkind 1997, 121) being narrated. This focus on not corrupting the factual truth of non-fiction narratives, however, also recognises the reality of interpretation. As biographer Michael Hicks stated in his study of Richard III:

Facts cannot lie, but they can be interpreted differently ... our facts do not come to us unvarnished, but are loaded, slanted, and embedded in narratives ... Almost every so-called fact comes with its accompanying bias. (1991, 69–70)

This neatly summarises this point, despite musings that:

In the twenty-first century, the boundaries dividing “fact” and “fiction” have become so blurry that new terms such as “fictional memoirs” and “non-fiction novels” are constantly being coined in order to define them (Nelson 2018, 48).

Readers of non-fiction engage with the work principally because they are seeking factual or other truths (Brien 2004). While not naïvely accepting everything the author presents on face value, or expecting a text to be a mirror image of reality, readers actively participate in this process of truth construction. Kendall L. Walton describes how such works communicate “*understanding* ... in a sense that goes beyond the acquiring of factual information, although the imaginative activities the work inspires in readers

also help to make the factual details of the historical events memorable [sic]" (1990, 93). Walton continues to describe how a reader's:

Imaginings may be enhanced by the knowledge that what he [sic] imagines is true, by his [sic] realization of the reality of the setting of a story and its characters and events (ibid., 93–4).

In the series of literary scandals that have erupted since the 1990s, the foundational issue is usually a clear question about an untruth being presented to readers: whether the author has transgressed the genre under which they have published their work; and presented fiction as non-fiction; and/or claimed an authenticity for the work due to an authorial identity which is later revealed to be feigned (Brien 2002, 2004, 2006, 2009). There are also cases where historians, scientists and journalists have been exposed for falsifying or inventing their data (Fritze 2009). As a result, recent discussions about truth in publishing revolve around expectations that, and how publishers ensure that non-fiction writing is based on, and represents, what has really happened, in terms of actual events and places, and real people, with an acknowledgment of the limitations of such representation including a recognition of the silences, contradictions and biases in the archives (Thomas, Fowler and Johnson 2017) and the vagaries of individual and collective memory (Radstone 2005).

The perception of a publisher's central role in accepting only quality manuscripts, editing and fact-checking those texts, and then deciding under which descriptor the resulting books will be published, puts the publisher or publishing house in the role of guarantor of the non-fiction text. In *Inside Book Publishing*, for instance, Giles Clark and Angus Phillips describe how publishers go well beyond the somewhat tautological dictionary definition of publish as "to make public" in terms of the practical function that printers fulfil of physically producing the work (2014, 1). Amidst this lengthy list of activities—from researching the market for a potential work to protecting the published item against various kinds of illegal reproduction—publishers, instead, in Clark and Phillips description, are involved in a range of activities that could be classed as quality assurance such as those that "add value to authors' works and protect the value of their copyrights ... commission authors ... [and] confer the authority of their brand on authors' works" (ibid., 1). Clark and Phillips indeed describe how a publisher also "assesses the quality of the author's work" (ibid., 2) and ensures that it appropriately fits into the genre under which it is published. This idea of publishers offering quality assurance underpins the assessment of "superior" and reputable publishing houses as compared to those of more dubious reputation, although time and cost restraints have led to a

recognition that “the public is probably less well served in terms of quality control than in decades past” (Horowitz and Curtin 2015, 311).

The Kardashians

Celebrity can be attributed to individuals through relationships (as happens with royalty or famous people’s family members) or earned via talent, accomplishment or behaviour (as with artists, film stars, musicians, sports people, other professionals such as high profile scientists and even criminals and other wrong-doers), but is most commonly today attributed via the media, as with reality television participants and many others (Driessens 2013; Giles 2000; Rojek 2012; Turner 2004, 2006). On celebrity via media prominence, Graeme Turner suggests that some celebrities “claim no special achievements other than the attraction of public attention” (2004, 3) or, as Laura Wright summarises, “for no apparent reason other than the fact that they are famous” (2015, 130). Olivier Driessens redefines such celebrity as a kind of capital, extending Bourdieu’s field theory and explaining “the convertibility of celebrity into other resources, such as economic ... capital” (2013, 543). In Driessen’s reconceptualisation, a celebrity’s capital or their “accumulated media visibility through recurrent media representations”, what can be summarised as their “recognizability [sic]” makes this a type of capital in itself and not a form of social or symbolic capital (ibid., 543). This is how the Kardashian family became celebrities. The first to attract public attention through media exposure was businessman and lawyer Robert Kardashian, who was highly visible as OJ Simpson’s friend and defense attorney during Simpson’s 1995 murder trial (Reed 2003). This was cemented by his daughter Kimberly (always now known as Kim), initially through her relationships with Paris Hilton and Nicole Ritchie and, then, due to the leaking to the media of a video of she and then-boyfriend, the entertainer Ray J, having sex (Halperin 2016, 124). Later that year, the reality television series *Keeping Up with the Kardashians* (Seacrest et al. 2007–current) premiered. The success of this series with viewers led to Kim, her sisters Kourtney and Khloé, and other members of the extended family (including half-sisters Kendall and Kylie Jenner, the result of mother Kris’ marriage to Olympian decathlete, Bruce Jenner) becoming celebrities. As a result, several spin-off series have been developed and launched (see, Seacrest et al. 2009–13, 2011–12a, 2011–12b, 2014). Both in acting roles and as herself, Kim especially has also appeared in other television shows and series and has had a number of cameo roles in feature films.

This screen visibility pales, however, in relation to the family’s, and especially Kim’s extensive online and social media presence, which

includes Kim's seemingly ever-growing numbers of followers on Instagram (114 million) and Twitter (58.5 million)—both of these figures as of August 2018. As a result of embedding endorsements in her seemingly personal postings, Kim has been cited as the world's most entrepreneurial celebrity endorser in terms of successfully generating advertising dollars from her endorsements of products and services (Evans 2016; Lueck 2015). She has been described in *Forbes* magazine's "2018 Celebrity 100 net worth" listing as having "monetized [sic] fame better than any other" celebrity, which lists her net worth as of July 2018 as US\$350 million (Greenburg and Robehmed 2018; Robehmed 2018). These Kardashian-endorsed products include "jewelry, shoes, candles, perfumes ... Sugar Factory candy stores, Nivea skin creams, self-tanning lotion, and diet products" (Guarisco 2016, 14). Products branded with the Kardashian name, which Kim and other family members also promote and endorse on social media, include the successful 2014 mobile game *Kim Kardashian: Hollywood*, the DASH chain of fashion boutiques, clothing, makeup and perfume lines, as well as workout DVDs—what Maria Guarisco describes as "a beauty empire" (2016, 14). As such, the Kardashians' most successful products are their own personal (and collective) brands.

Kardashian publishing

Analysing the above products and their marketing, Elizabeth Wissinger describes the Kardashian sisters as "glamour labourers" (2016). Guarisco, moreover, suggests that despite this focus on appearance—and which even includes the endorsement of a waist clincher (a modern corset)—the Kardashians are so successful in this branding because "they capitalize on the popularity of 'girl power' and ideas of the sisterhood" (2016, 14). A range of publications—most of which are described as non-fiction—that also bear the Kardashian and extended family members' names can also be read as part of this image generation. As the main purpose of this publication is as a form of merchandising, perpetrating the Kardashian and individual members' brands and their wide recognition as well as generating funds through sales, concepts of truth and verifiability become secondary to marketability.

Capitalising on their celebrity recognisability, a group memoir, *Kardashian Confidential*, was published in 2010 under the authorship of Kim, Kourtney and Khloé Kardashian. Reflecting their popularity with girls and young women, this copiously illustrated, full colour volume was presented in the style of a scrapbook, with short passages of excitedly-written memoir illustrated with many photographs of the family, images of memorabilia and

reproductions of handwritten notes, letters and cards, as well as beauty and style tips and a series of “Kardashianary definitions” of words and phrases with their own family meanings. The volume focuses on the sisters’ relationships, with chapters on “Family feuds” and “How to generate girl power” through their support of each other. Popular with fans, this volume rapidly reached *New York Times* bestseller status, although more critical reader and media reviews noted that there was little in this volume not already available in the public domain. The next year, sales justified the release of a new edition of this volume.

That year, another major publication was released under the Kardashian brand; the novel *Dollhouse* (2011), which became another *New York Times* best seller. Published under the names of Kourtney, Kim and Khloé Kardashian, as fiction, this narrative has a plot and content that nevertheless closely corresponds to the authors’ lives, including its three main characters’ names beginning with the letter K. Reviewers noted that this text “mined the raw material of the[ir] tabloid existence” for content, that “the novelised Kardashians mostly do the type of things the television Kardashians do” (Moynihan 2013). In an interview upon the book’s publication, Kim confirmed the autobiographical underpinning of the novel, noting that it contained “juicy nuggets of truth ... real-life stories” but adding that some of these were previously unknown (PageSix.com Staff 2011). Although comments such as the sisters were “sharing stories from our real lives” (Kim Kardashian quoted in PageSix.com Staff 2011) in the volume, strongly suggested that they wrote the book. Most commentary on the book, including online reader reviews, noted the involvement of a ghostwriter. Nancy Ohlin, a published author who had “contributed to” several celebrity novels, including *New York Times* bestselling fiction for young adults (Ohlin 2018). Ohlin was credited as a collaborator on this book, and was noted by a number of *Goodreads*’ reviewers to have written it. While some critics charged that such authors and their publishers are “manipulative and cynical” (McDonald 2014), others noted that the use of ghostwriters for celebrity memoirs and novels was “an accepted practice and open secret” (McDonald 2014), and even estimated that at least fifty per cent of traditionally published American books use a ghostwriter (Suzanne 2001). One commentator even marked the difference between “real reality [such as some of the people posting YouTube videos] and fake reality [reality television]” (McDonald 2014), with the suggestion that few were disappointed that the Kardashians used ghostwriters as everyone expected they did (McDonald 2014). Kim Kardashian commented on what she saw as the fluidity between notions of truth and invention in this novel, in that

she and her sisters “wanted to write a novel that would keep people guessing what’s real and what’s not real” (PageSix.com Staff 2011).

At this time, “momager” Kris Jenner also published a memoir, another volume that promised that it would provide previously unknown material. *Kris Jenner: and All Things Kardashian* (2011) was promoted as a “revealing personal story”. Although the memoir does include considerable material on Kris’s early life, her friendship with Nicole Brown Simpson and the trial after her murder, reviewers noted that the book only included a limited number of previously unknown facts (Bruce 2011).

In 2014, a photographic book of Kim Kardashian selfies and other photos, *Selfish*, was published. In 2016, a new edition, *Selfish: More Me!: With New-Selfies 2015–2016* (with Kim now going by the name of Kardashian-West), with sixty-four new pages, was released. While a number of writers outline how what can be described as “selfie culture” raises “a host of concerns about identity, privacy, security, and surveillance” (Iqani and Schroeder 2016, 405) including making “the self into an object of public concern” (Giroux 2016, 64), more in line with this discussion is the way the celebrity selfie, in Anne Jerslev and Mette Mortensen’s view, “merges intimacy, access and authenticity with promotion and branding” (2016, 249). In this way, while these largely self-promotional images, many of which also endorse products, can be accessed online for free, compiling a book of them allows audiences to pay further to be exposed to this marketing. In a similar way, after following a weight loss and fitness regime, Khloé Kardashian published a book about this experience, *Strong Looks Better Naked* (2015), which has obvious tie-ins to many of the other products promoted by the Kardashians. Although claiming writing credit for the book, Khloé also admitted that “I had a ghostwriter that was helping me”, adding “you can tell it’s from my voice” (McRady 2016); that “from” very telling in this context.

In 2017, following gender reassignment surgery, Caitlyn (previously Bruce) Jenner, published a memoir, *The Secrets of my Life*, openly written with the assistance of Pulitzer prize-winning journalist Harry Gerard “Buzz” Bissinger, who is credited on the authors’ page and appeared in media interviews for the book alongside Jenner. Presented nevertheless as Jenner’s autobiographical reflection on these “secrets”, and subtitled *A History*, indicating a factual account of the past, the book with following comment from Jenner regarding truth:

This is a book primarily of recollections. I believe them to be true, and I have cross-checked them with various members of my family and friends and what has been written in the past. But they are based to a large degree on my memory, and memory as we all know is selective (‘Author’s note’).

Overwhelmingly positively received by reviewers as an honest account of Jenner's experience, this warm reception echoed that of the televised series of *I Am Cait* (Goldschein et al. 2015–16), which followed her life after her transition. Promoted as documentary rather than reality television, *The Hollywood Reporter* noted its “serious messages about tolerance of the transgender community” and that the show was “surprisingly thoughtful” (Scheck 2015), *Time* magazine described its “earnestness [and] ... dual purpose, it’s a personal story played out for an audience of millions, on behalf of a much larger community” (Poniewozik 2015), while *Variety* lauded Jenner for making “a significant contribution to enhancing understanding of the transgender community” (Lowry 2015). This rhetoric was repeated in reviews of *The Secrets of my Life*, although some readers—including Kris Kardashian, who gave a series of media interviews on this topic and discussed her concerns on *Keeping Up With the Kardashians*—questioned Caitlyn's version of events.

Other publications are more tenuously autobiographical, but still assert a link with the family (and its promotion), as for instance, in the young adult science fiction/dystopian novel, *Rebels: City of Indra: The Story of Lex and Livia* (2014), published under the names of then high school students Kendall and Kylie Jenner. This sought to model the success of such popular young adult/crossover novels (and the films based upon them) as the *Hunger Games* trilogy (Collins 2008–10) with their own fan base (Kaufman 2014). *Publishers Weekly* reviewed the book positively, focusing on the story and the way it is told:

Details about the two worlds the girls inhabit are creative ... abundant action—including a hair-pulling fight, a high-speed chase on flying machines, and an attack by hideous beings known as “mutations”—provides momentum (2014).

This review also noted that the unresolved conflicts at the end of the novel was a purposeful device, done in order to “set the scene for the next instalment” (Kaufman 2014), what Jill Gutowitz described as a “cliffhanger” ending (2016), clearly suggesting a sequel. Most other reviewers as well as readers, however, ranged from lukewarm to unabashedly negative (White 2014) and the book sold poorly, only 13,000 copies in the first four months after its release (Barna 2014).

A media story that was both implicitly and explicitly critical of the publishing industry developed around the release of this volume. As Caitlin White reported:

It's safe to say no one expected the Jenner sisters' debut book to be the next Great American Novel, but the overwhelmingly bad press has fallen onto the shoulders of not just Kim Kardashian's little half-sisters, but the book's ghostwriter Maya Sloan (2014).

While the cover features only the names of the two Jenner sisters, the book's copyright page additionally attributes copyright to Elizabeth Killmond-Roman, the Jenners' creative director, and also includes the Library of Congress cataloguing entry, which lists the authors as "Kendall Jenner, Kylie Jenner; with Elizabeth Killmond-Roman and Maya Sloan" (2014). When Sloan's role as ghostwriter was discussed in the press, the Jenner sisters gave her immediate credit, telling reporters that it was obvious they could not write a science fiction novel on their own (Kaufman 2014). They also posted photos of the four authors with the book online (Writers Write 2014). Although the traditional role of a ghostwriter was to be invisible—unrecognisable and unrecognised—Sloan gave an interview to the *Los Angeles Times* (Kaufman 2014). This sympathetic profile outlines Sloan's qualifications; holding two MFAs in writing, teaching creative writing at New York University, ghostwriting the memoir of Broadway star Sheryl Lee Ralph, *Redefining Diva: Life Lessons from the Original Dreamgirl* (2012), and having published a young adult novel under her own name, *High Before Homeroom* (2010) (White 2014). Sloan also described the process she used to work with the Jenner sisters. Once provided with a "broad two-page outline describing the futuristic tale" that the Jenners' developed with Killmond-Roman, Sloan shadowed the sisters to a series of events, wanting to use them as models for the protagonists. While Killmond-Roman acknowledged that Sloan wrote the book, she also reportedly emphasised the Jenners' involvement, asserting that they had "numerous Skype and Face-Time sessions with Sloan ... and the group all marked up drafts with extensive notes" (Kaufman 2014). In the acknowledgment section for *Rebels*, Sloan is described as "cowriter" and thanked for her "tenacious and creative spirit ... [that] helped make our story come to life" (ibid., 344). In her profile of this media story, Caitlin White defended Sloan, while also noting criticism of how the contemporary publishing industry was willing to publish celebrities above others:

Reviews [that] decry that new, talented writers can't get a publishing deal but the Jenner sisters can despite never finishing school ... are missing the point about Sloan. She's one of these writers doing what she can for a book deal (2014, online).

Sloan agreed, stating "it's a gift to be a working writer" (Kaufman 2014).

Despite the poor reviews *Rebels* attracted, the second instalment in the series, *Time of the Twins* (2016) was published, this time with copyright resting with Kendall and Kylie Jenner together with Elizabeth Killmond-Roman and Katherine Killmond. Writing about his volume in *Teen Vogue*, Jill Gutowitz described this as “an adventurous, post-apocalyptic novel about sisterly bonds” (2016) that followed on neatly from *Rebels*. Gutowitz also writes of the links between these books and the feminist “girl power” narrative that underpins the Kardashian brand:

The Twins are ... fearless leaders, only falling second in command to their mother, Del, who is even more rigid, ruthless, and badass than they are (uh, hi, Kris Jenner, we see you) ... Neither one of the girls requires saving nor wants it. (2016, online)

Reviews for this volume were as scathing as for the first in the series and there is no evidence of any further instalments in progress.

Another text which can also be classed as tenuously autobiographical is Kris Jenner’s 2014 cookbook, which although titled *In the Kitchen with Kris*, clearly draws on the family’s notoriety in its subtitle *A Kollection of Kardashian-Jenner Family Favorites*. The text includes, for instance, many personal photographs of the family but few of food. Despite attesting to cooking daily in the book’s first chapter and professing that “preparing meals in my kitchen—is one of my favourite things to do” (ibid., 2), readers noted the inauthenticity of the entire premise of this volume, for *Keeping up with the Kardashians* features the personal chef hired to cook for the family.

A series of books of facts and quotations cull their content from already published content. Frankie Taylor and Jack Goldstein’s *101 Amazing Kim Kardashian facts* is aimed directly at young aficionados, promising a wealth of unknown information:

Are you the world’s biggest Kim Kardashian Fan? Do you know everything there is to know about today’s greatest style icon and reality TV star? Then this is the book for you! (2012, 1).

Goldstein and Taylor compiled another “101 amazing facts” book in 2015, *101 Amazing Facts about Kendall and Kylie*, this time promising that this would be *Unofficial and Unauthorized*. The similar *Pocket Kim Wisdom: Witty Quotes and Wise Words from Kim Kardashian* (Kardashian 2016) is marketed differently, not only as providing previously unknown material, but promising that readers can:

Benefit from the wisdom and insights that have helped ... [this] trailblazer of the “selfie movement” ... [become] one of the most iconic celebrities in the world (Hardie Grant 2018, online).

The tagline of this marketing is “when Kim speaks, people listen”. Although some of the quotes are far from inspiring—“Stretchmarks are my biggest fear of life” and “I feel really blessed because I genuinely love the process of getting my hair and makeup done”—others are more personally revealing. Despite moments of what read like authentic disclosure—“I’m an entrepreneur. ‘Ambitious’ is my middle name”. *Cosmopolitan*, 2nd October 2009 (ibid., 9) and “I love when people underestimate me and then become pleasantly surprised”. *Forbes*, 1st July 2010 (ibid., 10)—such publications do little to dispute George Monbiot’s assessment that the major qualities of celebrity are “vapidity, vacuity and physical beauty” and that “With a few exceptions, those who have least to say are granted the greatest number of platforms on which to say it” (2016).

The practice of ghostwriting apparent in the above volumes obviously raises issues of truth in publishing. While publishers contract both ghostwriters to remove their names from the work they produce, and the putative author(s) to the use of their names in selling the work, T. J. Fosko argues that ghostwriting is a serious form of deception and fraud perpetrated on readers that amounts to a form of “false advertising” (2012, 167) that evades consumer protection laws. He writes that ghostwriting allows “false representation of expertise and literary skill, and [fosters] exploitation of the general public’s interest in the lives and thoughts of celebrities” (2012, 166). For Fosko, trust is a central issue in ghostwritten publications: “Consumers suffer harm from ghostwriting because they cannot trust the name of the author of a book to indicate the quality of the work” (2012, 174). While ghostwriters are paid, it is—moreover—publishers who “reap the financial benefit of marketing a book by a well-known name, even though that person has no talent for writing” (Fosko 2012, 165–66).

Biographical publications

As such prominent celebrities, with such a significant following, it is not surprising there is also a publishing industry *around* the Kardashians. Many of these are largely biographical studies, and they pose a range of issues for publishers. Among the first of these was Posy Edwards’s *The Kardashians: A Crazy Life* (2011), which was aimed at young fans—joining other books she authored about Miley Cyrus (2008a), Zac Efron (2008b, 2008c) and a number of other such pop celebrities. This was followed by more detailed volumes such as Ian Halperin’s *Kardashian Dynasty: The Controversial*

Rise of America's Royal Family (2016) and prolific celebrity biographer Jerry Oppenheimer's *Kardashians: An American Drama* (2017). A winner of *Rolling Stone* magazine's Award for Investigative Journalism, Halperin is the author of multiple popular biographically-focused books, including the bestselling biographies of Celine Dion (1997), James Taylor (2000) and the final years of Michael Jackson (2009), as well as studies of celebrity couple Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie (2009), Arnold Schwarzenegger (2010), Whitney Houston and her daughter, Bobbi Kristina Brown (2015) and two co-authored books on the death of Kurt Cobain (Halperin and Wallace 1998; Wallace and Halperin 2004). Oppenheimer has similarly written unauthorised biographies of many public figures including Rock Hudson (1987), Barbara Walters (1991), Martha Stewart (1997), Bill and Hillary Clinton (2000), Anna Wintour (2007), the Hilton family (2007) and Jerry Seinfeld (2010). In line with Halperin's volume which promised "salacious ... scandals" that had been previously unexposed despite the "constant circus of tabloid headlines, red carpet appearances, branding deals, reality shows and their spinoffs, and a slew of media coverage" (2016), Oppenheimer also undertook to provide insights into "secrets and scandals ... so closely held that not even hard core fans have heard about them" (2017). Both authors thus clearly acknowledge the difficulty in producing something worth buying about people whose supposed daily life is exposed daily for free across various media and platforms.

Most other book-length biographies focus on Kim, such as Joanne Mattern's *Kim Kardashian: Reality TV Star* (2012) and, indicative of her fame, Sean Smith's simply titled *Kim* (2015) and Dennis Abrams' *Kim Kardashian* (2017). Her marriage to Kanye West attracted its own detailed attention in Nadia Cohen's *Kim & Kanye: The Love Story* (2014) and Sam Riviere's *Kim Kardashian's Marriage* (2015). The publication of actress and songwriter Linda Thompson's memoir, *A Little Thing Called Life: On Loving Elvis Presley, Bruce Jenner, and Songs In Between* (2016) indicated Bruce Jenner's media prominence leading up to his gender reassignment surgery, adding more evidence to the value of the Kardashian name, and by extension, that of the Jenners, as a marketing tool to sell publications.

Adam Woog's *Brand Empire Celebrities* (2016) profiles Kim Kardashian as a case study, alongside Sean (Diddy) Combs, Jessica Alba, Jessica Simpson and Taylor Swift. Jordan Christy's *How to be a Hepburn in a Kardashian World: The Art of Living with Style, Class, and Grace* (2017) counsels young women on how to develop what Christy calls "a glamorous personal style" while also promoting oneself "professionally and romantically". Other titles draw on the power of the Kardashian brand as its subject matter, as in celebrity-branding expert Jeetendr Sehdev's *Kim*

Kardashian Principle: Why Shameless Sells (And How To Do It Right) (2017)—a how-to guide positing that, in the contemporary world, self-obsession is a positive marketing asset.

Major scholarly studies

Scholarly publishing has also been interested in the family in relation to a wide range of subject matter from the family's presence in popular culture to feminism and sexuality, and studies of social media and branding. Amanda Scheiner McClain's major study *Keeping up the Kardashian Brand: Celebrity, Materialism, And Sexuality* (2014) details how the family has exploited the contemporary proliferation of reality television and social media to develop their cross-platform, multimodal brand, of which, the publishing outlined above is a component. The Kardashians and Jenners, but overwhelmingly Kim, are also included as case studies in volumes on various themes. Shelley Cobb and Neil Ewen's edited collection, *First Comes Love: Power Couples, Celebrity Kinship, and Cultural Politics* (2015) is a good example of this, as is Anne Helen Petersen's wonderfully titled, *Too Fat, Too Slutty, Too Loud: The Rise and Reign of the Unruly Woman* (2017). In her profiles of contemporary women who threaten the social order, Petersen includes Serena Williams as "too strong", Madonna as "too old" and Hillary Clinton as "too shrill", with Kim Kardashian included as "too pregnant" and Caitlyn Jenner as "too queer." Other scholarship has posited that manipulation of the Kardashian brand is a valid reaction to how women of colour have had their bodies hypersexualised and commodified in order to meet an audience "appetite for consuming difference" (Báez 2018, 87) or a reasonable response to post-feminist neo-liberalism (Monteverde 2016). According to Julie A. Wilson, the Kardashians/Jenners perform to expectations in:

The postfeminist, neoliberal milieu women [where] must perform as self-entrepreneurial, self-promotional workers on equal footing with their male colleagues yet still be invested in and appear willing to perform traditional gender roles (2010, 34).

While these volumes are examples of thoughtful scholarship, the marketing of these texts does not shy away from promoting their Kardashian-related content, no doubt hoping that some of that celebrity stardust will assist in sales of these volumes, as well as that of individual chapters available online.

Conclusion

Some of the publications profiled above obviously subvert the traditional role of publishers in filtering works for quality and authenticity and provide, instead, clear evidence that, at times, some publishers are motivated principally by the opportunity to generate profit. This leads to critics such as Jeff Rasley noting, “No matter how poorly written, the Kim Kardashians of our celebrity obsessed culture will find a publisher” (2012). The Kardashians (and Jenners) themselves sisters do not shy away from how they have leveraged their celebrity into the generation of multi-million dollar profits, baldly stating “We work for what we have” (Guarisco 2016, 73). With notions of the authorial pact and narrative truth acknowledged casualties in this marketplace, some however argue that the consumption of branded celebrity via such products is not merely innocuous entertainment. Instead, it can be understood as a highly manipulative component of advertising, marketing and the media. As Monbiot explains, celebrity is “the lieutenant of exploitation” (2016). Henry A. Giroux, moreover, goes further to suggest that celebrity culture fuels an “ethical tranquillization marked not only by a crisis of history, memory, and agency but also the proliferation of a kind of paralyzing infantilism ... and [the] elevation of self-interest [sic]” (2016, 63). When understood in this way, the publishing industry itself today—mostly a series of giant corporate entities—can be seen as complicit in this form of marketing, further enabling celebrities to promote their own personas and brands through publications. As a result, however, publishers have relinquished some of their traditional function as reliable purveyors of the truth and quality texts.

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CHAPTER THREE

PUBLISHING AND THE LAW: COPYRIGHT AND GLOBALISATION

FRANCINA CANTATORE

Introduction

The evolving global publishing landscape has not only affected the ways in which authors disseminate their work but has also impacted significantly on how copyright is enforced across jurisdictional borders. Authors of written work face increased challenges in protecting their copyright due to technological advances, and the extra-territorial publication of books that are sold online exacerbates copyright concerns.

This chapter deals first with the impact of electronic publishing across borders and what this means to authors in relation to their copyright. It postulates that, while technological advances have positively impacted on the availability and accessibility of books and increased publishing opportunities for authors, there have been corresponding negative consequences. Problem areas for authors have included pirating of their work on the Internet through unauthorised copying, as well as a lack of knowledge on digital publishing and copyright protections on the Internet. This chapter considers authors' views on copyright issues in the digital sphere, based on previous studies in this area of the law by the author and others (Cantatore 2014; Pappalardo et al. 2017); current copyright solutions such as licencing options and “free models”, and more recent proposed initiatives such as “smart contracts”.

Second, the issue of extra-territorial print publications is examined in relation to authors' copyright, as traditional publishing also faces cross-border issues which cannot always be readily resolved. This global trend in publishing extra-territorially may lead to territorial copyright infringements. One increasing problem faced by Australian authors and publishers is unlawful parallel importing of printed books, which is difficult to monitor,

especially in relation to sales on sites such as Amazon. Additionally, digital copies of books are not captured by the parallel import restrictions.

Parallel import restrictions (PIRs) apply in the US, Australia, Canada, and the UK but, in reality, these provisions are often breached by wholesalers or discounters who import illegally printed copies of books from the other jurisdictions into Australia and sell books as “remainders” at discounted prices. In these instances, authors do not benefit from royalties. These foreign-published books offered to Australian consumers effectively bypass the PIRs and are often text books with poor quality printing and binding. In other cases, books are lawfully published for an overseas market, and are then imported back into the country in breach of PIRs or sold online across territorial borders at cut-rate prices. These books are sold in competition with Australian publishers, who suffer losses as a result. The Productivity Commission (2016) has once again¹ recommended that Australia lift PIRs on books but, at the time of writing, the issue was still under consideration by the Australian government.

In Australia, the issue of selling printed books on the Internet has not yet been addressed in court but in the US case of *Kirtsaeng v John Wiley & Sons, Inc*, 133 S.Ct. 1351 (2013) the Supreme Court held that Kirtsaeng’s sale of lawfully-made copies purchased overseas was protected by the “first-sale doctrine” under US law. The decision has had a far-reaching impact on authors and local publishers in the US, and publishers globally. The case provided a clear illustration that the availability of books online and cross-border selling may affect the application of territorial copyright measures, essentially rendering them ineffective in practice. Thus, in addition to digital concerns, this chapter also aims to provide insights on territorial copyright issues in relation to printed books, with reference to a study conducted with a purposive sample of published Australian authors (Cantatore 2014), and to the diverse views expressed in response to the Productivity Commission recommendations to abolish PIRs.

Copyright in the new publishing landscape

In the context of globalisation, it should be stated at the outset that there is no concept of “international copyright” that automatically protects authors’ copyright globally. Instead, copyright protection is territorial in nature and relies on the laws of individual countries for protection in that country. For example, in the US the *Copyright Act 1976* (together with a number of other statutes) regulates copyright use; in Australia, the *Copyright Act 1968* (Cth)

¹ Echoing its previous recommendation in 2009 (Productivity Commission 2009).

(the Act) applies. Copyright in a literary work is specifically protected under section 31(1) of the Act. The Act regulates how creative work may be copied and distributed, and under which conditions, and aims to strike a balance between the public interest in promoting creativity and the interest of creators to be compensated for their work. The Australian copyright system is intrinsically utilitarian in nature; this has previously been noted by the Intellectual Property and Competition Review Committee (2000, 32), which also recognised that the general objective of the intellectual property law system in Australia was more specifically economic than moral in character. The legislature, through this approach, has striven towards balancing the rights of creators with public benefit (i.e., the use and enjoyment of their creations).

This approach necessarily provides for an ongoing tension between perceptions of “authors’ rights” and “users’ rights”, where the limitations should lie, and how authors can enforce their copyright in the global publishing sphere. Authors’ “moral rights” is also an issue dealt with under the Act (section 189), with corresponding concerns arising about protection of these rights in a digital environment. The Australian system has been described as “a hybrid system with authorial moral rights grafted onto a framework that has developed to protect the economic interests, not of the author, but the copyright owner” (Adeney 2002, 10). These perceptions have given rise to concerns by authors that their interests are not always adequately protected.

In respect of global copyright protection, most developed countries (including the US and Australia) are members of an international copyright treaty, the *Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works 1886* (as amended) (Berne Convention), where copyright works are defined as “literary and artistic works” (article 2(1), 102). Under article 7(8) of this treaty, authors receive recognition for their foreign rights under the “national treatment” requirement, which provides that a qualifying “foreign work” must receive the same protection as a “local work”. Thus, member States’ copyright laws should have certain “minimum standards” of copyright protection to comply.

In practice, however, it has become apparent that digital publishing models and global book sales have eroded these principles and impacted on authors’ ability to protect and monetise their copyright internationally. Digital publications have proven difficult to regulate due to the prevalence of cross-border digital sales in the global marketplace. Logistical issues such as the prohibitive cost of pursuing copyright breaches in other jurisdictions mean that authors and smaller publishers are often unable to enforce copyright in digital works where breaches occur. In addition, a

culture of free information has given rise to expectations of free content on the Internet. As was already recognised by the turn of the century, “it is probable, given the free-spirited culture of the Internet and its attachment to the “public domain”, that many users are simply unaware that works posted on the Net may be protected by intellectual property laws” (Jones 2000, 86). That perception continues today, as is evident from persistent breaches of copyright on the Internet, such as the illegal downloading of films and television shows (see for example the *Dallas Buyers Club LLC v iiNet Limited (No 5)* [2015] decision).

There is also increased pressure on authors to forgo payment for their publications by supporters of free content models. Earlier commentators such as Netanel (1996, 298) favoured a shortened copyright term, release into the “public domain” for creative manipulation, and less control over derivative works by copyright owners, which would benefit the public interest. Lessig (2004, 293) also favours a shorter copyright term, a loosening of control and a more public benefit focussed approach, stating: “What’s needed is a way to say something in the middle—neither ‘all rights reserved’ nor ‘no rights reserved’ but ‘some rights reserved’—and thus a way to respect copyrights but enable creators to free content as they see fit” (2004, 277). A recent research study conducted with different types of creatives (Pappalardo et al. 2017) also shows that, in certain circumstances, copyright law can act as a deterrent to creation, rather than an incentive for it.

Of course, the danger of placing undue emphasis on public interest considerations by limiting the copyright term (in an effort to maximise public benefit) is that those very limitations may discourage creativity, by limiting financial incentives to authors. Unfortunately, this paradoxical consequence of an excessively robust public interest focus is often ignored by proponents of a strong public benefit pursuit.

Challenges in digital publishing

It is apparent that, while authors have benefited from increased publishing opportunities in the digital domain, one side effect of global dissemination is that copyright enforcement has become more onerous. The complexity of copyright law and licencing has been a stumbling block for many authors in asserting their copyright online. Furthermore, the tension between the rights of creators and public interest considerations has never been more evident than in the digital realm, which aims to make information freely available to the world at large. To protect a foundational tenet of copyright, namely the incentive to create, the issue of copyright protection for authors remains

an important consideration in online publishing. Australian authors are becoming increasingly concerned about their copyright, as was evidenced by their strong opposition to recent recommendations to relax certain provisions of the Act (Productivity Commission 2016).

One of these recommendations, namely the substitution of “fair use” for “fair dealing”, would allow for the wider use of copyright material.² This author’s earlier survey of Australian authors found that by 2014, almost eighty per cent of all respondents were concerned about their digital copyright (Cantatore 2014, 205). Today that number may have increased, considering the proliferation of unauthorised copying online. Most of the author concerns in that survey related to the issue of theft of creative work on electronic media or “online piracy”.

These challenges have now escalated, due to the exorbitant cost of legal recourse and difficulty of pursuing offenders in other jurisdictions. In a paper delivered by Richard Hooper (2012) in Sydney, he recognised that there was a global battlefield between supporters of the notion that the Internet should be free on the one hand, and the creative industries wanting to protect their intellectual property and copyright on the other. His UK-commissioned report, “Copyright works” (the Hooper report) was Richard Hooper’s final report on the feasibility of developing an international Digital Copyright Exchange. The Hooper report included a feasibility study for a Digital Copyright Exchange, which was a key recommendation of the earlier UK report, *Digital Opportunity: A Review of Intellectual Property and Growth, Research Report* (Hargreaves 2011). However, this proposed initiative has not eventuated and the key concerns of copyright protection and licencing in the creative industries still remains a divisive topic.

It is significant that, although many authors have acknowledged that illegal online copying is a real concern for them due to the inadequacies of the current copyright structure, most have admitted to doing nothing to protect their copyright online (Cantatore 2014, 207). Several survey respondents specifically cited a lack of knowledge on e-book copyright as a problem and voiced concerns about a lack of time and funds to pursue copyright breaches on the Internet. In addition, publishers did not provide a shield for authors against online copyright infringement, with most authors and publishers appearing to accept the inevitability of copyright infringements on the Internet (Cantatore 2014, 207).

² In the USA the concept of “fair use” allows for users of copyright material that are considered fair in the circumstances; as opposed to the current closed list of permitted purposes for “fair dealing” in the Australian *Copyright Act*. There have been conflicting views on the viability and desirability of applying the “fair use” concept in Australian law.

Authors who take protective steps may employ different measures to protect and regulate the use of their online copyright material, such as digital rights management (DRM) and Creative Commons (CC) licences to prevent the copying of their work. Some authors have expressed reservations about the use of DRM and have described it as a barrier to readers buying their books. Proponents of greater transformational use of copyright material also oppose these measures, proposing that excessive copyright control obstructs creative endeavour (see for example, Suzor 2006, 2). Suzor has argued that “each appropriation is a limitation on the ability of future creators to work”, which devalues the substance of the “no harm” argument in the realms of an ideal limitless creative environment (2006, 106).

The effectiveness of DRM can also be compromised by circumvention (Sims 2017a, 78). Many others feel that flexible licensing models—such as the CC—which recognise the author’s moral rights and provide licensing options pursuant to section 189 of the Act, are useful as they set the parameters for authorised open access use. However, if these CC licence conditions are breached, authors are faced with the same dilemma of having to identify breaches and take enforcement steps.

Although the CC, a non-profit organisation, has been in operation for nearly two decades, many authors are not familiar with the concept. In the survey it was evident that interviewees who supported the CC were generally bloggers, who had more Internet knowledge than those who had not previously published work online (Cantatore 2014, 207). Another significant drawback of the CC licensing scheme is that it does not prescribe licensing fees or financial remuneration for participants due to its voluntary character.

As an alternative protective measure, it was found in the survey target group that around fifty per cent of authors either post warnings on their websites or on the creative work itself or rely on their publishers to take care of copyright issues (Cantatore 2014, 207). Although representative organisations such as the Australian Society of Authors (ASA) continue to warn authors against piracy (Loukakis 2011a, 29), many authors lack the knowledge and means to take protective action.

Unsurprisingly, the problem with protecting online copyright is that it is usually not commercially viable for individual authors to pursue offenders in the case of a breach. International copyright protection is a grey area for most authors and taking legal advice is a costly enterprise. The 2014 survey findings (Cantatore 2014, 233) showed that the prohibitive costs of protecting their copyright and litigating overseas was a stumbling block for most Australian authors, and this is still evidenced by the absence of Australian copyright litigation on books.

Another problem for authors is a lack of cohesive thinking between authors themselves to lobby on copyright issues. The global environment has decentralised public forums, and apart from localised representative groups such as writers' groups and writers' organisations (e.g., the various State-based writers' centres), authors often fail to present a "united front" or a "public voice" on pertinent issues such as copyright regulation, to harness their collective power as a group (Cantatore 2014, 234).

A report by the Australian Book Industry Strategy Group (BISG) recognised the problems associated with protection of digital copyright and the necessity for reform, stating that "the responsibility is with industry to invest, innovate, collaborate and improve competitiveness in order to secure the future of the Australian book industry (2011, 67). Furthermore, they suggested that the government should work with Internet industries to adopt a binding industry code on copyright infringement by Internet service providers, to protect online copyright. These recommendations were commendable, but would require not only a focused intention by the Australian Law Reform Commission (ALRC) and government to alleviate current digital copyright concerns, but also practical and enforceable measures, such as (yet unrealised) punitive sanctions and anti-piracy copyright education campaign proposed by the ASA as early as 2011 (Loukakis 2011b, 6).

The 2016 review by the Productivity Commission addressed digital copyright reforms, but the emphasis of the report was the introduction of public interest benefits, such as the extension of the fair dealing exceptions (Productivity Commission 2016, 165), rather than protective measures for creators. The proposed reforms will align the Australian copyright approach with US provisions for "fair use" and will create a wider range of copyright exceptions, especially relevant on the Internet. It can be argued that the report fell short of dealing with vital concerns facing authors in the digital sphere.

In addition to digital copyright concerns, there also exist increased problems regarding the collection of royalties internationally. In the research referred to earlier (Cantatore 2014) a number of authors voiced the concern that copyright measures and royalty schemes based in Australia did not sufficiently address the issue of loss of revenue from overseas sources, such as sales on the Internet, and copyright infringements that occurred overseas. This concern appeared to be fuelled by the blurring of territorial copyright zones as a result of new media structures and the expanding use of electronic devices. It was further evident that these problems were exacerbated as online publishing became more prevalent and territorial borders became less defined (Cantatore 2014, 233).

It is, however, important to acknowledge that many authors do not favour a hard-line enforcement of electronic copyright. There is a group of authors who view the Internet as a marketing opportunity, and either employ “soft” licensing practices such as the CC or who provide their creative work not only DRM free, but also free of charge. These “trailblazers” have been receptive rather than resistant to change and have sought to embrace new business models in the light of online publishing and proprietary branded electronic readers such as Kindle.

Thus, there are two ways of thinking which emerge in the digital sphere: those who take a more conservative and protective view of copyright and authors’ entitlements, and those who support unlimited transformative use and the “free” and “sharing” culture of the online media through alternative business models. It has also become apparent that licensing terms and conditions are becoming paramount in the digital milieu, especially in relation to e-books, such as the Kindle. This trend reflects the earlier observations of authors John and Reid (2011) that owners’ and users’ copying rights are now being determined more by individual licenses and less by provisions in copyright law than in the past. It is imperative that Australian publishers and authors apply close scrutiny to the terms and conditions of international electronic licensing agreements, such as Google and Kindle agreements, to avoid the power of the individual—both authors and localised publishers—sliding backward as global publishing giants advance forward.

Territorial copyright

Territorial copyright challenges

Considering the rapid developments in technology over the past twenty years, the digital sphere has made it increasingly difficult to cling to existing copyright models, leaving traditional territorial copyright protection in a state of flux. This is particularly evident in the dominance of online booksellers such as Amazon, who impact these rights by selling books across international borders. Notably, section 44F of the Australian *Copyright Act 1968* provides that there are no restrictions on the importation of electronic literary works, except that it must be a “non-infringing copy” (i.e., made lawfully in the country of origin), thus significantly affording no parallel import protection on digital books (as opposed to print versions).

However, despite these issues, in Australia—as in the case of the United Kingdom and United States—territorial rights remain in existence. It is likely that authors will find it increasingly difficult to address infringements,

considering the global reach of the online book market, and the associated jurisdictional problems. This trend points to a dilution of territorial rights, supporting those commentators who contend that the industry requires a new copyright infrastructure (Young 2007, 158–59).

Australian author and publisher Sally Collings expressed the view that the territorialism that existed in publishing for decades would become a non-issue as digital books became more prevalent (see Cantatore 2014, 172). This viewpoint was supported by author and self-publisher John Kelly, who said that the possibility of self-publication has effectively removed traditional territorial barriers. He stated that self-publishers “have access to a world-wide market by submitting their book to Google Books and Amazon and Lulu’s websites, all available for a start-up cost of less than \$100.00”. On the issue of the deregulation of publishing and parallel importing, he said:

The very nature of competition has been turned on its head and the once revered retail bookstore is staring its use-by date down the barrel just like the neighbourhood hardware store. But it isn’t the threat of de-regulation that places it in this invidious position. The Internet already has! One can debate the positive and negative impacts of this development, but it has nothing to do with government regulation (Kelly 2009, online).

Kelly’s observations are pertinent as he raised two issues: not only that of self-publication and the greater freedom it allowed, but also the fact that many books were bought online today across territorial copyright borders, rendering government regulation secondary to practical realities. These comments support the argument that the Internet has expanded the boundaries of copyright protection and that current legislative structures may not offer authors the necessary protection in the digital economy, due to cross-jurisdictional publication. Despite the Productivity Commission’s (2016) recommendations relating to abolishment of PIRs, and introduction of fair use exceptions, no changes had been implemented by 2018, and it remains to be seen what the effect of the recommendations will be.

The abolition of PIRs has been an ongoing debate in Australia for the past ten years and has consistently been opposed by authors and publishers (Productivity Commission 2016). There are divergent viewpoints between booksellers and consumer advocates on the one hand, and authors and publishers on the other. Commentators, such as Eltham (Cantatore 2014, 202), have questioned the effectiveness of dividing territories up geographically where digital rights are concerned, arguing that consumers should expect to have access to digital contents worldwide, irrespective of where they live. In addition, the possibility of self-publication in the digital

sphere has effectively removed traditional territorial barriers for authors, which raises issues around the efficacy of territorial regulation.

It is evident that most publishers have already come to the realisation that they need to acquire worldwide digital rights when they purchase a book and that authors and representative organisations such as the ASA have become acutely aware of the importance of worldwide digital rights (Loukakis 2011a, 29). A failure to acquire or protect worldwide publishing rights could erode any existing copyrights in view of global publishing practices.

The significance of the parallel import restrictions (PIRs) on books

In Australia, the current parallel importation provisions allow a restriction on importation of printed copyright material into Australia, which provide Australian publishers with a thirty-day window to distribute a local version of a book (and ninety days to resupply) before competing overseas publishers may distribute the same product in Australia (*Copyright Act 1968* sections 102 and 112A). The US *Copyright Act 1976* (section 104) provides similar protections for copyright works of national origin.

The Australian PIRs were under review between 2006 and 2009, and again in 2016 (Productivity Commission 2009; 2016), with lobbyists advocating the removal of these restrictive provisions in the legislation. The Productivity Commission conducted an investigation into the nature, role and importance of intangibles, including intellectual property, to Australia's economic performance, as well as the effect of copyright restrictions on the parallel importation of books. During the initial Parallel Import Investigation, 268 submissions were put forward to the Productivity Commission by authors on the issue (Productivity Commission 2008).

In their submissions to the Productivity Commission, many authors provided examples of how they felt the current PIRs had benefitted them, or how the potential removal of the restrictions might affect them. For example, Australian author Nick Earls argued that allowing parallel imports would “undermine authors’ incomes”, “destroy the local market”, and present “a serious disincentive towards Australian publishers publishing new Australian books” (Earls 2008, 8–9). Author Garth Nix pointed out that territorial copyright provided publishers with certainty, which encouraged them to invest in Australian authors and Australian books (Nix 2008, 7). Without that certainty, there would be less incentive to invest in Australian books, and consequently the opportunities for Australian authors would be fewer.

In addition, Thomas Keneally foresaw the gradual demise of the Australian publishing industry, cautioning: “Both authors and literary agents, particularly those whose interest is explicitly Australian, would be facing shrinking resources and contracts” (Keneally 2008, 4–5). Many authors also stated that, in the absence of parallel import restrictions, they would lose control over the sales of their books. Once the rights to books were sold overseas, authors would no longer be able to control which edition of the book was sold in Australia, potentially impacting on their returns. Furthermore, some new or undiscovered authors could find it more difficult to gain attention in an open market (Productivity Commission 2008). Despite the 268 author submissions (in addition to those of publishers and booksellers) against the proposed abolition of the PIRs, the Productivity Commission recommended that the Government repeal Australia’s parallel import restrictions for books (Productivity Commission 2009).

However, the final result of the investigation was that the Government, under pressure from authors and publishers, rejected the recommendations of the Productivity Commission to phase out parallel import control, and instead retained the status quo. While the brief euphoria of the Australian publishers and authors appeared to be well-founded, it has since become evident that the protective provisions in section 102 of the Act would not protect authors and publishers on an ongoing basis. Firstly, as noted above, the Act does not place any restrictions on importation of electronic literary works—except that they must be “non-infringing copies”. Secondly, the PIR issue was revisited in 2016, and despite acknowledging that “(t)he Commission recognises that the cultural and educational value of books is significant” (Productivity Commission 2016, 150), the Productivity Commission has reiterated its findings that the PIRs on books should be abolished (Productivity Commission 2016, 152).

The future of copyright in global publishing

Evidently, many authors have recognised the need for new copyright solutions in a global environment, although the research has showed divergent views on the subject (Cantatore 2014; Pappalardo et al. 2017). Advocates for copyright protection suggest that authors should be more proactive in their approach to copyright, while others are of the view that the existing copyright structure is intrinsically insufficiently suited to copyright use in the digital domain (Cantatore 2014, 233). However, supporters of the changes recommended by the Productivity Commission to the *Copyright Act 1968*, hold the view that a more generous approach to the dissemination of copyright material is called for in a digitised world.

Additionally, they dispute the effectiveness of the PIRs on books, saying that these measures are no longer suitable in the global marketplace where individuals can obtain overseas copies of books outside of the constraints of PIRs, and where digital publications are not regulated by the PIRs on books (Cantatore 2014, 203).

Transformative use has also remained an important issue of discussion, as evidenced by the 2017 Report by Pappalardo et al., which continues the debate by academics such as Suzor (2006, 2), who claim that the transformative use of existing expression is beneficial for society. These arguments persist in supporting the proposal that copyright should be observed within the broader context of public benefit considerations and not solely as an advantage to the creator or originator.

The issue has become more pertinent with digitisation and the electronic media, maintaining the argument that copyright restrictions prevent the proper utilisation of creative expression for broader use in the interest of the public benefit. There is however some difficulty in formulating exact guidelines as to what constitutes “the public good” or “public benefit” in transformative uses such as parody and animation, both lauded as creative re-expression (Suzor 2006, 2). Fisher (2001, 183) has suggested that various considerations such as consumer welfare, access to information and ideas, and a rich artistic tradition be considered. While some copyright owners may agree with these considerations and value the transformative benefits gained by the limitation of copyright, others might not. The challenge continues to lie in reconciling these (sometimes) conflicting ideologies.

Cross-border publications and cultural impact

Although Australia applies PIRs, authors often experience problems with illegal parallel importation of their books from countries such as China or India. In these instances, it is difficult and expensive for authors to address breaches by offshore operators and Internet marketers. Authors also do not benefit financially from remainder books that are sold at cost or below cost, as contracts generally provide that the author does not benefit once the book is sold by the publisher for less than the printing costs (Cantatore 2014, 184). This means that if a book by an Australian author is remaindered in the US and sold to a bookseller in Australia at a reduced cost, the author does not receive anything, even if the book is sold at full price in Australia.

Nick Earls experienced this problem when he discovered that copies of his novel *ZigZag Street* were being sold on remainder tables outside newsagents in Australia, in breach of copyright provisions. In this instance, his UK publisher had overstocked and copies of the novel found their way

to a remainder house in the UK, where they were bundled up and sent to Australia with other books, in breach of his territorial rights. He recognised, however, that it was difficult to prevent this from happening or to stop the newsagents from selling the books, as they had bought the books in good faith, thinking that they were legally entitled to sell them (Cantatore 2014, 171).

Frank Moorhouse, another well-known Australian author, has also recognised the problems with regard to the collection of royalties internationally. “It is difficult to police copyright zones in English speaking countries”, he said, referring to the problems of international collecting agencies (Cantatore 2014, 170). He also supported the proposition that books were not mere commodities, having significant cultural value. He saw copyright zones as more than economic zones, rather as cultural zones that contribute to the development of cultural identity and protect cultural rights, and held the view that the removal of these protective barriers would be detrimental to Australian authors and publishers from a commercial point of view (Cantatore 2014, 170).

Earls has been equally concerned about these issues and has predicted that authors would suffer greatly if the PIRs were lifted. Although Australians would, for a time, have that book available at a price that the Australian market couldn’t currently match, he pointed out that it wouldn’t be cheaper for that long because eventually that stock would be exhausted, and the local publisher wouldn’t print more books because of the threat of it being undermined.

He also referred to the effect these activities would have on the cultural value of books.

Particularly in the case of my American editions, they often change in hundreds of ways. Often in small ways, but hundreds none the less, from my Australian editions, which would spoil the reading experience in Australia. An Australian reading those books would notice things that didn’t fit and it would take them out of the story and really affect the kind of reading experience they had (Cantatore 2014, 171).

As examples, he referred to the use of the words “sidewalk” as opposed to “pavement”, the use of “holiday” as opposed to “vacation”, and the fact that American editions would refer to “college” instead of “uni” and in some instances, even change the names of towns and seasons in a novel. These changes impacted on the cultural experience of the Australian reader.

These authors’ comments accord with the concern voiced by most of the 2014 research study interviewees that copyright measures and royalty schemes based in Australia do not sufficiently address the issue of loss of

revenue from overseas sources such as Internet sales and overseas copyright infringements. Additionally, there is a perceived loss of cultural values where Australian books are adapted to the culture and language associated with another country, printed overseas, and then imported into Australia.

Authors' concerns are thus fuelled by a number of issues: the blurring of territorial copyright zones as a result of new media structures (and the expanding use of electronic devices), unlawful importation of books printed overseas, and actions by global organisations such as Google, who has successfully defied traditional copyright expectations by publishing extensive excerpts from copyrighted works without permission in its scanning project under the fair use exception (*The Authors Guild Inc. et al. v. Google Inc.* (2013) 954 F.Supp. 2d 282).

Former judge and author Ian Callinan noted (Cantatore 2014, 173) that it would be difficult to resist “the tide of American culturalism”. He used the example of the Australian High Court case *Gutnick v Dow Jones & Co Inc.* (2002) 210 CLR 575 (10 December 2002) to illustrate how copyright enforcement may be a problem when pursued in other territories. In that case, an American publisher defamed an Australian citizen on the Internet and argued that the alleged defamation occurred at the place where the material had been uploaded onto the Internet. However, the Court held that the defamation occurred where the material had been downloaded and read, namely Melbourne, and that the case had to be decided in that jurisdiction. Considering the global reach of the Internet, this precedent could cause litigation costs to soar and could render copyright protection ineffective against parties in other jurisdictions (should it be found that the breach occurred in that country). Furthermore, Callinan was of the opinion that the exponential increase in the use of English in countries such as China would exacerbate copyright protection problems in the relatively small Australian market.

These viewpoints are illustrative of the legal difficulties associated with the globalisation of publishing, and the expenses that could be associated with prosecuting breaches of copyright. Authors' viewpoints also demonstrate the fact that the publishing in the global sphere has not only affected the enforcement of their copyright, but in many instances also the cultural impact of written works. It appears that, for the legislation to be effective, it may be necessary to adapt regulation of publishing practices in keeping with new cultural trends, such as the increase in demand for English books in non-english speaking countries like China, and the increased popularity of the online marketplace.

The Kirtsaeng effect

The possibility of applying the “first sale doctrine” to books imported from another country, and then sold in the country of origin, as was the case in *Kirtseng v John Wiley & Sons* (2013), referred to earlier, put paid to the idea that territorial rights will necessarily protect US rights holders from the impact of cross-border sales. In Australian copyright law, there is no clear principle of first sale that positively permits the second-hand sale of copyright goods. However, in the context of physical goods, resale is generally not an infringement in Australia (Stevens 2016, 179).

In this landmark US case, Kirtsaeng, a Cornell University student, purchased mathematics text books from his home country, Thailand (with the assistance of friends), and then resold them on eBay to students in the US. The texts were English foreign editions and only authorised for sale in Europe, Asia, Africa and the Middle East. The issue to be decided was how section 602 (which prohibits the importation of works into the US without the copyright owner’s permission) and section 109 (dealing with the first sale doctrine) of the *Copyright Act 1976* (US) to copies of books made and legally acquired abroad, and then imported into the US. The Supreme Court held by a six to three majority that US copyright owners may not prevent importation and reselling of copyrighted content lawfully sold abroad, due to the application of the first sale doctrine (*Kirtseng v John Wiley & Sons, Inc.* (2013), 1357–1358). The effect of the first sale doctrine (also referred to as an “exhaustion of rights”), is that the publisher’s copyright is exhausted once a book is lawfully purchased.

It is significant that the Court read the *Copyright Act 1976* (US) as imposing no geographical limitation. This approach was in contrast to the lower court decision in *John Wiley & Sons, Inc. v Kirtsaeng* (2011) 654 F.3d 210. In the earlier decision, the Court had found in favour of Wiley, who relied on section 602 of the US *Copyright Act 1976* and argued that Kirtsaeng could not rely on the first sale doctrine (section 109) as it only applied to works manufactured in the US.

The six-to-three division in the Supreme Court decision is reflective of the controversy surrounding the interpretation and application of these two provisions in the Act. Previously, in the *Costco Wholesale* case (2010) 562 US 40 the Court was divided four–all on this issue, and in the earlier decision *Quality King* (1998) 523 US 135 (2013, 135) the Court held that section 109 limited the scope of section 602, leaving open the question whether US copyright owners could retain control over the importation of copies manufactured and sold abroad.

In her dissenting judgment in *Kirtseng* Justice Ginsburg criticised the reasoning of the majority, stating that the majority’s interpretation of the

Copyright Act 1976 (US) was “at odds with Congress” aim to protect copyright owners against the unauthorised importation of low-priced, foreign made copies of their copyrighted works” (*Kirtseng* 2013, 1373). She also expressed the viewpoint that “the Court embrace[d] an international-exhaustion rule that could benefit US consumers but would likely disadvantage foreign holders of US copyrights” (2013, 1385).

The Supreme Court in *Kirtseng* ultimately resolved the case in favour of permitting parallel importation by relying on the first sale doctrine. Despite the argument that this interpretation favours consumers by providing them with cheaper options, the flipside is that rights holders in written work could be disadvantaged by the erosion of their territorial rights. Principally, this decision illustrates how easily territorial copyright provisions may be circumvented, and the potential far-reaching impact on authors and publishers globally in the future.

Blockchain solutions and smart contracts: a copyright utopia?

In recent years the rise of blockchain technology³ has received some interest in the field of intellectual property (IP) management in the digital world. This has included a fascination with how blockchain technology and smart contracts can be utilised to assist creators and publishers of digital content. This technology has seen a burgeoning number of technology companies offering solutions for copyright owners. These companies often use blockchain technology, and many blockchains use “smart” contracts to regulate transactions. Automated smart contracts will be able to simultaneously represent ownership of an IP right and the conditions that accompany that ownership. These contracts can automate rules, check conditions, and take actions with limited human involvement and cost. Currently the Ethereum blockchain is used for most smart contracts (Sims 2017b, 77).

It has been acknowledged that “blockchains are great tools for managing the ownership of assets and tracking the flow of money related to assets” (Gain 2016), and that it could potentially disrupt current media ownership business models. For example, it enables authors to sell digital copies of a book and receive royalties directly, instead of using online stores such as

³ “A blockchain can be described as a database so secure that it can be made public, where altering a copy of the database has no effect and transactions can only be appended, never deleted or updated. Moreover, writing to the database is controlled by a peer-to-peer protocol that strictly enforces the validity of transactions before the transactions are appended” (Sims 2017b).

Amazon (Gain 2016). Industry professionals have stated that “blockchain has the potential to achieve copyright utopia, providing real-time transparency in relation to all of the information required to manage copyright” (Gilbert & Tobin Lawyers 2017, 5).

There are a number of companies in this space in varying stages of development, offering a variety of solutions, some focussing on music only (such as dotBlockchain Media, Muse Blockchain, Bittunes, Ujo and Mycelia), others are for copyright in visual images (such as Binded and Copytrack), and some that are multimedia focussed (such as SingularDTV, Mediachain and Veredictum.io). Additionally, companies such as the Decentralized News Network (DNN), provide opportunities for freelance journalists and bloggers to publish their content. DNN describes itself as “a news platform,⁴ combining news creation with decentralised networks to deliver factual content, curated by the community” (DNN 2018).

Examples of two companies which have entered the marketplace with the view of providing a secure database for copyright owners, as well as a marketplace where they can trade or license their digital works, are Po.et and LBRY.

Po.et

Po.et states on its website that it is “a shared, open, universal ledger designed to record metadata and ownership information for digital creative assets” and it claims to ensure that metadata attribution remains safe, verifiable, and immutable by allowing content creators to timestamp their assets onto the Bitcoin blockchain. However, Po.et’s functionality is currently limited to the distribution and licensing of written content, for publishers, journalists and digital content creators (Po.et 2017). It is currently only available on a test network, enabling authors to integrate their work with a free Wordpress plugin at <<https://wordpress.org/plugins/po-et/>>.

LBRY

LBRY describes itself as “a free, open, and community-run digital marketplace”.⁵ The system equips “a peer-to-peer protocol with a digital currency and transparent decentralized ledger” and “the LBRY protocol opens the door to a new era of digital content distribution making peer-to-

⁴ See DNN: Decentralized News Network, <https://dnn.media/>

⁵ LBRY: Content Freedom; <https://lbry.io/>

peer content distribution suitable for major publishing houses, self-publishers and everyone in between” (LBRY 2018). This model allows for the publication and sharing of different types of digital content such as movies, photographs or books.

Advantages of these models are that creators will be able to set the terms of their contracts (to varying degrees) for payments or licensing fees payable by users, when they upload their work on the blockchain, enabling them to earn direct revenues from their creative works instead of small percentage royalties associated with large online publishers (Gain 2016). It also allows them to register their copyright in a secure database, which is searchable.

However, despite the perceived benefits of blockchain technology and smart contracts to protect digital copyright, some concerns have been expressed. Firstly, software and coding in smart contracts can be flawed and these flaws can attract hackers (*The Economist* 2016), contradicting the assurances of a safe and secure database promised by blockchain users. Secondly, if the code is regarded as a legal (smart) contract, so are any bugs in the contract, and changing them might mean a breach of contract. Some of the problems associated with these models are that none of them offer total functionality on all levels necessary to protect copyright effectively, namely recording/registering of IP in creative work, ability to monetise/license the work, and monitoring of copyright breaches. There is no centralised platform for all creators that is easy to use—instead, at this point in time, prospective users are provided with a range of options all requiring some specific technical knowledge. Currently these models appear to be targeted to publishers or creators who are involved in, or familiar with, technology and could exclude many individual creators. Increased functionality and offering a wider range of applications may improve the practical value of these initiatives to copyright owners on a global scale.

Another noteworthy initiative is CUSTOS Media Technologies (CustosTech⁶), a company which focuses on tracking copyright infringements for videos, e-books, music, virtual reality and other media.

CustosTech

CustosTech provides a way of detecting the sources of leaked/pirated media, by imperceptibly marking each copy of a digital media file that is entrusted to a recipient. This “watermark” directly identifies the recipient. What makes the company unique, is that it rewards individuals in piracy

⁶ <https://custostech.com>

networks across the world to report on pirated content. The concept is based on incentivising individuals (bounty hunters) who know where to find pirated content, and are rewarded when they find new infringements. This is done by embedding a reward in the form of digital currency (Bitcoin) directly in the copies of the media that are sent to recipients. When an anonymous bounty hunter claims the bounty, CustosTech can immediately detect the leak and inform the copyright holder of the infringer's details. This discourages infringers or uploaders to provide what is essentially a free service to the downloaders, since the downloaders expose them to risk of being identified.⁷

A disadvantage of the system for individual content creators is that it may still require them to go through the expense of legal action in other jurisdictions, where the infringements occur. However, CustosTech states that a viable solution could be takedown notices, where content owners (or their representatives) ask sites hosting infringing content to remove such content. The issuing of these takedown notices is often automated, sometimes with embarrassing results to infringers (CustosTech 2014, 9) which has a deterring effect. CustosTech operates in conjunction with online publishing platform Erudition⁸, whose piracy detection fee starts at £100 per title per annum fee to cover the set-up, platform licensing and monitoring process.

An advantage of the CustosTech system is that it is user-friendly for copyright owners and does not require special tech knowledge, as the Bitcoin and blockchain form a part of the back-end of the technology. One commentator has observed that “Essentially, the Custos system is designed to attack the economy of piracy by targeting uploaders rather than downloaders, turning proactive downloaders into an early detection network” (Whigham 2018). Whigham also commented that “it remains to be seen if this type of technology-driven approach becomes widely adopted by content owners but at the very least it’s an interesting new tactic to combat illegal file sharing”.

Conclusion

It has become evident that the traditional application of territorial copyright and PIRs no longer serve to protect copyright holders, due to the impact of digital sales and the application of the first sale doctrine in the US to printed books. For now, PIRs apply to printed books in Australia, but they are ineffective in the digital world, and can be circumvented by secondary sales

⁷ See CustosTech: Custos Media Technologies, <https://custostech.com/tech/>

⁸ See Erudition: Custos for E-Books, <https://www.eruditiondigital.co.uk/>

of printed books. It is apparent that new copyright solutions are required, which require authors and publishers to continually embrace digital technology, improve their knowledge of online publishing and apply alternative creative publishing models. Although DRM has been criticised by some as being too restrictive, for many authors and publishers its use has been instrumental in protecting their copyright online.

While there have been efforts such as the UK Copyright Hub⁹ to harmonise and share online data, the technology and process landscape around rights remains fragmented (Cox 2017). Free models such as the CC¹⁰ have also gained limited support in the global context. Despite the provisions of the Berne Convention, the enforcement of copyright in the digital domain remains fraught with difficulties.

In respect of copyright management and tracking infringements, smart contracts on the blockchain system may provide solutions but come with their own challenges, and many of the companies offering these solutions are still in the developmental stages. Some of these models are also closely tied to cryptocurrency use and payments, which may require special knowledge on the part of the user. This could deter individual authors and content creators who may prefer more user-friendly models.

However, the blockchain system promises to revolutionise the way in which IP rights (including copyright) will be managed in the future. Sims (2017a) has pointed out that the blockchain can contain licensing terms, automatic royalty payments, notifications of when the licencing term expires, and that visibility to all parties (or potential parties) will limit potential problems with territorial rights clashes. Gilbert & Tobin Lawyers have stated:

while many of the preceding examples are still in development, it is our view that blockchain is the most significant technical and commercial revolution to emerge in the last 20 years. We are bordering on the precipice of copyright utopia, as the potential expands for blockchain to substantially re-engineer the complexities of copyright management, with far greater transparency, simplicity and rigour (2017, 10).

The issues highlighted in this chapter are indicative of changing copyright expectations in the digital sphere during a critical time of technological progress. Copyright has historically had a reactive, rather than proactive, approach towards changing technology, as copyright laws have traditionally adapted to technology to meet the needs of copyright users. This mindset

⁹ The Copyright Hub, at <http://www.copyrighthub.org/>

¹⁰ Creative Commons, at <https://creativecommons.org.au/>

has resulted in deficiencies which could affect creators adversely, and a more hands-on approach may be necessary. Primarily, authors need to equip themselves to deal with the challenges of new media technology to ensure that they are adequately rewarded for their creative efforts, and to exert power as a significant stakeholder group in the digital environment. How authors and content creators cope with these changes in a global marketplace depends on how effectively they expand their knowledge of the different options available to them, and how successfully they utilise the opportunities that arise because of technological change.

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CHAPTER FOUR

MORE THAN ECONOMICS: CULTURAL VALUE AND THE AUSTRALIAN BOOK INDUSTRY

PAUL CROSBY & DAVID THROSBY

Introduction

The Australian book industry can be seen as an economic entity like any other industry in the Australian economy. In the 2016–17 financial year revenue generated by the industry was A\$1.4 billion (IBISWorld 2017). While the contribution of the industry to the economy is easy to quantify, the product of the industry—books—are a cultural good, and as such are distinguished from normal commercial commodities because they yield some form of cultural value in addition to whatever economic value they possess. This duality in the value of books has presented a dilemma for Australian governments for many years—should book publishing be seen as just another industry, or does it warrant policy attention on cultural grounds? (Throsby 2017). Recent enquiries into the industry by the Book Industry Strategy Group (2010–2011) and the Book Industry Collaborative Council (2012–2013) have emphasised the importance of the cultural value of books as a distinctive aspect of their significance to Australian society (BISG 2011; BICC 2013).

Cultural value may derive from purely artistic or cultural assessments of cultural significance and as such it is independent of any economic evaluation. At the same time there might also be a perception in the community of a generalised public benefit yielded by the book industry's existence and operations. Economics would regard such a benefit, if it exists, as a public good, indicating a failure of markets to incorporate into prices a full assessment of the importance of books to Australian society. Government intervention (e.g., via financial support) is a standard means for correction for market failure. Thus, there may be an economic case for

public support for book production, as well as arguments on purely cultural grounds.

Despite the solid theoretical case for public support of the Australian book industry, the intangible nature of cultural value and complexities associated with measuring public-good benefits means that empirical examinations of how the Australian public view such issues remain rare. This chapter contributes towards filling this gap in the literature by presenting the results of two distinct investigations into the cultural value of the Australian book industry. The first study examines the extent to which members of the general Australian population attribute some cultural significance to Australian books and to the Australian publishing industry. We go on to assess whether or not positive attitudes towards the industry's contribution to cultural value translate into support for the public funding of Australian writing. The second study examines the cultural value of books in more detail. Using a survey of attendees at the 2016 Brisbane Writers Festival, we examine the elements of cultural value that are derived from the experience of reading and to what extent the price paid for a book is able to encapsulate these value judgements. As a background to our discussion regarding potential justifications for public support for the production of Australian books, we begin with an overview of the current state of the Australian book publishing industry.

Industry landscape

The book publishing landscape has changed considerably in recent years with a rise in the popularity of self-publishing, the entry and growth of new fee-for-service presses, and the availability of self-publishing platforms on booksellers' online sites. There has been strong growth in global self-publishing platforms, such as those available on Amazon and Apple, and in the size and number of fee-for-service presses which produce print and e-books. A 2015 national survey of Australian book authors (Throsby et al. 2015) found that during their careers over one-quarter self-published a book; these authors are likely to organise and manage the process themselves (twenty-three per cent of all authors) rather than to use a fee-for-service press (eight per cent of all authors).

Trade publishers in Australia have also been affected by a number of other structural changes in the industry. Data collected by Nielsen Bookscan (2016) show that the collapse of REDgroup retail (the owner of Borders and Angus & Robertson booksellers) in 2011 resulted in a twenty per cent onshore contraction in the value of book sales, while the launch of Amazon's Australian offering in December 2017 created further uncertainty. A decrease

in the average selling price (ASP) of books is also a concern for publishers. The same data show a decline in ASP from \$19.75 AUD in 2006 to \$17.35 in 2015. A number of explanations have been put forward to explain this trend, including a switch to cheaper formats by publishers, an increase in the proportion of less expensive books being sold (such as children's books or adult colouring books), and an increase in the share of sales by discount department stores at lower retail prices.

Publishers across the board are innovating in response to these developments by making significant changes to their workflow planning and management, organisational roles, market research, products and strategies for promotion. On this matter Zwar (2016: 2–3) notes:

Publishers have developed defensive strategies to entrants such as Google, Apple and Amazon, for example via direct-to-consumer print and e-book sales and improvements in their logistics management and speed to market. [...] Other strategies aim to open up new, different markets and test new business models, for instance new types of royalty agreements between publishers and authors, experiments with the pricing of e-books, and moves to subscription models.

Despite these innovations, a survey of Australian publishers conducted by Throsby, Zwar and Morgan (2016) reported that fifty-two per cent of the publishers surveyed suggested that their ability to respond to change in the industry has been constrained by reduced government support to promote books and reading, while forty-eight per cent suggested that changed government support for literary writing has also had a detrimental effect. One third of publishers reported a deterioration in their financial position since 2010 and over fifteen per cent of publishers experienced greater financial volatility during the same period. The study concluded that almost half of all publishers have experienced some form of negative impact on their financial position as a result of recent changes in the industry.

It is not just publishers who are struggling to keep pace with changes in the book industry. A recent survey of author income revealed that less than one in twenty authors earned the average Australian annual income or more from their creative practice in the 2013–2014 financial year (Zwar et al. 2015). Therefore, most authors supplement their income with other paid work. There has been considerable speculation within the writing profession about whether recent changes in the book industry have had a favourable or unfavourable impact on authors' income. Data from the survey show that nearly forty per cent of book authors have not experienced a change over the last five years, while fifteen per cent say they are better off, and fifteen per cent say they are worse off. Around ten per cent report that they are

experiencing greater variability in their financial position. It might be noted, however, that the changes in the industry over the last five years have had a differential impact across different types of authors—for example, writers of genre fiction are the most likely to report an improvement in their financial position, whereas about one-third of literary fiction authors and one-fifth of children’s authors say they have experienced a deterioration in their income from writing.

Overall, it is apparent that the structural and policy changes that have affected the Australian book industry in recent years have led to a great deal of uncertainty about the future. It is therefore an opportune time to look at empirical evidence concerning public attitudes to the industry and perceptions of the cultural value that it yields.

Public-good benefits from the book industry

We noted above that the book industry may give rise to public-good or non-market benefits if the population at large perceives some generalised benefit to the Australian community arising from the existence and operations of the industry that goes beyond the purely monetary value of books. Such a benefit might arise, for example, if books are seen to play a role in raising people’s awareness of themselves, their lives, their relationships with others, their cultural identity, and so on. Although these sorts of perceptions might relate to books in general, the interest in public policy circles is likely to relate primarily to Australian books written by Australian authors and published in Australia.

Whether such benefits exist in reality is an empirical matter that can be investigated most appropriately by random-sample survey methods. As one component of a large-scale survey of Australian readers undertaken in 2016 by researchers at Macquarie University in partnership with the Australia Council for the Arts (Throsby et al. 2017), respondents were asked about their perception of public-good benefits from the Australian book industry. The survey was conducted online by a market research company and contained a sample of 2,944 respondents whose responses were weighted in order to be representative of the Australian adult (older than fourteen years of age) population. In the survey, respondents were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with a series of statements about possible public-good benefits of the book industry. Three of these statements, pointed particularly at the sorts of effects discussed above, were as follows:

- Books make a contribution to Australian life that goes beyond their monetary value.

- Books by Australian writers about Australian subjects help us to understand ourselves and our country.
- An Australian book industry is part of an Australian culture.

The results shown in Table 1 indicate that about two-thirds of Australians agree or strongly agree with each of the three statements, lending strong support to the proposition that the Australian public recognises the importance of books and the book industry in our cultural life.

Table 1. Responses to statements about the cultural value of the Australian book industry: per cent of respondents in each group

	Non-readers	Readers	Total
1. Books make a contribution to Australian life that goes beyond their monetary value			
Strongly agree	12.1	35.3	33.4
Slightly agree	23.7	34.5	33.6
Neither agree nor disagree	34.7	22.5	23.5
Slightly disagree	3.0	2.9	2.9
Strongly disagree	8.7	1.2	1.8
Don't know	17.8	3.7	4.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
2. Books by Australian writers about Australian subjects help us to understand ourselves and our country			
Strongly agree	15.5	30.9	29.6
Slightly agree	26.6	40.5	39.3
Neither agree nor disagree	29.9	21.6	22.3
Slightly disagree	5.7	2.6	2.9
Strongly disagree	6.7	1.2	1.7
Don't know	15.6	3.2	4.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
3. An Australian book industry is part of an Australian culture			
Strongly agree	13.5	32.7	31.1
Slightly agree	20.5	31.0	30.1
Neither agree nor disagree	32.0	25.2	25.7
Slightly disagree	3.7	3.9	3.9
Strongly disagree	9.8	1.8	2.5
Don't know	20.5	5.5	6.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
<i>n</i>	244	2700	2944

It is noteworthy that this positive attitude is shared by readers and non-readers alike; the sentiment may be somewhat less enthusiastically held among the latter, but even so, a third or more of them agreed with the statements.

These generally positive attitudes towards the cultural significance of the industry go some way towards supporting the notion that Australian books possess public-good characteristics and are thus deserving of special attention when it comes to public policy. In order to see to what extent these attitudes translate into support for a locally based publishing industry, respondents were asked how important they thought it was that books written by Australian authors be published in Australia. A majority (sixty per cent) regarded this as important or extremely important, about one-quarter (twenty-four per cent) thought it neither important nor unimportant, and fewer than ten per cent expressed a negative view. Moreover, just over half (fifty-four per cent) of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the direct proposition that there should be public funding specifically for Australian writing. Nevertheless, some concern was expressed about book prices, with fifty-seven per cent of respondents believing that “books in Australia are too expensive”. This result is consistent with data on the importance of price in determining choice of books, although it is noteworthy that about thirty per cent couldn’t care one way or the other on this point.

While attitudinal questions such as the ones posed above provide a solid foundation on which to build the public-good argument for the Australian book industry, more advanced analytical techniques are needed in order to derive a public-good valuation that is expressed in monetary terms. One such technique is the contingent valuation method (CVM), which typically asks respondents what they would be willing to pay in a hypothetical market situation to support provision of some public good (Snowball 2008, 78). A full application of CVM requires a complex set of procedures that were beyond the scope of the 2016 survey. Instead a highly simplified approach was adopted whereby respondents were presented with the following hypothetical scenario and question:

Suppose a non-profit organisation were set up to help in supporting Australian authors to write books. The organisation would be financed by voluntary donations. How much (one-off) donation would you be prepared to make to such an organisation?

The results are shown in Figure 1. Almost two-thirds of respondents either indicated that they wouldn’t make any donation or that they were unable to say how much they would give. Amongst the thirty-eight per cent of the

entire sample that said they would donate something, the most common amount was \$20 AUD (ten per cent of the total sample, or twenty-six per cent of those willing to donate). Across the entire sample (not including the “Don’t knows”), the median willingness to pay was \$5 AUD per head, and the mean was \$14. Not surprisingly, readers were willing to donate more than non-readers (means of \$15.00 compared to \$3.60).

Figure 1. Donation amounts to support the Australian book industry: percentages of respondents (n=2944)



Results from CVM exercises such as this have to be interpreted with caution. In particular it must be reiterated that the measurement undertaken here does not constitute a full CVM application where all sources of bias are controlled for. Hence only the broadest conclusions can be drawn from the results. With this caveat in mind, we can say that this study provides some evidence for the existence of public-good benefits yielded by the Australian book industry and that consumers on average value these benefits, although we cannot draw a conclusion as to how much this value is in financial terms. Nevertheless, the policy implications of these findings point towards a generally positive attitude in the community towards some level of public support for Australian writers and publishers in the production of Australian books.

The economic and cultural value of books

We turn now to looking more closely at what it means to assert that books have economic and cultural value. To do so, we narrow our focus from books in general to books of literary fiction. Our concentration on this genre is not intended to imply that other forms of writing do not embody cultural value. On the contrary, books of all types can be seen to have some form of cultural significance, a quality whose characteristics are likely to vary markedly between different genres. Literary fiction is a field where issues of value and valuation have been widely discussed and is thus likely to be especially interesting as an object of study.

The concept of cultural value has been of interest to literary scholars for some time (Connor 1992). In recent years the nature of cultural value has attracted the attention of economists engaged in assessments of the value of cultural goods and services, and of artistic and cultural phenomena more generally. It is acknowledged that an appropriate way to come to terms with cultural value is to disaggregate it into specific components or dimensions, the detail of which depends on the context. For a literary work, cultural value might be thought to reside in aesthetic aspects such as its narrative or stylistic qualities, or in the work's symbolic value, its historical value, its value as a social document, and so on.

We explore these issues empirically by reference to a study of the cultural and economic value of works of literary fiction. The study is based on the assumption that a group of readers can make a series of evaluations of well-known authors of literary fiction, all of whom have amassed a substantial body of work. It is assumed that the cultural value of books written by each of these authors can be broken down into a number of clearly specified dimensions and that individuals are able to assign a value to each of these dimensions according to a given scale. In addition, it is assumed that the economic value of a book written by each of the authors included in the survey can be expressed as a respondent's willingness to pay for a book written by the author in question.

Data on which to make these evaluations were gathered by means of a survey of attendees at the 2016 Brisbane Writers Festival. Held annually over five days in September, the Brisbane Writers Festival is one of Australia's largest festivals of reading, writing and books. The 2016 event alone attracted over 38,000 attendees. A writers' festival was thought to be an appropriate place for the administration of such a survey as it brings together people who are predisposed to enjoying reading and who are likely to be interested in participating in a survey about books. It must be recognised that attendees at writers festivals are generally observed to be

predominantly middle-class and highly educated (Driscoll 2014; Weber 2018: 71); we acknowledge that, as a result, our choice of participants may implicitly render results representative only of the *reading class*, defined by Kelly et al. (2018) as a distinct segment of the reading public that is characterised by having significant levels of cultural and economic advantage. Nevertheless, while an examination of the economic and cultural valuations of other groups of readers in Australia would certainly be of interest, the nature of the survey required respondents to be as well read as possible in order to make their judgements. This sampling strategy was therefore deemed appropriate.

Randomly selected festival attendees were asked if they would be willing to complete a survey asking for their opinions on eight prominent authors of literary fiction, consisting of five Australian and three international authors. The authors included were:

Margaret Atwood, Canadian
Jonathan Franzen, American
Kate Grenville, Australian
Thomas Keneally, Australian
Ian McEwan, British
Peter Temple, Australian
Christos Tsiolkas, Australian
Tim Winton, Australian

This selection clearly does not provide for a balanced representation of writers according to gender or ethnicity. The long-standing biases in various listings of books and authors in the literary fiction field are well known. For example, the long and short-listing of titles put forward for a range of literary awards and prizes is frequently unrepresentative of women writers (Verboord 2012; Childress et al. 2017); likewise, as a further illustration, the treatment of ethnic diversity in newspaper coverage of literary authors has varied over time and across countries, but on the whole has tended to be biased against writers of non-western ethnic origin (Berkers et al. 2011). We had no desire to replicate these sorts of biases in our own work.

Nevertheless, whilst recognising these shortcomings, we decided to proceed with the selection shown above, for two main reasons. Firstly, the list was compiled after consultation with industry players to identify a group of authors who would be most likely to be read by an average festival attendee. This strategy was adopted because we needed to maximise our sample of valid observations for subsequent analysis. Secondly, we assumed that the particular dimensions of cultural value in which we were

interested (aesthetic quality of the writing, historical value, educational value, and so on) could be judged independently of the gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation or other personal characteristics of the author. If any interactions existed between criteria, they could be expected to be randomly distributed, and hence not prejudicial to our overall results.

In the survey, respondents were first asked if they had read a book written by each of the authors. If so, they were then asked a series of questions designed to elicit cultural and economic valuations. Note that if a respondent was not familiar with a given author's body of work, they were not asked to make any cultural or economic valuation judgements. The survey also contained a variety of questions regarding respondents' attitudes towards literary fiction, along with questions relating to their book reading habits and socio-demographic characteristics.

A total of 337 complete responses were gathered. Analysis of the respondents' socio-demographic characteristics revealed that the sample was skewed more towards females than the wider Australian population. Respondents were also skewed towards the higher end of educational achievement, with over eighty per cent of respondents possessing a bachelor's degree or higher. Both of these findings can be seen simply as characteristics of the average writers festival attendee, rather than as indicating any "within festival" sampling bias. Coverage of age and income was, however, representative of national averages.

The task of the survey was to measure as far as possible the cultural and economic values attaching to each author's work. We turn first to the estimation of cultural value. Measurement of cultural value presents some formidable difficulties. Unlike economic value, where money can be used as a convenient and agreed metric, there is no unit of account with which to express cultural value. Moreover, assessments of cultural value originate in the subjective opinions of individuals who may be unable to articulate their assessment of cultural value in any systematic way.

However, as noted above, it is possible to proceed by disaggregating cultural value into a series of dimensions or components and assessing an individual's valuation according to a given dimension by seeking their agreement or disagreement with one or more statements reflecting that dimension. In the present study, cultural value was assessed following Throsby (2001) by disaggregating it into six value components: aesthetic; educational; historical; social; symbolic, and spiritual. In addition, in recognition of the possibility that a person's valuation of a given cultural value element may differ between a judgement made on their own behalf and one made on behalf of society as a whole. The assessment for social,

symbolic and spiritual value was split into a value “for self” and a value “for others”.

To determine a form of words for each of the statements to be presented to respondents in the survey, an intensive preliminary process of focus groups and pilot testing was followed, ensuring that the statements were fully understood and as free as possible from ambiguity. The final list of statements is shown in Table 2. For each author they had read, respondents were asked to evaluate each statement on a scale of 1–10, with 1 indicating “strongly disagree” and 10 indicating “strongly agree”.

Table 2. Statements to elicit the cultural value of books

Cultural value dimension	Statement
Aesthetic: beauty	Books by this author are beautifully written
Aesthetic: imagination	Reading works by this author stirs the imagination
Educational	The topics of this author’s writing could be valuable in educating future generations
Historical	The subject matter that this author writes about helps to provide a connection with the past
Social: for self	Books written by this author help me to understand myself better as a human being
Social: for others	The subject matter that this author writes about helps to provide a connection with others
Symbolic: for self	Writing by this author possesses a cultural significance for me
Symbolic: for others	Writing by this author possesses a cultural significance for other people
Spiritual: for self	This author’s writing conveys spiritual messages to me
Spiritual: for others	This author’s writing conveys spiritual messages to other people

We turn now to the estimation of the economic value that respondents attribute to the work of each of the authors. We assume that participants in the survey could conceptualise how much they would be willing to pay out of their own pocket for a book written by one of the authors contained within the survey, and that this private valuation is a sufficient measure of the individual’s assessment of the economic value of that author’s work. Accordingly, respondents were asked to answer the following question for each of the authors whose books they had read:

Imagine a new book is being released by [author x] next week. Furthermore, the book is only being released in a paperback format (i.e., it will not be released as an e-book or in any other format). Knowing that you will not be receiving the book as a gift, nor be able to borrow it from a friend or library, how much would you be willing to pay for this book?

Analysis of the data from the survey involved calculating the mean numerical values across all respondents for each author for each cultural value statement and for the economic value estimate. The results are shown in Table 3, which also indicates the aggregate valuations calculated across all eight authors in the final column of the table.

Table 3. Estimates of economic and cultural value: All authors

Value dimension	Author								
	MA	JF	KG	TK	IM	PT	CT	TW	All
<i>Economic value</i>									
Respondent WTP (\$A)	27.93	21.18	28.14	25.73	26.20	24.06	22.65	27.00	25.92
<i>Cultural value</i>									
Aesthetic: beauty	8.86	7.66	8.52	7.60	8.49	7.36	6.96	8.59	8.13
Aesthetic: imagination	9.12	7.68	8.73	8.17	8.44	7.54	7.34	8.62	8.33
Educational	8.71	7.82	8.94	8.88	8.04	6.93	7.62	8.54	8.35
Historical	7.58	6.39	9.20	8.94	7.74	6.21	5.88	8.04	7.74
Social: for self	8.00	7.29	7.90	6.96	7.66	6.38	6.22	7.70	7.38
Social: for others	8.23	7.28	8.47	8.13	7.75	7.52	7.22	8.26	7.95
Symbolic: for self	7.35	6.74	8.26	7.56	6.81	6.48	6.64	8.02	7.36
Symbolic: for others	7.91	7.31	8.55	8.00	7.54	7.57	7.65	8.34	7.95
Spiritual: for self	6.49	5.23	6.94	6.28	5.71	5.00	4.76	7.20	6.15
Spiritual: for others	6.72	6.08	7.52	6.47	6.35	5.71	5.59	7.65	6.69

A look at the mean cultural valuations for all authors in this column shows that the most highly valued dimensions of cultural value are those related to aesthetic and educational value, while spiritual value is the least valued dimension. We can also observe that individuals are quite capable of recognising the potential for a book to impart a cultural value to others, even if they have a lower personal assessment of its cultural value for themselves.

Looking at specific authors, we can observe the strong valuations that readers of literary fiction place on the aesthetic qualities of Margaret Atwood's writing and the spiritual values in the work of Tim Winton. Kate Grenville's books generate a strong recognition for their symbolic, historical and educational values.

We turn now to the economic values shown in Table 3. As discussed, the mean willingness to pay for a book is \$25.92 AUD, which is considered to be reasonably close to current market prices. In order to avoid any potential anchoring or starting point bias, respondents were not made aware of the average selling price for a book by any of the survey authors before making their economic valuation decision. With this in mind, the willingness to pay results derived from the survey appear to be reasonable.

The relationship between cultural and economic value

In thinking about the twin values of cultural goods and that we have been discussing, it is not unreasonable to suppose that there may be some relationship between them. In particular it might be expected that the more a person values, say, the aesthetic qualities of a painting, the more they would be willing to pay to acquire it. In other words, it could be hypothesised that the cultural value of an artwork, a book, or some other cultural good is likely to influence estimates of its economic value. In fact, economists steeped in the strict neoclassical tradition would argue that all motivations for valuing a cultural good, however they arise, will be captured by willingness to pay, making a separate concept of cultural value unnecessary.

However, other economists have proposed that, although there is likely to be a correlation between cultural and economic value, the relationship will not be a perfect one. In particular it is suggested that there may be some dimensions of cultural value that may be strongly recognised in cultural terms but that do not affect willingness to pay. This proposition was tested in a study of the economic and cultural value of paintings in an art gallery (Throsby and Zednik 2014). The study found that there were indeed some components of the cultural value of paintings as judged by a sample of gallery goers that were regarded as significant but that had no effect on their

assessments of paintings' economic value. A similar analysis can be carried out on the above data to test the same proposition in the case of works of literary fiction.

Technical details of this analysis are shown in an Appendix, and the results are summarised as follows. Four out of the ten dimensions (aesthetic—imagination; social—for self; symbolic—for self; and spiritual—for self) are found to have a positive and statistically significant effect on a respondent's economic valuation of an author's work. Out of these four, the quality of the book to stir the imagination had the largest impact.

The other aesthetic dimension included in the survey (beauty) was not found to play a statistically significant role in influencing economic value, suggesting respondents struggled to make a connection between the stylistic elegance of an author's work and the price they are willing to pay for it. All three of the "for self" evaluations were also found to play a positive and statistically significant role in influencing a respondent's economic valuations.

What do these results tell us about the relationship between cultural and economic value in readers' evaluations of works of literary fiction? Table 4 lists the dimensions of cultural value in descending order of their importance to readers as revealed by the mean survey responses taken from the last column of Table 3. We then show whether each dimension had a statistically significant impact on economic value.

Table 4. Comparison of mean survey responses and statistical significance

Cultural value	Mean survey response	Statistically significant influence on economic value
Educational	8.35	No
Aesthetic: imagination	8.33	Yes
Aesthetic: beauty	8.13	No
Social: for others	7.95	No
Symbolic: for others	7.95	No
Historical	7.74	No
Social: for self	7.38	Yes
Symbolic: for self	7.36	Yes
Spiritual: for others	6.69	No
Spiritual: for self	6.15	Yes

It is apparent that five out of the top six cultural value dimensions (educational; aesthetic—beauty; social—for others; symbolic—for others; and historical) fail to exert any influence over economic value. There is therefore empirical evidence to suggest that books carry with them a cultural value (in terms of the dimensions listed in the survey) and that the importance of these cultural value dimensions to the consumer choice decision is not fully captured by monetary assessments. Overall the results confirm that price alone will not fully capture the cultural value of these authors' books to readers, and that a full assessment of the value of books requires a consideration of both economic and cultural value assessments.

Finally, we note that in the case of each of the three cultural value components that were split into evaluations for both “self” and “others”, respondents incorporated their self-evaluations of the cultural value components into their willingness-to-pay assessments.

However, despite having relatively high mean survey responses, each of the three cultural valuations made on behalf of others was not found to have a statistically significant influence on willingness to pay. This finding suggests that differences between economic and cultural value are driven to some degree by the fact that individuals are able to recognise the cultural value of a good to others but are not willing and/or able to extend that recognition into the price they are prepared to pay for the good.

Conclusion

The research on which chapter is based points clearly to the importance of accounting for both the economic and cultural value yielded by the Australia book publishing industry in any assessment of the importance of the industry to the economy and society. Indeed, both forms of value provide a solid basis on which to build a rational policy strategy in support of the industry. We have shown that there is at least *prima facie* evidence that the book industry yields public-good benefits that are recognised in the community at large, and that attitudes towards supporting Australian books and writing are generally positive.

Our investigation into the cultural value of literary fiction, although limited in scope and coverage, does at least yield results that are consistent with the proposition that the cultural and economic values of a cultural good are distinct though related phenomena. It should be remembered however, that the experimental methods we have used are in their early stages of development; there is a need for further theoretical and empirical research in this field. Furthermore, there is considerable scope for application of

these methods to investigate issues of value and valuation in regard to a range of other forms of writing and among different categories of readers.

Meanwhile Australian book policy continues in a state of uncertainty. The blueprint for industry reform contained in the BICC Report (2013) remains on the shelf, and the prospect for a re-emergence of a Book Council to oversee the implementation of a reform strategy seems further away than ever.

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Appendix

Table A1. Results of the OLS regression model

Dependent variable: Economic value (WTP)			
<i>Cultural Value</i>	<i>Author Characteristics</i>		
Aesthetic: imagination	1.3087** (-0.5200)	Australian	0.6337 (0.9730)
Aesthetic: beauty	-0.6949 (0.4853)	Years Active	0.0052 (0.0506)
Educational	-0.7543 (0.4925)	<i>Socio-demographics</i>	
Historical	0.4305 (0.3335)	Male	0.6161 (1.0683)
Social: for self	0.7436** (0.3583)	Age	-0.0584* (0.0329)
Social: for others	-0.0430 (0.5234)	Degree or higher	-0.7173 (1.2119)
Symbolic: for self	0.7629* (0.3995)	Income	0.0012 (0.0008)
Symbolic: for others	-0.3662 (0.4654)	Constant	17.5837*** (4.2310)
Spiritual: for self	0.8280* (0.4780)	<i>n</i>	337
Spiritual: for others	-0.7917 (-0.5120)	<i>R</i> ²	0.22
		<i>F</i>	4.67

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses; * p < 0.1, ** p < 0.05, *** p < 0.01.

The model used to test the relationship between economic and cultural value in this chapter can be stated as follows:

$$\overline{E}_k = f(C_{jk}, X_a, Y_k) \quad (1)$$

Where \overline{E}_k represents our measure of economic value for individual \overline{k} , \overline{C}_{jk} represents individual \overline{k} 's response to cultural value statement \overline{C}_j (as per Table 2, $j = 1, \dots, 10$), \overline{X}_a is a vector of variables representing various characteristics of author \overline{a} , where $\overline{a} = 1, \dots, 8$. Finally, \overline{Y}_k is a vector containing a variety of individual \overline{k} 's socio-demographic characteristics and reading habits.

The model put forward above can be estimated from our data using ordinary-least-squares regression, in which the dependent variable takes the form of economic value, as measured by willingness to pay, and the independent variables are our cultural value assessments, along with a suite of author specific and socio-demographic characteristics. The size and statistical significance of the individual coefficients on each of the cultural value dimensions can then be analysed in order to assess which dimensions have an effect on the economic value of a book, and which do not.

The regression results are shown in Table A1 below. These results are discussed in the text of this chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

PUBLISHING AND IDENTITY: GENDER, SEXUALITY AND RACE

DALLAS BAKER

Introduction

This chapter explores the intersections between identity and publishing. Specifically, it discusses notions of gender identity, sexual identity (sexuality) and race in book publishing and how certain critical theories might be applied in Publishing Studies to illuminate these significant social and cultural notions. The concepts and issues discussed here intersect with our everyday experience. We are all implicated in gender, sexuality and race in intimate ways (Offord and Kerruish 2009). As Martha Nussbaum notes, these concepts deal with “concerns which lie deep in many of us, and which are frequently central to the ways in which we define our identity and the search for the good” (1997, 155). Because race, gender and sexuality are at the heart of how we think and feel about ourselves, they also are at the heart of the narratives we produce, publish and disseminate. All books, both fiction and non-fiction, present an idea, or a *construction*, of race, gender and sexuality, sometimes explicitly, sometimes in ways that are more subtle. Sometimes these constructions take forms that resist or refuse dominant ways of thinking about gender, sexuality or race, sometimes they do the exact opposite. Many publications not only reinforce traditional conceptions of gender, sexuality and race but also perpetuate negative stereotypes. Studying the intersections between race, gender, sexuality and publishing is sometimes contentious. It is not uncommon for those new to the study of publishing and literature to think that books are (and should be) published purely because they tell a good story or relay important information. The truth is that more books are published, read and reviewed that tell stories about race, gender and sexuality from a white, male heterosexual perspective than from any other perspective. This bias in publishing reflects,

reinforces and disseminates broader social biases. This bias is also a rich field of research for Publishing Studies scholars.

Gender and sexuality

If we are to explore gender and sexuality in the context of publishing, we first need to have a basic understanding of these (complex) terms. Gender and sexuality are interconnected, perhaps even entangled, concepts (Offord and Kerruish 2009).¹ Gender is a term that refers to the social and cultural roles that define what is meant by feminine and masculine (Connell 2009). On the other hand, sexuality is a term that is usually associated with an individual's sexual preferences, orientation, behaviours or desires (Beasley 2005). It is difficult to understand gender without thinking about sexuality, and vice versa (Offord and Kerruish 2009). In the following section a number of critical theories are introduced that attempt to explore, question, debate and reflect upon how gender and sexuality manifest. These critical theories, or ways of contextualising and framing gender and sexuality, can be of use in the study of publishing and book culture.

Gender

The term “gender” comes from the Latin *genus*, meaning “type” or “sort”. Given this definition, it is obvious that gender is a word that indicates some kind of classification or grouping (Offord and Kerruish 2009). As a term and a social and cultural practice, gender is most often constructed as binary. In dominant and mainstream discourse, gender classifies people and things into two categories: masculine or feminine. Gender is rarely conceived as having more than these two categories, though some cultures have included three or more gender categories (Roscoe 2000). It is also increasingly accepted that there are up to five biological sex types (Fausto-Sterling 2000). To put it simply, gender refers to the socially structured behaviour, roles and characteristics that we associate with men and women (Connell 2009). Gender is one of the fundamental categories used in most societies to organise or structure social and personal relations (Connell 2009; Offord and Kerruish 2009). It is also fundamental to how people define and understand themselves (Connell 2009), and gender is often the foundation and core of an individual's identity (Offord and Kerruish 2009). According to feminist scholars, the different behaviour and social roles assigned to men

¹ Thanks to Professor Baden Offord and Dr Erika Kerruish whose teaching, research and writing on gender, sexuality and culture significantly informed this chapter.

and women are often tied to inequalities (Connell 2009; Casad and Kasabian 2009; Offord and Kerruish 2009). Gender and biological sex are theorised in many ways, but there are two dominant theories that are used to understand them: *social constructionism* and *essentialism*.

Advocates of social constructionism argue that social and cultural institutions, practices and behaviours produce what we call masculinity and femininity (Offord and Kerruish 2009). Social constructionists favour a social explanation for the constitution of gender and identity rather than genetic or biological explanations (Offord and Kerruish 2009). An advocate of social constructionism would insist that gender be studied as a social construction, not as a natural or inborn quality. Furthermore, social constructionists suggest that individuals actively construct their gender and identities through the (often ritualistic) behaviours and practices they perform (Butler 1990 and 2004). A social constructionist does not believe that gender is inherently linked to biological sex (Gatens 1983). Alternatively, advocates of essentialism argue that it is possible to distinguish between the essential and non-essential aspects of persons, objects or phenomena (Offord and Kerruish 2009). Fuss (cited in Baker 2017, xi) defines essentialism as “a belief in the real, true essences of things, the invariable and fixed properties which define the ‘whatness’ of a given entity”. In other words, essentialists believe that gender arises *naturally* from bodies and is *inherently* linked to biological sex. For many essentialists, gender is an inborn quality.

It is important to note that the notion of an essential gender has largely been discredited by both theorists and science (Fausto-Sterling 2000), as Judith Butler (1990, 214) notes:

Gender ought not to be construed as a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts follow; rather gender is an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a stylized repetition of acts.

Thinking about gender in a Publishing Studies context means critically examining how gender is reproduced and disseminated through acts of publishing and how those acts of publishing, and the discourses they circulate, then inform (and are incorporated into) gender practices and rituals and, importantly, our gender/sex identities. It is important to be open to the ways that notions and definitions of gender change and evolve through the dissemination of ideas in published artefacts. As Butler argues: “My view is that no simple definition of gender will suffice, and that more important than coming up with a strict and applicable definition is to track the travels of the term through public culture” (2004, 184).

Our ideas about gender inform (and perhaps even dictate) the narratives we tell about ourselves (in public culture), which, in turn, determine the kinds of stories that are published and disseminated. This classic quote from Simone de Beauvoir (2010, 5), illustrates the different kinds of narratives (or discourses) that are disseminated around gender:

Woman has ovaries, a uterus: these peculiarities imprison her in her subjectivity, circumscribe her within the limits of her own nature. It is often said that she thinks with her glands. Man superbly ignores the fact that his anatomy also includes glands, such as the testicles, and that they secrete hormones. He thinks of his body as a direct and normal connection with the world, which he believes he apprehends objectively, whereas he regards the body of woman as a hindrance, a prison, weighed down by everything peculiar to it.

These ideas find their way into books as a result of a publishing bias that selects, publishes and promotes written works in which men and women are gendered in specific ways. These ideas also influence the ways that published artefacts written by women are treated by the publishing industry, reviewers and readers.

In Publishing Studies, we can track the ways that ideas about gender (and sex) change, evolve or regress in book culture by asking questions like: What kinds of narratives about gender get published and which ones do not? Which narratives about gender prove to be more popular with readers, and why? Do men and women adopt different reading practices based on their ideas of gender? Is publishing biased towards male writers over female writers? Is gender a factor in what types of books get reviewed and which authors win literary prizes? Which roles in publishing (e.g., editors, publishers, promoters) are dominated by men and which by women, and why? Are men and women paid equally in publishing? Are genres gendered? Do more women read certain genres whilst men read others? Do certain literary genres reinforce gender stereotypes more than others? And perhaps the biggest question we can ask about gender in Publishing Studies is this one: How do published artefacts contribute to the constitution, that is, the making, of our gender identities?

Sexuality

As noted above, sexuality is an individual's sexual preferences, orientation, behaviours or desires (Beasley 2005). Sexuality is an important and fundamental aspect of life, both personally and on a collective level (Offord and Kerruish 2009; Beasley 2005). Like gender, sexuality is one of the

foundations of our personal identities (Connell 2009). Even so, discussions of sexuality are often challenging and controversial (Offord and Kerruish 2009). As Michael Leunig notes, “sexuality is where people are very human and vulnerable. This is precisely where truths emerge—and sensitivities and fears” (1998, 60). When we discuss sexuality, we are discussing very intense feelings and deep differences (Nussbaum 1997, 223). Furthermore, Ken Plummer (2008, 16) notes that:

The study of sexuality needs always to be seen as a political practice; the doing of sexualities is always embroiled in power relations; the writing about sexualities will always bring policy, political and public projects.

In other words, as a topic of investigation, sexuality intersects with numerous other domains, such as social and health policy, political discourse and questions of access to and representation in the public sphere, to name just a few. Needless to say, sexuality is not the same for all of us. Sexuality “may be thought about, experienced, and acted on differently according to age, class, ethnicity, physical ability, sexual orientation and preference, religion, and region” (Vance 1984, 17). The noted sexuality scholar Jeffrey Weeks argues that sexuality, like gender, is a social construct which is not determined by biological sex or even gender (1986). Weeks posits that our emotions, desires and relationships are shaped in multiple and intricate ways by the society we live in (1986). Indeed, the eminent philosopher Michel Foucault (1979, 105) wrote:

Sexuality must not be thought of as a kind of natural given which power tries to hold in check, or as an obscure domain which knowledge tries gradually to uncover. It is the name that can be given to a historical construct.

Sexuality is a common source of discrimination (Beasley 2005; Connell 2009; Offord and Kerruish 2009). Although the publishing world is often viewed as progressive, perhaps even too progressive (Deahl 2017), and as a space supportive of difference, it is, like all other institutions and industries, informed by social ideas about sexuality, about what is “normal” and what is “abnormal”. These ideas can, and often do, lead to biases that privilege heterosexual authors over non-heterosexual authors. Michael Hurley (2010) has shown how mainstream literary institutions (reviewing, publishing, journals, grant bodies) in Australia were, up until very recently, hostile or indifferent to gay and lesbian writing. From 1970 to 1990, major Australian publishers produced only *five* gay and lesbian works of fiction and a total of *eight* non-fiction books by or about gay and lesbian people (Hurley 2010). This is a significant problem when, as Hurley (2010, 44) writes:

Most minorities have a vested interest in how they are represented and how their cultures are documented. Cultures are built on the sharing of structures and processes of sense-making which include *inter alia* documentation, the negotiation of their own histories, associated artefacts (including ‘literature’) and how they are used in the making of social and literary narratives. For many gays and lesbians, fictional narratives, whatever the form involved (books, film, theatre, the Internet), enable personal and collective identification.

As with gender, our ideas about sexuality inform (and perhaps even dictate) the narratives we tell about ourselves, which, in turn, determine the kinds of stories about sexuality that are published and disseminated. Societal ideas about sexuality find their way into books as a result of a publishing bias that selects, publishes and promotes written works in which sexuality is represented in specific (often heteronormative) ways. Furthermore, it is clear that works by heterosexual authors that feature heterosexual characters and stories find publication much more easily than works by non-heterosexual authors that feature lesbian, gay or bisexual stories (Hurley 2010). Those works by homosexual authors that are published contribute to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) culture, enriching the discourse about sexuality and challenging dominant representations of LGBTI individuals. Indeed, published works written by LGBTI individuals push the boundaries of what is acceptable in the public domain and can initiate or strengthen social and human rights movements. Referring to gay male literature in particular, Christopher Bram (2012, ix) writes:

The gay revolution began as a literary revolution. Before World War II, homosexuality was a dirty secret that was almost never written about and rarely discussed. Suddenly, after the war, a handful of homosexual writers boldly used their personal experience in their work ... Their writing was the catalyst for a social shift as deep and unexpected as what was achieved by the civil rights and women’s movements.

Indeed, published artefacts (books, magazines, pamphlets and even posters) are often the inspiration for and foundation of social and human rights movements, the women’s liberation and Civil Rights movements being key examples. As authors like Truman Capote and Gore Vidal were to the gay liberation movement, so were Virginia Woolf and Edith Wharton to many others to the women’s liberation movement (Whelehan 2015). Social movements also inspire widespread publishing activity, as Imelda Whelehan (2015, 114) notes:

The Women's Liberation Movement produced feminist writers and readers. It inspired specialist publishers and small presses, as well as academic study, bolstering further interest in women's writing.

Publishing Studies can investigate and document the ways that ideas about sexuality change, evolve or regress in book culture by asking questions like: What kinds of narratives about sexuality get published and which ones do not? Which narratives about sexuality prove to be more popular with readers, and why? Do people adopt different reading practices based on their sexual identities? How precisely is the publishing bias towards heterosexual writers over non-heterosexual writers enacted? Is sexuality a factor in what types of books get reviewed and which authors win literary prizes? Is sexuality an issue in employment in the publishing industry? Are certain genres straighter or queerer than others? Do certain literary genres reinforce sexual stereotypes more than others? And, as with gender, the biggest question we can ask about sexuality in Publishing Studies is: How do published artefacts contribute to the constitution—the making—of our sexual identities?

Perhaps a good place to begin an investigation into how publishing intersects with our sexual identities is to consider our own reading practices. Do we read published works that feature characters whose sexuality is different to ours? If yes, what factors led us to choose that work? If no, why not? Are our attitudes about these things similar to those of our family and friends? If not, how do they differ? Reflecting on these simple questions can illuminate the ways that discourses about sexuality influence what we choose to read, reveal the notions of sexuality disseminated in the books we buy and also show how published works influence not only our purchasing and reading habits but our sense of our own sexual identity.

Race

The concept of race has historically signified the division of humanity into a small number of groups based upon five criteria based on physical characteristics, or phenotypes (James 2017). These characteristics are primarily skin colour, eye shape, hair texture, bone structure, and perhaps also certain behaviours, intelligence and delinquency (James 2017). The dominant scholarly position is that the concept of race is a modern phenomenon, at least in Europe and the Americas (James 2017). Many of us believe that race is evident, that differences in physical appearance between peoples proves that race is both real and indicate significant biological differences (James 2017; Zack 2002). However, many scholars argue that race, like gender and sexuality, is a social construction (Zack

2002). These scholars argue that there is little biological evidence for racial categories (James 2017). Zack (2002, 88) argues that “[e]ssences, geography, phenotypes, genotypes, and genealogy are the only known candidates for physical scientific bases of race. Each fails. Therefore, there is no physical scientific basis for the social racial taxonomy”.

Nakayama and Krizek (1995, 298) argue that “discourses on whiteness are relatively hidden in everyday interaction, but when whites are confronted, when they are asked directly about whiteness, a multiplicity of discourses become visible”. This multiplicity of discourses about whiteness “drives the dynamic nature of its power relations or forces, always resecur[ing] the hegemonic position of whiteness” (Nakayama and Krizek 1995, 298).

One of the racial characteristics mentioned above, intelligence, is particularly significant in terms of publishing. Literary culture is seen as a sign of a culture’s refinement and intelligence (Altbach 1997). The absence of literary culture therefore is associated with low intelligence. The presence of books and literature in a culture was, and still is, seen as indicating superior civilisation, meaning that cultures without published artefacts were considered inferior (Altbach 1997). This was certainly true in Australia, where the absence of book culture in pre-colonisation Indigenous cultures was used to justify racist discourse about aboriginal people as uncivilised. As Penny Van Toorn (2009, 6) notes:

That pre-contact Aboriginal societies were without European-style books and alphabetic writing was in itself a politically neutral fact. This historical fact became politically charged, however, by the symbolic values attached to books. Europeans viewed books and alphabetic writing as signs of their own cultural superiority over Indigenous societies, which they deemed to be without history, without writing, without books. Books and writing were some among many material and cultural benefits that philanthropists and missionaries believed Indigenous peoples needed, in order to be ‘raised up’ to the level of Europeans. These Eurocentric understandings of what a book was, how it might function, and what its very existence said about its culture of origin remained largely undisturbed in Australia until the last decades of the twentieth century, when Aboriginal stories and songs previously collected by anthropologists were incorporated into major anthologies of Australian literature.

As with gender and sexuality, our ideas about race inform (and perhaps even dictate) the narratives we tell about ourselves, which, in turn, determine the kinds of stories that are published and disseminated. Societal ideas about race find their way into books as a result of a publishing bias that selects, publishes and promotes written works in which race is represented in

specific ways. Furthermore, it is clear that works by white authors that feature white characters and stories find publication much more easily than works by non-white authors that feature non-white stories.

Publishing Studies can investigate and document the ways that ideas about race and identity change, evolve or regress in book culture by asking questions akin to those above: What kinds of books about race get published and which ones do not? Which narratives about race prove to be more popular with readers, and why? Do people adopt different reading practices based on their race identities? How precisely is the publishing bias towards white writers over non-white writers enacted? Is race a factor in what types of books get reviewed and which authors win literary prizes? Is race an issue in employment in the publishing industry? Are certain genres whiter than others? Do certain literary genres reinforce racial stereotypes more than others? And, as with gender and sexuality, the biggest question we can ask about race in Publishing Studies is: How do published artefacts contribute to the constitution—the making—of our race identities?

Frameworks and theories for exploring identity in publishing

The research methodologies that can be applied in the discipline of Publishing Studies when exploring gender, sexuality and race are only limited by our imagination. For example, research in Publishing Studies can be facilitated by the application of methodologies that include: literature review and analysis, deconstruction, discourse analysis, statistical analysis, textual analysis, interviews and other forms of ethnographic research, action research and reflection and reflexivity. However, there are three critical frameworks that are well-suited to exploring publishing as a social and cultural practice and offer a rich array of ideas and techniques for exploring the intersections between book culture and identity, especially in relation to gender, sexuality and race. These are Feminist Theory, Queer Theory and Critical Whiteness Studies. They are outlined below.

Feminist Theory

Feminist theory is the extension of feminism into theoretical or philosophical discourse that aims to understand the nature of gender inequality (Offord and Kerruish 2009; Doucet and Mauthner 2007). Feminist theory examines women's and men's social roles and lived experience in a diverse range of settings, from the private sphere of the home to the public spheres of the media and politics (Doucet and Mauthner 2007). Themes explored in

feminism include discrimination, inequity, objectification, including sexual objectification, oppression, patriarchy, stereotyping and many others (Doucet and Mauthner 2007). Whether or not these themes are explored using expressly feminist methods is not easy to determine. As Doucet and Mauthner (2007, 36) ask:

Is there a specifically feminist method? Are there feminist methodologies and epistemologies, or simply feminist approaches to these? Given diversity and debates in feminist theory, how can there be a consensus on what constitutes 'feminist' methodologies and epistemologies?

While it is difficult to argue that there is a specifically feminist methodology, it is certainly the case that feminist scholars have embraced particular characteristics or approaches in their work (Doucet and Mauthner 2007). Firstly, feminist researchers "have long advocated that feminist research should be not just on women, but *for* women and, where possible, with women" (Doucet and Mauthner 2007, 40). Secondly, feminist researchers "have actively engaged with methodological innovation through challenging conventional or mainstream ways of collecting, analyzing, and presenting data" (Doucet and Mauthner 2007, 40). Thirdly, feminist research is "concerned with issues of broader social change and social justice" (Doucet and Mauthner 2007, 40). According to Beverly Skeggs, feminist research is distinct from non-feminist research because it "begins from the premise that the nature of reality in Western society is unequal and hierarchical" (1994, 77). Fourthly, feminist research focuses on power relations, on how social and cultural institutions and practices impact on women and men differently, and impact on different types of women and men differently again (Doucet and Mauthner 2005). As Lennon and Whitford (1994, 1) note: "Feminism's most compelling epistemological insight lies in the connections it has made between knowledge and power". Fifth, reflexivity, or the practice of critical reflection, has come to be a potent method for feminist researchers (Doucet and Mauthner 2007).

Reflexivity is defined as "reflection upon the conditions through which research is produced, disseminated and received" (Matless 2009, 627). Reflexivity also often includes discussion of our unique worldview or positionality (Matless 2009). Douglas Macbeth defines reflexivity as "a deconstructive exercise for locating the intersections of author, Other, text, and world, and for penetrating the representational exercise itself" (2001, 35). For Rose, reflexivity should highlight the "emergence of difference" through the research process and be "less a process of self-discovery than of self-construction" (1997, 313). All of these approaches are relevant for research in Publishing Studies, and offer potent ways to explore questions

about gender inequality and representation in book culture and the publishing industry.

Queer Theory

Queer Theory has its origins in Poststructuralism (Jagose 1996) and employs a number of Poststructuralism's key ideas (Spargo 1999). As Spargo (1999, 41) argues, Queer Theory employs:

Lacan's psychoanalytic models of decentred, unstable identity, Jacques Derrida's deconstruction of binary conceptual and linguistic structures, and ... Foucault's model of discourse, knowledge and power.

At the most basic level, Queer Theory is a set of theories based on the central idea that identities are not fixed and closed off from outside influences but rather fluid and permeable (Baker 2011). Queer Theory is also based on the idea that our gender and sexual identities are not determined by biological sex (Jagose 1996). Queer Theory proposes that it is meaningless to try to understand gender and sexuality (or indeed race or class) through limiting identity categories such as "man" or "woman", "heterosexual" or "homosexual" (Jagose 1996). This is because identity (or personal subjectivity) are not simplistic but complex and consist of numerous elements, many of them in contradiction to each other. This complexity and in-built fragmentation of identity mean that it is reductive to assume that individuals can be understood collectively on the basis of a shared characteristic such as gender or sexuality (Jagose 1996).

The logical extension of this critique of sexual and gender categories or identities is a deconstruction of and challenge to all notions of identity categories as fixed, lasting and unified (or without ambivalence). In this way, the boundaries between other categories, such as race and class, can also be interrogated. Rather than fixed identities or categories, Queer Theorists such as Judith Butler (1990) suggest instead an identity (or subjectivity) that is fluid, ephemeral, complex and ambivalent. The quote below from Annamarie Jagose (Jagose 1996, 3) comprehensively describes the core concerns of Queer Theory:

Broadly speaking, queer describes those gestures or analytical models which dramatise incoherencies in the allegedly stable relations between chromosomal sex, gender and sexual desire. Resisting that model of stability—which claims heterosexuality as its origin, when it is more properly its effect—queer focuses on mismatches between sex, gender and desire. Institutionally, queer has been associated most prominently with

lesbian and gay subjects, but its analytic framework also includes such topics as cross-dressing, hermaphroditism, gender ambiguity and gender-corrective surgery. Whether as transvestite performance or academic deconstruction, queer locates and exploits the incoherencies in those three terms which stabilise heterosexuality. Demonstrating the impossibility of any 'natural' sexuality, it calls into question even such apparently unproblematic terms as 'man' and 'woman'.

Thus, Queer Theory's principal focus is the denaturalisation of categories/norms (Jagose 1996, de Lauretis 1991, Butler 1990) and abrading the borders between "infamous" binary terms like male/female, natural/unnatural, normal/abnormal, heterosexual/homosexual, white/black, self/other (Baker 2010).

The work of Queer Theory is one of deconstruction (Spargo 1999, Jagose 1996); to dissect and alter how we think about and *live* core aspects of human subjectivity such as identity, sex/gender, race and sexuality. This work is undertaken in the context of a culture steeped in heteronormativity—the discourse and practice of presumed and privileged heterosexuality (Butler 1990, 106). Queer Theory works to undermine the privileged position of heteronormativity by exposing the ways in which sexualities and genders are produced in/by discourse and the ways in which non-normative genders and sexualities resist, transcend and trouble normative notions of sex, gender and sexuality categories that would otherwise be widely (mis)understood as somehow natural, essential or incontestable. From a Queer Theory perspective, genders and sexualities (and identities) are fluid, permeable, mutable and largely the result of repeatedly performed utterances, rituals and behaviours; or *performativity* (Butler 1993).

Performativity

Judith Butler's theory of performativity could be said to be one of the most influential ideas of Queer Theory (Jagose 1996, 83). Judith Butler first presented the notion of *performativity* in her ground-breaking work *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990). Butler frames the notion of performativity in relation to gender and norms of heterosexuality (1990; 1993). Butler further argues that gender is a performance without ontological status when she writes: "There is no gender identity behind the expression of gender ... identity is performatively constituted by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results" (1990, 25). For Butler, performativity describes how what might be assumed to be an internal essence to something such as gender or subjectivity is "manufactured through a sustained set of acts, posited through the gendered stylization of

the body” (2004, 94). Therefore, it can be argued that genders, sexualities and identities are all equally performative; manufactured through a sustained set of acts (some of them cognitive) enacted through the racial, gendered and sexual stylization of bodies. Queer theories of performativity draw on and align with Poststructural conceptions of identity in which identity/subjectivity is seen as multiple, changing and fragmented (Sarup 1996). In this way, performativity re-conceives gendered identities and sexualities as plural, varying, fragmented and produced in, by and through discourse.

For Butler, performativity is not total “voluntarism” (2004). We do not freely choose how to enact gender or sexuality without constraint (Butler 2004). Our genders, sexualities and identities are not freely chosen but rather “compelled and sanctioned by the norms of compulsory heterosexuality (*heteronormativity*), and the subject has no choice but to exist within ... norms and conventions of nature” such as binary sex difference (Pratt 2009b). Performative subjectivities are also socio-culturally and historically embedded; they are “citational chains” and their effects depend on social conventions (Pratt 2009a). According to Butler, gender and sexual norms and identities are produced, disseminated and reinforced through repetitions of an ideal such as the ideal of “woman” or “man” (Pratt 2009b). As the heteronormative ideal is a fiction, and thereby unachievable or “uninhabitable”, there is room for *disidentification* (or counter identification) and human agency and resistance (Pratt 2009b).

Critical Whiteness Studies

The past two decades has seen the emergence of an interdisciplinary field of research and commentary that can be broadly gathered under the umbrella of “critical race and whiteness studies” (Nicol 2005). As Fiona Nicol (2005, 1) writes about Critical Whiteness Studies:

Common to the diverse perspectives and positions that constitute this field is the view that, far from having been ‘resolved’ through the anti-colonial movements and civil rights struggles of the latter part of the twentieth century, race and whiteness continue to shape local and global subjectivities and opportunities. In settler-colonial nations like Australia, New Zealand, the US and Canada, we can observe the currency of whiteness as a concept and value in the very vehemence with which politicians and journalists proclaim and deploy their ‘benevolent intentions’ against the rights and sovereignty claims of Indigenous and other Australians racialised as non-white.

The beginnings of Critical Whiteness Studies are said to be in the writing of W. E. B. Du Bois who, in 1903, wrote that the colour line is the defining characteristic of American society (Applebaum 2016, 1). Referring to the United States, Barbara Applebaum (2016, 1) writes:

Even when a society is built on a commitment to equality, and even with the election of its first black president, the United States has been unsuccessful in bringing about an end to the rampant and violent effects of racism, as numerous acts of racial violence in the media have shown. For generations, scholars of colour, among them Ralph Ellison, James Baldwin, and Franz Fanon, have maintained that whiteness lies at the center of the problem of racism. It is only relatively recently that the critical study of whiteness has become an academic field, committed to disrupting racism by problematizing whiteness as a corrective to the traditional exclusive focus on the racialized ‘other’.

Critical Whiteness Studies is a growing field of scholarship whose aim is to “reveal the invisible structures that produce and reproduce white supremacy and privilege” (Applebaum 2016, 1). Critical Whiteness Studies is based on an understanding or conception of racism that is connected to white privilege and white supremacy (Nicoll 2005; Applebaum 2016).

A foundational tenet of Critical Whiteness Studies is that unless white people “learn to acknowledge, rather than deny, how whites are complicit in racism, and until white people develop an awareness that critically questions the frames of truth and conceptions of the ‘good’ through which they understand their social world racism will persist” (Applebaum 2016, 1).

Nicoll argues that to appreciate the role of whiteness “in shaping Australia’s economic, military and political priorities today” we need to acknowledge that there was a significant shift in the meanings attached to “whiteness”, “race,” and “racism” under the conservative federal government of John Howard (2005, 1). She writes:

Rather than being understood as a collective and active cultural inheritance, racism has been thoroughly reconstructed as an individual moral aberration. As a consequence, the claim that individuals or groups within the nation might be racist has become tantamount to slander. This discursive reconstruction of racism has forged a broad social consensus which is most frequently expressed in claims that our tolerant, multicultural nation has moved beyond whatever ‘racial issues’ it might have once had.

This shift means that it is more difficult to discuss or analyse institutional, societal and cultural racism, especially when it appears in subtle forms (Nicoll 2005). It is important to note that the shift referred to by Nicoll was facilitated by the publication of books, magazines, newspapers, websites, government reports and papers and other media. It was through publishing that this shift occurred and it is through publishing (and other media) that this shift is maintained. It is also largely through published artefacts that resistance to this shift occurs.

Critical Whiteness Studies foregrounds the social construction of race and analyses the effects of race-based discourse, especially as it has been used to justify discrimination against non-whites (Nicoll 2005; Applebaum 2016). A number of whiteness scholars have argued that whiteness should be understood as “a product of discursive formation” and a “rhetorical construction” (Nakayama and Krizek 1995). As Nakayama and Krizek (1995, 293) write, “there is no ‘true essence’ to ‘whiteness’: there are only historically contingent constructions of that social location”. In Western societies, whiteness is ubiquitous, it occupies a central and yet often invisible position (Nakayama and Krizek 1995).

Whiteness is considered normal and neutral, and is in opposition to blackness which is constructed as Other and as abnormal (Nicoll 2005; Applebaum 2016). Major areas of research in critical whiteness studies include the characteristics and effects of white identity, the historical and contemporary processes by which white racial identities were and are constituted, the intersection of politics and culture to white identity and, significantly, white privilege (McIntosh 1990; Nakayama and Krizek 1995; Applebaum 2016).

White privilege

According to Peggy McIntosh, white people in Western societies enjoy advantages that non-whites do not experience (1990). McIntosh frames these advantages as “an invisible package of unearned assets” (1990, 31). The term “white privilege” refers to obvious and less obvious advantages that white people may not recognise they have and is different from overt bias or prejudice (McIntosh 1990; Nakayama and Krizek 1995; Applebaum 2016).

White privilege can take many forms but includes cultural affirmations of one’s own worth, greater social status, freedom to travel and relocate, ability to participate in work and the economy, freedom to consume, to access educational, legal and other facilities, to have time and finances for leisure and sport, and the ability to voice one’s opinion, both in public and in private, without fear of retribution (McIntosh 1990; Nakayama and

Krizek 1995; Applebaum 2016). The concept of white privilege also describes the ways that white people assume that their experience is somehow representative of all others' experience, or universal, and the way they often perceive their own life experience as standard or "normal" (McIntosh 1990; Nakayama and Krizek 1995; Applebaum 2016).

In the context of publishing, white privilege means that white authors are more likely to be published, more likely to be reviewed, more likely to win literary prizes and more likely to be read. It also means that most editors, most publishers and most of those employed in the publishing industry in other roles in the English-speaking world are white people.

As with sexuality, a good place to begin an investigation into how publishing intersects with race is to consider our own reading practices. If we go to our bookshelves and pick out the titles written by non-white authors, how many do we find? If we conduct some research into these authors, we are likely to find that white privilege made their road to publication more difficult and affected their ability to gain reviews, readers and win literary prizes.

Conclusion

All books present an idea, or a *construction*, of race, gender and sexuality, sometimes explicitly, sometimes in ways that are more subtle. Oftentimes, published artefacts and the narratives they contain present gender, sexuality and race in ways that resist or refuse the dominant ways of thinking about them. Mostly, however, the books we write, publish, buy and read reinforce dominant constructions of racial, gender and sexual identities and many perpetuate negative stereotypes. As we have discussed, these aspects of our identity are deeply significant, and often contested.

It may not seem obvious at first, but when we look a little more closely, we can see that publishing, as a discourse machine, is a significant component in how we constitute our identities and what those identities look like. Our ideas about gender, sexuality and race inform (and perhaps even dictate) the narratives we tell about ourselves, which, in turn, determine the kinds of stories that are published and disseminated.

Societal ideas about these aspects of our identities find their way into books as a result of a publishing bias that selects, publishes and promotes written works in which identities are represented in specific (privileged) ways. Publishing Studies can illuminate these inequalities and biases. It can also investigate and document the ways that ideas about identity change, evolve or regress in book culture and in the publishing industry. Feminist Theory, Queer Theory and Critical Whiteness Studies are three powerful

frameworks for exploring important questions about gender, sexuality and race in book culture.

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CHAPTER SIX

PUBLISHING AND NATIONHOOD: NEGOTIATING THE FIELD OF INDIAN WRITING IN ENGLISH

ROANNA GONSALVES

Introduction

The global attention on Indian literature in English, with its attendant focus on individual authors, is situated in what may be described as “the theological logic of ‘first beginnings’” (Bourdieu, 1996: 169), linked to Romantic notions of creativity springing from individual genius. While such a discursive framing fittingly applauds the success of individual authors, it naively delinks individual authors from the material conditions of their writing practice in a country like India, considered by many to be an emerging super power, the world’s largest democracy, multifariously stratified along caste, class, gender, ethnic, linguistic and religious lines (see Menon, 2012, 2015; Narayan 2015; Phadke 2013). Using a Bourdieusian conceptual framework, this chapter examines the material conditions, the specificities of the field of Indian Writing in English, in which writers labour and seek to survive as writers. In doing so, it presents a picture of the enabling and constraining forces that many Indian writers face as they aspire towards publication and literary success. Such an exploration of the Indian literary field offers a non-western extension of Bourdieusian conceptual categories, and consequently suggests a broader international relevance in relation to decolonising the study of literary fields and Creative Writing.

While this chapter mobilises a Bourdieusian, and therefore Western conceptual framework to examine a non-western literary field, this ostensible incongruity echoes the work of a number of theorists whose re-orientation of Eurocentric epistemologies is rooted in broader social movements towards the decolonisation of knowledge. The constructions of India familiar in Western popular culture are usually associated, with cricket, Bollywood and a particular brand of yogic spirituality. Today these

orientalist constructions are not restricted to Western discourses about India but are also “re-orientalised” (Lau 2009) anew within India itself (see Scroll 2014), a now familiar phenomenon where “a cultural East comes to terms with an orientalised East” (Ponzanesi 2014). This chapter aims to add complexity to such orientalist and re-orientalist simplifications which evoke what Ponzanesi calls “the uneven and non-reciprocal flows of globalization ... friction characterized by unequal interconnection across difference” (2014, 40) usually weighted in favour of the West. As Dipesh Chakrabarty who points out, “one result of European colonial rule in South Asia is that the intellectual traditions once unbroken and alive in Sanskrit or Persian or Arabic are now only matters of historical research” (2008, 5–6). Writing from a similarly inherited position, I attempt a small movement towards de-colonising knowledge and “provincialising Europe” (Chakrabarty 2008), not the geographical location but the universalising Euro-centric categories, concepts and formulations of knowledge about the ways in which literary fields function, and the enabling and constraining forces that writers must negotiate, in the process of creating and being created themselves in post-millennial India.

Bourdieu’s conceptual framework

Bourdieu once asked the question: “But who created the ‘creators’?” (1996, 167), arguing that artists who create work are themselves created by “the whole ensemble of those who help to ‘discover’ him [sic] and to consecrate him as an artist” (167). The ensemble that Bourdieu talks about is not only the individual people—the writers, literary agents, publishers, reviewers, academics, booksellers, readers, judges of literary prizes—but also the relations between them, the positions they occupy, the ways in which they acquire a “feel” for the process of publishing, and their struggles and competition to accumulate various kinds of power.

Bourdieuian field theory has been used extensively to understand the context of literature and literary production (see Berkers, Janssen, and Verboord, 2013; Dubois, 2011; Franssen and Kuipers, 2013; Gonsalves and Chan, 2008; Thompson, 2012; Webb, 2012, 2015). This relational aspect of Bourdieu’s conceptual framework has been useful for studying the Indian literary world because it provides a way of understanding individual agency, or the “schemes of perception, thought and action” (Bourdieu 1989, 14) of writers without excluding or overlooking the role that is played by objective structures, such as publishing and marketing conventions, and the role of the state, that affect the social world of literature.

Nestled within Bourdieu's theory of practice are the interrelated concepts of field, capital, and habitus. A field is a "social universe" (Bourdieu 1987), and an "ensemble" (Bourdieu, 1996: 167) not just of people but also of institutions and the relations between them, the forces that enable and constrain them, the struggles they engage in, their failures and successes. The geographic, social and symbolic space in which Indian writers work can thus be viewed as the Indian literary field, a space where struggles for power, authority, status, recognition, literary and economic success take place. These struggles are dependent on the resources that individuals and groups draw upon to preserve and improve their positions in the field (Swartz 1997, 73). Resources are conceptualised as capital in the Bourdieusian framework, and include economic capital, as well as cultural capital, social capital, and symbolic capital. Cultural capital refers to educational qualifications, skills, and credentials. Social capital includes friend-circles, networks, and resources based on connections and group membership. Symbolic capital is "the form the different types of capital take once they are perceived and recognised as legitimate" (Bourdieu 1987, 4): prestige, for example, or reputation, recognition, and status. Symbolic capital is generally conferred by specific institutions (Bourdieu 1993, 121), and in this chapter, such institutions include not only academia, the state, and literary institutions, but also small literary circles such as writing groups, open mic events, and small critical circles such as reviews or publication in a local newspaper. The habitus is a creative, generative concept, the product of one's personal dispositions, the effects of personal history, and rehearsed responses to various situations (Bourdieu 1990, 55). It is the habitus that "contributes to constituting the field as a meaningful world endowed with sense and value, in which it is worth investing one's energy" (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, 127).

The Indian literary field

Historical perspectives on Indian literary cultures focus on English language texts and more importantly on texts in Indic languages; studies include but are not restricted to the nexus between colonialism, language, and literary production (Busch, 2011; Kothari, 2006; Venkatachalapathy, 2012), as well as the emerging areas of print studies and book history (see Chakravorty and Gupta 2011; Gupta and Chakravorty 2004b, 2008).

Scholars have documented the co-dependent relationship between imperial English and European powers in India and the printed word, a relationship that echoes to this day (see Franssen and Kuipers 2015; Gonsalves 2015). In the colonial era, this relationship was fostered

especially by the English East India Company (Ogborn 2007), and English publishing houses such as Oxford University Press, Longman, and Macmillan (Chatterjee 2006, 2011). The history of the book in India is intertwined not only with the history of colonisation but also with the history of religious conversion to Christianity and, it seems, an unofficial history of misrecognition influenced by the varying degrees of importance given to each colonial power by diverse interpretations of Indian history. The first printing presses were said to have been brought to India by Jesuit missionaries in 1556 (Gupta and Chakravorty 2004a, 11), but rejected by the Mughal rulers who liked collecting printed books for their libraries but were not interested in printing itself. Some scholars accept that, as it was in Europe, in India too, the first printed book was the Bible, translated into Tamil.¹ Others claim the Portuguese naturalist Garcia de Orta's *Colloquies on the Simples and Drugs of India* (1563) as the first book printed in India (see Fontes da Costa 2012; Županov and Xavier 2014).

The genealogy of Indian writing in English can be traced back to the eighteenth century, with the first book published by an Indian in English being a two-volume edition self-published in Cork, Ireland, in 1794. The author, Deen Mahomed,² convinced 320 friends to entrust him with a deposit well before the publication and delivery of the book (Dharwadker 2003, 199), thus ironically locating the history of Indian publishing transnationally within the tradition of subscription-based self-publishing, which may be seen as a predecessor of the more recent phenomenon of crowdfunding. While this was in keeping with the late eighteenth century practice of self-publishing through subscriptions in England (Griffin 2009; Schücking 1966) in a period that preceded the rise of the publisher and the literary agent, these antecedents also locate the history of Indian publishing within the “exceptional economy” (Abbing, 2002) of the arts, where writers rely on the financial generosity of friends and others in the pursuit of publication and literary success.

A more direct link exists between the market, or commercial considerations, and the growth of Indian literature in English, via the institutionalisation of the English language in Indian education. Indians had been writing and being published in English since the early nineteenth century. A turning point arose when Thomas Macaulay famously advocated for the adoption of the

¹ Translation into Tamil, the classical language of the region, was completed by Lutheran missionaries Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg and Heinrich Pluetschau in the Danish colony of Tranquebar in 1712 (Gupta & Chakravorty 2004a; Ogborn 2007; Venkatachalapathy 2012).

² The spelling of Deen Mahomed's name varies in numerous texts. I follow that used by Tabish Khair (2014).

English language in Indian higher education in 1835 in an attempt to create a class of people who would be interpreters between the government and the governed. The effect of Macaulay's "Minute on Indian Education" on the development of Indian writing in English has been noted by many scholars (Das 2009; Mehrotra 2009, 2012; Mukherjee 2008). More pertinently, as the literary theorist G.J.V. Prasad notes, "Macaulay clinches his argument with the ground reality of commerce, that the British are 'forced to pay ... Arabic and Sanskrit students, while those who learn English are willing to pay' the British" (Prasad 2011, 14), thus pointing to the hegemonic if contested conferral of symbolic capital, linked to colonisation, upon Indian writing in English since the nineteenth century.

The growth of the Indian publishing industry

The last two decades of the twentieth century saw a steady rise in global interest in Indian writing and reading in English. This growth may be seen partly as the result of the success of Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* (1980), followed by the other prize-winning Indian and Indian diasporic authors (Arundhati Roy, Rohinton Mistry, Jhumpa Lahiri, Kiran Desai, Aravind Adiga); the rise of postcolonial studies in the Western academy; and the entry of Penguin into India in 1985, followed later by other major publishing houses.

While much globally successful Indian literature in English continues to be first published outside India, the publishing industry within India is said to be growing by 30 per cent per annum, with over 16,000 publishers publishing 90,000 new books per year in 24 languages, including English (CAPEXIL 2012; FICCI 2014). India ranks seventh in the number of books published annually, and third in the number of English language books published annually. Observers see the Indian publishing industry as booming (Chatterjee 2011), and India is one of the few places in the world where printed newspaper subscriptions, in various languages, are rising (Pathak 2011; Deloitte 2014).

A growing population that is literate in the English language, youthful and technologically savvy, is often seen as a key strength of the Indian market. With growing literacy, India has what publisher Urvashi Butalia calls a "book hunger" (in Griffin 2013). Linked to rising literacy and upward social mobility is the surge in the number of Indians writing fiction in English, and the consequent increase in the number of literary agents and publishing houses. This abundance has not been properly measured in India; there has been no survey of the field since 1972, and not all publications have International Standard Book Numbers (Butalia in Griffin 2013).

These demographic trends have affected the practices of writers in the Indian literary field. Linked to rising literacy and upward social mobility is the surge in the number of Indians writing fiction in English, and the consequent increase in the number of literary agents and publishing houses. Sahara,³ Head of Publishing at one of the major international publishing houses in India, had to remove the submissions option on the company website as the company could not keep up with the deluge of unsolicited manuscripts being submitted via the website (30–40 manuscripts a day). This abundance of unpublished manuscripts has not necessarily meant growth in readership and sales. While reading for pleasure in India is beginning to have more appeal, reading to learn or to pass exams is still the main reason that many Indians read. The deep-rooted tradition of oral storytelling, mixed with a sense of thrift in a country that is marked by high levels of poverty, suggest low expectations for sales of fiction titles, and this may not augur well for writers hoping to be signed on by commercial publishers.

The proliferation of publishing houses, print and online literary journals and magazines, and the ease of self-publishing, may have contributed to a more democratic, more easily accessible publishing environment in post-millennial India. Yet India tends to be seen as a profitable market, a new bazaar for Western books, rather than also a provider of new content (Gonsalves 2015). Despite the patina of global accomplishment linked to the success of a few writers who are first published outside India, many writers published in India find it hard to reach a global audience. The book distribution system and the way retail sales of books are organised mean that Indian authors must become more involved in the distribution and marketing of their books.

The autonomous and heteronomous principles

Fields of cultural production, such as the Indian literary field, are sites of struggle between the autonomous (art for art's sake) and heteronomous (commercial) principles (Bourdieu 1993, 40). This struggle between two principles is further complicated in India since, as the accounts of writers show, there is an entanglement between the autonomous and heteronomous dimensions of the field.

I use the term “entanglement” to suggest interlacing, where separation and extrication is difficult; and also, in relation to asymmetric gift exchange as developed by Nicholas Thomas (1991, 189). This sense of entanglement

³ A pseudonym is used to preserve anonymity.

affects the idea of literary legitimacy in the Indian literary field, and influences the way writers address the question of who may be a legitimate writer in India. On the one hand, writers seen as “literary” writers can accrue recognition and honour from the literary establishment in the form of good reviews, awards, or favourable media coverage. Yet the writerly habitus, or the way writers develop a sense of themselves as writers, is often shaped by the attention to economic profit in the wake of the astonishing success of Indian “pulp” fiction.

Successful commercial fiction writers like Chetan Bhagat have demonstrated the strength of the market for Indian English fiction in India, creating a large base of readers for their work. This could be perceived as gifting a large base of readers to more “autonomous” writers, but it remains to be empirically tested whether the Bourdieusian conceptions of “legitimate”, “middle-brow” and “popular taste”—which are homologous to educational levels and social classes (Bourdieu 1984, 8)—apply in the Indian literary field.

The Big 5 and local publishing houses

The Indian literary field is further entangled in relation to the relationship of its publishing houses to both global publishers (or “the Big 5”⁴) and smaller local independent publishers. Most local publishing houses in India are “family-owned, small-scale businesses” (Mallya 2014, 74). Some of these independent publishers have entered the field to represent particular sections of Indian society that have been underrepresented in Indian literature: women, lower caste and LGBTI communities. Bereft of the prestige enjoyed by the Big 5 on account of antiquity, international literary prizes, and their positions in Anglo-American publishing circuits, these smaller Indian publishers commission works that introduce fresh voices and experimental, cutting edge works into the field. Other smaller Indian publishers collaborate with the Big 5; an example is the partnership between Zubaan, a local independent feminist publishing house, and Penguin, in the form of an agreement to publish “a joint list of at least four titles a year” (Zubaan 2015). One consequence of this entanglement for writers is the provision of additional opportunities for Indian writers to be published in India while accessing global markets, or at least enjoying the prestige of being associated with a global brand. This prestige may act as leverage for the writer to negotiate better economic outcomes for future publishing deals.

⁴ The Big 5 is composed of Hachette Book Group; Harper Collins; Macmillan Publishers; Penguin Random House; Simon & Schuster.

Regressive political climate

The literary field in India is constantly mediated by the larger field of power in ways that are not just regressive but have proved fatal for a number of writers. It operates within a culture of provincial politicking, corruption, censorship and self-censorship in what may be termed a “repressive liberal system” (Sapiro 2003). Public protest and state protection is minimal and often inconsequential, and fails to address the frequent violent acts committed against writers, publishers and bookshops, and the constant threat to freedom of speech from self-styled guardians of culture. This weakness in public engagement and state protection when writers are threatened poses a constraint that leads to serious consequences, such as censorship and self-censorship, affecting freedom of expression and the safety of writers, publishers, booksellers and their families. Books have been banned or burned, a number of high profile authors working in Indian languages have been killed (see Reddy 2017), other authors and their families issued with death threats on the grounds that the book offends religious sentiments, as with the work of Salman Rushdie, whose book *The Satanic Verses* has an import ban in India (Mitta, 2012), or offends caste sentiments, as in the cases of the Tamil authors Perumal Murugan and Puliur Murugesan (Sundaram 2015). As one of the writers interviewed for this study, Jehangir, states, “it’s as if every writer here is on his own”. While it is mainly writers who work in other Indian languages which lack the status of English who have been the targets of recent death threats, and while many writers defy attempts at censorship, still the sense of fear contributes to a climate of uncertainty for all writers in India, irrespective of the language in which they work. This offers a counter-narrative to the more prevalent narrative of the exceptionalism of a handful of Indian writers flourishing in the safety of a democratic state.

Inadequate support, including tenuous links with academia

Another challenge writers face in India is inadequate financial support from the State, and from public or private organisations. While the arts may be seen as a public good, this is not backed up with financial support. Extreme and widespread poverty, malnourishment, disease, poor access to health services, violence based on caste, religion, gender, and geographic location, and widespread illiteracy are some of the immediate concerns of government attention and spending. With no adequately-funded equivalent of institutions such as the UK Arts Council or the Australia Council for the Arts, (for a sense of the contested role played by the under-funded Sahitya

Akademi, the Indian Academy of Arts and Letters, see Jacob and Viswanatha 2018) writers in India must spend the better part of their time outside the field in order to earn a living, at the cost of spending time working on their writing, calling to mind Abbing's (2002) "exceptional economy" of the arts, yet inflected by the material conditions of the Indian literary field.

A further constraint faced by writers is the informal and very tenuous links with academia. While many Indian writers have earned an income from the academy by teaching literature in various languages at universities and literary personalities have collaborated with universities and student groups to facilitate literary events, these opportunities are available only to a handful of writers, and are further restricted to the few with relevant qualifications in literary studies. These connections have not yet materialised into the "Program Era" (McGurl 2009) of Creative Writing courses offered by the academy. Creative Writing training in India is usually offered on a short-term basis, such as workshops for a few days, or a one term writing class in select universities.

The English language

English dominates the broader Indian literary field in terms of prestige. This is related to the politics of language formation after Independence, and economic policies designed to empower English speakers and the English language, as well as the rise of English as the global language of employment (Narayanan 2012, 15). However, Indian literature in English struggles for legitimacy, as it is sometimes considered to be incapable of representing Indian culture, and literature in other Indian languages is perceived as being more representative of the "lived experiences" (Narayanan 2012, 12) of their writers. This opposition to the English language in India is rejected by many scholars who consider English as a legitimate Indian language (see Prasad 2011, 4). The English language, and language in general, has been considered to be "a tool of self-fashioning" (Ashcroft, 2009, 101), "a practice" (Ashcroft 2009, 14) despite its "affective dimension" (ibid.) rather than merely a cultural symbol or "a repository of cultural contents" (Ashcroft, 2009, 4). Some scholars suggest that there are many different kinds of English used across India, leading to the formulation of Indian writing in English, not as literature written in a homogenous Indian English, but as "Indian literature written in English (Prasad, 2011, 76)".

One enfranchising application of this argument for the use of English as a "tool of self-fashioning" (Ashcroft, 2009, 101) is illustrated by its uptake

by some Dalit (or “untouchable”) communities. Some have argued that the English language, a language that has no memory of caste oppression unlike other Indian languages, has been a tool for empowerment, providing the oppressed castes with “agency, articulation, recognition and justice” (Kothari, 2013, 60) as well as “revealing the internalisation of caste hegemony” (Kothari, 2013, 62) not least because it has no scriptural injunctions against the learning of it (Anand, 1999). There is even a regular celebration of the birthday of Thomas Macaulay, reviled in India by some for his hand in cementing the teaching of the English language in India, with the worshipping of “Goddess English” by some Dalit communities because of the debt of gratitude they feel they owe to the English language (Gopinath, 2006; Prasad, 2011, 19–22).

This empowering take-up of the English language by Dalit communities is still available only to a few. Post-millennial India continues to be plagued in overtly violent as well as covert ways, by a casteist, Brahmanical patriarchal society (for accounts of the lived experiences amidst the unspeakable oppression of Dalit communities, see especially the work of the Dalit writers Ilaiah, 1996; Limbale, 2004). Industry expert Vinutha Mallya points to numerous divides within India due to “a lack of access and affordability, poor infrastructure, and social inequalities” (Mallya, 2014, 75). For example, Dalit writers, including those who write in English, are constrained by a field that is largely dominated by upper caste publishers and editors (Limbale, 2004, 131).

Indian publishing in English necessarily excludes a majority of the Indian population who do not have access to that language, meaning Indian writing in English is characterised as a space of privilege, populated by the political and economic elites, the upper classes and upper castes of India, who have access to education in the English language and in whose hands the press and political power are largely concentrated. However, this privilege is constrained by the small readership for literary fiction in English in India. To work as a writer in the English language in India is to come to accept low payments for one’s writing. As Veeru, a writer and editor interviewed for this study notes:

Given the size of the country we have a very small reading public [in English]. And that immediately makes it unviable for any publisher to pay a writer more than a certain sum. And often publishers are spending their own money and not earning any themselves and they can’t afford to pay anyone either. So that all kind of becomes this cycle of low payment. No payment. No payments on time.

Therefore, despite the status and prestige that accompanies literary professionalism for writers working in English, these writers still need to find work outside the economically unprofitable practice of writing fiction. Some writers have the financial support of their families, marking the particular class background of Indian writers in English. Veeru says:

Most English writers in India are from a class that can afford to sit back and they don't need to worry about where their next meal is coming from usually. Because they generally belong to the upper middle class people. They have other sources of income. Perhaps over generations. Family money ... Then you have the category of the bureaucrat, technocrat, MBA kind of people who come into writing ... the moment you say English, it's already upper middle class.

These complexities of working in the English language reinforce the need for writers without family or wealth to lead a “double life” (Lahire, 2010)—one life devoted to their writing, the other devoted to making a living. This is because the small size of the field means there are fewer opportunities and hence the need for multi-tasking: writers run literary festivals, literary agents write books, editors at publishing houses start up their own literary agencies, and writers edit the literary pages of magazines. In order to legitimise their positions in the field, and to better compete for the diminishing pool of resources, some emerging writers in India undergo long periods working *gratis* within the literary field, engaging in work other than their own writing, such as starting and editing literary journals, and curating literary festivals, before getting published.

Conclusion

This chapter has described the unique conditions of the Indian literary field in English: its rapid growth encumbered by uncertainty; a sense of entanglement between the autonomous and heteronomous dimensions of the field and between global and local publishers; and struggles for support in a regressive political climate, with inadequate state support, tenuous links with academia and a contested position in relation to the English language, all leading to specific ways in which symbolic capital is conferred in post-millennial India. Bourdieusian field theory, developed through a close engagement with and analysis of a particular period in French literary history, may be seen to be extended in a small way when examining the specificities of the material conditions under which Indian writers labour and seek to survive as writers. In this way, the consideration of the specificities of the field of Indian Writing in English attempted in this

chapter, provides significant knowledge about cultural life in post-millennial India, and offers a decolonising move in relation to the epistemological assumptions about and analysis of literary fields and Creative Writing studies.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

“NOW IT IS TIME FOR YOU TO ACT”: ETHICAL EDITING OF INDIGENOUS WRITING IN SETTLER SOCIETIES

ROBIN FREEMAN

Introduction

We continue to be seen through racially oriented eyes trained by a long tradition of focusing on white supremacy, paternalism and assimilation. Our part in this legacy is to be the people who will continually need looking after, always need direction, education, training and, most of all, need to be controlled (Wright 2016).

New South Wales was purposely settled in 1788 as a British penal colony. The land was seized, and a doctrine of *terra nullius* enabled the human rights of the Indigenous peoples to be ignored. Immigrants followed on the cusp of the nineteenth century, and with military men and their families, and convicts who had served their sentences, began the “free settler” society. Settler societies are distinguished from other forms of colonisation by the intention of the immigrants to create a site of permanent residence, and to remake the society and the landscape in ways that reflect the coloniser’s hegemonic notions of what is right, appropriate and “civilised”. From the point of view of the First Peoples of settler societies, decolonisation thus becomes infinitely deferred. The joint future for Indigenous and non-Indigenous inhabitants of the settler state depends on the confrontation and resolution of the issues of Indigenous human rights, of self-determination, and of land sovereignty in order to redress the violence of the past.

Hannah Arendt’s ethics of action in “dark times” seems particularly relevant in twenty-first century Australia. With few exceptions, Australian governments have failed to demonstrate leadership in addressing philosophical and structural issues associated with colonisation, Indigenous displacement and disadvantage, leaving society to consider these complex

issues without cohesive national leadership. A violent and tragic history informs present relationships between the Indigenous and non-indigenous inheritors of the Australian settler society. The First Peoples’ perspectives, so long repudiated, trivialised, silenced or ignored are part of a necessary polyvocal dialogue about our collective futures to which Indigenous writers have much to contribute.

Given that there are few Indigenous editors currently working in the Australian book publishing industry, I argue the necessity for cross-culturally educated, non-indigenous editors committed to an ethical participation in the publication of Indigenous literatures. In particular, I explore the importance of a thorough, nuanced understanding of the modes and purposes of Indigenous writing for cross-cultural editorial practice, a position which also encompasses support for the professional training of Indigenous editors.

Ethical behaviour resides in the refusal of an individual to participate in systems that reinforce the status quo by which agency is denied to others, and in this the non-indigenous editor choosing to work with Indigenous writers has a contribution to make. In this chapter I reflect on ways in which non-indigenous editors can approach the editing of Indigenous literatures as an ethical praxis towards decolonisation during a time of painful division in Australia between the First Peoples and the broader society. I consider ways in which the cross-cultural editorial experience between writer and editor of Indigenous literatures differs from editorial practices undertaken in apparently monocultural environments. Previous investigations into the cross-cultural editing of Indigenous writing in Australia have explored collaborative practices in the publication of Indigenous women’s life writing, highlighting questions of Indigenous identity and agency (see Jones 2009; McDonnell 2004; Hughes 1998). I consider relationships between non-indigenous editors and Indigenous writers of literary fictions, a form increasingly chosen for Indigenous creative expression. The editing of literary fiction is a task equal in complexity and exactness to that of memoir and autobiography, and requires a similarly nuanced approach to text and writer. Furthermore, the editing of literary fiction is rarely addressed in-depth during editorial education and training. (An exception has been the biennial, week-long Australian Publishers Association Residential Editorial Program established in 1999 to provide industry-specific professional development to mid-career literary editors, in response to a decline in in-house training).

This chapter builds a case for the conscious application of an ethics suited to the editing and publication of Indigenous writing by non-indigenous editors. From Emmanuel Levinas, I hypothesise a concept of

ethics suited to the complex interactions that take place between non-indigenous editors and Indigenous writers during the production of a written text for publication when the participants' cultures, ontologies, epistemologies and world views may differ quite markedly. Levinas's ethics of nonviolence, in which an individual takes personal responsibility for the survival of the "other" foregrounds choices available to editors who, as members of a civil society, choose to participate in acts of decolonisation as "an engaged responsiveness in the present" that asserts the possibility of mutually beneficial future connections between Indigenous and non-indigenous peoples (Rose 2004, 186, 213). Such work is not easy. It requires attention to the details of cross-cultural literacy, empathy, and engagement with the issues and influences that drive individual writers towards publication. Editors require a particular education, I suggest, to enable them to pose apposite questions of an Indigenous text, or to suggest apparently radical solutions to textual problems to both Indigenous writers and the managers of publishing organisations. They must understand the significance of cultural differences to cross-cultural editing, and consider the possibility that they may be unaware of their own social privilege as they balance their duty to text, to author, to reader and to publisher. As Cherokee scholar Daniel Heath Justice contends, a committed engagement with the processes of decolonisation requires "respect, attentiveness, intellectual rigor, and no small amount of moral courage" (2004, 9).

The editor and ethics

The philosophical assumption that to be human is to be a uniquely sentient being capable of reason and individual agency suggests a moral responsibility towards other humans enshrined in an ethics of action. Gernot Böhme proposes a challenge to an individual's humanity, an urgency that cannot be ignored: to invoke one's humanity requires an act in defence of a moral position (2001, 110). The work of Emmanuel Levinas posits a moral imperative in which the self is intrinsically responsible for the other. His evocation of the face-to-face encounter calls individuals to an ethics that presses them into the service of the other. This requires a substitution, a putting of oneself in the place of the other, whose life becomes more precious than one's own. The appeal in the face-to-face encounter "Do not kill me", Morgan suggests, is also a plea equivalent to "Make room for me" or "Feed me" or "Share the world with me" or "Reduce my suffering" (2007, 69–70). With his focus on the human face, Levinas intends an ethics of nonviolence that seeks the subjugation of an individual to the survival of the other. Animals, he says, "must struggle for life without ethics", a

Darwinian idea (in Wright et al. 1988, 172). “However, with the appearance of the human—and this is my entire philosophy—there is something more important than my life, and that is the life of the other” (ibid., 172). To achieve this purpose humans must work against their natural inclination towards the manipulation and domination of others either for their own ends or for those of their group. They must seek an answer to the question: “How can I co-exist with him and still leave his otherness intact?” (Wild 1991, 12–13). Furthermore, this ethics of Levinas entails no expectation of reciprocation. “For me this is very important. Something that one does gratuitously, that is grace” (Levinas, in Wright et al. 1988, 176).

In the context of relations between the Indigenous and non-indigenous peoples of Australia, and the lengthy history of the subordination of Indigenous lives to colonial requirements, Levinas’s act of grace implies neither superiority, nor expectation of reward, nor affirmation by the other. Such expectations are inappropriate and likely offensive to colonised minorities, and they deny individual responsibility for present realities by the non-indigenous inheritors of settler societies. An ethical editorial practice thus becomes a personal quest intended to relieve any perceived burden of reciprocity upon the writer, who may otherwise find herself in an onerous or unwanted position of cross-cultural instruction, or affirming the cross-cultural “credentials” of a non-indigenous industry professional (Huggins 1998, 61–3).

Precisely because Levinas’s focus is on the other (indeed on all others, which requires effort and commitment on the part of the self), his situated ethics provide a model for behaviour and thinking suited to those who have benefitted from the settler society at the expense of the autochthonous peoples. Responsibility, Lingis argues, suggests a “bond” between present and past. Individuals are at once responsible for their own initiated actions and for the situations they inherit. “To be responsible is always to have to answer for a situation that was in place before I came on the scene” (Lingis 1981, xiv). Levinas’s ethical position thus illuminates the situation of the non-indigenous inheritors of the settler society who, it would suggest, have a duty to address the injustices of the past over which they had no control. In so doing, they assert agency towards beneficial changes as a form of “reparation” for Indigenous displacements, disadvantages and inequities, past and present.

While Levinas advocates an approach to human behaviour bounded by an ethics of individual responsibility, anthropologist Debra Bird Rose develops these ideas towards an ethics of reconciliation. She argues a personal responsibility for reconciliation through engagement with the processes of decolonisation. She seeks to establish “relationships across

otherness without seeking to erase difference” (2004, 21). She asserts an obligation to the work of decolonisation by those who presently benefit from membership of the settler-immigrant society as an ethical response to more than 200 years of British-Australian colonisation. Rose argues, drawing on the work of Anne Curthoys, that knowledge of the conditions of settlement and its consequences for Indigenous peoples requires a re-visioning of the “moral basis of Australian society” (Rose 2004, 12). She evokes Levinas’s ethics of the face: “Life with others is inherently entangled in responsibility” (ibid., 13). She distinguishes between “guilt”: a burden brought about by one’s own actions, and “responsibility”: an ethical obligation to secure the wellbeing of the vulnerable other (ibid., 12). “In considering the possibilities for ethical action”, Rose writes, “I come to use the term ‘decolonisation’ in an extremely strong sense to mean the unmaking of the regimes of violence that promote the disconnection of moral accountability from time and place” (ibid., 214). Rose resists the comfortable space associated with mainstream “monologues” of history that have denied Indigenous perspectives and interpretations of the past, present and future, advocating instead “a discursive space for conflicting argument” (ibid., 28). Her concern is the explicit connection between ethical behaviours and the conceptual frameworks of decolonisation. Her perspective is influenced by her citizenship connections with Australia and the United States, “two powerful settler societies”, and the knowledge that the “callous indifference to the dispossession, death, and despair [the settlers] generated for the Indigenous peoples and ecosystems of their ‘new worlds’, requires a response from the current generation” (ibid., 1, 5). In view of the colonial history and its current aftermath, Rose conceptualises an ethical response (from Levinas and quoting Hatley) that accepts the susceptibility of the other to pain as a personal burden (2004, 12):

In practical terms this means that we humans (perhaps other living things as well) are brought into being already called into ethics by others. Furthermore, the primacy of ethics means that while ethics can be talked about with some abstraction, ethics are properly always situated ... Like the living beings who call and respond, ethics are situated in bodies and in time and in place (Rose 2004, 7–8).

Drawing on Indigenous philosophies of sociability and interdependence, Rose’s ethic is active rather than passive. She promotes present action rather than mere hope for a different future (ibid., 32).

In response to this legacy of responsibility, I argue, editors (and publishers and writers) have a role in empowering Rose’s “discursive space for conflicting argument” (ibid., 28). Non-indigenous editors may thus

choose to make a considered response to the historical and current exploitation of Indigenous peoples in Australia through an ethical praxis of cross-cultural editing.

The editor and the writer

The publication of literature in Australia occurs within a complex set of interconnecting fields of interest influenced by specific historical and contemporary events, by media reportage, cultural mores, social pressures, and government policies (particularly for the arts and education). Writing and its commercial publication involve multiple participants and sites of activity across a range of vested interests. This is despite industry practices that encourage readers to infer that writing is a solitary and individual pursuit, and support public belief in the autonomy of acquisitions editors with “the right combination of judgement, taste, social flair and financial nous” to enable the commissioning of commercially successful books (Thompson 2010, 7).

The commercial publication of literatures requires that authors submit themselves to the constraints of the publishing organisation’s editorial, production, marketing and distribution processes, in the hopeful expectation of favourable receptions of their works by the institutions of public sphere and education. Writers desire positive reviews of their books in the arts media, to have their work submitted for literary prizes, and listed as required reading for school and university courses. They want their literary works to be included on the selection lists for book clubs and reading groups circulated by organisations such as book distributors, local libraries, municipal councils, and institutions of adult learning. Through the auspices of such diverse systems and organisations, through speaking engagements at festivals and to educational networks such as teaching associations, literary writers constitute their reading publics.

Indigenous minority writers, however, create literatures under additional constraints. As First Peoples, they may seek to assert Indigenous worldviews, sovereign custodial rights to country, to acknowledge a primary commitment to family and community, and to their continuity as particular peoples maintaining elements of traditional and contemporary cultures. This means they regularly write simultaneously for Indigenous and non-indigenous audiences. They may seek control over how details of their individual and collective identities are portrayed, and challenge the boundaries of literary form and style, as well as the acceptable uses of Indigenous languages in English. Australian copyright legislation is inadequately framed to address the issues around Indigenous community

custodianship of particular traditional stories, which provides additional challenges for ethical cross-cultural negotiations between writers and publishers (Janke 2009). Some Indigenous writers, through historical circumstances, particularly the government's pursuit of assimilation policies and child removal, have been excluded from their traditional knowledges and languages, and have become alienated from their families and communities, yet the experience of racism informs their Indigenous identity. Indigenous writers may be influenced by the tensions of identity politics, the legacy of racial stereotyping in settler literatures, as well as their personal aspirations to become successful creative writers. Miles Franklin prizewinning author Alexis Wright, who is a member of the Waanyi Nation, for instance, has a long history of Indigenous activism, yet she also wants her fiction to be "recognised for its unique literary value in ideas and form" (2008, 23).

The editor's job is to assist writers to convey their ideas to the best of their ability to a nominated readership, but editors undertake a variety of functions as part of the production and manufacture of a text. Editorial decisions may involve selection (including choices about what gets published and what does not), the shaping of a manuscript through the development of content, voice, character, tone and structure, the implementation of a publishing-house imposed style on the text, and the fashioning of its content for a perceived market. Structural editing (where an editor considers the viability of elements on the page) and copyediting (where language is scrutinised at the sentence level) are also part of this process. Editors plan schedules, and liaise with other publishing staff to provide briefings on page and cover design, to marketing and publicity personnel, as well as communicating with the printer. Editing is, however, not merely engagement with a series of lineal processes that move an idea from proposal or manuscript through to published book. An editor's work involves conceptualising the writer's project, and considering what it might become. Her work requires insight to perceive what is missing from, as much as what is present on, the page. An editor also brings to her work an understanding of both literary aesthetics and contextual theories if she is to best advise the writer.

Editors of fiction work intimately and intuitively with writers to alter texts in ways that even authors may have difficulty understanding. Australian novelist Charlotte Wood suggests this may be because writers reach "beyond their grasp" towards insight that becomes a basis for "new knowledge". The best editors, she argues, find ways to assist the writer to "discover and fulfil a book's creative vision" (2014). They bring generosity and humility to their work, and demonstrate what Wood calls "imaginative

courage” in their interactions with writers (2014). She uses the metaphor of “illumination” to suggest what an editor is capable of doing in the service of a writer. Given that the editorial process is designed to produce a book that captures both the writer’s intentions for her text, and the publisher’s ideal market for the particular book, it is evident that author-editor collaborations may require compromises by both parties.

Wood envisages the engagement between a writer of literary fiction and her editor as taking place within a delicate and uncertain arena entered in concert by both parties (2014). If this fragile space is inhabited also with potential for cross-cultural misunderstandings, the ethical editor must confront her entrenched, often subliminal, attitudes to Indigenous literatures (and peoples) with a degree of self-awareness. When the work is Indigenous and the editing is undertaken in a cross-cultural environment, more is required of the editor than technical editorial competence, clarity of communication, goodwill, and adherence to a set of industry-prescribed editorial standards. Her practice needs to be augmented with a range of additional considerations and strategies, informed by a cross-cultural education, even while she remains conscious of potential limitations in her own Eurocentric education, and the “resistance” of some texts to her scrutiny. As Patricia Linton writes, the “meanings” contained within Indigenous texts, are not of necessity wholly accessible to those outside the particular community primarily addressed (1999, 29–32). Ethical cross-cultural editors, therefore, need to become comfortable working with a degree of uncertainty, not a natural condition for a group trained to value and to apply “rules” associated with consistency of written style, and an acculturation to the particular euphony of the English language. The aspiring cross-cultural editor will be better prepared to assist writers achieve their desires for their texts if she is aware of the breadth of the cultural and political spectra that influence the writers with whom she works, as well as the constantly changing social climate in which Indigenous writing is sought and enjoyed by contemporary readers. Cross-cultural editors engaged in ethical praxis are thus enabled to enter into alliances with Indigenous writers to facilitate the representation of Indigenous realities as a contribution to the decolonisation of the settler society.

Contemporary Indigenous literatures, identity and oral storytelling

The role of literary criticism is also important in the milieu of literary production. In increasingly tertiary-educated and multicultural societies like Australia, critics explicate and contextualise literatures for present and

future generations of readers; and, importantly in this context, set the pedagogical agenda for the teaching of literature in schools and universities. Contextualising Indigenous texts in ways that accommodate open classroom discussion while respecting differences between Indigenous and non-Indigenous cultures and world views makes a valuable contribution to twenty-first century education. Yet as Leigh Dale argues, after Bourdieu, having been acculturated into particular institutional ways of understanding, those engaged in teaching and learning are invested professionally and emotionally in believing that “the forms of knowledge they promote and produce” are both “timeless and valuable” (2012, 22, 301). Since definitions of literature and its interpretations draw on “shared understandings as to how the artistic vehicle is to be apprehended” (Davies 2007, 13–14), it is clear that the degree of difficulty of such interpretations is increased when readers share neither a common culture nor aesthetic with the writer of a text.

In settler societies during the past thirty years, Indigenous and non-Indigenous critics have advanced innovative ideas for teaching and reviewing Indigenous writing based on the validation and preservation of Indigenous epistemologies, ontologies and perspectives. Without intending to portray Indigenous peoples as a homologous group, it is nevertheless useful for non-Indigenous editors to consider the body of critical work which links Indigenous identities with a primary commitment to family and community, a special relationship with place, and the assertion of Indigenous continuity as particular peoples maintaining elements of traditional and contemporary cultures. (In an Australian context see, for instance, Rose 2000, Graham 2008, Grieves 2009, and Brewster 2015).

Postcolonial theory has challenged non-Indigenous readers to see “the other” in human terms, and has developed scholarly understandings of dominant race privilege towards critical whiteness studies: encouraging a “process of denaturalising or defamiliarising whiteness; making it strange” (Brewster 2005). Non-Indigenous critics (and editors) are enabled thereby to recognise their cultural conditioning towards patronisation, and its attendant suppression of Indigenous agency, and to reconceptualise their work as supportive rather than authoritative when engaging with Indigenous writers and writing, and with student communities (Aveling 2007, 40; Leane 2010, 38). Postcolonial theory also supports readings of Indigenous literatures as challenging colonial ideals and majority-society values (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 1989, 33).

Indigenous identity, aesthetics and values are also linked by scholars to forms of traditional storytelling repurposed as literature for the modern

world (Narogin 1990).¹ Michael Dodson (a Yawuru man from the Broome area) argues that, regardless of the degree to which urbanisation has affected the lives of Indigenous peoples and produced generic symbols of Aboriginality, an Indigenous identity is generated through an intimate connection with the past:

[W]e, the Aboriginal peoples, are already the retelling of the past [which] cannot be limiting, because we are always transforming it. In all expressions of our Aboriginality, we repossess our past, and ourselves ... We do not need to re-find the past, because our subjectivities, our being in the world are inseparable from the past (1994, 10).

Here, Dodson expands the idea that culture is fluid, transformable, and that intrinsic elements of Indigenous archaic wisdom inform present day Indigenous identities, which are neither limited nor inhibited by reliance on traditional symbols.

Anne Brewster argues that the growing body of Indigenous literatures “brings about a renegotiation of the literary contract—recording and resignifying subjectivity, aesthetics, canonicity, indigeneity, whiteness and the nation, and transnational connectivities” (2015, xii). In a series of interviews with Indigenous writers about their work, Brewster finds that her interviewees intend to construct stories that acknowledge past suffering while recognising and affirming Indigenous resilience and continuity. They demonstrate agency in choosing to subvert mainstream expectations of Indigenous texts. Kim Scott (a descendent of the Wirlomin Noongar people), for instance, tells Brewster that when writing *That Deadman Dance*, his intention had been to construct a political narrative to subvert expectations of Indigenous fragmentation and despair. “Can I make a positive yarn”, Scott asked himself, “and still make it political?” (in Brewster 2015, 8). Doris Pilkington Garimara (of the Martu people of the Western Desert) considers her life provides a “role model” for Indigenous women (Brewster 2015, 253). In her partially fictionalised autobiography *Under the Wintamarra Tree*, she constructs an authorial persona of leadership and authority through the subversion of “Eurocentric psychoanalytic models of narration” (Brewster 2015, 253). By writing as a “witness” rather than “a victim”, Pilkington Garimara challenges normative

¹ Mudrooroo Narogin’s Indigenous identity was challenged in 1996, and he was subsequently rejected by the Nyoongah communities of the Narogin and Cuballing regions (Laurie 1996: 28, Clark 2007: 43). Nevertheless, Australian Indigenous literature has been significantly influenced by his critical writings and novels. Further details are available in Oboe (2003) and Clark (2007).

psychoanalytic modelling in which the “narrator of trauma [is placed] in a position homologous to that of the analysand, and the reader/listener to that of the analyst” (Brewster 2015, 253). In such cases the reader is positioned by the writer to identify “with or as the Indigenous protagonist” (Brewster 2015, 253). In contrast, Pilkington Garimara’s writing, Brewster suggests, positions the non-indigenous reader as a witness, an outsider, unable to identify with the Indigenous protagonist. Brewster feels implicated in colonial history because of the benefits she enjoys as a non-indigenous Australian, and is called by the text to a sense of obligation that requires a response. Aboriginal writers, she argues, exhibit considerable agency through their literature which, “actively convenes its various publics” (Brewster 2015, 253–4).

Alexis Wright envisions interconnections between the future and ancient wisdom. She is compelled by the necessity of incorporating the values represented by “all times” in Indigenous literatures (see, for example, Wright 1998; Moss 2008; Mandybur 2014). The wisdom available through traditional forms of Indigenous storytelling enables agency to transform present and future in ways that will restore and sustain Indigenous cultures, relationships with the land and economic sustainability (Wright 2016). Wright seeks to demonstrate “how ancient beliefs sit in the modern world”, and how memory “somehow becomes a contemporary continuation of the Dreaming story” (2006, 4). In presenting Indigenous spiritual beliefs as commonplace, she protests the normative effect of the settler society’s belief systems. In using the Waanyi language in her fictions without glossing, she challenges readers to become more comfortable seeking meaning within the context of her stories.

Despite criticism that *Carpentaria* is too complex for non-tertiary educated readers (Syson 2007, 86), Wright is quite explicit. She conceived *Carpentaria* (and later *The Swan Book*) as an epic narrative because of this form’s similarity with traditional Indigenous oral storytelling and the Indigenous voices with which she was familiar:

I hoped that the style would engage more Indigenous readers, especially people from remote locations, to be readers of this book either now, or in the future, or perhaps at least, to be able to listen to a reading of the book (2006, 2).

It is possible, then, that what can be read as a concession to an educated professional class is at the same time a direct address to particular Indigenous communities, an idea to which the ethical cross-cultural editor should be open.

Envisioning a cross-cultural education

The editing of literary fiction is an intense, intimate, frank, and diplomatic process encompassed within a professional relationship between writer and editor, which must be augmented with a range of additional considerations and strategies when the work is Indigenous and the editorial practice takes place in a cross-cultural environment. Charlotte Wood constructs a picture of the “potential vision” for her literary fiction as a “space” entered in concert by writer and editor: “a fragmentary, partially glimpsed, faltering thing, never fully present ... until the work is complete” (2014). Editors have been described as a “writer’s coach, psychiatrist and chief advocate” (Cosic 2016). Yet their work with writers can be fraught with tensions and misunderstandings and, when the publisher’s and writer’s intentions for the text do not align, conflicting loyalties for the editor. Some writers approach the editing process with a degree of antipathy, fearing a contest of wills over their text. Such conflicting expectations suggest editors need to establish an empathetic, supportive and trusting relationship with writers. In the case of cross-cultural relationships, the editor should also understand the strategies and protocols available for adoption when editing Indigenous literatures, and the potential for limitations on her own specific cultural awareness. Non-Indigenous editors engaging in editorial practice with Indigenous writers need to apprehend the pressures that both compel and constrain the writer’s chosen form of artistic representation. Editors need to recognise the politics that drive many Indigenous writers, while perceiving the unique individuality of any particular work. They should avoid stereotyping writers and expecting writing “typical” of an Indigenous style, content or theme, yet be aware of the prevailing discourses that surround the reception of Indigenous literatures by reading publics. They should endeavour to understand how all these issues may affect writers’ abilities to convey meaning in their texts simultaneously to Indigenous and non-Indigenous audiences.

The editor needs to educate herself in order to perceive the basic premises that inform the writer’s choice of mode, content and style for a particular text. She must be well informed about the various audiences for any specific work of Indigenous literature, yet cultivate a flexibility of mind that enables her to ascertain and support her clients’ aspirations for their writing and personal preferences for representation to those reading publics. Importantly, an editor needs to engage with a writer in ways that encourage and assist writers to clarify their thoughts and intentions on the page. In this context, I consider elements of the self-reflective practices required of non-

indigenous editors pursuing ethical cross-cultural editorial relationships with Indigenous writers.

Editors, like critics, are professional readers, and cross-cultural editors can find useful lessons for approaching Indigenous texts in the deliberations of literary scholars. Helen Hoy, for instance, discusses the difficulties of reconciling one's own strongly held ideologies, in her case her feminist principles, to an ethical reading of Indigenous texts, foregrounding the potential for diffidence inherent in cross-cultural engagements (2001, 70–1). Patricia Linton, meanwhile, warns against overconfidence by experienced “professional” readers. Ethical reading, Linton writes, comes not only from technical competence. It involves a form of “readerly tact”, a particular attitude towards the texts of Indigenous writers: “Good reading—skilful, ethical reading—is restrained by the recognition that culturally specific experience may have no equivalent outside its own context” (1999, 43). Linton advocates training to enable non-indigenous readers to recognise “rhetorical modes that distance and deflect the inquiring gaze”, and to gracefully accept limitations to their reading abilities in particular cases (1999, 43). The privilege of “whiteness”, Alison Ravenscroft warns, limits the strategies available to non-indigenous critics for understanding Indigenous knowledges, while simultaneously enabling perceptions that with perseverance the critic may access *all* possible meanings in Indigenous texts (2010, 198). The lesson for non-indigenous editors is an awareness that their understanding of Indigenous “culture, art and law” may be only conditional (2010, 215).

Scholars like Linton (1999), Hoy (2001), Ravenscroft (2010) and Brewster (2015) represent a coterie of non-Indigenous critics committed to ethical reading strategies, yet cognisant of the complexities of cross-cultural engagement with Indigenous writing. Their scholarship suggests, for instance, that ethical engagements with Indigenous texts should spur a commitment to political advocacy for change and improvement in the social conditions of Indigenous peoples (Hoy 2001, 46). An ethical engagement with Indigenous texts takes precedence over professional and career advancement (Hoy 2001, 46). While familiar Western models may be limited in explicating an individual's reading, awareness of and sensitivity to the implications of one's outsider or witness status requires an openness to and acceptance of partial and conditional meanings (Linton 1999, 29–33; Ravenscroft 2010, 215; Brewster 2015, 253).

These ideas also provide critical scaffolding for consideration by the cross-cultural editor striving towards an ethical editorial praxis that facilitates decolonisation. They suggest a commitment to activism that extends beyond the text, recognition of limitations in her own cross-cultural competence, and a warning against overconfidence in her professional

skills. The cross-cultural editor should commit herself to a lengthy self-education process that will assist her to engage with unfamiliar world views and epistemologies, in conjunction with a self-reflective approach that enhances her awareness of her personal ideologies, and the acceptance of unresolvable gaps in her cultural understandings.

Conclusion

The ethical cross-cultural editor works to understand as completely as is possible the Indigenous philosophies, epistemologies and ontologies that inform the writers with whom she works. She needs to accept that—particularly in regard to the numinous, and elements of traditional Indigenous law or ceremony—explanations of certain realities of Indigenous life will be unavailable to her, or to her non-initiated readers. Other ideas may remain obscure because of her own cultural background and education. Nevertheless, she should endeavour to equip herself with appropriate cultural tools in addition to her editorial training. She should immerse herself in the influences that have informed the writer with whom she is working. She needs to read a broad range of national and international Indigenous literatures, and be aware of the dangers of stereotyping or essentialising both the writers with whom she works and their stories. Cross-cultural editors need also to familiarise themselves with the politics of identity that may influence both the content and presentation of an Indigenous writer’s narrative form. Finally, cross-cultural editors and Indigenous writers are individuals who must establish empathetic relationships if they are to work constructively together to the benefit of the writer, the book and its readers.

Levinas offers a framework within which the processes of reconciliation may be reconsidered. Myriad individual responses are possible as works of reconciliation. My interest in this chapter is in ethical responses that enable nuanced and empathetic editing and publishing of Indigenous writers in the context of the Australian settler society. This limited endeavour seeks ways in which the cross-cultural editor may envisage herself as conducting a work of decolonisation in support of her fellow human beings. Such work requires an ideological stance that enables and upholds the legitimacy of “otherness” within the sometimes-antithetical environment of commercial publishing. To affect this task, the cross-cultural editor must be convinced that Indigenous societies have legitimate worldviews informed by philosophies different from but not inferior to those informing the Western philosophical agenda. As responsible sentient beings capable of reason and individual agency, editors are then challenged by the moral responsibility enshrined in Gernot Böhme’s “*tua res agitur*—now it is for you to act” (2001, 110).

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CHAPTER EIGHT

LOVE, FORGERY AND STRANGE DESIRES: TEXTUAL EDITING AS RESEARCH PRACTICE

SHARON BICKLE

But is a scholar, collector, aficionado ‘in love’ with the object of his or her desire? Is it the existence of passion that defines the distinction between fan and aficionado, between dangerous and benign, between deviance and normalcy? (Jensen 1992, 20).

For academics, working in the archive is often a romanticised journey—its letters, diaries, and billets-doux retain the frisson of history (Steedman 2001; Dever, Newman and Vickery 2009). By contrast, the work of the textual editor is seldom considered more than dry scholarship. Adrian Armstrong (2013, 232) calls textual editors the “football referees of text-based research”, backing up his claim with a description of the work of editing that, while thorough, would have a despairing insomniac gratefully lapsing into slumber:

To edit a premodern text with a moderately complex tradition involves making literally hundreds of decisions per page: identifying a base text, attending to orthography and punctuation, selecting and presenting variants, supplying notes and glossary entries. All these decisions are informed by an expertise that embraces not only technical skill, but also an awareness of epistemological and methodological concerns, and a capacity for judgment that Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht has aptly characterized as ‘aesthetic’.

Attendant upon Armstrong’s description of the work of the textual editor is a strong emphasis on expertise, technical skill and “a capacity for judgment”, what Nicholas Frankel (2004, 14) calls “the powerful myths of authenticity and genius on which criticism often relies”. It is this that Joli Jensen (1992, 19) identifies as dividing the diligent professional scholar from the obsessive fan, the production of a culturally-loaded context that validates and valorises the work of scholarship and its “modes of

enactment”. That is to say, obsession with the smallest details of a life are valued differently when contained in a scholarly monograph than when read in a blog or fanzine. While not seeking to dismiss textual editing or devalue its rigour, this chapter sets to one side the idea of detached, rational, textual scholarship in order to re-think its obsessive passions as research practice, and discuss how the editing of life-writings can bring relationships and events to life in a meaningful way.

To illustrate this textual challenge, I focus on the *krankenhaus* (fever hospital) episode of the joint personal diaries of Katharine Bradley and Edith Cooper, the late-Victorian British writers and lovers who formed the literary partnership of “Michael Field”.¹ This section of the diaries describes a visit to Germany in 1891 during which Cooper was diagnosed with scarlet fever, and both women were detained in the Dresden *krankenhaus*. What makes this section significant, as a textual editing problem, are several odd characteristics that distinguish it from the rest of the diaries. In most of their diaries the women share the page, re-telling or building upon the other’s account of an event one after the other. In contrast, the *krankenhaus* account is written throughout (fifty-three pages) in the hand of Edith Cooper only; yet, in spite of this, the point of view shifts between Cooper and Bradley. Unusually for a diary (which is often reflective), early sections of the account—the arrival at the *krankenhaus*—have been retrospectively edited in Cooper’s hand to change the tense from past to present, and the whole episode is framed by a literary structure with a clear beginning and ending. Cooper concludes:

This seems a little, circular bit of my life, shut out by a special, exclusive line from my other days; it is curious how perfectly my imagination has been curving round to the point whence this circle began. As soon as convalescence touched me warmly, my thoughts began to revert to the first sensations, the fear, the sadness, the vacancy of ‘illness’—the splendour of delirium, the still growth of the ‘machtige Liebe’ in Schwester. I see all these things in their completeness as the time comes for me to pass the hospital doors ... (Michael Field Diary Archive, Add. Ms 46779, fol 113r).

¹ These multi-volume diaries, entitled “Works and Days,” are held in the British Library; the account of the *krankenhaus* can be found at Add. 46779, fols 88-114. Facsimile pages of “Works and Days” were accessed using the “Michael Field Diary Archive,” *Victorian Lives and Letters Consortium* (Center for Digital Humanities, University of South Carolina), <http://tundra.csd.sc.edu/vllc/field>. This is hereafter referenced as Michael Field Archive Diary, with folios provided in accordance with mss.

Cooper comments on the “special, exclusive line” that sets up a division between this experience and “normal” life, but also from the rest of the diaries; and carefully marks it as separate just as the “splendour of delirium” invites the reader to regard its perceptions and assertions as illusion.

A simple explanation for the consistency of Cooper’s handwriting throughout the episode readily presents itself: the women were far from home, they were detained until Cooper was medically discharged, and perhaps diary entries were of necessity recorded in some temporary form and transcribed later. Interpreted in this light, that the episode is written throughout in Cooper’s hand is an effect of dislocation—barely a textual footnote—but I want to suggest a different, perhaps even deviant reading of this textual anomaly; one that embraces the carnival qualities of the narrative as the creation of a queer space that grants Cooper unique freedoms to explore her own character and sexuality in ways not usual in (these) diaries, and not generally appropriate for a Victorian woman.

Why “Michael Field”?

Prying into the sexuality of Cooper may seem an unpardonably salacious act, but largely as a result of the disputes of the 1980s and 1990s regarding “romantic friendship” on one hand (Faderman 1981) and lesbian sexuality on the other (White 1990), Cooper and her partner/aunt Katharine Bradley are, in the twenty-first century, “now among the best-known lesbian couples of the British *fin de siècle*” (Vicinus 2005, 326).² More than that, careful stewardship by their literary executor, Thomas Sturge Moore, and his family has guaranteed the survival of the extensive life-writings of Michael Field for over a century. Since their recovery, Michael Field has continued to grow in literary and critical importance as a key part of scholarship on the female aesthetes of the late-Victorian period and are now part of an ambitious interactive digital archive project developed through the *Victorian Lives and Letters Consortium* (<http://vllc.cdhs.org/about/>).

Michael Field burst onto the British literary scene in May 1884 with a frenzied critical reception to their debut book of verse dramas, *Callirrhoe: Fair Rosamund*. This “new poet” was compared to Swinburne, to George Eliot, and to Shakespeare; his “poetic fire” sounding “like the ring of a new voice, which is likely to be heard far and wide among the English-speaking

² In addition to Faderman (1981) and White (1990), as early as 1975, Jeannette Foster included Michael Field as conjectural proto-lesbians in *Sex-Variant Women in Literature*; Emma Donoghue’s biographic *We Are Michael Field* (1998) asserts that Bradley and Cooper were lesbian lovers. For the notion that Bradley and Cooper became lovers when Cooper turned twenty-one, see Blain 2006 and Vicinus 2004.

peoples” (Sturgeon 1922, 27). As “Michael Field”, Bradley and Cooper published eight volumes of lyric poetry and seventeen verse dramas. Other dramas were authored anonymously or published posthumously, making a total of twenty-seven. Michael Field’s literary career began to falter in the 1890s, and was in decline by the 1900s, although they continued to publish well-regarded lyric poetry throughout this decade and beyond. They died, mere months apart, in 1913 and 1914.

Possibly their best-known poem is “Prologue” (Field 1893, 1–6) in which both lyric voice and beloved/muse intertwine bodies and voices to declare the centrality of art and love:

It was deep April, and the morn
 Shakespeare was born;
 The world was on us, pressing sore;
 My love and I took hands and swore,
 Against the world, to be
 Poets and lovers evermore.

With all three—Field, Bradley, and Cooper—complexly interwoven in the poem’s declaration, “Prologue” embodies what several critics (Prins 1999; Laird 2000; Thomas 2007) have identified as the contingent pluralities of Michael Field and “his” poems and verse dramas. This is the way Bradley and Cooper create queer spaces and *a*/temporalities in which they explore their love and fluid female-centred subjectivities and sexualities.

In addition to the published poetry and plays of Michael Field, the extensive letters and diaries represent a treasure trove of the lives of a pre-modern lesbian couple. Particularly in the earlier life-writings, their depiction of the women’s relationship is often dominated by Bradley. Her statements unequivocally represent their unity, as in her diary reflection: “we are closer married” (Field 1933, 16). In their love letters Bradley adopts the position of husband, “the male part of Michael as besemeth our relations” (Field 2008, 36), to Cooper’s wife. Cooper writes to Bradley, “Well, *gifts* are not always perfect and yet of some help and joy—And I have given myself to you as your spouse forever” (ibid., 155; emphasis in original). Later she declares: “Dearest love, my Own husband. I send you this blue flower—I, your spousa, and so make you a brilliant complement” (ibid., 162) and Bradley replies to Cooper with the salutation, “Darling Wife” (ibid., 167). From Cooper’s late teens, Bradley’s lifelong adoration of her niece is remarkably constant. While the diaries reflect the full complement of experiences in a shared life from joys to petty disputes, if Bradley’s eyes strayed from her object it is not recorded in the journals she shared with Cooper and in which she performed her devotion.

I have argued elsewhere (Bickle 2008) that the textual construction of the relationship as a marriage in which Bradley was husband to Cooper's wife functions in the early love letters as an assertion of the primacy of their private and literary bond over the claims of family. Once Cooper matures and the control her family is able to exert over her lessens (particularly after the death of her mother), her sexuality becomes more complicated. In one of the few articles to consider the impact of the art historian Bernhard Berenson on the relationship of Bradley and Cooper, Martha Vicinus argues that Cooper's "discovery of raw heterosexual desire" (2005, 349) for Berenson developed soon after they met in 1890, and "pried apart their private persona as a devoted couple" (ibid., 328). Cooper shifted between love and hate for Berenson for the rest of her life—oddly abetted and occasionally defended by Bradley. Vicinus suggests that through Berenson, Cooper "fell in love with a masculine version of herself" (ibid., 331):

[Cooper] reworked her boy-role, not only to differentiate herself from her aunt but also to confirm her androgynous, faun-like resemblance to Berenson. Cooper was both delighted and dismayed by this mirroring, because she discovered her desired (and desirable) self through her soul-sameness with a man and her alterity with a woman.

Most significantly from a textual editing perspective, Vicinus suggests that from 1892, with her passion thwarted by Berenson's relationship with Mary Costelloe (whom he married), Cooper "deployed an array of metaphors and similes [in the diaries], in order to help Bradley see her emotional conflict" (335), a performance Vicinus (2009, 758) depicts as "self-dramatization". Here I argue that Cooper's play with androgyny and fluid gender fantasies in the *krankenhaus* episode of the diaries grants her a freedom to perform the "desired (and desirable) self" identified by Vicinus (ibid., 755). It is in the *krankenhaus* that her transformation into an object of desire that revels in the attention of both women and men begins. Aiding the dramatisation, Cooper distances her own voice from the events in the *krankenhaus* with a small act of forgery.

Forging the bonds of love

Forgery or fakery is an accusation never levelled at Michael Field. Women writers who take a male pseudonym choose to follow a common literary practice that enables their writings to be taken seriously in a marketplace that privileges the male voice—and to which literature and its gatekeepers for the most part turn a blind eye. However, while Michael Field began as exactly this type of conventional, authorly pose, Bradley and Cooper soon

test such polite accommodations by becoming Michael (Bradley) and Field (Cooper). In this sense, Michael Field is always more than a forged or faked subject not only because of the exemption that excuses women's literary pseudonyms, but because the name is absorbed into Bradley and Cooper's personal identities in art and in life. Nevertheless, there are good reasons for looking upon the *krankenhaus* episode as a kind of forgery.

Although now a dated notion in autobiographical theory, Phillippe Lejeune's idea of the autobiographical pact (1989) where, as Leigh Gilmore (1994, 76) states, "the title page functioned as a signed document attesting to the historically truthful representation of the coherent self of an actual person" is still influential. Studies of autobiography now emphasise the fictional/narrative qualities of life-writing in what has been termed the "textual turn" (Stanley 2004, 212), but historical and testimonial affects linger, particularly in considerations of pre-modern subjects. In many ways the simple existence of the diaries, as *Michael Field* diaries, enacts life-writing and autobiography as contested and liminal spaces: documents that cross and re-cross textual-historical boundaries according to the contingent and shifting nature of its constitutive identities (Michael and Henry or Field, Sim and Puss, and Michael Field himself) that are never quite coherent or consistent with their gendered bodies.

In the *krankenhaus* account, Cooper writes or re-writes Bradley with implied permission (next Cooper herself, Bradley was the first reader of the journal) and in a manner that violates, or at least vigorously bends, the autobiographical pact to its own unique textual turn. In the rest of the diaries, changes of voice are not explicitly flagged, which is entirely consistent with a private autobiography whose readership is its two authors. Here, however, narrative shifts are clearly marked with subheadings. This is necessary because the episode is all in Cooper's hand, but this new practice also adds strange layers to the narrative: when the subhead "P. [Cooper] dictates" (Michael Field Diary Archive Add. Ms 46779 fol 113r)³ appears, it suggests Bradley is writing Cooper's dictated words upon "a" page, yet "this" page is in Cooper's hand—so the content has been spoken by Cooper, written by Bradley, and re-written by Cooper. There is slippage between the subjectivities—who is whom? Further, as both Bradley and Cooper were there in the *krankenhaus*, why is it necessary to be so fey about who is actually telling the story?

In *Faking Literature*, K. K. Ruthven (2001) argues that the separation of literary forgeries from truthful representation is what makes it like literature.

³ Bradley's favoured nickname for Cooper at this time is Persian Puss and its diminutives, Pussie, Puss, PP and simply P.

More than that, Ruthven comments on the forgery's "carnavalesque irreverence towards the sanctity of various conventions designed to limit what is permissible in literary production" (ibid., 4). It is just this sense of the carnivalesque that the confusing layers of Cooper's "forgery" add to the *krankenhaus* episode. Even when Cooper as herself writes "as in a dream and to someone I watch" (Michael Field Diary Archive Add. Ms 46779 fol 91v), she contributes to the idea that this section of the diaries invites the reader into an altered reality. As a result of the slippages of perspective, Bradley seems more character than writer or co-writer and, from within the distorted illusions of carnival, perhaps Bradley as narrator is best read as mask. In this sense, Bradley (written by Cooper) observes a world apart in which Cooper is embodied in a way distinctly separate from her usually reserved self, and who can perform herself and call out her desires in ways that are not commensurate with her "real" self. It is precisely within this unstable—and I would argue protective—matrix of not just one, but several, illusory and unstable realities that I want to explore the experiences in the *krankenhaus* as a queer space.

Into the *krankenhaus*: a Dantean descent

The *krankenhaus* episode begins with Cooper falling ill at their hotel in Dresden. On Wednesday, 19 August, the suggestively-named Dr Faust diagnoses her with scarlet fever and declares she must go to hospital. The association with hell continues in the trip to the hospital which is depicted as a Dantean descent:

An officer enters—burly, black, prompt—two men follow in deep-coloured blouses. I am borne through deserted passages on a chair and descend, descend—til I come to piercing grey light and free air. Then I am shut with my beloved in a coach—very like a mourning coach (Michael Field Diary Archive, Add. Ms 46779 fol 91r).

Later, incarcerated in the *krankenhaus*, Cooper compares herself to Tantalus (fol 93v), the mythological figure punished eternally in the underworld, and the relationship of the *krankenhaus* with Dantean imagery becomes more explicit when Bradley notes "the sick ones from their pale hospital gowns look at my English clothes as the Shades at the shadow cast by Dante on the ground"⁴ (fol 96v). These Dantean shades continue to wander the grounds of the *krankenhaus* aimlessly throughout the account.

⁴ In Purgatorio III, the dead are unsettled by seeing Dante's shadow on the ground which indicates he is living.

Judged one of “*die Kränken*” (fol 91v)—the sick—by the head doctor, the narrative also makes use of Gothic tropes. There is an attempt to separate Cooper and Bradley, a division of the living from the dying: Cooper says, “I have a feeling, that the dying must have, of external powers taking possession of me and severing me from all I love” (fol 91v). Bradley, however, argues doggedly with the doctors, and ultimately a compromise is reached where, as she may have a red throat, she is incarcerated as well. Perhaps surprisingly, little is made of Bradley—who is not sick—and her unquestioned, even heroic, willingness to enter a nineteenth-century fever hospital to be with Cooper, but this is not really Bradley’s story. Cooper is taken on a dream-like journey through “prison-passages” (fol 92r) to a tiny room, then to a large room with six beds “in one of which: was a great baby-doll—Ghastly creature!” (fol 92v). The uncanny doll plays no part in Cooper’s narrative but contributes to the nightmarish dreamscape. Events in the *krankenhaus* become even odder when Cooper writes of her delirium, “A great dromedary comes along, with red trappings and trophies, in the midst are set the words Two weeks at Dresden!! The ironic beast passes” (94v, original emphasis). The ironic beast brings a further sense of theatrical, even burlesque, performance to what has been identified in the narrative both psychologically and spatially as a different reality.

If it were not clear enough that Cooper and Bradley have somehow found themselves in an unreal space, perhaps closest to a Gothic novel, the account of Cooper’s fever confirms it. Bradley writes of “the horror of imprisonment, the sense of isolation, the strange gnawing anxiety. Last (Thursday night) was one of delirium and horror, the delicate brain all entangled. I woke to find P. at the other end of the room; she nearly if not quite fainted” (Michael Field Diary Archive Add. Ms 46779 fol 96r). In this way, several pages of the account are devoted to drawing Cooper’s special, exclusive line, positioning the narrative within the “kingdom of the sick” (fol 96r) and removing the *krankenhaus* from the usual rules that govern both the rest of the diaries, and the broader conventions recognisable in diaries and life-writings more generally.

Der sanfte Heinrich (Gentle Heinrich)

Thus far, I have outlined how Cooper uses the episode in the *krankenhaus* to clearly signal the creation within the diary of a Gothic fantasy world with Cooper as its focus and subject. Reliant upon the narrative, or perhaps mask, of a fictionalised or forged Bradley are the transformations in Cooper herself. As she moves from being sick to convalescent, Cooper writes, “my whole nature grew elfishly wicked as she read. I determine I will have as

much pleasure as I can" (Michael Field Diary Archive Add. Ms 46779 fol 96v). The "elfishly wicked" Cooper also has a new look: on 29 August, Cooper had her hair cropped short. This creates for her a boyish identity—"der sanfte Heinrich" (fol 107v)—given her by the nurse, Schwester. The "pretty boy" (fol 102v) as a new masculine identity was so dear to both Cooper and Bradley that Henry very quickly becomes Cooper's preferred identity in their letters and life-writings, one that she maintains throughout the rest of her life.

Vicinus (2005, 331) argues that in her relationship with Bernhard Berenson, Cooper "fell in love with a masculine version of herself", exploring her role as a boy, a mirror image of Berenson's androgynous faun. Situated at the nexus of two gazes, Bradley's and Berenson's, Vicinus asserts Cooper "used her passionate feelings to transform herself into an art object, to be admired not only by her partner but also by their friends" (2005, 341). In Dresden in 1891, Cooper and Bradley had known Berenson for a year, but Berenson's interest was now focused on his relationship with Mary Costelloe: the original love triangle of Berenson-Cooper-Bradley was doubled by the addition of Berenson-Cooper-Costelloe. In the *krankenhaus*, Berenson and Costelloe visit the invalid several times, bringing gifts of flowers and books. Berenson flirts casually with Cooper, telling her: "You will never know what plans I have been forming for your happiness, nor how I looked forward to being in the gallery with you" (Michael Field Diary Archive Add. Ms 46779 fol 98r) and "My little blue blouse (his choice) he had been enjoying some time" (fol 100v). Berenson's flirtations with Cooper in the *krankenhaus* illustrate his willingness, even here, to participate in the androgynous love-play described by Vicinus, and to continue his admiration of Cooper (despite the presence of his lover and future wife).

More than that, Berenson's presence in the *krankenhaus* signals his ability to cross the line between the world of the well and the sick. According to the diary, Berenson claims he is "just a faun" (fol 98v) who therefore has no fear of infection, and who therefore mirrors Cooper's "elfish wickedness"; just as his shaving of his moustache (fol 100v) mirrors Cooper's cropped hair. In this way, Berenson is situated as part of two worlds—their existing cross-gendered love-fantasy as described by Vicinus; and the fantasy world Cooper is constructing within the *krankenhaus*, where Berenson's appearance emphasises, more than ever before, his similarity to Cooper.

Cooper's feelings for Berenson are on display here, as they are in several parts of the diaries—a despairing and doomed passion that haunts her life. Directly after a visit from Berenson, Cooper writes of a vision of a broken cupid:

A little love comes to me and lays his little cheek against my heart. He shows me in a vessel his broken wings, his broken bow and arrows, his broken heart. And then he sings ... In the vessel it looked such a bright, feathered smash (Michael Field Diary Archive Add. Ms 46779 fol 98r).

On the next page, Cooper writes erotically of Berenson's gift of roses:

Oh, I lay and gazed intoxicated with the glow, the colour of life itself swelling the buds, fading in the blossoms—with the perfume around me, within me. An insatiable rapture, almost delirium, haunted my eyes and brain (fol 98v).

While Cooper's relationship with Berenson opened up the potential for cross-gendered and heterosexual pleasures to be found at the centre of multiple gazes, it is in the *krankenhaus* (or her contained and constructed fantasy of the *krankenhaus*) that Cooper discovers a space in which to articulate and perform her cross-gendered sexual fantasies. This space extends beyond Bradley, and even beyond Berenson, with Cooper abandoning her customary caution and revealing a fluidly-desiring sexuality.

The "Kingdom of the sick" (fol 96r) is populated not just by Bradley and Cooper, the visitant Berenson (and Mary), and the roaming shadows of the inmates, but also by the nurse, Christiane Schwester, and the doctors. Dr Henner is described in the diary as "a very tall dark young man, with gentle lines of beauty and a thoughtful face" (fol 100v). On 15 September, Henner arrives to succeed Dr Wagner (Waggie). Henner is "light-minded and disposed to flirt. P. is so minded" (fol 103r). He returns in the afternoon and their limited conversation is rendered in German complete with bouts of girlish laughter from Cooper (fol 104r). Later, the young Dr Waggie returns from holiday, and is depicted with eyes that "gleam on the patient" (fol 105v). While none of these interactions could be described as risqué, Cooper's delight in these interactions sit in contrast to her usual self and go beyond how a well-brought-up Englishwoman should comport herself abroad. Charles Ricketts described Cooper for Mary Sturgeon's study of Michael Field as:

Very quiet and restrained in voice and manner, a singularly alive and avid spectator and questioner, occasionally speaking with force and vivacity, but instinctively retiring, and absorbed by an intensely reflective inner life (Sturgeon 1922, 38).

If we view Cooper's flirtations with the doctors as kicking over the traces, it is in her relationship with nurse Schwester that Cooper really embraces

the role of object to a “terrible fleshly love” (Michael Field Diary Archive, Add. Ms 46779, fol 109v).

In the grip of passion: *Eine mächtige liebe* (A mighty love)

Early in the diary’s *krankenhaus* account, Schwester is depicted as severe but re-assuring, fervently Catholic and lonely: a “good, sweet, homely woman” (Michael Field Diary Archive, Add. Ms 46779 fol 96r). During Cooper’s convalescence, as Bradley begins to venture outside the walls of the fever hospital once again, she returns to discover:

Sister [Schwester] kisses her [Cooper] with a kiss that plunges down among the wraps (Yes, as the wolf did when he sought the child—O Eros!—in Browning’s ‘Ivan Ivanovich’—a fatal kiss). (fol 105v).

Bradley is upset that the nurse’s attentions have pre-empted her own “Springtide kisses” (fol 105v) and, in spite of the wolfishness of her interaction with Schwester, Cooper mollifies Bradley by emphasising the motherliness of the attachment. Hereafter, Schwester’s passion for Cooper retains a dual aspect: “She has in her eyes a twofold divineness when she looks at P.—that of the mother who has done everything for her babe, and that of a Dog who watches for the love of a higher Power” (fol 107v). Yet there are no less than ten encounters with the nurse involving “great spreading kisses” (fol 108v), more “wolf-kisses” (fol 108v), and a hand that “curls round my heart to feel the life beat and strays” (fol 111v). Ultimately, Cooper is brought to the conclusion that:

My experiences with Nurse are painful—she is under the possession of a terrible fleshly love, she does not conceive as such, and as such I will not receive it. Ah, why will Anteros make one cynical by always peering over the beauty of every love ... why must his fatality haunt us? (fol 109v).

There are some ways in which Cooper’s interlude with Schwester mirrors the one she shares with Bradley: Schwester is older and idolises Cooper with a passionate intensity that becomes a kind of desperation. Is Schwester’s “fearful passion of unsatisfied senses in a strange nature” (fol 113v) then a dark reflection of the Cooper–Bradley relationship? Is Cooper gesturing obliquely to the ways her desires for Bradley and Berenson conflict and collide? Is this what she means by the fatality of Anteros, the god of requited love? It is, of course, the nature of the *krankenhaus* that permits Cooper to reveal and to revel in such thoughts, but not be responsible for them or for a clear explanation of her meaning—it is simply

part of the “splendour of delirium” that covers all and extends its mantle over the entire time she lives as one of the *kranke* (sick).

For Chris White, the *krankenhaus* episode helps map out a pro-sex account of the history of lesbianism that included “the complicated processes whereby the discourses of lesbianism might have been inscribed in the nineteenth century” (1990, 210). White argues that “fleshly love” is a phrase indicative of Cooper’s capacity to recognise “one woman’s feelings of physical desire for another woman” (1990, 207). For White, the description of this “fleshly love” as terrible is ambiguous in terms of how that adjective is applied: to all such feelings, or just to their manifestation in Schwester? It is important to note that White’s intention is a broad one—to demonstrate that the Bradley–Cooper relationship is more complex than Faderman’s romantic friendship hypothesis (1981), and to identify how, while neither woman would have named their relationship lesbian, the diaries include strategies and devices that can articulate female-oriented desire. Having begun the process of thinking about how lesbian desire might be expressed, she leaves it to others to expand on the discourses of lesbianism.

After the *krankenhaus*, and more significantly after Berenson rejects Cooper for Mary Costelloe in Paris in mid-1892, Cooper’s position at the centre of a love triangle in which she could enjoy the admiration of both Berenson and Bradley collapsed. The special, exclusive line of the *krankenhaus* that allowed her to experiment with open, fluid expressions of sexuality had forever shut behind her when she wrote in the diary on 29 July 1892:

Although the doctrine’s [Berenson’s] wonderful eyes—a Faun’s crossed with the traditional Christ’s—pursue me, tho’ they have a charm that maddens, I will never go off to the hills like Agave only to rend my own flesh and blood—my artistic personality. I die in the presence of the face I love—the man’s.

There is no fellowship, no caress, no tight winding-together of two natures, no tenderness when my Love [Bradley] is severed from me. And there seems to be no life in people—no life to be got anywhere—if one is withdrawn from the Doctrine.

So I sit here doubly dead. (Michael Field Diary Archive, Add. Ms 46780 fol 134r).

The double death that Cooper describes is both the loss of Berenson and (temporarily) Bradley, who is away in Oxford. While Berenson was now more or less untouchable as a result of his long-term relationship with Mary Costelloe, Bradley would return, and would reaffirm her adoration for Cooper in a telegram transcribed into the diary, “But oh it

is most better when we are together, closer, growing into one” (fol 136v). Throughout Cooper’s passionate love for Berenson, she neither renounces nor sublimates her feeling for Bradley in the diaries, yet it is difficult not to see the shift from the “splendour of delirium” in the *krankenhaus* to an exclusive focus on the devoted love Bradley offers as also the closing off of part of the herself represented by Berenson.

After 1892, the Michael Field relationship becomes a far less problematic love relationship. While Berenson continues to trouble Cooper’s heart, and while Berenson and Mary Costelloe’s difficult marriage encouraged Berenson occasionally to stir the embers of desire between himself and Cooper (probably to provoke Mary), no other relationships could take precedence over Cooper’s love for Bradley. Indeed, after this, it is possible to see more clearly Ricketts’ assessment of her as “instinctively retiring, and absorbed by an intensely reflective inner life” (Sturgeon 1922, 38). In the final years of their lives, Cooper and Bradley took strength and consolation from each other, and also from their Catholic faith.

Maryanne Dever writes that we venture into the archive with our own archival stories and the nature of what we seek there is revelation, particularly if what is sought is sexual intrigue or what Dever calls “the smoking lipstick” (2010, 164). Carolyn Steedman characterises the archival search as about dust, an “immutable, obdurate set of beliefs about the material world” that enables the archival scholar to “conjure a social system from a nutmeg grater” (2001, 45). Antoinette Burton notes: “archives are always already stories; they produce speech and especially speech effects, of which history is but one” (2005, 1). It does not escape me that what I have conjured from the *krankenhaus* is a fanciful story of Edith Cooper’s secret inner self—perhaps held together by dust and smoke—but also guided by what Armstrong (2013, 232) describes in that maligned description of the textual editor’s work as technical skill, the questions that arise from careful observation of the words on the page, its additions and deletions, with the eye of an editor: an editorial process which sparks off its own research journey.

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CHAPTER NINE

BOOKS AS ART (IN AUSTRALIA): LOVE, NOT MONEY, AND A MEASURE OF INDEPENDENCE

CAREN FLORANCE

Introduction: Pushing against definitions

At the end of last century, the artist book was hailed by Johanna Drucker as “the quintessential twentieth-century art form”, appearing in “every major movement in art and literature” (2004, 1). For well over half of that century, the book as art remained a variation of the Western codex format, whether in magazine, pamphlet or case-bound format. There were two polarised attitudes towards performing the codex: craft and conceptual. The former, known as fine press or private press books, referenced historical book production and prized quality and tactility, and were printed in limited editions using traditional letterpress processes and fine materials (Loney 2008). Conceptual books tended to push against these traditions and utilised readily available and reasonably affordable commercial production means like offset printing, photography, photocopying and stapled bindings. For these artists, content was primary (Catalano 1983, 9) and they often valued a minimalistic, pseudo-scientific aesthetic which Kotz calls “the look of pure information” (2010, 221).

The swift transformation from this binary approach to the codex outwards into a complex tangle of structures, themes, purposes and attitudes was an international phenomenon. It started in the 1970s in the northern hemisphere and in the mid-1980s in Australia. Some of these works were new approaches to constructing the codex—or deliberately exploding and subverting the ready-made codex—one genre (altered books) being so popular that they are almost a field in their own right. Others used alternative structures, sidestepping the codex altogether. Artists like Hedi Kyle (American artist, 1937–) became renowned for inventing new

structures that perform book actions (folding, turning, enclosing, containing) in unusual ways (Black 2017). Other artists went looking for alternatives to Western culture and rediscovered historical book structures from all around the world.

A self-driven need for collectors (institutional and otherwise) to make sense of this proliferation of ideas and objects has resulted in innumerable attempts to neatly define the field and to categorise its activities; something that the artists, for the most part, have ignored. A few key figures in this conversation are Drucker (2004, 1–19); Betty Bright (2005, 3–4); Stefan Klima (1998, 21–40), whose chapter synthesises the US debate (including a lengthy account of Clive Phillpot’s campaign against non-codex book arts); and Rob Perrée (2002, 12).

In *A Manifesto for the Book* (2010), which is the summation of the research project “What Will be the Canon for the Artist’s Book in the 21st Century?” UK researchers Sarah Bodman and Tom Sowden aimed to coin a definitive term for artistic publishing. They surveyed widely across artists around the world, using direct interviews and online call-outs that asked respondents to classify their publishing output by responding to an “ABTREE”, a chart that listed various forms of publishing, organised into four onward-branching sections: artists’ books, ephemeral, digital, and artisan. Participants could customise the chart and include commentary. The project results failed to find a definitive term, reinforcing the slipperiness of the field, but it also uncovered a resistance to the term *publishing*, especially from traditional book makers. By the end of the project, Bodman and Sowden (2010, 5) were also undecided:

We too were slightly uncomfortable with the term Artists’ Publishing. As much as we appreciate work that is “published” by artists, it was not quite the inclusive term that we had hoped. By its nature, publishing tends to define work that is produced in multiple and distributed. For many, that is not what they do. Unique and sculptural books are no small part of the artists’ books world and the term publishing does not appear to include these works. Neither does it seem a correct term for books produced in very small editions, which is again a significant theme within artists’ books.

The action of publishing, in the context of “releasing for public scrutiny” rather than simply “producing multiples”, underpins artist book typology. An approach I will take in this chapter is looking at *origin* and *destination* as factors that distinguish books made “as art” from “art books”. Art books are situated within “independent publishing”, a contemporary mode of working that is ambivalent about its attachment to art, as explained by Tony White (2014). This chapter will direct attention to the Australian scene,

where artistic publishing appears to be segmented in a way that doesn't occur elsewhere. A discussion panel at the 2017 Artist Book Brisbane Event (ABBE) at Griffith University (Queensland) contained international artist book makers who confirmed that the local division between "artist" books and "art" books isn't as compartmentalised in the northern hemisphere. One suggestion is that we have a smaller population, which intensifies communities and the power of gatekeeper personalities. Another angle is that that educational opportunities for Australian book-making is more limited than in the northern hemisphere. A final thought is that the activity from the 1980s to the early 2000s is essentially by one generation of artists, who used alternative modes of production to challenge the dominance of the codex when it was the primary mode of information sharing, and now a new generation has emerged for whom the book is a secondary source and almost nostalgic object. They also use digital printing methods which, ironically, privilege the codex as a material output.

Before exploring Australia's particular relationship with the artist book, it is worth looking closer at the distinctions I have made: craft versus conceptual, codex versus non-codex. The rapid formation of a field of book arts also generated a rapidly-solidifying canon of the historical development of the published artist book. This consists of points of time when someone—printer, poet, artist—did something radical with page- or book-space (page-space being the design of the page/s, book-space being the complete environment of a book) that is now tracked as an influential moment for the development of artist books. These points are expanding to include women and non-western influences; but three constant examples are William Blake, Stephane Mallarmé, and Ed Ruscha.

Making the book

William Blake (England, 1757–1827) is claimed by book artists and fine press printers because he published books by himself, using his own poetic content and by his own physical production, thanks to his trade training and printmaking inventiveness. An eccentric man who saw no reason to pay others for skills he was capable of attaining, he bypassed his contemporary book publishing system (Drucker 2004, 23; Bright 2005, 33–34; Oppen and Lyssiotis 2011, 11, 15). For poetry studies he is a poet whose page materiality—the way he incorporated handwritten text into his images as a single page unit—makes it hard to separate out his poetry without losing an essential critical component of the reading, something that flows through to concrete and shaped poetry (Perloff 1997).

This last point is also true of Stéphane Mallarmé (France, 1842–98) whose radically poetic use of page-space folds together the enthusiasm of book artists, designers, and poets alike. His unresolved “ideal book” project, *Le Livre*, caused major ripples after his death, but it was his design of his poem “*Un Coup de Dés Jamais N’Abolira Le Hasard*” (“A Throw of the Dice will Never Abolish Chance” 1897/1914), that transformed the conventional space of the page. With it, he transgresses the boundaries of the page gutter to treat the double page spread as a single unit, and his use of typography and scale to evoke movement and distance pushes the work beyond the mere concrete (Arnar 2011). Mallarmé drew his layout by hand, and his typographic design was easily achievable by letterpress, the contemporary printing technology; but he found the first 1897 printing unsatisfactory, probably because of the printer’s design interpretation rather than any failings of the process. Mallarmé’s death in 1898 prevented his taking direct action in the matter, and something much closer to his desired outcome wasn’t achieved until a private press took matters in hand in 1914, using exactly the same technology (Mallarmé [1897] 2016). This awareness of, and emphasis on, textual performativity as image and his vision of page-space as a field of possibilities influenced generations of visual artists and poets through the twentieth century, who credit him as their stepping stone to active page/book-space.

Ed Ruscha (America, 1937–) plays this role for all contemporary independent publishing, especially “art books”. A multimedia visual artist, his motivation in turning to offset printing to produce cheap, affordable books of his photographs (curated as portable exhibitions rather than albums) was to escape the gallery distribution system:

I am not trying to create a precious limited edition book, but a mass-produced product of high order. All my books are identical. They have none of the nuances of the hand-made and crafted limited edition book. It is almost worth the money to have the thrill of seeing 400 exactly identical books stacked in front of you (Catalano 1983, 16).

He wanted to make a cheap, democratic “form of art available to a different audience by utilising a different distribution system”, says critic Clive Phillpot (2013a), who notes that it took a while for Ruscha to break himself free of art publishing conventions. His first book, *Twentysix* [sic] *Gasoline Stations* (1963), a simple black-and-white photobook with no text other than the title, had a run of four hundred copies that were numbered as an edition; with his second book, *Various Small Fires and Milk* (1964), he numbered the first fifty of the four hundred, thinking to underwrite the printing costs with an element of enhanced collectability. By his third book, *Some Los*

Angeles Apartments (1965), he had rethought this, and the edition of seven hundred were unnumbered, as were subsequent reprintings of *Twentysix Gasoline Stations* (which reached 3900 copies) (Phillpot 2013a, 186–88).

Ruscha was not alone, and probably not the first to publish like this, but he is certainly the poster-child of the conceptual publishing movement, which burst into peak activity in the 1970s and is having a contemporary art resurgence as “art books” in this early part of the twenty-first century. He is also a touchstone for the development of the contemporary photobook, now easily publishable via Internet print-on-demand (POD) facilities. While aspiring to Lucy Lippard’s wish to “see artists’ books ensconced in supermarkets, drugstores and airports” (1977, 41), these early conceptual books were, as Phillpot points out, often produced or underwritten by galleries and specialised art bookshops, and not pitched in content towards a mass-audience (2013a, 193). Still, they espoused Benjamin’s democratic multiple, a concept that attempts to demolish “aura”, the “sacred” essence that makes a work of art singular, precious, collectible and irreplaceable (2009, 236–37):

Altogether, the three printings [of *Twentysix Gas Stations*] meant that 3,900 people could, in theory, experience the artist’s work in different locations simultaneously. Additionally, by invoking the possibility of continual reprinting in response to demand, Ruscha destroyed any aura of preciousness that might have remained. Indeed, if Ruscha wishes to continue to make his work available to the widest audience, he, like any other artist who discovers that an originally cheap bookwork has become expensive because it is out of print and in demand, can counteract this rarity by simply reprinting the work. This is one meaning of an ‘open edition’ (Phillpot 2013a, 188).

However, not many of the books of this time were republished and, ironically, they did become collectible, rare and expensive. Ruscha’s original work is now iconic: at the time of writing, a numbered first-edition copy of *Twentysix Gas Stations* is available on ABEbooks for US\$20,000, and an unnumbered third edition (1969) is an average of US\$2,000.

These three protagonists are male champions of the codex and of “literate” image/text dynamics. Their books used the commercial processes of their times: printmaking, letterpress, offset printing, and regardless of initial intention, their books were (eventually) disseminated through conventional channels of publishing and ended up on bookshelves, albeit in conservation wrappings.

Printing the book: old craft

Another reason that Ruscha published the way he did was as a reaction to the private printing movement of the early twentieth century: privately owned independent publishers, usually working with letterpress, printmaking and craft bookbinding. Examined in an art context, the British fine press printers printed text and image as complementary but separate. The French *livre d'artiste* movement was more adventurous, using lithography to render text as handwriting and allowing text and image to interact in equal measures on the page (Garvey and Hofer 1972). By the late 1960s, the freshness of private press work had concretised and most fine press books had become locked into permutations of these two models. They were high craft, marketed to be “deluxe” books, using the best materials, expensive production and polished craft bookbinding. Most were produced using a subscription method, where a prospective was printed and collectors pre-purchased copies to fund production. A story goes that Ruscha had worked in a printery as a typesetter (Cassidy 2018); it is little wonder that the sight of a minimalist offset-printed, perfect-bound paperback gave him deep pleasure.

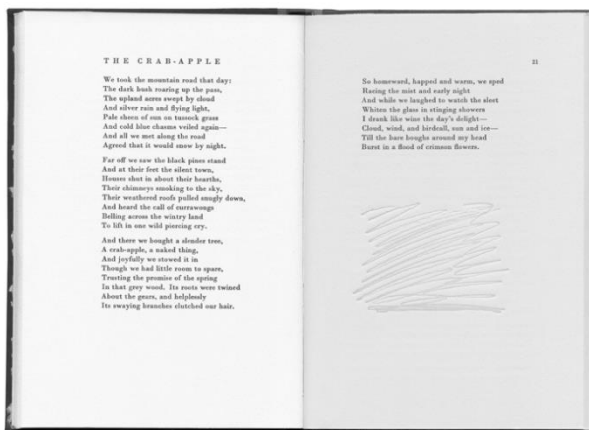


Figure 1. An example of a fine press book (codex page-spread view). Caren Florance (publishing as Ampersand Duck), *Transmigration*, 2007. Poems by Nan McDonald with embossed drawings by Jan Brown. Hand-set letterpress text in Bodoni. Relief printed images using photopolymer plate. Paper: 250gsm Rives BFK. Quarter-bound cased binding in buckram and letterpress-printed wibalin. Size when closed: 240 x 165 mm, 40 pp. Edition of 90.

Othering the book: new craft

These motions of “action and reaction” continued in another way from the late 1970s, driven in part by the re-emergence of grass-roots craft practices such as textiles and papermaking and, by the 1980s and early 1990s, in part by the rise of Feminism and the “Post-” movements, especially Post-colonialism, when artists were searching for genuine ways to push against the dominant paradigm and exploring alternative and international (non-western) book structures. These artist books, often sculptural and always material, were given many labels, sometimes used disparagingly: “sculptural books”, “unique books”, “bookworks”, “book arts”, “auratic objects”, (Drucker 2004, 93–201) and Phillpot’s damning statement, the “anti-literate, unopenable, fetishistic book object” (2013b, 160). The “anti-literate” tag is a jab against the priority of materiality over readable content used by many of these makers. This was also the era when many artists began identifying wholly as “book artists”, rather than artists who augmented a wider practice with books. The majority of these artists happen to be women, and they were also reclaiming the perception of domestic craft as “women’s work”.

When the book form meets artistic expression the results are visual stories that don’t necessarily need words. They can be read from the interplay of materials, textures and colours.—Mia Leijonsted (Prince 2008, 8)



Figure 2. An example of an experimental non-codex artist book. Caren Florance with Byrd (street artist), *Snatches: A Mystery in Six Parts*, 2008. Letterpress and Sharpie pen on spun polyester sheeting, folded into stackable “chatterbox” origami shapes. Housed in a CD spindle case. Dimensions variable. Unique.

These kinds of books were not made to be disseminated through traditional book publishing systems; they were made as unique objects or small editions, to be shown in galleries as art, and sometimes were not made to be touched, which provoked questioning about their role as “books”.

Australian book arts: learning by example

Pierre Bourdieu writes about “structurally marked practices” within cultural fields being relational to social and educational origins (1993, 70–71). Artists tend to make work that relates to the things they have encountered and by means that suit the financial affordances of their circumstances. Formal tertiary classes in book-making are rare in Australia and are often integrated as small units within design classes or printmaking classes. The majority of learning opportunities outside of universities has been through workshops associated with exhibitions or community groups, or in more recent times, via the Internet.

Until the revolution of the Internet, Australian artists working with books operated in regional clusters and relied on visiting international artists or community members bringing or sharing news of examples from overseas. One example of an artist who became a regional “hub” is Adele Outteridge (1946–), whose Brisbane-based Studio West End often hosts visiting international book artists. She is better known than many regional book artists, thanks to US artists like Keith Smith (1938–) including her very distinctive Perspex optoc-bound sculptural works in their instructional books.

Journals and newsletters about artist books and fine press publishing were valiantly started, but few survived past a few issues unless their focus could be connected with broader interests. Recent examples, post-internet, are the *Australian Journal of Artist Books* (edited by Linda Douglas), which burnt itself out by publishing seven hard copy issues over two years, and *Verso* (edited by Alan Loney), which ran five hard copy issues over three years, but focused only on fine press books, many of them international and sometimes over a decade old. Sustained reportage about Australian artist books since the 1980s is to be found in the archives of journals like *Textile Fibre Forum* (1986–) published by The Australian Forum for Textile Arts, and *Imprint*, a printmaking quarterly published by the Print Council of Australia (1966–).

Other than exhibition catalogues, there are only two books to date that survey Australian artist books, both based on a small cross-section of work representative of the time at which they were written. Poet and art critic Gary Catalano’s *The Bandaged Image* (1983) was published at a time when

there was no real field, just “two paradigms dominat[ing] the concept of the artist book—on the one hand ... the highly crafted “beautiful book” and on the other the utilitarian “concept book” (Uhlmann 1993, 64). Catalano’s book concentrates on the latter, a selection of books made between 1968 and 1983, where the “conceptual content [is] more important than the production values” (1983, 9) and there was “a [deliberate] lack of concern for the book as a crafted object”. 1983 was Australia’s moment when “new craft” was being explored by artists, and he takes care to point out that his choices were not this kind of book. They were “vehicles for ideas, not monuments to craft” (1983, 17), often produced using cheap preproduction processes like the photocopier, and connect directly to the Ruscha stream of influence. They would have been exhibited in small, alternate galleries, but perhaps also sold at poetry readings and other community gatherings. Many of the works he discusses are very zine-like and would today be found in zine distros—distribution outlets, sometimes physical shops, sometimes websites (Poletti 2008, 1–17).

In 2008, Melbourne architect, poet and book artist Alex Selenitsch (1946–) examined a selection of books from the collection of the National Gallery of Australia as part of a fellowship and published his findings as *Australian Artists Books*. Calling the artist book “a living, changing discipline” (2008, 5), he presents four detailed case studies of artists who work with books and then “performs” the reading of a wider selection of books, standing in for his own readers, as a solution to the no-touch conservation regime of museum collections:

The best descriptions of artists books seem to be a report of the performance of looking through one, like reports of a trip to another place. The performance of the reader is therefore another narrative laid over whatever narrative the artists book may have.

Following the four essays of artists books on works by [Robert] Jacks, [Bea] Maddock, [Ian] Burn and [Mike] Parr, sixteen striking and individual books by other artists are described in this manner. These short texts are written as one reader’s confrontation with each book, to show how an artist’s book is an involving and complex experience. Taken as a group, the sixteen books have also been chosen to show the wide range of approaches that currently exist in this ever-expanding field (ibid., 11).

Catalano’s 1983 book was published at a genuine turning point for artist book experimentation in Australia. By 2008 Selenitsch demonstrated a distinct Australian field of material yet conceptual works that were made for gallery audiences.

The catalyst for change was a major international papermaking conference in Kyoto, Japan, in 1983. Twenty-four Australian papermakers

attended, where they saw a large number of haptic, materially conceptual artist books from the northern hemisphere that completely transformed their attitudes towards the use of handmade paper in books (Wilson 1984, 95). The impact of this conference was immediately evident in the year after the conference, but much of the output was 2D: paper-pulp “paintings” and “prints” (for an example, see Button 1984). Two attendees were Canberra artists Gaynor Cardew (1952–1999) and Katharine Nix (1940–). They were featured in the paper section of the *1984 Craft Australia Yearbook* for their handmade paper installations and books (Wilson 1984, 91–101), which is the first published sighting of such work. They also actively taught bookmaking workshops around the country, supported by a burgeoning interest in paper via textile groups (“fibre” being the connective element) (Carey Wells 1994, 14–15).

Cardew also taught in the Graphic Investigations Workshop (GIW), which was a department of the Canberra School of Art headed by Czech artist Petr Herel (1943–), who had made books in Europe before coming to Canberra. The GIW was (and is still) the only example in Australia of an educational institution where artist books were a core component of the full-time curriculum, rather than a short unit within a major such as printmaking or design.

The four main and interrelated curriculum components of the GIW were drawing, the printed image, papermaking and typography (Agostino 2009, 119). The word “investigation” was the core tenet of the workshop; its overarching agenda was finding new ways to pull together multifarious creative practices to service the development of philosophical ideas, and from the first book made by a student in 1980, artist books increasingly served that purpose. When the workshop disbanded in 1998, it left a large archive of books and prints in the Australian National University Library’s special collections and a three-volume *catalogue raisonné* (Herel and Fogwell 1992; 1994; 2001). The book works of the GIW, produced by staff, students and national and international visiting artists, combined fine press sensibilities, book object experimentation, and a healthy irreverence for tradition in varying degrees. Once the state and national collecting institutions started purchasing and exhibiting GIW work, it had a discernible influence on Australian book arts communities (Florance 2018, 17–27).

Exhibiting and selling Australian artist books

Gallery “publishing” depends upon the existence of galleries that support the field. While artists can include books in their solo exhibitions, and groups of artists can organise to show their collective efforts in galleries,

there are only a few dealers or galleries in Australia that have represented book artists: examples of dealers are Akky von Ogtrop in Sydney and Noreen Grahame, from Grahame Galleries and Editions in Brisbane. Both have been instrumental in organising market opportunities for book artists, like the Sydney Art on Paper Fairs (1989–2005) and Paper Contemporary (2015–18) for Ogtrop, and a series of “Artists Books + Multiples” fairs by Grahame in the 1990s (SLQ 1994; Grahame, Kirker and Hoffberg 1996).

Other book fair events have been akin to pop-ups, like the 2014 Codex Australia fair (which reluctantly accepted artist books but focused on fine press publishers), or the Artist Book Brisbane Event (ABBE) fairs of 2015 and 2017 (the second one run by Grahame). More recently there have been regular annual Art Book Fairs in Sydney (Volume, run by Artspace Sydney) and Melbourne (National Gallery of Victoria); these are inclusive of experimental artist books but primarily focused on independent publishing.

There have also been bookstores, like Melbourne’s Artisan Books (now closed) that combined sales of commercial books about art and books with small exhibition spaces for book works.

The main opportunities for artist book makers to exhibit their work meaningfully for curators and collectors has been through competitions and acquisition exhibitions. Many of these exhibition opportunities have come from regional galleries and these opportunities regularly arise and discontinue: Noosa Regional Gallery had an annual themed exhibition, Noosa Books, for many years in the late 1990s and early 2000s; currently Artspace Mackay has its biannual Libris Awards, with a number of categories; and the Manly Regional Gallery runs its acquisitive award in the alternate years.

These, and other competition opportunities, create a rhythm of making for many book artists. Works are often made to respond to themes, which are sometimes quite literal, like “Black and White Books” (Papermakers of Victoria, at Artisan Books, Melbourne, Victoria, 2005) or broader, like “Books ... beyond words REVOLUTION” (East Gippsland Art Gallery, Victoria, 2011).

Perceived trends in judging also affect artists whose practices are not independent of these rhythms. When a judge for the 2011 Southern Cross University Acquisitive Book Awards complained that not enough of the entries looked or functioned like “real books” (Spowart and Cooper 2011), the entries for the next round were so “conventional” (i.e., codex-based) that the judge for that year complained of a lack of experimentation. This cycle of “opportunity” might be blamed for a lack of cohesion in many book arts practices. Over time, such themes became broader: Noosa Gallery’s 2005 call-out was titled “Works of Imagination”. Artists who resist the thematic routes, producing books within a dedicated visual practice, like printmakers

Angela Cavalieri (1962–) or Dianne Fogwell (1958–) tend to enter their work in broader competitions, like the Fremantle Arts Centre Print Award or the Silk Cut Award for Lino Prints, both of which accept artist books as works on paper.

Collecting artist books

Australian artist books are collected institutionally by both libraries and galleries, and it is hard to distinguish any clear demarcation between their collecting foci. Many national and regional institutions collected widely from the late 1980s with generous budgets and enthusiastic specialist curators and librarians. The State Library of Queensland, in particular, was bequeathed a large collection of “old craft” books in 1988 (SLQ n.d.[a]) and took the opportunity to start augmenting that collection with more experimental works (SLQ n.d.[b]). Over the past decade funding has been slashed and institutions devalued, which has in turn affected opportunities for collection. An excellent contemporary snapshot of national collections and collecting was written by ex-State Library of Queensland Special Collections Librarian, Helen Cole, in 2015:

Artists’ books have a low profile in the wider art community in Australia ... although artists’ books are currently popular with artists, ‘most do not find a home’. Those that do find a home must of necessity find it in a public collection (2015, 8).

Private collectors of artist books are generally not visible in Australia, unlike in the US, where private collectors are openly generous. One of the largest private collections in Australia is that of Sydney artist Monica Oppen, who has set up a library called the *Bibliotheca Librorum Apud Artificem*, available to the public by appointment. She has a strong collecting focus: political books, books using text, and books with an environmental focus.

As with making books for exhibitions, the lack of collection opportunities affects the kinds of books and quantities made. An editioned artist book in the 1990s might have been printed in an edition of 50–100 copies. As it became evident that there was little or no market, despite valiant efforts by aforementioned people, artists have almost cynically moved to produce editioned books in an extremely limited number that covers the number of possible collecting institutions. Making books as art is not an activity for those wishing to make a profit.

Material independence

Independent publishing is the product of a generational shift; the number of dedicated “book artists” is dwindling and seem confined to those who practiced in the 1990s and early 2000s. Like Bodman and Sowden, Tony White writes about the unsatisfactory nature of labelling publishing by contemporary creatives:

The challenge is for twenty-first century independent publishing to move beyond the hegemony of the phrase ‘artists’ books’ and to develop terminology that best describes what is currently happening with independent publishing. And yet there is no satisfying descriptor: artists’ publishing is inaccurate, but independent publishing or self-publishing both seem too distant from the more limited artists’ books. ‘Post-contemporary artists’ books’ is unsatisfying as well. This is not to say that artists’ books are dead; they will always exist in the long tail of production. However, the majority of independent publishing in the last fifteen years cannot accurately be identified as artists’ books. Many may have a singular online presence, while others exist in a hybrid environment. This new paradigm of independent publishing is vibrant, experimental, and in flux (2014, 231).

Many of these books are commercially printed using digital technology and have to work within the affordances of POD production restrictions. Often the inner pages are printed at print providers such as Officeworks, with a bespoke cover added that is printed by hand, or by a process like screenprint or risograph. Photobooks are often printed using high-end inkjet printers and compiled into neat concertinae (also known as accordion folds). Art books flirt with alternative binding techniques, like hand-stitching or manual embellishments, but they adhere to the minimalist aesthetic that marked Ruscha’s era, a personal impersonality, and fetishising of simplicity that is as much a uniform as the overt materiality of fine press printing.

Art books rarely appear in galleries except via the gift shop: most of the collective activity is to be found in book fairs, dedicated bookstores, and the Internet. When thinking about the democratic multiple in terms of Ruscha’s urge to disseminate to multitudes at once, contemporary artists can now, of course, use the Internet to publish their concepts and photographs. The fact that they still imbue value in the printed book shows a connection to materiality that unites them with the more craft-oriented publications that they often love to disparage. People who make publications in the twenty-first century are performing the book as a conscious adjunct to digital technologies, and if there seems to be any kind of siloing in Australian artistic publishing, it is unimportant in the face of *materiality versus virtual*,

the new dematerialisation. Even this is breaking down as practitioners learn to mix page and screen in new and exciting ways.

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CHAPTER TEN

BEYOND THE CODEX: BOOK DESIGN IN THE DIGITAL AGE

ZOË SADOKIERSKI

“Book” refers to both authored content (a narrative or argument) and the container that holds it (an object). Publishing is the business of transforming authored content into a book object and getting that object into the hands of readers.

Until recently, a book object was almost universally understood to be a *codex*: a block of printed pages bound along one edge, protected by a cover. We now distinguish between printed books and e-books—strings of code that can be flowed into a reading device such as a computer, tablet or smart phone. Where a codex book is a unique object, its content fixed to the page, an e-book can be read on multiple devices and altered after publication; an e-book has no fixed form.¹

Most publishers now offer new releases in both print and electronic editions simultaneously. Are these two editions the same book? The advent of digital reading devices forces us to rethink the idea of the book as an object. How does the book object impact our reading experience? What is lost and gained as we shift between reading books on page and screen? How could the design of books address these potential losses and gains?

¹ Some e-book files such as the ePub3 format commonly used for illustrated books and PDFs “fix” the layout of words and images so that they don’t vary from one reading device to the next, but these files may still appear differently on different reading devices—larger or smaller screens, with different colour reproduction or resolution, and with more or less distraction around the screen itself (based on the application the e-book is being read and the protective hardware around the reading device) all effect the appearance of the “book”. The distinction here is that once a book is printed it does not change in format or appearance unless it is “vandalized”, whereas a digital file may appear slightly differently on each device, and even on different reading sessions on the same device.

To respond to these questions, the book object must be understood to do more than “package” a text. The design and production of a book involves the creation of a range of visual and material elements—such as the cover, layout and format—that provide cues for how to interact with and interpret the text within. For example, at a glance we understand that a coffee table book and a paperback novel propose different reading experiences through their form; the first demands a stable reading surface and lots of space, the second can be slipped in a bag for reading anywhere.

Gerard Genette’s paratextual theory (1997) offers useful vocabulary to explain how various elements of a book object communicate to readers. Genette distinguishes between a “primary text”—authored content—and “paratexts”—the collection of liminal devices that frame and present the primary text as an object that can be held, read and distributed. Paratext includes everything from the title and author’s name to the paper stock, cover image and promotional material associated with a book. Most significantly, Genette argues that in addition to constructing a physical container for a primary text, paratext mediates the book to the reader. Paratext functions as a “threshold for interpretation”:

a zone not only of transition but also of transaction, a privileged space of a pragmatics and a strategy, of an influence on the public, an influence that—whether well or poorly understood—is at the service of the better reception of the text and a more pertinent reading of it (1997,1).

Paratextual theory proposes that devices that surround and package a text provide important cues that help readers identify with, navigate and interpret that text. If these devices change between page and screen, it follows that the ways we interact with and interpret a text change from a print to a digital edition.

Although Genette’s vocabulary is useful, his paratextual theory has limitations for the purposes of discussing the differences between the visual and material aspects of print and digital books. Genette identifies “non-verbal” elements such as cover and typography as important aspects of the paratext but recognises that his explanation of these devices is limited by his lack of design and iconological knowledge (*ibid.*, 406). Genette assigns responsibility for these non-verbal elements to the publishing house without recognising the role designers play in their creation, which forgoes critical discussion about the strategic function of these devices from those who author them. Originally published in French in 1987, Genette’s paratextual theory also largely omits aspects of digital publishing, such as the way books are designed and promoted on digital platforms, which did not exist at the time of publication. Recent scholarship has elaborated on Genette’s

description of the functions of non-verbal elements in print books (Drucker 2008; Sadokierski 2010, 2016), and extended paratextual theory into the digital realm (Drucker 2003, 2008; Desrochers and Apollon 2014; Northcutt Malone 2015).

Drawing on Genette's paratextual theory, recent extensions of that theory, and my insights gleaned from fifteen years of experience as a commercial book designer, this chapter describes how visual and material paratexts—the format, book cover and layout—provide cues for interacting with and interpreting codex books. The chapter addresses what is lost and gained in designing these visual and material paratexts for codex versus e-books. Finally, the chapter argues that understanding the function of visual and material paratexts should inform how we design for all kinds of digital publications; at this “incunabula” stage of digital publishing, we need to reflect on what is, to better design what could be.

Format: size, shape, paper stock

Reading a printed book is a tactile experience; we encounter codex books with our hands as well as our eyes. The size, shape and paper stock of a book communicate to the reader in subtle ways.

Whether a book is hardcover or paperback tells us how the publisher anticipates the book will be used. Hardcover books are printed on archival stock, section-sewn (a durable binding technique), encased in sturdy boards and protected by a dust jacket; they are designed to be shelved for multiple readings. Paperbacks, designed to be wedged into coat pockets and tossed in bags, are printed on cheaper stock that yellows quickly and tears more easily, and held together with less durable glue binding.²

Paper stock can cue particular kinds of reading experiences or behaviours; a creamy, heavy-weight stock with deckled-edges invites us to slow down, to turn pages with considered care and use a bookmark rather than dog-ear the pages. Through their large size and physical weight, illustrated books printed on fine stock inform us that they are not intended for reading in beds or baths; these books demand we clear space to read them, and leave them on display for others to admire.

The format of a book has cost implications which carry value judgements. Some books seem “worth” buying in more expensive formats,

² Hard and paper back are not the only format options. Modified formats such as gate-fold paperbacks and French-fold dust jackets, as well as flexi-bound and boxed books, provide variation in the market. Any format which appears “unconventional” functions as a cue to readers that the book object is being presented as unordinary.

while we wait for paperback editions of others. In the Australian market “literary fiction” is often first published as a larger and more expensive C-format hardback, whereas “commercial fiction” is published as smaller and cheaper B-format paperback. This is not to say that hardbacks are exclusively considered more literary. Genette recognises that a “pocket size” book is often associated with a series—such as the Penguin classics—a format which conveys two basic meanings: “One is purely economic: the assurance (variable, and sometimes illusory) of a better price. The other is indeed ‘cultural’ and, to speak of what interests us, paratextual: the assurance of a selection based on revivals, that is, reissues” (1997, 21). Through their format, serialised books invite us to respect and collect them based on cultural association with the publisher or author.

Matthew Kirschenbaum (2008) describes five affordances of the codex book—ways in which the format of the book object impacts our interaction with it. Here, I list Kirschenbaum’s affordances, but extend them with my own interpretations.

First, books are “simultaneously sequential and random access”; being bound along one edge means information is fixed in a particular order, yet readers can dip in and out by opening the book at different points. Second, books are “volumetric objects”; the size of a book and our place in it effects our behaviour and expectations. For example, we may read faster as we approach the end of a book. Third, “books are finite”—they are discrete works which cannot be altered unless reprinted as a new edition. Fourth, “books offer a fundamentally comparative visual space”; readers are presented with a double-page spread, which can be used to juxtapose a text on one side with elements such as images, notes, translations on the other to form a comparison or make an argument. This is relevant in contrast to most e-readers, in which scrolling does not allow for fixing a comparative space. Finally, “books are writeable as well as readable”; readers can inscribe notes, underline, and otherwise mark up a particular edition of a book. Consider that a book inscribed with your mother’s name presents a different threshold to interpretation than a second-hand book inscribed with a stranger’s name. Although many e-readers allow readers to “mark-up” e-books (highlight text, insert notes), these notes remain locked in the e-reader and are often not transferable or easily accessible (Mod 2015).

Kirschenbaum presents these affordances of codex books in the context of critiquing electronic publications. He suggests that unlike the dominant codex form for printed books, “there is no one ideal form for the book to assume in electronic space; models of the book will instead need to be implemented to serve the needs of different users and constituencies”. Here Kirschenbaum is primarily referring to the potential for publication that

fully embrace the audio-visual and interactive functionality that online platforms enable (see, for example, the “book” apps published by TouchPress and Editions At Play), but the lack of singular form is still a problem for the “simple” e-books discussed in this chapter.

Much has been written about the messiness of the early e-book market, resulting from rival companies vying for dominance by developing unique file types and readers that are not compatible with their competitors. (Pressman 2014; Sadokierski 2013; Drucker 2003) There is still no single file type that allows an e-book to be published on all e-readers; an e-book purchased for a Kindle may not work on an iPad.

Which brings us to the most obvious shift between the format of print and e-books is how we interact with them. A print book is a beautifully contained technology; pick it up, turn each page in sequence until finished. E-books are more complex. E-books require an e-reading device, which requires a power source and connection to a digital catalogue in order to download e-book file. Different brands of e-reader have unique interfaces; readers must learn to click, pinch and swipe their way to and through the text. In other words, e-books require new kinds of literacy beyond reading the primary text.

Kirschenbaum presents his five affordances as a frame against which to critique the design of digital publications, with the aim to “help provide more thoughtful and appropriate solutions for different user communities”, an idea I will return to after presenting the strategic functions of cover and internal layout of books.

Book covers: Context and content

Most immediately, book covers function as a marketing tool: attracting the attention of consumers in a competitive marketplace. A striking image, a well-chosen stock, the way an image or typography move around a cover can delight and engage us. Beyond that initial grab, a well-designed cover provides cues that help consumers identify a book’s *context*—the genre it belongs to—and *content*—evoking a sense of what the book is about and/or the writing style.

Book covers communicate through a combination of verbal, visual and material devices. Verbal devices are the title, author name, blurb and other publishers’ information that appear on the front, spine, back and occasionally inside cover. Visual devices are the typography, images and illustrations. Material devices are production specifications such as hardcover or paperback, and special finishes such as gloss or matt lamination, foil and embossing. An effective cover synthesises these verbal, visual and material

devices in a way that has immediate impact, enticing consumers to pick up a book and read the blurb, or recall a book they have seen advertised or reviewed.

Readers learn to associate visual conventions (or tropes) with particular genres. For example: title and author in a large, sans serif typeface over a desaturated photograph of an ominous-looking location = crime fiction; a figure dressed in period costume, cropped under the nose, with title centred in serif font = historical fiction. This is not to say that effective cover design is formulaic. The challenge is designing a cover that fits with genre conventions but also speaks to the content of the particular book. Renowned book designer Chip Kidd (2014, online) describes this as a tension between clarity and mystery:

I design covers for all kinds of books: fiction, nonfiction, poetry, history, memoir, essay, comics. Each demands its own visual approach. Sometimes I want the viewer to ‘get it’ right away, but more often I want to intrigue him or her enough to investigate the book further (i.e., to open it up, begin to read it, and hopefully buy it). Mystery, by its very nature, is much more complex than clarity, and I try to create a balance between the two.

Cover conventions vary from one market to another; what “works” for a UK audience may not translate well in Australia. In consultation with booksellers, sales and marketing departments determine what will appeal to a particular audience; whether this is a response to, or a driver for, local styles in a chicken-egg paradox. As readers increasingly shop online and the division between markets blurs, will we see the evolution of an international style? Influential book blogger Dan Wagstaff (2017, online) reflects:

I think we’re seeing a more global approach to covers as a result of publishers deciding to hold on to the international rights for their books, and designers and publishers (not to mention authors and readers!) being more exposed to covers from other markets through the Internet and international travel. But it is still surprising how different covers from different countries can be. The contrast between British and American covers can still be quite striking.

For marketing purposes, the digital realm offers great opportunities for promoting books. Although the small simulacrum of covers that appear on screens are devoid of their tactile qualities, all books are displayed “face out” online, as opposed to the vast majority of books presented spine-out in bookstores and libraries. What is lost in material communication may be made up for in exposure. Many publishers produce book trailers—short videos that replicate the cover’s aim to communicate something of the

content and context of the book, often via a mash-up of audio-visual material—which can be viewed via multiple online social media platforms and websites. These new marketing paratexts can supplement the cover, yet due to the expensive of production, they are prohibitive for most books.

Publishers have scrambled to harness other technologies for marketing leverage, with little lasting impact. A short-lived trend toward “interactive” printed covers is exemplified by Ruth Ozeki’s novel *A Tale For the Time Being* (2013). Simultaneously released in e-book, audio, hard and paperback editions, the “interactive” aspect involves hovering a smart phone over the physical book cover and, via an augmented reality app, linking to a fifteen-second animation, an author interview and a Facebook book group. Cate Cannon, head of marketing at Canongate, describes this as an exercise in branding: “The animation and design translates across our digital outdoor advertising, our website and all our editions, creating a brand identity for this novel that is enriching, engaging and progressive” (Montgomery 2013). Once the novelty of such gimmicks passes, the cost of production means these supplementary online paratexts are unlikely to replace covers as the “face” of books online.

An effective cover has instant impact, but also reveals nuanced meaning to the reader as she develops a relationship with the book over time. Books are object to be read but also totems that tell stories about us through their physical presence in our lives. We carry books close to our bodies and place them by our beds—the first and last thing we see in a day. We shelve favourite books in prominent places, their covers wallpapering our living and work spaces, displaying titles and authors that communicate something about us to our guests, and remind us of reading experiences that have educated, moved or changed us in some way. An effective cover becomes an emblem for the literary work, a visual cue that triggers the memory of our unique reading experience.

Publisher Elda Rotor states, of Penguin Classics: “Many of our editions become love songs to the physical book ... I would argue that the key to that remembrance, and to your encounters with a book from first read to rediscovery, begins with the cover” (2016, 18). Therefore, a second strategic function of cover design is mnemonic; a cover functions as memory aid to a personal reading experience.

There is a sense of ceremony in buying, borrowing or being given a book object. A printed book is uniquely our copy, to have and to hold, to dog-ear and scribble in. While readers may feel attached to their reading devices—iPads, Kindles, Kobos—this attachment is too a generic container, not an individual book. Here is a distinct loss between print and e-books. A print book exists as a physical presence in our life, we catch a glimpse of the

cover as we open a bag or walk into a room. When not being read, an e-reader is a mute block. Manon Soulet (2015, online) describes this a problem of possession with e-books:

We cannot possess anything online because we, as users, are separated from the object in question. And few people know better than students/lovers of literature that a book constitutes a valuable possession. Yet, considering that possessions sometimes work as a way to complete a person, it seems that when we are online, we are losing that sense of possession, and by extension, that sense of completeness. In this sense, reading a book online may, in a way, amount to losing or at least to dispense with a part of ourselves.

In order to achieve these dual functions—to create an eye-catching cover that also comes to define a book in our mind—designers must deeply engage with a book’s content. Tom McCarthy’s introduction to acclaimed book designer Peter Mendelsund’s monograph *Cover* is titled “A cover designer, first and foremost, is a reader”. According to McCarthy, rather than producing artwork which “‘explains’ the book, reduces it or fixes it semantically”, a good cover “is one that sets off the whole, complex set of mechanisms through which meaning is produced—or, rather, meanings: escalating, contradictory, vertiginous—that sets off, in other words, the grand adventure that lies at the heart of literary experience” (2014, xii). In Genette’s vocabulary, providing a threshold for interpretation. Mendelsund himself describes a particular type of reading in which he searches for “that unique textual detail that can support the metaphoric weight of the entire book” (quoted in Vanhemert 2014). Similarly, describing her design process Atosha McCaw (2018) explains: “I try to build in things that you will only ‘get’ once you have interacted with the design. I want to build a design that has moments of discover and not a design that is purely for the moment of purchase”.

In *The Clothing of Books*, Jhumpa Lahiri reflects on book covers from the perspective of a writer. For Lahiri (2015, 15), the cover is metonymic for the publishing process:

The cover makes me aware that the book has already been read. Because in reality, the book jacket is not only the text’s first clothing but also its first interpretation—both visual and for sales promotion. It represents a collective reading by the book designer and various people at the publishing house; it matters how they see the book, what they think of it, what they want from it. I know that before a book is launched, the cover has to be discussed, considered, approved, by many.

Lahiri's comment draws attention to the fact that designers do not work in isolation. Developing a cover that effectively communicates the context and content of a book is a collaborative process.

Designers are generally commissioned by an editor overseeing the title, although in some publishing houses creative directors commission freelancers or assign the title to an in-house designer. The designer is given a brief, a document outlining the format, production schedule and information about content and context, including a blurb and key passages. A process of to-and-fro between editor, publisher, author and marketing continues until everyone is happy or the production deadline is reached. Once the design is finalised, files are sent to a production house for copies of the book to be printed, bound and delivered to the publisher's warehouse/bookstores.

This description of the design process reveals the number of people, each with particular expertise, involved in the creation of a book cover. This is important to consider in relation to the effect of digital technologies on the production aspect of the publishing process, discussed below after addressing the layout, which often brings more players into the game.

Internal layout

Book designers and/or typesetters arrange graphic elements such as page numbers, headers and body text on the surface of a page according to conventions. The conventions of book design are rules or systems which help designers to structure content and assist readers to navigate books. For example, a well-structured grid establishes margins that allow for comfortable reading: the inner margin should be large enough that lines of text do not bend or disappear into the crease of the binding, and outer margins should be wide enough for readers to hold a book without obscuring the text with our thumbs. The choice of a readable typeface and well-proportioned typesetting allows our eyes to move from one line or paragraph to the next without losing our place. Graphic principles such as hierarchy and proximity inform decisions on how to distinguish between body text and chapter headings or text breaks (Haslam 2006; Hendel 2013; Lupton 2010).

Consciously or not, we learn to read design conventions when we learn to read books. For example, we don't stop at a chapter heading wondering why the text is suddenly bigger, bolder and separated from the previous lines. We don't "read" page numbers even though they appear on every page. We understand that a contents page points to sections of the book and is part of the primary text. We scan and move on, barely registering the

familiar conventions before us. This is the point; effective typesetting recedes.

Novelists strive to create verisimilitude, a believable world for readers to enter; no character, event or literary device should distract readers from our state of immersion. Likewise, book designers strive for a kind of visual-verisimilitude; well-executed typography allows readers to slip into the world of the book, unimpeded by the activity of reading. This is not to claim that text does not exist as an “image” on the page, rather that the grey rectangle of text is so familiar we no longer see it. Therefore, the primary function of internal layout is to assist readers to navigate a text.

However, Johanna Drucker argues that in addition to a navigational function, some aspects of the internal layout also perform what she calls narrative functions. For example, chapter titles which appear in running heads on every page become, through their placement: “a refrain against which the chapter text contrasts as it unfolds. The graphic facts of presentation participate in the textual field in this instance, inflecting the semantic value” (2003,123). While Drucker recognises that the distinction between navigational and narrative functions of graphic devices is blurry, and that some will disagree with the assertion that graphic elements can perform narrative function at all, her argument for the placement of illustrations as a narrative device is less contestable.

To make this argument, Drucker cites Stuart Sillars’ analysis of the placement of images in Charles Kennet Burrow’s 1898 short story “The Golden Circler”. Sillars argues that by placing illustrations before the text that they refer to, the positioning of these images shapes the reader’s idea of the story’s outcome. Drucker (2008, 122) explains:

No one would dispute the contribution of images to the narrative content of an illustrated text. But the more subtle aspect of [Sillars’] argument is [...] that the graphic placement of the images plays a crucial part in the way they produce meaning within the text. In other words, Sillars reads the structuring effect of the layout as an integral feature of narrative production.

The discussion here is not whether the content of an illustration affects our reading of a text, but its placement. Similarly, consider the placement of illustrations that are integrated within written text versus segregated in “picture sections”. Richard Hollis cites the original edition of art historian Ernst Gombrich’s book *The Story of Art* (1950) in which Gombrich “planned from the outset to tell the story of art in both words and pictures by enabling readers as far as possible to have the illustration discussed in the text in front of them, without having to turn the pages” (Hollis 2015, 54). To do so Gombrich collaborated with the design team, rewriting

sections and adding images as the layout took shape. A pocket-size edition released by Phaidon in 2006 reproduces the images in a separate section, after the written text. Disappointed by this edition, Hollis states “no longer does the story unfold” (ibid., 54). Hollis uses this example to call for collaboration on the design and production of illustrated books: “The case of *The Story of Art* underscores the book’s central role as go-between in conveying the author’s meaning to the reader. And the most rewarding way to ensure the go-between has understood the message is for author and designer to work together” (ibid., 56).

These examples point to historical conversations about the importance of considering the placement of illustrations in texts. While early e-readers struggled with image resolution and placement, devices such as Apple’s iPad have dazzling image displays and new reading apps pay more heed to the placement of “assets” such as illustrations and audio-visual paratexts. To harness the potential for creating unique and engaging digital reading experiences, authors and publishers must be conscious that the placement of images impacts the reading experience and interpretation of a text, but also of the value of collaboration with designers who understand these strategic functions.

Beyond presenting books on screens, digital technologies also impact publishing by altering the network of people involved in the creative process. In particular, sophisticated software and production technologies increasingly promise to streamline the publishing process by bypassing the need for specialists. Pre-made book covers—simply insert title and author name—are available for as little as a few dollars, bypassing the need for designers and marketers. Print-on-demand platform such as Blurb and Lightning Source allow anyone to print and sell books without having a single conversation with a printer, warehouse or bookstore—let alone a publisher, editor, designer, typesetter or marketer. While these technologies may have a democratising effect, opening the possibility of publishing to many more than the traditional model, at what cost?

The first cost of removing experts from the publishing process is quality control. Ordering a book online recently, I receive a copy that is clearly a C-format design chopped down to a B-format edition; the publisher cut costs by not redesigning the book to suit the smaller format. The text runs so close to the edge of the page my thumbs have nowhere to sit. Frustrated by constantly needing to readjust my grip on the book to avoid obscuring text, I stopped reading. Cheap choice, lost reader.

Designing for long form reading requires thoughtfulness and skill. Putting typographic tools at the fingertips of untrained designers, or making production decisions based primarily on cost, can lead to unreadable texts.

An illegible text is one that literally cannot be read—doctor’s handwriting, a book dropped in the bath. Unreadable texts are ones you don’t want to read. More than making texts *look good*, designers and typesetters are concerned with rendering them *readable*. Ensuring people have good reading experiences goes part way to ensuring people continue to read.

An additional cost of bypassing experts is the threat to the culture around books and reading more generally. Just as books are the product of a network of people and technologies, not just a single author, books are never isolated objects; they exist among and are understood in relation to other books.

Van Dijk states that the “paratext tells us about the social and economic networks that the text in question is involved in, but also about the ways in which our interpretation of the text is influenced by these extra-textual elements” (2014, 25). Covers, internal design and the format of books communicate something of the time and place of publication; design reflects aesthetic trends, technological capabilities and the culture that produced it. If we allow algorithms or set templates to generate the bulk of our visual paratexts, we leave a soulless legacy for generations to come.

Yet despite the initial fanfare around e-books and the streamline of digital design and production processes, the digital age has not resulted in the death of the printed book. In 2016, sales of print books in Australia, the UK and the US increased as sales of e-books declined. In the fast-paced, ever-changing digital age, there is something comforting about the fixed nature of printed books. A book is for reading one thing at a time; we cannot be distracted by phone calls, email, social media or become lost following links. A book doesn’t need to be charged or updated. Each time we return to a printed book, its content is exactly as we left it. A book is a rock in the stream of information swirling around us. At a time when so much of our culture is disembodied and ephemeral, books transcend their function as vessels to carry information and take on a more symbolic value.

The end of an era of penny-pinching by publishers, which occurred in response to the global economic crisis and uncertainty about the impact of e-books, has resulted in a “golden age” of book design (Preston 2017; Wilson 2017). Confident that a market for print books remains, publishers are investing in design and production that distinguish printed books as desirable objects. Recent years have seen trends for books with cloth or exposed board covers, embellishments such as elaborate foils, coloured edges and ribbons. Cookbooks have become such fetishised objects that it seems a sin to take them near the mess of the kitchen. There is a turn to hand-rendered typography and original illustration; a return to craft, the hand of the designer creates something unique for the hands of the reader.

Small commercial publishers such as McSweeney's and Visual Editions have brought the artist book maker's attention to commercial editions, recognising the potential for visual and material paratexts to enhance or extend the reading experience. This renewed interest in the form of the printed book is partly in response to the coldness of the digital reading experience but also a response to the kinds of digital production technologies that allow unique finishes and treatments at lower costs.

Traditional publishing houses which separate book designers from the marketing department have much to learn from these independent publishers. In most large commercial publishing houses, design is separated from marketing in both job title and desk-space. Designers are often brought in at the end of the process, part of the production rather than content creation phase of publishing. Peter Mendelsund (2015) states: "Book publishing may be one of the last businesses where the design department is not considered one of the most important constituencies in the room. This is super weird, and, frankly, wrong. Remedy this".

Publishers could consider a design studio or advertising agency model, in which a creative or artistic director is responsible for a team of designers working on the cover and marketing collateral collaboratively, to harness technologies and expertise in order to get books into exactly the right market, using online platforms and targeted campaigns.

Returning now to Kirschenbaum's aim to present affordances of the codex as a means to critique digital "books". Or, as Drucker simply asks: "What do designers of electronic books have to learn from the traditional, paper-based codex?" (2003) From the critique presented above of book covers, layout and formats, it can be concluded that visual and material paratexts function as: marketing tools—appealing to consumers by communicating something of the content and context of a book; mnemonic devices—representing our personal reading experience; navigational tools—assisting our interaction with a book; and cultural artefacts which reveal something of the time and place in which the book was published. Collectively, these elements construct a threshold for interpretation.

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CHAPTER ELEVEN

PUBLISHING AND TECHNOLOGY: THE DIGITAL REVOLUTION, DEMOCRATISATION AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES

NICK CANTY

Introduction

In 2012 media commentator and technology author Clay Shirky quipped “Publishing is no longer an industry, it’s a button” (2012). Shirky was highlighting the extent of automation in the publishing industry which made publishing so easy it no longer needs an industry behind it. As he went on to say:

In ye olden times of 1997, it was difficult and expensive to make things public, and it was easy and cheap to keep things private. Privacy was the default setting. We had a class of people called publishers because it took special professional skill to make words and images visible to the public. Now it doesn’t take professional skills. It doesn’t take any skills. It takes a WordPress install.

Barriers of entry to the field, never particularly high, have fallen further in recent years as new technologies enable anyone to become a publisher—at least in name. As it became easier to become a publisher or an author, aided and encouraged by technology giants principally Amazon, Google and Apple, social media platforms have given readers access to publishers and authors in ways unimaginable at the start of this century.

While there is evidence technology has democratised publishing, the evidence is patchy and contradictory. Traditionally, books and printing have been hierarchical in nature due to the investment required and the fact that not everyone had access to published content. The author was privileged over the reader who had to passively accept what was produced for their

consumption. The Web and the technologies that enable entry to the field now allow an equality between reader and author (van der Weel 2014).

Bourdieu's *Fields of Cultural Production* (1993) described a literary industry in which elite actors alone had access to symbolic capital in the form of access to publication, literary prizes and critical endorsements, all of which is challenged with the recent technologisation of the publishing industry. However, the injection of technology and data into the industry raises questions around a narrowing of publishing decisions and the acquisition of titles and the sourcing of authors with editorial decisions being based on author social media profiles and the size of their fan base or data on past sales performance.

This chapter explores these issues first by addressing technologies and data in publishing and the recent rise in self-publishing that these developments have enabled. The chapter then moves on to examine new writing spaces as a public sphere before turning to consider the place of social media as a democratic space for interactions between authors, publishers and readers.

Publishing and the digital revolution

Technologies

While “the digital revolution” has become a widely-used term it is worth remembering that much of what has been hailed as a paradigm shift is concerned with production methods and opinions differ on the importance of digital publishing (Martin and Tian 2010). Cope and Kalantzis (2007) suggest that seen against the epoch-shaping invention—the printed book—the Internet is not so revolutionary while, in contrast, Murray's (2015) “digital literary sphere” is democratically accessible and celebrates amateur self-expression, surely a revolution in its own right. The term might be a contested and overused but it does convey a sense of the transformation that has affected all sectors of the publishing industry in recent decades and the consequences this has had for publishers, authors and readers.

This transformation has come about through a number of social and economic factors; most notably a consolidation of the industry through mergers and acquisitions which started in the 1960s and peaked in the 1990s and the emergence of global markets that together became interlaced with a technological revolution that started in the mid-1980s (Thompson 2010). These changes, together with changes to the organisational structures of publishing companies, a shift in power from the Editorial to the Marketing

functions, an increase in outsourcing operations and increased competition, have been many and varied.

In 1985, Braudel wrote “In a way everything is technology” and while it can appear that technology is omnipresent, we need to consider cultural issues around technology, particularly as there is no single trajectory or effect of a technology and many seem to be in permanent state of transition (Matthewman 2011). This is particularly important because publishers, as producers of cultural artefacts, are vulnerable to changes in audience demographics and competition for time from other electronic devices. Pfaffenberger (1992) argues that technologies are inherently political because designers tend to belong to dominant social classes and they create artefacts that entrench their positions in society and women are denied access to technology and technological knowledge (Berg and Lie 1995, 340).

The primary reasons technologies are introduced to any organisation are for efficiency and cost savings, leading, it is hoped, to enhanced profitability and commercial advantage. Martin and Tian (2011) argue that for publishing companies these technologies can be seen through the themes of content, convergence and communication. Technologies such as those mentioned above can assist in the acquisition, production, distribution and reuse of content while the convergence of communication technologies with networking technologies enable the reuse of content in emerging business models. Communication technologies, such as social networking sites, are now firmly embedded in publisher workflows and these will be addressed later. These technologies have brought publishers a number of commercial advantages and possibly cost benefits, but they have at the same time introduced disintermediation into the value chain and this has unwittingly had the potential to give more power in the publishing process to authors and readers (Hall 2013; Martin and Tian 2010).

Much attention is given to consumer-facing technologies such as the Internet and the World Wide Web or social media but there has been a hidden revolution that has put the power of publishing in the hands of authors. The digital production processes used in the publishing industry today evolved from a number of technological developments including word processing, databases, desktop publishing systems and digital printing. With increased digitisation workflows have developed to allow a manuscript to be produced in multiple outputs such as print books, a PDF or an e-book file for output to various electronic devices. Tagging content in XML allows it to be converted into a variety of formats and many designers and typesetters now offer XML tagging as a service. XML manages how content is structured while HTML is responsible for how

content appears on the web. Print-on-demand technologies became available in the 1990s and they have allowed publishers to efficiently manage their inventory whilst curbing production costs (Greco 2014). Print-on-demand has the added attraction of keeping the title in print in perpetuity which, while helpful to publishers, is less attractive for authors, as when titles are declared out of print the rights revert to the author. Underpinning all this and receiving much less attention has been a wave of technical interoperability standards that allows cost-effective digital publishing to provide content that is discoverable, accessible and preservable across platforms and channels (Carpenter 2012).

Data driven publishing

One consequence of digitisation has been the access to quantities of data unimaginable to earlier generations, and this phenomenon affords publishers new ways to acquire and promote new books. With publishing now available to almost anyone, the challenge is gaining attention and generating word of mouth recommendations around books. This has to be transacted in an era when bookshops are reducing in number and Amazon is the world's largest book retailer, to which any publisher or author has equal access (Friedman 2017). The first concern is how books are discovered in a crowded online world. Publishers are aware of the importance of good metadata to ensure titles appear in online searches, where there is no shortage of content but little by way of meaningful reading recommendations. Metadata, by using rules that link pieces of information about a book, allow a title to be discovered as users can establish accurately the information they need, whether searching a library database or an online retail site (Hall 2013). Research by Nielsen, the market research company that monitors books sales from point of sale data, shows a correlation between the level of metadata provided and an increase in book sales (Nielsen 2016). Metadata provides descriptive details on a book such as title, author, publisher and so on, but this static data could be enhanced further. Speaking at the 2013 Frankfurt Book Fair, German publishing expert Ronald Schild called for semantic analysis that identifies the “core concept” of a book as readers are searching for themes—say, a LGBT coming-out story or other emotional or intellectual criterion. Publishers have done little thinking about this type of marketing to date (Friedman 2017).

Data and detailed title information are necessary for the promotion and discovery of books, but this can be turned on its head and used to inform title acquisition instead of relying on an editor's knowledge and judgement

of the market. Larger publishers have invested in consumer insight teams who have the responsibility to identify consumer trends which could be exploited through a focused title acquisition strategy. Moving from opinion-based decisions to behaviour-based decisions, consumer insight based on social and sales data allows publishers to test books, trend-watch and monitor conversations on social media and try to gauge the potential interest in a title, particularly consumer reactions to celebrity authors which involve substantial advances. Anecdotally, commissioning editors twist consumer insight data to deliver the narrative they need to justify an acquisition, and this publishing-by-numbers, while in its infancy, has the potential to further reduce innovative and fresh voices being published.

Self-publishing

A cultural phenomenon

In the eighteenth century self-publishing was a respectable activity and several important works have come to market through this route. Self-publishing, despite a long and dignified history, became associated and sullied over time by its association with unscrupulous vanity publishers who publish any work for a sum. There is undoubtedly a place for vanity presses—they help clubs and enthusiasts produce works on niche subjects for example—but the problem comes when they give the impression to the author that their work has passed some assessment and there is a potential market for the book. Today a number of companies offer to help the self-publishing author.

The disdain reserved for those who to decide to pay for publishing their own work is unusual in the creative industries. In film or music-making, artists working outside the mainstream are celebrated, but this admiration does not extend to self-published authors who are frequently denigrated (Baverstock 2011). Few successful authors with a loyal readership have taken the decision to take their work out of the publishing mainstream and self-publish, with one of the most famous authors who have done so being J.K. Rowling. In 2012, Rowling launched the Pottermore company to handle the e-book versions of her titles, having previously been reluctant to have e-books available due to the fear of piracy. Pottermore is possible because Rowling has the resources to fund the project, and the author sees the company's website as both a community space for her readers, and a place where they can legitimately buy her e-books (Philips 2014).

Nowadays excellent mechanisms are in place for any author to create and publish their work outside the traditional world of publishing and, in so

doing, they avoid giving a part of their book's income to a publisher while exercising control over what they produce. Amazon's Kindle Direct Publishing (KDP)—arguably the platform that has driven contemporary self-publishing—has a clear pricing policy allowing authors to keep up to seventy per cent of the revenue in certain countries. Self-published titles are shown in search results alongside traditionally published works and titles rise in categories as the title generates sales. In addition, KDP has a built-in audience for new titles, particularly as authors can enrol in Kindle Unlimited and add their titles to Amazon's e-book subscription service for which subscribers pay £7.99 a month for access to “1 million books, magazines and audiobooks” (Amazon 2018). For those wanting to produce print books, Amazon's Create Space platform allows authors to publish and distribute their titles on Amazon.com and other channels. Create Space offers tools for designing covers and sharing sample chapters to get feedback from other authors before publishing a book. In addition, prices are set by authors, and books are printed on demand, meaning that authors do not need to worry about managing stock. The non-exclusive license also allows authors to take their work to a publisher if they wish to do so. Apple has been more concerned with publishing through its hardware and authoring tool, Apple Author, which allows people to write books and sell them through the Apple store.

In this environment, success depends on sales, thereby countering the argument that publishers, as cultural gatekeepers of quality, know what to select to publish (Hall 2013). This is arguably Internet democracy in action, but it does raise questions about the originality and reliability of the content, and whether there is a place in publishing for the content selected.

While there are undoubtedly winners in self-publishing, it is not without its downsides. Firstly, there is evidence that authors again operate in a “winner takes all” environment. In a survey of American self-published authors, the average author made US\$10,000 per annum while the top 10 per cent earned seventy-five per cent of all author income (Cornfield and Lewis 2012). While the return may be slow, the writing and publishing of your own book can be satisfying, and as only time and effort are required, the “cost” is minimal. Just as important, however, is the realisation that self-publishing authors are required to commit to devoting significant time to publish, market and promote their books; time that could otherwise be spent writing. Philips (2014) cites the example of self-published author Amanda Hocking who in 2011 decided to sign to a mainstream publisher, St Martin's Press. This decision was greeted with disappointment by her fans who saw this decision as a sell-out. In response Hocking explained “I'm a writer. I want to be a writer. I do not want to spend forty hours a week handling

emails, formatting covers, finding editors etc. Right now, being me is a full-time corporation” (Hocking 2011). Hocking’s problems were ones of success, but declarations like this reveal the demands of being a full-time self-published author.

In order to assist authors with the self-publishing process, an industry of editors, marketers, and production managers has sprung up. Literary agencies have extended their services to offer a range of services to self-publishing authors while, at the other end of the process, Clays, established in the UK over 200 years ago and the country’s biggest book printer, established Clays Indie Publishing offering editorial, production, design, distribution and marketing help for authors going it alone (Clays 2018).

Traditional publishers have attempted to harness this interest in self-publishing by launching their own imprints, as Penguin did with Author solutions and Harper Collins with Authonomy. The demise of these platforms suggests, however, that participatory cultures of creation do not fare well under corporate structures. Their demise also disproves the notion that edge capabilities and marginal phenomena have the ability to radically transform the core competencies of the industry (de Kosnik 2009; Lichtenberg 2011).

A space for new voices

Technologies such as the design software programme InDesign have enabled authors to publish and print their own books without the need for an agent or a publisher and this, together with a perception that anyone can become an author, has given rise to the recent self-publishing phenomenon. The publishing industry has unwittingly helped promote self-publishing through its practices, if not simply because making a living from full-time writing is the preserve of a minority of authors. A survey into author earnings conducted by the Authors’ Licensing and Collecting Society in 2018 found that just 13.7 per cent of authors managed to live solely off their writing, with the median salary of “professional writers” being just £10,437 (ALCS 2018). Writers operate in an environment in which the top 10 per cent of UK authors, for example, earn sixty per cent of the total author income (Philips 2014). Despite the meagre financial rewards available to most, being an author and getting a book published remains a desirable ambition, possibly because it is so hard to be offered a book contract; indeed, it has become more difficult for authors to get their debut novel published (Philips 2014, 1). The outsourcing of talent spotting to agents has further increased the difficulty of getting published. Few publishers accept unsolicited manuscripts and agents and literary scouts are the new gatekeepers of writing talent (Philips 2014).

The conglomeration of the industry over recent decades has raised questions about whether this transformation has been a cultural tragedy for the industry and unresolved tensions in the industry between the twin poles of culture and commerce (Martin and Tian 2010). The heart of this debate centres on whether cultural objects such as books can exist comfortably in a commercial, market-driven publishing industry. This is an issue that Squires has addressed in relation to the marketing of literary books (2009) and book historians such as Al Greco and Andre Shrifin, who decry the conglomeration of the industry. While there is evidence that there was initially little impact of the transformation of the industry in the diversity of titles published (Kovac 2008), more recent research on the British Young Adult (YA) sector found that white, Anglo-American female authors dominated the sector, and female and male authors (particularly British) of colour were not well represented with just 8 per cent authoring titles, far less than the 13 per cent of the UK population who have a minority background. (Ramdarshan-Bold 2018). This supports arguments about the lack of authors of colour being published by the UK publishing industry and could be seen as another reason for would-be authors to avoid the publishing industry and go it alone (Baverstock 2011, xiii). Authors saw a way that circumvented the conventional author-agent-publisher model and would allow them to keep more of their money and reach readers directly. These alternative media streams offer the means for the democratic communication to people who are normally excluded from the media (Atton 2002). A 2014 survey on the UK publishing industry found it to be predominantly white and middle class with an under-representation of Black, Asian and minority ethnic employees. Black and Asian authors reported that they felt pressured into delivering a “certain kind of book”, which conformed to the publishing industry’s perception of what was “authentically” Black or Asian (Shaffi 2015).

It is not unsurprising then that for many people with a compulsion to write, and sensing publishing is a difficult industry to enter, self-publishing appears to be the way to go, even if few self-published authors are successful like best-selling examples Kerry Wilkinson and Amanda Hocking (Hall 2013).

The world of self-publishing

New writing spaces

Self-publishing has broken into further realms with a variety of innovative writing platforms such as Wattpad, Medium, AsianfanFics or HelloPoetry.

Simone Murray (2015) argues that although the hyperbolic predictions of futurologists have not come to pass, and the codex remains a popular format, a “digital literary sphere” has emerged in recent years. This space is made up of websites and digital content and its focus is the production, circulation and consumption of contemporary literature. These digital networks have revolutionised and fragmented linear publishing operations and with this disintermediation publishers may be usurped by other agents in the publishing circuit. This vast space can be mapped as shown in Table 1.

Print-originated media such as the *New York Review of Books*, *London Review of Books* and *Guardian Books* have supplemented their print offerings with an array of digital add-ons including podcasts, comment sections, blogs, online competitions and social media in the hope of being the online literary home of their readers. Born-digital media, while free of the disadvantage of legacy media operations and pressures, have emphasised innovative interactive functions although these tend to be cannaballed by the traditional media in due course (Murray 2015).

Table 1: The Digital Literary Sphere

Processes → Website Categories ↓	Performing authorship	“Selling” literature	Curating the public life of literature	Consecrating the literary	Entering literary discussion
Print-originated media	•	•	•	•	•
Born-digital media	•	•	•	•	•
Author	•	•	•		•
Publisher	•	•	•	•	•
Retailer	•	•		•	•
Reader	•			•	•
Cultural policy entities	•		•	•	

Source: Table reproduced from Murray 2015

In this space sit book bloggers who can claim to be free of commercial pressures and who can consequently provide what they claim to be objective book reviews as well as a number of user generated sites including Goodreads and Shelfari where users can curate their online books shelves and share reviews and recommendations. Moving beyond the author/publisher functions are new writing spaces. The success of the online writing platform Wattpad allows authors, perhaps frustrated with traditional publishing models, the chance to develop and extend stories around

characters from books, films or real life. Anna Todd and Beth Reekles were both offered book contracts with traditional publishers because of their work, and it is worth remembering that *50 Shades of Grey* began as a piece of fan fiction based on Stephanie Meyer's Twilight series. Research on Wattpad by Ramdarshan Bold (2016) found 16 per cent of authors had established relationships with Amazon/Kindle Direct and there was evidence in discussion forums of interest in securing a contract with a conventional publisher. The popularity of genres such as gender identity, pansexuality, and Black, Asian Minority Ethnic (BAME), feminism were explored by popular authors, which suggests that Wattpad, and self-publishing in general, can be a vehicle for expressing otherness (Ramdarshan Bold 2016).

Social media

New writing spaces have allowed more people to enter the publishing field, but the challenge now is how to create a voice for a title in a crowded online world; particularly so when there is a book published in the English language every four minutes. Technology allows and indeed requires authors to take a larger role in the marketing of their books than in the past and the peer to peer communication and feedback that social media affords on the reception of texts can provide an instant feedback loop for authors and publishers. Compared to industrial era communication models, publishers and authors now need to go beyond simply making content available to the market and provide a more nuanced context to their offerings. This context can be provided by connecting authors and titles to readers through social media (O'Leary 2012). Bob Stein at the Institute for the Future of the Book argues that as reading has always been a social activity, and as for most of their history books had audiences rather than readers, in an online world the social aspect of writing and reading returns to the foreground and the lines between author and reader begin to blur (Ginna 2017).

From a social constructionist perspective on technology, social media gives agency to all the actors in the publishing process from the author through to the reader and by operating in networks people can embed commercial interactions within social relations—as Jenkins (2006) states, technology has enabled new networks of cultural production in which individuals become a part of a network of *prosumers*. Previously, we would read a book and if it was good, tell someone about it. Now we can read a book and share our view on social media, turning us from mere readers to producers of content—we consume and produce at the same time.

The empowerment that comes from participating in social media can mean that to digitise is to democratise and it is for this reason that we—you and I—were named as *Time Magazine's* person of the year in 2006. The magazine's editor wrote "For seizing the reins of the global media, for founding and framing the new digital democracy, for working for nothing and beating the pros at their own game, Time's Person of the Year for 2006 is you" (Time Magazine's Person of the Year 2006). The award is a reflection of the potential of social media and our interaction with platforms that circumvent the traditional media systems. Taking Bourdieu's theory of cultural production, we can see social media as a place where the producers of cultural goods can promote themselves to an audience of their peers and the wider public who may be interested in their products. (Philips 2014). For publishers, social media offer a dynamic channel to generate word of mouth around authors and books through endorsements and recommendations which can be powerful drivers of conversational capital (Cesvet 2009). Word of mouth is important for cultural artefacts like books because each book is unique, unlike commoditised products (such as cars or refrigerators) which have similar features and standards (Philips 2014). Books are therefore highly susceptible to word of mouth interactions because their quality is not easy to evaluate before purchase, making such recommendations helpful to potential individual customers and librarians considering acquisitions (Fang et al. 2011). It is for this reason that word of mouth remains the cornerstone of marketing in publishing (Thompson 2010).

While technology has given a voice to those wanting to write and publish traditional notions of authority, ownership and control are still exercised by publishers and it is on social media that these issues are confronted and debated (Ramdarshan Bold 2016). Famous authors may command authority on social media and publishers may frame our notion of the publishing industry, but this is challenged by the rise of micro-celebrities or micro-influencers on social media which enable self-published authors to themselves become celebrities among their audiences (Senft 2008; Shaefer 2012). Research on Twitter by Marwick and Boyd (2011) showed that the platform can be used to extend the popularity status of users and gives a seemingly seductive impression of a more democratic relationship between celebrities and followers to connect and communicate but their research showed that social media reinforced the hierarchies between users and entrenched, rather than narrowed, the power gap.

Conclusion

Technology has created opportunities for anyone to participate in the publishing process but the picture is more nuanced than might at first appear. Access is almost universal but it is still a winner-takes-all world for authors and existing hierarchies carry over to new media. Technologies frame our relationship with our environment and with each other, making us human and making society possible (Matthewman 2011, 14). This idea is captured by Callon and Latour (1992, 359), who argue that “there is no thinkable social life without the participation—in all meanings of the word—of non-humans, and especially machines and artefacts”. Heidegger warned us that regarding technology as neutral blinds us to the essence of technology; computers and software may form technology but they cannot be separated from the social and perhaps this is why social interactions transacted in the digital space have yet to progress from the conventional publishing world (Murthy 2013, 24).

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CHAPTER TWELVE

PUBLISHING AND INNOVATION: DISRUPTION IN THE CHINESE EBOOK INDUSTRY

XIANG REN

Is digital publishing leading to a paradigm shift or only replicating the print publishing systems in digital garb? This appears to be a key concern of the Chinese publishing industry in the Internet age. In the time of e-books, dynamics such as self-publishing, digital distribution, and the Internet economy have the potential to challenge the established business models, regulations, and publishing culture through disruptive innovation ranging from disintermediating and reintermediating publishing communication, to empowering authors and readers in connected and distributed ways, and monetising content resources in new channels. While digital publishing has tremendous disruptive potential, there is still uncertainty about the transformation and evolution of publishing in China, as it is deeply influenced by the special Chinese contexts. Just some of the characteristics include: strong government control, the monopoly of state-owned publishers, the prevalence of print reading habits, and a traditional book culture as opposed to the open, connected, and distributed Internet culture.

In this chapter, I will review disruptive innovation in the e-book industry and the cultural impact of the e-book in both the production and consumption sides of publishing in China. I will explore the complex interplay between disruptive innovation and contextual factors through examining three case studies in the e-book field: Qidian (*Qidian Zhongwen wang* 起点中文网), the literary self-publishing site; China Mobile Reading Base (*Zhongguo yidong yuedu jidi* 中国移动阅读基地), an e-book distributor that produces material for mobile phones; and Duokan (*Duokan yuedu* 多看阅读), an e-book start-up powered by user-oriented and user-driven innovation. They are conducting e-book business differently from traditional publishers as well as many other e-book vendors. These disruptive initiatives could be viewed as

a snapshot of the digital transformations occurring in the Chinese publishing system. Analysing their practices and challenges sheds light on our understanding of the complexity of digital innovation in China's publishing world.

Apart from the focus of the industry, I will also discuss the cultural impacts of industrial changes, particularly on the consumption of e-book content. Disruptive innovation has created new reading markets in China, and this has also changed the demographics of reading publics; for example, the rise of the *diaosi* 屌丝. One could identify the *diaosi* population with Chinese millennials, but *diaosi* is usually applied particularly to young Chinese who have low levels of income, education, and/or literacy. These young people adopt the term *diaosi*, which refers to “self-aware and self-deprecating losers”, as a cultural identity, thus expressing their dissatisfaction over “getting left behind in capitalist China” and using the online public sphere to playfully protest against social inequality (FlorCruz 2014; Szablewicz 2014). Their activism and cultural resistance coexist with vulnerability to digital consumerism, cyber-nationalism, and political propaganda. All of these elements influence e-book consumption and cultures. With an awareness of complexity and chaos in an “anarchic cultural marketplace” (McNair 2006, 1), this chapter focuses on the questions of to what extent, and in what aspects, has the growth of disruptive initiatives and emergent reading publics led to a digital publishing culture that is different from its print counterparts? I will then explore the enlightening role of disruptive e-book innovation in China's digital and transitional society at large.

Background

Disruptive innovation

Theories on disruptive innovation are widely used today in studying digital transformations. Harvard Business School Professor Clayton M. Christensen coined this concept, in contrast to sustaining innovation (Christensen 1997). Disruptive innovation refers to innovations that create new markets and value networks and eventually disrupt the existing system, displacing earlier models. Christensen uses the concept to explain why successful companies failed to adopt new technologies and business models and, therefore, lost ground to disruptive innovators. Despite its popularity as a theory of change, scholars and practitioners tend to question disruptive innovation for its simplification of the role of enterprises in digital transformation as either disrupting or being disrupted. It is sometimes difficult to employ the concept

of disruptive innovation when explaining disruptive changes in complex socioeconomic systems (Lepore 2014).

Book history studies normally embrace technological determinism when assessing the transformation of publishing, in light of the revolutionary role of printing technologies in the Gutenberg age and digital technologies today. Social readiness, cultural shifts, and economic and political imperatives appear to drive the critiques of technological determinism in explaining publishing transformations (Judge 2011). This debate echoes the concerns over applying disruptive innovation in complex systems.

Nevertheless, the concept of disruptive innovation is important to understand the changes in the Chinese publishing industry in the digital age. Disruptive innovation is also a useful lens to analyse the complex interplay between disruptive technologies and the Chinese publishing contexts. Therefore, the scope of disruptive technologies in this chapter goes beyond business or physical technologies, and includes social technologies too. Since the Cultural Revolution, significant changes and reforms have happened in the Chinese publishing industry, particularly marketisation, privatisation, and digitisation based on disruptive physical and social technologies. Disruption thus transcends competition between enterprises, relating rather to the evolutionary competition between the new and old systems, cultures, and paradigms.

The Chinese e-book industry: A digital “special zone”

China’s book publishing industry has been both rapidly evolving and growing since the beginning of the reform era (1979). New disruptive innovators, including the reformers within state-owned publishers, private publishers, and digital initiatives, have been continuously creating and exploring new markets through new types of content and radical business innovations. These innovations are challenging and disrupting the established models, administration, power structure, and publishing culture. When these new models are widely employed and emergent practices become mainstream, the Chinese publishing system at large evolves.

In the print age, private publishers were a major driver of disruptive innovation. The government and state-owned publishers dubbed them “the second channel” in the 1980s and 1990s, which defined them not only as solely a book distribution channel rather than a publishing or editing entity, but also one that is supplementary to the state-owned counterpart. For private publishers, doing business in such a heavily regulated industry and competing with dominant state-owned publishers was like “swimming with hands and feet tied”. However, private publishers are developing and

growing rapidly due to their more flexible and market-driven operations and because they are offering entertaining and practical content to a mass readership. The business of private publishers has gradually expanded into the publishing and editing fields since the 1990s. The disruptive innovation led by private publishers has changed the old book publishing business, which was based on academic and professional publication, “pure” (i.e., “high-brow”) literature, propaganda, and textbooks, and created a vast consumer market for book publishing in China. Today, the private sector dominates mass-market trade publishing as a result of market-oriented disruptive innovation.

Digital publishing, particularly e-books, delivers the next generation of disruptive technologies in China’s book publishing industry, based on new communicative and commercial models and the rising digital reading market. Digital reading is booming, especially in the mobile Internet age. The total revenues generated from digital content business including e-books, e-magazines, and e-newspapers in 2017 was RMB8.27 billion—roughly US\$1.2 billion (Wei 2018). Kozlowski and Greenfield (2014) estimate that the Chinese e-book market is two-thirds the size of the US market, which remains the world’s largest. There are significant opportunities for electronic publishers to grow their business in emergent markets in China, which also enables digital disruptors to affect traditional book publishing.

Further, digital publishing and e-book businesses enjoy a regulatory “special zone”. China still maintains very tight governmental control and censorship over book publishing and this is extending from print to digital. For example, the Chinese government issues licences for e-book businesses and launches campaigns like “Cleaning the Internet” to regulate Internet content, including e-books (Zorabedian 2015). However, the Chinese government is also ambitious in establishing leadership in digital innovations and specifically building a sustainable publishing system through marketisation and digitisation together (Liu 2008). As a result, the government allows a certain level of deregulation in digital publishing, which gives rise to a practical special zone for disruptive innovation. Moreover, government regulation and censorship usually lag behind technological developments and digital innovations in the Internet age. This further enhances the advantages of digital disruptors over traditional publishing in terms of regulations and censorship.

Despite the opportunities and advantages, the Chinese e-book industry offers both uncertainty and challenges, particularly the lack of high-quality content, the generally low willingness and purchase power of readers, and rampant copyright infringement. As traditional publishers, including private

ones who own most of the book content copyrights, hold conservative attitudes towards e-book business, they are reluctant to license the latest and most bestselling content to e-book vendors. This reduces the overall attraction of e-books to readers. Despite a vast digital reading population, Chinese readers spent on average only US\$4.30 on e-books, while this figure was US\$46 in the United States, US\$84.40 in the UK and US\$86.50 in Japan (Rosoff 2015). An important reason for Chinese people's low spending on e-books is digital piracy and copyright infringement. The estimated number of pirated e-book websites in 2014 was fourteen thousand, when copyright infringement was perhaps most rampant in digital publishing, and these sites generated about eight to ten times more revenue than the copyrighted e-book business (Yang 2014). These factors make the e-book business less attractive for traditional publishers than print publishing, where they can make higher and more stable profit margins while enjoying a monopolistic position.

While disruptive innovation has started in the emerging e-book market in China, it appears to have been too limited or too difficult for established publishers to experiment with. Start-ups and new entrants outside the traditional publishing domains have thus become leading players in the e-book industry. In order to deal with the challenges, they employ communicative and commercial models different from those that print publishers are familiar with, harnessing digital dynamics. With the growth in e-book markets, the disruptive innovators are able to threaten the business of print publishing. Traditional publishers today call these disruptors "the wolves at the door". In the following sections, I will introduce three case studies that represent different types of disruptive innovation in the production, distribution, and consumption of e-books.

Three case studies of disruptive innovation in the E-book industry

Qidian and self-publishing

Self-publishing is a disruptive technology to publishers as intermediaries and gatekeepers, as well as government censorship, given that everyone is theoretically free to publish anything on the Internet. Represented by online literature, self-publishing has indeed led to disruptive changes in China, in particular, the rise of new Internet intermediaries, "freemium" business models, entertaining literary content, and population-wide creative writing.

Online literature was originally fan-generated fiction and self-expression of lovers of literature, and first emerged in the country during

the late 1990s. Genre fictions soon became dominant, along with a rapid shift of online creative writing from self-expression to creative money-making. Qidian was established in 2002 and acquired by Shanda Literature (*Shengda wenxue* 盛大文学) in 2008, and later by Yuewen Group (*Yuewen jituan* 阅文集团) in 2015. It is the most important platform in the Chinese industry of self-published online literature. Qidian invented a unique business model to capitalise on self-published literature, combining freemium with micropayment, allowing readers to read a few free chapters and then pay to read the rest of the book on a chapter-by-chapter basis. This model enables the financial sustainability of Chinese online literature in its early stages, particularly for self-published content whose quality and value can vary greatly, and also in light of a copyright environment in which IP infringement and piracy are prolific and readers are unwilling to pay for content. Compared with the mainstream business models of e-books, the Qidian model is radically innovative and has created a vast readership for online literature.

After Qidian was acquired by Shanda Literature, some new initiatives, such as a VIP subscription that allows unlimited reading on the entire website, gradually became popular. Since 2014, the so-called “big IP (intellectual property) strategies” have been on the rise. Such strategies monetise popular content by licensing right for film and TV adaptations and franchising, rather than by charging readers for accessing original fiction e-books. “Big IP” has become extremely popular in the industry, facilitated by the commercial success of films and TV dramas based on popular online literature such as *Hou gong: 后宫·甄嬛传* (*Empresses in the Palace*, 2011), *Gui chui deng zhi xun long jue* 鬼吹灯之寻龙诀 (*Mojin: the Lost Legend*, 2015), *Langya bang* 琅琊榜 (*Nirvana in Fire*, 2015) and 半月转 *Miyue zhuan* (*The Legend of Miyue*, 2015). Venture capital and Internet giants like Tencent and Alibaba also play an important role in integrating e-book business into bigger commercial ecosystems based on IP exploitation. As a result, cross-subsidies (whereby the revenues generated through advertising, licensing, or franchising cross-subsidise content production) have become prevalent in online literature. Copyright owners sometimes even make fiction titles free to read in order to accumulate popularity and increase the value of their IP. This is far different from traditional publishing business models that depend on selling physical books or digital copies directly to readers, as well as from the earlier Qidian model (Ren 2014).

These innovative business models led to the commercial success of online literature in China. The current economic value of the industry is over RMB9 billion (US\$1.43 billion); thirteen million people write online

and publish 150 million words each day; there are about six hundred thousand contracted authors who earn stable income from platforms¹; 333 million Chinese people are active readers in online literature, accounting for 45.6 per cent of total Internet users.² In the age of mobile Internet, online literature is the third largest category of in-app purchases in China, accounting for 30.8 per cent, behind only games and social media.³ Based on their huge commercial value and popularity, online platforms like Qidian have replaced traditional publishers and become the dominant intermediary of literary publishing. Unlike what happens in other publishing fields, where e-books normally digitise already published print content, the information flow in literary publishing is reversed: once the born-digital online literature becomes popular, the print version will be published to further explore the market.

Apart from business innovations and commercial success, self-publishing enables new types of content, which disrupts the established paradigms of literary writing and drives cultural changes. Online literature—particularly born-digital genre fiction—has become the dominant form of literary writing, for example fantasy, romance, thrillers, crime stories, ghost stories, and Chinese warrior fiction (*wuxia* 武侠). The Chinese online literature authors have also created some unique Chinese genres, in particular, grave robbers' stories (*daomu xiaoshuo* 盗墓小说), time travel romance (*chuanyue wenxue* 穿越文学), and alternate history (*jiakong lishi* 架空历史). All these are different from what was written during the “print age” by professional authors, who were generally members of official authors' associations, sponsored and supervised by government. Understandably, literary critics, university academics, and mainstream media widely criticise the literary quality and aesthetic value of online literature, and question some moral values and ideologies the

¹ These figures are from Mr Yijun Zhang, the dean of Digital Publishing Department of China's State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television. See relevant news report at http://www.xinhuanet.com/fortune/2017-08/14/c_1121481917.htm; there are other articles that provide similar statistics, for example, http://www.xinhuanet.com/book/2018-01/31/c_129802946.htm.

² Several different sources of information estimate that the overall scale of online literature readership is between three hundred million and four hundred million. See, for example, <http://news.cctv.com/2017/03/29/ARTI4lmUyaPZPwEJ7B4m1C0f170329.shtml>, or <http://tech.sina.com.cn/i/2018-01-31/doc-ifyqyuhy7671103.shtml>.

³ See relevant statistics in *China Internet Network Information Center: Chinese Mobile Internet Research Report. Beijing: CNNIC 2014*, <http://www.cac.gov.cn/files/pdf/cnnic/CNNIC20132014ydh1wdcyjbg.pdf>.

content is perpetuating. However, the entertaining online literature content is highly attractive to the majority of Chinese readers who are tired of reading serious literature and propaganda. We may safely conclude that the commercial success of Chinese online literature results from a systemic coincidence; that is, the inability of the print publishing industry to service public reading demand for genre fiction and the dynamics of self-publishing based on millions of creative users (Ren and Montgomery 2012, 121). In other words, it is China's strict censorship of traditional literary publishing in the past decades that stimulated a strong market demand for the online literature.

On the other hand, even for online literature, there is still a bottom line of politically sensitive content and pornography. Self-censorship has become the major mechanism to regulate content in online literature today, in addition to occasional government-led "Cleaning the Internet" campaigns. Interestingly, self-censorship becomes even more effective in the big IP context, as many authors hope to maximise commercial benefits through TV or film adaptations and thus accommodate to the more restrictive censorship standards of screen media in China. Some self-published authors even write "main melody (*zhu xuanlü* 主旋律)" fictions serving propaganda purposes to increase the opportunities for TV or film adaptations. Compared with the digital disruption to the business models of print literary publishing, the innovations of self-published online literature are less disruptive to government censorship in terms of publishing content that would not normally be officially allowed or encouraged.

China mobile reading base and digital distribution

In China, major e-book stores are based on large e-commerce (Internet retailer) sites, for instance, the Kindle e-book Store (in partnership with Chinese All, *Zhongwen zai xian* 中文在线), Chinese Dang Dang e-books (*Dangdang dianzi shu* 当当电子书), and Chinese Jing Dong e-Reading (*Jingdong shuzi yuedu* 京东数字阅读). As part of the commercial ecosystem of Internet retailing, these e-book stores can easily convert the purchasers of print books and other commodities into the purchasers of e-books. Meanwhile, e-books, like print books, have a high consumption frequency and thus help attract Internet traffic to the e-Commerce sites where e-book purchasers often continue to shop other commodities. This tends to redefine the commercial value of e-book business for e-Commerce. However, the business model of e-books in these e-Commerce sites is by nature nothing

innovative, but a digital replication of print bookstores, selling individual e-book “copies” to readers as if they were printed books.

In comparison, the business model initiated by the Chinese telecommunication corporations in 2010 was more innovative. In 2014, during the peak time of the e-book business run by telecommunication corporations, Chinese publishers heavily depended on the revenues generated from mobile reading, which on average accounted for 60–70 per cent of their total e-books business (Yuan 2014). China then had over 527 million active mobile Internet users⁴ and 53.67 per cent of Chinese mobile Internet users read all sorts of literature on mobile devices (Enfodesk 2013). This huge mobile reading market was (and still is) dominated by three monopolist telecommunication corporations, China Mobile, China Tele, and China Union, which together acquired seventy per cent of the market share. China Mobile as the industry leader held 49.1 per cent (Li 2015).

China Mobile Reading Base was launched in May 2010. Based on its 750 million users, this initiative aimed to build new models of e-book distribution from the very beginning. China Mobile Reading Base employed an e-book subscription mode, similar to Kindle Unlimited of Amazon. This was not a genuine innovation at the time but was disruptive to the established e-book business in China which depended on selling individual titles. The price for e-book subscriptions started at only RMB3, roughly US\$0.50 per month, which is much cheaper than buying individual e-book titles. Moreover, it provided a super-value bundle for Chinese readers who were generally reluctant to pay for digital content then, giving them full access to over one hundred thousand e-book titles. Furthermore, compared with other e-book stores, China Mobile Reading Base has a large number of popular online literature titles, making its subscription bundles especially attractive to mobile phone users for relaxing reading in fragmented time. It even attempted to import e-books published in Hong Kong and Taiwan, in order to differentiate its e-book content from that of its competitors.

It is worth mentioning that China Mobile Reading Base started its e-book business when the industry was pessimistic about the commercial viability and financial sustainability of e-books. In 2010, the leading e-book store Fanshu (*Fanshu Wang* 番薯网) only generated RMB1.14 million (US\$175,000) with losses of over RMB20 million (US\$3.1 million) from selling individual e-book titles to readers (TechWeb 2011). By contrast, China Mobile Reading Base generated a revenue of RMB100 million

⁴ See relevant statistics in *China Internet Network Information Center: Chinese Mobile Internet Research Report. Beijing: CNNIC 2014*, <http://www.cac.gov.cn/files/pdf/cnnic/CNNIC20132014ydhhlwdcyjbg.pdf>

(US\$17 million) in 2012. In 2014 they had over 130 million individual visitors per month and over six hundred million daily visits (Sun 2014). This attracted over 240 publishers who licensed their content to this e-book platform.

Its commercial success could be attributed to the combination of disruptive business innovation and industrial monopoly. The e-book subscription model has proved to be commercially viable as it is attractive to mobile phone readers and also helps spread the risk of selling individual e-book titles based on the economics of scale and scope. Undeniably, the monopoly situation of China Mobile is crucial for commercial success. China mobile has hundreds of millions of users that help form the economics of scale and scope. Other exclusive advantages include, for example, China Mobile pre-installing e-book reading apps in the smartphones they sell; China Mobile also offers bundles like Donggan Didai 动感地带⁵ that combine e-book subscription with value-added information services or even monthly mobile phone charges. It is monopoly-backed disruptive innovation, through which the Chinese telecommunication corporations have created a growing new e-book market. The success of China Mobile Reading Base and its e-book subscription model significantly expanded e-book readership in China, by attracting some less educated and low-income people to digital reading, such as rural migrants working in big cities.

The rise of telecommunication corporations in digital distribution of e-books has reintermediated digital publishing in China and restructured the value chain, particularly by marginalising traditional publishers and e-book stores. However, this has not led to a decentralised, competitive, and diverse industrial structure. Rather, the monopolist telecommunication corporations have established their own monopoly in digital publishing through disruptive innovation and enjoy the commercial benefits of distribution dominance. In addition to cash revenue and profit, e-book business also helps the monopolists in telecommunication industries attract users and Internet traffic, increasing the number of users in their other various services. Although China Mobile used disruptive innovation to translate its monopoly in telecommunications into an advantageous status in the e-book industry, once it became the dominant distribution channel, it gradually returned to the traditional e-book selling models based on individual titles for higher profit margins.

⁵ This is a bundle of mobile telecommunication services provided by China Mobile. For a monthly minimum fee of RMB10, users get 120 complimentary text messages, access to digital content such as e-books, mobile music, and so on.

Duokan and user-driven innovation

Unlike the disruptive innovation implemented by the monopolist companies based on economics of scale and scope, the e-book startups represented by Duokan develop new publishing models based on user-driven innovation and user co-creation. Digital reading experience is prioritised in these models rather than competing on price. The reading experience is being improved through both upgrading the design, functions, and content of e-book systems based on user feedback and enabling user participation and co-creation in innovation and development.

Established in 2010 by a group of IT engineers, Duokan was originally a technology company with a keen interest in digital reading. It became well-known in the e-book industry for hacking the operating system of Kindle e-readers. In April 2010, Duokan issued the first third-party firmware for Kindle 2 and continued to provide Duokan systems for all available versions of Kindle e-readers. Duokan provides a user-friendly and open alternative to the restrictive and closed official Kindle software system, and one which is free of charge. The Duokan system supports almost all e-book formats with special optimisation for PDF and provides enhanced information functions of searching, highlighting, note-taking, and sharing. It is more compatible and interoperable with other platforms than the official Kindle system. The Duokan system also has strong Chinese language support, while Kindle firmware did not support Chinese until 2013 when Kindle was officially launched in China. All these innovations removed the exclusions and restrictions set by Amazon for commercial purposes, maximising the benefits for Kindle users. Based on its third-party firmware and the hardware of Kindle e-readers, Duokan later launched an e-book store, producing and selling e-books to end users.

Apart from the useful and user-friendly functions of its e-book system, Duokan also tried to enhance the visual design and navigation of its e-books. They believe the e-book is a new medium of content that goes far beyond digitising the textual content of print books; rather, the artistic and graphic design of e-books should be carried out following the same aesthetic criteria as print books (Lucius 2013). In other words, e-books should try to digitise the whole enjoyment of print reading. Following such principles, Duokan has invested heavily in designing beautiful e-books and improving reading experience, which helps form competitive advantages over other e-book vendors. Duokan even copyedits the e-book content, as sometimes the quality of original textual content is not satisfactory. The launch of Apple's iPad in 2012 challenged the digital reading business based on black-and-white e-readers, including the Duokan model based on the Kindle. However, this also provided new opportunities for Duokan to

expand its e-book business to tablets and smartphones. Duokan's mobile phone reading apps on iPads, iPhones, and Android devices follow the same principles of optimising digital reading experience through useful functions and attractive graphic design, for which mobile phones and tablets actually provide a larger creative space. The beautifully designed and high quality e-books produced by Duokan were pioneering in China's e-book market then and they gradually changed many people's ideas of what an e-book is, as well as their expectations of digital reading (Wu and Ran 2015).

Like other e-book vendors in China, Duokan still need to survive the challenges of rampant copyright infringement. Originally a high-tech company, Duokan engineers have developed a complicated digital rights management (DRM) technology and, as a result, it is technologically difficult for pirates to remove DRM restrictions from Duokan e-books.⁶ Further, unlike the low-price strategy adopted by China Mobile Reading Base, Duokan believe that readers' habit of consuming copyrighted content can be gradually cultivated through good reading experiences despite the free pirated alternatives. In other words, in competing with digital piracy, this e-book start-up expects readers to pay for well-designed, quality e-books.

Those who regard Duokan as purely a technology-driven disruptor focusing on the optimisation of digital reading experience tend to neglect another key element of its innovation: user co-creation based on fan-communities. Duokan is perhaps the first enterprise that values and successfully harnesses user creativity, collective intelligence, and social networks in the Chinese e-book industry, perhaps also in China's publishing industry at large. Soon after Duokan developed its first third-party firmware for Kindle e-readers, a participative user forum was set up to encourage collaboration between the company and e-book lovers.

Duokan is part of Xiaomi Inc., the emerging Chinese mobile phone giant. Xiaomi's principle of valuing user co-creation deeply influences the business model and culture of Duokan, which tries to transform users into partners and fans and build connected communities between enterprise and end users. The staff members of Duokan, ranging from senior managers to engineers, are active in social media and Duokan forum in responding to user comments and discussing with fans on various topics. Such interaction is helpful for obtaining user opinions on content, function, and possible bugs in the software system; more importantly, cultivating a partnership relationship with users and their sense of belonging to the Duokan

⁶ Kindle Duokan chongchu Yamaxun 多看冲出亚马逊. In: *Geekpark.net* (March 22, 2013), <http://www.geekpark.net/topics/175427> (January 15, 2016).

community. This is rare in the Chinese publishing industry. Although state-owned and government-backed publishers are largely forced to learn the value of readers during market reform, it is impossible for them to embrace Internet culture like user co-creation. There is large gap between traditional publishers and start-ups like Duokan in listening to readers, responding promptly to their feedback, and working with them in innovation and development.

The value of the disruptive innovation by Duokan, resulting from the collision between a high-tech company with Internet culture and the conservative traditional publishing world, is not well recognised by the publishing industry and scholars in publishing studies. The value has not been translated into reasonable market revenues, either. Even during the peak period of its business in 2014, Duokan struggled to monetise its user co-creation advantages (either collective intelligence or networked communities), as well as its reputation and popularity accumulated through innovative practices. It is surprising that Duokan solely depended on traditional e-book store model (i.e., selling individual titles to users and fans) to make revenue, which did not work well. Duokan e-book store had over seven million registered users in 2014, but there were only about fifty thousand paid users who spent money purchasing e-books, a number which could not financially sustain this business initiative and satisfy investors (Li 2014). Another challenge concerns comparative advantages. Though Duokan inspires the industry that an optimised and value-added reading experience can be as important as the content for e-book business, such disruptive innovation is easy to imitate by other e-book vendors. In other words, innovation of this kind is not enough to establish a long-term comparative advantage.

Cultural impact of digital disruption

Value propositions of digital publishing

In the three case studies discussed, disruptive innovation harnesses various digital dynamics such as cross-media convergence, population-wide creativity, and social networks in transforming publishing from a traditional media and copyright industry to a digital creative industry (Potts et al. 2008; Ren 2012). Disruptive innovation enriches the understanding of publishing value proposition in the digital and networked environments and provides forward-thinking strategies for the publishing industry at large. Print publishing builds on the scarcity or artificial scarcity of content and creativity, while digital publishing is by nature an economy of abundance.

The publishers' role is no longer that of gatekeeping or creating scarcity, but of intermediating abundant human creativity while transforming the creative inputs from both authors and readers into tangible economic values in large Internet ecosystems, and moving beyond the narrow "publishing" domain.

Disruptive innovation is useful for the innovators to create user growth and stickiness and acquire resources which are otherwise unavailable. But the disruptors must integrate such innovation with other comparative advantages over competitors, which could be a relaxed form of censorship (Qidian), the possession of a monopoly in the telecommunication industry (China Mobile Reading Base), or some unique technological capacity (Duokan). Interestingly, once they become mainstream, some disruptors tend to return to the traditional publishing paradigms which they were previously disrupting, for example, the self-censorship of online literature, China Mobile Reading Base returning from subscription to the traditional e-book selling model it once disrupted, and Duokan's unusual combination of open innovation and closed e-book store model. This raises questions: Is disruptive innovation in the e-book industry genuine when compared with print publishing? Or does it merely prioritise user growth over sustainability, in which cross-subsidy is key to disrupt traditional publishers?

From passive consumers to creative users

Disruptive innovation provides entertaining content, affordable e-book products, and optimised reading experiences. All help to popularise digital reading and widen public access to knowledge. The gap between digital and print reading is shortening—in 2017 Chinese adults read 3.12 e-books on average, compared with 4.66 print books (Sina Books 2018).

Apart from the growth of a digital reading public, the disruptive e-book initiatives imply a significant cultural change in understanding readers, shifting from passive consumers to creative users and partners for co-innovation. The traditional publishing paradigm in China is a top-down approach, in which elitist authors, institutional authorities, and state-owned publishers decide what people read and feed them with approved "spiritual food". Further, as Chinese publishers, like other media companies, serve two masters: the market and the Party (Zhao 1998), they always struggle seeking a balance between economic benefits (demonstrated by sales in market) and social benefits (usually approved by government). Though the Chinese publishing system is market-oriented due to market reform, traditional publishers' understanding of readers is far different from today's

Internet companies. For them, readers are mostly a statistical indicator of their performances, either commercial or propagandistic.

By contrast, disruptive innovation in e-book initiatives as part of Internet innovation builds on user-centric culture, which is illustrated not simply by maximising readership in the “click economy”, but also the models that empower, connect, and collaborate with users. The case studies in this chapter reflect different aspects of such user-centric culture in the publishing context.

The rise of self-publishing sites like Qidian, where everyone can write and publish their fictions, democratises literature and disrupts the dominance of professional writers in creating literary text. Moreover, readers’ collective choices, rather than editorial control, is crucial in filtering literary content. From Web 2.0 to Big Data, technologies are making it increasingly viable for digital publishers to gain an accurate understanding of readers’ cultural needs and then to match their diverse needs with right content. The most recent example in China is Toutiao, owner of a variety of influential digital content apps (e.g., Today’s headline, and Tik Tok), which employs algorithm and machine learning to recommend content to individual readers based on their reading/viewing history. Another important aspect is optimising reading experience by increasing readers’ enjoyment, convenience and rewards, ranging from functional reading apps to easy electronic payment, as developed in China Mobile Reading Base and Duokan. Duokan also exemplifies the cultural change in harnessing user co-creation and building a fan community of e-book lovers.

Digital enlightenment in complex systems

The disruptive innovation of e-books in China leads to cultural evolution, involving self-expression, cultural resistance and digital activism, particularly relating to the younger generations born after the 1980s. In online literature, eighty per cent of the readers are between twenty and thirty-nine years of age (Xin Fan 2014). As the majority of digital writing and reading publics, these younger generations are keen to develop and express their own cultural identities in the digital literary sphere. For example, Jiu Ye Hui 九夜茴, a popular novelist of the post-1990s (*jiu ling hou* 九零后) generation, described her motivation to write as a wish to express herself on behalf of China’s one-child generation who feel lonely and lost during their adolescence (Xianggang shuzhan 2015).

In some cases, the cultural consumption of e-books contains digital activism and the expression of dissatisfaction over the present-day society

of China. The cultural phenomenon of *diaosi* could be understood as a socio-cultural driver behind disruptive innovation of e-books. Sociologically, *diaosi* are young people from middle or low socioeconomic backgrounds who feel disillusioned with “the apparent lack of possibilities for upward socio-economic mobility in contemporary China” (Szablewicz 2014, 259), as career advancement and life success depend more and more on social connections and family background. They often mockingly express their dissatisfaction in the digital public sphere (Cheng, Liang, and Leung 2014). As the *diaosi* population becomes the most active demographic among Internet users, the belief is emerging in the Internet industries that “who gain the common aspiration of the *diaosi*, who can rule the world 得屌丝者得天下”. The combination of sociocultural trends and business innovations has enabled Internet industries, including e-book initiatives, increasingly to become mediators and facilitators of *diaosi* activism in China.

In the production and consumption of e-books, Chinese online writers and digital readers are displaying a cultural resistance against official values and traditional authorities (Han 2011). Though the digital publishing sphere is growingly depoliticised, cultural practices still involve protest against Internet censorship and government control (G. Yang 2014). Many popular online works of fiction contain beliefs, aesthetics, and ideologies that challenge official values. This “new style of writing” began to emerge before online writing prevailed and as a result of the marketisation of print publishing (Berg 2000, 316). In the era of online literature, Internet authors continue to differentiate themselves from their traditional fellows. For example, Tian Xia Ba Chang 天下霸唱, the author of the very popular work of online literature *Gui chui deng* 鬼吹灯 (The Ghouls), publicly claimed that the original motivation for his writing was simply to chase a girl.⁷ In digital reading, it is a popular custom to read and share books which the Chinese government bans or does not approve of (Buckley 2013). *Jin ping mei* 金瓶梅—the Chinese classic pornographic novel that was banned during the print age—was one of the most downloaded e-books in the Duokan platform. A growing number of readers share politically sensitive e-books purchased from international e-book stores in various online communities such as Baidu Tieba 百度贴吧 and Kindleren (it has removed the online sharing function) and without copyright authorisation. Social media users show strong sympathy and support for piracy-related websites

⁷ See interview with the writer in: Tian Xia Ba Chang tan *Gui chui deng* 天下霸唱谈《鬼吹灯》, 163 News (December 15, 2015), <http://news.163.com/special/00011N8F/fictionistzhang.html> (June 10, 2016).

and some even regard copyright infringements and unauthorised sharing as a form of resistance against censorship (Latt 2016).

The democratisation of publishing, as well as the shift from elitism to mass culture, is not free of controversy. The prevalence of entertainment, pulp content, and pornography in the e-book industry is a worrisome trend. For quite a while, almost all the most read e-books in China Mobile Reading Base contained soft pornography, which even became a key selling-point. People's worries about the decline of the quality and value of public digital reading is thus understandable.

However, it is misleading to assess the cultural value of disruptive innovation by taking a black-and-white approach. In book history, the growth of public reading always contributed to the democratisation of knowledge and mass enlightenment (Leavis 1939). The disruptive models of e-books have greatly broadened the scale and scope of public reading, particularly beyond the boundaries drawn by the official institutions in China. Digital enlightenment is not as straightforward as that "one book changed millions of lives", and neither is it a top-down process dominated and controlled by government or elite intellectuals. Rather, digital enlightenment is a chaotic bottom-up process. Enlightenment is closely linked to self-expression, activism, and cultural resistance. Every creative citizen is playing a role, making contributions and differences; conflicting messages, competing values, and various forms of behaviour coexist and mutually shape each other. Overall digital publishing and reading in China is such a complex system that nobody, including the government, can completely control it (McNair 2006). In short, the disruptive innovation of the e-book industry is part of the complexity of publishing transformation and digital enlightenment. The value of digital disruption lies in widening public access to knowledge, connecting authors and readers, and empowering them more than ever before.

Conclusion

The disruptive innovation in the Chinese e-book industry could be interpreted as an interplay of universal Internet dynamics and "Chinese characteristics", in which disruptive technologies drive changes, while being shaped by contextual factors such as policies, industrial structures, market demands, and publishing culture. The Internet as a disruptive technology undermines the basis of traditional book publishing. The rise of digital innovation and networked technologies challenges the crucial value propositions of traditional publishers as gatekeepers and intermediaries

(Ren 2014). As such, what Schumpeter (1975, 82–85) calls “creative destruction” happens in the book publishing market.

The digital disruption was very significant in the Chinese e-book industry when it was emerging at a rapid rate and from almost zero. The market gaps, the regulatory vacuum or “special zones”, and the lagging traditional publishing sector all helped to bring about the rise of disruptive innovators. Yet this golden age of digital disruption based on vast market gaps and extensive growth has now ended.

The next wave of disruptive innovation is coming in the post e-book age, harnessing emerging technologies like big data, machine learning, virtual/artificial realities, and increasingly based on platform infrastructure. In the Chinese digital publishing sphere, one of the most noticeable innovations of this kind is the so-called “Pay-for-Knowledge” industry. In 2017, the economic scale of the Pay-for-Knowledge industry, as a cross-sector area of trade publishing, online learning, social media, and e-Commerce, was over RMB50 billion (nearly A\$10 billion), which attracted more than fifty million paid users. Compared with traditional book publishing or Kindle-style e-books, Pay-for-Knowledge initiatives shift the focus of publishing from selling bookish content to offering multimedia, interactive, social and customisable services for knowledge sharing and social learning, ranging from audiobooks, to paid podcasts, paid subscriptions, cash for answers, and celebrity-led reading groups. Though Pay-for-Knowledge is still in its infancy and not free of controversies, its ideas and practices suggest some interesting potential of reinventing publishing and knowledge communication in China and beyond.

Despite Internet monopoly by BAT (three Chinese Internet giants: Baidu, Alibaba, and Tencent) and increasingly tight control and censorship in digital publishing in Xi Jinping’s “New Era”, there is always space for digital disruptors and game-changers. In the unique Chinese context, the interplay between disruptive innovation and contextual factors will still be a defining feature of digital publishing. As before, for the game-changers, as well as those who are dissatisfied with current situation, disruptive innovation is a catalyst, not only for the transformation or evolution within the publishing world, but also, for institutional reform, cultural changes and social transitions broadly.

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CHAPTER THIRTEEN

PLATFORM GAMES:
THE WRITER, THE PUBLISHING INDUSTRY
AND DEBATES OVER NON-PRINT BOOK
FORMATS IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

NICK EARLS

Introduction

The twenty-first century has seen significant evolution of publishing platforms. Since the publication of the first commercial e-book in 2000, much of the public discussion around the e-book's place in English language publishing has cast it as a rival to printed books and a threat to the industry, rather than an alternative vessel for content delivery. At various times during these last eighteen years, e-books and paper books have each, at times, been declared a spent force, with the other declared to be on the brink of triumph. During this time, audiobooks have evolved significantly, and other narrative platforms have arisen. This century's technologically mediated changes in publishing practices, author-reader relationships and readers' lives present challenges for writers and publishers, but they can also present opportunities for industry participants prepared to adapt their publishing models. This chapter examines the ongoing debates about platforms and argues for a writer-centred view that sees all formats as a way to reach readers, and worthy of consideration in a writer's publishing plans.

“At last. Peak digital is at hand” (Jenkins 2016). So announced Simon Jenkins in the *Guardian* in May 2016, citing a fall in the sale of specialised e-reading devices, along with Publishers' Association UK sales figures showing a 1.6 per cent fall in e-book sales from 2014 to 2015. The article's sub-head boldly claimed, “The hysterical cheerleaders of the e-book failed to account for human experience, and publishers blindly followed suit. But

the novelty has worn off". He was far from alone in holding that view and expressing it with passion.

Data from the Association of American Publishers showing a drop in publishers' e-book revenue in early 2015 provoked a comparable response, such as Phil Wahba's article in *Fortune* with the emotive headline, "Book Sales Hang on as E-books Wither" (Wahba 2015). The same message was coming from some with a commitment to e-reading, though with a tone of resignation. At *Good e-Reader*, Michael Kozlowski's article entitled "E-book Sales Have Peaked" includes the sentence, "It looks like from all of the data currently available that e-book sales have peaked and it is very unlikely the format will ever account for more than twenty-one per cent of global sales" (Kozlowski 2015).

Perhaps spurred on by data from the two largest English language publishers' associations and the 2015 Nielsen survey of the US book industry showing the digital share of the overall book market reducing from twenty-seven per cent to twenty-four per cent (Nielsen Company 2016), it has become commonplace to assert that e-book sales have peaked; but is it accurate? If so, is it as permanent as the talk suggests? And what are writers and publishers to make of it, when contemplating how to connect books with readers?

E-books have peaked before, and been declared a fad before, though that seems to have been omitted from the discussion that has been ongoing since 2014. Since the publication of the first commercial e-book, Stephen King's (2000a) *Riding the Bullet*, in March 2000, the growth of e-book sales has been neither steady nor linear. Surges have typically been driven by the arrival of a specific new technology or e-reading pathway that has proven popular, and plateaus occur when no new impetus for e-reading has been forthcoming. At each surge and each plateau of e-book sales, it is tempting to extrapolate, with the straight line extending from the surges to the date of paper book and terrestrial bookshop oblivion and from plateaus to a permanent market-share ceiling.

While publishing books simultaneously on paper and digitally has become standard among established publishers, much of the ongoing conversation around "peak e-book" focuses on pitting one platform against the other. Data from apparently authoritative sources such as publishers' associations is cherry-picked or skim-read for articles such as those by Jenkins and Wahba in order to support the case that this is happening. This chapter assesses the data underlying the hyperbole and examines the evolution of non-print book formats and their markets in the twenty-first century to date, with a focus, ultimately, on cutting through format-

supremacy debates to look at how writers might best respond to the evolution of new formats when pursuing publication of their work.

E-books

Stephen King's novella *Riding the Bullet* had the distinction of being "the first work released exclusively in an electronic format by a major fiction author" (Minkel 2000, 20), and the first e-book sold by Amazon (Blessing 2000, 36). Across all sites, it was downloaded five hundred thousand times in the first few days (Blessing 2000, 36). While many of these files were PDFs read on personal computers, this response showed a strong interest in the potential of e-reading, sparking, as Rose Blessing (2000, 36) observes, "a flurry of articles in the national press" about e-books versus print publications.

But the publication of King's e-book was not without its challenges. Within days, hackers posted a free PDF version of the e-book on the Internet and, while Adam Rothberg, Director of Corporate Communications at Simon & Schuster, maintained that any piracy "was limited to a few sites which were shut down pretty quickly" (Blessing 2000, 36), the e-book's vulnerability to theft became the dominant public narrative, raising doubts about the format. It would not be the last time, in the evolution of narrative platforms beyond print, that a partial truth took the wheel and drove the story.

Despite King's spectacular download figures, the e-book's move to the mainstream was still years away. Readers were struggling to make the move away from paper. Dedicated e-reading devices were in their infancy, and some way short of wide acceptance. As David Strom (1999, 76) noted when reviewing four different devices in 1999, "None was as comfortable to read as a printed page. All had limited content available ... The smaller units are harder to read, while the bigger ones like Everybook are bulky".

In June 2000, King wrote that most of the readers who had contacted him about *Riding the Bullet* "hadn't liked getting it on a screen, where it appeared and then disappeared like Aladdin's genie ... Book lovers are the Luddites of the intellectual world. I can no more imagine their giving up the printed page than I can imagine a picture in the *New York Post* showing the Pope technoboogieing the night away in a disco" (King 2000b, 62).

While it is not exactly technoboogieing, in 2013 the *New York Post* ran an article headed, "Pope Francis Worked as Nightclub Bouncer" (Li 2013). Perhaps the logic of booklovers as Luddites could shift too. Perhaps King himself even sensed that, or hoped for it, as, in June 2000, he set up his second online experiment, a serialised novel called *The Plant*. Subscribers

were to pay a dollar per instalment, with nothing to enforce payment but an honour system and King's undertaking that he would stop the project if people failed to pay. After several instalments and a significant number of non-payments, he did just that, posting news of the project's abandonment on his website. With that, Guthrie (2006, 129) reports, "The optimism over e-books in 2000 came to an abrupt end".

By early 2002, e-book sales projections were being revised down significantly and, rather than pushing e-books over the Internet as products, Stephen King was e-publishing free teasers to drive physical book sales. E. A. Vander Veer (2002), in a piece published that year tellingly entitled "The Revolution that Wasn't", cites several factors contributing to readers' decisions to keep reading on paper, particularly when reading fiction. These include lack of a consistent e-book format, confusion over the dollar value of electronic rights, an increasingly volatile e-publishing landscape, and a reluctance to read long passages for pleasure on a flickering screen.

For several years, e-reading and the technology supporting it made little progress. Richard Guthrie, in a discussion following publication of his article "Riding the E-Frenzy of 2000" in *Logos* in 2006, stated, "e-readers have not developed much ... Dump the current e-reader because it isn't even worth discussing" (Esposito, Levine, and Guthrie 2007, 51). In the same discussion, *Logos* editor Charles Levine, said, "I took another look at Sony's new e-book reader that was recently launched in mid-2006. I am appalled at how unappealing the new e-reader is, even after all these years" (ibid., 51). Both were seeking devices offering greater sophistication and a more reader-friendly experience designed to more closely mimic the comfortable experience of reading a paper book. Levine went on to say, "An attractive iReader that is as sexy and as easy to use as an iPod would turn the book industry on its head" (ibid., 53).

Whether it was quite as sexy as an iPod is debatable, but Amazon's Kindle was launched in November 2007. Barnes & Noble's Nook followed in October 2009, and Kobo's E-reader in May 2010. With the arrival of more appealing e-reading devices, e-book sales rose dramatically. Apple's launch of the iPad in January 2010 boosted this further by creating a non-specialist device that gave a pleasing e-reading experience and would soon be purchased by millions. US e-book sales rose 1260 per cent from 2008 to 2010 (Alter 2015). By early 2011, US advisory group Gartner reported that industry researchers were predicting a seventy per cent annual growth rate for e-reader sales globally (Barrett 2015).

In February that year, the REDgroup, the parent company of Angus & Robertson and Borders in Australia—chains responsible for twenty per cent of the country's books sales—went into receivership (Lim 2011). After five

per cent growth in 2009, Australian book sales contracted slightly in 2010, then dramatically in 2011, with falls of thirteen per cent in volume and eighteen per cent in value, and significant falls continuing into 2012 (Coronel 2012). In June 2011, with Australia's retailers of paper books challenged by the rise of a web-based book retailing model (exemplified by Amazon) and the emergence of a serious non-paper reading platform, Australia's Minister for Small Business, Nick Sherry, predicted that, "in five years, other than a few specialty bookshops in capital cities, you will not see a bookstore. They will cease to exist" (Barrett 2015).

Bold predictions about seismic shifts in the book industry were back in vogue, in a way that they had not been since 2000. Like those earlier predictions, these too would prove to be overblown—bookstores did not cease to exist by June 2016 and sales of dedicated e-reading devices peaked at twenty million units worldwide in 2011, falling to twelve million in 2014 as more readers opted to e-read on non-specialist devices such as smartphones and tablets (Alter 2015)—but this is unlikely to be the last instance of over-extrapolating from short-term trends in book buying.

While ultimately inaccurate, the predictions were an over-reading of patterns in evidence at the time. By January 2011, Amazon was selling more e-books than paperbacks (Bradley et al. 2011). According to Nielsen figures, US e-book sales went from US\$69 million in 2010 to US\$165 million in 2011, a 139 per cent increase. From there, they increased a further thirty per cent in 2012 and thirteen per cent in 2013 (Nielsen Company 2016).

With increases in both average smartphone screen size and smartphone use, the 2014–2015 period marked another shift in the use of electronic devices for reading—the phone was becoming a significant reading tool. According to US Nielsen surveys, while the percentage of the e-reading population reading primarily on tablets had increased from 30 per cent in 2012 to forty-one per cent in 2015, the number of e-book buyers who used their phones to read at least some of the time increased from twenty-four per cent to fifty-four per cent in the same period (as quoted in Maloney 2015).

E-book sales in the US, though, appeared to plateau at 2013 levels, according to Association of American Publishers figures, and then dipped early in 2015. In the UK, the Publishers' Association reported digital sales for the year 2015 falling from £563 million to £554 million, and print sales growing minimally from £2.74 billion to £2.76 billion. Declarations of "peak e-book" became commonplace. Those figures, though, do not tell the whole story.

As Simon Jenkins admitted, the adult colouring book fad made a contribution to print sales in 2015 and is specifically relevant when looking at the performance of different publishing platforms as sales of colouring books are almost entirely in print format. In the case of the UK market, the £20.3 million generated by adult colouring books in 2015 (Houlder 2016) matched the growth in the overall print market and, without it, the pattern of zero or negative growth seen in the preceding seven years would have continued. In the US, Nielsen reported that sales of adult colouring books surged from one million units in 2014 to twelve million in 2015 (Nielsen Company 2016). Australia was also part of the adult-colouring craze. Nielsen BookScan's November 2015 Australian top twenty featured eight colouring books, each one of them outselling the most successful Australian novel (as quoted in Cooke 2015).

Other factors were at work as well. Following the renegotiation of pricing between major American publishers and Amazon, e-book prices rose in the US Kindle Store in late 2014 and 2015. Until then, Amazon had pushed publishers to keep prices no greater than US\$9.99, and buyers had become conditioned to paying less than US\$10 for e-books. Publishers that increased prices above that mark subsequently recorded a fall in e-book receipts, and some identified higher prices as a factor (Trachtenberg 2015). According to Jeffery Trachtenberg (2015), publishers viewed this pricing change as involving "some sacrifice, but they felt it was worth it to keep Amazon in check. What's more, they have noticed a bump in sales of physical books that is possibly related to the higher price of digital books".

Furthermore, while the Association of American Publishers' figures are based on a survey of 1200 publishers and often seen as authoritative, the Amazon Kindle Store stocks many independently published titles and titles published by small and micro publishers not captured by the survey. Many of these titles do not have ISBNs and are therefore not included in Nielsen data either. At the same time as the Association of American Publishers and Nielsen were reporting a drop in overall e-book sales, Amazon, the retailer with the majority of the US e-book market, reported increases in sales in terms of both units and revenue (Trachtenberg 2015).

David Montgomery, CEO of publishing services company Publishing Technology (now Ingenta), drew on these factors to declare that publishing had split into two markets, with a widening gap between them. Self-published and micro-published authors, particularly those writing genre fiction, were pricing their e-books much lower and claiming an increasing share of the market—particularly through Amazon—while large publishers were increasing e-book prices in a way that reduced e-book sales; in his

view, using the reintroduction of agency pricing “as a strategy to support print book sales” (Montgomery 2015).

This pattern continued in 2017, and the rhetoric that pits one format against another appeared to continue, too. At the Digital Book World conference in January 2017, Nielsen presented 2016 data from more than thirty traditional US publishers showing a fall in e-book sales from 2015 to 2016 and hardback unit sales overtaking e-books for the first time since 2012 (as quoted in Milliot 2017). Nielsen, too, nominated the return to agency pricing as the biggest driver. Despite their data being an estimate and covering relatively few publishers, and their attempts to explain the raw figures, *Publishers Weekly* ran its story on the presentation with the headline “The Bad News About E-books” (Milliot 2017). Meanwhile, at the same conference, an analysis by the Author Earnings data site showed Amazon’s e-book sales growing 4 per cent overall in 2016 (Dale 2017). The following week, the *Sydney Morning Herald* published a Bloomberg-sourced piece headed “How Print Beat Digital in the Book World” (Bershidsky 2017).

While it is possible to speculate about the future trajectories of the e-book and paper book markets, many confident pundits have been wrong before, as new factors have emerged that have significantly impacted reader behaviour and sales patterns. Among these are other book-based entertainment platforms that have developed or evolved through technological advances, and that demand a broadening of the discussion beyond print and e-books.

Audiobooks

In their conversation about the stalling of the e-book in the first years of the twenty-first century, Joseph Esposito, Charles Levine, and Richard Guthrie expressed a range of views about audiobooks. Guthrie identified what he saw as limitations of both the form itself and its market, adding:

Audiobooks will never go mass. With fiction alone, reader-discovery of a writer’s voice is short-circuited by actors playing that role. Audiobooks grew fast, then levelled off just as fast in the late 1980s, early ‘90s—an LA-styled fad for the intellectually lazy, for listening to expurgated novels while cruising in their convertibles (Esposito, Levine, and Guthrie 2007, 52).

Levine, though, could see technology creating at least some opportunities for the audiobook market to grow:

Audiobooks indeed are a smart alternative way to ‘read’ when eyes and hands are occupied. Frankly, I am surprised that audiobooks don’t account for more than six to eight per cent of the US trade book market. I imagine

that as text-to-voice technology gets much better and cheaper, and we will be able to download an audio version of any desired book or chapter quickly and easily, then audio sales will go up. Maybe they will even double over time to peak around 15 to 20 per cent of trade book sales. But audiobooks don't threaten, and never will, the core business of print publishing the way that e-books and e-readers unmistakably will (Esposito, Levine, and Guthrie 2007, 53).

At the time of Esposito, Levine, and Guthrie's discussion, digital downloads had already claimed fourteen per cent of the billion-dollar US audiobook market (Nawotka 2008), but perceptions of the audiobook had not yet shifted from that of the 1990s, when Sarah Kozloff (1995, 83) observed that the audiobook was viewed as "a debased or lazy way to read, with connotations of illiteracy ... passivity ... and lack of commitment". With perception already against it, the audiobook market at that time had been further limited by technology and price. Compared with a paperback novel, an audiobook in the 1990s was a relatively cumbersome package of cassette tapes or CDs and cost several times as much. None of this is the case with the audiobook as an MP3 file.

Winfried Schulz (2004, 89) pointed out in 2004 that "media use is woven into the fabric of everyday life" and this observation has become only more relevant in the years since. With escalating smartphone and tablet use, many people have come to regularly carry a device that makes audiobooks not merely more accessible, but easy to use. Coupled with significant improvements in affordability, barriers to audiobook use have been much reduced. As Iben Have and Birgitte Stougaard Pederson (2013, 125) point out, "The new portable and digital audio media change the act of reading, moving it into fields of social practice such as exercising, commuting, and housekeeping in which reading has not previously been common", at the same time changing perception and status of the audiobook. A 2016 survey commissioned in Australia by Audible bears out this changed pattern of use, reporting audiobook users listening to audiobooks during commuting (forty-nine per cent of users), road trips (44 per cent), housework (thirty-eight per cent) and exercise (thirty per cent) (Clark 2016).

In the US, audiobook sales increased by twenty-two per cent from 2011 to 2012, consistent with the double-digit annual growth seen for several years, with much of the growth attributed to the digital transformation of audiobook recording, delivery and use (Kaufman 2013). The Association of American Publishers reported audiobook sales growing by thirty-one per cent from the first half of 2014 to the first half of 2015 (Bluestone 2015). In 2015, 1.6 billion hours of content was downloaded from Audible worldwide (Bochner 2016a). Also in 2015, Montgomery (2015) reported that, in the

UK, “anecdotal evidence from publishers suggests that audio is the only segment of trade publishers’ businesses that consistently delivers double-digit growth”. In the US, digital audiobook sales rose 35.3 per cent from the first quarter of 2015 to the first quarter of 2016 (Alter 2016). From its Australian launch in 2014 to early 2016, Audible reported “triple-digit growth” in sales (Jennings 2016). From 2011 to 2016, Australian audiobook company Bolinda’s sales quadrupled (Jennings 2016). Audible’s Matthew Gain identified the growth in audiobook sales as coming from people in the habit of using their phones to consume digital content, and whose reading was limited by time constraints (Clark 2016).

As audiobooks themselves were evolving, a potential new audience for downloaded digital audiobooks—and therefore a potentially powerful driver of audiobook reading—was being created through the rise and evolution of podcasting. Though podcasts arose completely unrelated to audiobooks, the evolution of audiobooks into downloadable audio files has brought the consumer’s experiences of the two closer. The growing popularity of longer-form podcasts—downloads of Richard Fidler’s “Conversations” show on ABC radio, each around fifty-three minutes in length, hit one million per month by June 2015 (Bodey 2015)—has contributed to this convergence too. While they have remained largely separate at the level of production and somewhat separate at the level of distribution, the comparability in the use of audiobooks and podcasts has potentially created a new market for audiobooks.

Enhanced e-books and future formats

Just as the printed book evolved over the second half of the fifteenth century, so the e-book is evolving now. Enhanced e-books can include audio files (including music), video files, archival material, background material from the author, interviews with the author and experts, and web links to other content. Material can be formatted to allow the reader to click to change the page view from the set font to the font of the author’s typewriter to the corresponding manuscript page, with the author’s and possibly editor’s hand-written annotations. Some e-books might be minimally enhanced, with minimal effort and expense. Some have the scope to become a vast interactive entertainment experience, produced at significant expense and pushing the boundaries of the definition of a book.

In 2010, the first releases of enhanced e-books by a number of major trade publishers prompted significant debate. A market for books with extra features was long established, with Dominique Raccach, publisher and owner of Source-books, explaining the background of her company’s move into

enhanced e-books by saying, “We sold more than four million physical books with CDs, so we know that there is an interest in meshing text with audio and video” (Trachtenberg 2010, B5). With e-books often less profitable than paper books, publishers were looking to see if added content might allow a significantly higher price point and higher return (ibid., B5).

While the medium is still early in its evolution, some publishers are prepared to devote resources to it. In 2013, Richard House’s four-part novel, *The Kills*, released both as a hard-copy edition and an enhanced digital edition featuring film clips, audio clips and animation, was longlisted for the Man Booker Prize, with the work itself and its acclaim generating discussion about the enhancements. The *Guardian*’s reviewer declared, “This is the first time I’ve read a digital edition of a primarily text-based novel where I’ve thought: yes, this works” (Pullinger 2013).

The enhanced e-book, however, has yet to capture a significant share of the book and entertainment markets. According to Calvin Reid (2016), “Although multimedia e-books have found some traction in the children’s market, enhanced e-books and apps have had problems in the broader marketplace”. By 2013 it had been “pronounced dead several times” (Rankin 2013), but this is similar to the development trajectory of the standard e-book in its early years.

In the longer term, the enhanced e-book may push the boundaries of what a book is to such a degree that it will call for the book to be defined anew, and make it a challenge to know where to set the limits. Wherever the boundaries lie, hybrid digital products that spring from books, embrace text at the heart of their way of operating, and require the work of writers are likely to become more common and will compete with books as we know them.

Beyond sales-figure debates

While the debate about sales figures and format supremacy has been an ongoing distraction, the e-book and other new formats have also presented other significant issues requiring consideration. The e-book has made self-publishing easy and cheap, and given the self-published author access to a global market, but a global market that offers millions of titles. Some breakthrough authors have sold in huge numbers, but far more have found themselves in the long tail that Garrison Keillor (2010) called “the future of publishing: eighteen million authors in America, each with an average of fourteen readers, eight of whom are blood relatives. Average annual earnings: \$1.75”.

Piracy of e-books is also a concern and may increase as an issue for audiobooks. In some languages, such as Chinese languages and Russian, e-book piracy has led to a questioning of the viability of e-book markets (Wischenbart 2013, 9). In a number of languages, including English, writers face piracy while at the same time participating in a viable and potentially lucrative legal e-book market, with Rüdiger Wischenbart (2013, 8) finding that “many authors who do not have a regular income other than from their writing have good reason to be worried”.

The impact of piracy, though, is not easy to quantify, and other assessments have yielded results that support a less pessimistic view. The UK Online Copyright Infringement Tracker studied the habits of British Internet users for three months in 2015 and found that, during that time, nine per cent consumed at least some music illegally, six per cent at least some film content illegally, and only one per cent consumed at least some book content illegally. Among consumers of particular entertainment genres, ten per cent of book consumers consumed at least one item illegally, compared with twenty-six per cent of music users and twenty-five per cent of film users (Mackay 2015, 3). The assessment of the impact of piracy is further complicated by ubiquitous fake piracy sites that harvest e-book covers, data and metadata, and use them as bait to drive advertising revenue, insert malware, or obtain personal information or payment, rather than to give away pirated books (Bailey 2016; Hoffelder 2016).

Beyond these issues affecting digital publishing in general, some genres seem more successful than others as e-books. Ben Arogundade (2012), in his article “Ten Steps to E-book Success”, lists thriller, mystery and romance as the most popular e-book categories. Andrew Wilson’s (2011) assessment is broadly in agreement: “Genre novels—particularly crime thrillers, fantasy, paranormal romance and chick-lit—seem particularly suited to the Kindle format”. In 2013, Random House and Harper Collins in the US set up digital-only imprints specifically to publish genre fiction, with imprints for mystery, romance and speculative fiction. According to Allison Dobson, Random House digital publishing director, “The genres were among the first where readers took to the digital format, and the ratios of readers of digital, as opposed to physical, are much much higher” (McMillan 2013).

Jan Zwar, David Throsby, and Thomas Longden’s detailed survey of Australian authors provides more evidence to support claims about the relative success of genre fiction in the digital domain. While 60.7 per cent of literary authors surveyed had seen technology change the way their work is published, the same was true of eighty-four per cent of genre fiction authors, with the research identifying e-book uptake by genre fiction

consumers as a contributing factor (Zwar, Throsby, and Longden 2015a). Genre fiction authors were also more likely to report favourable changes in financial circumstances due to industry changes, and literary authors more likely to report a deterioration (Zwar, Throsby, and Longden 2015b).

British author Stephen Leather suggests one factor behind the strength of genre fiction in the e-book market is that readers in the genres popular as e-books tend to read more than other readers (Wilson 2011). US Harper Collins publisher Liate Stehlik (quoted in McMillan 2013) agrees. “Genre fans, she says, became ‘early adopters’ of the digital format because e-books are the optimal format ‘for people who want to read a lot of books’. With Hui Li (2015, 47) demonstrating that avid readers are substantially more likely to e-read (his modelling predicted a Kindle penetration rate of thirty-eight per cent among US avid readers by the end of 2012, compared with 2.2 per cent for general readers), if Wilson and Stehlik are correct, it is possible that avid readers of genre fiction have driven sales of genre titles in e-book markets such as the Amazon Kindle Store, perhaps encouraging authors to write and publish e-books in those genres.

Just as technological advances may have improved the prospects of some genres over others, they may also lead to a reassessment of industry perceptions around book length and viability. The novella remained a difficult standalone print publishing proposition throughout the twentieth century because each copy costs almost as much to make as a novel two-to-four times the size, and therefore reaches the retailer at close to the same price point; but such constraints do not apply to e-book and audiobook publishing and pricing. In 2011, Amazon launched Kindle Singles for works five- to thirty-thousand words in length, and sold more than two million units in the imprint’s first fourteen months, at an average price of US\$1.87 (Owen 2012). To tap into the podcast market, Audible launched Channels, a subscription service for short-form audio content, in 2016 (Bochner 2016b). Both of these created a space for novellas.

Publishing the five novellas of my 2016 series *Wisdom Tree* individually at monthly intervals, rather than as a collection, with each released simultaneously as a compact paperback, e-book and audiobook, created the opportunity to develop an appealing and collectible look for the physical editions as a set (a point of difference from the cheaper e-book versions), spread interviews and events across months, and led to the use of a cast of five nationally-known actors to read the audiobooks. By October 2017, this had resulted in ninety-four interviews and media discussions of *Wisdom Tree* (compared with twenty-one in a similar time period for my 2012 collection of three novellas and five short stories, *Welcome to Normal*), invitations to more than twenty writers’ festivals (compared with three),

forty-eight events (compared with thirteen), and almost triple the earnings from advances and royalties.

A multi-platform approach

Writers are creators of stories, not of the vessels they come in. Once stories are fed into the machinery of the book industry, they emerge in one form or several: paper books, audiobooks, e-books and enhanced e-books. While some commentators and even industry players at times behave in a way that suggests one format is being pitted against another, it is prudent for the writer and publisher to resist this, and to develop a publication strategy across platforms, as befits each work and its possible audience. The paper book has not been replaced or turned into a niche product, and most publishers who publish on paper are likely to continue to do so for the foreseeable future; but the design, manufacture and prospects of each paper edition need to be considered in the context of the same material being simultaneously released on other platforms, often at different price points.

When Allen Lane began the paperback revolution by setting up Penguin Books in 1935, the industry saw its potential, embraced it and capitalised on it. The paperback had come from within the industry, used existing technology in a slightly different way and allowed expansion of existing retail channels. In that instance, publishers were dealing with an evolution that was immediately comprehensible and adapted existing practices.

The development of e-books and other digital reading technologies has been very different. Early e-reading devices were developed not by long-established publishers but by technology companies, and the breakthrough e-reader, the Kindle, was the work of an Internet retailer whose model was already seen as posing a significant threat to business as usual. Compounding this, and also unlike the situation that had occurred with paperbacks, the distribution and sales model that developed for e-books (and other digital platforms) necessarily had very little in common with the model used for print books—each copy of a book in a digital format takes up no space, requires no warehousing or physical point of sale, and does not exist until it is purchased. Rather than simply being a different and convenient device for carrying stories to readers, the e-book arrived as an awkward “other” that, as soon as it moved in from the margins, revealed itself as a disruptor of existing practices and markets.

To this environment, add more calls on recreational dollars and time than existed just a few years before—books had survived cinema, radio and television, but could they survive Facebook, YouTube and Netflix?—a global financial crisis curtailing recreational spending (almost certainly

including spending on recreational reading) and recency bias, and it is perhaps no surprise that a dramatic surge in e-reading has been extrapolated by some to mean the end of days, and a plateau extrapolated to mean the war might be over. Neither of these is accurate, or helpful.

When new storytelling media have evolved, they have added to the options for consumer-readers, rather than the supersessionist notion of new media wiping out old—an idea Paul Duguid warned of more than twenty years ago, before the development of most formats discussed in this chapter (Duguid 1996). Opportunities have evolved that allow creators to bypass existing systems, and those systems have been required to adapt. In an era in which anything can be published anywhere, in any state of readiness, established publishers have marketing power (for the titles with which they choose to use it), a deep knowledge of the still-substantial paper-based publishing industry, a significant presence in the e-book market, and brands they can leverage—brands that say a selection process of some rigour has occurred, an investment has been made in an author, and editors and others have added value with the aim of optimising the reading experience. Potential purchasers will value that as they may.

For the writer, the book industry in the twenty-first century is no longer a single-platform proposition. By examining a project's prospects across platforms, the writer can maximise the pathways to readers and achieve worthwhile synergies. For example, simultaneous release across platforms can lead to increased total marketing spend and greater penetration of the project, a high-profile narrator for an audiobook can increase media coverage that benefits all platforms and social media discussion about the project in one format increases awareness and recognition of the project across all.

By cutting through the noise of ongoing debate around the notion of an inter-platform rivalry and accepting that the best way to reach readers is to maximise a work's potential in any platform available to it, and to operate those platforms synergistically and strategically, the writer at this point in the twenty-first century maximises their chances of connecting broadly and in a compelling way with a readership.

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CHAPTER FOURTEEN

PUBLISHING AND ITS DISCONTENTS: AUTHORS, INCOMES AND ALTERNATIVE MODELS

JEN WEBB & PAUL MUNDEN

Introduction

Australian cultural economist David Throsby has committed several decades to examining the economic context in which creative practitioners operate, and the findings are not encouraging. Report after report has found that, on average, writers make little more than pocket money from their writing. It is, however, rare for a larger publisher, at least, to contract any manuscript that is unlikely to make a profit for the company; publishing profits do not typically find their way to the authors. Further, since few major publishers are willing to invest in non-commercial work—poetry, literary fiction—such writers often turn to alternative modes to reach an audience. Sometimes this means adopting the tradition of self-publishing, whether in print or electronic media, in which case the author does all the work of production and distribution and retains any profits from sales. In other cases, it means signing with small presses, which may not generate much financial return, but provides membership of a literary community and, for those who sign with recognised small presses, a degree of literary consecration.

A further approach is adopted by some writers in what is arguably the least commercial mode—poetry—who often become disenchanted by the difficulties of entering and remaining within the publishing sector, or choose to resist the doxa of the market in favour of an art for art's sake logic. Because individual poems tend to be significantly shorter than other literary forms, it is quite an easy step to eschew the convention of printed or electronic book altogether, and instead exhibit work in artist books; produce small handmade chapbooks; use the walls of buildings as “pages” for short writings (through commissions, graffiti, or projections); or adopt the

performance mode. While such modes of presentation or “publication” tend to be more ephemeral than are printed volumes, they have their own attractions—not least that of creative autonomy.

In this chapter, and drawing on our recent research into creative employment (Gu and Webb 2018; Webb 2018; Webb 2016), we begin by discussing the structural dimensions of national and international publishing, and identify poetry as a case study for writing that is barely accommodated by this structure. Next, drawing on our experience with poetry “off the page”, gained through several years of convening the University of Canberra’s Poetry on the Move festival and its associated publishing practices,¹ we focus on alternatives to conventional (industry-standard) publishing, and some of the strategies and tactics deployed by writers—particularly poets—to circumvent the constraints in which they operate.

Publishing as industry

For governments and corporations, the publishing sector is a good earner. UK book publishers, in 2016, made a gross value added (GVA) contribution of £2.2billion to the national economy (Frontier Economics 2017, 13). Australia has not collected detailed records on the sector since 2008–09, but the figures back then were similarly healthy—taking into account the relative size of the economies—with the Australian publishing sector contributing a GVA of A\$12,539 million (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2014). In each nation, the creative and cultural sectors are among the top earners for all industries, and their levels of contributions are growing.

Such economic success is replicated across the globe. An International Publishers Association and World Intellectual Property Organization study of the sector in 2016 produced data that, though patchy, demonstrates the magnitude and economic impact of the sector. In the UK alone, their study shows, the 2,255 publishers reported to be operating in 2016 together

¹ The University of Canberra’s Poetry on the Festival and project has been running as an annual event since 2015. Its original focus was to “explore poetry’s ability to move from—and interrogate—its place on the printed page” (<https://www.canberra.edu.au/research/faculty-research-centres/cccr/events/2015/poetry-on-the-move>), and it has morphed, over the years, to an event that incorporates scholarly work on poetry and cultural contexts, small press printing, workshops, exhibitions and performances, practitioner panels, et al.; and in every case it attempts to sidestep the financial aspects, bringing poetry with low or no cost to as broad an audience as possible. While we do not explore the poetry or its publishing here, our experience and associated research informs this chapter.

employed some 29,000 people (IPA and WIPO 2017, 15), produced 149,443 titles, and generated net income of US\$6,870.8 million (2017, 13). These are impressive figures, particularly when viewed through the eyes of individual writers ruefully examining the size of their royalty cheque. This profit does not translate into incomes for those who produce the content. There are few opportunities for writers to extend their professional skills, or to earn significant advances or royalties from their publications.

In consequence, for every J.K. Rowling or Dan Brown there are myriads of authors earning little, if anything, from their creative practice. Samuel Johnson may have been able to maintain the position that “No man but a blockhead ever wrote, except for money” (in Boswell 1831, 384), but for twentieth and twenty-first century writers, art and money have been poor bedfellows. A recent research project shows that, in 2015, the annual income from writing for Australian authors whose main occupation is writing ranged from A\$4,000 to A\$15,000 a year; this for a reported labour input of 46.4 hours a week (Throsby et al. 2015, 21). It is worth noting, though, that these figures are from self-reporting, and few authors would be likely to sustain that sort of workload over the course of a career. Writers therefore earn significantly less than the minimum hourly wage, which in 2015 Australia was A\$17.29. If they were paid the minimum wage for hours worked, they could expect to earn nearly A\$40,000 a year. UK authors do better, but only a little: a 2016 EU report shows their average total income as €8,000 (Europe Economics 2016, 202), which is well below the average of £28,200.² The report writers qualify this finding because of the limited number of responses they received from UK authors, and the higher response rates from EU member states; however, across the region, average income is—as for Australian writers—well below the median wage. The material rewards for writers publishing their work are, therefore, small; which is not surprising given the comparative difficulty of first finding, and then being contracted by, a publisher. In many countries, there is an annual or biennial volume that lists publishers and agents (see, for example, the *Writer’s Market* produced by *Writer’s Digest* in the US, *The Australian Writer’s Marketplace* managed by the Queensland Writers Centre; and Bloomsbury Publishing’s *Writers and Artists Yearbook* in the UK). But there is no exhaustive or authoritative record of who the publishers are; and nor can there be, given the constant turnover of small and micro-publishers. The field is, therefore, opaque, especially to a new entrant. Given how many

² The Irish government has addressed this problem head-on, specifically identifying the need to support artists among the justifications for their universal basic income. See *Basic Income Ireland*, <https://www.basicincomeireland.com/basic-income--you.html>, accessed 15 September 2018.

people identify as writers, comparatively few volumes are actually published and distributed. Throsby's research indicated that, excluding educational and academic books, Australian authors produce on average 13.5 books during the course of their career (Throsby et al. 2015, 17). In Australia at least, over the course of their career about eighty per cent of Australian authors rely on publishers, though self-publishing is increasing in both Australia and the UK (Throsby et al 2018). But even for those lucky enough to be signed by an agent and then a publisher, the combination of minimal market research or post-publication marketing done by publishers, and fractionalised audiences for genres and forms, means that most books generate low royalties for their authors.

Marketing can be a significant factor in shifting the odds. One mode of marketing takes the form of literary prizes, with major awards such as the Man Booker significantly translating literary capital into economic capital (see Childress, Rawlings and Moeran 2017; Street 2005). Commercial marketing of popular forms of writing has the capacity to act as a machine that translates a manuscript into a product or a brand. In each case, there is a combination of consecration and commerce: as Wynne observes, "Literary awards confer a degree of celebrity, while commercial prizes tend merely to confirm it" (2016, 591). Beyond celebrity is what marketing a book might afford in the cultural milieu, and J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter series offers perhaps the best-known example of its affordances. The Harry Potter series has spawned over a decade of publication of books and articles by experts in a range of disciplines (see, for example, Brown and Patterson 2010; Nel 2005; Blake 2002; Zipes 2001), trying to understand how an apparently ordinary set of stories became a phenomenon. Marketing is certainly a major element: of a wide range of possibilities, only Harry Potter has aced the market; and it is, if not unique, certainly rare, in enjoying massive investment by its publisher. But that awards and celebrity are not necessarily aligned is evidenced in outcomes of the 2000 Whitbread Prize, when Seamus Heaney's translation of *Beowulf* pipped Harry Potter: an example of cultural history plus cultural capital beating contemporary celebrity and commerce.

Arguably one of the issues in attracting enough attention to sell books, and thereby earn royalties, is the competition enforced by the vast number of publications produced around the world, year by year, by a vast number of publishers. PublishersGlobal's Directory reports that there are 909 publishers in the UK and 448 in Australia. Other reports suggest different figures for the sector: IPA/WIPO's record of 2,255 publishers in the UK greatly exceeds the PublishersGlobal account; and while Throsby calculated between 375 and 470 publishers in Australia, anecdotal evidence is of far

higher numbers (Throsby et al. 2018). But few of these publishers are in a position to take a risk on an unknown or a non-commercial author. Although the sector as a whole records very healthy income levels, it is a skewed field, with a few major corporations generating huge incomes because of their scale and global reach. And of those few corporations, very few take real risks, or in fact publish literary work (almost none publish poetry).

Publishers Weekly produce an annual report of the top publishers, and a quick analysis of the 2017 “Top 54 Publishers” makes this very clear (Milliot 2017). Of those 54, well over half are listed companies, with private corporations and multinationals comprising all but three of the remainder. Those three are privately owned, but only one of them publishes fiction. For all Top 54 Publishers, educational, academic and professional or technical books make up the majority of their output—only thirteen produce trade publications (literary and genre fiction; creative nonfiction; children’s books; poetry) and, of those thirteen, only two focus on literary fiction. Perhaps it is not surprising that most of the Top Publishers do not explicitly identify themselves *as* publishers. Of the list, only sixteen use the designation “publisher”, and they include in their lists commercial and literary fiction, nonfiction, education, professional/technical texts, children’s books, academic works, reprinted classics, “how-to” books, cooking, gardening and, in some cases, magazines. The remaining thirty-eight are corporate in nature, describing themselves as media companies or educational providers (or in similar terms), with only twenty-four of these even mentioning the word “publishing” in their public documents. And, after all, they are not publishers in the 19th or even twentieth century meaning of that title; they are corporations that include publishing among their income-generating activities, and their focus is economic: their revenue ranges from an eye-watering US\$5,617 million at the top, to US\$154 million at the bottom.

Beyond discontent

The point in rehearsing this is that art and money do not mix. As Australian Rebecca Clarke wrote, “One of the most serious problems faced by artists in this country is their low level of income. In no other sector of the economy do people invest so much time, energy and plain hard work for so little return” (1994, 4); and this is not news. Artists and writers have been making that point ever since art was “emancipated from ... the rule of money and interest” (Bourdieu 2010, 222), and William Blake takes it a step further, annotating his Laocoon print with the homily: “Where any view of

Money exists, Art cannot be carried on, but War only” (see Erdman 1981, 275).

This is not the end of the story. There are many thousands of underpaid writers, who may dream of hitting the big time, but nonetheless continue to pursue what Lahire (2010) terms “the double life of writers”: one life being creative activities, the other the income-earning world. Writers need to be read, of course, and given that few of us will ever be picked up by a major publisher, and receive six-figure advances and high incomes, the choice is only to surrender to discontent, or to find other avenues for publication. There are many of these. Inpress director Sophie O’Neill told the *Guardian*, in 2017, that small presses are rapidly increasing the number of publications and volume of book sales (Kean 2017), and all the national lists of publishers show a tiny handful who publish more than one hundred volumes a year, with the rest publishing between two and twenty. It is here that literary fiction, short fiction and poetry is likely to find its home, for those authors who seek a publisher. For those who prefer to go it alone, there is the DIY of self-publishing—a mode that is sometimes treated with disdain, but which has a long and often respectable history, counting among its adherents such luminaries as Laurence Sterne, Stephen Crane, Walt Whitman, Virginia Woolf and Derek Walcott. This approach is increasingly being adopted, according to Europe Economics (2016, 133), thanks largely to the contemporary affordances of layout software and e-publication.

Dworkin, Morris and Thurston (2012), authors of *Do or DIY*, dedicate their petite (self-published) booklet “to everyone who has advanced literature by self-publishing, and who, in doing so, has moved beyond the horizons of a myopic literary industry”. They give an overview of the illustrious history of self-publishing, focusing first on Laurence Sterne, who “borrowed money from a friend to finance the publication of his first novel, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*” (2012). Significantly, Sterne’s action enabled him to control every aspect of the book’s production—and its marketing; it is conceivable that the book might not have become such an overnight (and lasting) success if published more conventionally. Sterne’s determination proved to be more than self-promotion; it changed the prevailing concept of what a literary work might do, and how the public might engage with it.

In Virginia Woolf’s case, self-publishing led to her establishing the Hogarth Press—still in existence today as an imprint within Random House—so that her own means of production became an enterprise of complementary value. Others have taken a similar approach: writer-artists such as Ian Hamilton Finlay (Wild Hawthorn Press) and Johanna Drucker (Druckwerk), along with an extensive list of other writers (particularly

poets), have set up their own small presses. Their impulse is often beyond the need to self-publish. Ted Hughes, for example, was well-established, published by Faber, when he set up his own press with his sister Olwyn. His initial intention was to publish poetry “really beautifully—maybe very small, yes with woodcuts etc., in a small edition and a slightly larger edition, dirt cheap, in bound-proof form” (cited in Reid 2007, 297–98). He wanted poetry—not just his poetry—to be accessible to the masses. The first publications from Hughes’ press featured Sylvia Plath, Ruth Fainlight and Alan Sillitoe. He later published Thom Gunn and Seamus Heaney too (Skea 2015).

Hughes’s vision was unrealised; the Giveaway Press morphed into the Rainbow Press, whose production values made the books very expensive. (They were printed on Italian mould made paper and bound in calf leather.) These special editions might be viewed as capitalising on fame achieved through trade publication, but they represent, rather, an insistence that poetry is deserving of fine art treatment. Hughes, who was achieving remarkable success as poet, still lacked control of how Faber typeset his work. The Rainbow Press afforded Hughes the opportunity to see poetry reproduced with full aesthetic consideration. And, as Sagar (1998, 4) has commented, the Rainbow Press also functioned “as a tiring room or rehearsal space”. Others, including Heaney and Muldoon, have used small presses in a similar way.

It is interesting that Hughes should consider his work to have been poorly presented by Faber, a publishing house where poets themselves have occupied the editorial role, and published their own work in a way that elsewhere might be called vanity, or self-publishing. Perhaps this is not so much a case of “poachers turned gamekeepers”, but of gamekeepers helping themselves. But if the likes of T.S. Eliot and Craig Raine, or Michael Schmidt at Carcanet, are “guilty” of that, the principle of having a poet in charge of a poetry list (as is the case at Jonathan Cape, Bloodaxe, Picador and elsewhere) is widely endorsed. Sameer Rahim quotes Don Paterson stating that “it’s pretty much essential that [poetry editors] are also practitioners”, because “A non-poet can’t do a line-edit on a poem” (2012). It might be considered best practice, however, for poet-editors to publish their own work elsewhere, not least to benefit from another’s editorial eye.

Peer editing, like peer review, is one aspect of quality control. The DIY publishing ethos, as demonstrated by Sterne, Hughes and countless others, is not necessarily the enemy of quality—the contemporary demise of close editorial support within major publishing houses is perhaps a greater threat. But the ease with which an increasing number of authors publish their work on the Internet is another matter. The initial need to please no-one but

oneself may be a two-edged sword: it can allow the writer to hack through to fruitful new territory; it can also cause self-harm through the lack of adequate peer-critique. In most cases, this goes un-noticed; poorer work dies without trace. But occasionally a self-published work becomes a hit and subsequently fodder for which the mainstream is hungry. The poetry of Kate Tempest, Rupi Kaur and Hollie McNish has risen to extraordinary popularity through similar means, though not without attracting considerable criticism. Rebecca Watts questions how such poets are “lauded by the poetic establishment for their ‘honesty’ and ‘accessibility’—buzzwords for the open denigration of intellectual engagement and rejection of craft that characterises their work” (2018).

Beyond the page—and back

Kate Tempest is a poet for whom the printed word is a minor consideration, and who places far greater store in oral delivery, whether live or online. A million hits for a YouTube video does not itself pay the bills, but guarantees that the author will be in high demand for readings around the world. Similarly, other poets—sometimes without a book to their name—find work in schools or other community settings a viable source of income. The intersection of these various “literary” activities is increasingly definitive; indeed, Arts Council England has a “Literature” department to cater for them all.

Where the view once prevailed that Literature needed no public funding, being supported by a commercial publishing industry, there is now a much broader and democratised vision of what that the term “literature” might encompass. It was Arts Council funding that, for instance, enabled the Ikley Literature Festival to commission Simon Armitage, in 2010, to collaborate with Tom Lonsdale and Pip Hall on the Stanza Stones, vast rocks inscribed with poetry, situated on the Pennines. Many poets and other writers have been involved in public art commissions, which offer an entirely different publishing opportunity to the book. It is not only a matter of scale, and material; it is the fact that literature is encountered in an altogether different way. Walkers may come face to face with words that speak to them in an unexpected but contextually appropriate context, with moss and lichen adding to their expression. The Stanza Stones owe much to the work of Ian Hamilton Finlay (already mentioned as an important small press publisher) whose poetic practice incorporates sculpture and landscape design and is characterised by “the inscription of language ... onto real objects and thus into the world” (Carlson n.d.). As Carlson comments, in reference to Finlay’s garden, “Little Sparta”: “The garden historian John Dixon Hunt has

written that ‘the ideal gardener is a poet’. Finlay, in an astonishingly explicit way, is this ideal gardener, having made of his Little Sparta a sustained as well as highly sensuous poem” (Carlson n.d.). Finlay gained a number of major commissions (although not from the Scottish Arts Council with whom he had notorious battles, as he did with Strathclyde Council: was the barn in his garden an art gallery or, as Finlay claimed, a temple?). It is the creation of Little Sparta, however—his own private garden—which led to those commissions, and which perhaps, too, has provided an example to other free-spirited individuals. The small-scale, highly personal endeavour—something within the scope of an author’s own actions, unreliant on publisher or financier—may, when executed with compelling originality and integrity, open up pathways to rival a more conventional career.

Armitage and Finlay are major poets, highly successful, and it is understandable that public art commissions should go to established writers. But many other writers do get similar opportunities, and others take the initiative to disseminate their work in less monolithic ways—through film, light projections, temporary installations—and of course guerrilla activity that one might assume to be off the spectrum of income generation. At Canberra’s Noted festival, poets were paid for “bill poetries”, poems that were posted on walls around the city without official sanction. Indeed, the project’s publicity subverted Australian Government explicit policy regarding bill posters:

Bill poetries deteriorate in the weather, end up in the streets and pollute our waterways through the stormwater system. Bill poetries make areas look uncared for and attract other litter. Councils can spend a lot on cleaning up after illegally posted bills including flyers and advertising material—money which could be better spent on more useful programs. Bill poetries are advertisements. The advertisers have not taken responsibility for ensuring that they do not become litter. The community then pay for their clean up. There are no exemptions for bill poetries put up without consent. They are items that become litter. – Department of Environment and Conservation. (Noted Festival 2016)

More often, poems posted in public spaces are part of an authorised scheme, such as Poems on the [London] Underground, or Poetry in Action (on one hundred Canberra buses). Poems on beer mats have also recently been produced, by Otley’s OWF Press. The mathematics is persuasive in recognising these schemes as major players in poetry publishing. The number of commuters (or casual drinkers) encountering the poems is likely to far exceed those browsing poetry in a bookshop. And the variety of

venues for such adventurous, public dissemination is considerable. In 2008, Paul Munden, along with Andrew Motion, Oliver Comins and others, had poems relating to climate change commissioned and hung in the foyer of the World Meteorological Organisation in Geneva, where scientific specialists formed the readership. Such exposure is of real value not only to the individual poets but also to the recognition of poetry having plenty to say to the general (or specialist) public beyond poetry devotees. (The poems were published by the British Council in *Feeling the Pressure*, Munden 2008).

Sporting arenas provide another example of literary activity reaching beyond its traditional borders. In 2016, when Templar published *Battling Against the Odds* by Oliver Comins, they had already published some of his work, but the new chapbook “about the game of golf and the sport of life” presented a very different marketing opportunity. Featuring a sequence of eighteen holes, it was launched at the Fortwilliam Golf Club in Belfast, and Comins was appointed as National Golf Month Poet for 2017, “to help reverse the decline in the game and inspire people to take up the sport” (WriteOutLoud 2017). The chapbook itself is pocket-sized, in the manner of a golfing “yardage” book carried about on the golf course, and the final page is a scorecard. This asks readers to think differently about why and how they want to have poetry to hand. In 2004, Sarah Wardle was appointed poet-in-residence at Tottenham Hotspur Football Club, in North London. Wardle’s article about her residency, “Audere Est Facere” (2004), takes its title from the Club’s motto, “To dare is to do”, which might also speak for the DIY determination of the writer, gaining considerably more exposure through a football association than by conventional publishing. Wardle’s 2005 collection *Score*, published by Bloodaxe, features work from the residency, the title suggesting a winning result, but Wardle’s (and Spurs’) daring and doing was probably of more significance, the book a mere by-product that reached a smaller audience. Ian McMillan, poet in residence for Barnsley Football Club, was also the first poet to work with a British police force (Humberside), and as “mobile bard” for Northern Spirit Rail Network with a mission “to make poetry part of everyday life” (Guardian 2002). McMillan is one of the UK’s most famous poets, yet his published output is small (and in readings he will joke about the slim volume that is *The Very Best of Ian McMillan*).

Paul Munden engaged McMillan as poet in residence for the Moving Stories project based at the National Railway Museum in York, celebrating the 200th anniversary of the first steam-powered journey by rail. McMillan himself wrote nothing; his creative work was to get visitors writing poems of their own—and publishing them in the online carriages of poems on the

project website. Moving Stories gave members of the public scope to see their own stories and poems instantly published—alongside those by well-known writers whose work was used to prime the site. It also provided a themed context, travel, which gave purpose to an otherwise miscellaneous set of writings, and served to attract the casual reader to work by new writers. The project offered payment to the commissioned writers, although not to the public submissions. It was time-bound and, although archived, no longer appears online. It might therefore be classified as a temporary installation rather than a publication, which we tend to assume is for perpetuity. Perhaps, though, all art exists on that edge. Some, like poetry posters, or poetry and jazz in performance, might deliberately opt for the ephemeral, but writers rarely share the jazz musician's ethos—that the work should never be replayed the same way. For poets, publication—the dissemination of an exact copy—tends to matter.

Exhibition is another alternative publication mode, but there is a fundamental difference between a visual artist incorporating text within their work, and a collaborative undertaking between artist and writer, in which a literary element is being published, albeit unconventionally. When writers “exhibit” in this way, the possibility of financial gain is not always apparent or even possible, and projects in which writer and visual artist produce separate, complementary pieces may result in sales of the visual artefact but not of the written word. However, books may be published that represent both parties and this represents a special opportunity for self-publication. *Henderskelfe* (Munden and Heaton 1989) is an example, the imprint Talking Shop being set up for the specific purpose. Peter Heaton's photographs of the Castle Howard estate, together with Munden's poems, were exhibited at the Castle during the Spring of 1989, and the accompanying book was sold through the gift shop. With a high number of visitors viewing the exhibition at one of northern England's prime tourist attractions, a risk was taken on a print run far above that of most poetry books, with the sales (less the retailer's discount) going directly to the artists as publishers. The model encouraged UK poetry publisher Smith|Doorstop to publish a similar, collaborative work featuring poems and photographs of Shandy Hall (Munden 2011).

Learning to thrive

Creative Writing courses in higher education are sometimes criticised for developing writers with no real literary future. While it is true that few writing students will go on to make a living from their creative writing, they are nevertheless equipped to pursue the great variety of careers in which

writing and/or creative problem-solving is paramount. Even this, however, stresses what are described as transferable skills above what may ultimately be more important: the constant reshaping of the literary landscape that we inhabit. Interviewed as part of a survey of creative writing in UK universities, one program leader commented of his students:

They are directors of the medium, not a passive part. Every year it is the students themselves who raise money for an anthology and promote it—a punk DIY ethic: don't expect people to do things for you; that would be falling for an old lie. You have to re-invent readership every single year, and [our programme] is a mechanism for this. We don't sit back. (quoted in Munden 2013)³

That survey, published by the Higher Education Academy, was produced in partnership with the UK's National Association of Writers in Education (NAWE), an organisation that supports writers not only in their educational endeavours but in their overall career development. Supported by Arts Council England, NAWE commissioned a number of articles from a diverse range of writers and literary producers. These “How did I get here?” case studies (still accessible on the NAWE website) aimed to encourage new writers to think beyond the one-track career path that relies on a traditional publishing (or, indeed, teaching) model. In a recent article for the NAWE journal, “Writing and Teaching as a Business”, Stockton (2018, 53) looks at the business she co-manages with Danielle Lloyd. She analyses the proportionate income from four different activity strands: writing, teaching, mentoring and other miscellaneous activities, identifying that “about half the income came from teaching, about a third from writing, with mentoring and the other activities making up the rest”. Examining the first strand, Stockton comments:

Writing had five elements: magazine columns; feature writing; business writing; social media content and books. The book writing was further subdivided into fixed fee; mainstream published with royalties and self-published. Business writing had included writing content for advertisements and websites, whilst social media involved managing a Twitter account for a local magazine. It was interesting to note that the most significant earnings had come from successful self-publishing. (2018, 53)

Part of Stockton's particular purpose was to identify those areas of work which needed “culling” in order for the overall business to thrive, but her

³ All contributions to the survey, *Beyond the benchmark* (Munden 2011), from which this quotation comes, were anonymous.

depiction of a freelance writer's career is also a useful enterprise model in which publishing (especially self-publishing) plays an important part, but does not dominate. The portfolio of activity is effectively a micro-economy, with lucrative work underwriting the less commercial ventures, rather than distorting those ventures with a commercial imperative.

The concept of the literary entrepreneur, nurtured perhaps in university creative writing programs, but also by non-academic organisations such as Steve Dearden's Yorkshire-based Writing Squad, has enabled a new generation of writer-editors to emerge, with an even greater stake in their publishing businesses, although not necessarily in the capitalist mould. Publishers such as Dead Ink and The Cadaverine—whose very names speak of the death of publishing while also heralding a resurgence—offer a more social model, with crowd-funding in the mix, demanding that writers are readers too—an important aspect of escaping the “vanity” label. Jamie McGarry's Valley Press, for a while at least, demanded that all submissions were accompanied by evidence of an order for a Valley Press book, good practice turned to commercial effect. McGarry, who is currently Co-Chair of the Northern/Midlands branch of The Society of Young Publishers, works extensively in advising other small- and self-publishers. That is now an important part of his portfolio career—all derived from setting out to be a writer.

Valley Press has been fortunate in receiving substantial Arts Council England support and, in the UK, this and National Lottery Funding does make it possible for individuals, as well as organisations, to receive financial support for personal projects. It is some compensation for the much-criticised phase in which the Arts Council withdrew all support from the Poetry Book Society while lavishing it on Faber.

Similar patterns of entrepreneurship have emerged in Australia, particularly since the 1990s, as arts funders have suffered cutbacks and ministerial interference. The Copyright Agency Ltd, state-based arts funding bodies, and in some cases university presses, have provided some cushioning of the blows. Overall though, particularly for poetry publishing, the cost of production and dissemination has been carried by the authors themselves, through self-publishing and/or the payment of publishers' subventions, or by the small publishers, who work for “love” and not for financial return (see Shane Strange's chapter elsewhere in this volume).

Survival of the fittest

Writing in 2010, Dworkin, Morris and Thurston claimed that “‘non-traditional’ publishing increased by 169 per cent last year”. Since then, the

rise has been exponential, in line of course with the expansion of the Internet. But is the Internet the only game in town? And—just as singular works of art may be lost, and books may be burned—what happens when websites are not maintained; or when the Internet, one day, goes down? (As mentioned above, *Moving Stories* has already vanished from the web). Armitage's *Stanza Stones* may seem sufficiently monolithic to weather all storms, but their inscriptions will fade. Armitage, though, celebrates the weathering, saying “the full blast of the weather has calmed and healed the long lines of the *Rain* poem which, when they were first carved, seemed raw and exposed” (2013, 9). If necessary, they might one day be “restored”.

Seeking a radical alternative to mere longevity and focusing instead on ultimate survival, the literary/scientific experiments of Christian Bök have seriously (albeit playfully) questioned what publishing for perpetuity really means. Bök's Xenotext Project has attempted to “write, genetically encode and implant a poem into the DNA of a bacterium” (quoted in Tamburri 2013). The chosen bacterium, *Deinococcus radiodurans*, is seemingly indestructible, and therein lies Bök's ambition for his poem. “By putting my poem into this organism, I could conceivably be writing a book that might outlast the rest of civilization” (quoted in Tamburri 2013):

Once implanted, the poem is designed to act as a set of genetic instructions prompting the bacterium to create a protein, a chemical reaction that will produce yet another poem. ‘I've engineered an organism so that it not only becomes an archive for storing my poem but also becomes a machine for writing a poem in response’, explains Dr. Bök (Tamburri 2013).

Bök's experiments have benefitted from a \$100,000 grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, money that rewards Bök's host university rather than him personally as a writer. It may seem a far cry from the humble requirements of the average self-publishing poet, and yet, consider James Campbell's comment about Ian Hamilton Finlay, that “[his] aim is to plant poetry in the natural world” or McMillan's idea of making “poetry part of everyday life” (2003).

Conclusion

What all these examples share is a crusading sense that poetry should not be viewed as an esoteric irrelevance, but as far more fundamental to experience. Just as Kate Tempest and others use poetry to fight for a cause, Bök and McMillan—in their very different ways—are fighting for the cause of poetry itself.

Adrian Mitchell's (1964) comment that "Most people ignore most poetry because most poetry ignores most people" remains potent, but the examples given in this chapter challenge its claim. In their large or small ways, they demonstrate that poetry can play a valuable part in unexpected walks of life, gaining a substantial audience through innovative partnerships and presentation—and with a DIY ethic to the fore. True, not just anyone can go out and carve their poetry onto the Yorkshire landscape, although, as Tom Lonsdale (quoted in Armitage 2013, 30) points out:

It is extremely unlikely that Pip [Hall] would have been arrested if she had gone out and carved [Armitage's] poems unannounced: the incidence of names and other symbols scratched, painted and chalked onto slabs and crags in the hills by anonymous scribes bears witness to that. Nevertheless, the fact remains that doing so would have ranked as a criminal act, which neither we nor our clients and patrons could contemplate, funded as we were by the public purse, plus here was an opportunity to set a fine example of how art and culture can earn its rightful place in the countryside.

Setting multiple examples of value would seem key to gaining further support for what may currently be viewed as "alternative" models of publishing, but which are, potentially, the mainstream of the future. We need more evidence of how, why, and with what impact new models of literary "publishing" serve communities well. University research of this nature might conceivably lead the way.

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CHAPTER FIFTEEN

FROM GUILDS TO STATE CENSORS: EARLY MODERN STATIONERS, REGULATION, AND PRINTING PLAYS

LAURIE JOHNSON

There have been numerous attempts to explain the characteristic features of the Elizabethan publishing industry. Shakespeare scholars, in particular, have busied themselves with studies of the typical work practices of compositors and printers in an effort to isolate variations in the quarto and folio versions of his plays, ultimately with the goal of identifying compositor error versus authorial revision in the texts. Similarly, in recent years, there has been renewed interest in the economics of bookselling as scholars revisit questions concerning popularity (of playbooks in general, and of Shakespeare's plays in particular) and the extent to which Shakespeare wrote for an intended readership. In the search for typical publishing practices behind a presumably consistent Shakespearean text, scholars too often dismiss variation as a corruption of the text and divergence from normal practice. As Janet Clare (2012) has shown, the idea of authorship—whether in the sense cultivated in literary theory since the eighteenth century or in terms of the “author-function” that Michel Foucault described as operating in the service of an industrial complex of which book publishing forms a part—was unknown in Shakespeare's lifetime. Accordingly, decisions made in the printing and sale of playbooks rarely took account of the intentions of a playwright. By the same token, it is the premise of this chapter that the modern industrial complex had not yet shaped “publishing” as we know it, as the printing and selling of books were defined rather by guild culture. Three examples of supposedly “bad” publishers—Peter Short, Thomas Millington, and John Danter—will be considered in this chapter, to show that the publication of “corrupt” versions of Shakespeare plays need not be understood as poor publishing practice. It is possible to discern the impact of the new market for plays, giving rise to

approaches that were innovative and yet altogether consistent with the culture of the guild.

Andrew Weiss (2007) observes that by the mid-1590s, “the various functional aspects of the process of producing printed books had been long established” (*ibid.*, 195), and I commend Weiss’s chapter in the companion to the collected works of Thomas Middleton to any reader interested in the mechanics and economics of owning and operating an early modern printing press. It makes sense to want to focus on the hulking wood and metal screw presses in order to emphasise the material realities of the London book trade, dispelling old ideas that extant playbooks represent in any fashion direct access to a playwright’s intentions. Yet these giant machines might also stand between our fascinated materialist gaze and deeper understanding of an even older set of principles and practices organising the daily grind of those who owned and operated them. Johannes Gutenberg developed a screw press printing system in Germany around 1440 and William Caxton set up the first press in England in 1476 to move some of his commercial operations (initially established in Bruges) closer to the London market (see Blake 1976, 32–33). Long before the introduction of the modern printing press into England, a burgeoning industry in book production and selling was already well established. By 1357, a “mystery” (company) of limners and textwriters (illuminators and scribes) had already been established to provide producers of clerical documents certain privileges of trade that were previously reserved for writers of legal documents (Blayney 2013, 4–10). In addition to the producers of textual content, there was also a sharp increase in the numbers of bookbinders trading on Fleet Street toward the end of the fourteenth century. By the 1380s, the number of registered book craftsmen rose from six to sixteen, with this total being doubled again in the next decade, and in the early decades of the fifteenth century this number remained relatively steady between forty and fifty (Raven 2007, 12). In 1403, the limners, textwriters, scribes, binders, and booksellers applied for, and were granted, the right to form a single company. Although it did not possess the title at the time, this action is commonly considered as the foundation of the Stationers’ Company, a name the group adopted in 1441 to refer to all of the activities related to book production and sale (Blayney 2013, 10–19).

Formal recognition within the Corporation of London brought to the stationers the protections and responsibilities associated with the medieval guilds. Under a guild model, members acquired the collective authority to regulate working conditions, limit the numbers of people in each trade, oversee prices, and control labour supply through an apprenticeships system (Berlin 2008, 316). More than just a guarantee of economic security, as a

substantial body of scholarship has shown in recent years, the guild system also retained well into the early modern period a commitment to:

Collective acts of worship and conviviality ... aimed at maintaining social cohesion through a regulation of economic activity based on a shared sense of a moral economy of production (Berlin 2008, 323–24).

When Caxton introduced his press in 1476, he chose to situate it in Westminster, closer to London than Bruges, but a location probably chosen to enable him to operate outside of the immediate area of influence of the guild stationers—a member of the powerful Mercer's guild and bearing healthy capital from his European ventures, Caxton had no need to attach himself to the stationers' guild and was likely seeking to establish his business without their interference (Raven 2007, 17). The appearance of the printing press just outside London was not so much the moment that book production as we know it became established; rather, it was more like the threat from the new kid on the block to the established way of the guild. Initially, Caxton's press represented the deviation from the norm, opposing the social cohesion of the guild. The situation remained much the same during the next two decades, as several other foreign operators set up presses within London, but without gaining membership of the company.

The turning point may have been the appointment in 1504 of a Frenchman, William Faques, to the position vacated by Peter Actors, Stationer to the King, and his success in having the role rebadged as Printer to the King (Raven 2017, 33). Moreover, Faques was given the monopoly on printing royal statutes and proclamations. In one stroke, Henry VII had signalled the legitimacy of printing in London and indicated to the stationers that their turf was ready to be parcelled off to the newcomers if they were not prepared to rise to the new mode of production—and rise they did. During the first half of the sixteenth century, members of the company were so adept at transferring their production model to the new technologies that by 1557, the London Company of Stationers was formally ratified with a royal charter granting them exclusive rights over printing. To ensure these rights were secure, the Company was afforded the power to authorise the printing of any title by record in the Stationers' Register. The function of the register kept at Stationers' Hall was partly to ensure the efficient administration of the new monopoly, and partly to relieve both the City and the Crown of the burden of policing censorship of all printed material, but in many ways it also represented a material artefact of the old moral economy of the guild: registration of a title by a stationer ensured exclusive right to produce or sell that title, but it also carried with it an obligation to print the title expeditiously lest other stationers be denied an opportunity to

market it. In 1588, a company ordinance stipulated that any title “out of print” for more than six months became fair game for another stationer to “cause and get any such booke or copy” needed to “procede orderly with the ympression to ye finishing thereof” (Arber 1950, 2.43-44). It is on the basis of these guild requirements that the practices of Short, Millington, and Danter needed to evaluate, situating publication of “bad” versions of Shakespeare plays in an emerging market for play publications by stationers whose guild now operated as functionary to the authority of City and Crown.

Short was apprenticed as a grocer under John Kingston, gaining his freedom in 1585, but then entered the Stationers’ Company by redemption—meaning ostensibly that he paid his way in rather than serving an apprenticeship for the trade—in 1589, and in the next year he bought up the business of the deceased Henry Denham (Arber 1950, 2.705; Straznicki 2012, 284). Although he was new to the stationers’ guild, Short earned his freedom through the guild system, so he would have known that those who became members by redemption would need to work at garnering the trust of the established members of the guild. He spent his first three years as a stationer operating in partnership with Richard Yardley, evidently mastering the trade into which he had purchased entry, and from March 1592 he took on his first apprentice, James Ridley (Arber 1950, 2.179). He was not in any way profligate in using apprentice labour, only taking on a new one on average about once every three years—his next was in October 1596, then another in April 1599, then March 1602 (Arber 1950, 2.214, 235, 261). While no record of Ridley’s freedom remains, it is possible that he was still with Short when the decision was made to take on a second apprentice, Richard Stretton, toward the end of 1596. Certainly, Stretton stayed on with Short to gain his freedom in 1604 (Arber 1950, 2.738) so the apprenticeships of Edward Rathbone in 1599 and Richard Badger in 1602 were undertaken with at least one other apprentice in Short’s service. The decision to take on a second apprentice in 1596 was likely motivated by the intense workload Short had agreed to undertake the preceding year when he accepted the monumental job of completing the fifth edition of John Foxe’s *Book of Martyrs*.

On 7 April 1595, a consortium of ten booksellers entered into an arrangement to pay Short a fee of 17s 6d per book in remuneration for completing an edition that Denham had started prior to his death in 1590, with partial payment made in advance at a weekly rate of 10s for each press he committed to the job, compensating him for loss of other business while his shop focused on this task (Evenden and Freeman 2011, 323). Their choice to contract Short for this job was no doubt guided in part by the fact that he possessed Denham’s press and resources, so they were banking on

him having retained any progress Denham had made on the project or, at the very least, Denham's approved copy. At any time prior to this, any stationer could have invoked the terms of the 1588 ordinance and staked a claim on Short's copy, but this was no ordinary book. A volume of this magnitude, and with four editions and several abridgements also already having sold out in the three decades since its first edition was produced, required more capital than any bookseller could afford to risk so the job was allowed to lie dormant for half a decade. Once the ten booksellers had reached the point of agreeing to share the capital investment on such a large-scale venture, however, they still possessed the ability to have the copy and any surviving impressions seized and handed on to any printer they might have considered more trustworthy for the job. That they contracted Short speaks instead to how successful this newcomer printer had been in earning the trust of the guildsmen in the few years since gaining his entry to the guild by redemption.

After his partnership with Yardley ended, Short went into business on his own as a printer who initially had no pretensions to being a bookseller and competing for market share. His business model worked by aligning himself with a bookseller for each title—only in a few instances is he listed in the Register as the sole stationer responsible for a title, but the vast majority of the titles he printed were registered by another stationer and he was simply contracted to produce the work. Those titles for which he is listed individually were, upon completion, invariably sold by another stationer, as is the case with his registration of *The Taming of a Shrew* (the relationship of which to Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew* remains a matter of ongoing debate) on 2 May 1594 (Arber 1950, 2.648): the resulting publication was listed on its title page as being for sale by Cuthbert Burby. Operating under this business model, Short was evidently quick to establish his reputation as a reliable and efficient printer: in 1594, his name appears as the printer on no fewer than sixteen new titles and three reprints, which is more than he printed with Richard Yardley in three years as partners; and in the first half of 1595, he had added another twelve titles to his production list (EEBO—Early English Books Online; English Short-Title Catalogue). His name does not appear on another work until the release of the first volume of Foxe's book in June 1596. For a little over twelve months, then, Short's shop seems to have been busied exclusively with the production of the work for which he had been contracted by the consortium of booksellers.

Following the release of the first volume, Short began to take on new jobs again, even while the second volume was still in production—it was released in 1597. Five other titles appeared in late 1596 with his name on them, and then sixteen more in 1597, one of which was the second volume

of Foxe. My reading of this activity is that Short decided to free up one of his presses in late 1596 and, in anticipation of a return to the pre-Foxe demand on his services while still completing the lucrative job for the bookseller consortium, he decided to expand his trained labour force by taking on a new apprentice. In the case of Short's early career as a stationer, then, we encounter an example of somebody who bought his way into the trade but, having trained in a guild, understood the guild way of working and sought to establish his business within these parameters. He cultivated a specialisation, quickly gained high demand for his services, but did not expand his own business too quickly for the tastes of his fellow guildsmen. Instead, when the opportunity arose to become involved in a major collaborative enterprise, he dedicated the full resources of his business to the task and only resumed operations when the progress of the job allowed. His ten partners did not begrudge him the chance to resume relatively normal operations once the first volume hit their stalls.

Short's reputation is tainted in the eyes of Shakespeare scholars by virtue of his role in printing the book of *The true tragedie of Richard Duke of York and the death of good King Henrie the Sixt, with the whole contention betweene the two houses Lancaster and Yorke* (STC 21006) for Millington in 1595, before he had taken on production of Foxe's book. *True Tragedy* is considered to be one of the "bad" versions of Shakespeare's plays—in this case, an unauthorised publication of a reported version of Shakespeare's *3 Henry VI* (Martin 2002, 8). Yet Randall Martin has shown that *True Tragedy* has the hallmarks of being *both* an early version of the play that Shakespeare later revised *and* a reconstruction of that earlier version by players who performed it, suggesting it is "a product of both authorial and non-authorial agencies" (Martin 2002, 8). Such potential for recuperating some authorial agency behind the text might not be enough to recuperate Short's reputation among Shakespeare scholars simply by virtue of his association in this venture with the more notorious Millington, who is widely characterised as a poor publisher because he was responsible for not just one but three "bad" versions of Shakespeare plays: the other two were printed by Thomas Creede, six years apart. *The First part of the Contention betwixt the two famous Houses of Yorke and Lancaster* (a version of *2 Henry VI*) was registered on 12 March 1594 (Arber 1950, 2.646) and printed in the same year (STC 26099), and *The Chronicle History of Henry the Fift* (STC 22291), an abridgement of *Henry V*, was printed without registration in 1600. In addition to these plays, Millington and Nicholas Ling registered *The Jew of Malta* by Christopher Marlowe on 17 May 1594 (Arber 1950, 2.650), but the play remained unpublished until 1633. His activity seems to have been sporadic, producing only fourteen titles in a career spanning

twelve years, with four of these issued twice. Add to this three fines for breaches of company regulations, and Millington's reputation seems well-founded. Yet I contend that each of the acts counted by modern scholarship against his character are altogether consonant with his guild training, even if we regard his career as rather unspectacular and perhaps unsuccessful.

Millington was apprenticed to Henry Carre in 1583 (Arber 1950, 2.123) and became a freeman of the company on 8 November 1591 (Arber 1950, 2.710). He learned his trade in a busy commercial workplace, with Carre financing and selling twenty books and as many as thirty-four ballads—twenty of these ballads were registered to Carre in a single entry, on 15 August 1586 (Arber 1950, 2.451). This mammoth entry was the first listing of a ballad for Carre since Millington started his apprenticeship in August 1583, but in the five preceding years he registered no fewer than thirty-nine new ballads, so it is fair to assume that he was still publishing and reissuing copies for sale of these ballads up until the large entry of new ballads in 1586. With up to seventy-three ballads available at Carre's shop during Millington's apprenticeship, the commercial focus of Millington's early career as a freeman becomes clearer. After several years gaining the necessary capital to establish his own business, Millington hit the ground running in 1594, registering seven ballads and four books (two of which are the plays previously mentioned) in his first twelve months of operation, as well as being the designated seller on Danter's 1594 release of *Titus Andronicus*. Despite the efforts of generations of Shakespeare scholars to find fault in his part in the *Contention*, the only sign of poor form in Millington's activity at this time is the failure to release Marlowe's play.

On the day before Millington and Ling registered *Jew*, Danter had registered a ballad "*intituled the murtherous life and terrible death of the riche Jew of Malta*" (Arber 1950, 2.649), providing a context in which the play's registration can be read. As Kirk Melnikoff has pointed out, Millington developed a regular strategy of capitalising on current happenings by "using a spurt of ballad publication to prepare the ground for more substantial, more costly pamphlets on the same topic" (2013, 141). To this we can add that he initially attempted this strategy in partnership: On 29 August 1594, the group of Millington, Thomas Gosson, and Thomas Dawson registered both "*A true discourse*" and a ballad dealing with the murder of Robert Beeche and Thomas Winchester by Thomas Merry (Arber 1950, 2.658); then, on 7 September, Gosson and Millington registered a ballad of "*the pitifull lamentacon of RACHEL MERRYE*" and Gosson alone registered the ballad of "*the lamentable ende of THOMAS MERRYE and RACHELL his sister*"; and, finally, on 9 September Millington alone paid to register the "*said lamentacon of THOMAS MERRYE & c*". (Arber 1950, 2.659).

While Edward Arber adds a note here that this last entry refers to one of the prior entries—“This ballad had apparently been printed off in the two days since the previous entry” (2.659)—it is not clear which of the two prior items refers and it is just as likely that Millington was indeed registering a third new ballad in the sequence. Certainly, the warden accepted three registration fees, one for each item, as recorded in the right margin of each entry. Danter even seems to have tried to cash in on the popularity of the murder and subsequent trial, registering on 3 September a ballad “*describing the wofull murder of ROBERT BEECHE &c*” (Arber 1950, 2.659).

If Millington was familiar with the strategy of publishing ballads in combination with a more profitable book, he had not attempted to create a ballad-play combination along these lines. On the other hand, Danter was quite familiar with the use of plays in this strategy—it is even likely that he was the first to recognise the oncoming boom in play publication in 1594 (see Farmer and Lesser 2005) and recognised the potential for marrying a popular pre-boom form (the ballads) to plays on the same topic. On 6 February 1594, when he registered *Titus*, Danter also registered “*the ballad thereof*”, meaning that it was a ballad based directly on the play (Arber, 1950, 2.644). Later the same year, on 6 November, Danter registered the ballad of “*TAMBURLAYNE the greate &c*”, which seems to all intents and purposes based on another of Marlowe’s most famous plays (Arber 1950, 2.664). He had not of course been responsible for the previous editions of that play since Richard Jones, having registered the title on 14 August 1590, released it in that year and again in 1592 (Arber 1950, 2.558). The play was not reissued in 1594, so Danter must have timed the release of his ballad to capitalise on the play’s revival at the Rose from August 1594, where it remained in the repertory of the Lord Admiral’s Men throughout the following year (Foakes 2002, 23–33). It might be wondered, then, if when Danter registered the ballad of the “*riche Jew of Malta*” he planned for it to be sold by Millington, giving the junior stationer a play-ballad combination.

Danter is widely regarded as one of the worst offenders in the annals of Shakespeare piracy, but this is largely due to his part in the publication of the unregistered “bad” quarto of *Romeo and Juliet* in 1597 (Kastan 2002, 36). Yet apart from this blemish, Marta Straznicky notes that “his business practices on the whole appear to be typical” (2012, 247). As David Scott Kastan explains, in his eight year career, Danter published “79 editions of 67 separate titles, mainly popular forms like pamphlets, ballads, and plays”, suggesting that the “odour” attached to the name of Danter “may not be the fetid scent of fraudulence or incompetence but only the homely smell of workmanlike activity” (2002, 36). My suggestion here is that he may actually be rather atypical, but in the positive sense of being an innovator

rather than in the sense of being criminally aberrant. He had completed an atypical apprenticeship, since his first master, John Day, died while he had a year to serve, and the master to whom he was assigned, Robert Robinson, disgraced himself sufficiently to attract a fine of five shillings and was “Committed to ward” (imprisoned) for “Disobedience and other Disorder” (Arber 1950, 2.860) during that last year of apprenticeship. Little wonder if Danter had turned out to be a bad stationer. I suspect that he rather learned how to skirt at the edges of guild rules, and the boom in play production provided him with the opportunity to try out some new tricks of the trade. The publication of *Romeo and Juliet* came toward the end of his career, at a time when his stocks were in decline, as Kastan explains: “In 1595, he was involved with nineteen publications; in 1596 with eleven; in 1597 ... only three; the following year just one” (2002, 37). Kastan thus suggests his failure to register the play should be seen “less as an effort to put forth a degraded version of one of Shakespeare’s plays than as one to put food on the table for his family” (2002, 37). Even this “bad” play could also have been imagined as a ballad-play combination, as Edward White had registered and published “*A newe ballad of ROMEO and JULIETT*” in late 1596 (Arber 1950, 3.68).

Conversely, Millington seems to have followed his master’s example in publishing ballads for the most part, and merely aligning himself with like-minded stationers regarding the publication of ballads along with other topical books. This does not explain why *Jew* was left unpublished. In *Shakespeare’s Lost Playhouse*, I showed that Marlowe’s play dropped sharply in popularity following the execution of the “murderous Jew” Roderigo Lopez, so Ling and his relatively inexperienced partner could have calculated the empty seats at the Newington Butts and Rose playhouses as auguries that the book would not be worth further capital or labour (Johnson 2018, 150–53). Under such circumstances, a decision not to print a registered title appears both political and economically sound, with the call having likely been made by the more senior partner. It should be noted that Carre did not publish plays—the first boom in play printing coming at the end of his career—so his apprentice had no experience with drama prior to agreeing to sell Danter’s *Titus*. Millington followed shortly afterwards with *Contention*, for which he assumed the rights and responsibilities of registration. When he published *True Tragedy* in 1595 with Short, he did not register the title, but this is easily explained by a belief that the registration of “The First Part” covered the second title, and this is supported by the fact that he was not punished for publishing this title unregistered (Martin 2001, 103). He was to publish no further plays until 1600, when he released second quartos of both Henry VI plays and

published his abridged Henry V play, with Creed again involved in the printing.

While he was not the innovator Danter was, Millington's decision to reissue the two earlier Henry plays at the time of his release of the Henry V play has been described by Tara Lyons as capitalising on an earlier hunch that publishing plays about historical events in sequence would increase marketability: "in 1600, Millington had for sale in his bookshop three quartos that featured cross-textual characters and plots during a span of English history from approximately 1415 to 1471" (2012, 186). The idea spread, with Andrew Wise opting to produce the serialised cluster we know as the *Henriad* from 1597 to 1602, and eventually the compilers of the first folio organising the History plays around those that dealt with English history regardless of which of these plays were previously recognised by that label. What drama, and History plays in particular, gave to Millington and others was this capacity for serialisation that generates market demand—one "First Part" book, for example, signalling to buyers that another would follow—without the massive capital investment that was required of a multi-volume work like Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*. Rather than producing a "bad" quarto, Millington was contributing to the development of a publication strategy that would prove to be remarkably profitable for other stationers and, later, publishers into the future.

Millington's experience of publishing plays allows us an opportunity to revisit the issue of the fines he received during his career as a stationer. The first fine was issued in August 1596 for publishing a ballad "against orders", which William St. Clair has astutely observed is evidence of a potential crackdown by Stationers' Hall against the spate of ballads that were being sold popularly as digests of plays registered to other stationers (2004, 696). There is no evidence in the Register to suggest that Millington engaged in this practice at all, but it is possible he began to realise the potential to shift popular new stock quickly if it was off the official record. In any case, he appears to have been the single scapegoat for a far more widespread practice—one that necessitated "orders" to be issued, after all, although no record of any such order survives. This fact alone also tells us something important about how the guild operated: not all orders were written down in the Register or the records of the Stationers' Court. It is likely that such orders were made known through the meetings at the Hall on the guild's quarter days, attendance at which was compulsory for all members.

Millington's second fine was issued on 7 February 1597 for printing a ballad "to the wronge of Thomas Crede" and in penalty for not having gained license for the title (Arber 1950, 826). It is not clear from the Register or from the publication histories of either Creed or Millington what this

ballad could have been, but it seems unlikely to have been part of any play-ballad combination. What is clear is that the wardens did not consider this to be critical to Millington's standing since the record states that once he had paid the fine and license, he was welcome to "enjoye the ballad". For his third fine, Millington was penalised on 7 March of the same year for publishing a book that had not yet been licensed. Since he published the one book in 1597, the offending title must have been the unregistered *Devoreux, or Vertues Teares* (STC 19793), a piece of sycophantic propaganda for the Earl of Essex (Steggle 2013, 52–53). Perhaps owing to the stature of the Earl and his influence with the monarch, the small fine was again considered sufficient and no details of the title were entered into the record. If Millington had wronged Creed too badly or disgraced himself too much with the wardens, it is unlikely that Creed would have returned to printing the plays for him in 1600, nor would Millington have been allowed to take on an apprentice soon afterwards, as he did on 12 June 1598 (Arber 1950, 226).

In each of the three cases considered in this chapter, then, a "bad" publisher can be seen instead to have been involved in the publication of a "bad" version of a Shakespeare play for reasons that are entirely consistent with their guild membership. Short's part in the production of *True Tragedy* matches his normal preference for being the printer of a work for which another stationer or even a consortium of stationers made the primary investment. His preference for this approach may well have been shaped by his experience of needing to gain the trust of other guild members after he gained his membership by redemption. His partner in *True Tragedy*, Millington, made this investment as a stage in the development of a strategy of serialisation that would eventually prove to be enormously beneficial for the industry as a whole. Millington's training had primarily been in ballad production under the guidance of Carre, but he developed in concert with a group of other stationers the strategy of combining ballad publication with the production of larger works on the same material, inspired perhaps by Danter's strategy of combining *Titus* (for which Millington was the seller) with the "ballad thereof" in early 1594. Millington was learning from others, adapting strategies that would be beneficial to himself and others, even though his own stocks failed in the end to be lucrative.

Danter, conversely, was both innovative and productive for much of his career, succeeding in spite of a disrupted and atypical apprenticeship. Yet he was no rogue, and the one blemish in his record—the "bad" *Romeo and Juliet*—came late in a career that had been productively spent closely monitoring the activities of his fellow stationers, forming viable partnerships, and getting on with the business for which he had been training

for eight years. Even then, as I noted, the work was typical of his well-established strategy of following the publication of a ballad (in this case, one by White) with a play publication.

While guilds regulated the practices of their members, their structures of control were not designed to lead to standardisation of practices. This was especially true of the stationers, whose members in the Elizabethan period became dominated by the masters of the new print technology (supplanting the scribes and textwriters). The guild needed to allow members to develop new forms of partnership between the producers of books and other print materials and those who would sell these materials to a public that was both increasingly literate and more desiring than ever of news, scandal, and entertainment. The Stationers' Company was given significant regulatory authority over printing and sale of books and related materials, but its function as a tool of State censorship was carried out, in practice, through the use of such authority according to principles inherited from the earlier guilds from which it had sprung. By studying the supposedly "bad" printers and booksellers, the ongoing impact of these principles on the decisions of guild members becomes clearer, particularly when the spotlight is shone on the new market demand for printed versions of popular plays, and the innovations attempted by these stationers in response to this market.

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CHAPTER SIXTEEN

THE WORLD IS CHANGING, AGAIN: PEER/EXPERT REVIEW, LEGITIMACY AND ACADEMIC SELF-PUBLISHING

KERRIE LE LIEVRE

In 2004, I completed my PhD at the University of Adelaide with a thesis titled, “The World is Changing: Ethics and Genre Development in Three Twentieth-Century High Fantasies”. Both of my thesis examiners recommended that I revise my thesis for publication, on the grounds that it made a significant contribution to the study of genre fantasy through its identification of the “orchestrator” figure who guides the Secondary World through an ethical transition but cannot remain in it after doing so. One specifically suggested publication in monograph format due to the high degree of interconnection between chapters. Due to a combination of personal and institutional factors, including time away from academia and declining opportunities for publishing monographs (James 2011; Steele 2008), I was never able to publish the thesis as a monograph by traditional means. However, between 2004 and 2016, when I began a Master of Arts in Editing and Publishing at the University of Southern Queensland, a new option became available: electronic self-publishing, also called independent publishing.

In the practice-led (Baker 2011; Candy 2006; Nimkulrat 2007) research project that formed part of my master’s degree, I therefore aimed to explore whether independent electronic publication could be an alternative option for the publication of scholarly monographs. My project addressed the question of whether independent expert review could be sufficient to replace the “value-added” (Haynes 2010) element of peer review provided by traditional academic publishers and make independent e-publishing a legitimate option for Australian monograph authors—both those within academia and those who have left it since producing their PhDs. To do this, I developed a model of independent expert review based on the changing peer review practices of the current academic publishing industry. To test

the model, I revised my original thesis into a book manuscript—specifically a version of the traditional academic monograph adapted to the more linear, less structurally complex preferences of e-book readers. I organised an independent, blind expert review of the monograph with the aid of my thesis supervisor and published the reviewed manuscript as an e-book via Amazon’s Kindle Direct publishing platform. The results suggest that independent peer or expert review can be a viable option, but there are other factors that need to be considered.

The decline of the monograph

A monograph is defined as a substantial piece of scholarly research published in book form, usually between fifty thousand and one hundred thousand words in length (Haynes 2010; Mason 2009; Pinter 2012), that is distinguished by a specialist approach to a comparatively narrow topic (Haynes 2010; Stieg Dalton 2006; Williams et al. 2009). It may be based on a PhD thesis (Haynes 2010; Jackson and Lenstrup 2009; Mason 2009), but whether it is or not, it is usually the work of a single author, aligning it strongly with the humanities tradition of individualistic work (Haynes 2010; Williams et al. 2009; Wolfe Thompson 2002).

In the field of scholarly communication, the monograph plays a key role, which is to “disseminate the results of scholarship” to the author’s peers, “thereby contributing to both present knowledge and future scholarship” (Stieg Dalton 2006, 251). In contrast to journal articles, which focus on “critical dialogue” (Wolfe Thompson 2002), monographs—particularly in the humanities—engage substantially with primary sources and focus on synthesis, interpretation and the development of new ideas and conclusions (Halpenny 2003; James 2011; Lindholm-Romantschuk and Warner 1996; Wolfe Thompson 2002). They provide depth of coverage and allow for the sustained development of a substantial argument (James 2011; Stieg Dalton 2006). They are also particularly associated with academic disciplines in which “there is an expectation of thorough exploration of context and relationships and a lack of interest in speed” (Stieg Dalton 2006, 252) and texts can reach their peak impact anywhere between five and fifteen years after their date of publication (Lindholm-Romantschuk and Warner 1996; Selfe and Hawisher 2012; Wolfe Thompson 2002). This usually means humanities disciplines. Indeed, monographs are considered “the cornerstone” of research in the humanities (Stieg Dalton 2006, 253), and bibliometric analysis since the 1990s has shown that they tend to be cited much more frequently than journal articles (Lindholm-Romantschuk and Warner 1996; Wolfe-Thompson 2002). However, since the 1980s at least, academics—

particularly in the northern hemisphere, where publication of a monograph is required for tenure and promotion (Cross 2011; Derricourt 2012; James 2011)—have been lamenting the “death of the monograph” as a form of scholarly communication (Haynes 2010; James 2011; Wolfe Thompson 2002).

This is predominantly due to ongoing changes in the publishing market and library priorities: in order to access critical new research (particularly in the STEM disciplines) as quickly as possible, libraries have diverted more and more funding to purchasing increasingly expensive electronic journal access (Gould 2010; Steele 2008; Wolfe Thompson 2002); meaning that they have been able to afford fewer monographs in either print or, more recently, electronic form. In order to survive this drop in sales, academic presses—previously the standard publishers of scholarly monographs—have moved toward publishing more textbooks and trade books (James 2011; Steele 2008; Stieg Dalton 2006; Williams et al. 2009; Wolfe Thompson 2002) and accepting proportionally fewer monographs for publication. The print runs of these monographs have grown smaller (from two to three thousand to four to five hundred: (James 2011; Stieg Dalton 2006; Thatcher 2015)), and their prices have increased. Because of this, the culture of individual academics and students purchasing monographs in their area of interest has also decreased (Mason 2009; Steele 2008; Stieg Dalton 2006), exacerbating the sales decline (Pinter 2012). Although monographs are still being published (Haynes 2010) and used in a central role in research, circumstances have conspired to lessen their centrality to the field of academic publishing.

In Australia, this situation has been further affected by a constellation of other factors. There is no survival imperative such as tenure or standing to promote monograph publication amongst early career researchers, and the local culture of university presses centred on monograph publishing has always been less developed than those in the UK and US (James 2011). Likewise, Australian authors do not always have equal access to the international scholarly publishing culture, which may assume their manuscripts to be lacking in broader interest (Steele 2008). At the same time, funding of universities and departments has been tied to impact measures such as the now-defunct Research Quality Framework (RQF) and Excellence in Research for Australia evaluation framework (ERA), which rewarded the STEM-based pattern of journal publication over the humanities-based pattern of book publication (James 2011). Australian scholars may therefore still use monographs in their work, but their scholarly publication patterns have become dominated by what Stephen James calls “the tyranny of the journal article” (2011, 185). The need to

publish or perish, fast, combined with federal funding models that favour journal article publication over book publication, has impelled researchers in the humanities to prioritise writing and publishing comparatively fast-turnaround journal articles (Steele 2008), and forego attempting to publish in book form, especially at the beginning of their careers.

The problem with this is that, as previously noted, in the humanities journal articles prioritise critical discussion and responses to new scholarship, rather than the development of new knowledge itself. In the six thousand to ten thousand words of a journal article, it is next to impossible to engage extensively with primary sources, synthesise them with the field, and develop a substantial argument (James 2011). Australia's scholarly output in the humanities therefore risks becoming unbalanced—more reactive than it is creative. While this may have brought in funding, as Jennifer Wolfe Thompson points out, “Articles ... are not substitutes for monographs” (2002, 133), and a healthy scholarly culture needs the monographs that engage deeply with primary sources, synthesise ideas and develop new knowledge as well as the journal articles that respond to them with theory and analysis in order to be complete.

Many scholars have acknowledged that electronic publication, and in particular the e-book, offer a means of reviving monograph publication in general (Derricourt 2012; Gould 2010; Haynes 2010; Pinter 2012; Williams et al. 2009). However, this is almost always conceived of within existing structures—established academic presses, university e-presses (James 2011; Haynes 2010; Pinter 2012; Steele 2008; Williams et al. 2009) or electronic collections managed by university libraries (Cross 2011; Derricourt 2012; James 2011). To some extent, this has happened. For example, Palgrave Macmillan's “Pivot” series, established in 2012, publishes short monographs of between twenty-five thousand and fifty thousand words in e-format, many (if not most) of which are based on PhD theses (Palgrave Macmillan n.d.b). However, the price point for most of these e-monographs remains very high (US\$54.99 for a complete e-book or US\$29.95 for a single chapter), potentially placing them outside a student's or sessional academic's budget. And unlike in the fields of trade fiction and non-fiction, where it quickly became both a viable and a popular option, self-publishing or publishing independently at a lower price point has not become a respectable option for academics even in recent years. While the reasons for this are rarely addressed, it seems to be due at least in part to the assumed absence of a central element of academic publishing: the value added by the publisher in the form of peer or expert review (Haynes 2010; Jackson and Lenstrup 2009; Stieg Dalton 2006).

Peer review and academic legitimacy

Peer review is the practice of written scholarship being assessed by one or more “accredited experts” who advise on whether it is worthy of publication on the grounds of quality, accuracy and contribution to the field (Bauerlein 2013). Like the journal system it is most closely associated with (Derricourt 2012), it has its origins in the field of scientific publication. Most scholars trace its English-language origins to 1655, when Henry Oldenburg of the Royal Society of London established the first scientific journal to provide researchers with an independent, third-party venue for research dissemination which would ensure that they received credit for their findings and publications (Gould 2010; Howard 2012; Selfe and Hawisher 2012). Over time, however, as the prestige conveyed by peer-reviewed publication increased, the practice spread to all areas of scholarly publishing—humanities as well as sciences, and book publishing as well as journals—though in these areas it is both less studied and less standardised in format (Fitzpatrick 2009; Giménez-Toledo et al. 2014). Books and articles that have been through a process of peer review are considered to be more authoritative than those that have not (Howard 2012). In other words, they are legitimate.

In the field of scholarly book publishing, peer or expert review generally follows a straightforward process. The author, as part of the submission process, identifies several expert scholars within their field who are appropriate reviewers. The editor selects reviewers from this list and sends them a completed manuscript for assessment (Bauerlein 2013; Mason 2009; Stieg Dalton 2006). These experts then review the manuscript based on “a mixture of empirical, logical, field-specific, and stylistic figures” (Bauerlein 2013, 141). For a book manuscript in a humanities discipline to pass peer review and be recommended for publication,

Every statement of fact must be accurate, the thesis must be distinct, the arguments cogent (with relevant and sufficient evidence on hand), and the interpretations plausible. Knowledge of the field should be obvious and sharply-wielded, and the prose must be readable (Bauerlein 2013, 141).

Because even academic presses are commercial operations, the reviewers must also assess the manuscript’s suitability for the specific publisher, its potential to sell, and its competition (Mason 2009). However, as in the journal system, the final decision to publish remains with the editor (Derricourt 2012; Ford 2013; Mason 2009).

While this seems straightforward, in practice peer review is acknowledged to be a flawed process in many ways, from its tendency to reflect conscious

or unconscious bias, to its potential for homophily and damaging negativity (Gould 2010; Graue 2006; Lamont 2009). Over time, scholars and publishers have attempted to address these by modifying the system, by creating the practice of “double-blind” peer review to protect authors from bias (Derricourt 2012; Howard 2012; Selfe and Hawisher 2012), developing various systems of “open” or “peer-to-peer” review to democratise the process and acknowledge the impossibility of achieving genuine objectivity (Fitzpatrick 2009; Ford 2013; Gould 2010), and relying on the expert judgment of the journal or book editor (Ford 2013). Then there is the question of what actually constitutes acceptable peer review in any given case, as Graham Howard’s discussion of the “*Social Text Affair*” shows (2012): in practice, an “acceptable” degree of peer review can prove to be something of a shifting goalpost. Finally, there is the fact that both blind and open peer review are part of a system that relies on large amounts of mostly unpaid academic labour (Bedenbaugh 2014; Cross 2011; James 2011; Selfe and Hawisher 2012), opening a separate debate about ethical participation in the system.

Nevertheless, peer review remains a central—even defining—element of academic publishing, for one simple reason. Its role in scholarly communication is generally described as one of quality control (Bedenbaugh 2014; Howard 2012; Weiser 2012), which encompasses both gatekeeping—the exclusion of inadequate work from the field of scholarly publishing (Bagchi et al. 2017; Fitzpatrick 2009; Graue 2006; Lipscombe 2016; Selfe and Hawisher 2012)—and teaching, or the development of new work to meet the standards required of scholarly communication (Bagchi et al. 2017; Bauerlein 2013; Gould 2010; Graue 2006; Selfe and Hawisher 2012). However, its true value in the scholarly publishing field is more basic than even quality control. It is what Graham Howard describes as “boundary work” (2012, 333): the practice by which scholars demarcate what constitutes legitimate scholarly communication from everything else in print (Bedenbaugh 2014).

Peer review is therefore a key element of the legitimacy (Haynes 2010; Selfe and Hawisher 2012) bestowed by the traditional scholarly publication process—as is shown by the knee-jerk resistance to electronic publishing based on its assumed absence (Fitzpatrick 2009; Jackson and Lenstrup 2009). Any attempt to open the issue of independent scholarly publishing in the era of e-books must, at least while academics’ concepts of “intellectual authority” remain in their current form (Fitzpatrick 2009, 125), address the issue of arranging, and communicating, a text’s participation in the process of peer review.

A new model of independent peer review

To create a viable model for peer or expert review of independently-published scholarly monographs, I therefore identified and combined existing models drawn from both traditional scholarly book publishing, and recent developments in the area of e-journal and small-press publishing that render peer review visible as part of the publishing process.

The first model was traditional “blind” peer review, which occurs when there is no direct contact between the author and peer reviewer during the peer review process, and the author does not learn the names of their reviewers until after their revisions are completed, if at all. Blind peer review is widely accepted as the standard peer review process in academic book publishing—so widely, in fact, that it is rarely discussed or even acknowledged to have been completed. This raises a significant issue, which is that while peer review is certainly, as Anthony Haynes points out, a value-added component of the traditional publishing process (2010), it is also a hidden one. Academic publishers do not generally identify their list of potential peer reviewers on their websites or in their catalogues. The front matter of an academic book does not include the names of the scholars who reviewed it. Academics rarely advertise their status as peer reviewers, and if they do it tends to be after the fact, for books that have been successfully published. Much like editing, peer review is assumed to have happened at some point, but in practice it is invisible.

In contrast, in the rare discussions of independent academic publishing (electronic or otherwise), peer review has automatically been assumed to be absent—and its absence has been assumed to be visible in the inherently inferior quality of an independently-published work (Fitzpatrick 2009; Jackson and Lenstrup 2009). In order to assert the academic legitimacy of an independently-published manuscript, it would therefore be necessary to invert the standards of the traditional academic publishing, and not only arrange for peer review to occur but also make the peer-reviewed status of the manuscript visible. This would help to differentiate the book from all the other, non-scholarly independently-published books around it, and shift it inside the boundary of scholarly work.

Models for visible peer/expert review are beginning to become available. Established academic presses have strong enough reputations as legitimate publishers to allow their peer review processes to remain all but invisible—for example, Palgrave Macmillan provides a brief statement about peer review on its website (n.d.a) and Brepols acknowledges peer review on its Author Information page (n.d.) but does not discuss the process itself, while Melbourne University Press (n.d.) only mentions peer

review in passing in blurbs for its MUP Academic imprint. However, some newer e-journals and less prestigious small presses have begun to make their peer review processes more visible. This is at least partially in response to the implementation of performance measures in Australian universities that require academics to provide not only proof of publication but proof of peer review in order to receive credit for their publications. *TEXT: Journal of Writing and Writing Courses*, for example, not only announces its status as a peer reviewed journal on its website via the description “An international electronic refereed journal published twice yearly” (n.d.), but also maintains lists of current and former peer reviewers and the papers they have reviewed, and keeps copies of all reviews on file so that contributors and administrators can request copies as needed to fulfil their reporting obligations to their universities. Other journals have implemented similar systems.

Likewise, many smaller academic book publishers have made their peer review processes more visible. In this new format, as in the traditional one, the author of a manuscript compiles a list of potential peer reviewers for their work, and either the publisher (for blind review) or the author themselves contacts the chosen reviewers to organise a review of the manuscript. When the reviewers return their reports, they indicate whether they are willing to be identified to the author. The author edits the manuscript and responds to any issues raised in the reviewers’ reports. After this stage is complete, the publisher discloses the identities of blind reviewers (if permitted), and the reviewers’ contributions are then directly acknowledged in the book’s front matter. For example, the book, *Recovering History Through Fact and Fiction*, published by the small press Cambridge Scholars Publishing, includes the following statement of anonymous thanks on its Acknowledgments page:

This collection is the sum total of the work of the contributors, and we thank them for their commitment to this project. Sincere thanks, too, to the peer reviewers of the collection, whose astute and generous comments improved this volume (Baker, Brien, and Sulway 2017, vii).

If the reviewers have given the editor permission to pass on their names to the book’s author and readers, the statement of acknowledgment may include their names, academic titles and institutional affiliations. To support the legitimacy provided by mention of a completed peer review process and the naming of the reviewers, authors may also, with permission, draw on the reviewers’ reports when promoting their books. This can include excerpting positive quotes from the reviewers’ reports to include on the

book's cover (for print productions), add to its blurb (for print and e-publishing), and use on websites and promotional materials.

This shift in peer review procedure has not yet been discussed in the literature. However, it is clear that under the pressure of circumstances, there has been a movement toward both making peer review visible, and making visible peer review acceptable, in modern academic publishing. Moreover, the existence of this model of peer review and its acceptance by Australian and international universities—even if, so far, this acceptance has mostly been for administrative purposes—suggests that its legitimacy may be transferrable to independently published works.

The aim of my Master's project was to create a peer review process for an independently-published scholarly monograph that would both provide as much legitimacy as possible for my manuscript and be replicable by other authors. Therefore, I combined elements of the traditional peer review process with the emerging “visible” peer review method created by small Australian presses to create a model with as much legitimacy as possible. Specifically, I opted for blind peer review, as this is still widely regarded as one of the least biased (and therefore, most preferable) forms of peer review available (Derricourt 2012; Howard 2012; Selfe and Hawisher 2012). In addition to this, I decided to use the term “expert review” to describe the process rather than “peer review”, for two reasons: first, the change of terminology emphasised the legitimacy of the reviewers, and therefore of the review process, and secondly, it acknowledged the fact that as I am no longer working as an academic, I cannot accurately call my reviewers my peers.

In the trial of this independent expert review process, my Master's supervisor, Dr Dallas Baker, fulfilled an intermediary role analogous to that of a book editor in a small academic press. His role was to identify three potential expert reviewers based on his knowledge of the field, secure their co-operation in the project and ask them to clarify whether they would be willing to be identified as the manuscript's reviewers, both to me and to the reader. He would also assess the manuscript to determine whether it was of an acceptable standard to submit for peer review, receive the final version and forward it to the reviewers, receive the reviewers' reports, de-identify them and passed them on to me, and complete a final check of the edited manuscript before its publication. Finally, he would identify the expert reviewers and enabled me to acknowledge their work in the book's front matter and promotional material.

While this model was streamlined and functional in theory, when it was put into practice several unforeseen complications arose. Initially, three potential expert reviewers were approached and informed of the project's

focus and aims. However, while all three initially agreed to participate, one eventually chose not to provide a review, citing a fundamental disagreement with the concept of self-published academic work (Baker, D, pers. comm., May 8, 2018)—a comment that echoes the ambivalence toward the concept expressed in the literature (Cross 2011; Jackson and Lenstrup 2009). Later, another reviewer had to withdraw from the project for personal reasons. As the monograph was guaranteed further review by two external experts during the master’s dissertation examination process, one “editorial” review and one “expert” review prior to publication were deemed sufficient, and the project was able to proceed. However, for a publication taking place outside of the Master’s degree structure, a minimum of two and maximum of three expert reviewers would be required to give the author effective feedback.

After receiving the editorial and expert reviews, I made two significant changes to the manuscript in response to their feedback. First, I shortened the title of the monograph from “The World is Changing: Narrative Paradigm and Environmental Ethics in the High Fantasies of J.R.R. Tolkien, Ursula K. Le Guin and Patricia A. McKillip” to “The World is Changing: Narrative Paradigm and Environmental Ethics in Three High Fantasies”. This was done to make the subject of the book easier for potential e-book readers browsing the Kindle Store to process, without sacrificing scholarly specificity. Second, I combined and streamlined the first two sub-sections of the Introduction in order to eliminate excessive background material (Halpenny 2003). Once the manuscript was fully edited and ready for publication, I added a statement to the Acknowledgements page thanking the expert reviewer for their insights, following the model of small press publications discussed earlier. To assert as much legitimacy as possible, this included not only the reviewer’s name but also their academic title and affiliation, with their permission:

Finally, I must thank Dr Nike Sulway of the University of Southern Queensland, the expert reviewer of this manuscript, both for the feedback that improved the final version and for her support for the concept of an independently-published scholarly monograph.

The manuscript was then returned to Dr Baker for final checks. It was published in Amazon’s Kindle Store on June 18, 2018. Ongoing monitoring of sales rates (via Kindle Direct Publishing’s reports function) and usage rates (via Google Scholar and other metrics) will help to determine whether the inclusion of visible peer review has enabled it to be accepted as a valid piece of scholarship.

Conclusion

Despite the unexpected problems that arose, this new model of independent peer review proved to be workable in the context of a Master's degree and should be useable for other authors outside of that context also. As it is based on existing, familiar processes, it both gives independently-published authors access to the higher-status form of blind expert review for their manuscripts, and enables duplication. An author still working in academia, for example, could enlist a colleague to take on the editorial role of identifying expert reviewers and serving as an intermediary for the purposes of compiling the reviewer's brief, de-identifying and forwarding the manuscript, and filtering feedback. As author who has left academia but still wants to publish could draw on former PhD supervisors, peers or colleagues for the same purpose. Authors in either situation with the necessary knowledge of the field who are willing to forego blind expert review could also take on the editorial role themselves, identifying and contacting potential reviewers directly. Finally, the fact that the model is built on existing processes that are increasingly being both used by Australian academics and publishers, and accepted as legitimate for administrative purposes by Australian universities, suggests that it is robust enough to transfer to independently-published monographs as well.

So, by drawing on the newly-developed forms of "visible" peer review created by online journals and small academic publishers in response to the administrative needs of Australian academics and universities, it is possible to create a model for independent expert review that offers authors both within and outside academia the same access to academic legitimacy as the traditional publishing process does. However, for independent e-publishing to become accepted as a fully legitimate method of publishing scholarly work, it will take more than just access to the connections and resources necessary to set up a peer review process. It also needs to be accepted by the established academics who may be requested to provide expert review of manuscripts, and by scholars and libraries, who must be willing to purchase, borrow, and cite independently-published monographs in exactly the same way as they would traditionally-published monographs. Without both reviewers to provide monographs with the stamp of academic legitimacy, and end users of those monographs to signal their acceptance of it, the system will not work.

It also raises an additional issue. Like the traditional academic publishing industry, the model of independent peer review developed in this project relies to a large extent on voluntary, unpaid academic labour. Unlike PhD evaluations, academics are not paid to conduct peer reviews, and while

it can be argued that this lack of pay ensures that reviews are objective and avoids any appearance of reviewer bias, it is nevertheless problematic in terms of independent peer review, because unless academics have the ability to record independent peer review work as “service to the discipline” or “service to the (publishing) industry” in the same way as they do traditional peer review, it will not be recognised as part of their academic workload. For independent expert review to avoid the ethical issues created by reliance on unpaid academic labour, a means of enabling reviewers to register their work on independently-published manuscripts within the existing workload models of Australian universities will need to be developed.

Finally, although some academics are willing to experiment with the form and encourage independent academic e-publication—even without any remuneration or recognition beyond the Acknowledgments page of an e-book—others may be less so. To make independent academic publishing a viable option, authors of academic manuscripts will therefore need not only access to the legitimising stamp of peer/expert review, but also a cultural shift in academia itself around the issue of self-publication on a par with that which has already taken place in trade fiction and non-fiction publishing. As for how to create this shift, however; perhaps it will only be necessary for independent academic authors to follow, once again, the precedent set by authors of trade fiction and non-fiction, and continue to self-publish high quality, expertly-reviewed work until the rest of the field catches up.

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CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

WELCOME TO THE REAL WORLD: PUBLISHING PREPAREDNESS AND QUALITY CONTROL IN *THE MATRIX* FANDOM

SHAYLA OLSEN

What is ‘real’? How do you define ‘real’?

The Matrix, 1999, dir. The Wachowskis

The demand for expanded storytelling from our favourite televisual fictions is very real. Publishers continue to commission and produce media tie-in novels to keep up with fan appetites, and these continue to make bestseller lists, but for a large community of fans, this is neither fast enough nor immersive enough. Long disregarded as the cultish playground of the incompetent wannabe writer, fanfiction—the writing of stories and poetry based on other, usually copyrighted, stories, created and shared in online communities called fandoms (Coppa 2017, 2–14)—is now an everyday term to many media consumers and an increasingly acceptable hobby for writers, even cited by some as beneficial to their writing practice (Black 2008; Harris 2015; Hellekson and Busse 2014; Van Parys 2011).

Recently, the monetisation of fan works and contentious bestsellers crossing into mainstream publishing have shifted public perception and highlighted the online community of fandom as a viable and thriving alternative publishing platform from which serious authors are emerging, skilled and publishing-ready (Brennan and Large 2014; Coppa 2017; Flegel and Roth 2016; Hellekson and Busse 2014). Fanfiction is a dynamic, complex thing, different in numerous ways from the traditional writing and publishing process, an amateur’s game, the roles of writer, editor and publisher indistinguishable from one another and meaningless in isolation (Brennan and Large, 2014; Clarke 2009). What is it, specifically, that is preparing and sharpening these authors? What is benefiting them, and what

challenges do they overcome to grow both as writers and as future book professionals?

As a writer; an educator; a publishing professional, and a fandom participant, these questions played quietly at the back of my mind for many years before the opportunity to research them came up. After more than a decade of reading fanfiction and dabbling in fan communities online, it seemed obvious to me that fanfiction was fostering some incredible writers. By my own experience and observation, I knew that those writers improved over the years that I followed them, becoming more skilled with language but also savvier in their choices outside of the fiction—how they worded summaries to attract readers, how they responded to feedback, where they posted their work and how they utilised multiple online social platforms for maintaining their fandom personas (Black 2008). As I grew as a writer, developed as an educator and embarked into my career in publishing, I came to realise that the fanfiction model wasn't just hiding great authors—it was teaching them.

Through surveys and interviews with five long-term fanfiction writers across several active fandoms, my interdisciplinary research investigates the ways in which the highly social online publishing culture of writing with a set of established story elements (characters, histories, settings, story arcs) improves authorial skill (Olsen 2017). The research takes a qualitative approach informed by the Vygotskian social constructivist model (Vygotsky 1982), whereby learning is constructed through experience; understandings are built together through interaction and sharing of knowledge, and creative output is the result of social processes both in and outside of the self (Moran, John-Steiner and Sawyer 2003). In young children, we see this taking place most evidently during engaging, collaborative play enriched by the gentle guidance of adults.

However, play does not have to end with childhood. Vygotsky conceived of creativity as a point of tension between personality and cultural experience, and between one's internal interpretation of these and their external reaction (creative output) (Moran, John-Steiner and Sawyer 2003). The story universes established in beloved works of fiction being a component of social and cultural property (Coppa 2017; Jenkins and Deuze 2008; Willis 2016). The constructivist perspective reflects the value of participants' unique personal experiences and perceptions in their learning, their creative and professional journeys as writers, and recognises the significant social and cultural potential of collaborative online publishing environments (Kumar 2014).

Put more simply, this chapter looks at online fanfiction publishing as highly effective “play” for prospective authors. Though Flegel and Roth

(2014) argue that play as a term in fanfiction is a reductive label intended to diminish the creative value of the practice (which is typically a woman's activity) in comparison to professional original writing by signalling it as the binary opposite to "work" (presumably, man's work). Play throughout this chapter has been treated with only utter respect for its vital place in the learning process.

Follow the white rabbit ...

The Matrix, 1999, dir. The Wachowskis

Like many modern media fans, at some point mid-high-school, I discovered fanfiction quite by accident (Coppa 2017; Larsen and Zubernis 2013). A school friend and I had started penning a story about ourselves trapped in the Matrix in the back of our German class exercise books. When I did an Internet search for other such stories on a whim, I found much more than I bargained for—a whole underground society of strangers-turned-friends-and-sometimes-frenemies, writing not just about *The Matrix* but about everything cool I had ever seen, read, heard of or not heard of (Coppa 2017; Larsen and Zubernis, 2013). On my very first perusal (I now know this is called lurking) of a very heated public deconstruction of someone else's "fic" by a group of online somebodies, I quickly encountered new vocabulary that curbed some unfortunate early writing practices of mine: Mary-Sue, self-insert fic, OOC (Bacon-Smith 2014; Coppa 2017; Riley 2015). It was apparent that this community was cut-throat. It would not tolerate incompetence or deviation outside the rules established by longer-term participants, conveniently not written anywhere for newcomers (Bacon-Smith 2014; Larsen and Zubernis 2013). If I wanted to play, I would need to bring my A-game. Fan works began educating me about the world of publishing straightaway.

Moving away from less favourable labels like "derivative works" that imply a watered-down, lesser form, fan works, and transmedia texts are broad-brush terms in the discipline of fan and cultural studies, pertaining to any artistic or literary response by fans to an original text (Black 2008; Brennan and Large 2014; Coppa 2006). This can include creative expressions in the forms of video, sketches, graphic art, handmade craft, song, as well as written forms such as works of fiction and poetry of varying lengths written by unpaid fans without the consent of the copyright owners, posted to the Internet either in a blog, forum or an archive (Brennan and Large 2014; Hellekson and Busse 2014; Riley 2015). It is with these works of fiction, known as fanfiction or fanfic or sometimes even just fic, that this research is concerned, and to most closely mirror my own experience, I

selected long-term writers of lengthy, novel-style fanfic. These writers produce alternate endings, versions of events where a new character or romantic pairing redirects the original story, alternative universe stories where beloved characters exist in our world or exist in an abstract world where they may have wings or unusual powers, and original side-quests, sequels and prequels to the existing story, all upward of fifty thousand words and cohesive in the style of a traditional novella or novel.

I can only show you the door. You're the one that has to walk through it.

The Matrix, 1999, dir. The Wachowskis

I should mention now that I am hugely biased against all things digital and technological, including the Internet, and that without the promise and fun of fanfiction, I may have failed to interact with it in my younger years even as minimally as what I did. A childhood diet of quality science fiction ensured a healthy mistrust of such technology, sustaining a view of the digital as “not real” as well as “not good”. Films like *The Matrix* do little to challenge the latter, but my interaction with the fan community that developed around this film and flourished in online environments forced me to reconsider the former.

What is “real”? How do we define “real”? If the online world supports the genuine connection and relationship-building of likeminded people, provides a platform for authentic learning and skill refinement and archives interactive co-constructed cultural artefacts of true value to community members, does this setting not qualify as real in some sense (Black 2008)? The question, of course, had already been asked and answered many times over by those to tread this ground before me, but the realisation of this for myself was fundamental in my shift to understanding fandom. This was a “place”, and I could go there and be among my people and be part of something I could not get to by leaving my front door in suburbia (Coppa 2017).

Accessibility is a major drawcard and foundation to the success of online fandom—fans do not need to live on the west coast of the United States or in the middle of London to engage with the main hub of a community built around a beloved intellectual property (Hellekson and Busse 2006). First on clunky online arenas such as forums, and later on more sophisticated, purpose-built platforms such as social media and archives, fellow fans have congregated on the Internet to form actual communities to which participants come to belong (Black 2008; Coppa 2006).

Community is central to fandom, and therefore to fanfiction as a practice (Coppa 2006). Histories of fandom trace it back to science fiction fans

opening lines of communication through the letters-to-the-editor section of magazines and their subsequent movement to their own fanzines and conventions, essentially shifting the locus of love for the story universe from the individual to the collective (Coppa 2006; Van Parys 2011). Today, this collective is a bustling multi-site online community, a culture complete with rituals, a dynamic lexicon, and societal expectations and lore (Coppa 2017; Riley 2015). A world without money, participants create fanworks and contribute it to the community, and in return, the community shares it, builds upon it and comments upon it—the gift economy (Black 2008; Coppa 2017; Flegel and Roth 2014; Jenkins and Deuze 2008; Riley 2015).

This chapter examines most closely the community culture, and the interconnectedness and reach made possible by the online nature of the modern fan world. Legality aside, validity aside—these are arguments for different academics and different papers—it is the combination of these two distinctive elements of the fanfiction writing and publishing platform that set it apart from any more traditional publishing model, and also, that distinguishes fanfiction as a locale of learning for future authors (Black 2008).

As attracted as I was by the concept of downloading full sets of knowledge and skills into the human brain via a direct channel as per the Wachowskis' fictional premise, an education degree and some teaching experience has since destroyed that fantasy. I now know that this is not reflective of how learning takes place. Working with young children and paying closer attention to my own adult learning journeys, particularly in writing, I'm aware now of the constructed, social nature of learning, and how we build it, together, bit by bit (Vygotsky 1982).

Each of us having at some point been confronted by a complex new process such as cooking or riding a bike will appreciate the effectiveness of having the overall process broken down into its component parts and being guided through with decreasing levels of assistance. In education, this is known as the scaffolding method, and is attributed to the works of social constructivist educational psychology theorist Lev Vygotsky (1982) and his theorised zone of proximal development (ZPD). This learning theory, upon which much of modern educational practice is based and which is connected further with Vygotsky's investigations into adult creativity (1936, cited in Moran, John-Steiner and Sawyer 2003), builds on the works of other social constructivists such as Jean Piaget (1951). The theory suggests the image of the learner as an isolated individual in a world of potential knowing, whose current knowledge, skills and understandings (actual development) can be enhanced by interaction with those knowledges and understandings that lie only slightly beyond her or his current ones (zone of proximal development).

To begin with, the learner can only manage in this zone in collaboration with more capable others or through scaffolded tasks intended to “bridge” between what is known and what is desired to be known (Verenikina 2003; Vygotsky 1982). In cooking this might be the recipe on the packet sauce; in riding a bike; it’s the training wheels or dad holding the back of the seat. Complete acquisition of a skill or field of study is impossible to the first-time learner. However, through stepped, steady interaction with component skills or topics just outside of what has already been grasped (the ZPD), especially in a social setting where more learned peers may coax or enable this stepping out of the comfort zone into new territory, optimal learning takes place and is soon internalised, widening the current knowledge base and bringing the learner closer to the goal skill (Vygotsky 1982). Eventually, as actual development expands, proficiency falls into the zone of proximal development, and becomes attainable (Vygotsky 1982).

Fanfiction is easily argued as a scaffolded learning task, not dissimilar to how writing would be taught in an educative setting (Black 2008; Lewis 2004, cited in Thomas 2006; Magnifico, Curwood and Lammers 2015). In a study conducted on the importance of scaffolding in the teaching of writing to English as a Second Language (ESL) students, Pilu discusses how the scaffolded instruction reduced student errors, progressed their grammatical skills, improved their grasp of genre and enhanced the overall cohesion of ideas connected throughout texts (2015). In other words, the reduced expectation on students to perform at total proficiency from the outset enabled higher levels of learning, and ultimately, progressed the students closer to proficiency. This is likewise reflected in the responses to my research, in which “learning” was the most reported theme of all in any category, appearing either explicitly or implicitly on all responses, repeatedly. Respondents identified numerous ways in which writing fanfiction provided learning opportunities to improve their technique through scaffolded engagements.

The Internet has brought immense change and interconnectedness to our way of life over the past two decades, though its creeping integration, as well as the integration of other technologies it has enabled in its wake, into mainstream formal education has been markedly delayed (Black 2008). Though far from an advocate for the digitisation of education myself, the significant opportunity the online environment provides for scaffolding and connecting amateur writers aiming for publication of future original fiction cannot be overstated (Black 2008; Coppa 2017). Numerous authorial skills and literate practices are fostered in this dynamic setting when fan writers set out to play together with the toys of shared story worlds. Each of the five participants in this research, kept anonymous due more to their desire to

maintain their social standing in fandom than any concern of the ongoing question of legality of their work, were selected for their lengthy fanfiction careers, spanning ten years or more, one sharing that she'd been writing fanfiction since her twenties and now has an adult daughter who writes fanfiction too. Short response questions including "What has been your experience with online fanfiction?" and "Please respond to the statement: "writing in other people's universes has made me a better writer" were posed as part of a short online survey. Participants also confirmed that they were at least eighteen years of age. Often active across multiple fandoms and rich with experience in this domain, responses from these fan writers quickly began to confirm what I had perceived from my own years in fandom—that the writers developed in skill through their time and engagement with this practice (Black 2008; Coppa 2017).

Welcome to the desert of the real.

The Matrix, 1999, dir. The Wachowskis

Writing is hard work, as one participant in the study noted:

You need to have engaging characters that readers can relate to, or that they'll at least want to read about. You need an interesting world big enough for those characters to play in. You need an antagonist who is a threat to the characters, and preferably to the world at large ... And there are so many other smaller things that can go into worldbuilding—politics, ecology, culture, societal taboos, prejudice, food, clothes—that examining them all would take up more space than I have.

While of course it did not surprise me, I was still impressed by the level of professionalism and professional knowledge demonstrated by the fanfiction writers I interviewed for this research. One participant's lengthy, articulate response to a question of benefits to writing fanfic included the above statement, showing the awareness of storytelling structures and elements that she has developed in her years of experience in fandom, an expertise she did not have beforehand and can now apply to original fiction, if she chooses to. Ongoing engagement with quality and popular original fiction, for instance J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* or in my case the Wachowskis' *The Matrix*, provides developing writers with all the building blocks required to reconstruct a good story. In their absence, the original authors act as unknowing mentors, hand-holding their admiring fan writers as they pick their way through new territory at their own pace on their way to proficiency (Vygotsky 1982). For me, following the Wachowskis down

their rabbit hole by repeatedly watching their film, critically analysing it with other fans online, reading multiple interpretations of it and playing around with different elements of it in fiction, I learned about power and authority in character relationships, the use of transitions to convey scene and setting changes, and how to communicate feeling and power with minimal dialogue—skills I now use with awareness and proficiency in my own original writing.

But it isn't only writing skill that gets a boost from engagement with online fanfiction publishing. Three participants in this research identified fanfiction writing as requiring “work” or “effort” at different times, particularly when discussing goals such as appeasing their readership or developing a satisfying or sophisticated story arc. This indicates a prioritisation and commitment to producing quality writing, and an appreciation of the labour that is involved, even in this relatively low-stakes environment. The public, very social element of fanfiction ensures that there is always an expectant audience—some parts demanding and cut-throat like those flammers I first encountered, many parts supportive and warm—wanting the best out of the writers they follow and support, quick to provide feedback alerting the writer to their hits and misses (Black 2008; Larsen and Zubernis 2014). This shouldering of responsibility as a creator to their audience reflects the pressures on original authors to continue to produce content for publication, allowing developing writers to experience this and learn how to manage it in a setting where their finances and publishing contracts are not affected.

Discipline was another theme raised by two respondents in the initial survey, something they claim to have developed despite the general perception of fanfiction as purposeless, valueless play (Coppa 2017; Flegel and Roth 2014). Two writers made mention of the challenge of balancing reader needs with writer/narrative needs—taking reader feedback with a grain of salt, so to speak—an ability to discern between the useful and the unhelpful that can come only with experience. One cited her own agency as a writer when evaluating feedback, which she can “choose to take on board or ignore”, suggestive of a developed sense of awareness of what kinds of criticism are assistive. The focus to see a story to its conclusion, of course, is another manifestation of discipline. The expectations of the fandom community ensure that there is usually a demand for more content, encouraging the writer to keep writing in order to produce more while also steering the direction of the story and its quality with feedback (Black 2008; Coppa 2017). This meeting point of feedback, encouragement and frequent practise mimics the classroom learning environment (Hattie and Gan 2011).

For another participant, writing fanfiction meant; “most importantly, I was writing more or less constantly”.

Fanfiction is both a writing and social practice, and social standing is an important aspect of any community system. In regards to maintaining readership and community favour, one participant pointed out:

Just like with original fiction, the writing has to be solid: characters, descriptions, dialog, plot. Maybe it even has to be better than the original since there are dozens/hundreds/thousands of people comparing one fic against another. In many fandoms, there are just a couple of ‘good’ fics to choose from, but in the more popular ones, there are THOUSANDS [sic].

This competitive element provides readers with a smorgasbord of diverse options to pick from, but also offers writers a plethora of public examples, both of writing of varying quality with which to compare their own work and of reader responses to others’ writing (Coppa 2017; Couzijn 1999). With the original author unknowingly having led the developing writer out of their comfort zone into their zone of proximal development (Vygotsky 1982), the writer is now surrounded by other learners at differing stages of proficiency and differing levels of commitment. There are other hands to take, other footsteps to follow, more voices to discourage non-tolerated tropes or writing choices, and the writer is free to explore it all without needing to depart from the story world they love and engage with willingly (Black 2008; Coppa 2018).

You think that’s air you’re breathing now?

The Matrix, 1999, dir. The Wachowskis

Evolving out of this story-centric community has come the fanfiction model of instant voluntary peer feedback, whereby readers of a fanfiction can comment upon a story to share their thoughts as they read (Black 2008; Littleton 2011; Riley 2015). This can occur after a work is already completed and available to read in full online, but more commonly occurs at the close of each chapter while the work is still in progress, the author writing and making available one chapter at a time (Black 2008). As mentioned above, my first encounter with fanfiction feedback came in the form of a whole website dedicated to the shredding and humiliation of poorly written *Matrix* fic—I soon learned that this is called flaming, although what I had stumbled across was a pretty extreme brand of what normally manifests as singular mean comments on a story—so it came as a surprise when I delved deeper and came across the other, more common

forms of fanfic feedback. Support. Encouragement. Expressions of admiration and gratitude. Constructive criticism. Suggestions for improvement. The good stuff I now know, as an educator of young developing writers, builds confidence and understanding in the writing process and fosters meaningful skill-building (Black 2008; Hattie 2013; Littleton 2011).

Four of the five fanfiction respondents to this research identified the swift feedback they received from fellow fans as one of the aspects of writing in established universes that has improved their writing overall. As Littleton (2011) discusses, in fandom, community members are a writer's peers, and peer feedback has been shown both in fanfiction and in formal classroom settings to have a great impact on the teaching and learning of writing (Black 2008; Hattie 2013). In fact, in his meta-analysis of over 900 studies conducted on effective teaching practices, John Hattie (2013) identified feedback as one of the top ten influencers on learning, with a potential impact roughly twice the effect of the average teaching practice. This study was of course intended for the education sector and for classroom implementation, but this impact size cannot be ignored here when discussing the opportunities for a leisure activity to improve or refine writing skill.

As Hattie and Gan (2011) warn, feedback is simultaneously one of the highest impact learning strategies but also one of the most varied in its effectiveness. Littleton's (2011) application of Simmons' (2003) categories of writing feedback to fanfiction confirmed that a lot of fandom commentary is of little use, taking the form of global praise ("This is amazing! You're a fantastic writer!") or personal reaction ("I really hope Phoebe and Paige forgive each other soon and find Piper. Please, the suspense is killing me!"). Magnifico, Curwood and Lammers' 2015 ethnographic study of interactions between fanfic writers and their reviewers found the same. These personal reactions and pleas for particular outcomes can present a challenge for writers in established universes. "There's a strange push for stories with romance to have explicit scenes", writes an anonymous respondent. "Most of the time they do not add to the story". While this writer goes on to add that she feels pressure to include scenes of a sexual nature even when it goes against the intended direction of the story, and receives private messages querying why she hasn't, her mindfulness of the lack of value in this sort of feedback demonstrates that she is developing her self-awareness as a writer. As mentioned earlier, the ability to distinguish useful feedback from that which is not, and the discipline to select and apply feedback without compromising the story being written, is an unexpected learning opportunity for fanfiction writers. The formal publication process involves numerous stages of review from and between every member of the

production chain—author, editor, publisher, proofreader, graphic designer, reader, critic—making the ability to formulate and assess effective critical commentary an essential, if often overlooked, skill for success in publishing.

While the practice of creative writing, whether original or transformative, online or handwritten, inherently implies a degree of creativity being fostered and sustained, there are ways in which the online environment itself may serve to support creative thinking (Black 2008). An example given by one long-term writer refers to some of the restrictions of the publishing platform, namely the chapter-by-chapter content release that enables the feedback model, which then has an impact on narrative development:

Because you've already posted the earlier chapters. You can't go back and change them easily, so you have to write your way around problems that you discover later.

Readers following along with the story have already internalised and accepted the plot thus far, and some sites that host fanfiction have minimal or clunky editing functions, making it challenging and not always viable to retroactively alter existing content. Decisions made and plot directions taken in previous chapters often have to be simply worn and worked with, prompting writers to think longer and more deeply about where to go next, lacking in the relative luxury of opting to go back and change elements that are no longer convenient as a writer may do with a work kept as a private document. Black (2008) argues these creative and innovative ways of thinking encouraged by the practice of online fanfiction continue to be sought-after professional skills and will be into the future. In a community of peers invested in the collaborative building of narrative meaning and willing to provide on-the-go feedback (Riley 2015), writers engaging in online fandom are honing publishing skills that others engaging only in private writing practice may not.

Excepting the friendly neighbourhood flammers who were my initiation to fandom, readers are a desirable (and necessary) element of any publishing model. Writers write, the publishing platform makes the written text available, and readers step up at the last stage to do their part and consume. But in fanfiction communities, the process is less linear than in the traditional producer-consumer model (Magnifico, Curwood and Lammers 2015). The readers exist *first*. Masses of people are already connecting over a communal love for a film, television show or book, generating an audience that eagerly awaits the contribution of the fanfic writer to the community's greater shared wealth of cultural capital (Black 2008; Coppa 2017; Harris 2015; Hellekson and Busse 2014). When the fic is produced, and published

online, readers immediately and actively engage with it, commenting, sharing, recommending, enjoying (Black 2008; Riley 2015). Few first-time authors have access to this kind of ready-made audience when they start producing original fiction. And the numbers of ready-made readers are impressive. “By publishing fanfiction on popular sites, I have access to a diverse readership who already have the background to the characters / show [sic]”, one writer notes. “Thousands of people have read my fanfiction works, when I had previously written poetry and published on a respected site, readership was limited to a handful”.

A repeated theme among survey respondents was mention of the shared story context, and how this communal construction and understanding of characters and their universe eased the writing process (Hellekson and Busse 2006). Once a work of fanfiction is posted to the Internet with invitation for comment, it shifts from being the work of a single author to being a meaningful creative work in progress to each individual member of its audience (Coppa 2017; Hellekson and Busse 2006, cited in Riley 2015). Unpopular divergent portrayals of characters can set a member offside with the group in some less tolerant fandoms (Larsen and Zubernis 2014). Inconsistent or “late” posting of updates can be treated as an invitation to anonymously “shame” writers. An audience already to a story world they are invested in, genre fiction readers tend to know what they like, and what they do not, especially about characters they love. Writers express frustration with the demanding or expectant nature of a “vocal minority” of readers. The fickleness of fandom makes this a difficult maze to navigate, though learning how to do so is arguably an interpersonal professional skill of benefit to any developing writer working toward publication.

They are the gatekeepers. They are guarding all the doors, they are holding all the keys. Which means that sooner or later, someone is going to have to fight them.

The Matrix, 1999, dir. The Wachowskis

Nobody is going to take seriously an argument that fanfiction is a competitor with traditional publishing, and I’m not going to try and make it. Two very different things, serving different social purposes, yet drawing in the same audience—readers—and sharing content developed by the same creators—writers. As my personal experience and that of the participants to my research shows, fanfiction communities can be challenging and harsh environments to the uninitiated or unprepared, but no argument is required to state that entry and success in traditional publishing can be an even greater trial, tied up with finances, professional reputation, and the whims

of the publishing house. Compare this with the relative ease of anonymously joining a free website and uploading a file that can be accessed freely by anyone with the internet. The opportunities for learning and honing skills that will be valuable in a professional publishing setting abound in fanfiction communities, making them ideal low-stakes playgrounds for developing future writers and publishers. These communities are flourishing across the Internet, and successful new authors are rising out of them every year and joining the published elite, apprenticed in the skills and knowledges of writing and publishing through years of critical and creative engagement with quality works of fiction, collaborative co-construction of innovative transformative texts and meaningful interaction with an involved, skilled and diverse readership. For how much longer will we sneer at the writers at play in fandom?

Welcome to the real world.

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CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

PUBLISHING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: CLUNES BOOKTOWN

TESS BRADY

Using a case study this chapter will outline personal reflections on a culture-based rural renewal project (Clunes Booktown in Western Victoria, Australia), and invite the reader to apply the lens of publishing to the project as a way of nuancing and enhancing our understanding of publishing and cultural-based rural renewal projects. A significant gap in scholarly work on publishing and community development, particularly in Australasia, necessitates a reliance on primary material and personal reflections. Significant information for this chapter comes from primary sources and has been sourced from the Clunes Museum, archival material held by Creative Clunes and my private papers.

The village of Clunes

Clunes is located in the Djadja Wurrung lands, roughly between the rural city of Ballarat and the tourist town of Daylesford in Victoria. It is an hour and a half drive by freeway to Melbourne's CBD. The area consists of wide open pastures and farming paddock with low ancient volcanic forms and an abundance of gold-rush detritus. It was the place where, in 1851, gold was first discovered in Victoria and in its heyday, during the 1880s, had a population of over six thousand (State Library of Victoria 2013).

By the early 2000s, Clunes was a rural village in decline. The drain of its youth by the Great War, subsequent droughts and years of socio-economic change in the twentieth century saw the population dwindle to around 700. Its impressive wide main street consisted almost entirely of boarded up nineteenth century buildings and facades. A 1998 travel guide referred to it as "a true ghost town" (Blair 1998, 52). What shops and

services were available (post office, library, health services, butchers, milk bar, chemist, grocer, hairdresser, petrol station) were run on a part-time basis, as shared shops, and with modest turnovers. There was a daily bus service with additional transport for teenage children whose only high school options were in the nearby rural cities of Ballarat or Maryborough.

The village's central precinct had been spared the 1970s craze to modernise and remained a nineteenth century gold-rush streetscape. As a result, the streetscape became the location for two significant films, *Mad Max* (1979), which pictured Clunes as an apocryphal landscape at the end of civilisation, and *Ned Kelly* (2003), where the streetscape had to be *modernised* in post-production in order to reflect Kelly's decade of activity in the 1870s.

The filming of *Ned Kelly* occurred shortly after Wesley College, one of the largest private schools in Australia with over 3,000 students and multiple campuses (Wesley College website) opened a rural campus in the village for its year nine students in 2000. In each of the four terms of the school year, just under one hundred students attend the campus where the curriculum: "blends experiential learning; social and emotional learning; community engagement; the arts; sustainability, and interdisciplinary learning" (Wesley College website). They use the village and surrounds as their classroom and self-cater using the local shops to purchase food. The films and the establishment of the campus provided two important ingredients in the town's psyche. The campus policy of "buying local" kept the butcher, baker and small grocery open and, if not thriving, at least surviving, while the films provided something less tangible, a sense of pride amongst the locals.

While outwardly, the village appeared in decline, what existed behind the façade was a strong community. For example, the Clunes and District Agricultural Show has maintained an organisation which has staged the annual show since 1850. Attendances at this event regularly exceed 4000 with as many as 1000 entries in the home craft sections (Campbell 2010). Similarly, the Clunes town organisation, somewhat curiously called the Clunes Tourist and Development Association (CTDA), began in the 1970s and has actively worked towards the establishment of tourism facilities including a caravan park, creek walk and a scenic drive. This was done through a combination of working bees and fund raisers. Many of the same people, wearing different club-hats, also developed sporting facilities, a senior's club house and maintained a functioning cemetery. Further, the people of Clunes have always been proud of their gold rush history and have established a surprisingly professional museum.

The outcome of this outward physical decline and inward robust community manifested itself in two seemingly conflicting traits. On the one hand, there is an enormous desire to preserve and keep that-which-is-there and a corresponding deep conservatism to the community. The following is possibly an apocryphal story but it sums up this approach: When the justice system moved from Clunes and the courthouse was no longer needed, the local elders changed the locks so that the removalist could not gain access. The courthouse remained closed for over forty years, ink drying in the inkwells, papers disintegrating on desks, law books collecting dust. It was kept intact in the belief that one day there would be a use for it. Other buildings enjoyed a similar fate. On the other hand, in a paradoxical outrageous contradiction, there is a deep community belief that the “new” needs to be embraced. The community has been, and remains, welcoming of new idea and residents. The acceptance of the Wesley campus and the social disruption of an ever-changing cohort of teenagers in the village is just one example.

There is one last ingredient I want to add to this entry point. While the robust community of Clunes was prepared to take a chance with the unknown or the outsider, welcoming the films and the campus, they did not possess the skills to capitalise on the potential tourism that either offered. While organisations such as the CTDA could see the importance of tourism for the village’s survival, they did not possess the skills to navigate licencing of name use, copyright issues, media releases and protocol. The association was unable to respond when confronted with the most elementary of obstacles. Two missed opportunities will serve to elaborate this. Firstly, there was limited overnight accommodation, at its height reaching sixteen beds, for the 200 Wesley parents who visited once a term. Secondly, there is not, nor ever has been, a single sign in (or around) the town pointing out film locations in spite of Clunes having become—by 2018—the main location for thirteen films and television mini-series. Perhaps because a sign disturbs that-which-is-there, it is extraordinarily difficult to introduce any signage into Clunes.

In summary, in Clunes in the mid-2000s, there existed an unspoilt but run-down heritage village, a robust but unskilled community who were willing to embrace uncharted waters in order to foster economic security (albeit in a limited way) so that the basic domestic shops and services survived.

As part of this story, in 2003, I drove into Clunes, became entranced (this is the only way I can describe it) and took an unexpected shift in my life moving myself, lock, stock and barrel, into the village.

In the beginning (2006–2007)

Three years later in late 2006, I and three other so-called “tree changers” (those escaping city life for a new life in the country)—newly elected Councillor Tim Hayes who had a deep understanding of strategy; media expert Linda Newitt; and community stalwart Graeme Johnstone—became concerned that the nearby city of Ballarat had designs on the village. Two options came to the surface: Ballarat was expanding as Melbourne grew and had its eye on Clunes as a dormitory suburb; the other option was to move Ballarat’s stock saleyards to Clunes and re-opening the railway line for stock transport. Neither option appealed to us, or the residents of Clunes. When the four of us came together to discuss more palatable options, we would have expressed our motivation in terms of “saving the village”, however, unlike earlier attempts to capitalise on the village’s assets, between us we possessed the necessary skills to effect change.

My use of “us” and “we” is deliberate and important here. Like a publishing venture, what was needed was a team. I firmly believe that social, cultural, political and/or economic change only occurs through the efforts of a team and not through that of heroic individuals. I do not agree with the adage that *it only takes one person to change the world*. Instead, I want to suggest that prioritising the leader (one person) in a process of social change reflects our own need for a heroic narrative and at the same time gives us all an excuse for *not* taking action. (How could *I* instigate change when it takes a special individual, a hero to do so and *I* am just a mere mortal?). For me, change is brought about through teams working together. Further, each functioning member of that team is as important as the other. From the tea-lady (whose name we never know) to the association or government leader, each plays a vital role in the synergy and mechanism of change. The tea is part of the chain—if there was no tea there would have been no impromptu meeting and discussion; no solution found; and no action taken.

The four of us then pooled our skills and looked for an idea which would quintessentially fit our perceived understanding of the village psychic. This was in itself an interesting process as it needed to fit our own idea of the village, that thing we were trying to protect, and also fit into the long-term Clunes residents’ understanding of the village and village life. Another way to think about this period is in terms of the rudimentary parts of a business plan and publishing venture and what they would need to address: our vision; our goal; and some early market research. Eventually, we centred our vision around the idea of “discovery”. Clunes had been the place gold was first discovered in Victoria, the museum was about geological discovery, Wesley campus and the Clunes Primary School were all about

discovery through education, and the Agricultural Show was about sharing farming discoveries. From the idea of discovery, we rapidly arrived at the idea of the book, as books are the artefacts that contain discoveries. From this, we envisioned Clunes as becoming a Booktown and set ourselves the task of investigating those possibilities.

At the time, a Booktown was seen as a small rural township in a tourism shadow which turns empty shops and public buildings into retail outlets for second hand and antiquarium books, thus creating a tourism destination (Seaton 1999). More recently, the concept has been widened and Johnson simply defines a Booktown as “a small town, usually rural and scenic, full of bookshops and book related industries” (2018, 7).

I had visited the first Booktown, Hay-on-Wye in Wales in the UK, so I knew about the concept. Further research yielded a government-sponsored project to select and establish a Booktown in Scotland. The chief sociologist on this project, A. V. Seaton, developed a set of criteria to select the village most likely to succeed (Seaton 1999) and, as a result, in 1998, the town Wigtown was nominated as Scotlands National Book Town (The Association of Wigtown Booksellers website). A long-term success, Wigtown has recently celebrated its twentieth year as a Booktown and hosts The Bookshop, the largest secondhand book shop in Scotland (The Bookshop website) which is chronicled in the owners’ bestselling memoir, *The Diary of a Bookseller* (Bythell 2017) and his extensive social media presence.

When we applied Seaton’s criteria (Seaton 1999) to our village, Clunes scored a remarkable twelve out of 13, scored on his criteria. Wary, however, of the difference in population between Europe and Australia, the question remained: *Would a Booktown work in rural Victoria or would we need to be books and something else—food, antiques, toys, shoes, or some other such attraction?* We felt the only way to test the idea was to run a festival-of-the-book over one day in May 2007, *Booktown for a Day*, as market research. We had a very small budget of A\$11,648 which we had scraped together from various sources, a lot of energy, the support of the town leaders and assistance from over forty per cent of the Clunes population (Creative Clunes 2007). It was at this time that many of the sealed buildings were opened to accommodate the booksellers, a process which included finding the key to the courthouse.

The support of the community leaders and town’s population was especially notable chiefly because the region was at the time deep in the despair of drought. It was the worst drought on record for the area and was so significant as to be given its own name, the Millennium Drought (Australian Government Bureau of Meteorology website). Most of our gardens had died. All public water features in Victoria had been turned off,

the gold-rush buildings were developing large cracks due to the dry ground sinking and shrinking, the street trees were dying and children sang ditties about not flushing the toilet every time they used it. When such devastation surrounds an entire town on a daily basis, it is hard to embrace hope or a new project. Winning over the community could be seen in the same terms as winning over a board or a financial backer.

The festival, from the very beginning, got away from us. We had hoped that, at the very most, sixteen book traders might come and set up a stall but more and more kept booking a site until fifty-two set up on the day. They came from Melbourne and northern Victoria, but also from Tasmania and New South Wales. Linda's publicity message of *a small village, a festival-of-the-book*, which she had to create without an advertising budget or media monitoring service, hit the zeitgeist. As a result, we had no idea of the numbers of visitors to expect.

On our day in May the skies opened. It was cold, windy, wet and the earth—too drought-hard to absorb the rain—soon turned to slippery mud. But this did not deter those hungry for a festival-of-the-book. Between five and six thousand people came, which massively exceeded our wildest dreams. We ran out of everything—electricity, cash from the ATM and food. Many stories from this day have moved into Clunes folklore. Perhaps one will give the flavour of the extraordinary people and event. It was re-told with pride by a family member in a eulogy, in 2018, for RSL member Jean Higgins.

The RSL Ladies Auxiliary regularly hold Devonshire teas as fund raisers. For Booktown for a Day, they made their usual plans but very quickly ran out of scones. A small group of women, not one under seventy, quickly went to Jean Higgins' house to bake more scones. (Scones are made from flour, a raising agent and milk and baked at a high temperature for a short time). They purchased all the flour in the IGA grocery, scrounged what they could from their own pantries and coped with power brown-outs. Between them they baked an enormous number of scones. The number varies in the re-telling from forty to sixty dozen but whatever the actual number, which is probably lost forever in the re-telling, the effort was significant. Back at the RSL building, others served a long and hungry queue. The RSL, as a team of some of Clunes' most senior citizens, spent the entire day baking, delivering and serving as best they could.

There was sufficient and positive interest in the event for Senator Tierney (the member for Western Victoria) to make a statement in the Parliament (Tierney 2007), for Radio National's *The Book Show* to run a segment on the festival (L'Estrange 2007), and for journalist and critic Jason Steger to lead his *Bookmarks* page with the event (*The Age* 2007).

With our market research clearly indicating interest in at least an annual festival, we began the long journey of becoming a Booktown.

The establishment years (2007–2016)

Soon after the event, we wrote and published a 46-page review mapping our steps, collecting media and providing possibly on-going solutions (Creative Clunes 2007). Our initial focus was almost entirely on improving infrastructure including water, power and cash availability and to do this we lobbied politicians, government officials and corporate heads in every venue we could gain entry. With these strategies, we kept the original hype of the event active and it seemed like few involved in rural development in our region escaped knowing about the Clunes Booktown festival. The various government departments charged with rural growth, tourism, cultural and economic development, and whose role it is to keep a finger on the pulse of their region, were left scurrying to catch up. We had flown entirely under their radar. Within weeks after the first event, a meeting was arranged by the local shire CEO between the various regional departmental heads of programs and us. As a result, we learned to use the required language that governments not only understand, but listen to.

On every step of the way, we reflected on our direction and outcomes. Annual festival reviews were written and distributed to interested parties and made available on our website. In 2010 we worked with a team from La Trobe University to audit the festival and Melissa Kennedy (Kennedy 2010) wrote a report which we used extensively. This process of reflection and review was key to our development.

Developing new models

We did not realise it at the time but we had developed two new models in staging our event. In the long term, both helped to establish our reputation but, in the short term, they also provided significant obstacles.

At the time we were establishing the festival, regional economic growth, cultural activities and tourism were run by different arms of government and, at least at the regional level, there was no obvious cross-over. This silo approach required the adroit use of three different sets of jargon and the compartmentalisation of the one event into three distinct sets of aspirations and potential outcomes. Specifically, we saw our festival-of-the-book as a way of branding Clunes as a Booktown, creating year-round tourism and flow-on economic prosperity, and generating a program of cultural activities. Not unlike a publishing house, we aimed for an audience, an

economic and a cultural outcome, and we used culture as the medium to achieve this. But in government parlance these three aspects had to be handled as distinct entities. For the first five to seven years grant applications, acquittals and reports had to use three different sets of language, meet three different sets of criteria and provide three different measurements of outcomes. Further, we had to break down the suspicion that we were somehow spurious because we lacked the purity of purpose of a single silo.

From the beginning, the weekend festival offered the biggest collection of rare, out-of-print, second hand and new books in one place in Australia. It also offered a range of panels and activities around the writing, publishing and collecting of books. Writer panels were a part of the festival but not its dominant activity. For the first few festivals, the number of writers speaking was no more than four or five and as Artistic Director I was greatly assisted in the curating of this part of the festival by my long-time collaborator and friend Nigel Krauth.

We had particular issues when selecting authors. We saw that our work occupied the intersection between two main stakeholders, our community and those who could help grow our vision—the sponsors, “tree changers” and visitors. In forming our author programs, we avoided the traditional theme approach and embraced three criteria.

Firstly, we wanted to bring high quality authors into the environment of Clunes and the festival. The authors also needed to represent possibilities to the audience so a mixture of age, gender and culture was necessary. But in all cases, the first criterion was that the authors had achieved significant publication.

Secondly, we initially chose authors who could get on together and who would not, in appearance or behaviour, “frighten” the community. Their ideas could be radical but at least outwardly, they had to be able to blend in. This sensitivity may seem odd or deeply conservative, but it was not. It was, instead, a strategy which acknowledged the initial nervousness of the community regarding literary innovation. Historically, the voice of regional Australia had been well represented in the literary output and cultural debates of the nation. The Great War, droughts and other hardships had a devastating effect on rural communities, which were left not only with a depleted skilled labour force but also with a depleted youth population, often losing their risk-takers (McMullin 2012) and leading to a growing attraction to safe ideas. This was important to recognise as the 2008 (2nd) festival, the first to bring in a group of authors, the writers were viewed by the local community with suspicion and their books languished, untouched and unborrowed in the library. To counter this, at every opportunity we

encouraged visiting writers to meet and mix with members of the community. There was no green room for authors to retire to. The strategy worked and by 2010 dozens of the visiting author's books were borrowed, community members socialised easily with the writers and their books were sold.

Thirdly, we selected carefully to include a variety of genres to maximise relevance to, and engagement with, the community. Contemporary literary fiction was mixed with biography, science writing and history. To this we added a sprinkling of popular nonfiction in areas such as sport, craft, gardening and cooking. Behind our thinking was the hope that by continuously introducing the community to quality authors, from a range of backgrounds, genres and interests we would:

- Reintroduce the idea, especially to our children, that being a cultural worker is a valid and important contribution to the regional world.
- Remind our community that the world of books, writing and ideas can offer alternative problem-solving techniques and is to be valued and embraced.
- Through writers' familiarity with Clunes and the area, reintroduce our landscape into the Australian consciousness.

On this last point, the local landscape is gradually infiltrating into literature with perhaps one of the most striking examples being Glenda Guest's description of the nearby "birthing tree":

There it stood at the side of a narrow dirt road between two ordinary, empty paddocks, this Significant Tree, looking as if it could hold all the sorrows of the world ... Cassie stepped into the tree, into a small space, and a silence so profound she wondered how it could be so. Maybe it was the hundreds—thousands of layers of birthing pain soaked into the gnarled old wood. And joy—there must be joy too (2018, 154–5).

The other differing model we were exploring was cultural tourism and the development of experiential displays. By seeing ourselves as a festival-of-the-book and not another regional literary festival, we encouraged all things "book". Although with almost no budget, we knew we wanted to include book selling, book collecting, book valuation, publishing, the making of paper, book binding, book design, illustration, book marbling, book plates, rare books, copyright issues, government publishing policy and, unsurprisingly, panels of authors discussing their work. We quickly learnt to form partnerships and developed a mode of "exhibition" which was conversation-driven. For example, to supply the experience of rare and

precious books, we formed a partnership with the State Library of Victoria who annually send rare books and librarians to the festival. The books are not put glass cases but opened on a table, and the gloved librarians turn their pages and discuss the works. The extraordinary books displayed in this way have included Captain Cook's atlas of the sky, *Atlas Coelestis* (Flamsteed 1729), and many others which would not otherwise have been seen in regional Australia.

By taking the object out of the glass case, by providing the conversation with the paper maker, the book binder and the book valuer, we were developing an experiential model of exhibition. This conversation-driven mode of exhibition was later to form the basis of our contribution to cultural tourism (OECD 2014).

Setting up a bookshop

As part of our vision was to become a Booktown and be able to join the International Organisations of Booktowns, running an increasingly successful festival was not enough. We needed permanent bookshops, but we could not entice book traders to set up permanent shops in Clunes—and so, in 2010, we opened one. The shop was run entirely by volunteers (around fifty per month) and stocked books from a number of booksellers on consignment, as well as a strong collection of donated books. It did not take long to discover that book events in the shop brought customers and publicity. Radio stations wanted an interview with the coming guest writer, customers came, books were sold and we gained significant editorial publicity through regional print and radio outlets. The monthly author talks rapidly developed into a win-win situation, the author attracting publicity and selling books while we generated profile for the shop and gained customers.

Open seven days a week, the shop ran for two years until it was sold to a book trader in 2012. After the business was sold, we continued to host the monthly author talks, now run in one of the community spaces as Booktown on Sundays. These free author talks have attracted their own private sponsor and are a significant part of the Clunes monthly calendar attracting audiences from thirty to sixty strong for each event. To date, 365 published writers have been the guest of Creative Clunes and, in all cases, their books have been sold at—and as a result of—the event.

Publications

With the combination of the festival, the bookshops and the monthly author talks, books were becoming part of the fabric of Clunes. Not everyone, of

course, embraced this development and for a time the front bar of the local hotel remained a stronghold of opposition. Interestingly even that, over time, has broken down with the pub holding events during the last three festivals (2016, 2017, and 2018), hosting local artists' work on their walls and, in August 2018, hosting stand-up comedy from a newly-developed comedy festival.

With the acceptance of books being “our way forward”, it is not surprising to see the development of publishing in Clunes. The desire to publish “our own” book was made all the more possible by the existence of the factory of major book printing company, McPhersons Printing Group, half an hour's drive away in Maryborough. Using money raised from the sale of donated books in the community bookshop, two community books were published, 2010 and 2011. Rhonda Fawcett, a community worker, edited them both. The first collection, *Fields of Gold* (Fawcett 2010), looks and smells like a commercially-published paperback book and is professional in appearance. Its cover colours and design are the colours and design of the festival, emotionally belonging to the Clunes festival. Fawcett and her team also managed to encourage 146 members of the community, around fifteen per cent of the total population, to contribute. This was not a case of vanity publishing for a couple of would-be-writers but more a case of ownership of the Booktown concept and the book as artefact. It was a case of “we too can have a book”.

The second book, *Memorable Meals* (Fawcett 2011) a collection of very short reminiscences became a community, and often family, affair with—in several cases—multiple family members making a contribution. It was larger by an extra forty contributors than the first book.

In other publishing endeavours, Creative Clunes produced a limited collectable, *The Clunes Little Book of the Book* edited by Nigel Krauth and myself (Krauth 2010), the Agriculture society developed a history of the show in 2010 (Campbell 2010) and the Women's Auxiliary of the Clunes Returned and Services League of Australia (RSL) released a recipe book in 2014. On their website, the RSL connect the festival, the book and the community as the impetus for their publication:

Clunes RSL is well known for its monthly Sausage Sizzle and Devonshire Teas, run in conjunction with the Clunes Farmers Market on the second Sunday each month, and during Clunes Book Town weekend in May. An outcome from this activity has been the publication of the Clunes RSL Women's Auxiliary recipe book, *Sprinkle with ... and serve with love* featuring The Perfect Scone, and 150 other recipes (Clunes RSL 2014).

While there has been other self-publishing ventures, the other notable book is J Christine Rowe's *What Brought You To Clunes* (Rowe 2015). Rowe, a photographic artist and fourth generation Clunes resident asked 141 residents to write one hundred words on why they had come to live in Clunes. Rowe accompanied the short text with a photographic portrait of the individual or couple. The idea was kept simple and executed cleanly. The limited print run of under 400 sold out within weeks of release and not only did people want more copies printed but they also asked for another book which might include those not included in the first one. Rowe resisted these advances partly because she saw the book as a photographic/artistic work rather than a commercial publishing venture. By 2015, many of the local residents of Clunes were so comfortable with being included in a publication that they were disappointed if they were not. Clearly, the book is now seen as a friendly and useful cultural artefact by significant numbers in the community.

International connections

During this time, we knew we needed to reach out internationally, and in 2011 gained support from the Premier of Victoria, Hon. Ted Baillieu for our application to join the International Organisation of Booktowns (Baillieu 2012). The letter states:

Creative Clunes' committee has worked to transform the township in to a booktown using the existing heritage streetscape of the old gold town to create a unique Australian experience, Mr Baillieu said ... 'It's a great effort and a tribute to the town, to the partnership approach it has adopted with State and Local Government, and to its efforts to build a sustainable future based on words, books and ideas'. Mr Baillieu said Clunes had been selected as an exemplary model of sustainable rural tourism and development centred around the second hand and antiquarian book trade. 'This international honour for Clunes is a wonderful complement to Melbourne's designation as a UNESCO City of Literature', Mr Baillieu said (Creative Clunes Collection).

With this patronage, we were able to attract the support of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Australian Embassy in South Korea, to carry out a three-year international project with Paju Book City, South Korea. Titled *In the Spirit of George Rose*, this involved the photographic artists William Yang and Koo Bohncchang, and was curated by Catherine Croll (Puvanenthiran, 2015). The government had then recently published a white paper *Australia in the Asian Century* (Australian Government,

Department of Defence 2012) and our project nestled nicely into this new approach. The project generated an ABC Radio National program, *In the Spirit of George Rose* (Cathcart 2015) and a film-festival screened short film *Three Photographers* (Gough-Brady 2015). In a sense, the project sums up the way we worked—one project developed between stakeholders over years, negotiation between international, Australian government and different agencies involving curator, photographic artists, film maker and members of the community and a hungry magpie approach to publicity.

As part of our international commitment we also formed a long-standing friendship with the newest Booktown, Featherstone, New Zealand, helping them during their formative years. We each sent delegations to each other's festivals and embraced cross-Tasman internship exchanges. In addition, in 2018 Clunes hosted the IOB biannual conference with visiting delegates from eight countries.

The Booktown project, 2017–2018

The team worked its way through the years selling a single message—*small town finds prosperity through books*—embracing the community and squeezing every drop out of any publicity or political opportunity. Putting any personal politics aside, we made much of our Prime Ministerial visits with Malcolm Fraser and Bob Hawke as speaking guests and Julia Gillard and Tony Abbott as visitors. Photographs taken of them wearing the Booktown volunteer apron were used extensively in our presentations, reports, applications and publicity.

The number of invited authors for each festival has steadily increased to forty in 2018 with talks and panels on four main stages and many talks are now ticketed. The increase in the number of author-talks is partly due to partnerships with the Ballarat based Federal University and reflects the general growth of the festival. The festival attendance increased to 18,000 in 2018, with a slight demographic shift seeing a lowering in the age of the crowd from previous years: sixty-one years of age or older 31.1 per cent; fifty-one to sixty years 30.3 per cent; forty-one to fifty years 20.2 per cent and thirty-one to forty years 13.4 per cent (Creative Clunes 2018). Vic Rail not only re-instated passenger trains to Clunes on a permanent basis, but for the festival puts on three additional daily trains connecting Clunes to Ballarat and Melbourne over that weekend. State-based infrastructure has improved, but not that which is federally based. Mobile phone service during the festival remains a serious issue with the number of users overloading the system and rendering mobile phone service, credit card payment facilities and other associated services non-functioning. This

impinges on book trader's commercial activities, communication between festival officials and the good will of our visitors who, in many instances, find it stressful to spend a day without mobile coverage.

By 2016–17, the original team were ready to hand over the festival and the organisation to a new generation of leaders. We had a new ten year business plan, tax deductible status as a cultural organisation, government status as a cultural organisation with financial assistance for part-time staff, a purposely restored building as an office, interest from the village and region in board membership and governance roles and—most importantly—a sustained level of prosperity in the township whose population had increased by sixty-four per cent between 2007 and 2018 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2018 Census). We had dodged the saleyard and the dormitory suburb and instead established the village as a cultural hub and Booktown.

There is a constant need to see our work in relationship to other Booktowns. In Clunes, as elsewhere, the number of bookshops in a Booktown vary through time, but what seems to remain reasonably steadfast across the range of Booktowns are the cultural events—writers talks, book launches, monthly book markets—and, in most cases, an annual festival. Some, such as Paju Book City (South Korea) or Tvedestrand (Norway) have an active publishing arm. Some, like Clunes have come about through community effort and others, like Wigtown, through government start-up schemes (Johnston 2018 and private correspondence). The overriding experience shared by Booktowns is the propagation of the culture, principally of books, reading and publishing, but also of other artistic forms.

Perhaps, personally, the most satisfying aspect of our work is our contribution in breaking down the government silo approach. The notion of cultural tourism has been developed and Clunes was given as the main Australian example in an international report on *Tourism and the Creative Economy* (OECD 2014). Further, there are now specific government programs for small towns to regenerate via cultural pursuits. Regional Arts Victoria runs a program (from 2016), *Small Town Transformation* allocating up to A\$350,000 over two years to communities of less than 2,000 people to instigate a cultural project which aim to: “enrich people's lives, strengthen community connections, increase economic possibilities and provide opportunities for greater access and inclusion for everyone” (Regional Arts Victoria 2016).

The lens of publishing

Publishing, in its narrowest sense, is a core component of the story of Clunes Booktown. Certainly, books have been published by the local community

and organisations that see their publications as a valid way of collecting memories, experiences and knowledge. It is also seen as a way of directly engaging with the commodity provided by publishing (the book) which brings prosperity to their town. More than this, the book, as an object and an idea, has been absorbed into the community as part of the everyday fabric of life. As Altbach notes, the book is essential to the educational, scientific and cultural life of communities (1997). This community engagement with a cultural artefact invites the notion of publishing to embrace social connectivity and possibly nuances discourse concerning community and cultural activities. In particular, it places publishing in its widest sense at the core of an *art-and-the-community* project. For many of the people of Clunes Booktown, the book—and the publishing industry which produces and disseminates it—has simply become part of what it is to be human.

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CHAPTER NINETEEN

HOW NICE IS TOO NICE? AUSTRALIAN BOOK REVIEWS AND THE “COMPLIMENT SANDWICH”

EMMETT STINSON

This chapter responds to an ongoing public debate about whether Australian book reviewing is “too nice”, which started in the literary journal *Kill Your Darlings* in 2010 and has continued in other literary publications. It takes up Ben Etherington’s claim that “too nice” reviewing is characterised by the “compliment sandwich” in which critique is surrounded by mollifying praise. It offers a “distant reading” of two years of fiction reviews in the *Australian Book Review*, applying a manual appraisal analysis to demonstrate that book reviews in Australia’s flagship reviewing publication do often adhere to the compliment-sandwich form. The chapter then returns to the question of “too nice” reviewing and applies a modified Bourdieusian analysis to examine how reviewing debates have served as proxies for larger disputes between institutions and interlocutors in the literary field.

Critiquing the Too-Nice Review

The Melbourne journal, *Kill Your Darlings* (*KYD*) opened its inaugural issue in March of 2010 with Gideon Haigh’s polemic, “Feeding the Hand that Bites”, which bemoaned the “demise of Australian literary reviewing” (*ibid.*, 9). Haigh accused reviewers of timidity, arguing that, since they are neither well-paid nor highly esteemed, “there’s little incentive for sticking one’s neck out, for actually taking a position, for arguing that a book is bad, or sloppy, or stupid” (*ibid.*, 10). For Haigh, negative criticism is counterproductive, since “the author might be reviewing us one day ... [i]n which case, it may, of course, be payback time” (*ibid.*, 10). He argues reviewers avoid critical judgment, preferring to “summarise the contents,

recapitulate the blurb, describe the author's reputation, or examine the author's politics" (ibid., 10).

Book reviewing seems an unlikely flashpoint for controversy, but Haigh's essay served as a proxy for larger literary debates. When he argues that book reviews "have become hodgepodes of conventional wisdom and middlebrow advertorial" (ibid., 9), he rehashes old antipathies between highbrow and middlebrow. He raises concerns about how economics impinge on notions of literary value (however such a term might be construed), when he bemoans the "the lacklustre infomerciality of so much Australian reviewing that gushes 'over the latest vogue'" (ibid., 11). He laments Australian literary culture's insularity by claiming reviewing practices support "vested interests in Australia's small, snobbish, fashion-conscious, self-celebrating literary scene" (ibid., 11). Craven book reviews become symptoms of an unhealthy literary culture. Haigh's refraining from naming specific reviewers further created anxiety among critics who wondered if they were the essay's secret target (although this failure to name names—common in critical pieces on book reviewing—may itself be a symptom of a "too 'nice'" literary culture).

KYD published Haigh's essay to generate controversy and establish the journal as a locus of edgy and important literary conversations. Haigh was an inspired choice for generating media buzz: he had access to wider media networks from his popular sports writing but still possessed a highbrow appeal among literary insiders. In this sense, he crossed the domains of popular and high culture that Pierre Bourdieu describes as the key opposition within the literary field (Bourdieu 1993, 53). When Haigh read the essay at *KYD*'s launch on March 10, 2010, it was already familiar to much of the audience, who had heard it discussed across a range of media. *The Sydney Morning Herald* ran a short piece about Haigh's essay on February 20, 2010 and Haigh appeared on ABC Radio on February 22nd. *KYD* made an excerpt available online on February 24th and published a response to Haigh by Martin Shaw, (then the books division manager of Readings Books Music & Film) on their website the following day. Stephen Romei published another response in *The Australian* on March 2nd. This was the intent, since this controversy promoted the journal; *KYD* followed up by holding a panel discussion on reviewing with Haigh, Jo Case, and Anthony Morris at Readings on March 17, 2010.

Haigh's essay, though tied to the marketing strategies of a new literary journal, also instigated an ongoing debate about Australian literary reviewing. In August of 2011, Louise Pine revisited Haigh's concerns in the *Overland* essay "To Review or Not To Review", and Melbourne writer Mel Campbell responded in a *Crikey* essay the next day, arguing that "hatchet

job” reviews constitute “a lazy form of reviewing” (2011). Concerns about “too-nice” reviews then received their most detailed articulation in Ben Etherington’s 2013 essay “The Brain Feign”, which critically describes Haigh’s essay as “glint[ing] with aphorisms” but too “brief when it comes to articulating what is at stake”. Rather than lamenting generalities, Etherington examines the reception of Anna Funder’s 2011 novel, *All That I Am*, in a case study of the book’s reviews, which locates a “structural” problem within an insular Australian contemporary literary field,¹ caught between “print’s decline and the self-promotion attending so much activity online” (2013).

The context of Etherington’s essay matters, because it was used, along with five others, to launch *The Sydney Review of Books (SRB)*. Like Haigh’s article, Etherington’s essay had been surreptitiously passed around literary insiders before publication (it was sent to me by the editor of a literary journal who had received it from a festival director), thereby introducing the journal to those in the field with significant stories of social and symbolic capital. The confrontational nature of Etherington’s article—which strenuously criticised a much-lauded Australian novel—generated controversy, producing wider interest from readers beyond the field of cultural production. The irony of Etherington’s piece (though one he is certainly aware of) is that it criticises the deleterious effects of social media on literary culture while leveraging those same forces to promote *SRB*. The key distinction here is that “The Brain Feign” also served as the first instalment of “Critic Watch” an ongoing column meant to expose the self-serving reviewing practices Haigh identified.

Despite the appearance of “Critic Watch”, questions about the “niceness” of book reviewing have persisted, as evidenced by Kerryn Goldsworthy’s 2013 “Everyone’s a Critic” in the *Australian Book Review* and the 2015 Monash University conference, Critical Matters, which

¹ The nature of the Australian literary field remains contested. David Carter argues that the Australian literary field increasingly resembles “media cultures”, such as “cinema, television and popular music” rather than Bourdieu’s oppositional model of high and low cultures (1999, 141). Beth Driscoll claims that literary discourse is generated by a middlebrow circuit of production and reception that sits between the notions of avant-garde and popular fiction. I have argued that the Australian literary field comprises a set of producer-consumers who are both audience and participants (Stinson 2016, 36-7), a mode of cultural praxis Bourdieu identified with the avant-garde. At the moment, however, I am applying this term in Bourdieu’s sense to refer to the “space of literary or artistic position-takings” that comprises “the structured set of the manifestations of social agents” in relation to writing and literary culture (Bourdieu 1993, 30).

presented perspectives on book reviewing from academics and practitioners. But rather than tracking this debate, my interest is in substantiating whether or not book reviews are “too nice”. Haigh does not produce any evidence to support his claims. Etherington’s “The Brain Feign” employs a case study of Anna Funder’s *All That I Am*, a process he repeated in a 2013 examination of the reception of Hannah Kent’s *Burial Rites* (Etherington 2013). But case studies—while they may be able to highlight or substantiate particular lapses of critical reception—work through a large-scale synecdoche, in which the specific instances stand in for a broader set of failings. But individual instances of critical failure are just that, and do not necessarily reflect wider practices.

Etherington implicitly acknowledges the limitations of exemplary case studies in “The Poet Tasters”, which examines the 247 reviews of Australian poetry that appeared in 2013. In this survey, Etherington (2015) notes reviewers’ frequent use of the “compliment sandwich”, in which critical comments are bookended by vague affirmation according to a set formula:

1. Introduce the volume, the poet and their previous publications.
2. Describe the poet’s overall aesthetic with reference to European and/or North American antecedents.
3. Quote approvingly from two or three choice poems with some technical commentary.
4. Express reservations about one or two poems.
5. Affirm, nevertheless, the worthiness of the volume as a whole.

For Etherington, the “compliment sandwich” is not just lazy, but “inverts good critical practice” (ibid., 2015). In the “compliment sandwich”, criticisms are not “patiently explained”, so readers must take reviewers’ claims on trust rather than on the strength of their analysis (ibid., 2015). This muted critique also “weakens the praise” in a review, because such praise is the *default* rather than having “been won from a determinedly critical disposition” (ibid., 2015).

Etherington states the “obvious and probably accurate conclusion” is “compliment-sandwich” reviews are mostly written by writers afraid of making enemies in a small literary scene. But Etherington’s essay expands the critique of “too-nice” reviewing in two important ways. Instead of using illustrative examples, it analyses aggregated cultural practices of reviewing. Secondly, in identifying the “compliment sandwich”, Etherington suggests that “too-nice” reviewing is not simply dispositional, but also *formal*. The “compliment sandwich” thus constitutes a formal criterion for assessing reviewing—and this is what I have set out to do in a provisional mode by applying a modified form of appraisal theory to a small sample of literary

reviews from *The Australian Book Review* to see whether or not they are “compliment sandwiches”; this pilot study—which applies a novel methodology to a limited sample—gestures toward ways in which aggregate literary practices might be analysed. I will then re-examine the results of my analysis through a Bourdieusian frame, arguing that disputes over “niceness” reflect key distinctions between agents in the Australian literary field, and thus are of broader significance for understanding contemporary Australian literary culture.

Measuring the compliment sandwich

I surveyed two years of issues of *Australian Book Review* (*ABR*), from September 2013 through August 2015, examining reviews of fiction to see if they matched the formal characteristics of the “compliment sandwich”. This produced a relatively small sample of seventy-eight reviews, which I then analysed for polarity (a linguistic term referring to the orientation of an opinion as positive, negative or neutral) to see whether or not they conformed to the “compliment sandwich”. This admittedly small and non-random sample would not meet the evidentiary criteria of formal statistics, and I am not claiming that it meets this burden. Given both the novelty of the method I have applied and the time-intensive nature of manual appraisal analysis (which, as I will demonstrate, requires careful, close reading), I worked with a smaller sample to ensure precision, rather than a broader sample that might include significant errors. As a result of this limited sample, however, my results are neither indicative of other reviewing outlets in Australia, nor, necessarily, of *ABR* reviews outside of this designated time period. Nonetheless, I do think these results are a way of partially substantiating Etherington’s claims, and also represent another (and, within the field of literary studies, original) mode of distant reading for analysing aggregates of cultural praxis.

I decided to examine *ABR* (founded in 1961), because it is the longest-running publication devoted to Australian book reviews, although it has had competitors like *SRB*, as well as and the now-defunct *Australian Literary Review* (2006–11) and *Australian Review of Books* (1996–2001), both of which ran as inserts in News Corps *The Australian* newspaper. While *ABR* is the standard-bearer of Australian book reviewing, it often publishes emerging critics, who might produce more formulaic reviewing than in the broadsheets, which employ established reviewers.

A few caveats need to be addressed about the reviews I sampled. I did not consider *all* reviews in the *ABR* from this period but restricted my analysis to reviews of fiction. I did this because I wanted to be sure my

analysis was not affected by the logics of different cultural subfields (such as when Etherington argues that poetry reviews are affected by the closely-knit nature of the poetry community). Moreover, debates about “niceness” in book reviews have mostly been about fiction reviewing—and *literary* fiction reviewing in particular. Popular fiction reviews did not seem to have entered the debate—though I did not make distinctions between literary and popular works in this survey.²

I excluded non-fiction, because it can be considered valuable (by containing unusual information, for example) even if it is deemed faulty or wanting in aspects of style, language or structure. Fiction, on the other hand, is usually assessed in relation to its style, language, characterisation, and narrative, rather than content. Admittedly, this binary breaks down for some works; I excluded reviews of Robert Dessaix’s *What Days Are For* (2014) and Martin Edmond’s *Battarbee and Namatjira* (2014) because both are technically non-fiction, even though they share many stylistic qualities with fiction. Moreover, many fictional works do refer to important political or social events and issues, and thus encompass more than purely stylistic or formal concerns.

I also excluded reviews of overseas works and republished “classics”, since attacks on the “niceness” of Australian reviewing typically claim the smallness of the local literary scene is what discourages robust criticism. I also did not analyse all “capsule” reviews of fiction, which tend to be 300–500 words long; my method of analysis requires each review to have at least four paragraphs, so capsule reviews that were three paragraphs or less had to be excluded. The final sample comprised fifty-six feature reviews and twenty-two capsule reviews.

To determine whether or not these seventy-eight *ABR* reviews were “compliment sandwiches”, I had to assess where negative and positive comments appeared within the reviews. Determining this orientation—known as polarity within the field of sentiment analysis—presents intractable problems because it is inherently subjective. Analyses of polarity vary significantly between readers, and this variation has led to the rise of computational sentiment analysis or opinion mining, which makes use of software to determine polarity. Digital sentiment analysis, which examines responses from relatively short and simple texts (such as social media posts

² Ken Gelder, in *Popular Fiction* (2004, 11), has argued that popular fiction might be viewed as the “opposite of Literature”. While it is worth noting the differences between these fields, I have not made distinctions between popular and literary works for the purposes of my survey. Indeed, many reviewed works seem to be popular fiction, but the *Australian Book Review* mostly reviews what appear to be literary titles.

or customer-generated product reviews), can be useful for analysing certain kinds of cultural responses, as Beth Driscoll has recently demonstrated in her analysis of tweets about and survey responses to the Melbourne Writers Festival (2015).

But Driscoll's method, which employs the program SentiStrength, cannot easily be applied to book reviews. SentiStrength analyses polarity based on the most positive or negative words in a passage, and longer texts therefore distort its results. SentiStrength functions by evaluating texts against an internal bank of words with pre-determined polarity scores; complex rhetorical works, such as book reviews, express polarity in ways that do not correspond to SentiStrength's word bank. Alison Broinowski's (2014, 45) review of Dominique Wilson's *The Yellow Papers*, includes the statement "I cavil at half a dozen typos". This is unambiguously negative, but SentiStrength does not recognise "cavil" as such. In the same review, Broinowski notes the novel depicts "racial prejudice" (ibid., 45), but SentiStrength assesses this as negative. Computational sentiment analysis—at least the kind enabled by off-the-shelf software tools—does not yet present an adequate means for determining polarity of book reviews.

I have instead applied a "manual" analysis of polarity, following a method partially derived from appraisal theory in corpus linguistics as articulated by Martin and White's *The Language of Evaluation: Appraisal in English* (2005). In Martin and White's taxonomy, book reviewers' evaluations constitute "appreciation", which refers to "evaluations of 'things'" (ibid., 56); "judgment" applies to persons and actions that are oriented towards the social (ibid., 52). For Martin and White, appreciation can be subdivided into three categories: "reactions" to things (do they catch our attention; do they please us?), their "composition" (balance and complexity), and their "value" (how innovative, authentic, timely, etc.) (ibid., 56). There are valid objections to these categories: Compositional notions of balance and complexity seem culturally specific value judgments in their own right. Nonetheless, Martin and White's typology reflects the insights common to book reviews and mirrors Haigh's claims that book reviews should be "engaging" (ibid., 10), examine what "makes good books good" (ibid., 11), and present context that "deepens understanding and clarifies debate" (ibid., 11).

Martin and White also usefully discuss the inherent subjectivity of manual appraisal analyses: Such analyses are "inevitably interested" and "can never be the final word" (ibid., 206), but, rather than being an unfortunate artefact of examining polarity, this is its natural result. Appraisal is subjective by nature and can only be grasped *subjectively*. Nonetheless, attempting to gain more objective purchase on appraisal

through analytical methods brings to light trends that otherwise might be obscured. This point recalls John Frow's argument about sociological readings of texts, which are never objective, but provide an essential vantage point that undermines "the apparent coherence of the literary" by revealing its embedment within determining and contingent social and cultural structures (ibid., 242).

Martin and White's appraisal theory establishes some guidelines for analysing polarity, but manual methods for marking appraisal are still in flux. This is due to the novelty of appraisal theory, and the fact that much work in the field has focused on digital sentiment analysis. My method applies aspects of appraisal theory, but greatly simplifies manual analysis to focus on evaluative statements at the levels of the sentence and the paragraph. This approach would be too simplistic for corpus linguistics scholars, but I would argue it is sufficient to establish polarity in *ABR* reviews.

My method is as follows: rather than analysing entire reviews, I examined the polarity of opening, median, penultimate, and final paragraphs of reviews, which reflect the key structural points of the "compliment sandwich". Where there were two median paragraphs because a review had an even number of paragraphs, I examined the first of them. This method requires reviews to be four paragraphs long, so shorter reviews were excluded.

This method constitutes a mode of "distant reading", a term Franco Moretti has defined as "*a condition of knowledge*" that "allows you to focus on units that are much smaller or much larger than the text: devices, themes, tropes—or genres and systems" (Moretti 2000, 57). By examining only sections of the text, this approach participates in modes of literary analysis that suspend the usual relationship between part and whole, which forms the basis of traditional hermeneutics. Perhaps the most famous such example from Moretti's *Distant Reading* (2013) involves his analysis of changes in literary culture using a database containing only the *titles* of books. As Caroline Levine has pointed out, the privileging of wholeness in hermeneutics itself relies on a set of assumptions that cannot be separated from contingent political, social, and cultural circumstances (2015, 24–5).

Nonetheless, I have also read each review in its totality, and my belief is that the given selection of paragraphs generally represents the distribution of evaluation in *ABR* reviews. If this had not been the case, reviews' polarity should not correlate to the "compliment sandwich" form. There is a formal objection to this method: it may be that reviews of this length (between 300–1500 words) naturally follow a pattern that moves from summary to close analysis and ends with evaluation, which lends itself to the "compliment

sandwich”. Further research would be needed to determine whether this is a generic commonplace of most reviewing.

My polarity analysis employed two different levels of what corpus linguists call “unitisation” (the granular level at which polarity is assessed); I assessed polarity at the level of each sentence, and then averaged the results to determine the overall polarity of the paragraph. There were four possible assessments of polarity: Units assessed as “negative” received a score of 0.0; units assessed as “positive” received a score of 1.0; units assessed as “mixed” received a score of 0.5; units with no polarity (i.e., sentences that contained only summary, non-evaluative analysis, and neutral statements of fact) were excluded from averages.

So, if a paragraph contained six sentences, three of which were neutral (excluded), one of which was negative (a score of 0.0), one of which was mixed (a score of 0.5) and one of which was positive (a score of 1.0), the polarity average would be calculated by dividing the total score (1.5) by the total number of evaluative sentences (N=3). Following this method, this paragraph would receive a score of 0.5, which would suggest that it was mixed. This method might overstate the polarity of some paragraphs; if a paragraph contained five sentences, four of which were non-evaluative and one of which was negative (0.0), then the entire paragraph score would be 0.0. I would argue, however, that evaluative sentences following a neutral analysis or description often determine the tone of paragraphs.

I will briefly outline the criteria I used to assess polarity. Assessments of polarity are affected by subjective perception and background knowledge: A reader familiar with book reviews’ evaluative lexicon will probably be more sensitive to such judgments. Despite the subjectivity of such assessments, I was surprised that most evaluations of polarity seem straightforward. Positive evaluations often employ explicit modifiers. For example, Catriona Menzies-Pike’s 2015 review of Lisa Gorton’s *The Life of Houses* states that the novel “is a nuanced and intelligent reflection on the spaces mothers and daughters share” (19). Amy Ballicu’s 2015 review of James Bradley’s *Clade* notes that he “elegantly evokes the subtleties of his characters’ evolving relationships” (36). Felicity Plunket’s 2015 review of Amanda Lohrey’s *A Short History of Richard Kline* notes that Lohrey’s “perceptive analysis irradiates each of the novel’s questions” (37). Chris Flynn’s 2015 review of Steve Toltz’s *Quicksand* praises not only the novel under considerations but also three other novels *and* the publishing house that produced them:

Penguin Australia’s recent fiction output has been remarkable. Ceridwen Dovey’s *Only the Animals*, Omar Musa’s *Here Come the Dogs*, and James Bradley’s *Clade* have all been idiosyncratic and inventive reads, bristling

with energy and ideas. Steve Toltz's *Quicksand* proves to be the cherry on the cake—a beguiling novel that confounds and astonishes in equal measure, often on the same page (30).

The rampant praise here is so expansive that a cynical reader might be forgiven for wondering if Flynn—himself a novelist—is hoping to sign a contract with Penguin Random House in the future. In each case, though, modifying adjectives—“nuanced”, “intelligent”, “perceptive”, “idiosyncratic”, “interesting”, “beguiling”, “bristling”—indicate a positive polarity.

I deemed as “mixed” those evaluations in which criticisms were both advanced and ameliorated. For example, in his 2014 review of Rohan Wilson's *To Name Those Lost*, David Whish-Wilson both questions and praises the dark tone of the novel:

Wilson's vision of Launceston town is hellish, and some readers will question the relentlessness of his vision, his refusal to heighten the dark with contrasting moments of light (one episode in which children torture a cat felt like overkill), but this is not to detract from the novel's vitality or its perfectly rendered dialogue (55).

Here, the novel's “relentlessness” is queried with the suggestion that the novel may be too dark, but this criticism is paired with mitigating praise about the work's “vitality” and “perfectly rendered dialogue”; Whish-Wilson also suggests this criticism is a matter of personal disposition rather than a technical failing (although attributing this perspective to “some readers” could also pass off a subjective critique as a more objective one). In a 2015 review of Anson Cameron's *The Last Pulse*, Catriona Menzies-Pike similarly notes, regarding the novel's objectivising portrayal of women, that “In a gleeful and inclusive romp, this strikes a dud note” (32). While the comment is critical, it is alleviated by praise and cannot be considered wholly negative.

The distinction between “mixed” and “negative” assessments seems more subject to variation across readers. Some negative assessments are clear, as in the case of Rachel Robertson's 2014 review of *Riding A Crocodile: A Physician's Tale* by Paul Komesaroff when she notes that “Like the characters, the dialogue can be stilted and unconvincing, all too obviously serving the novel's themes” (32). Such wholly negative assertions are relatively uncommon in the sample of *ABR* reviews I analysed; the rarity of unqualified criticism goes some way to substantiating the claim that *ABR* reviews are “nice”, or at least aim to be *civil*.

Many of the criticisms I judged as negative were still hedged, as in Sarah Holland-Batt's 2014 review of *When the Night Comes* by Favel Parrett, which notes that “While the novel integrates its two halves evenly, they do

not always feel equally balanced or pressing” (12). Here the criticism—that novel’s two halves lack equal weight—is mitigated by the claim they are “integrated”—a fairly opaque distinction. The hedging of negative judgments may simply mean book reviewers finely calibrate their judgments to be sensitive to a novel’s form and the author’s apparent intentions. Nonetheless, Holland-Batt’s critique here differs in intensity from “mixed” evaluations because it does not counterpoise its criticism with strongly positive language.

Another source of potential variation requires consideration: several prominent critics studiously avoid the modifiers that typically signify evaluation. Such sentences, if not read carefully, can be incorrectly deemed “non-evaluative”. James Ley—recipient of the Pascall Prize and founding editor of the *Sydney Review of Books*—claims that “Whenever I write a sentence that sounds like the kind of thing that gets plastered across a book cover, I cross it out” (2014, 29). Kerryn Goldsworthy, winner of Pascall Prize and one of Australia’s most eminent critics, has also noted an aversion to overtly evaluative language:

I try to avoid direct expressions of evaluation—except in extreme cases, I don’t think the worth of a book can be confidently quantified—and, as a result, can sometimes find that I haven’t made my judgement as clearly as readers might have liked; I prefer to make more indirect comment on the book’s value by using descriptive terms with positive or negative connotations (2014, 22).

Goldsworthy’s 2014 review of Joan London’s *The Golden Age* demonstrates this precept when she states that “The curse of the Old World is invoked in flashbacks; although the word “Jewish” appears in this book only once ... a handful of scenes from wartime Europe tell us all we need to know in this respect” (11). The praise is implicit: London’s novel is understated and alludes indirectly to larger issues, such as anti-Semitism, which demonstrates her technical mastery. Goldsworthy’s observations positively reflect London’s craft and restraint without evaluative adjectives.

The dominance of the compliment sandwich

My expectation was that *ABR* reviews would not overwhelmingly conform to the “compliment sandwich”, but a significant proportion were “compliment sandwiches” in my analysis. This finding becomes more significant when considering some other trends revealed in the analysis. For one, overwhelmingly positive reviews make up a large portion of the sample: thirty-one of seventy-eight reviews (39.7 per cent) did not contain

any significant negative criticism in sampled paragraphs. The high prevalence of positive reviews to some degree substantiates the idea that *ABR* reviewing is often “nice”. Moreover, only two of the wholly positive reviews were “compliment sandwiches”—which is logical since a wholly positive review would normally not have any criticism requiring mitigation.

This high proportion of positive reviews was not balanced out by an equal number of harshly critical reviews. There are only seven reviews (8.9 per cent) that could be viewed as significantly negative (an overall evaluation score of 0.25 or lower). But there was a significant differential in the percentage of negative reviews in relation to form: while four of the twenty-two (18.2 per cent) of capsule reviews were negative, only three of the fifty-six (5.3 per cent) feature reviews were negative. I will consider the significance of this difference later in the essay.

Of the three negative feature reviews, Alison Bronowski’s review of *The Yellow Papers* by Dominique Wilson seems the most critical, raising significant concerns with little compensatory praise. Delia Falconer’s review of Mark Henshaw’s *The Snow Kimono* offered some significant critiques of the novel, which I will discuss at the end of this essay. Susan Lever’s 2015 review of *Merciless Gods* by Christos Tsiolkas, though it praises the author’s adherence to naturalism as “admirable”, ultimately concludes that “it makes for a severely confined literary art” (23). Such reviews are outliers, however, since seventy-one of the seventy-eight reviews are mixed or positive; my analysis thus applies within a context of reviewing practices that are often positive but rarely negative.

Another key finding—which differs from the model of the “compliment sandwich” that Etherington describes—is that evaluations almost always occur at the end of reviews but are less frequent in early paragraphs. Only thirty-four of the opening paragraphs (43.5 per cent) from my sample contained any evaluations, which is logical, given that opening paragraphs often provide summary information. Only seven of the reviews (8.9 per cent) had mixed or negative evaluations in the first paragraph, while twenty-seven of the thirty-four (79.4 per cent) first paragraphs with evaluations were positive. Of the median paragraphs, forty-six (58.9 per cent) contained evaluative language; again, many of the reviews seem to engage in thematic or formal analysis at this stage but refrain from evaluation. By contrast, fifty-five of the penultimate paragraphs (70.5 per cent) contained explicit evaluations (and seven of the thirteen (53.8 per cent) reviews whose penultimate paragraphs were non-evaluative were wholly positive). Seventy-three of the seventy-eight reviews (93.5 per cent) contained evaluations in the final paragraph. Only four (5.1 per cent) of these final paragraphs had a negative polarity overall. Again, this suggests that *ABR*

reviews tend to privilege a civil criticism that refrains from ending reviews on a negative note.

The inconsistent appearance of evaluation in early paragraphs means that—while I could not locate the form of the “compliment sandwich” Etherington describes—I could identify another form of what might be called the “open-face compliment sandwich” (OFCS). The OFCS leads with summary and formal analysis that has no evaluative polarity. It deploys negative or mixed criticism in the penultimate paragraph, which is qualified and alleviated in the final paragraph. Such reviews are not necessarily wholly positive in the final paragraph, but rather the polarity of final paragraph is higher than in the penultimate paragraph. Of the seventy-eight reviews I examined, thirty-five (44.8 per cent) conformed to the OFCS.

The OFCS is even more predominant than this suggests, because wholly positive reviews generally do not employ this form. Of the forty-seven reviews that were not wholly positive, thirty-three (70.2 per cent) met the criteria of the OFCS. Moreover, only two of the seven negative reviews adhered to the OFCS. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the OFCS is most common among mixed reviews, comprising thirty-one of the forty (77.5 per cent) mixed reviews. Regardless, it is clear the wholly positive review and the OFCS are the most common mode of *ABR* reviewing in my sample, since sixty-four of the seventy-eight reviews (82.1 per cent) belonged to one or both of these categories.

In this sense, then, my survey of *ABR* fiction reviews between September 2014 and August 2015 suggests that the OFCS is both a major form and the *dominant form* among reviews that are not wholly positive. The survey also suggests that such reviews, on balance, tend to follow a rough formal pattern: They open with summary information about the author or work; offer detailed non-evaluative analysis of the text in the middle of the review; present their most stringent critiques in the penultimate paragraph, and the qualify or soften such criticisms in the final paragraph. I now want to examine the consequences of these findings by considering their significance, offering some possible explanations, and returning to the question of whether or not *ABR* reviews are “too nice”.

Do open-faced compliment sandwiches matter?

My survey does suggest that the OFCS is prominent in *ABR* fiction reviews, and, following the claims applied by Etherington in “The Poet Tasters”, this would suggest that *ABR* reviews are “too nice”. Its “niceness” is further underscored by the prominence of overwhelmingly positive reviews, and the relative paucity of negative reviews. If one believes that reviewing

should be relentlessly critical and strongly negative where appropriate, then *ABR* appears to fail this test. What I want to examine now is how such criticism is motivated by what Pierre Bourdieu might describe as the field-position of different agents. In particular, I will make two claims:

- 1) attacks on overly “nice” reviews tend to ignore the commercial function of book reviewing, which cannot be easily separated from its critical task, and
- 2) the “niceness” (or not) of reviewing seems to be at least partially tied to the field-position of agents and organisations in important, and arguably determining, ways.

Etherington’s critique of “too nice” reviewing seems motivated by the idea that it undermines genuine criticism. In “The Poet Tasters” he suggests that the “compliment sandwich” blunts critical praxis. In “The Brain Feign” he argues that cordial reviewing practices do not apply adequate scrutiny and generate illegitimate praise that can harden into received opinion: “Critical acclaim compels us to entertain the idea that this novel’s distinction should be regarded universally to be true” (2013). Etherington elaborates on these claims in a comment left on an *Overland* essay also about reviewing practices, arguing that:

I think decline polemics arise out of a keen and justifiable sense of despair—that so many of the public performances of artistic experience (aka ‘criticism’) fail to articulate well the truth of those experiences; and nearly always under the predictable pressures of the distribution of real and symbolic capital (Brooker 2014).

Here, his frustration—presented in explicitly Bourdieusian terms—is directed towards criticism that reflects the social prestige of an author or publishing house, rather than applying a rigorous analysis outside of the commercial and symbolic valuations of the publishing industry. Etherington worries that reviewing practices might be informed by the commercial imperatives of the book trade rather than a disinterested or at least distanced application of critical rigor.

James Ley makes a similar point in *ABR*’s own “Critic of the Month” column from 2014 by arguing that “so much alleged ‘reviewing’ is transparently chicken-hearted and insipid” (37). But he diverges from Etherington in arguing that “niceness” is not an adequate metric since it reflects the “misperception ... that the salient aspect of a review is the critic’s final verdict” (*ibid.*, 37). As Ley argues, this undue emphasis on evaluation obscures the fact that the “quality of analysis is always more

important than one's personal impressions ... his primary concern of criticism is the meaning of the work, so whatever evaluations might follow are secondary concerns" (ibid., 37).

Presumably, the pernicious reviews Ley refers to are both overly evaluative and reflect commercial imperatives. Ley's suggestion for combatting "chicken-hearted" reviewing is not through Kantian disinterest, but the formation of strong critical dispositions:

A critic needs to have some kind of traction, some point of view. A perfectly even-handed critic would resemble the proverbial liberal who refuses to take his own side in an argument (ibid., 37).

Ley's arguments indicate a larger structural critique: the need for critics with "traction" presupposes the existence of a cultural and commercial structure that will foster the growth of what I will describe as "strong" critics—a term that is not meant as a form of subjective praise, but rather an objective description of position characteristics.

I am sympathetic to Etherington's and Ley's concerns, and have myself written an essay (Stinson 2013) in *The Sydney Review of Books*, which articulated similar concerns about reviewing practices.³ It needs to be noted that my analysis of *ABR* reviews potentially substantiates aspects of their claims. It is notable, for example, that, as I mentioned earlier, 18.1 per cent of capsule reviews are negative, while only 5.3 per cent of feature reviews are. Moreover, 41.1 per cent of feature reviews were wholly positive, while only 31.8 per cent of capsule reviews are. This distinction matters, because capsule reviews are much more likely to examine works by debut or lesser-known writers than feature reviews. Indeed, of the three negative feature reviews, one examines a debut work Dominique Wilson's *The Yellow Papers*. The difference in polarity between capsule and feature reviews suggests that the symbolical capital possessed by established authors might affect reviewers to some degree; when taken in aggregate, reviews of works by more established writers, which appear in feature reviews, are more likely to be overwhelmingly positive and less likely to be overwhelmingly negative. At the same time, it could be argued that more established authors are simply more likely to produce works of high quality and less likely to produce bad works.

³ It is worth emphasising that the criticisms of reviewing offered by myself, Etherington and others are hardly objective or disinterested. *The Sydney Review of Books* was founded at Western Sydney University, and runs out of the same offices as Giramondo publishing; both arguably reflect a set of highbrow literary practices and preferences.

So, while there may be merit to Etherington's and Ley's claims that social and economic capital affect reviewing, their claims largely ignore the fact that book reviews are inextricably tied to the book's status as a commodity—as evidenced by the fact that virtually all book reviews cover new releases. Book reviews straddle a divide between economic and “literary” notions of value, a distinction already made ambiguous given that published works of literature are always already commodities. Book reviews may contain incisive analysis—it may appear as if they *only* contain such analysis—but reviews are absolutely a form of indirect marketing presented as a specialised kind of informed consumer recommendation.

Ley's claim that reviewing is not primarily evaluative runs counter to the commercial conditions that underwrite virtually all forms of book reviewing. Books reviews are a hybrid genre, combining literary criticism, advertising and news reporting since the publication of a book is a newsworthy “event”; this hybridity produces a schizoid split because the genre has its feet planted in two irreconcilable notions of value (the economic and the literary). Ongoing debates about reviewing practices derive from this internal contradiction, which explains why such debates serve as a proxy for questions about the difference between commercial and literary regimes of value. From this perspective, reviewing practices, because they are enmeshed in the commerce of the book trade, inevitably reflect economic and symbolic capital. The campaign against “niceness” in reviewing often does not adequately grasp the intractability of this situation.

Moreover, attacks on “nice” reviews have not always adequately grappled with how such views derive from positions in the literary field. As I noted at the beginning of this chapter, attacks on literary “niceness” by Haigh and Etherington have been used to create controversy and discussion around the launch of new literary journals (*Kill Your Darlings* and *The Sydney Review of Books*). More recently, *The Saturday Paper* attracted attention for its book reviews by instituting a policy that its reviewers remain anonymous. These provocations suggest that existing publications—such as *ABR*—are staid and “too nice”, whereas the new publications will offer different and more objective forms of criticism. In other words, the argument against “niceness” enables new entrants to the field of literary journals to justify their existence and differentiate themselves in a crowded market. Attacks on “niceness” reflect the position characteristics of upstart journals seeking to challenge the legitimacy of powerful agents or organisations that determine the structure of the field.

A journal like *ABR* seems to have little to gain from publishing overly critical reviews. It is already established as a prominent outlet for literary reviewing, has an active subscriber base, various forms of institutional

support and recognition, and attracts significant private donations. This last fact suggests that many *ABR* subscribers and stakeholders have attachments—whether formal, informal, or emotional—to established literary institutions. Given this, why would *ABR* disrupt the circuits of reviewing that underwrite its influence? I also suspect that *ABR*'s generally civil reviewing practices reflect the expectations of its audience (both subscribers and stakeholders), who want informed cultural recommendations and restrained analysis, rather than literary provocations. In other words, the “niceness” of *ABR* reviews probably cannot be separated from the position the journal occupies in the field and the concomitant expectations of its readers and stakeholders.

It is also interesting to note that many of the most vocal critics of “nice” reviewing have positions that are related to, but not directly involved with, the book trade. Etherington is an academic. Haigh is known primarily as a sports writer. I am an academic, and James Ley, although he is an active freelance book-reviewer, has a PhD and has written an academic monograph on literary book reviewing (*The Critic and the Modern World* 2014). On the one hand, this outsider status enables the capacity to look at the functioning of literary symbolic capital without economic self-interest. On the other hand, the “outsider” status of such critics means they are not subject to the same penalties for violating the rules of the game as those directly engaged with literary commerce. In this sense, outsiders’ criticism of “insiders” ignores the precarious nature of making a living through the publishing industry.

Professional reviewers similarly experience economic precariousness: very few people in Australia can make a living from book reviewing, because the work is typically undertaken on a freelance basis (which is always feast or famine) and there is a paucity of outlets for reviews. As a result, few book reviewers have the economic liberty to cast aside or ignore the conventions of book reviewing, which probably often do encourage civility (or “niceness”) and discourage overly critical reviews, at least in the case of well-known authors.

There are, however, some exceptions to this tendency. These exceptions are critics who write for publications like *ABR* but are still able to offer negative assessments even of works that have been highly regarded. I term these individuals “strong critics”, both because of their capacity to express negative evaluations outside of the accepted OFCS form and because this capacity is backed by a store of symbolic capital. From this perspective, stringent reviewing would not simply reflect the strength of personal convictions, but rather an agent’s position in the field, which enables him or her to make such claims without fear of reprisal, losing face, undermining relationships, or simply being ignored. In this sense, being a “strong critic”

still requires one to “play the game” within the literary field, since the reviewer in question needs to be esteemed (i.e., to have an adequate amount of symbolic capital) and to publish in an outlet or journal that will be sufficiently read (either be other cultural producers or the broader public or both) to have an impact on the field.

One potential example of strong criticism in the sample I analysed comes from Delia Falconer’s review of Mark Henshaw’s *The Snow Kimono* (2014), which was generally well-reviewed and won the Christina Stead Prize for Fiction in the NSW Premier’s Literary Awards. Despite such accolades, Falconer highlights a variety of problems in the book with analytical rigor, by noting both its intellectual aims, and simultaneously describing the problematic results of the novel’s employment of “an oddly affectless, flat prose”:

The effect is like watching the kind of arthouse film in which everything receives lingering attention from the camera — the rain on a window pane, light on a flagstone park—and especially women’s sufferings, as a highly aestheticized element of the *mise en scene* (10).

Here, these reservations, along with questions about the novel’s sexual politics are raised in the review’s final paragraph, and the criticism builds towards the final sentence which offers a clearly negative evaluation: “I finished *The Snow Kimono* with a queasy sense of discomfort, and not, I sense, of the sort intended” (ibid., 10). Nonetheless, it is worth noting that even this strong opinion is articulated in a highly-personalised and hedged (e.g., “I sense”) mode that employs affect as a strategy for softening stringent criticism. Thus, even moments of “strong” criticism—which make critical assertions about books against the grain of broader reception—still employ hedges. Perhaps, then, the debates about the “niceness” of literary reviewing are about field position in the sense that they raise the question of who is allowed to offer strong critiques of novels and under what circumstances.

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CHAPTER TWENTY

FICTION PUBLISHING IN AUSTRALIA, 2013–2017¹

DAVID CARTER & MILLICENT WEBER

“It is a matter of some puzzlement that the one sector of the creative industries about which we know very little is the sector that has been with us for the longest time—the book publishing industry” (Thompson 2012, xiii). So begins the first sociological study of Anglophone trade-book publishing, John B. Thompson’s *Merchants of Culture: The Publishing Business in the Twentieth-First Century*. Despite the prominence of publishing and reading in the new media landscape, the area of publishing studies has largely been neglected in accounts of the creative industries with only a few partial exceptions (e.g., Bonner 2014; Gelder 2004). Books are frequently cast as “old media”, despite the dramatic rise in digital reading devices, online bookselling, and e-book production (Coronel 2014, 4). Elsewhere the blurring of “books” with “literature: has meant the field is identified with a consecrated aesthetic realm and its status as ‘everyday culture’: ignored”.

Publishing studies is also situated in a disciplinary grey area between communications, literary studies, book history, writing, and business studies. While this heterogeneity has meant that book publishing has frequently fallen through disciplinary cracks, it has also led to innovative, hybrid research. Such research includes work on cultural institutions and value, frequently taking its bearings from Pierre Bourdieu’s model of the literary field (Bourdieu 1993; Driscoll 2014; English 2005; Gelder 2004), while recent studies of literary marketing (Collins 2010; Squires 2009),

¹ An earlier essay using the same methodology focused on the period 2000–2013: Carter 2016a. Research for the essay was enabled by the support of two separate ARC-funded projects: “Australian Cultural Fields: National and Transnational Dynamics” (led by Tony Bennett) and “Genre Worlds: Australian Popular Fiction in the 21st century” (with Beth Driscoll, Lisa Fletcher, Kim Wilkins).

reading cultures (Fuller and Rehberg Sedo 2013), digital publishing (Striphas 2009; Murray 2018) and the adaptation industry (Murray 2012) have brought books and reading into the purview of cultural/media studies.

Following Bourdieu, the present essay takes the “literary field” to be exemplary rather than ex-centric as a field of cultural production, insofar as it is still defined fundamentally by the relation between economic and symbolic rewards; but also, in more contemporary terms, by its hybrid local, national and transnational structures, its uncertain status as an object of policy and state investment, and its uneven transitions between old and new media. These different settings and determinants will be discussed in detail below, with the focus on fiction publishing as a major sector within the broader domain of trade-book publishing in Australia. This essay locates the Australian publishing industry within a globalised industry—and publishing was arguably the *first* globalised media industry—and maps the structures and recent developments characteristic of the field of fiction publishing, including the impact of digital technologies. Further, it traces the function of “literary fiction” as an industry category as well as a locus of symbolic value and national cultural capital.

Trade publishing, in contrast to the educational, academic or professional sectors, refers to the very diverse sphere of fiction and non-fiction books “intended for general readers and sold primarily through bookstores and other retail outlets” (Thompson 2012, 12). Trade or consumer books are the publishing industry’s “most visible products” (Lee et al. 2009, 9), and fiction the single largest category in terms of production and sales. In Australia, fiction titles comprise more than a third of new titles published annually (excluding educational) and around a quarter of total sales value (Carter 2007, 232–36; Zwar 2016, 6). However, estimates also suggest that sales of *literary* fiction, in the restricted sense of the term, comprise only five per cent of trade sales, and Australian-authored literary fiction 2.5 per cent or less (Zwar 2016, 8).

From an industry perspective, literary fiction sits within the broader field of fiction publishing which in turn sits largely within the general field of trade publishing; “largely”, but not entirely, because literary publishing is also concentrated on the margins of or constituted in opposition to trade publishing and its commercial imperatives. Literary publishing is frequently tied to areas of production, typically small-scale, that are fully invested in the prestige of literature as art—in the “autonomy” of artistic production, in Bourdieu’s terms (1993, 37–39)—or in other forms of symbolic value, such as authenticity, the local, or the new. This distinctive constitution is clearest for poetry, which exists essentially within a separate publishing economy (Lea 2007) where the limits of commercial success become the virtues of

commitment to artistic autonomy, but such position-taking can also be found among niche genre fiction publishers.

From the perspective of field theory, however, trade-book publishing and the fiction industry exist *within* the “literary field” (Bourdieu 1993, 38–51). Bourdieu’s analysis of avant-garde as opposed to bourgeois taste and institutions (almost always misread in the Anglophone context as the opposition between high literary and mass commercial production) has limited explanatory power for the contemporary Australian literary field. Indeed, it is remarkable how little the local dynamics have had this logic since the 1970s: factions are now more likely to emerge among genre fiction producers or digital activists, staking new claims to symbolic value against consecrated forms of literary taste. Nonetheless, the struggle between “autonomous” and “heteronomous” principles of legitimacy (Bourdieu 1993, 38–41), or in simpler terms the opposition between commercial and cultural imperatives, continues to structure the key institutions of the literary field in fundamental ways, despite the greater blurring of high and popular categories that critics—and publishers keeping up with market trends—have noted. The literary field behaves at one end like the art field, as if it were an economy of scarcity where only a small number of rare objects count; but at the other end, it operates as an economy of abundance, like popular music, with the replicability of print media and comparatively low barriers to entry into the industry ensuring a surfeit of goods in both mass and niche markets. While literary works can circulate in hundreds of thousands and the methods of their production (if not their production values) are the same as those of other kinds of book, the economy of prestige is still narrowly distributed and organised hierarchically through the institutions that produce and circulate them. These include institutions of reviewing, scholarship, prizes, and, not least, the internal organisation of publishing houses—their organisation into different imprints, the publishing process determined for each individual book, and the position of each agent within that process.

Thus, trade publishing participates in *both* economies, both principles of legitimacy, and this is true for small specialised literary publishers no less than for the big players. The opposition between “the field of restricted production” and “the field of large-scale production” (Bourdieu 1993, 39) operates internally within the larger houses, especially in relation to fiction, which extends voluminously all the way up and down the scale of value. In Bourdieu’s (1993, 51) words, “the novel ... is the most dispersed genre in terms of its forms of consecration”. Fiction is thus where the balance or stand-off between economic and symbolic capitals is most intense, but also most banal. Within the industry, notions of literary fiction function in two

distinct ways. “Literary” retains the more traditional sense signalling cultural value, but also increasingly operates as a quasi-generic term: literary fiction as “a kind of *category fiction*” in its own right (Collins 2010, 225). For a publisher or bookseller to assign a novel to a literary or general fiction list rather than a crime, romance or fantasy imprint is to make a judgement about *kind* in the first instance rather than quality.

In this light, the utility of Thompson’s *Merchants of Culture* is not simply the detailed information it provides about the industry but its explicit use of Bourdieu’s field theory to model its subject: trade publishing as a relatively autonomous field “in which agents and organizations are linked together in relations of cooperation, competition and interdependency” (Thompson 2012, 4). The field-like attributes of the industry are evident in the ordinary competitive and cooperative relations that exist among publishers, among agents, and between agents and publishers. Thompson distinguishes five separate but interlocking forms of capital that represent the key resources for publishing firms: economic capital, human capital, social capital, intellectual capital and symbolic capital (*ibid.*, 4–9). As Bourdieusian theory would suggest, the “differential distribution of economic and symbolic capital” (*ibid.*, 9) is the most significant and most likely to characterise distinctive successes in the field of publishing. Here we begin to see the unique “logic of the field”. The rules of the game are distinct, and while the field is “intensely competitive [and] characterized by a high degree of inter-organisational rivalry” (*ibid.*, 10)—publishers, like recording companies, compete for content as well as for customers (*ibid.*, 11)—there is also a high degree of consensus as to the rewards in play. Or rather, the forms of consensus and competition are articulated around two different interpretations of these rewards:

the ‘value’ of a particular book or book project is understood in one of two ways: its sales or sales potential, that is, its capacity to generate economic capital; and its quality, which can be understood in various ways but includes its potential for winning various forms of recognition such as prizes and glowing reviews, or in other words, its capacity to generate symbolic capital. These are the only two criteria—there simply are no other (*ibid.*, 10).

Sometimes the two criteria will work together, often they will conflict; but both will be important for all publishers. Converting a good book into a bestseller has symbolic and not merely economic value in the field.

This same logic produces the ambivalent place for literature in national cultural policy (Carter and Kelly 2018). In Australia, literature was the first target of such policy with the founding of the Commonwealth Literary Fund in 1908; it was one of the named Boards of the Australia Council until its

recent restructure; and state and federal governments now invest significantly in literary festivals and prizes (about A\$1.5 million on the latter). In September 2015, it appeared a new stage in policy attention to the literary field—or at least to the publishing industry—was about to begin when the federal government announced the terms of its promised Book Council of Australia. These terms restated in the strongest manner the cultural significance of “Australian literature and literary non-fiction”:

Australian literature is vital to our cultural and intellectual life. Australian writers are ambassadors for our stories and experiences, reflecting the diverse and exceptional creativity of the nation. The Book Council of Australia will ... focus on promoting Australian writing nationally and internationally, developing and extending audience engagement with Australian literature, and nurturing a vibrant reading and writing culture (Attorney-General 2015).

The Council’s brief was to cover “the accessibility of books and writing for all Australians; the breadth and diversity of Australian writing; support for and promotion of high quality Australian literature; [and] the Australian publishing industry’s capacity to meet new technologies and competitive challenges”. As such, it promised to reverse “the long drift of cultural policy arguments towards cultural industry arguments” (Glover 2015a, 14) and indeed was part of a deliberate positioning of the Council as first and foremost a matter of cultural rather than economic policy, along with the decision to launch the new body out of the Arts rather than Industry portfolio (Throsby 2017, 10).

There had been no extended consideration of literature or publishing in earlier cultural policy statements, neither in *Creative Nation* (1994) nor *Creative Australia* (2013); while important industry reports were commissioned (PwC 2011; BICC 2013), “Australian literature” as an object of cultural policy appeared to be fading. The Book Council, however, was controversial from the outset, on the one hand for being financed by funds withdrawn from the Australia Council’s budget, and on the other for representing the established players and an old model of publishing at the expense of newer forms based on “smaller and more mobile forms of literary production and consumption” (Glover 2015b). Nonetheless, its demise amidst government leadership changes in December 2015, before it even began operation, did represent a lost opportunity. A model defined by the contiguous but potentially conflicted claims of Australian literature, aesthetic quality, “books and writing”, “reading culture”, and industry capacity—by mixed national, social-reformist, aesthetic and commercial imperatives—would not necessarily be a policy failure.

Bourdieu's two-dimensional model with its horizontal relational structure of positions within a field and its vertical scale of symbolic value brings the institutional and industrial aspects of literary production into relation with the aesthetic. This made one kind of sense in a literary field (as in 1970s France) where publishing was largely a matter of independent houses that behaved like self-governing individuals, more or less consciously taking a position within a self-contained field, and where homologues existed across authors, editors, publishers, booksellers and critics (Bourdieu's term "cultural production" (1993, 39) refers primarily to writers rather than publishers, although he tellingly describes the latter's structurally ambivalent position). If this was also the case in the US and UK until the 1960s through the familiar names—Doubleday, Simon & Schuster, Scribner, Viking, Knopf, Macmillan, Longman, Heinemann, Jonathan Cape, etc.—the fit is much less obvious in the contemporary Anglophone book trade given its dramatic restructuring since the 1980s by the emergence of multinational publishing conglomerates and global booksellers. The symbolic logic of the literary field in the present needs to be mapped rather across a fundamental structural feature of the industry: its dramatic polarisation between a very small number of very large multinational corporations and a very large number of small, local independent publishers, with relatively few medium-sized firms in between. The dynamics of production and bookselling produced by this polarisation significantly determine the logic of the field. Size and scale will determine what strategies and business models are available, the kinds of access to economic or symbolic capital, and possible relations to local or national cultures. But the questions of scale will vary according to the specific dynamics of each domestic market.

Thompson's focus is on the US and UK industries, and his arguments need careful drawing down into the Australian situation. In what ways is the Australian book trade on the receiving end of developments originating elsewhere, and how far does the Australian context exert its own pressures back onto these larger forces? It is useful to recall O'Regan's (1996) description of Australia as a "middle-sized English-language" culture. If the effects of the English-language dimension are clear, "middle-sized" is no less significant: Australia is big enough for major producers to want a slice of the action; big enough to be an exporter; but not big enough to satisfy the local market. Book exports grew thirty-nine per cent from A\$162 million in 2001 to A\$225 million in 2010 (PwC 2011, 54). At home, forty-eight per cent of revenue for publishers is derived from Australian books (PwC 2011, 54). Titles published in Australia represented forty-seven of the top one hundred sellers among adult fiction across twelve years to August 2014,

although this number included seven works by American Jodi Picoult (in Australian editions) and multiple titles by a small group of authors: Bryce Courtenay, Tim Winton, Matthew Reilly, and Di Morrissey (Nielsen Bookscan 2014). (Compare, too, Dixon's 2005 characterisation of the field of Australian literature in relation to the "Tim Winton phenomenon"). Still, the figures suggest a mature industry, however uneven the distribution of its resources and rewards. Australia is no longer a dominion or client state within a closed literary and publishing system, but a medium-sized player, both importer and exporter, within a globalised industry and a transnational market, especially for fiction. Indeed, "Australian book publishers are ... enmeshed with global markets, both as buyers and sellers, to a far greater extent than their counterparts in the USA" (Lee et al. 2009, 25).

The polarisation of the field among English-language publishers can readily be demonstrated. In US trade publishing in 2007–2008, Random House and Penguin occupied the top two positions, sharing twenty-four per cent of total sales (Thompson 2012, 117). The remaining big players were HarperCollins at 9.5 per cent and Simon & Schuster at 7.5 per cent, followed by the Hachette and Holtzbrinck groups. The top four accounted for more than forty per cent of total US trade sales, the top six almost fifty per cent, and the top twelve almost two-thirds. The picture from the UK is very similar. Hachette, Random House, Penguin, HarperCollins and Pan Macmillan dominate, with the top four commanding almost fifty per cent of trade sales and the top ten over sixty per cent (Thompson 2012, 124).

This top-end domination was spectacularly reinforced in July 2013 with the merger of Penguin and Random House, "the two largest consumer book publishers in the world"; two "trophy brands"—as characterised by CEO Markus Dohle (Frankfurt Book Fair 2013)—that merged to form "the first truly global publishing company with operations in the US, Canada, UK, India, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, Spain, Mexico, Argentina, Uruguay, Colombia and Chile. [It] employs more than 10,000 people and publishes more than 15,000 new titles every year across 250 imprints" (Pearson 2013). The scale is extraordinary. But Dohle could also advocate the virtues of smallness:

Penguin and Random House before the merger were actually two communities of small and medium size publishing houses, creatively and entrepreneurially independent. The task is to bring these two communities of small and medium size publishing houses together into one and still preserve that small company feel on the creative, author- and agent-facing part of the business ... The core of the book business will always be local.(quoted in Frankfurt Book Fair 2013).

This is not just “management-speak”. It is a powerful truth about publishing, and of defining significance for Australia.

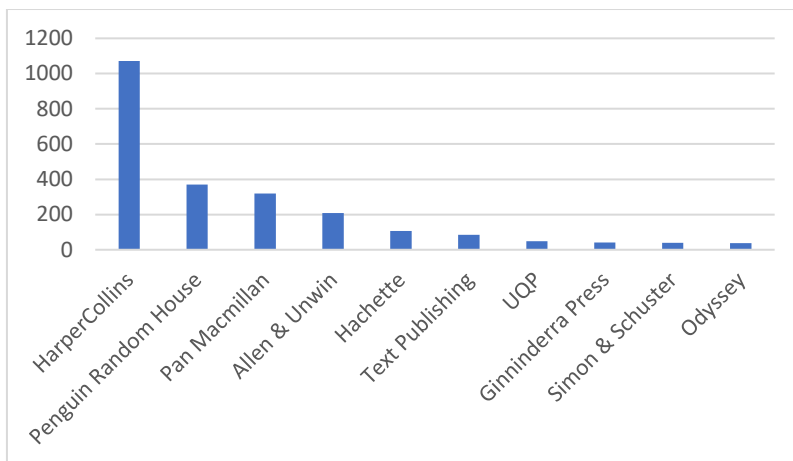
There are obvious advantages in being large in terms of economies of scale, capital resources (the ability to offer larger advances and absorb larger losses), negotiating power, and access to markets. But there are also tangible if less obvious advantages in being small—a shared ethos among independent publishers, booksellers and authors, close knowledge of local markets and writing scenes, the absence of some of the pressures on large firms (such as agents expecting high advances), and, for some, a high level of symbolic capital through personal editorial attention or an overt commitment to cultural values. Being medium sized, by contrast, can make it difficult to benefit from either scale (Thompson 2012, 148–76).

The concentration of these major publishers is reinforced when we map in the corporations that own these publishers and the imprints they control (see Thompson 2012, 410–14). All are now active in Australia. Their presence looks like a classic instance of cultural/economic imperialism thwarting or threatening the local industry and hence the local (national or regional) culture. This diagnosis has often been made, and certainly there have been casualties, but the picture is more complex (Bode 2014, 79–81). For the point of mergers and acquisitions is not just global growth but also to gain a foothold in local markets. The multinationals now operate as major “Australian” publishers, and indeed are the major publishers of Australian books produced for the local market. What we see here is a classic instance of the capacity of the big firms to work small as well as large. Their success depends not only upon capital or size but also, as noted above, on their capacity to build symbolic and social capital locally “on the creative, author- and agent-facing part of the business” (Frankfurt Book Fair 2013).

In Australia between 2013 and 2017 (Figure 1), the top four publishers of Australian fiction were the three multinationals HarperCollins, Penguin Random House (PRH) and Pan Macmillan, and one local independent house, Allen & Unwin. These were followed at some distance by Hachette, Text Publishing, University of Queensland Press (UQP), Ginninderra Press, Simon & Schuster (still much smaller than the other multinationals), and Odyssey Books in the top ten. (The next five in order are Brio Books [formerly Xoum], Fremantle Press, Hardie Grant, Transit Lounge, and Brolga Books). The top three firms were responsible for just over thirty per cent of all new fiction titles, and the top six for thirty-seven per cent (down from near forty-five per cent for the period 2000–2013). The extraordinary figures for HarperCollins, with over eighteen per cent of the total on its own, is due largely to romance publisher Harlequin, which HarperCollins acquired in 2013; excluding Harlequin’s titles from HarperCollins’s total

brings their results into the mid-range of the top five, just below Allen & Unwin.²

Figure 1: Top ten fiction publishers 2013–2017 (novels/novellas, new titles), excluding children’s fiction³



Source: AustLit www.austlit.edu.au.

² The statistics represented in this essay have been derived from AustLit (www.austlit.edu.au) except where otherwise referenced. Searches have been limited to “Australia” as place of publication and the date range 2013–2017 as first known date. All books indexed in AustLit are tagged by form (e.g., “novel”, “novella”) and where relevant by genre (e.g., “crime”, “romance”). The latter, of course, is inevitably much more subjective and/or reliant on information from publishers and other external indicators. In order to produce the separation between “literary fiction” and “genre fiction”, searches have been conducted on the following genres: crime/detective/mystery; romance; fantasy; science fiction; adventure/thriller; horror; western. Novels and novellas not tagged with any of these genre terms have been counted as “literary fiction” (including those tagged as “historical fiction”, humour, satire and a number of other terms). No judgements have been made as to literary quality. For a fuller explanation of the methodology, see Carter 2016b, 2–5.

³ The publisher names used here and in Figure 2. cover multiple imprints: HarperCollins (Harlequin, Escape, Carina, Mira, Mills & Boon, Fourth Estate, William Morrow), Penguin Random House (Hamish Hamilton, Michael Joseph, Viking, Bantam, Vintage, Destiny Romance, Penguin, Random House, Transworld), Pan Macmillan (Macmillan, Momentum, Pan, Picador, Tor), Allen & Unwin (Arena), Hachette (Hodder Deadline), Brio (Xoum, Seizure, Fantastica, XO Romance).

It should also be noted that Figure 1 excludes self-publishing and “pay-to-publish” enterprises, which must nevertheless be acknowledged as increasingly significant producers of new fiction titles: the more prolific examples include Zeus (115 titles), Vivid (fifty-seven), Sid Harta (forty-nine), MoshPit (forty-five), Inspiring (forty), BookPal (thirty-six), and Horizon (30). Self-published titles represent approximately forty-five per cent of all new fiction titles published in the 2013–2017 period—“approximately”, because the distinctions between traditional royalty-based publishing, vanity publishing and self-publishing are increasingly difficult to draw. Many firms now offer a mix of traditional, self-publishing, and “cooperative” or “customised” publishing services in print and digital formats.

If we remove Young Adult fiction (just over eleven per cent of the total), the ordering changes slightly but the top six remain the same with much the same percentage share. Brio Books and Fremantle Press join the top ten (at the expense of Odyssey; Fremantle’s numbers equal UQP’s in tenth position). Whichever way the numbers are assembled, the pattern recurs: a small cluster of large publishers at the top responsible for a high proportion of the titles released, followed by a long tail of independent firms, medium sized, such as UQP, Fremantle, Pantera Press, Transit Lounge, Black Inc., or Scribe (all with at least ten titles in the period surveyed), then small and smaller enterprises. The “long tail” comprises dedicated literary houses with a high investment in cultural value, specialist genre outlets, and occasional publishers with little investment at all in the prestige stakes.

Although this pattern reproduces the US and UK situation, critically it also indicates local differences for the Australian market/industry. What is noteworthy is less that the multinationals dominate, but that there is one Australian independent in the top four, two in the top six, and five altogether in the top ten. This suggests firstly, that being medium sized is more sustainable in Australia’s medium-sized market than in the larger overseas markets, but also secondly, that what counts as medium-sized in Australia is comparatively small. While the largest independent, Allen & Unwin, publishes around 250 titles annually, a medium-sized publisher such as UQP, with around sixty titles, also ranks quite highly. The book trade itself sees an “expanding middle-ground, where [for all categories] 101 publishers produced between 20 and 99 titles each and another 96 published between 11 and 20 titles” (Coronel 2014). At the other end of the scale, almost ninety per cent produced between one and five titles only.

The majors are dominant in both literary and genre fiction, but unevenly depending on sector. Isolating literary fiction (for the 2013–2017 period), PRH, Allen & Unwin, Pan Macmillan, and HarperCollins dominate in that order, followed by Hachette, then local independents Ginninderra, Text,

UQP, and Fremantle (while the “small multinational” Simon & Schuster again appears in the middle of the local firms, just above UQP). While five of the top ten firms are local independents, there is however a significant gap between fourth-placed HarperCollins’s sixty-three titles and the next two independents, Ginninderra and Text, with thirty-five and thirty-four titles respectively. Only the top four publishers averaged ten or more titles annually. In the middle, fourteen publishers averaged between four and one, and all except Simon & Schuster were independents: firms such as UQP, UWA Publishing, Giramondo, Fremantle, and Wakefield Press. In the literary sphere, we might say, the long tail begins after this group, among those firms publishing fewer than five new titles over the period surveyed.

For genre fiction, romance—by far the largest of the generic categories, with 1766 titles published in 2013–2017—is dominated unsurprisingly by HarperCollins’s Harlequin and related imprints, responsible on their own for forty-eight per cent of romance titles in the period surveyed (for further analysis of genre publishing see Driscoll et al. 2018). In terms of market share, this figure is in fact a decline from the sixty-four per cent recorded for the period 2010–2013, indicating the recent commitment of other major players to the expanding romance market, not least through digital imprints such as PRH’s *Destiny Romance*. HarperCollins, PRH, Pan Macmillan and Hachette between them cover sixty-one per cent of new romance titles, and the vast majority of the remainder are self-published. By contrast, a much larger number of independents figure in crime publishing, which overall recorded 574 titles for the period. The prominence of these independents testifies to crime’s higher cultural standing among genre forms and its generic investment in local settings. The multinationals, including Simon & Schuster, produced only seventeen per cent of crime titles in the period surveyed, while a group of twenty independents produced 22 per cent.

In sum, local independents are comparatively far more visible in literary and crime fiction publishing than in romance, thriller/adventure and fantasy. Medium-sized firms are substantially represented, but the multinationals dominate in *both* literary and genre fiction, that is, in both the more profitable and the more prestigious forms of publishing. As shown by examples such as Christos Tsiolkas’s *The Slap* (Allen & Unwin) or Tim Winton’s novels (Penguin), the larger publishers are better placed to get the double whammy of cultural prestige and commercial success. With the exception of crime, where publishing patterns more closely resemble those of mainstream fiction despite the genre’s taste for seriality, the medium-sized publishers are much less engaged with genre fiction. For romance in particular, but also fantasy and science fiction, this is due in part to the typical pattern of larger print-runs and relatively rapid production of

successive titles rather than the title-by-title strategies common elsewhere. However, the balance is beginning to shift with the multiplication of specialist and niche lists among small to medium-sized publishers.

Again, the advantages of size are evident: large publishers can act small where it matters, for example in cultivating a literary list, and big where that matters, say in sustaining a romance list. Medium-sized publishers can play across the various sectors, maintaining a literary list while also investing in selected genres or a few genre titles, especially when these are closest to mainstream or literary fiction (as with Text's crime list). A small publisher, by contrast, has little option but to keep it small, to specialise or invest in literary prestige.

The dynamics of Australia's medium-sized industry have produced a distinctive *modus operandi* for those large enough to deploy the different strategies:

To cater for a modest but affluent market in which imported books and locally originated titles are sold side by side, successful Australian trade publishers have developed a distinctive business model in which revenue is derived from multiple sources: importation, the publication of Australian-originated titles and of local editions of overseas-originated titles, overseas rights sales, exports and, in the case of several of the larger firms, revenue from distributing third parties (Lee et al. 2009, 29).

Indeed, despite the accelerated pace of multinational consolidation, we cannot assume that the local industry has been suddenly or radically transformed by globalisation. Firstly, multinational publishers began to play a significant role in Australian publishing much earlier, in the 1980s, and their role as publishers of Australian novels increased steadily through the 1990s (Bode 2014, 74–76). Secondly, this growth has *not* been sustained. There has been a slight but steady decline in the proportion of Australian novels produced by multinational firms, from fifty-two per cent in the 1990s to forty-eight per cent in the 2000s. Over the same period, the field of Australian novel publishing has become less concentrated: the top five publishers contributed forty-two per cent of all titles in the 1980s and thirty per cent in the 2000s (Bode 2014, 84). Bode (2014, 91) also confirms the notion of an expanding middle: “the considerable expansion in this middle band [of publishers] suggests a diverse local industry with a substantial and growing commitment to Australian literature”. Our own figures concur: among the top thirty-five publishers of literary fiction, the proportion contributed by the top five declined from sixty-seven to fifty-seven per cent between 2000 and 2013, while the contribution of local independents rose from forty to sixty-six per cent. In the 2013–2017 period, the top five were

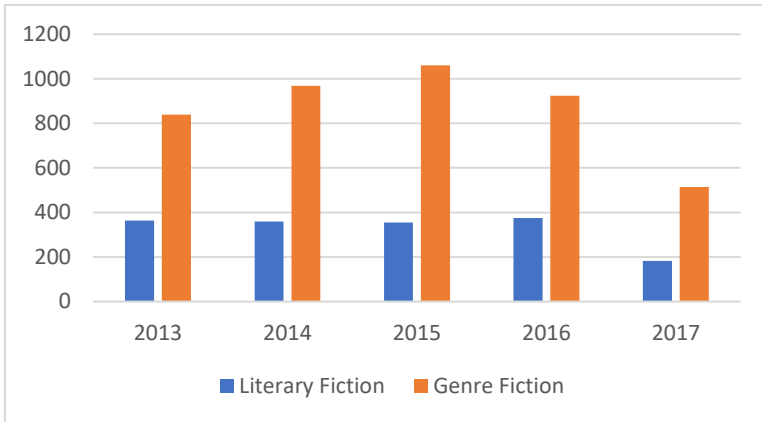
responsible for a relatively modest forty-eight per cent and the local independents for the remaining fifty-two per cent (excluding vanity and self-publishers).

Figures for the 2000–2013 period indicated a rapid expansion in new adult fiction titles over the final years, from 306 in 2010 to 723 in 2013, and an even greater increase in genre fiction, from 160 to 434 (Carter 2016b). These earlier figures recorded only new *novels*. For the more recent period, 2013–2017, we have included novellas as well in order to reflect the growing importance of this mode of publishing—novellas published serially, then together in a single volume—which seems well suited to digital release and the already often serial nature of genre fiction. The high numbers recorded for 2013 have been maintained, with more than a thousand new titles appearing each year from 2013 to 2016. (At the time research was conducted, the 2017 figure was only 697 in the AustLit database, but the total will increase as indexing continues. The ratios examined below remain consistent). Even excluding novellas from the count, the numbers remain high: 1119, 1209, 1275, 1174 and 662 for each year from 2013 to 2017. Numbers of new literary fiction works have been maintained (above 350 for each year 2013–2016 and above 335 excluding novellas); again, genre fiction has grown more rapidly, peaking at 1061 new works in 2015. Excluding YA fiction, the *ratio* of literary fiction to genre fiction, as far as this can be calculated, remained reasonably consistent between 2000 and 2013, fluctuating around an average of forty-nine per cent, lowest in 2012 at forty-two per cent. The revised figures for 2013–2017 reveal an even lower percentage, but not quite evidence of a steady, ongoing decline: thirty per cent (2013), twenty-seven per cent (2014), twenty-five per cent (2015), twenty-nine per cent (2016), twenty-six per cent (2017), with an average over the period of 27.4 per cent.

The higher numbers of new titles published since 2012 is due in large part to digital publishing and e-books. In Australia, there was an eightfold increase between 2009 and 2013 in the number of books published in digital formats, with numbers peaking in 2013 at twenty-nine per cent of all titles published (Coronel 2014, 4). With many books released in print and digital formats, the precise contribution of e-books is not clear, nor are reliable sales data kept, but the rise in e-book production for *fiction* would certainly be above twenty-nine per cent (Ebooks in Oz, 2012, 10). By comparison, e-books represent some twenty-five to thirty per cent of sales in the US and UK, but nearly forty per cent of fiction sales (Wischenbart 2014, 23–26). However, the rapid growth in sales has slowed—in the US sales fell eight per cent in the first quarter of 2015 (Milliot, 2015)—and many predict they will stabilise at around a quarter or a third of overall sales (Wischenbart 2014).

In Australia, the proportion of books published in digital formats appears to have stabilised at just over twenty per cent (Jefferies, 2017, 6). E-books are now “in the later stages of the innovation curve and have settled into reasonably predictable consumption patterns” (Milliot 2013).

Figure 2 New adult fiction titles 2013–2017 (first published in Australia).



Source: AustLit www.austlit.edu.au

In the Australian case, it is still too early to say whether the recent growth in fiction publishing is sustainable, or even whether print or digital formats are the key to its sustainability. The longer-term impact of the digital revolution is likely to be in the area of bookselling and distribution. For publishers, e-books mean “more units but less revenue” (Donoughue 2013, 17), and the “overwhelming majority of the industry’s profits still derive from print” (Stinson 2013, ix). The multinationals are best-placed to reap the benefits of investing in multiple digital titles in the hope that one or two might take off, in which case they would probably be released in print. All now have digital-first imprints privileging popular fiction—Pan Macmillan’s Momentum imprint for sci-fi, fantasy, romance and thrillers (the imprint has been wound back since 2017), HarperCollins’s Impulse within its speculative fiction Voyager imprint, Penguin’s Destiny Romance (active 2013–2015) and Harlequin’s Escape. For smaller publishers, digital production is likely to have a different rationale, becoming less a question of expansion than reducing costs.

The spread of publishers in Australia points to a mature industry and a relatively stable (rather than crisis-ridden) book culture, despite the vulnerabilities inherent in the system for the small and medium-sized

players. Conceptions of domestic or national markets remain significant, although just how the notion of Australia literature as a national literature will be sustained is much less clear. Genre fiction is expanding at a faster rate than literary fiction. But the latter is also growing, alongside mid-range titles in areas such as commercial women's fiction that are neither genre fiction nor literary in a restricted sense (the methodology used in this essay would divide such texts between the "literary" and "romance" categories). Works of genre fiction as well as titles within these other mid-range commercial spaces make little claim on the national culture, but in the Book Council's terms they might well contribute to a "vibrant reading and writing culture".

Literature is a dispersed, disaggregated field, mobilised in diverse ways in diverse institutions—as commodity, industry, professional or aesthetic practice, ethical or pedagogical technology, leisure, entertainment, policy object and national space. This is a diversity better captured in a more flexible notion of "Australian writing" or the Australia's Council notion of an "arts ecology" (Australia Council 2014; Carter and Kelly 2018) than restricted notions of Australian literature, not least for the crucial task of bridging gaps between industry, policy and culture. Future work toward this end would do well to draw upon this kind of contextualised, networked understanding of the industry, as well as the full range of cross-disciplinary affordances granted to publishing studies.

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CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

A MARGINAL BUSINESS: SURVIVING IN AUSTRALIAN POETRY PUBLISHING

SHANE STRANGE

There is a telling account in Geoffrey Dutton's *A Rare Bird: Penguin Books in Australia 1946–96* of renowned UK publisher, Allen Lane, visiting Australia in 1953. Having heard “somewhere along the line” good reports of Australian poetry, he invites canonical Australian poet Kenneth Slessor to lunch, where they formulate the idea of a book of poetry to be called *The Penguin Book of Contemporary Australian Verse*. Lane then travels to Canberra where he meets the equally canonical A. D. Hope and asks him to edit a “second, historical anthology” of Australian poetry. Then “Lane seems to have forgotten about both anthologies. The whole story is a lovely example of the workings of the capricious mind of the great publisher” (Dutton 1996, 12–13).

Perhaps, but it is also indicative of the relationship of empire and colony, and the history of a publishing industry in Australia bound to the whims and norms of British publishers who saw in Australia and New Zealand profitable markets, a “jewel in the crown”, in a world where the English language book trade had been divided into territories by the US and British publishing industries (Munro and Curtain 2006). As a result, and in the face of overwhelming imports from overseas publishers, a truly local publishing industry has been forced to thrive entrepreneurially and “in the margins”, with varying degrees of success.

While the realities of publishing changed in the intervening time, in many ways they persisted. Writing in 1979, Michael Denholm suggests the “flourishing” of small press publishing in the Australia of the 1960s and 1970s was not only a result of technological innovation (in this case offset printing and innovations in layout) but also:

[a] response to cultural and intellectual developments in Australia ... especially the emergence of many young new writers, and to the failure of large Australian publishers and the overseas publishers in Australia to understand and meet the needs of Australian writers (Denholm 1979, 1).

In the late 2010s, we find ourselves, in relation to poetry and poetry publishing, in a space with some similarities to Denholm's account. The editors of the recently released anthology *Contemporary Australian Poetry* suggest "Australian poetry is a much richer scene than almost anyone—including some members of the poetry community—believe it to be" (Langford, Beveridge, Johnson and Musgrave 2016, v–vi). And this is happening against a background where significant technological change has, over the last twenty or so years, not only altered the way books are published and distributed, but also introduced technologies that affect the act of reading and question the idea of the "book" in all its forms (Jeffries 2017, 4–5; Carter 2016, 49).

Of course, Denholm is talking through a period of Australian "cultural nationalism", a period of relatively significant government investment in the national arts prompted, as Elizabeth Webby suggests, by the election of the progressive Whitlam government and sustained through the 1980s by the bicentennial celebrations (Webby quoted in Bode 2012, 24). Katherine Bode suggests that, while the case of funding for cultural nationalism from the 1960s has probably been overstated, this is not the case for poetry: "Given that such funding is allocated to 'high culture' forms of literature, increased government funding probably contributed significantly to growth in Australian poetry collections from the late 1960s to the early 1990s" (Bode 2010, 33).

While the baleful influence of international publishing houses, now reborn as arms of global media conglomerates, has not waned, recent studies suggest global publishers have developed an "expanding middle" that ameliorates the effects of globalised book publishing with local-facing and locally-based operations with a "commitment to Australian literature" (Carter 2016, 58). But this is not borne out in poetry publishing (Carter 2016, 58; Bode 2012, 91). Through the 1990s, poetry was dumped from the lists of major publishers: an "abandonment" of the "cultural worth" of poetry, according to Bronwyn Lea (2007, 247). The editors of *Contemporary Australian Poetry* note the loss or withdrawal of iconic poetry publishers such as Angus and Robertson, Heinemann, and Penguin, with their capacity to confer status through publication, and the subsequent disruptions to an "economy of poetic value" (Langford et al. 2016, v). The fragmentation of poetry publishing—the "lack of a canonical poetry publisher" (Langford et al. 2016, v)—into myriad micro and small press publishers, or where poetry

is a very small part of the lists of middle ground publishers, means that poetry has never reached the critical mass that would warrant its inclusion in a “burgeoning middle” (Carter 2016). Yet now despite, or maybe because of, these manifold factors, interest in poetry—as in the 1970s, so too in the 2000s—is “booming” (Lea 2007, 251), and poetry, as a result, has gone “underground” in a “state of tenacious survival” (McCooley 2005).

How do publishers of poetry survive “underground” in Australia? And what are the conditions they encounter there? If poetry has essentially vanished from the lists of the global publishers who make up (and have always made up) a large part of book publishing in Australia, what characterises the much smaller players who have taken up publishing poetry? What motivates them to do it?

French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (Bourdieu 1993) offered an account of the social world that has provided the intellectual context for many recent studies of the publishing industry. These accounts have proven apt to the task, in that they tend to de-emphasise the role of cultural values and distinctions in favour of contextualising these and other factors in terms of positionality within a “field”. A field here is a structured space (a field of activity) of social positions that can be occupied by agents or organisations in varying ways, depending on the resources at their disposal (Thompson 2012, 4–14). One virtue of this kind of analysis has been an emphasis on relationality as a structuring dynamic in understanding the complex interactions of the publishing field. Another has been a keen interest in the “logic of the field”: that is, the often tacit understandings by which agents and organisations within the field understand its inherent dynamics, its practical conditions, without necessarily being able to formulate a systematic view of the field as a whole (Thompson 2012, 12–13). Participants in the field, in other words, are often the best resources for articulating that field’s practical dynamics.

Bourdiesian accounts of publishing also view poetry as exemplary in leveraging a lack of commercial success against the virtues of artistic integrity or “autonomy” or other forms of symbolic value (Carter 2016, 49). However, in the literary field broadly, cultural *and* commercial imperatives are important to all publishers, although in differing degrees, emphases and deployments. In this regard, poetry publishing is divided between ensuring “poetic value” and its import for an amorphously defined “culture”, and in the way that these factors work with commercial and economic decisions of publishing as a business. How do poetry publishers in Australia, as a segment of the literary field, position themselves in relation to both commercial *and* cultural imperatives?

In 2016, as part of the *Poetry on the Move* poetry festival run by the International Poetry Studies Institute at the University of Canberra, I chaired a discussion panel comprising five small press poetry publishers of varying scales of operation, audiences, and experiences, to discuss the challenges and opportunities of poetry publishing in the contemporary moment. This chapter reports on this discussion, attending to areas such as the perceived necessity of government support for poetry; innovation, change and publishing; and the necessity of “sacrifice” or unpaid labour and financial cost in being a poetry publisher in the contemporary market.

The participants

The panel in question was simply called “Poetry Publishing”. As a panel meant for a general festival audience (billed as “an exceptional opportunity to hear from leading Australian poetry editors and publishers”), its intent was simply to illuminate the arena of contemporary poetry publishing. The participants were invited based on their standing within the Australian poetry publishing community. Although all were “traditional” publishers of printed books, most had affiliations with online or print poetry journals, and in one case alignment with a peak organisation. As this was intended to be a representative discussion, rather than a discussion about the place of poetry in the general environment of publishing, no representatives from major publishing houses were present.

Of the participants, only University of Western Australia Publishing (UWAP) would be considered an “established” publisher. While the press has been operating for more than eighty years, the publishing of fiction and poetry has been going only since 2005 with, at the time of the panel conversation, only twenty-four books of poetry being published. Some of the discussion from UWAP was about the introduction of a multi-title release of new poetry titles that would significantly bolster their presence in this space. The press operates as part of the University of Western Australia in Perth.

Puncher and Wattman is an independent publisher based in Newcastle, and has existed since 2005. It would be considered a significant national publisher in the field of poetry, having published 130 books of poetry up to the date of the panel: “more books than any other poetry publisher in Australia in the last ten years” (International Poetry Studies Institute 2016). It has recently released *Contemporary Australian Poetry*, a significant anthology surveying poetry from 2005 to 2016.

Cordite Publishing Inc, based in Melbourne, had published twenty books of poetry up to the date of the panel. While print publication was a recent

introduction to Cordite's business, it is a significant national and international presence as an online poetry journal of some twenty years standing.

Rabbit Publishing is a comparatively new entrant (2011) into the field of publishing, with its print-only journal and subsequent poetry collections focusing on the specialised area of nonfiction publishing. It is based in Melbourne and has a loose affiliation with RMIT University.

Gloria SMH was a new publisher that at the time of the panel, considered itself a continuation of reputed small press poetry publisher John Leonard, and was just producing its first titles. Publisher Jacinta Le Plastrier is also the head of Australian Poetry:

[a] national poetry body [existing] to interconnect and support a flourishing community of Australian poets, to enhance and promote their poetry, here and internationally, and to reach and engage directly with readers, lovers and potential admirers of Australian poetry, and promoters of it (Australian Poetry n.d.).

The cultural value of poetry

In the context of the discussion—a poetry festival panel—I assumed a broad consensus among the participants and the audience on the general cultural value of poetry, i.e., that poetry is a culturally significant literary art form deeply embedded in cultural expression, identity and history—a broadly cultural “good”. This wasn't and didn't come under question.

Of note was the way in which the participants discussed the field as “flourishing” or undergoing some form of growth and remarked on the high levels of activity or participation around poetry. Therefore, participants inflected statements with the aim of defining and structuring a sense of value *within* and *for* poetry. Here discussions ranged generally around questions of quality and activity:

Australia has this culture of so many participants and so many contributors who are publishing diverse voices, that it's really created, I think, this flourishing in the last five to ten years.

... *there's an exceptionally high quality of good work being done right now.* There's quite a good press going on and the country and the world need to know about it.

I've been getting a huge number of manuscripts ... and I felt really both exhilarated and really nervous about how we'd cope with this, and how you say no to really good manuscripts.

This applied to not only poets but also to readers of poetry:

I just want to be really upbeat about it. Because there is so much activity going on ... I want to honour the people who take a very big risk on buying new poetry books, because I think there are quite a lot of those people out there.

But these observations were inflected by the recognition that the distinctions between poets and readers of poetry were often blurred in an environment that worked as a community as much as, or more than, a market. Here the question of activity as a producer of poetry was often aligned with reading (and buying books) as a cost of participation:

Well, part of me wants to say that I think a lot of people are writing poetry and wanting to be published but don't necessarily want to read other books, which I think is a little bit of a problem.

So I think as a community you've got to buy peoples' books, you've got to subscribe and, yeah, contribute in those ways.

I'm frequently surprised at how many people submit things, for example, and perhaps won't consider subscribing. There are some journals out there who won't let you submit without subscribing and I think that we're in such a kind of critical moment at the moment that I think there just needs to be a little bit more consideration about how poetry can't really function without community, and that it requires a bit more generosity on behalf of all of us. It is incredible what's being written. And the best and most committed poets I know, who I publish through Gloria [SMH] or who I'm associated with at Australian Poetry as subscribers, do read. They read everything that interests them, that is being published in this country and in contemporary American and in contemporary European in English translation, so there might be students and folk who think they don't need to do that.

This often moved the discussion into the realm of reading as criticism and (for one participant) the role that criticism has in defining cultural value:

There is definitely a readership, there's no doubt about it. The biggest challenge is really going back to what I said before, that with the absence of a canonical publisher, which was the go-to in the 70s and 80s for the interested poetry reader. With that gone there has to be a lot more discrimination exercised by the reader, and they quite often don't have the information readily available. There's issues with reviewing culture, there's issues with much, much less reviews. A book of poetry 20/25 years ago might have got 30 reviews. Mostly now they get about three if they're lucky. So we've got sort of this absence of a guiding light, as it were, that people can gravitate towards. But it also means that the field can be quite bewildering for anyone interested in poetry and wanting to find out where the good stuff is.

Certainly, this wasn't disinterested comment, but it fed into and highlighted the stakes involved in the dissemination of poetry (and its assumed value) in educational settings. This took two forms: first, a lack of support in maintaining and proliferating the ongoing importance of Australian poetry as a discipline—

... teaching at the tertiary level is very difficult at times because the secondary material just isn't there. I tell you what, if ... I mean I am an academic, but if I was an academic looking for an area to specialise in, I'd do Australian poetry because it's greenfields, it's wide open, there's no work, you could write on any poet you wanted and you wouldn't have any competition, you'd be a trailblazer. So that's a big problem. Academia actually has a lot to answer for, for not actually supporting Australian poetry in that way as much as it could.

—and next, the tangible support this kind of institutional support can provide to small publishers:

The few times where I've opened up my inbox and there's an order for 300 copies; you know that's very rare but I was very thankful for Monash University doing that. That kind of dovetails back into something that David said before, you know if you are an academic and you teach Creative Writing—the three course adoptions that we have had has made all the difference.

Overall here we see a more nuanced translation of the cultural value of poetry as it is translated through activity in the poetry community, through critical practice, and institutional support. While the richness of activity is noted, this is inflected by a perceived decline in what might be seen as the “traditional” supporters and disseminators of poetic cultural value: namely the decline in reviewing culture, the absence of a “canonical” publisher in guiding taste, and a relationship with educational institutions that characterises them as progenitors of taste and value, and as material supporters of poetry publishing.

Precarious business, organisational innovation and government support

Although situated at the autonomous/non-commercial area of the literary field, participants in the panel reflected upon poetry publishing very much in terms of commercial/ financial/ business relationships. The context here took two forms: the general cut in Australia Council funding by recent

conservative governments; and how a “flourishing” of poetry was characterised as a potential “oversupply” of both poetry and poetry publishers:

There was a definite gap when I started eleven years ago. There’s not so much a gap now; possibly an oversupply.

However,

It’s a very grim time ... My prediction is that we’ll see one third of poetry publishers go under. It’ll take a year or two for that to occur, but it will happen and there’ll be one third less books because there’s one third less dollars. It’s really simple.

Here a narrative was constructed charting how relationships with arts funding affected poetry publishing generally, foregrounding its precarity in commercial terms:

No, no, [UWAP] is getting all our rejects because we haven’t had funding for coming up to two years now. We’ve had three rejections from the Australia Council ... We can survive for a little while, but we can’t survive another rejection from the Australia Council.
 ... it’s quite hard, and we just suffered a rejection from Aus Co as well.
 ... yes, that definitely accentuates the fact that we are completely subsistent on government funding ... without that sort of funding we wouldn’t exist.

—suggesting some of the broader cultural reasons that publishing relies on direct government support:

Australia doesn’t have a philanthropical culture, which is probably more based on laws, taxation laws we have around giving, rather than anything else. But it’s just a difficult situation ... The reason why we need government support in Australia is because we speak English, so we’re competing directly with poetry from all of the English-speaking countries around the world. It’s a very different situation for Ukraine or somewhere like that.

—and articulating the desirability of increased funding:

I think it’s a crime when organisations, or sorry, companies like Puncher & Wattmann and Rabbit aren’t getting project funding at least, if not more.
 I do think poetry should be funded, of course, by our main funding body and state bodies, and supported by philanthropy.

—or, while recognising the necessity of funding for the industry, choosing not to seek it out:

I've chosen not to go to funding and I just ... as long as the money goes in, roughly the money that comes in is what has to go out; as I said I do contribute as I need to, that's all that matters.

Cordite Books particularly expressed, with regard to seeking out diverse funding opportunities:

... regarding funding, everybody is kind of in the same boat but we have been quite fortunate, Cordite's always hovered just below the organisational funding. So you've heard a lot about how 60 or 80 organisations lost or got dropped from their funding, and what that really didn't cover was there were hundreds more who were only on project-to-project annual funding ... So we still go annually, limp ... not limping along but we go from project to project, and we have been successful that way.

Interestingly, the discussion was also able to articulate the dynamics in relation to funding that were driving the immediate environment:

... what's happened since the end of last year is suddenly there is a flood ... The reason for that is what's going on with arts funding in this country ... the number of poets who came to me after they had submitted finished manuscripts to their publishers that they have contracts with and a release date, and the contracts needed to be cancelled, you know amount to more than just a couple.

Some participants discussed adjusting to those circumstances, or even innovating in light of them. For UWAP, the “flood” of manuscripts arising from a cut in arts funding across the sector generally led directly to a decision to offer a subscription series of contemporary Australian poetry because, perhaps surprisingly, “poetry sells well”, but also because:

I'm not as kind of reliant on cashflow as most small publishers are and therefore I can take bigger risks.

Participants talked reasonably freely about commercial or organisational imperatives beyond government funding. Generally, this was in context of finding readers, or activities around distribution. Cordite Publishing, for example, talked about the leveraging of a significant online presence (an estimated 50,000 regular readers with forty per cent of them international) into the newly established print publishing venture:

I guess being online for almost twenty years we have developed, found an audience ... because it's been an imperative to keep the journal free, free to anybody on the planet with telephony to get it, doesn't cost anything ... I've done the past five years with translations and collaborations in Germany and in Indonesia and in Korea, you can see that readership and engagement grow. And you can find a lot of readers that way ... the print and the online kind of work as counterweights and counter measures and so if you imagine, like a steam engine in perpetual motion, this way it goes forward and run back, and so they kind of both move each other along. We don't have any formal distribution in Australia or New Zealand because frankly we don't actually need it, we already have access to that market.

Other technological innovations have played a part here:

I've found that social media works remarkably well for selling books. So we have an online shop and every sale comes through into my email inbox and it's very exciting to kind of watch the flow of things that we post and the way that people respond with dollars.

But technology was also, in some respects, something to be resisted. Of interest here is the value of the book of poetry as a material object:

... I made the deliberate choice to not do print on demand. It's a terrific technology that exists now, so you can publish a book of poetry and earn your money back, or even make a little bit, with ... not easily but much easier than it was perhaps fifteen years ago. I deliberately chose to do one-off print runs on nicer stock to make kind of objects, which works well when you're shipping around Australia, New Zealand and when it's part of a contributor payment model and, you know we sell a lot online as well.

And:

... we do original artwork for our front covers, and that was inspired very much by an immersion in the Hogarth Archives and the way that Virginia Woolf worked with Vanessa Bell to create these beautiful books which each respond uniquely to that work.

However, no matter how precarious or marginal, no matter how reliant on government funding for survival, poetry publishing's characterisation as "business" was a constant frame of reference:

I'm a terrible businesswoman. I give away too many free copies. I've made very poor financial decisions ... poor decision number one was I improved

the quality of the print publication so there's colour print ... again that's one of my issues, not really thinking about the business of it.

Love and sacrifice

If poetry publishing in Australia is precarious business with little financial gain, why do it? Overwhelmingly, answers to this question were framed in terms of the personal value of poetry, and this brought into play personal sacrifices made to publish poetry, often framed as financial sacrifice, and sacrifices of time and lifestyle.

Many of the participants spoke about a personal love of poetry as a key motivation:

I'm not a poet but I love reading poetry so that's why I do it ... Yeah, I also publish fiction and nonfiction but I just love poetry.

Well I mean I do love poetry and I do love publishing.

I love poetry so much.

I'm always going to publish poetry books, touch wood, because I'm passionate about reading extraordinary poetry ...

But there were other motivations, sometimes personally framed, or oriented in terms of craft or vocation:

... books are my community ... I surround myself with peoples' words on the page instead of socialising. But also because I'm so interested in the idea of, or the provocative kind of term of nonfiction poetry, what that means in my own work, I guess I can't stop asking people what they feel about that. I just think it's a privilege to be able to work with the art form that you believe you're destined to live within for a lifetime ... I'm in that job because that's what I believe.

—or in terms of unexpected professional benefits:

... there has been a lot of, you know, secondary and tertiary benefit as I've met thousands of interesting people.

Balancing this were comments on the sacrifice of doing this kind of work:

Lots of two minute noodles and sacrifices and, you know, maybe that's something we could discuss as well because I think a bit of a problem is that editors really tend to suffer.

These were often framed in terms personal sacrifices of time:

[as] blog editor at *Cordite* I routinely got the next issue coded between 12 and 2 am in the morning
 ... you're like a footy coach, an AFL footy coach, you live it 24/7, you actually do, every book is precious because it's someone's blood and flesh effort and it means so much to poets. So it's a pleasure but it also takes a lot of time and I personally, I'm on a very low wage and I raise a bunch of children on my own and I pay printer fees, so just like Jess as well, we both put our own money in and it means that you do think about the Myki tram fare next week too ...

It is this sense of financial sacrifice and of the unpaid labour work of publishing that came across in some responses:

Yeah, well I've earned exactly zero dollars and zero cents ... so I volunteered the past 5½ years of my life doing that. I have a fulltime nine-to-five day job, for those days I commute four hours a day. Have a five-year-old son, a mortgage, a spouse, so many things. And then in addition to all of that, I'm everything from janitor to CEO ... regarding the books and for the nearly 40 something issues of the online journal that we've put out ... So, it is exhausting. I'm not quite sure how many more years I can keep going at this untenable pace. We'll see.

I'm obviously just really stupid. Well I mean, you know, I've put in half a million dollars unpaid work that actually doing the editing, the typesetting, the design, the distribution, everything, building the website. So that's actually impacted on my life. I won't own a house in Sydney, you know it's not going to happen because I've ... I've spent that decade when I could've earned money elsewhere doing that ... I don't know, I'm probably too pissed off to keep going.

Conclusion

The decline of a “literary paradigm” in Australian publishing since the “golden age” of state funding and heightened attention to cultural nationalism has been given several glosses. These include specific factors, such as a “decline” in editing standards, the rise of marketing in publishing houses, and the advent of Nielsen BookScan (a source of real sales data taken directly from booksellers) leading to publishing decisions based upon quantitative sales data on what “actually sells” (see Davis 2006; Hollier 2007). But these explanations have also included larger structural factors, such as the rash of consolidations of large publishing houses into much larger entertainment conglomerates; the neoliberal agenda of trade

liberalisation and deregulation—the opening up of markets to global trade (see Davis 2006; Hollier 2007).

While this fits with a relatively recent story of the evacuation of major publishers from the (unprofitable) field of poetry publishing, it doesn't account for its “tenacious survival”, or the conditions under which most of the independent small press poetry publishers participating in this panel operate (McCooley 2005).

In 2005, David McCooley argued that Australian poetry survived essentially through reinvention: of methods of delivery, of other (down-scaled) forms of funding and adapting to new technological forms. However, it also seems to survive by its capacity to perpetuate traditions. The cultural value of poetry was not seriously challenged in the discussion above, for example. Or rather, its survival would not seem to be entirely dependent on technological change, or as much as it was in Denholm's 1970s publishing industry. Certainly, poetry has thrived and proliferated online (as in the case of Cordite) and adapted to new modes of technological delivery, but all the publishers above print in traditional book form; even, in some cases, rejecting new innovations in print technology (i.e., print-on-demand) in favour of the perceived quality processes of printing. Here, something like artistic integrity is at play, where “quality” literature should be met with “quality” production values. It would seem that the “vast array of possibilities” of digital technology are overstated, or at best, not yet fully realised (Fox 2012, 11). Sure, poetry might read well on a mobile phone, but is this, according to participants in the field, where poetry should be read?

What the above discussion shows is the complex intertwining of economic and cultural imperatives that define the field of poetry publishing, but do not significantly escape consideration in the context of each other. UWAP, with an institutionally-sponsored budget, had the “worry of cash flow” reduced, but even so sales and innovation (how to make poetry publishing *work*) were key considerations, even in taking advantage of the quality and quantity of the “good poetry manuscripts” being produced. This situation conforms with a general call by (particularly Bourdieusian) analysts of publishing to avoid the “high” versus “low” cultural categories and to “attend to the complex negotiations between cultural and economic capital that permeate the publishing industry”. (Bode 2010, 44).

However, it seems to me that the general mode of Bourdieusian interventions in the analysis of publishing in Australia has been to marginalise the cultural *in favour of* the economic: seeing broader cultural and policy effects on the complex business of publishing while de-emphasising (though not ignoring) the reverse. What we see in the above conversation is a reverse

emphasis. Although the business is marginal and difficult, it “should be done” because poetry is culturally important.

When we think of the “economies” of poetry, publication is increasingly a small but important part of a much broader suite of activities that inform and are informed by book publication. In countless “page” versus “stage” arguments, for example, performance poetry redefines the value and form of publication. Here poetry, as a cultural activity, in concert with its history of adaptation to marginalisation in response to its abandonment by publishing houses seeking to exploit the “burgeoning middle” of Australian literature, seems particularly ripe for consideration in new ways.

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CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

MAGAZINE PUBLISHING:
PRODUCTS, COMMUNITIES AND CONTEXTS

ROSEMARY WILLIAMSON
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Introduction

Magazines continue to assert their popularity despite repeated predictions of their demise. For many consumers, this is seen in the ongoing presence of magazines in daily life, including through the retail sale of a wide variety of published titles in long-established genres, such as those for women or those that appeal to readers with particular interests or at certain stages of their lives. Variety now extends to the medium of publication: Some titles embrace the capacities of digital or multi-platform delivery; others exploit the aesthetic pleasures and practicality of paper (Le Masurier 2012). As it has done since its beginning, which is variously traced to the seventeenth or early eighteenth century (Le Masurier 2014), the magazine continues to re-invent itself. The contemporary consumer magazine market—those titles on sale to the public—is therefore highly segmented, dynamic and competitive (Williamson 2014, 122), dependent as magazines generally are on economic imperatives around attracting and retaining readers and advertisers. In addition to consumer magazines are other broadly-defined types, such as b2b (business-to-business) and promotional publications, that illustrate what Holmes (2007, 512) calls “the protean nature of the [magazine] form”.

Such diversity has led to industry and academic experts questioning precisely what a magazine is as well as what it can be (Le Masurier 2014), and how we may classify different types of magazine publication (Prior-Miller 2018). Others seek to analyse and describe what magazines do, describing them as:

Vectors of pleasure, they encourage the acquisition of knowledge, they may play an important role in the formation of identity, they are open to resistant readings, they easily encompass and incorporate flexible and varying conditions of consumption and production, and they form a readily accessible community focus (Holmes 2007, 510–11).

Other researchers draw attention to the form of the magazine and its associated characteristics stating that they are:

Containers for the curated content of words, images and design, where each of these elements is as important as the other and the entire content is filtered through an editor via an editorial philosophy that speaks and responds to the specific needs of a niche readership. Magazines are serial in nature and finite in execution. Each issue is almost always produced and consumed in a mid-temporal media space, allowing time for contemplation and desire (Le Masurier 2014).

Apart from the importance that text, image and design play in concert, these examples suggest a significant principle through the respective mention of “community focus” and “niche readership”: Those who produce magazines work within, and must respond creatively to, sociocultural as well as economic contexts. As Johnson comments, “magazines help readers make sense of their world and their lives” (2007, 523). Conceptualising readers within defined communities is fundamental to achieving this aim and is a theme recurrent across guides to magazine publishing (Evans 2004; McKay 2013; Morrish and Bradshaw 2012; Whittaker 2017), industry-initiated research (“Research” 2018) and scholarship (Davidson, McNeill and Ferguson 2007; Kitch 2018, 12–13). Content is “curated” and “filtered” (Le Masurier 2014) to that end.

When viewed along these lines, the magazine represents a set of community-centred production and editorial practices, the success of which relies on capturing those elements of the magazine’s sociocultural context that are foundational to its readership. Some scholars have appreciated magazines primarily as repositories of information that usefully mirrors the times in which the magazines were produced, and so have “mined” for content that serves to answer questions about topics that are framed with various disciplinary perspectives (Latham and Scholes 2006, 517). Latham and Scholes contend that, because of this, “we have often been too quick to see magazines merely as containers of discrete bits of information rather than autonomous objects of study” (2006, 517–18). Along with others (Beetham 1996, 5–6; Damon-Moore 1994, 6), Latham and Scholes (2006, 517–18) draw attention to the magazine as an object of study in its own right, or what Beetham (1996, 6) calls “a genre with its own history”.

Gough-Yates (2003) also moves beyond this “container” view in her call for a shift in attention to the cultural dimensions of magazine production processes and practices. Another, interdisciplinary, development in magazine research is to view the magazine as a cultural product “in conversation” with others (see Patterson 2018, 75–76).

This chapter approaches the magazine as a discrete yet interactional cultural product with its own history, and from a critical perspective explicitly aligned with Publishing Studies. In doing so, it draws on the concept of magazine exceptionalism. According to Abrahamson, the magazine is exceptional because it has “a unique and powerful role both as a product of its social and cultural moment and as a catalyst for social change”, which occurs to varying degrees on a continuum, “ranging in both intent and effect from the reflective to the transformative” (2008, 146). Magazines’ singularity derives in part from the lack of journalistic distance between those who produce and those who consume content, all of whom inhabit the same “community of interest” (Abrahamson 2008, 148). Integral to magazines in this sense are editorial practices that not only engender close relationships between content producers and readers but that, because of the magazine’s periodicity, are also necessarily continuous and adaptive. The synergistic, dynamic nature of these practices plays out both on the pages of the magazine itself and in other ways within the media and publishing industries.

By way of illustration, this chapter presents a case study of Australia’s *MasterChef Magazine* (News Magazines/News Limited 2010–12). Identifying key aspects of the magazine from its inception to its demise suggests a far-reaching and enduring influence, even if measuring the precise extent and nature of that influence is beyond the scope of this chapter. The case study is preceded by a selective overview of relevant magazine scholarship and is followed by a summary of findings and an explication of their relevance to Publishing Studies.

Studies of Australian magazines

Australia is known for its comparatively high level of magazine readership in global terms (Bonner 2014, 193–94), yet the body of scholarly—as opposed to industry-supported—research on locally-produced titles is small and dispersed across disciplinary foci and approaches. This is symptomatic of the development of magazine scholarship more generally. In the mid-1990s, Abrahamson characterised scholarship on American magazines as “brilliant fragments” lacking “any overarching intellectual structure” (1995, xviii). Some progress has been made internationally since then, including

through collections that heighten awareness of magazine studies in various ways: by surveying the field and its specialisations (Abrahamson and Prior-Miller 2018); by illustrating diverse critical perspectives and encouraging further contributions (Holmes 2007; Williamson and Johninke 2014); and by providing new insights into women and magazines (Ritchie, Hawkins, Phillips and Kleinberg 2016). In Australia, the long-lived and popular general-interest *The Australian Women's Weekly* (1933–current) repeatedly has attracted interest (see, for example, Bonner, McKay and Goldie 2000; McKay 2003; Ryan 2001; Sheridan 1995, 2000a, 2000b, 2002), which reflects that women's magazines traditionally represent one of the more robust areas of magazine scholarship, but comparatively little has been conducted on other titles (Griffen-Foley 2007; Turnbull 2014, 3; Williamson and Johninke 2014). Some histories of magazine publishers, genres and titles appear intermittently. Examples are Greenop's (1947) early publishing history and Griffen-Foley's (1999) account of Australian Consolidated Press. Denholm (2006) charts the history of art and craft magazines, Fisher (2014) chronicles gay magazines, and one of the authors of this chapter, Williamson (2014), traces the origins and evolution of a sub-genre of craft titles within wider print culture. Carlin and Mason (2017) document the genesis of selected indie (independent) print magazines in the digital age. As notable as these contributions, however, is what still remains to be completed to advance understanding of this sector of the publishing industry in Australia.

One especially under-explored area is the special-interest or niche magazine. Since the 1980s, Australian magazine publishers—enabled by desk-top publishing and more recently by digital publishing—have launched a plethora of new titles around quite specific interests. These magazines “encourage readers to conceive of themselves as members of a distinct group linked to certain modes of consumption” (McCracken 1993, 257) and may attract stronger reader loyalty than titles with more generalised content (Davidson, McNeill and Ferguson 2007). From an economic perspective, they exploit “lucrative” markets, to cite Universal Media Co (“Magazines” 2018), which publishes thirty-five such titles on pets, health, craft and other subjects. These titles also are especially agile in their capacity to capture, exploit and shape “the sociocultural realities of their times” (Abrahamson 2018, 1) as distilled by specific pastimes or interests, which is shown in relation to motorcycling and surfing (Henderson 1999), weddings (Wilding 2006) and quilt-making (Williamson 2014). In 2018, National Title Tracker listed more than 5,000 magazines in more than fifty special interest categories available in Australia (NTT 2018).

Beyond the consumer special-interest market are other niche magazines that generally are overlooked, with some exceptions. Newman (2005), for instance, investigates the ethical dimensions of editorial practices relating to state-funded community health magazines in which reader contributions are printed. Another example is the custom (also called customer, public relations, contract or promotional) magazine, “a highly specialised sub-set of consumer publishing” recognised as “an area rife with research opportunities” (Holmes 2007, 514). Two of these custom magazines are Australia’s most-read titles. They are distributed free of charge by the two major Australian supermarkets, Coles and Woolworths, with their respective readerships—3,783,000 and 3,400,000 as at March 2017 (“Roy Morgan Readership” 2017) into a national population of just under twenty-five million (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2018)—indicating the reach of their potential influence. Both these titles contain recipes and a significant amount of advertorially-based food and lifestyle content. That such titles are worthy of attention is illustrated by Johnkinke’s (2014; 2017) work on gym club magazine *Fitness First*, which reveals the strategies it employs to promote healthism and the trans-media complexities in which custom and other magazines are now published and consumed.

MasterChef Magazine case study

The “life” of the magazine

Special interest magazines promote more than passive reading. Abrahamson asserts that they:

Encourage readers to be more active in their leisure interests ... the editorial content of magazines is specifically designed by its editors and looked to by its readers as something that will lead to action ... information that will allow the reader to do something—and, in many cases, to do something better or more enjoyably (2008, 148–49).

Apparently culinary-related activities were something that Australians wanted “do ... better or more enjoyably” in the 2000s. New magazines on food had entered a market that by this time accommodated both mass market titles (for example, *Australian Good Taste* for Woolworths supermarket) and more specialised ones (for example, *Donna Hay Magazine*, *Australian Gourmet Traveller* and *Delicious*). In different ways, all taught Australians about sourcing and cooking food, and eating and drinking more generally. *MasterChef Magazine* joined them in May 2010 as an affordable, mid-range

option—the cover price was A\$4.95¹—and it published twenty-nine issues to November 2012.

Produced by News Magazines (owned by News Limited), *MasterChef Magazine* was designed as a “masstige” title (Jackson 2010), a mass-produced, relatively inexpensive good marketed as prestigious or deluxe, with its editor-in-chief explaining that the magazine sought to “bring a whole new audience to food magazines” (Jenkins, cited in Jackson 2010). It was one of several media products arising from the eponymously-named television series. The series, shown from 2009 in Australia as *MasterChef Australia*, developed from a British format premiered in 1990. Based on the competitive selection of a Master Chef, it became “one of the most remarkable brands in Australia” (Khamis 2013). The magazine was launched during the second series, which averaged over 1.5 million viewers per episode and led the national ratings in its timeslot (Jackson 2010).

As an offshoot of the television series, *MasterChef Magazine* was symptomatic of broader phenomena. Models for linked television series and magazines thrived in Australia (Bonner 2014, 198–99) and internationally. Some magazines spawned television series (*Better Homes and Gardens* in the USA and Australia, for example) whereas some television shows gave rise to magazines, as with *MasterChef Australia*. Some magazines and television series were synergistic components within a broader range of products promoting a culinary celebrity’s global brand, as seen with Jamie Oliver (Hollows and Jones 2010; Jones and Taylor 2013), Martha Stewart (Allen 2006; Brunson 2005; Byron 2002) and Donna Hay (Whitaker 2005, 126–35). The magazines themselves prospered: *Jamie* survived from 2008 to 2017; *Donna Hay* reached its 100th issue in April 2018 before moving to subscription-only publication, and *Martha Stewart Living*, first published in 1990, remains in print. Apart from drawing on these models, *MasterChef Magazine* was shaped by the amalgamation of subject matter and advertising that characterised the television series and others of its kind. Viewers and critics alike had noted the trend of “contextually congruent advertising”—where advertising matches or mimics the program or publication in which it appears (Fleck and Quester 2007; Nitschke and Bogomolova 2012), the most extreme form being the “advertorial” that *becomes* the content (see Russell 1998). Such advertising is exploited in Australian reality television, with such popular lifestyle shows—which Gareth Palmer calls “agent[s] of consumerism” (2008, 6)—as *Better Homes*

¹ Some slight variations were made to both the cover and subscription prices, with the highest being \$5.50 for the summer 2010/11 double issue.

and Gardens (home and lifestyle) and *The Block* (home renovation) promoting stores and products during the program (see Bonner 2005).

Against this background, *MasterChef Magazine* was a runaway success. With robust advertising interest—advertisements comprised just over a third of the first issue’s 160 pages—the magazine was backed with a A\$5 million marketing push centred on promotion during the television series. The inaugural issue of 226,000 copies sold out in four days. A fifteen per cent reprint was arranged promptly (Kirk 2010a, 2010b), but some newsagents reportedly sold their orders within two days (Kirk 2010b). All copies of the second issue sold despite an increased print run (Kirk 2010c). Released when the show’s ratings were regularly topping viewing figures and growing—some weeknight episodes attracted 2.2 to 2.3 million viewers (Kirk 2010e; Media Spy 2010)—the third issue also fared well (Kirk 2010d). Viewer interest in the finale of the television show’s second series was such that the single televised federal government election debate between the then prime minister and the opposition leader was rescheduled (Washbrook 2010b).

Behind this success was extensive *MasterChef*-related advertising. One of Australia’s major supermarkets, Coles, was the major sponsor of the television series. Coles not only used “MasterChef” in promotional materials but also drew on the television series’ stated goal of encouraging home cooks to cook more and to cook more creatively using fresh produce. A spokesperson for Woolworths supermarket, Coles’ main rival, even acknowledged that *MasterChef Australia* had “created a much greater level of interest in food and cooking” (Buchanan, cited in Washbrook 2010a). In response, Woolworths used Australian cookery writer doyen Margaret Fulton in similar, recipe-based advertising. Despite some cynicism around the claim, this amplified interest in home cookery and all things culinary (Australian Food News 2010) was soon named the “MasterChef effect” (Hunter 2010).

The MasterChef effect extended beyond the magazine itself to print-based food writing and publication by those involved in the series, including contestants and judges. Paradoxically, this occurred at a time when the decline and even demise of print media (at least in the West) had been widely heralded for a decade (see, for instance, Levy and Nielsen 2010, 117). Winner of the first series Julie Goodwin, for example, became a prominent food writer for high-circulation magazine *The Australian Women’s Weekly* and then launched her first cookbook, *Our Family Table* (2010), the production of which was part of her *MasterChef Australia* prize. Featuring a foreword by Margaret Fulton, *Our Family Table* had sold 138,603 copies by October 2010, generating \$3.7 million for publisher

Random House and becoming the year's top selling cookbook (Wilden and Thomsen 2010). The second-best-selling cookbook of 2010 was *MasterChef Australia The Cookbook: Volume 1* (Fremantle Media 2009), with 51,000 copies (Wilden and Thomsen 2010). These two titles represented some ten per cent of what Australians spent on cookbooks that year (Nielsen BookScan 2014). *MasterChef Australia* judge Matt Preston's collection of previously published food writing, *Cravat-A-Licious* (2009) and co-host and judge, chef and restaurateur Gary Mehigan's first book-length publication *Comfort Food* (2010) also sold well during this period (News.com.au 2010), as did co-host and judge, chef and restaurateur George Calombaris's earlier cookbooks *The Press Club: Modern Greek Cookery* (2008) and *Greek Cookery from the Hellenic Heart* (2009), and Mehigan and Calombaris's joint effort *Your Place or Mine?* (2010).

MasterChef Magazine itself attracted healthy subscriptions and in-store purchases and became a leader in culinary magazines in Australia. News Magazines' food titles publisher Fiona Nilsson had predicted average sales settling just above 80,000 copies (cited in Jackson 2010), but this initially proved conservative. According to July 2010 figures from the Audit Bureau of Circulations, in a relatively weak sales market for magazines, most food titles were on the rise, an increase attributed by many to the *MasterChef* effect. Culinary magazines overall were also shifting their focus to accommodate the trend of "dining out at home", eating a "special occasion" meal at home (Scott, cited in Kent 2010), which possibly reflected changes in consumer behaviour following the global financial crisis. This was *MasterChef* territory. By the end of 2010, *MasterChef Magazine* was thriving, despite falls of magazine sales generally and food titles specifically. Monthly sales grew to 150,000 in this period (Capel 2011). At its launch, News Limited had predicted that the magazine would do well because it would attract "non-traditional food magazine buyers" (Nilsson, cited in Jackson 2010)—that is, the television show viewers—but by late 2010 it also may have been drawing readers away from competitor titles.

Despite this initial success, *MasterChef Magazine*'s lifespan was relatively short. Falling circulation figures from February 2012 mirrored declining ratings for the television series. Whereas the first nineteen issues of the magazine ranged from 144 to 200 pages, with advertising printed on many of the extra pages, the final ten issues, published in 2012, were notably slimmer, which reflects falling sales and advertising revenue. By early August 2012, Audit Bureau of Circulations figures revealed that the 4.2 per cent year-on-year drop in sales of monthly magazines (Ross 2012) had been overshadowed by *MasterChef Magazine*'s fall of 36.7 per cent in the six months to June 2012. Monthly sales were then 78,721 copies, a marked drop

from the 124,301 per month during the same period the previous year. Many other food magazines' sales also fell although less dramatically than those of *MasterChef Magazine*; however, sales of general home and lifestyle magazines (with recipe sections) improved, suggesting shifts in the purchasing habits of readers with cognate interests. In response, *MasterChef Magazine* instituted a new subscription strategy with the addition of a "taster" category—six issues for \$23. In mid-October 2012, however, News Limited announced that the November issue would be the last (Jackson 2012). Postings to the magazine's Facebook page then stopped although it remains online and has even attracted new followers. Despite this decision, the November issue still invited subscriptions. A Facebook fan page was set up, calling for the magazine to continue, but subscribers were already being advised that the magazine would cease.

Apart from being associated with the television series' popularity, the rise and fall of *MasterChef Magazine* from 2010 to 2012 coincided with a volatile period in culinary print publishing in Australia. As cookbook sales first rose to unprecedented heights and then fell during this period (Broadfield 2011), so too did sales for magazines *Australian Good Food* (2008–2012/13) and *Australian Good Taste* (1996–2013). Other networks produced cookery programs to compete with *MasterChef Australia*, including *My Kitchen Rules* (2010–current), yet neither these shows nor their leading personalities generated the equivalent of the MasterChef effect.

Content and other characteristics

From its first issue, *MasterChef Magazine* embodied principles of the MasterChef franchise. "Become a MasterChef at home" was the masthead for the first issue. The cover used the distinctive font and logo of the television series, a practice that continued across later issues. The cover also showcased the series' stars—the judges and high-profile guest judges—and promised *MasterChef Australia* restaurant-style food, with "chefs' recipes made easy". It referenced three segments of the show, and the *Junior MasterChef* spinoff series. Unlike Australasian competitor magazines, images of delicious dishes were understated rather than dominant. "No-fuss everyday food" was, however, emphasised. Like the tie-in cookbook that preceded it, the magazine incorporated recipes cooked by the television program's participants together with information and advice on, for example, ingredients, equipment, skills and presentation ("plating up"). Also similarly, the magazine contained recipes for culinary mainstays alongside recipes based on what *MasterChef Australia* called "hero" (but

not necessarily expensive) fresh ingredients. Like the cookbook, the magazine used photographs of the show, including behind-the-scenes images. The first issue therefore established continuity with the television series, the prominence of “chef” in the *MasterChef* branding and, associated with that, the inclusion of both straightforward and more challenging recipes for domestic cooks.

An enduring characteristic of the magazine in terms of its continuity with the television series was the presence of three host judges of the series: Gary Mehigan, George Calombaris and Matt Preston. Scott Ellis, television critic for the *Sun-Herald* newspaper, narrated their transition “from being three blokes with reasonable profiles in the food world to something akin to rock stars. Mobbed when they appear in public, their every word—spoken and printed—is hung upon, and their businesses are booming” (2010, 3). The centrality of the three judges to the magazine and the brand of which it was a part can be seen in each issue where either or both images and their names often appear on the cover and liberally in both features and advertising throughout each issue. This high level of exposure continued throughout the run of the magazine.

The content of the magazine also remained largely stable over time. Some regular features—culinary-related news and events, product promotions and travel column—resemble those of other food titles or magazines generally. Other content was derived from, or inflected by, associations with chefs and others from the *MasterChef Australia* television series; for example, “The Professionals” column presented a food personality, including major contemporary Australian culinary figures such as Maggie Beer, and printed versions of signature or representative recipes recast for the home cook. International figures dominated the “Last bite” column on the final page, where interviewees were asked a series of culinary-related personal questions, such as “Guilty pleasure?” and “Career highlight?” British celebrity chef and restaurateur Gordon Ramsay was the first featured in this column and was followed by a “who’s who” of internationally recognised chefs, restaurateurs and food writers in both this column and elsewhere in the magazine during its run. Nevertheless, *MasterChef Magazine* consistently valorised the work of Australian chefs, cooks, food writers and other culinary personalities: the expected pantheon of well-known figures (such as Margaret Fulton, Maggie Beer and Donna Hay, who also appeared on the show) as well as those less well-established.

Changes to *MasterChef Magazine*’s front and back covers also referenced the television program although the way in which this occurred changed along with the magazine’s fortunes. During the initial year and a half of publication (eighteen issues), covers depicted personalities from and

segments of the *MasterChef Australia* television series. Four pictured the judges, two featured Curtis Stone and six showcased Australian “star” guest chefs, thereby reflecting the Australian focus of both the magazine and the television series; others promoted popular *MasterChef Australia* competitors and signalled their contributions to content within specific issues. Another element that remained consistent on the first eighteen covers was the bright lower-page banner, which mostly listed segments from the television program and occasionally popular personalities from it. When sales of the magazine began to drop, however, the cover format (issues 19 and 20) moved to a more conventional close-up of a dish. Most covers continued to include boxed inset images. While these had been food when the main cover image was of a person, they now switched to at least one being a show-related personality. The greater prominence of food on the cover had been anticipated from issue 16, when the bottom edge banner shifted from referencing the show to listing dishes featured within the magazine. The back cover, also important to the magazine’s visibility and advertising revenue (see McCracken 1993, 96), featured many advertisements containing images of, or textual references to, *MasterChef Australia*-related chefs and/or food writers.

Staff and contributors

The core contributing staff of *MasterChef Magazine* remained largely stable throughout the magazine’s history. Founding Food Director Sophia Young occupied this role until the final three issues. Initially training in New York as a chef and with experience in restaurants elsewhere in America, Young relocated to Australia and worked in the test kitchen of *The Australian Women’s Weekly* and on that magazine’s popular home library cookbook series (for discussion of this series, see Williamson 2013). She became associated food editor of *Australian Gourmet Traveller* (1989–) and supplied content for the magazine and eleven *Gourmet Traveller* cookbooks before becoming food editor for *Notebook* magazine (2005–10) and then food *Vogue Entertaining + Travel* (1998–2014) (Nikas-Boulos 2010). Yet it was her new role with *MasterChef Magazine* that brought her to the attention of the press, and she was profiled in *The Daily Telegraph* newspaper in June 2010 (Nikas-Boulos 2010).

Alongside Young, who featured in most issues, other writers contributed to *MasterChef Magazine*. Figures from the television series comprised a distinct group. Preston, already an established food writer and restaurant critic, contributed to all issues whereas others did so to lesser degrees; for example, *Junior MasterChef* host Anna Gare, formerly better known as a

musician, wrote for two issues. Guest chefs and judges were another recurring authorial presence, especially Curtis Stone across all issues and popular judge Matt Preston from issue 12 with his “Chef at home” column. The September 2010 issue drew heavily on the popularity of the second series even though it had finished: “We’ve brought back our favourite contestants from Series Two ... asking them for a signature recipe” (ibid., 2). This suggests that some writers might have been chosen (at least in part) because of their assumed popularity with readers.

The magazine also helped a number of popular *MasterChef Australia* contestants establish themselves as food writers. Marion Grasby, for instance, had knowledge of, and experience in, the media and food writing through studying journalism and gastronomy, working as a reporter with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and maintaining an early Australian food blog, *The Hedonistic Hostess* (2009–10). The day following her highly publicised elimination from *MasterChef Australia*, the media announced her exclusive signing to the magazine as its first ex-contestant columnist. With a bylined column in each issue thereafter, she also appeared on two covers. Kate Bracks, winner of series three, supplied her “Country cook” column from issue 20. Each released her first cookbook while working for the magazine: *Marion: recipes and stories from a hungry cook* (Grasby 2011) and *The Sweet Life: Desserts from Australia’s MasterChef* (Bracks 2012). The inaugural *Junior MasterChef* winner also became a columnist, known only as “Isabella” (see issue 8), and contributor to the cookbook produced from this series (News Magazines 2010).

Others who were not obviously involved in the television series also wrote for *MasterChef Magazine*. Although named in the contributor’s list in each issue, few of them had bylines, so it is difficult to determine whether they composed entire articles were co-authors, editors or ghostwriters. One of the few with a byline is established food and drink writer Greg Duncan Powell, who wrote a wine column for all issues. Leanne Kitchen, author of several published cookbooks, contributed to all issues but without a byline; however, her book, *Turkey: recipes and tales from the road* (2011), which was promoted in issue 10, suggests a career encompassing travel as well as food writing.

Unlike many other contemporaneous food magazines, *MasterChef Magazine* profiled food bloggers. Glossy features promoted open-access food blogs up to issue 6, after which only blogs connected with the MasterChef franchise were cited (for example, that of regular *MasterChef Magazine* contributor Olivia Andrews). Issue 28 printed an extract from the cookbook based on contestant Billy Law’s recipes from the show and reproduced on his blog. Another exception was the “Food blogosphere”

story (issue 22), under the banner “Meet 6 of our favourite food bloggers” (121). As a full-page advertisement for the new digital version of the magazine (ibid., 120) faces the opening page of this feature, this can be read as a form of self-promotion by the magazine.

The case study and magazine exceptionalism

Researchers who are interested in the sociocultural dimensions of publishing understandably may overlook a title such as *MasterChef Magazine* because of its overtly commercial function within multi-platform promotion of a brand. As with magazines generally, moreover, there may be other impediments to conducting research. Despite advances in digitisation, many magazines still may only be accessed in paper form, and often it is difficult to obtain industry-based information to support research (Johnson 2007, 523). As Holmes (2007, 517) observes, however, even the most easily dismissed magazines are significant cultural products: “Gossip and celebrity titles could be said to both reflect and transform, even on the simple level of mirroring current cultural concerns and promoting a form of consumption based on what the ‘famous’ are wearing, accessorising, eating”.

MasterChef Magazine is a case in point. It embodied a “community of interest” (Abrahamson 2008, 148) that captured a sociocultural moment—one that privileged the pleasures associated with good food—and acted “as a catalyst for social change” (Abrahamson 2008, 146). Through its content, the magazine consistently promoted sourcing, cooking and consuming a range of fresh foods. Alongside this, and despite its links to major supermarkets and advertisers of processed food, the magazine supported small-scale and boutique food producers and farmers’ markets. It repeatedly acknowledged the value of Australian farmers, producers, chefs and restaurateurs to the national economy. Australian-based travel stories and other content consistently promoted owner-operated cafés and restaurants. Finally, like the television series with which it was associated, *MasterChef Magazine* supported the idea of the “amateur” being able to contribute to Australian culinary culture as well as to culture more broadly (Khamis 2013).

Those who produced *MasterChef Magazine* envisaged this community of interest first and foremost as followers of the *MasterChef Australia* television series. Editorial decisions, therefore, assumed a bond between reader and series as well as between reader and magazine. When this tripartite relation was threatened—that is, when ratings for the series fell—the magazine’s producers moved swiftly toward conventions used by other food magazines, most notably in relation to front cover images. Such

editorial decisions illustrate the necessarily adaptive nature of magazines as well as their agility in accommodating changed contextual circumstances, even if for *MasterChef Magazine* they were not sufficient to secure its future.

Central to the community was the defining feature of magazines identified by Abrahamson (2008, 148): the closeness between writers and readers engendered by their shared interest. Despite *MasterChef Magazine*'s overt promotion of its parent brand, all who wrote for and appeared in the magazine had a demonstrable commitment to preparing and consuming good food and drink. Moreover, the magazine functioned as a site within which those with culinary aspirations or expertise could establish themselves as professional food writers or extend previous experience. Even after *MasterChef Magazine* ceased, the magazine's legacy is seen in, for example, a wide range of cookbooks by the series judges, contestants and guests, or the many columns and features in other publications by former *MasterChef Magazine* writers.

Conclusion

Australian magazines represent a dispersed and under-exploited field of enquiry that we encourage researchers in Publishing Studies to augment. This chapter draws attention to some, if necessarily not all, approaches to studying magazines from this disciplinary perspective. As the case study demonstrates, we may approach a magazine as a discrete object by tracing its "life" and identifying those characteristics that differentiate it, and the community formed around it, from others. The concept of magazine exceptionalism (Abrahamson 2008) may guide exploration of the ways in which a magazine continually reflects and shapes communities within a broader sociocultural context. Related to that, we may investigate the contributions made by those who produce content, and even view a magazine as a site for the professional development of writers, editors and others within the creative industries. We also may consider a magazine as a dynamic and interactional product within a publishing context that includes not only competitor titles but also cognate publications or products across different media. The magazine, therefore, is viewed as part of a complex and ongoing effort to capture, distil and shape a particular sociocultural moment. The magazine is inflected by and intersects with other publications and media products, even if this occurs less emphatically than with *MasterChef Magazine*. Such an approach represents what Patterson calls "newer work" in magazine studies, which recognises that magazines are "in conversation" with other cultural products (2018, 75). It bears the influence

of “newer interdisciplinary fields such as cultural studies, history of the book and the history of print” (Patterson 2018, 75); it also suits Publishing Studies as conceptualised within this volume.

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Poets: Interviews with Australian Poets (edited with Monica Carroll; Puncher and Wattman, forthcoming 2107). Her recent creative volumes include *Open Windows: Contemporary Australian Poetry—An English/Chinese Anthology* (edited with Paul Hetherington and [translator] Naikan Tao, Shanghai Joint Publishing Company, 2016); *Sentences from the Archives*, Recent Works Press (poetry, 2016); *Stolen Stories, Borrowed Lines*, Mark Time Publishers (poetry, 2015); and *Watching the World* (with Paul Hetherington; poetry and photography, Blemish Books, 2015). She is lead investigator on the ARC projects “Understanding creative excellence” and “So what do you do?: Tracking creative graduates in Australia and the UK”.

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