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The Contemporary Australian Book: A product of its time

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INTRODUCTION

This is a study of the contemporary Australian book. The book is a product of a complex cycle of events and processes which operate within the context of contemporary Australian society and which are informed both by history, and by the various social, political, intellectual, economic, cultural, and other conditions and conflicts at play in that society. This study examines the book and book culture: the events and processes of the book's 'life-cycle', and the historical and contemporary societal context in which these events and processes occur.

The aim of the research is to provide an understanding of the nature of the contemporary Australian book, the conditions of its creation, production, distribution, reception, and use, and the various contextual influences on it.

The review of the literature on the book and book culture which is included in this study, reveals a lack of material presenting a broad, or overall, view of book culture in Australia. This study seeks to provide such a view, and to illustrate the nature and conditions of book culture in Australia through both a general examination of aspects of book culture, and through the detailed examination of a single contemporary Australian book.

Contemporary Australian book culture is here systematically examined, according to a model of the standard 'life-cycle' of a printed and bound book, that is, a model which depicts each process or event that the book commonly undergoes, as well as the environment in which these processes take place. One book, *The Orchard* written by Drusilla Modjeska and published by Pan Macmillan Australia, is presented as a case study, and is examined in detail. It is followed through the events of its life-cycle: its writing, editing, design, publication, printing, promotion, marketing, sales, buying, lending, collecting, reading, reviewing, judging, and the early stages of its preservation. While the examination of the various events and processes which books undergo provides an overview of the historical development and the nature of contemporary Australian book culture, the detailed tracking of a single book illuminates those processes, and illustrates the influence of history as well as of the current social, intellectual, political, economic, and cultural conditions as they bear on a particular book.

This study is based on the premise put forward by American book historian Robert Darnton (1979; 1983), that the specificity provided by the study of a single book is more valuable than generalisations about books and contributes to an understanding of not only the particular book studied, but also of the book culture and aspects of the society in which that book was created, produced, and received.

Definitions and Parameters

In this study, 'the book' refers to the generic printed and bound book, and includes all such books which are *commercially* produced. An 'Australian book' is a printed and bound book either created in Australia or by an Australian, and published in Australia. The book is considered,

in this study, as both an *artefact*, that is, a product of human art and manufacture, and as a particular communication *medium* or *format*. Other such media or formats include film, video, CD-ROM, and audio-tape. 'Book culture' refers, in this study, to all aspects of the life-cycle of a printed and bound book including authorship, publication, printing, distribution, bookselling, reception and use, and preservation, as well as the historical, industrial, commercial, cultural, social, political, economic, and intellectual contexts in which these events occur.

This study presents a 'snapshot' of the contemporary Australian book and book culture. The book exists in a dynamic and evolutionary environment, the description and analysis of which necessarily involves the documentation of continuous change; this study does not attempt this. It is not an historical study, although some historical material is included, nor is it a definitive or enduring analysis, but a 'snapshot' of Australian book culture in the early 1990s and, specifically, in the years 1994 and 1995.

The material presented comprises data which refers to Australian book culture in general, and to a single book in particular. The data on the events or processes of the generic book's life-cycle describes the *general* nature and conditions which prevail in Australian book culture; the data is not, however, *generalisable* since different conditions apply to different books within this standard model. The data provided on *The Orchard* is obviously specific to that book only, and while it illustrates aspects of the life-cycle of books in general, it represents processes undergone by a single book.

Content of the Study

The study begins with a survey of literature on the book and book culture in general, and in Australia. An overview of selected literature is presented, specific works are reviewed and evaluated, and an overall evaluation of the literature is presented. Gaps and deficiencies are identified and provide a rationale for the research which follows.

The next chapter details the methodology employed in this research. A number of models which have been devised as frameworks for the study of the history of the book are examined. Two are evaluated for their appropriateness to the task of examining the book and book culture in contemporary Australia and, from these, a new model is proposed which is applied in subsequent chapters to both Australian book culture and, as a case study, to a specific Australian book. The book which serves as a case study in this research is also introduced in this chapter.

Each of the following six chapters represents an element of the model, that is, a primary event or process in the life-cycle of the book; these are: authorship, publication, printing, distribution and sales, reception and use, and preservation. The general nature and conditions of each of these processes in contemporary Australia is presented, as is their role in the making of a specific book, *The Orchard*. The case study illustrates the specific nature of the processes involved in the book's life-cycle in contemporary Australia, as well as the issues surrounding and informing these processes. This, in turn, demonstrates that the book is distinctly a product of its time, one which reflects aspects of the

various social, intellectual, political, economic, and cultural conditions and conflicts which exist in Australian society.

This central section of the research is followed by a concluding chapter in which the major findings of the study are brought together and discussed, the limitations of the study are noted, and avenues for further research are identified.

Chapter 1 LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Works on the book and book culture in Australia can be found in the literature of a number of disciplines: history, bibliography, library and information studies, sociology, English literature, cultural studies, political science and administration, economics, and literacy. Much of the work is not confined to a specific subject area but crosses several, revealing the book's essential cross-disciplinary nature. It is necessary therefore to think not in terms of a single discipline, or even a number of narrow disciplines, but in terms of 'book culture', a comprehensive system which involves the history of the book, the social and other contexts of the book, and the events of the book's life-cycle.

Book culture in Australia appears to be an increasingly popular area of study with particular interest focused on the history of the book. This follows an international trend, with a number of large national 'history of the book' projects underway. An article in a recent edition of the *American Chronicle of Higher Education* (Winkler 1993) notes an increase in scholarly interest in books, print, and in the history of the book in particular. The article suggests that current technological developments which challenge certain aspects of the book's role may have ignited this interest in books and in book culture.

Readers and reading are also subjects of interest in the literature. This appears to be related to the increasing attention paid in some disciplines to audiences as active participants in the creative process, as creators of meaning, rather than as passive consumers.

While cultural theory and studies are burgeoning areas of academic interest in Australia, there appears to be little attention being paid by their theoreticians to contemporary book culture in Australia. The same applies to communications and media studies where the focus appears to be on mass media and 'popular culture', and which excludes the book except for occasional surveys of the Australian publishing industry and studies of popular fiction genres.

Studies of book culture in Australia are fragmented and tend to focus on specific, isolated areas; very few present an overview of the book or book culture such as those seen in European sociological studies. This is evident in major Australian works which comprise short articles on various aspects of book culture with no consistent theme or chronology. Work is underway, however, on a major national 'History of the Book in Australia' project which should result in a comprehensive work of scholarship covering many aspects of book *history*. There appears to be no such comprehensive work on contemporary book *culture* in Australia either existing or planned.

This survey concerns book *culture* specifically; it represents work toward the development of an understanding of the role and status of the book in Australia. The literature represents various approaches to the book and, while some of these may overlap, I have found it useful to examine them in separate sections. The first looks at reference books on the history and development of the book in the western world; such

works are fundamental to an understanding of the book as a communication medium. The second section examines some significant British and other European works on the sociology of the book and of literature in general; these have informed some of the recent work on the book in Australia. Some of this work exemplifies early 'cultural studies' approaches to book culture which link literary studies with both sociology and history; other works are strictly sociological. Both approaches provide interesting overviews of the nature and function of the book and book culture in the societies in which the studies are set.

The major part of this review deals with the book in Australia. The third section examines general literature which focuses on the book as a format or as a cultural artefact, or which deals with specific or general aspects of book culture in Australia.

The fourth section examines literature on the history of the book and book culture in Australia. This is by far the best documented aspect of the book in this country. Some of the literature was spawned by the commemoration in 1988 of the Bicentennial of white settlement in Australia which saw funding and encouragement provided to a wide range of historical and cultural projects. Other literature is found in general studies of Australian colonial culture, and some is the work of particularly prolific and interested individual book historians. Historical studies of the book production industry, and of libraries are included in this section.

The fifth section focuses on readers and reading. Much of this literature is also historical in nature and examines reading in various periods. There are several discussions of reading and gender, and discussions of the role of the reader in book culture.

The last section looks at literature concerning the book production industry, and government policy and support for that industry. The nature and degree of government assistance reveals, to some extent, the status of the book in Australia, at least in the eyes of various governments. This literature focuses on assistance schemes, industry inquiries, their recommendations, statistics, and policy documents.

This literature review is selective and includes only those works which provide insight into the development of book culture in Australia and which deal specifically with books, book reading, book history, and the role of the book. Not included are detailed current studies of the publishing industry, bookselling, library provision, and writing; while these are obviously important aspects of book culture, they will be examined in the body of this research for their contribution to an understanding of the contemporary book in Australia.

THE LITERATURE

1. The Development of the Book

Important to the study of the book and book culture is an understanding of the early history and development of the book as a physical medium, or communication format; there are a number of historical reference works which assist such an understanding. Douglas McMurtrie's *The Book: The Story of Printing and Bookmaking* (McMurtrie 1980 reprint) begins with the origins of writing, the alphabet and paper, and

continues through to the development of the book format and of printing, to 20th century typography and book design. While McMurtrie's story of the development of the book includes early Asian printing and bookmaking, the focus is on the codex and on printing in Europe and America. McMurtrie's work provides valuable background information on the physical aspects of the book's development in western culture. The third edition was revised in 1943 and had its 12th printing with the 1980 edition; it is considered a 'classic' work of its kind.

Another important work which examines the development of the book is *The Book Through 5000 Years* edited by Hendrik Vervliet (Vervliet 1972). This large format volume comprises articles by various European scholars, and is organised in four general sections which address the early development of books and writing, the book in Asia, and the manuscript and the printed book in the west. It is less comprehensive than McMurtrie's but functions as a survey of important aspects of the development of the book with individual writers contributing articles on their particular area of expertise. Numerous colour illustrations are an integral part of this work, and comprise reproductions of book designs, typography, illuminations and other illustrations, and book bindings.

2. Sociological Studies of the Book

There are a number of works which explore the book and book culture from a sociological perspective; the approach is valuable for its holistic view of the book, and for its consideration of aspects of production, distribution and reception of books. British sociologist Peter Mann, for instance, in his *From Author to Reader: A Social Study of Books* (Mann 1982) looks at the book in general, and at authors and their place in book production; he goes on to examine publishing, bookselling, the lending and borrowing of books and, finally, readers.

Mann's first chapter is an extensive exploration of the nature and function of the book as a medium of communication; he examines various definitions of the book, functions of different kinds of books, the social status associated with books, and the book and its relationship to other communication media, particularly radio and television. His work is set firmly in British culture but could be applied to other western cultures. Mann's examination of the various elements of book culture include general comments and observations about the nature and role of each element as well as statistics relating to book culture in Britain at the time of his writing. Obviously his general comments are useful to the study of the book in Australia. The work in total provides an example of a sociological study of the book and a useful model for studying various aspects and functions of the book. This work could be seen as a synthesis and development of Mann's earlier research, some of which was carried out with funding from the Bookseller's Association.

In *Books and Reading* (Mann & Burgoyne 1969), Mann and research assistant, Jacqueline Burgoyne propose a sociological model for the analysis of book reading. The model differentiates types of reading, book types, and buying and borrowing practices associated with each. It is an attempt to deal with the vast range of book types and functions, and provides a differentiated model to facilitate its study. While the

model is useful in identifying a variety of books, reading, and procuring practices, the writers do not apply the model; it is derived from their study rather than used in it, it is therefore difficult to evaluate its efficacy as an analytical tool. The model has obvious weaknesses such as its omission of books with little or no text, and its hard dividing lines which do not recognise or allow for any literary or 'social' value in common 'leisure' genre works such as detective or mystery fiction.

Robert Escarpit is a French practitioner of the sociological approach to the study of books whose work *Sociology of Literature* is seminal in this area (Escarpit 1971). Escarpit proposes the notion of 'literary facts', each of which involves a circuit made up of an author, a book and a reader in an inter-relationship combining art, technology and business. Escarpit expands the boundaries of literary studies and challenges the notion of the centrality and insularity of the creator of literature by considering as equally important, processes of production, distribution and consumption:

If we are to understand writers in our time, we cannot forget that writing is a profession - or at least a lucrative activity - practised within the framework of economic systems which exert undeniable influences on creativity. We cannot forget, if we are to understand literature, that a book is a manufactured product, commercially distributed and thus subject to the laws of supply and demand. We must see that literature is, among other things, incontestably, the production segment of the book industry, as reading is its consumption segment. (Escarpit 1971: 2)

While Escarpit's focus is on literature, he refers to books and book culture in undifferentiated ways throughout his study, and much of his discussion is relevant to books of all kinds. Escarpit looks at authors, publication, distribution, and consumption in much the same format as Mann whose work follows and refers to Escarpit.

Probably the most interesting aspect of Escarpit's work is his sociological analysis of the circuits of distribution in which he identifies a 'cultured' or 'cultivated' circuit of writers, producers and readers, and a 'popular' circuit of readers for whom certain types of books are produced and to whom they are distributed. One major difference in the circuits is that those 'popular' circuit participants have no input into production, while within the 'cultivated' circuit writers, publishers, critics and readers all operate and interact to a certain extent, resulting in mutual influence being effected. While these circuits are discrete, Escarpit suggests that their boundaries can be breached and cites examples of the 'cultivated' circuit breaching the 'popular' with the production and distribution of cheap editions of literary or 'cultivated' books. I suggest that in recent years a breach could be said to have occurred in the other direction with increasing incursion of 'popular' genres, such as romance and detective fiction, albeit in an elevated form, into the 'cultivated' circuit.

The least useful part of this book is Escarpit's study of authors in which he seeks to locate authors by demographic and geographic characteristics. Apart from obvious problems with definitions of social class, the validity of such an approach and its conclusions are questionable.

Escarpit also worked with UNESCO in book research, producing *The Book Revolution* (1966), an overview of the nature and function of the book and publishing, and *Book Hunger* (1973), a study of the implications of the scarcity of books in developing countries. *The Book Revolution* is a particularly interesting exploration of the book and its functions; Escarpit provides an historical overview of the book's role including the way it enables the word to conquer distance just as writing allows the word to conquer time. He goes on to explore its various mutations ending in the book as a vehicle for mass communication. The functions of the book are considered, and two broad types are identified: the functional book and the literary book. Escarpit sees the functional book as tool and estimates that 75% of books published annually fall into this category. In his exposition of the literary book, Escarpit amends and develops his definition set out in *Sociology of Literature* (1971); that is, that a literary book is characterised by being an end in itself: "Any work which is not functional, but an end in itself, is literature" (Escarpit 1971: 14). In *The Book Revolution*, he considers this definition insufficient and adds the necessity of an element of exchange between author and reader, a conscious aesthetic judgement by the reader, and 'solitude' for both author and reader. Escarpit also examines the publishing industry, patterns of production, bookselling, and he notes the scarcity of books and literacy skills in the developing world, an issue he explores in greater detail in his subsequent work, *Book Hunger* (1973).

Malcolm Bradbury addresses issues similar to those addressed by both Escarpit and Mann, in his book *The Social Context of Modern English Literature* (1971), although his concern is more clearly the book as a literary medium than the book in general. He places the literary book in the context of modernity and the 'modern tradition'. Bradbury is the first of these authors to locate his work in the area of 'cultural studies', that is, according to him "the middle ground between literary study, sociology, and intellectual history" (Bradbury 1971: xi).

Bradbury believes that the book is an 'institution of literary culture' along with other media. He makes an interesting observation of the book's nature and status: it has, he writes "tended to present itself . . . on a pre-technological model - as a species of relatively intimate communication, as a source of values and community, and for that matter as an object of elegance. It has profoundly distilled associations in our society." (Bradbury 1971: 226).

Swedish writer Per Gedin makes an important contribution to this sociological approach to the book with his *Literature in the Marketplace* (Gedin 1977). Gedin takes a broad view in examining societal changes, particularly the movement to a 'service' or a 'mass' society, and its effect on cultural interests in general, and on books and literature in particular. The value of Gedin's work is that he locates books, readers and the book industry in a broad and changing social context. He notes changes in the economic basis of society and consequent changes in work patterns, in consumerism and material conditions, in increased stress as well as leisure, and fundamental changes in the aims of public education; these are important factors influencing culture, cultural products, and their reception. Gedin notes a large number of changes in this area, including the centralisation and bureaucratisation of culture, "[in] the process [of which] the humanistic elements of culture and particularly serious fiction, have had to give way to professional knowledge, technology and

specialization" (Gedin 1977: 178-179). By locating the book and an analysis of its nature and function within this broad social context, a more realistically complex picture emerges.

Several chapters of Gedin's work refer specifically to Sweden and other Scandinavian countries while others are less specific and concern modern western society in general; all chapters, however, are interesting with the specific Scandinavian details functioning as illustrative case studies.

This work is of major importance to the study of the book in Australia - it highlights the importance of consideration of both general structural, and specific societal conditions, as well as the importance of examining the book in its broader social context.

Although a number of these sociological studies focus on literature and literary books, their methods and observations are valuable to the study of books in general. Their differentiation of types of books and their functions is particularly useful, and the holistic view of the book set in its social context is a useful one from which to approach the study of books and book culture.

3. General Literature on the Book in Australia

The general literature on the book in Australia comprises several major collections of articles and papers, three quantitative studies of books and reading, individual articles and research reports, works generated by a 1988 exhibition on books in Australia, and trade publications including those of the National Book Council.

Three major publications which examine the book in Australia are all collections of articles and conference papers: *The Book in Australia: Essays Towards a Cultural and Social History* (Borchardt & Kirsop 1988), *Books, Readers, Reading* (Australian Cultural History 1992) and *Books and Reading in Australian Society* (Macleod & Buckridge 1992). The three collections include 36 separate articles on various aspects of print culture in Australia. The first two collections mentioned are largely historical in nature and as such, make an important contribution to understanding the development of book culture in Australia. The third collection, *Books and Reading in Australian Society* comprises "articles on contemporary issues under the general rubric of 'book culture' in Australia" (Macleod & Buckridge 1992: i). That the three are collections and are relatively recent publications attests to the topicality of this area, and to the lack of lengthy and major studies on book culture. Many of the articles in these collections represent preliminary work on particular areas of book culture; only one is an excerpt from a larger work (Lyons & Taksa 1992b). The majority of articles are written by university-based scholars and librarians, indicating significant academic interest in this subject area.

The Book in Australia: Essays Towards a Cultural and Social History (Borchardt & Kirsop 1988) is a collection of eight essays, and in spite of its title includes some articles on printed forms other than the book. The collection is intended to serve as a starting point for historians and other scholars concerned with "the vehicle and medium through which Australian literary culture survives" (vi), that is, the book. The editors express concern at the lack of in-depth study of print culture in

Australia and consider their publication "a small base onto which scholars of the future can build a fuller, more detailed and more varied approach to the history of the book" (vi). It is an important collection in that it is the first to bring together works related to book history to form the beginnings of an integrated picture of that history. It includes articles on printing, bookselling, publishing and reading in the 19th century, publishing and the economics of the book trade in the 20th century, and an overview of library history in Australia.

Books, Readers, Reading is an issue of the annual journal *Australian Cultural History* (1992). A number of its articles are based on papers presented at a conference on books and reading held at the University of NSW in 1991. The journal sets out to explore "topics that broaden our knowledge of Australian culture" (v) and, as a collection, does not claim to encompass the subject but to "whet the appetite, raise interest in the subject and suggest some new lines of enquiry" (vi). As with the collection *The Book in Australia* (Borchardt & Kirsop 1988), this publication suggests preliminary work, an exploration, a sampling of work on the subject rather than definitive study or studies. This appears to be the nature of the literature of the late 1980s and early 1990s on book culture in Australia; it is in its early stages and is made up of works of a somewhat tentative and exploratory nature.

Books, Readers, Reading is an interesting collection which covers a variety of aspects of book culture and 'reading cultures' including varieties of reading practices, the book club and circulating libraries, Australian paperback publishing, and book reviews.

The third collection, *Books and Reading in Australian Society* (Macleod & Buckridge 1992) is a collection of papers presented at a conference organised by the Institute for Cultural Policy Studies at Griffith University and held in late 1990. The articles represent a number of contemporary issues involved in book culture and form part of various debates on those issues. The introductory paragraph suggests the polemical tone of the collection:

We hear almost daily that these are critical times for the fate of reading, and in particular that of book culture. But for all the shared assumptions about the importance of reading and the value of the book, the nature of the current situation and its causes and the way forward are deeply divisive concerns. Indeed the debate has engendered a rhetoric so intense that at times the overall picture portrayed is one of a cultural battleground where the shape of our cultural future is being made and unmade. (iii)

This may be somewhat overstating the feeling which emerges from these articles. They do, however, present some interesting views on aspects of contemporary book culture including aboriginal writing and culture in books, reading and gender, librarians and book culture, government policy and the book industry, and issues in reading research. The 16 articles in the collection appear to be direct transcripts of papers delivered to the conference; as such they convey some of the feeling of the conference and allow the reader additional insight into its nature and tone.

Individual articles in these collections will be considered in the appropriate sections of this review.

Among the significant sources of data on contemporary book culture in Australia are three major studies commissioned by the Australia Council, *Reading and Buying Books in Australia* (Brenac & Stevens 1978), *Books-Who Reads Them?* (Guldborg 1990), and *Books: Who's Reading Them Now?* (ABS 1995b). The studies survey book buying, borrowing and reading practices among Australian adults, as well as the size and composition of the Australian book market, and in the case of the 1990 study, provide an overview of library services and the book industry in Australia. The surveys were conducted in a similar enough form to allow for data comparisons.

Reading and Buying Books in Australia (Brenac & Stevens 1978) is considered a "landmark survey" (Shapcott 1988: 277); it was the first major survey of the reading public and of book buying and borrowing practices in Australia. It was also important for the definition it gave to the Australian book market. The objective of the survey was:

... to obtain information which will help the Literature Board of the Australia Council formulate policies for the encouragement of reading generally and buying of Australian books in particular as well as provide a basis on which to develop priorities for funding in 1978-79. (Brenac & Stevens 1978: 4)

The methods used by the researchers involved interviews with a number of publishers, booksellers and librarians, and with larger samples of householders, book borrowers at libraries, and with book buyers at the point of sale. While data collected was largely unanalysed in the report, it provided a benchmark by which to identify quantitative changes and developments in those aspects of book culture surveyed. Details of the results of both surveys will be examined in the body of this research.

Books-Who Reads Them? (Guldborg 1990) was commissioned to update the 1978 study as well as to integrate data from a number of other sources in order to present a detailed picture of the Australian book industry, and to identify information gaps. Another objective was to examine the status of Australian-produced books relative to the total book market. The third study, *Books: Who's Reading Them Now?* (ABS 1995b) updates the second, and provides more reliable data since the surveys were carried out by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), and the household survey was based on data collected by the national ABS Population Survey Monitor.

The later two studies, in particular, are valuable resources for any consideration of the book in Australia; they identify changes in buying, borrowing and reading practices, provide statistics and characteristics of book lending functions of Australian libraries, as well as information on the Australian National Bibliography (ANB) and local publishing output. They also examine Public Lending Right statistics and, the 1990 study provides detailed market estimates and descriptions of the Australian book industry. Their value lies not only in their original research but also in their assembling of the above information to provide a comprehensive exposition of both commercial and public sectors involved in Australian book culture. The studies attracted attention with their findings, particularly those on gender differences in reading, buying and borrowing, and on the relative and increasing ill-health of book culture.

Kay Daniels takes up this 'ill-health' issue in her article "Book Distribution and Book Culture" (1992). Daniels notes the figures in Guldberg's study (Guldberg 1990) which indicate a diminishing book culture in Australia and she suggests that this is a more important issue than the conflict over protection of local writers and the 'Australianness' of cultural production. Daniels suggests that concern should be focused on "the creation and maintenance of a healthy Australian book culture" (Daniels 1992: 101); she presents some indicators which might demonstrate such health. These indicators go beyond concerns with production to concern with access which involves distribution and price. Daniels goes on to review the Commonwealth government's intervention in book culture, and to examine its concept of its responsibilities and the objectives in this intervention. She looks at a number of defunct and extant schemes and protective measures, and concludes that the Commonwealth's role has been to intervene protectively at the production end of the market. Daniels sees Commonwealth policy in this area being made up of a series of ad hoc decisions, the results of which have been an increase in local products which are unevenly subsidised and sold at high prices to consumers, and continuing low levels of income for most writers. Daniels argues that production has been subsidised at the expense of distribution and access, and suggests that the balance be redressed by involving a neglected participant in book culture, the reader, and that this be done through community involvement and an increased focus on access to, and reception of, books and writing.

Daniels' article, while providing a good overview of Commonwealth intervention, also addresses the serious issue of a diminishing book culture in Australia, and offers some interesting analyses, as well as suggesting ideas for change and indicators by which to gauge any change. It provides a brief but substantial exploration of a number of critical issues within Australian book culture.

Jenny Burns and Mark Tredinnick offer some interesting insights into contemporary book culture in their research report "Knowledge is power the case for consumer research in book publishing" (Burns & Tredinnick 1994). Their research is based on qualitative methods and is an attempt to augment information about book buying found in quantitative research such as Guldberg's study *Books-Who Reads Them?* (Guldberg 1990). Burns and Tredinnick interviewed publishers and booksellers to produce a picture of the book publishing and selling industries, current issues therein, as well as anticipated trends and projections. They also interviewed readers in order to collect qualitative data on the book and its meaning to readers; the researchers pepper their report with quotes from the interviews allowing the readers to speak for themselves to some extent. Readers identify important roles for the book and the researchers suggest that such information could be used by publishers to produce and market their products more successfully. While this research focuses on commercial outcomes, it provides very interesting insights into the role of the book in the lives of a sample of regular and committed readers.

The role of libraries and librarians in book culture is explored in two articles from the collection *Books and Reading in Australian Society* (Macleod & Buckridge 1992). In "The Library System and Book Culture in Australia", the Director-General of the National Library of Australia, Warren Horton (1992) discusses the role of libraries in collecting and promoting Australian material, including books. He addresses the issue

of librarians and book culture toward the end of his article where he suggests that an appreciation of cultural values and a care for books are less a priority in the selection of senior librarians than abilities in management, computer use, and control of information. He goes on to say: "I think we have a real problem . . . while there is a balance, I think the balance has gone a bit too far one way", and ". . . as regards to the book, it tends not to figure as an important issue in terms of our discussions" (Horton 1992: 83). Horton's words are an indication of the changing role of libraries and librarians in relation to contemporary book culture.

John Levett in his paper "Librarians and Book Reading" (1992) addresses this issue more fully, asserting that the library profession "is only tangentially part of book culture" (64). He sees this as a provocative statement which he goes on to qualify and illustrate. Levett states, rather lyrically his own immersion in book culture:

I have an absolutely unshakeable belief in the fundamental power, efficiency, and efficacy of the book to illuminate, to relieve, ameliorate, inform, stimulate and uplift. (Levett 1992: 64)

He believes that this position is shared by few librarians and by few academics. He illustrates his point in a number of ways including recounting his own experiences in trying to get librarians and academics to discuss books in general. The most telling illustration, however, is his presentation and comparison of current and previous Australian Library and Information Association (formerly Library Association of Australia) requirements for professional education standards. 75% of the 1975 list of required subject areas focused to some extent on books; the 1992 list does not include the word 'book' at all, and 8 of the 9 subject areas include the word 'information'. Levett goes on to point out that librarians are very good at selecting, acquiring, organising, and providing access to bibliographic resources, and that perhaps their lack of training and interest in book culture does not handicap them in these functions. Levett, however, considers it preferable and "more congenial" for librarians to be active in book culture.

These papers highlight a shift in emphasis within the library profession away from book culture towards information management. While Australian libraries still house and provide access to books, they are no longer champions of the book. Warren Horton provides evidence of this when he writes: "Library promotions are generally geared more toward the word 'library' than towards words like 'books'" (Horton 1992: 81).

The book in Australia was the subject of a celebratory travelling exhibition prepared by the National Library of Australia as part of the 1988 Bicentennial fanfaronade. The exhibition served to draw attention to the book as an artefact in Australia, and to generate literature which focused both on the exhibition and on the role and status of the book in Australia.

The curator of the exhibition, Michael Richards, was also responsible for the handsome catalogue which accompanied it, *People, Print and Paper: A catalogue of a travelling exhibition celebrating the books of Australia, 1788-1988* (Richards 1988). The catalogue provides an introduction to the exhibition which it describes as "a statement about

the importance of books . . . a celebration of the power, the beauty, and the companionship of books" (Richards 1988: 3-4). A leaflet which also accompanied the exhibition adds that it "is based on the firm belief that the books of Australia are essential and central mirrors of...history, both of its high spots and of its darkest moments" (*People, Print and Paper* leaflet 1988: 1). The text of the catalogue provides an overview of the development of the Australian booktrade, publishing, bookselling, reading. It is illustrated with images from the exhibition: photographs, reproductions of book covers, illustrations, together with commentary on books on different subjects from different historical periods.

Justice Michael Kirby opened the exhibition in Canberra and used the occasion to speak on the peculiarly Australian social paradoxes which were evident in the exhibition. His opening address was published in *The Australian Author* under the title "Books in a Land of Paradox" (Kirby 1988). Among the paradoxes he identifies is the coexistence of strong British colonial sentiment with early Australian nationalism and republicanism; another is a celebration of a pioneering bush spirit represented in both colonial and post-colonial literature of Australia alongside the demographic reality of a largely urban population. The image of a tolerant Australia is contrasted with its history of prejudice and censorship. Kirby's address draws on the role of the book as a cultural artefact which reflects the society in which it is found; in so doing he highlights these interesting cultural idiosyncrasies.

James McClelland opened the exhibition in Sydney with an address, "The Battle Has Not Yet Been Lost to the Philistines", also published in *The Australian Author* (McClelland 1989). McClelland's theme is that of the book as a bulwark against the hardship of Australia's past and the philistinism of the present:

I get comfort from the evidence assembled here that in the darkest, most difficult days of our nation's growth the lives of people seeking to come to terms with this harsh, beautiful continent have been nourished and softened by the presence of books in their lives. (27)

. . . this library serves to remind us that the battle has not yet been lost to the philistines who today seek to dominate our society. (27)

The opening addresses and the exhibition's catalogue represent a eulogistic appreciation of the role of the book in Australian culture which is evident in much of the literature about the book, particularly in publications emanating from the National Book Council (NBC). This is not surprising since the Council defines itself as "a national, independent, non-profit-making body dedicated to the promotion of books and book reading and to the defence of the book in our society" (quoted in Bull 1990: 6). The NBC's publications include the *Australian Book Review* which features reviews of newly released Australian books as well as news and essays about Australian book culture. It is an important information source on past and present book culture along with the monthly trade journal, *The Australian Bookseller and Publisher*, although the latter is targeted at the booktrade, and is a largely commercial publication with a strong advertising function. The NBC also produces a bi-monthly newsletter *Thumbnail* which includes news about events and developments within the NBC. The *National Book*

Council Annual Report is also a useful source of information on the various promotional and other activities of the Council.

4. History of the Book in Australia

The history of the book and of book culture in Australia is a relatively well-documented area of study. Its literature consists of works which examine book history and culture in general, as well as those which focus on its particular aspects such as printing, publishing, bookselling, mechanics' institutes, and both public and private libraries. Information and analyses of book history and culture are also found in general histories, particularly those which deal with cultural or social history. The collections mentioned above, *The Book in Australia* (Borchardt & Kirsop 1988) and *Books, Readers, Reading* (*Australian Cultural History* 1992) contain relevant articles many of which are examined here. Other rich sources of historical studies in this area are the published proceedings of a number of forums on library history (for instance Morrison & Talbot 1984; Rayward 1988).

Much of the work in this area is influenced by the French *histoire du livre* school pioneered by Lucien Febvre and Henri-Jean Martin in their *L'Apparition du livre* (Febvre & Martin 1958). This approach emerged from the 'Annales' school of socioeconomic history, and approaches the history of the book from a number of disciplines and perspectives. It includes as integral patterns of production and consumption as well as the social and political contexts in which these activities take place. This holistic approach differs significantly from the narrow focus of bibliographic history with its emphasis on the physical properties of particular editions. American book historian, Robert Darnton provides a particularly clear explanation of *histoire du livre* in his article "What is the History of Books?" (Darnton 1983). Perhaps the major Australian exponent of this approach is Monash Associate Professor of French, Wallace Kirsop who has written prolifically on 19th century Australian book history and who, in 1995, chairs the editorial committee of the 'History of the Book in Australia' project.

Kirsop's work focuses on the Australian booktrade in the 19th century and on the social and political conditions which affected it. He is also responsible for documenting important sources for book history in Australia in his comprehensive survey, "The Literature on the History of Books in Australia" (Kirsop 1991).

Kirsop has produced some important works on the history of the Australian booktrade and the role played in it by the colonial and commercial interests of Britain. Its history is one of domination characterised in its early stages by the British consignment trade, or 'dumping' as Kirsop considers it (Kirsop 1977 & 1982), and later by a 'closed market' controlled by British publishers. Kirsop documents this history and particular aspects of it in a number of his works, the most comprehensive of which is "Bookselling and Publishing in the 19th Century" (Kirsop 1988). In this article, Kirsop identifies four major periods in the development of the Australian booktrade; he believes that in only one period, 1850 to 1890, did Australians come close to establishing control over their booktrade. This control was lost with the opening of Australian-based offices by British publishing firms, and by the subsequent closing of the Australian market in the late 19th

century. The implications of this loss of control are explored in this and other of Kirsop's works, for instance "The Book Trade: Conservative Force or Agent of Change?" (Kirsop 1982), in which he establishes the essentially commercial nature of the booktrade, its strong influence on "shaping our cultural consumption" (96), and the dangers inherent in those factors.

While most of Kirsop's work is both insightful and intriguing, some of it, particularly one published speech (Kirsop 1985) is rhetorical and circumlocutious. Kirsop's importance lies in his careful scholarship, his enthusiasm for his subject, his application of *histoire du livre* to Australian book history, and the influence this has had on other researchers. His other related works include *Towards a History of The Australian Booktrade* (1969), "Books and Readers in Colonial Tasmania" (1977), "Consignment Sales and Britain's 19th Century Colonial Booktrade" (1977), and "Exploring and Recording the World of the Book as an Integral Part of Australian Studies" (1985).

Elizabeth Webby is another productive researcher in Australian book history and one who also embraces the *histoire du livre* approach; as a literature scholar Webby's focus includes "imaginative literature" (Webby 1967: 266) and writers as well as other aspects of the booktrade. Her four volume PhD thesis, "Literature and the Reading Public in Australia 1800-1850" (Webby 1971) is often referred to by other writers; articles based on that work published in *Southerly* (Webby 1967, 1976a, 1976b) present a detailed examination of the nature of book distribution and of literary tastes in Australia in the early part of the 19th century. Webby also contributed an interesting overview of literary culture in this period to *The Penguin New Literary History of Australia* (Hergenhan 1988) with her article, "Writers, Printers and Readers: The Production of Australian Literature Before 1855" (Webby 1988). While this article deals largely with literature written and produced in Australia, it offers insights into Australian colonial book culture including the identification of the first Australian-produced literary books, and an examination of the popular preference for imported books and magazines. Webby suggests that imported books were not only cheaper to buy than locally produced works, but were also believed to be inherently superior.

Elizabeth Webby has also written on mechanics' institutes and their predecessors: book clubs, private libraries, and literary, philosophical and scientific societies in the early years of the colonies (Webby 1994).

A number of other works focus on early book culture in Australia including D. H. Borchardt's "Printing Comes to Australia" (Borchardt 1988). This article forms the first chapter in the collection *The Book in Australia* (Borchardt & Kirsop 1988) and is described by its author as a 'prolegomenon' to the history of the book in Australia. It provides a detailed description of the establishment and development of printing in Australia, with sections on printing in each Australian colony. Michael Richards' catalogue of the exhibition *People, Print and Paper* (Richards 1988) offers a written and illustrative overview of the development of the booktrade in Australia while Richards' small booklet *Bound for Botany Bay: What books did the First Fleeters read and where are they now?*, written with Colin Steele (Richards & Steele 1988) explores the question posed in the title.

Graeme Johanson's article "'Cultural Cringe' or Colonial Fringe?: British Books in Australia" (Johanson 1986) introduces and explores the phenomenon of 'colonial editions'. In this article, Johanson examines Australian dependence on Britain and dismisses the commonly held belief that cultural inferiority contributed to this dependence; he cites other factors such as technology, economic influences, social characteristics of Australian readers, and the "'smothering' effects of the Empire" as being of greater importance (Johanson 1986: 92).

Literature on the history of books and book culture can also be found in general histories, and in studies of colonial, and later Australian culture. George Nadel produced one of the first and most influential of these with his work *Australia's Colonial Culture* (Nadel 1957). This book identifies book culture as an integral part of colonial Australia's culture and as one in which a number of cultural tensions were played out. Those tensions included that between the materialism of land, sheep and wealth on one hand, and culture: arts, literature and education on the other. Another tension was that between the moral and social benefits of 'improving literature' as espoused by certain of the middle classes, and books and literature as entertainment as favoured by participants in colonial popular culture. Nadel explores these cultural tensions in his examination of book culture, literary trends, and the development, progress and, as he sees it, the ultimate failure of mechanics' institutes.

Michael Roe's *Quest for Authority in Eastern Australia 1835-1851* (Roe 1965) is an important source for information on the beliefs, philosophy and ideas which informed Australian culture, including book culture, in this period. Specifically, Roe examines the notions of 'moral enlightenment' and bourgeois respectability, and their relationship to literary or book culture. Bruce Clunies Ross also discusses 19th century beliefs as well as perceptions of Australia, and the influence these had on Australian literary and book culture in his article "Australian Literature and Australian Culture" (Clunies Ross 1988) published in *The Penguin New Literary History of Australia* (Hergenhahn 1988). Other studies of culture and history relevant to the history of the book include Geoffrey Serle's *From Deserts the Prophets Come: The Creative Spirit in Australia 1788-1972* (Serle 1973), Baba Berzins' *The Coming of Strangers: Life in Australia 1788-1822* (Berzins 1988), Richard White's *Inventing Australia: Images and Identity 1688-1980* (White 1981), Richard Waterhouse's "Popular Culture and Pastimes" (Waterhouse 1989) in *Under New Heavens: Cultural Transmission and the Making of Australia* edited by Neville Meaney (Meaney 1989), and *Australians 1838* edited by Alan Atkinson and Marion Aveling (Atkinson & Aveling 1987).

Paul Gillen contributed an interesting chapter to *Constructing a Culture: A People's History of Australia since 1788* (Burgmann & Lee 1988). Entitled "Mightier Than the Sword" (Gillen 1988), Gillen begins by discussing the imposition of a literate culture on an oral one, and the subsequent power of literacy in Australia. He goes on to examine the role of the written word, and book culture; he includes in his examination printing, bookselling, reading, libraries, censorship, education, and 'oppositional writing'. While it is refreshing to encounter a political perspective on these issues, Gillen's disappoints in its occasional heavy-handedness.

Mechanics' institutes were an important feature of early Australian book culture and are popular subjects for research and analysis. George Nadel's work (Nadel 1957) mentioned above, contains a detailed

examination of the mechanics' institute movement in Australia as a significant feature of colonial culture. R.W. Connell and T. H. Irving use the mechanics' institute movement as an illustration of class relations and hegemony in their *Class Structure in Australian History: Documents, Narrative and Argument* (Connell & Irving 1980). A more recent work on mechanics' institutes is the collection *Pioneering Culture: Mechanics' Institutes and Schools of Arts in Australia* (Candy & Laurent 1994). It contains works of varying quality and interest on both specific institutes, and on the movement in general; it also includes photographs of institute buildings throughout Australia. Perhaps the most interesting contribution in the collection is Phillip Candy's in which he examines common themes in the values and organisational principles of mechanics' institutes, and evaluates the contribution of the institutes to Australian cultural history (Candy 1994). Elizabeth Webby's article "Dispelling 'The Stagnant Waters of Ignorance': The Early Institutes in Context" (Webby 1994) makes the point that institutes did not emerge in a vacuum but were related to an active but uncoordinated movement to establish book clubs, libraries, and various literary, scientific and philosophical societies in Australia since the 1820s.

Much of the literature on mechanics' institutes considers their role in the culture of 19th century 'respectability', and examines issues of class, the 'improving' function of 'useful knowledge', and the hegemony of the middle classes with respect to the institutes. A similar analysis is applied to libraries by Brian Hubber in his article "Libraries and Readers in Nineteenth Century Melbourne" (Hubber 1984). Hubber introduces the concept of what he calls "the hegemonic aspects of the library" (55) in which he sees the library as "both a passive symbol of the dominant respectable culture, and an agent in diffusing that culture" (55). While he goes on to present excellent definitions of the terms he uses, and to explore the notion of 'respectability', his attempt to "ascertain the extent and nature of respectable book culture" (57) is less successful. Hubber presents demographic information coupled with examples of library use and holdings but fails to make his point. It is an ambitious project for a single paper and, perhaps would benefit from fuller and lengthier treatment.

The history of libraries in Australia is obviously related to that of mechanics' institutes and is central to the literature of books and book culture. *Australian Libraries* (Biskup & Goodman 1982) offers a comprehensive view of the development of libraries in Australia while Harrison Bryan's contribution to *The Book in Australia* (Borchardt & Kirsop 1988) provides an encapsulated view of the same (Bryan, 1988). Bryan examines the development of libraries in Australia in five aptly named historical periods, for instance the period 1788 to 1849 is entitled "Establishment in the face of indifference" (140). Bryan's is a useful brief history which takes the reader to 1988 with a survey of the then current position of libraries. A series of historical studies on the development of the State libraries is included in *Books, Libraries and Readers in Colonial Australia: Papers from the Forum on Australian Colonial Library History* (Morrison & Talbot 1984); these include John Levett on the Tasmanian Public Library (Levett 1984), Margery Ramsay on the Melbourne Public Library, later to become the Public Library of Victoria (Ramsay 1984), and John Cook on the Public Library of Western Australia (Cook 1984).

Private subscription libraries and book clubs were also a feature of Australian book culture, particularly in the 20th century. John Arnold provides an interesting study of the circulating library movement in Melbourne (Arnold 1992) which is included in *Books, Readers, Reading (Australian Cultural History 1992)*. In the same collection is a personal view from the former proprietor of a book club, Kevin Reid, in his "The Lane Cove Book Club Remembered" (Reid, K. 1992). These two articles are useful for the details they present on these institutions. Arnold's is particularly enlightening on the extent of subscription libraries, their holdings and loans, and their eventual decline. Arnold equates his view of the subscription library as "an institution ideally designed to meet the unique demand and supply factors in the distribution and reading of books", with the present-day video library which does the same for videos (Arnold 1992: 78).

The early history of publishing in Australia is the history of British domination, and it was not until the end of the 19th century that local publishing began as an adjunct to printing and bookselling. The firm of Angus and Robertson is perhaps the best known Australian publisher and bookseller, although a comprehensive history of that firm is yet to be produced. A. W. Barker's *Dear Robertson: Letters to an Australian Publisher* (Barker, A. 1982) is a collection of letters between writers and publisher but could not be seen as an adequate history.

Carol Mills has published comprehensive work on the successful NSW Bookstall Company in her article, "The Bookstall Novel: An Australian Paperback Revolution: 1904-1946" (Mills, C. 1992), and her book *The NSW Bookstall Company as Publisher* (Mills, C. 1991). The latter combines a history of the company with an exhaustive bibliography of its publications. Both are valuable and attest to the successful phenomenon of the NSW Bookstall Company as both publisher and bookstall franchiser.

While no major works on the history of publishing in the 20th century have been produced, there are a number of articles which address this topic. John McLaren's article "Publishing in the 20th Century" which appears in *The Book in Australia* (Borchardt & Kirsop 1988) is an example. McLaren begins with a brief overview of the "Colonial Inheritance" (McLaren 1988: 66), and proceeds with an account of developments in publishing throughout the 20th century to the time of writing. He provides an excellent overview of issues and developments. John Curtain focuses on the British presence in Australian publishing in his oddly titled article "Distance makes the market fonder: the development of book publishing in Australia" (Curtain 1993b). Written for an international audience and published in the London-based *Media, Culture and Society*, Curtain's account concentrates on the issues involved in British domination of the trade. He also considers the role of government intervention, and the differences between Canadian and Australian priorities in publishing. Michael Zifcak, also writing for an international audience in the American journal *Logos* presents an overview of what he calls in his title "The Evolution of Australian Publishing" (Zifcak 1990) in which he charts the changes in the industry which have led it to become, in his view, less Australian-owned but more Australian.

Much of the literature on publishing in the 20th century can be found in works which focus on particular firms such as F. W. Cheshire's *Bookseller, Publisher, Friend* (Cheshire 1984), Frank Eyre's *Oxford in*

Australia 1890-1978 (Eyre 1978), *The Australian Government Publishing Service and Its Role in Commonwealth Printing and Publishing 1964-1978* (AGPS 1979), and Stuart Sayers' *The Company of Books: A Short History of the Lothian Book Companies 1888-1988* (Sayers 1988).

5. Reading in Australia

Much of the literature on reading, readers, and book culture is historically based, and is also influenced by ideas associated with *histoire du livre* which sees the reception of the book and its impact as equally important to the history of the book as production and distribution processes. Writers who focus their research on reading and readers universally agree that this aspect of book culture is one which has been neglected. One reason put forward for this neglect is the variability of reading practices and uses of reading, causing its study to involve interdisciplinary research which is not a strong academic activity in Australia (Askew 1992: 130-131). Other literature on reading and readers in Australia is associated with contemporary surveys of the reading public, and commentaries on the findings of these surveys. Works on literacy and book reading are also relevant in any examination of the literature of books and book culture.

The fact of British colonisation of Australia in the 18th century, with its wholesale importation of British culture and cultural practices is vital to the understanding of book culture in Australia. White settlement of Australia coincided with the spread of literacy in Europe, particularly in Britain and, as Marc Askew and Brian Hubber maintain, with the "rise of the reading public" (Askew & Hubber 1988: 111). Richard Altick's *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public 1800-1900* (1957) is an enlightening study of reading in Britain in the period of British colonisation, subsequent convict transportation, and migration. Altick's chapter on the 18th century is particularly relevant to Australian book culture since this was precisely the book culture which was imported to Australia - a culture fully formed, complete with reading practices, attitudes, and expectations. Altick's book also provides a comprehensive study of 19th century reading in Britain, as well as a thorough background to the development of reading from the 15th century. Another British study which is relevant to Australian book culture of a later period is Kate Flint's *The Woman Reader: 1837-1914* (Flint 1993). Its excellent examination of women and reading contributes to the understanding of Australian women's experience in this period.

While studies of 18th and 19th century British reading and book cultures are clearly relevant to colonial Australia, differences in the cultures began as soon as the colonising ships set sail; the British material must be seen as background only.

Marc Askew examines a number of issues involved in researching the history of reading and readers in Australia in his article, "Reading the Australian Reading Public: Some Historical Considerations" (Askew 1992). Askew calls for comprehensive research into books and reading and suggests some themes which might link such research, these include the theme of white Australia as a culture 'born modern' with a fully imported literate culture; the theme of white cultural unity in spite of vast geographical distances; the size and variety of reading

publics in Australia; and the dominance of the masculine in defining Australian culture, a practice which has led to under-estimation of the importance of "more reflective and sedentary activity" often practised by women, and which included reading (Askew 1992: 136). The aim of such research, according to Askew, should be "to locate reading as a cultural practice in conceptual terms" with reference to its "social, class, cultural, and institutional settings and dynamics" (Askew 1992: 140). Askew's article provides some challenging comments and suggestions regarding research themes, and includes a valuable bibliography.

An earlier work by Marc Askew with Brian Hubber appears in *The Book in Australia* (Borchardt & Kirsop 1988) under the title "The Colonial Reader Observed: Reading in its Cultural Context" (Askew & Hubber 1988). It is described by its authors as a "tentative foray" which presents both past research and the authors' work in progress. The article examines book culture and the cultural context of reading in colonial Australia, and explores issues such as the importance and role of reading in 19th century Britain, and the encouragement of reading in the Australian colonies, linked as it was to "the pursuit of mental and moral enlightenment" (Askew & Hubber 1988: 113). Book distribution in the colonies is also discussed along with its impact on reading; British domination of the market is noted and various local distribution points are examined, these include circulating libraries, mechanics' institutes, and public and private libraries. The difficulty in determining readers' responses to what was read is discussed, and one example of a reader's response is provided in the form of excerpts from a 19th century gold-miner's diary. Askew & Hubber also look at the phenomena of public readings and lectures which were popular in 19th century Australia. The article ends with a suggestion that books, while "clearly significant in the history of ideas and of literature . . . should also be studied as cultural artefacts" (Askew & Hubber 1988: 137). As a "tentative foray", this article covers a great deal of ground and touches on many issues; it is an excellent introduction to the study of books and reading in colonial Australia.

Martyn Lyons is another researcher interested in the history of reading in Australia and produced, with Lucy Taksa, a significant study of Australian reading habits and attitudes in *Australian Readers Remember: an oral history of reading 1890-1930* (Lyons & Taksa 1992a). Another work by Lyons which preceded the publication of this important oral history discusses the context of the later study as well as different approaches to the history of the book. In "Texts, Books and Readers: which kind of social history?" (Lyons 1992), Lyons outlines three approaches to book history, each of which embraces a different perception of what constitutes "the essential literary act". Traditional intellectual and literary history focuses on the text, authors and "the act of writing as the essential creative moment in the literary process" (Lyons 1992: 13). This approach analyses texts: their contents, authors, influences, and antecedents. The second approach sees publication as the focus with the publisher as an arbiter of taste and values who makes literature possible. This approach sees the book as a commercial, industrial, and cultural product, and stresses the importance of understanding the material factors of production. The third approach is the most neglected, according to Lyons, it focuses on reading and the book's reception as the "essential literary act" which gives literature meaning. Lyons examines this third approach in detail with a brief history of western reading practices and a discussion of sources of

reader's history which include normative sources such as lists of 'acceptable' texts; evidence from the physical layout of books which suggest and pre-empt interpretations; and the autobiographies of readers. It is this last source which is drawn on in the oral history mentioned above. The article provides an excellent survey of approaches to book history, the characteristics of each approach, and the beliefs and perceptions which underlie them.

Australian Readers Remember (Lyons & Taksa 1992a) covers some of the above issues in its introduction, and also presents questions which the history of reading seeks to answer: who bought books? what was the status of books in households? how were books received? where were they read? were they read alone or in groups? on holidays, travel, at home? did attitudes and practices differ among social classes, religious affiliations, sexes, ages? Lyons & Taksa set out to answer these questions and more in interviews with 61 people born between 1886 and 1915. The choice of age of the subjects ensured a coverage of the years 1890 to 1930 drawing on both childhood memories and adult experiences. The results of the interviews are presented in clearly delineated categories such as general fiction, poetry, newspapers and magazines, children's reading, non-fiction, libraries, bookshops and other sources, and so on. The report includes quotes from interviews as well as statistics from the sample. It concludes that the role of the book and attitudes to reading have changed and "constitute a significant cultural transformation" (Lyons & Taksa 1992a: 189). It lists a number of changes and some common myths which emerged, including this interesting finding:

... we encountered little in this history of reading to sustain the myth of Australian anti-intellectualism. Rather, interviewees belonged to a reading-oriented society. (Lyons & Taksa 1992a: 8)

This study is an important one in the area of book culture, it is the only major historical study based on personal interviews and which provides both quantitative and qualitative evidence on the role and status of both the book and of reading in Australian society. It asks important questions of an ageing generation, the last to be able to grant us personal insight into book culture of 19th century Australia.

Lyons and Taksa have published an article based on one aspect of their study as "If Mother Caught Us Reading . . ." Impressions of the Australian Woman Reader 1890-1933" (Lyons & Taksa 1992b) in *Books, Readers, Reading (Australian Cultural History 1992)*. Martyn Lyons also published an early report of the research in an article "Reading in NSW 1890-1930" in papers from a forum on library history, *Australian Library History in Context* (Rayward 1988).

All three of the Australia Council-sponsored studies discussed earlier in this review (Brenac & Stevens 1978; Guldberg 1990; ABS 1995b) have drawn responses and commentaries on their various findings, particularly those associated with reading practices. The gender imbalance found in reading, buying, and borrowing practices prompted both Louise Adler and Susan McKernan to comment in papers published in *Books and Reading in Australian Society* (Macleod & Buckridge 1992). Louise Adler's paper does little more than link the findings regarding gender with her own experiences as a publisher (Adler 1992), while Susan McKernan presents a cogent argument regarding the cultural values implied by the findings. In her article "Female Literacy and Male Success: The Implications of Gendered Reading" (McKernan, 1992),

McKernan quotes the findings of *Books-Who Reads Them?* (Guldborg, 1990) in relation to gender differences which reveal that, at all educational levels, women are more literate than men; she couples this with the observation that men are more important in public life, better paid, and therefore more valued in an economic sense. This leads McKernan to question the value our culture places on literacy, and particularly the development of 'human attributes' through reading, as opposed to the higher value placed on "technical skills, moneymaking, calculation" (McKernan 1992: 87-88).

Relevant material and research on reading in Australia can also be found in the literature of literacy, and the teaching of reading and education; while much of this refers to the mechanics and psychology of reading, some focuses specifically on book reading and reception, and contributes to an understanding of book culture. Several articles in the collection *Books and Reading in Australian Society* (Macleod & Buckridge 1992) fall into this category (Reid, I. 1992; Carr 1992; Luke 1992), as well as a number of articles in the collection *Literacy in Contexts: Australian Perspectives and Issues* (Luke & Gilbert 1993).

6. Government and Industry

Australian governments have concerned themselves with the book industry and with book culture in a variety of ways since Federation. While there is no comprehensive study of government intervention and concern, there are a number of articles which overview the government's role in particular periods as well as works which explore and explain specific government assistance schemes. The Commonwealth is the major governmental player in both book culture and industry issues, and has held a number of inquiries into aspects of the book industry over the years; these are valuable sources of information on the extent and nature of the industry, as well as on issues of relevance to the industry. Official organisations within the booktrade itself have produced reports which are also useful in the study of book culture.

Kay Daniels in her paper discussed above, "Book Distribution and Book Culture" (Daniels 1992) reviews Commonwealth government intervention in book culture, listing and describing various assistance schemes and programs. The paper provides a useful survey of government involvement in Australian book culture, as well as a clear analysis of its shortcomings. A. J. Hagger also presents a useful catalogue of government assistance measures in his otherwise somewhat confusing article "Economics of the Book Industry" (Hagger 1988). Hagger raises the issue of the difficulty in differentiating the book production industry from other like industries in the absence of an Australian Standard Industry Classification for book production as a separate entity.

John Curtain, in an article which is primarily on book publishing in Australia (Curtain 1993a), not only provides a useful listing of 'proactive intervention' measures by government, but also a rationale for such measures:

Because of the book's traditional status as a cultural artefact, educational tool, universal transmitter of ideas, and conduit of

national identity, governments have supported the writing and publishing of books . . . (Curtain 1993a: 107)

A number of other works examine particular government intervention schemes in detail, for instance the book bounty (Zerby 1978; *Facts About the Book Bounty*, 1980), the Public Lending Right ("Public Lending Right in Australia" 1982), and Literature Board assistance. This latter avenue of government assistance is particularly well-documented in a history written by Thomas Shapcott, a former director of the Literature Board (Shapcott 1988). Shapcott presents a history of the Board and of its predecessor, the Commonwealth Literary Fund, and detailed discussions of the Board's functions including, in some cases, reports of discussions leading up to Board decisions. Also listed are details of Literature Board grants including each recipient and amount granted. It is a valuable document which provides a full picture of the work of the Board from its establishment in 1973 until 1988. *Australia Council Annual Reports* include a report on the activities of the Literature Board and also provide details of its funding activities on an annual basis. The work of the Commonwealth Literary Fund is also well-documented in a government publication, *Helping Literature in Australia: The Work of the Commonwealth Literary Fund 1908-1960* (1967).

Valuable primary sources on aspects of book culture are government industry reports, these include a Tariff Board Report *Products of the Printing Industry* (1973), a number of Industry Assistance Commission Reports (1978, 1979, 1986, 1987) and an Industry Commission Report on *Book Production* (1992). These reports contain examinations of the industries which they refer to, and often include statistics on various aspects of the industries such as markets, import-export figures and employment. The reports include recommendations with respect to government assistance to, and protection of, the industries, recommendations which may or may not have been taken up by the government of the day. Although all of the reports mentioned are relevant to books and book culture, they do not all focus on a single industry; the 1978 report, for instance examines 'products of the printing industry' (IAC 1978), and the 1987 report looks into 'pulp, paper, paper products and printing industries' (IAC 1987), while the 1985 and 1992 reports both examine 'book production' (IAC 1986; IC 1992). This difference in industry focus and definition creates some difficulties for analysis and comparison.

Other valuable sources of information on Australian book culture which focus on the distribution and sales end of the book industry are the Prices Surveillance Authority's *Inquiry into Book Prices* reports; two reports were issued in 1989 (PSA 1989a and 1989b), and another in 1995 (PSA 1995). Both of the 1989 reports offer information and discussion about issues involved in the establishment and maintenance of book prices, including copyright issues and international agreements, market deregulation, and protection of Australian authors. They also include comparisons with prices in comparable countries such as Britain and Canada. The later report evaluates the effect on prices of the 1991 changes to the importation provisions of the *Copyright Act 1968*.

Works contributing to the continuing debate about Australian copyright laws also provide insights into Australian book culture. The debate raged through recent years regarding the importation

provisions of the *Copyright Act 1968* until its eventual amendment in 1991 (for instance, Gaunt 1990; Muller 1990). The debate has been re-kindled in relation to copyright in an electronic environment, and continues to raise issues of interest to the study of book culture.

Representative organisations within the book industry have produced a number of works regarding the trade in general and regarding particular aspects of the trade. Some of these are in the form of submissions to government inquiries, for instance the Australian Society of Authors' submission to the 1979 Industry Assistance Commission report into the publishing industry (Australian Society of Authors 1979), while others are trade reports. An example of a trade report is the Australian Book Trade Working Party's *The Australian Book Trade* (1975) which is an examination of the trade carried out by a joint working party made up of members of the Australian Booksellers Association (ABA) and the Australian Book Publishers Association (ABPA). In 1991, the NSW branch of the ABA produced a report based on a survey which was undertaken by the branch to ascertain the size and structure of the bookselling industry in Australia, *Bookselling in Australia: The "State of Our Art"* (ABA NSW 1991). Both of these are interesting documents which provide detailed information on the trade as well as discussion of issues of concern to those involved in the trade. As mentioned previously, *The Australian Bookseller and Publisher* is also a useful source of information on commercial and personnel aspects of the trade.

Conclusion

The literature on the book in Australia is limited in both scope and depth, however, there is much which offers positive contributions to the understanding of the development and the nature of book culture in Australia. The major focus of the literature is historical, and much involves the application of the *histoire du livre* approach. The literature which constitutes book history in Australia is expanding and offers an increasingly full and complex view of the development of book culture in Australia, particularly in the 19th century.

Another prominent focus in the literature is on readers and reading; while much of this is historically based, contemporary studies are also in evidence. A significant amount of this work is influenced by audience 'uses and gratifications' research of communications and media studies as well as 'reader-response' criticism of literary studies, both of which view readers (or audiences) as creators or co-creators of meaning. This approach, with its focus on the book's reception and meaning, affords a valuable contribution to the understanding of the role of reading and of the reader in Australian book culture.

While the literature offers important information and viewpoints, it is fragmented, focusing on particular aspects of the book and book culture, either in historical periods or in contemporary Australian culture. In this sense, it is limited in scope. Its limited depth is illustrated by the exploratory and tentative nature of much of the work; this will obviously change as more work is carried out based on these explorations. The exploratory works are valuable, however, for the sources they unearth, and for their identification of issues and topics for further exploration and research.

It appears that the necessity for an interdisciplinary approach has held back research in this area in Australia with academics often unwilling to venture outside the boundaries of their particular discipline. This too appears to be changing, with the increasing interest in cultural studies within Australian universities. As mentioned previously, however, little attention has been paid to the book and book culture in cultural studies research to date; work in the area appears to favour other aspects of popular culture such as television, film, shopping and sport.

The major quantitative research projects which have been carried out in recent years provide valuable data on buying, borrowing and reading practices as well as demographic details concerning these practices. Such research demands augmentation when considering the book in Australian culture; quantitative research alone cannot reveal all significant factors related to the book and book culture. What is lacking in the literature is significant qualitative research, and work which brings together quantitative and qualitative research.

Also absent from the literature is work which provides a broad and integrated overview of contemporary book culture in Australia. While works exist on various aspects of the book, such as authorship, publishing, and bookselling, there appear to be no studies which take an holistic approach and integrate all aspects of the book to provide a comprehensive picture of the nature of Australian book culture, and of the conditions which both affect it and prevail within it.

Chapter 2 MODELS

Introduction

The task of presenting a study of a subject as broad and as complex as the book in contemporary Australia necessitates the casting of a very wide net indeed. It is essential, therefore, to understand the structure and parameters of book culture, as well as the forces which influence and inform that culture. An effective method of achieving such an understanding is the employment of a framework or model which depicts book culture and the environment in which it operates. The use of a model provides a theoretical overview of book culture, and allows a broad view to be maintained while delving into its particular elements.

Several models for the study of the book are found in the literature and, in particular, in the literature of *histoire du livre*. Robert Darnton produced the 'communication circuit' in his paper, "What is the History of Books?" (Darnton 1983). Concerned with the danger of history of the book scholarship becoming fragmented and compartmentalised, Darnton proposed his model in an attempt to make sense of its 'interdisciplinarity', and, "to show how disparate segments can be brought together within a single conceptual framework" (Darnton 1983: 7, 14).

While not an *histoire du livre* scholar, British sociologist, Peter Mann employs a strikingly similar format to Darnton's model in his *From Author to Reader: A Social Study of Books* (1982), in which he examines the social aspects of the production and consumption of books. Mann does not label his approach a model, however, he does view it as a method of examining "the process of communication brought about by books" (Mann 1982: ix).

Thomas Adams and Nicolas Barker propose a "new model for the study of the book" which is based on *histoire du livre* principles (Adams & Barker 1993). The authors accept the need for a model to facilitate the study of books and, while they identify limitations in Darnton's model, they employ his 'communications circuit' as a basis for their 'new model'.

I intend to employ a framework derived from these models to examine the book and book culture in contemporary Australia. The decision to use an *histoire du livre* model is based on several factors. Firstly, models exist for the study of the book from an *histoire du livre* approach, and there appear to be no other areas of scholarship which focus attention on, or provide models for, a comprehensive study of the book. Other areas such as bibliography, literary studies, and communication and media studies, have an interest in the book and book culture which is limited. Secondly, the *histoire du livre* view is holistic and considers the context in which books are created, transmitted, and received. It takes into account the influence of social, intellectual, political, economic, and cultural conditions on the book, as well as the book's influence on those conditions; it is a dynamic and inclusive approach. Thirdly, although *histoire du livre* scholarship is obviously concerned with the book and book culture in various historical periods, the approach and models can be equally applied to the contemporary book and book culture. The models, although historical, are

not diachronic, nor designed to examine the book over time; the models can be anchored in a single historical period, including the present or recent past. The models can therefore be used to assemble a 'snapshot' of book culture at any given time, a 'snapshot' which can be analysed, evaluated, or compared with other 'snapshots' based on the same or similar models.

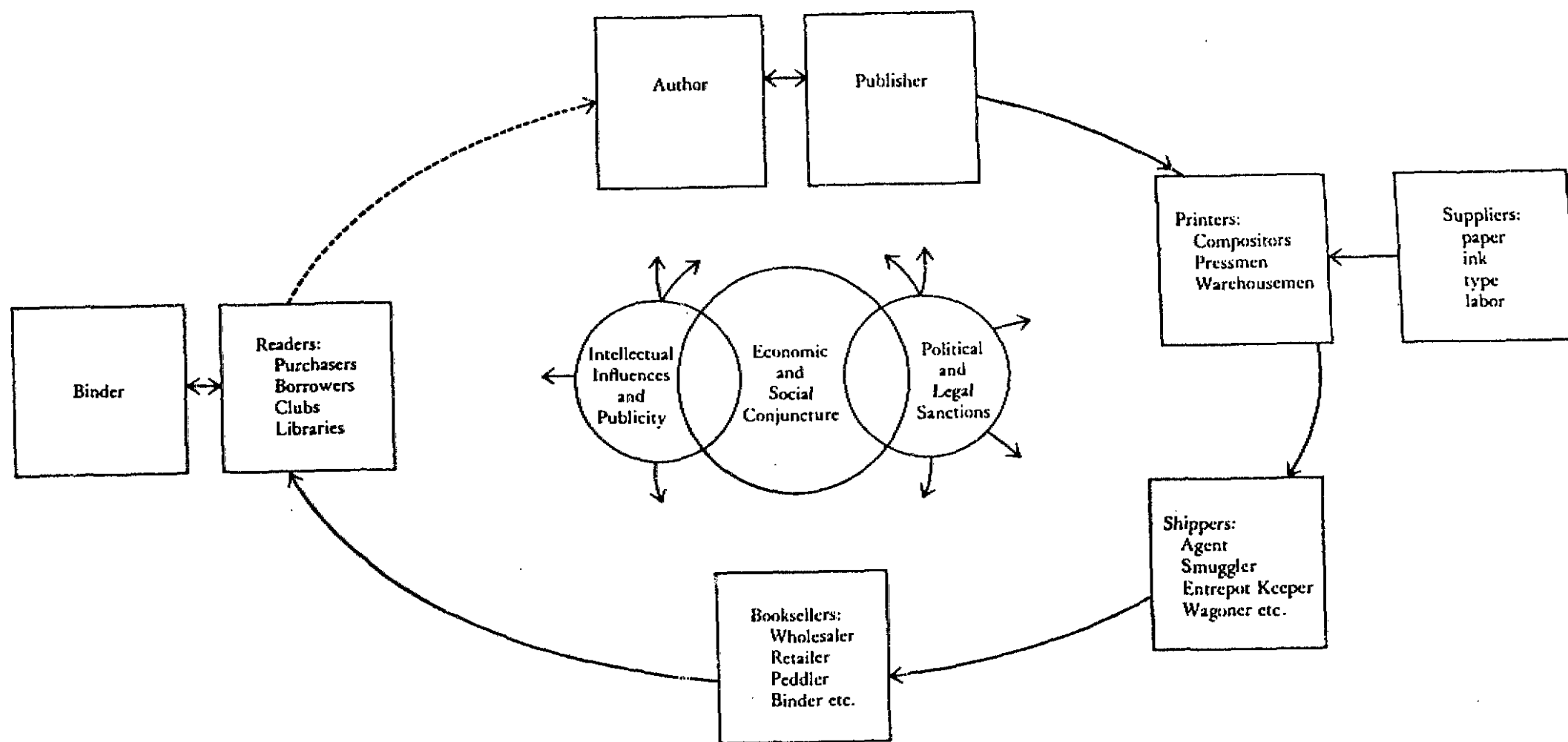
What follows is an overview and critique of the models developed by Darnton and by Adams and Barker, and the proposal and explication of a composite model which is applied to the Australian book and book culture in this study.

The Models

In the introduction to his 'biography of a book', *The Business of Enlightenment: A Publishing History of the "Encyclopédie" 1775-1800* (1979) Robert Darnton articulates a notion that it is often more instructive to know the specifics about a single book at a single time in history "than to withdraw into hazy statements about books in general" (Darnton 1979: 4). It is this notion that he demonstrated in the above work, and developed into his proposal of a "general model for analyzing the way books come into being and spread through society" (Darnton 1983: 5). While he accepts that conditions can vary, and have varied enormously, Darnton believes that all "printed books pass through roughly the same life cycle" (7), and, that while complex, "books belong to circuits of communication which operate in consistent patterns" (21). It is this life-cycle, and these patterns which are represented in Darnton's model, the 'communications circuit' (see Diagram 1).

His is a circular model which includes as elements, the players or participants in the book's movement from creation to reception: author, publisher, printers, shippers, booksellers, and readers. Its circular nature, and the links between the elements, illustrate the dynamism and interconnectedness of the stages of the book's life-cycle. In the centre of Darnton's circuit sits the 'economic and social conjuncture' which explicitly includes political and legal sanctions as well as intellectual influences; it may have been intended that other societal conditions be included here, however, this cannot be assumed since other conditions are not specifically mentioned. Darnton designed his model to be applied to any printed book in any historical period, and with its consistent elements, it can be employed to compare books in different book cultures, and in different historical periods.

Darnton's model is valuable in that it provides a dynamic and holistic scheme with which to consider the book, a scheme which takes into account the context in which the book is created, distributed, and received. As such, it allows books to be examined and identified as products of their time, that is, as being both informed by, and informing the intellectual, social, political, and economic forces and conditions which exist in a society at any particular time. Darnton's model concerns itself with each element of the book's life-cycle, as well as the process as a whole, and its interactions with other processes.



The communications circuit

DIAGRAM 1

From Robert Darnton (1983): "What is the History of Books?". In K.E. Carpenter (ed.): *Books and Society in History: Papers of the Association of College and Research Libraries Rare Books and Manuscripts Preconference 24-28 June 1980, Boston, Mass.* New York: Bowker: 3-26 (this diagram on p.6)

One of the major problems with Darnton's model is the absence of a stage or element beyond the reading of books; with the exception of acknowledging their influence on future books, Darnton does not seem to consider the processes experienced by books after their reading. Adams and Barker include a stage in their model for this purpose called 'survival', although I suggest that 'preservation' is a more appropriate description of a stage in which books are both deliberately and accidentally preserved.

Another problem with Darnton's model is the limited nature of its 'economic and social conjuncture'; in order to be more comprehensive, the elements within this conjuncture could be more explicit and include other factors such as general political and cultural conditions. That Darnton connects particular aspects of the conjuncture with particular processes in the circuit denies the pervasive influence of all of these factors and conditions on all of the elements in the circuit. While the placement of the 'economic and social conjuncture' in the centre of the circuit attests to its centrality and importance, it also implies that these forces are contained. A better position for these social, political, intellectual, economic and cultural conditions is *around* the circuit, in a position which would convey the fact that the circuit operates *within* an environment comprising these factors, and is both influenced by them and influences them.

Adams and Barker (1993) consider Darnton's model "the most significant recent contribution" (10) to the integration of the study of the history of the book; however, they are also critical of aspects of the model. Their major concern is the absence of the book in the model; they believe that Darnton focuses on people rather than books. Adams and Barker see this focus as a problem which, while useful to social historians, limits "those who are concerned with the total significance of books" (12). They maintain that Darnton's model ignores the minor or unintended processes which the book often undergoes: "the sheer randomness, the speculative uncertainty of the book trade" (Adams & Barker 1993: 12).

Adams and Barker propose a model which "owes its inspiration to that offered by Darnton" (13); it is, like Darnton's, a circular model made up of connected elements, however, it is placed *within* a total 'socio-economic conjuncture' instead of that being at the circuit's centre. The centre, in this case, is the book cycle which, according to the authors, centralises the theme, which is the book, unlike Darnton's central theme which appears to be people (13). In fact, Adams and Barker focus on *processes* rather than people *or* books. They identify five processes, or events in the life of a book: publication, manufacture, distribution, reception and survival (see Diagram 2).

The value of Adams and Barker's model lies in its capacity to accommodate the complexities of the book's life-cycle. By simplifying the elements in the cycle with broad headings as listed above, the authors have expanded the capacity of each heading to incorporate a number of processes. 'Reception', for instance, can include not only reading but also other factors such as popularity, and the influence a book might have. 'Distribution' includes both formal, intended distribution, and 'secondary distribution' to unintended audiences reached by gifts, loans, unauthorised reprints, and quotations. Adams and Barker also add an element, 'survival', to the circuit; this element represents the stage past reception, and allows

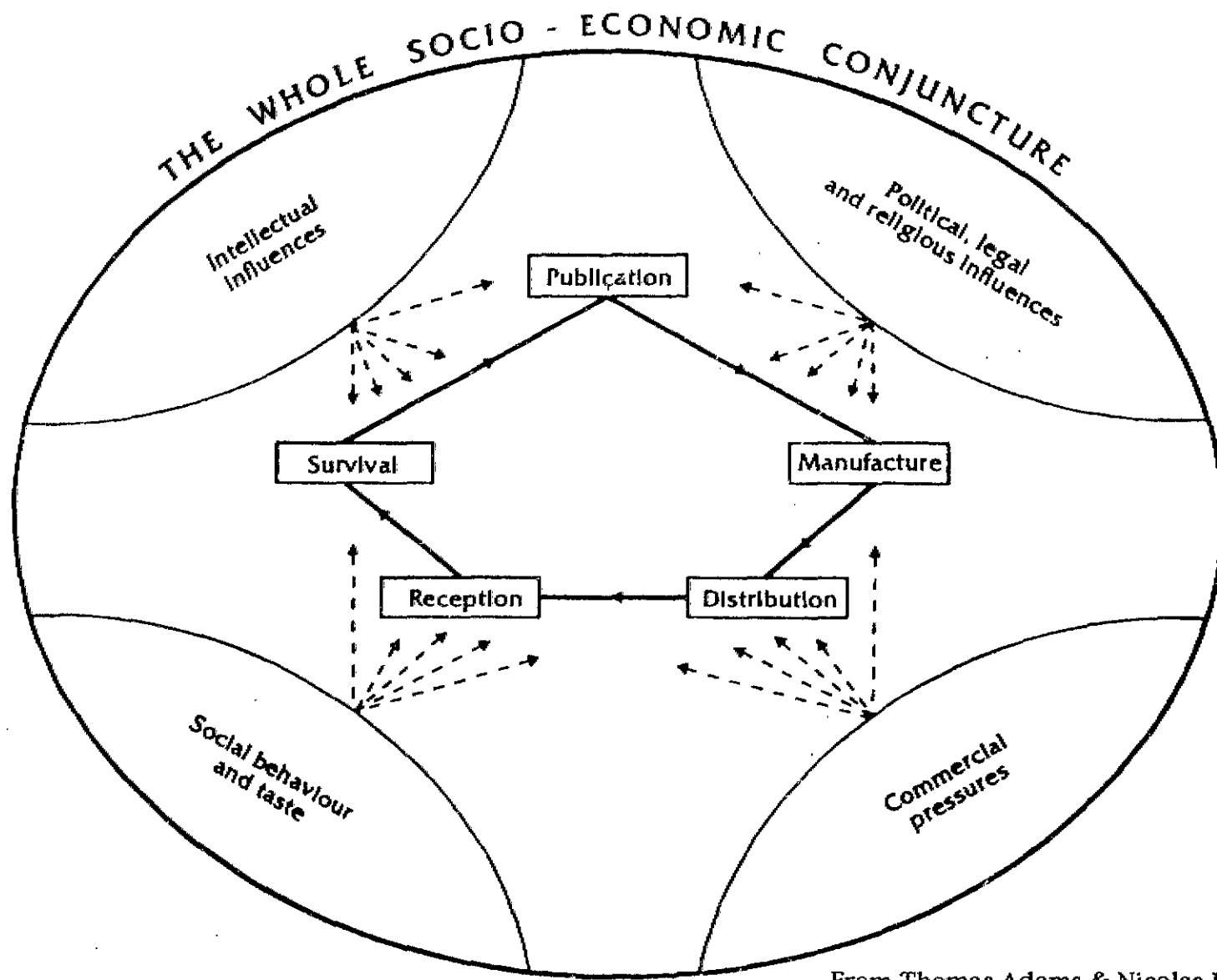


DIAGRAM 2

From Thomas Adams & Nicolas Barker (1993): "A New Model for the Study of the Book". In N. Barker (ed.): *A Potencie of Life: Books in Society*. London: The British Library: 5-43 (this diagram on p. 14)

for consideration of what happens to books after their active reception. Libraries and book collecting are features of this 'survival' event. Adams and Barker identify the possibility of a return from 'survival' to 'publication', a common movement exemplified by the large number of second or subsequent editions of books found in libraries, collections and bookshops.

An interesting feature of Adams and Barker's model is their assertion that the "point of departure" for the cycle is "the initial decision to multiply a text or image for distribution" (15). In Darnton's model, 'authors' and 'publishers' share the position at the top of the circuit, implying a starting point of either the author, the publisher, or both. The emphasis on, and significance afforded, the intention to publish in Adams' and Barker's model explains the absence of authorship in a position of primacy such as that enjoyed by the author in Darnton's model. However, the absence of the author, or of any creative element in the outline of Adams' and Barker's model is a serious omission which indicates the undervaluation of that creative element within book culture.

While Adams and Barker locate their circuit within the 'whole socio-economic conjuncture', they highlight specific elements, and indicate linkages from these to each of the events in the circuit. Each element of the 'conjuncture' appears to be positioned nearest to the event or process most affected by it; while this contributes to the symmetry of the model, it does little to enhance its efficacy. The authors state, "It is only in theory, in the simple context of a diagram, that these forces can be disentangled from one another" (39); if this is the case, one wonders why they have bothered to separate them.

Of the two models presented here, the latter is the most versatile and, therefore, the most useful. The breadth of identified events in the book's life-cycle allows for a variety of occurrences within these unexpected, unusual, serendipitous, or complex occurrences. Darnton's model is limited to the conventional participants involved in book culture, and does not allow for deviation from the norm. While Darnton's is a "general model" (Darnton 1983: 5), his naming of specific participants limits its application, and excludes players or processes which are unnamed and unidentified.

Both models have limitations and omissions, and it is for that reason I propose a model which employs and combines features of each, and which provides a relevant and comprehensive framework to apply to the book in contemporary Australia. The application of a common and accepted methodology for the study of the book through use of a composite of established models provides a conceptual framework for this research, one which is both derived from previous scholarship, and which contributes to a common and expanding body of knowledge about the book.

A Composite Model

The model I propose is an amalgam of those developed by Darnton (1983) and by Adams and Barker (1993), with some variations. I have taken the basic design of a cycle of interconnected events, or processes within a total social system from both models, and have renamed, added, and shifted a

number of events (see Diagram 3). The model is a representation of the life-cycle of a published book. Each book passes through a number of common events; the manner and nature of its passing-through will vary with each book, but the cycle will be largely the same for all. The events within the model are labelled broadly enough to accommodate a range of processes within each, and to allow for different experiences of the same overall events.

The model is both surrounded by, and operates within a context; this is made up of the social, intellectual, political, economic, and cultural forces, conditions and conflicts which exist in a society at any given time. These influence all events of a book's life-cycle. The context is both central and encapsulating, in that neither the book nor the events of its cycle can be disentangled from the context in which it exists.

The model represents a continuous cycle which is both self-perpetuating and fuelled from its context. The cyclical nature of the model illustrates both the influence of books on books, and the interconnectedness of the events in the cycle. Social, intellectual, political, economic, and cultural factors affect books at all stages in the cycle. The model, with all of its elements including its context, can be seen as a single, but not discrete, organism within society.

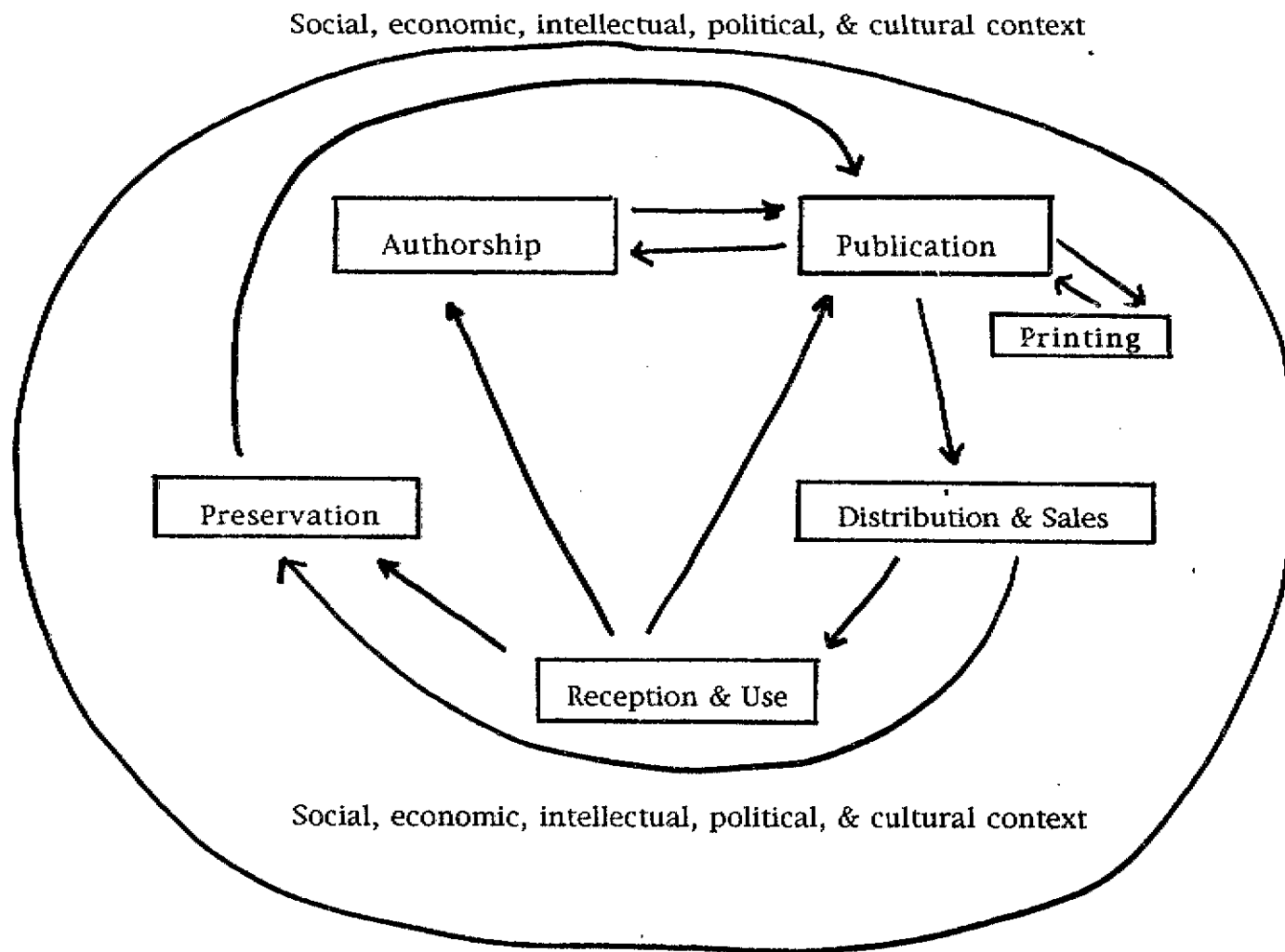
The cycle begins at the top, with *authorship* and *publication*, two linked processes. The event of *authorship* in a book's life-cycle involves the production of a text by an author who may also be a writer, editor, compiler, photographer, or artist; 'author', in this study, refers to the provider of content, or text, of books. *Publication* involves the intention to make multiple copies of a text in book format for distribution; it also involves the editing and design of the book, and the organisation of the *printing* of multiple copies of the book. *Distribution and sales* are the processes through which the book reaches the next event in its life-cycle, *reception and use*. *Reception and use* involve a range of activities after which the book may, or may not be subject to *preservation*, a deliberate or accidental act which preserves the book either in its original format or in another.

Reception and use can lead back to the beginning of the cycle by means of feedback from readers, reviewers, or users, or by means of the influence of a book on subsequent books through the agency of either *authorship* or *publication*, or both. *Preservation* can also lead to *publication*, since re-publication is a common method of preserving the text of books.

In examining the events and context which make up the model, I draw on the works of Darnton (1983) and Adams and Barker (1993) who offer valuable explications of their respective models. The following is an overview of each element in the model, the players and issues involved in the events are identified, as are significant contextual influences.

Authorship

Darnton's 'communication circuit' includes the element, 'authors' which considers "the basic conditions of authorship", and the light that such



A Composite Model

The Life-cycle of the Book

DIAGRAM 3

conditions shed on the book and book culture (Darnton 1983: 15). The model proposed here shifts this slightly to consider the *event* of 'authorship' of a unique text (which could be made up of images) by any type of author. As in Darnton's model, this event is concerned with the nature and conditions of authorship at a given time and place; it is concerned with issues such as financial and other rewards, status, relationships between authors and publishers, as well as the nature of the creative process within society, and its place in book culture. Intellectual and general cultural conditions are particularly important to this aspect of the book cycle.

The position of this element in the model acknowledges the equal standing and mutual dependence of authorship and publication: a book cannot become a book without each of these events. The model acknowledges the influence of the reception and use of books on the creation of new books through the agency of authorship; Darnton expresses this clearly:

Authors are themselves readers. By reading and associating with other readers and writers, they form notions of genre and style and a general sense of literary enterprise which affects their texts. (Darnton 1983: 5)

In many cases, it is the publisher who originates an idea for a book, and commissions an author to produce a text or type of text; this is illustrated in the model by two-way arrows between the events of authorship and publication.

Publication

Publication is a vital element in the book's life-cycle, and involves responsibility for facilitating, to a greater or lesser extent, other events in the cycle, including authorship, printing, and aspects of distribution. As well as involvement with these events, publication itself includes processes such as editing, design, financing, and marketing.

According to Adams and Barker, in order to understand the process of publication, "the point of departure" for books, it is necessary to examine "the decision to multiply a text or image for distribution" (Adams & Barker 1993: 15). They list four factors which may motivate such a decision: creation, communication, profit, and preservation; they assert that the motivating factors contribute to the nature of the end product, the book. Consideration of such factors raises the issue of the often conflicting roles of publishers as both cultural gatekeepers, and as commercial entrepreneurs. This, in turn, requires examination of who publishers are, that is, examination of the ownership and control of publishing.

Publication is influenced by a full range of contextual factors including social, economic, intellectual, political, and cultural conditions.

Printing

This event is organised and contracted by those involved in publication and, while it is an important event in certain periods of book history, its significance shifts when considering the modern, late 20th century book. Modern book production technology has largely eradicated printing and typesetting idiosyncrasies and differences between print-runs. Further developments in printing technology, however, are likely to have an impact on other elements in the book's life-cycle, including distribution and reception.

Darnton's model sees this element simply as 'printing', while Adams and Barker label it 'manufacture', and consider aspects of design, promotion, and economics (Darnton 1983; Adams & Barker 1993). Printing, in the model I propose, sits to one side of the cycle, and is linked to it only through the agency of publication. In most cases, printing is a purely commercial industry which manufactures the book as a product like any other, as such, it is removed from the cultural and intellectual influences which affect other processes in the book's life-cycle. Printing is most influenced by economic, technological, and political conditions of the broader environment.

Distribution and Sales

This element comprises the various processes through which books reach their reception; these include distribution from publishers outward to booksellers, libraries, educational institutions, and directly to readers, as well as all aspects of bookselling: retail sales, bookshops, book clubs, mail-order services, and the library supply market. Libraries are also agencies of book distribution since providing access to books is a major function of many libraries.

This element concerns access to books, and also involves the dual and often conflicting demands of commerce and culture. Darnton describes the bookseller as "a cultural agent, the middleman who mediated between supply and demand at their key point of contact" (Darnton 1983: 18). Such a description opens this element up to the influences of economics, politics, and social, cultural, and intellectual factors. Once again, issues of ownership and control become important.

'Secondary distribution' is a process identified by Adams and Barker (1993) through which books reach an audience which is unanticipated by author, publisher, or primary distributor. That audience is reached through gifts, loans, quotations, unauthorised reprints or translations, and the second-hand book market. While Adams and Barker include libraries in this secondary distribution process, I believe that libraries are too well established and accepted as distribution agencies, to serve an 'unanticipated audience' and to thereby be involved in secondary distribution.

Reception and Use

Darnton's equivalent element in his 'communications circuit' is 'readers' (Darnton 1983), and is an example of the limitations of his model. Adams and Barker (1993) employ the broader event of 'reception' which involves not only reading but also a book's popularity, and its influence. I include 'use' with 'reception' to acknowledge a period past a book's initial reception, and to suggest the possibility of a number of uses for books.

The importance of readers is considered here; the question of who readers are is also considered, as is the role of readers in creating meaning and providing feedback. Book reviews, discussions, awards, and best-seller lists are relevant issues, as is the important factor of the influence of books on readers, cultures, and on subsequent books.

Various symbolic and other uses of books are examined, including the power and significance of books and, consequently, the ownership of books. Adams and Barker assert, "There is more to the possession of books than mere utility" (Adams & Barker 1993: 26).

This element of the cycle is most strongly influenced by intellectual, cultural, and social and emotional factors.

Preservation

This element involves the book's destination after its reception and use, providing it has not been permanently discarded and disposed of. It involves both deliberate and accidental acts of preservation which can range from the placing of a book on a shelf, to the conscious selection and collection of rare or 'antiquarian' books. Libraries have an important role in this process since some exist solely to preserve books, while others seek to strike a balance between preservation and distribution, and use. Book collecting, whether casual or formal, is also an important aspect of preservation, as are issues of book conservation.

Preservation can lead back to publication in the very common case where existing books are re-published in new editions. In order to be re-published, books must, of course, be preserved in some form. Formats other than the printed book are used for preservation; it can be argued, however, that such methods, which include electronic preservation and microform, remove the text from the book cycle.

Preservation is subject to the influence of intellectual, as well as social, economic, cultural, and political factors.

Social, Intellectual, Political, Economic, and Cultural Context

This is the all-pervasive element in this model of the book's life-cycle; it surrounds it, and is influential in all events in the cycle. Darnton (1983) calls his corresponding element the 'economic and social conjuncture', while Adams and Barker (1993) borrow this idea and add an unnecessary descriptor, 'the whole socio-economic conjuncture'. The use of the term

'conjuncture', meaning the combination of events, is a good one in this context, however, the limitation of its description to a combination of social and economic conditions runs the risk of omitting some crucial and powerful factors. It is for this reason that I spell out these conditions and factors; in this model, it is called the 'social, intellectual, political, economic, and cultural context'. While these contextual elements are specifically named, they are also inclusive of other conditions and factors, for instance those associated with industry, commerce, taste, fashion, and emotion.

This 'social, intellectual, political, economic, and cultural context' is made up of the dominant and conflicting issues, mores, conditions, and beliefs which exist in a society at any given time. These make up the context of a society, and inform, and are informed by, that society's book culture, among many other things. Any study of books or book culture must view those subjects within this context.

This derived and composite model is used to examine contemporary Australian book culture both in general, and in particular. The study which follows is the application of the model to Australian book culture; it explores each element of the model as that element operates in the context of Australia in the early 1990s. The following chapters also examine the processes and events which *The Orchard*, as a recently published Australian book, has undergone in its life-cycle so far, and the context in which this has occurred.

The research shows, for instance, that the writing of *The Orchard* was influenced by a number of factors including the (then) current intellectual climate, the author's previous writing experiences, and her intellectual and political background. Other elements of *The Orchard's* life-cycle were, and continue to be, similarly influenced by a variety of factors and conditions; the following chapters examine these as well.

The Orchard is presented as a case study in this research; as an individual 'case', it illustrates the actual functioning of the events which comprise a book's life-cycle, as well as the influence of contextual factors, in contemporary Australia. It is not intended that *The Orchard* be seen as a 'typical' Australian book. It is presented as a case study because it is an *example* of a contemporary Australian book, and one which, due to its particular characteristics and its critical and commercial success, illustrates a number of features of Australian book culture.

While the case study both exemplifies and illuminates the events and context of Australian book culture, it is essential to bear in mind that it concerns *one book only*, and that each Australian book will undergo the same general events differently. The value of the case study in this research, lies in its ability to exemplify and illuminate, to bring actual experience to bear on the general nature and conditions of Australian book culture and, by so doing, enhance the understanding of the book and of book culture which is provided by this research.

The Orchard is followed through the cycle from *authorship, publication, and printing*, through *distribution and sales, reception and use*, to *preservation*. These events are detailed and discussed, and the influences of social, intellectual, political, economic, and cultural conditions are identified and explored. This is accompanied by a description and discussion of the general nature and conditions of these events as they operate in contemporary Australian book culture, as well as a brief historical background to each event.

The information presented in this research is derived from primary sources such as trade journals, government reports, statistical publications, newspaper and journal articles and reviews, and correspondence and interviews with individuals involved in the creation, production, distribution, and reception of *The Orchard*. A number of examples cited in this study are Tasmanian, these examples are not intended to be 'typical' or representative but are intended to illustrate, for instance, an Australian library and bookseller. Since the research was carried out largely in Tasmania, it was convenient to use local examples to illustrate practices and opinions which were not locale specific. Secondary sources were also used, chiefly to provide information on the history, and general nature and conditions of Australian book culture.

What emerges from the research is a comprehensive and holistic view of both the life-cycle of *The Orchard*, and of the nature and conditions of Australian book culture in the early 1990s. It also reveals *The Orchard* as a book which is a product of its time, that is, of the dynamic interaction of the events of its life-cycle with those social, intellectual, political, economic, and cultural conditions at play in Australia at the time.

Case Study: *The Orchard*

The Orchard was written by Australian author, Drusilla Modjeska. It was first published by Pan Macmillan Australia in September 1994. It was printed in both hardback and paperback formats by McPherson's Printing Group, and distributed by Macmillan Distribution Services. Its author received grants from the Literature Board of the Australia Council to assist with its writing; the publisher and printer are eligible to claim a percentage of its production costs from the Federal government under the Book Bounty. It was reviewed in newspapers and literary magazines, and interviews with its author appeared in print, and on radio and television. It was promoted and sold in retail bookselling outlets across Australia. It was, and continues to be, bought mostly by women, but also by libraries and book discussion group services. It has been reprinted several times in both hardback and paperback. It has made, and continues to make, money for its author, publisher, and for booksellers. It has been deposited in a number of major Australian libraries under legal deposit clauses in legislation; it has been collected by libraries for both lending, and Australian Literature reference collections. It is borrowed from public and other lending libraries. It is read by its buyers, their friends, the recipients of the book as a gift, by library borrowers and their friends, by members of book discussion groups, by teachers and students, by literary award judges, by reviewers, and by academics. It has been selected for the short-lists of literary awards, and it has won several. It has been recorded as a 'talking book'. An option on the film rights has been sold, and the sale of other rights has been negotiated by the author's agent. It has been collected, put on shelves, left on bedside tables and in cars; it has been read and not read. It is a contemporary Australian book.

Chapter 3 AUTHORSHIP

Introduction

The first process examined in this study of the Australian book is that of 'authorship', an apparently obvious starting point, although Adams and Barker give primacy to 'publication' since they believe that the "decision to publish . . . is the first step in the creation of a book" (Adams & Barker 1993: 18). While there is no doubt that publishers are responsible for transforming content provided by authors into book format, there could be no book without first the creation of that content. This is not to say that books are always *initiated* by their authors; very often publishers commission works from professional authors and others. However, the events of authorship and of publication are interdependent, and are of equal importance in the life cycle of the contemporary Australian book.

The process of authorship involves the production of a unique text which will become content for a book. The text may be in the form of writing: poetry, fiction, non-fiction, or the text may be made up of images, or of a combination of writing and image. Most commonly, books contain at least some written text, and the vast majority of books produced in Australia are created by authors. It is for this reason that the focus of this chapter is on authorship, the process of creation of text which, through the agency of publication, becomes a book.

This chapter examines the nature and conditions of book authorship in contemporary Australia. The chapter begins with a brief overview of the history of authorship in Australia and a look at the numbers of people identifying as authors. It then goes on to examine the particular nature and conditions of authorship in contemporary Australia. It does this by focusing throughout on Drusilla Modjeska, author of *The Orchard* and an active and relatively successful contemporary Australian author. After a brief biography of Drusilla Modjeska, conditions of authorship in Australia are considered both in relation to Modjeska and her individual experience as an author, and in general; these conditions include education and training, influences, income, government support, writing processes, authors' relationships with publishers, and writers' organisations. The chapter concludes with an examination and discussion of the role and status of authors in contemporary Australia.

Authorship in Australia

Authorship in Australia began with the introduction of literate culture by the British in 1788. The first book created and produced in Australia was *New South Wales General Standing Orders*, a work with no acknowledged author; it was printed in 1802 and was obviously a practical book that reflected the preoccupations of the nascent colony. It was not until the end of the second decade of the 19th century that two books were produced which could be attributed to individual authors. There is some dispute, however, as to which book was Australia's first 'literary' book; certainly the first book of poetry was Barron Field's *First Fruits of Australian Poetry*

(1819), and the first book of literary prose was Thomas Wells' *Michael Howe, the last and worst of the bushrangers of Van Dieman's Land* (1818) (Ferguson 1978: 3). While other books were written in the early days of the Australian colonies, these could not be said to be Australian books since most were edited, published, and produced in Britain for the British market. They included accounts of travel to Australia, and of early settlement. Authors resident in Australia looked to Britain for publication throughout most of the 19th century, and it was not until toward the end of that century that Australian books were being written and published in Australia specifically for the Australian market.

The decade of the 1890s is often identified as a period of growth and acceptance of Australian writing, with the emergence of a number of successful and prominent local authors. The volume of Australian writing steadily increased throughout the early 20th century, and increasing numbers of books were produced locally although some Australian authors were unable to get their works published in Australia. John McLaren, in his survey of 20th century Australian publishing (1988), suggests that Australian publishers, Angus and Robertson in particular, were cautious and chose to publish works which presented stereotyped and idealistic images of Australian life; works which deviated from this were often rejected, causing their authors to seek publication overseas. McLaren cites as examples M. Barnard-Eldershaw's *A House is Built*, and Katharine Susannah Prichard's *Coonardoo*; ironically, although both were published in London, these two novels shared first prize in the *Bulletin's* 1929 novel competition (McLaren 1988: 76).

The first book by an Aboriginal Australian, David Unaipon's *Native Legends*, was published in 1929. The later years of the 20th century have seen an enormous increase in the output and publication of works by Aboriginal authors, as well as the establishment of publishing companies specialising in the work of indigenous authors.

Australian authors are now well established in their own country with their output making up just over 50% of retail book sales in 1991 (ABPA 1994b: 5). Both overseas-owned and Australian publishers maintain healthy Australian lists, and the acceptance of Australian authors is reflected in sales figures.

A 1993 survey of both paid and unpaid work in the cultural/leisure industry found that 273,000 people were involved in writing and publishing, mostly in a voluntary or unpaid capacity (ABS 1993a). Obviously not all of these are engaged in book production, but it does indicate the large number of people involved writing in Australia and, put beside an estimate of those who make their livings from writing, it indicates the large numbers who do not.

An estimate of the number of *professional* authors is found in the 1994 Australia Council's economic survey of Australian artists, *But What Do You Do for a Living?*. It estimates the population of "practising professional" writers to be 6,000 (Throsby & Thompson 1994: 8, 9). This figure was established through a process which involved the tallying of names provided by a range of writers' organisations with names of authors appearing in various directories and guides. Interestingly, of the 6,000

professional writers identified, the majority are women, that is, 3,400 or 57%; 2,600 or 43% are men (10).

Drusilla Modjeska, Author of *The Orchard*

Drusilla Modjeska was born in London in 1946, the eldest of three daughters, to her social worker and barrister parents. She married in her early 20s and left England with her husband in 1968, for Papua New Guinea. In 1971 she left both PNG and her husband, and moved to Australia where she undertook an Arts degree at the Australian National University in Canberra. She later moved to Sydney and enrolled as a PhD student at the University of NSW. She completed her doctorate in 1979 with a thesis on Australian women writers in the early 20th century; this thesis formed the basis of her first published book, *Exiles at Home: Australian Women Writers 1925-1945* (Modjeska 1981).

Modjeska has edited or co-edited six books, and has written three; these latter three, *Exiles at Home*, *Poppy*, and *The Orchard* have all achieved varying degrees of both critical and commercial success. She has also written a number of introductions to works by other authors, including introductions to several reprints of works by Katharine Susannah Prichard, published by London publisher, Virago. Modjeska has published non-fiction articles, essays, interviews, short stories, and book reviews (see Appendix A for a full list of published works).

She continues to live in Sydney, and is actively involved in the literary world with writing and editing.

Becoming an Author in Australia

Drusilla Modjeska's professional writing career began with academic writing and, like most Australian writers, she has not had any formal training in writing, although she has taught creative writing at tertiary level. In spite of the proliferation of professional and creative writing courses in Australia, the majority of writers interviewed in the survey published as *But What Do You Do for a Living?* identified "learning on the job" and "self-teaching" as the most important training avenues for their artistic careers (Throsby & Thompson 1994: 16).

The notion of being able to 'learn to be a writer' is a relatively recent one, and one which is both the subject of debate, and is receiving formal recognition and validation within tertiary institutions in Australia. It is only since the early 1970s that professional writing courses have been available at a tertiary level and, while these courses have not become a prerequisite to successful writing careers, they do have the potential to alter the nature of authorship in Australia through both its formalisation, and the possible imposition of academic licensing. The impact on Australian book culture of formalised academic training of authors remains to be seen, however, it would be both unhealthy and undesirable to have any form of licensing of authors, since the independence,

pluralism, and spirit of Australian book culture is dependent on the emergence of writers with a variety of backgrounds and experiences.

Other less formal training opportunities are made available through writers' organisations, community arts programs, adult education systems, and private enterprises. These are popular largely among people who may aspire to be, but are not yet professional writers.

An important factor in the development of authors is the influence of other people involved in book culture, of people who function as mentors to both emerging and established authors. In Drusilla Modjeska's case, it was her involvement with Angus and Robertson editor George Munster which taught her about writing for publication. Angus and Robertson approached Modjeska with an offer to publish her doctoral thesis if she re-worked it with the assistance of Munster; the text was eventually published as *Exiles at Home: Australian Women Writers 1925-1945* (1981). Modjeska identifies that re-working process with George Munster as a significant influence on her career:

George Munster was the editor of *Exiles* and I learnt my trade painstakingly from him and owe him a great deal. Hours in coffee shops while he took me through it line by line.
(Modjeska 1995a)

Drusilla Modjeska also identifies academic and writer, Dorothy Green as both a significant influence and a mentor: "Dorothy Green taught me what it meant to be a woman and an intellectual" (Modjeska 1995a).

Former publisher and current chair of the Australia Council, Hilary McPhee, was also an important influence on Modjeska's work, and on *The Orchard* in particular. Hilary McPhee first worked with Modjeska at Penguin where Modjeska's fictional biography, *Poppy*, was published in 1991. McPhee left Penguin to join Pan Macmillan in 1992, and Drusilla Modjeska followed; the two worked together closely on *The Orchard*. Details of this relationship will be examined later in this chapter.

Writers also emerge from social, religious, and political movements, and receive inspiration and support from within such movements. Drusilla Modjeska identifies the Women's Movement as an important factor in the development of her career as a writer; she states,

... it was the context of the Women's Liberation Movement, as it was called in those days, that gave me the necessary focus, and confidence, in which to write. (Modjeska 1991: x)

The modern Women's Movement has played an important role in shaping contemporary Australian book culture, it has not only produced a number of successful authors, but it has also produced significant audiences and markets for women's writing, particularly writing featuring feminist perspectives and themes. Modjeska's role as a feminist author is explored later in this chapter.

Income and Work

Drusilla Modjeska currently earns her living exclusively through writing and other literary pursuits; she sees herself as "one of the greatly privileged people in the world because there is no line between work and pleasure" (Drusilla Modjeska quoted in Elliott 1994c: 24). It is not common in Australia for authors to be able to live on income derived from their writing and associated activities alone; most are forced to seek other employment, often outside of the literary world. While Drusilla Modjeska has worked in the past in publishing as an editor, and as a lecturer in textual studies and writing at the University of Technology, Sydney, she no longer needs to take on work which diverts her from her writing, although she continues to work as an editor of anthologies, reviewer, and critic.

Not all Australian authors are so successful. A study carried out in 1994 by the Australia Council involved a comprehensive survey of work and remuneration in the arts in Australia, and its title reveals the tenor of its findings, *But What Do You Do for a Living?* (Throsby & Thompson 1994). The study examines the work of artists, including writers, crafts-people, actors, musicians, dancers; it looks at the nature of such work, and aspects such as income, time allocation, the need to work outside one's 'principal artistic occupation' to supplement income, the regularity of arts income, taxation and superannuation, and the role of the Australia Council. Its findings are drawn on here to illustrate the conditions under which contemporary Australian authors work and are remunerated.

In examining income, the study differentiated between income derived from 'creative activity in principal artistic occupation' and income from other sources, both arts-related (such as teaching, editing, reviewing) and non-arts related. It was found that the mean income for writers from their 'creative activity in principal artistic occupation' in 1992-93 was \$13,500. It is no surprise then that authors find the need to supplement their incomes with both other arts and non-arts work. Women authors are significantly worse off than their male counterparts, earning 56.9% of the average total male income (see Table 1).

Table 1
Mean Incomes of Writers by Gender (\$ per annum)

INCOME FROM	MALE	FEMALE
Principal Artistic Occupation	16,300	11,900
Other Art	4,100	4,100
TOTAL ART	20,400	16,000
Non Art	18,200	6,800
TOTAL	38,600	22,800
(size of sample)	(40)	(50)

(Adapted from Throsby & Thompson 1994: 94)

The need to seek additional income obviously detracts from the time available to devote to one's 'principal artistic occupation'; the study examines this phenomenon in detail and notes that the major restriction

on writing and other artistic work is financial (Throsby & Thompson 1994: 22).

Sources of Income

Royalties

The most common source of income for authors is the royalty payment earned from the sale of their books, and this is likely to be Drusilla Modjeska's major source of income. Neither Modjeska nor her publisher were willing to discuss financial arrangements, however, it is likely that Modjeska receives royalty payments of at least 10% of the recommended retail price of all three of her independently authored publications. Since all have been published by different companies, payment systems would probably vary, although payments are likely to be made either annually or biannually. It is also likely that Modjeska would have received, at least in the case of *The Orchard*, an advance on the anticipated royalties. While the amount of royalties from each book will obviously vary, together these must provide Drusilla Modjeska with a significant income contribution. *Exiles at Home*, although first published in 1981, has been re-issued, is used as a text in university courses, and continues to sell consistently. *Poppy*, published in 1991, maintains steady sales in 1995, and has sold an estimated 20,000 copies (Miller 1995: 23; Gaunt 1995). Modjeska's most commercially successful book, *The Orchard*, is likely to provide very healthy royalty returns. With sales of about 30,000 to August 1995, made up of equal numbers of hardback and paperback sales, a flat 10% royalty would return the author approximately \$66,700. Most contracts, however, include increased percentages for authors after sales pass a specified number; it is likely, therefore, that royalties on *The Orchard* would yield the author more than this estimate.

The Australian Society of Authors (ASA) surveyed their members in 1989 and published the findings with discussion in *The Good, the Bad and the Greedy: How Australian Publishers are Rated by Their Authors* (Jefferis 1989). The survey revealed a wide range of royalty arrangements and other contract conditions; the most common royalty system is a 10% basic royalty on the recommended retail price of a book, with a rise to 12.5% after a certain number of books have sold (this can range from 2,500 to 10,000 copies sold). Authors whose works have high volume sales benefit from the royalty system, however, most earn little from royalties. Royalty percentages range from 2% to 20%, and not all are calculated on the retail price of a book; many are calculated as percentages of the wholesale, or discounted price, a practice which can significantly erode a writer's earnings. Royalty payments are generally made annually, biannually or in advance and, while the payments may be regular, they are relatively infrequent.

The majority of respondents to the ASA's survey were dissatisfied with the royalty system; the system requires that an author become a partner with the publisher in the risk of publishing, with little or no rights of partnership such as involvement in decisions about publication date, price, print run, or distribution. In some cases publishers require authors to relinquish copyright, and some publishers claim the right to alter the

author's text. The dependence on retail sales for royalties encourages the author's cooperation in the promotion of a book, an activity which involves an author's time but rarely attracts payment other than that which is reflected by increased retail sales. Publishers may decide to 'remainder' a book without consultation with the author; this practice is carried out when a publisher feels that "books . . . no longer have any prospect of selling at full price, and . . . are . . . sold off for as much as possible in an attempt to recover the cost of printing" (ABPA 1994a: 50). Authors generally receive no royalties on remaindered books.

The uncertainty of the royalty system does not allow most authors to budget or to anticipate their level of income. Many authors, therefore seek additional work with more regular, and often better payment.

The ASA survey revealed a high degree of dissatisfaction with authors' financial status in the author-publisher relationship including resentment of the fact that most other participants in book production are paid award wages 'upfront' for their contributions. Disaffection was directed equally at booksellers and publishers; booksellers are seen to play no part in the risk (with books most often taken on a sale-or-return basis), yet can claim 40% or more of the retail price of a book, compared to an author's 10%. Australian booksellers, according to Barbara Jefferis are accustomed to large discounts from publishers, an expectation which dates back to the practice of British publishers offering authors a 'colonial royalty' of half the normal royalty for export copies. Publishers could therefore offer Australian booksellers big discounts, allowing for equally big mark-ups; ". . . naturally, they began to want the same discounts and mark-ups in the local trade" (Jefferis 1989: 51). The loser was, and is, the author.

Sale of Rights

Authors do, in most cases, retain the rights to their work and can sell what publishers call 'subsidiary rights', that is, rights other than local publication rights. These include overseas publication rights, film, television and audio rights, broadcasting rights, and merchandising rights; the sale of such rights is often more financially rewarding than royalties paid on retail book sales. Copyright laws ensure that rights remain with the author for life plus 50 years, or until sold. Rights are often sold on behalf of authors by literary agents who are employed by authors for that purpose, as well as to perform other functions such as negotiating contracts, filtering correspondence, and so on.

Drusilla Modjeska has earned income from the sale of rights to *The Orchard*. A film option was sold, as well as audio rights; British book publication rights were being negotiated in September, 1995 (Mobbs 1995). While some of these rights sales involve royalty payments, others would most likely consist of lump sum payments.

Government Support

The Federal government in Australia is an important source of income for authors, and has a long history of support for literature and individual authors. Drusilla Modjeska, like many Australian authors, has been a

beneficiary of grants from the Literature Board of the Australia Council, particularly in the early years of her career, after the publication of her first book. Since 1982, Modjeska has received a total of \$82,000 from the Board; this has been made up of a variety of grants, including Special Purpose Grants, Writers' Assistance Grants, Category B Fellowships, and a Writer's Project Grant (*Australia Council Annual Reports 1982-1994*).

The Australia Council is the Federal government's major arts funding body, and provided in the 1993-94 financial year, through its Literature Board, direct income assistance in the form of fellowships and project grants to 116 authors totalling \$2,108,102 (Australia Council 1994: 89-90). The Literature Board also provides funding for commissions, training and development, residency schemes, festivals, conferences, and promotions, as well as providing book publishing subsidies to publishers, and funding for literary magazines. Literature Board fellowships provide living allowances for periods of up to four years; these buy writers time to write, freeing them from the necessity of seeking additional and unrelated work. Fellowships are awarded to established writers whose applications are assessed by a committee of their peers, that is, other Australian writers. In June, 1994, Drusilla Modjeska was appointed to the Literature Board (since renamed 'Literature Fund') as a member, and participates in the work of the Board, including this peer assessment of grant applications.

The Literature Board continues the work of the Commonwealth Literary Fund (CLF) which was established by the Federal government in 1908 "to assist prominent authors or their dependents who have become impoverished" (Shapcott 1988: 13). The CLF provided annual grants in the form of 'literary pensions' to authors and their survivors. Although the pensions were means-tested, they were about three times higher than age pensions, an indication of the elevated status of the recipients, and, presumably, an acknowledgment of their contribution to Australian literature. In 1938, J. H. Scullin extended the scope of the CLF to assist with publication, provide fellowships for working authors, and promote Australian literature; it continued its provision of 'literary pensions'. Scullin also initiated a bipartisan administration of the Fund which continued until its disbanding in 1973; from 1939, the CLF committee was made up of the leaders of the three major political parties, with the Prime Minister as chairman. The top-heaviness of the committee indicates the high profile which the CLF was given and, although the grants administered by the Fund were relatively small, their symbolic value was high: the Federal government was concerned with authors and books at the highest level.

Government concern for authors and books has expanded to include other arts, such as performance, music, and visual arts, and the CLF was subsumed by the Australia Council for the Arts (later, simply the Australia Council) in 1973 as its Literature Board. The CLF was, however, the first and longest standing federal arts assistance body.

While government assistance to authors is increasing every year and the conditions conducive to creative work are better understood by government (for instance, the recent move to multi-year funding which recognises the sustained nature of literary work), Literature Board assistance is something of a lottery, even among established writers.

Relatively few authors can be assisted each year, however, Literature Board funding remains a significant source of income for Australian authors.

Copyright and Public Lending Right

Other sources of income for authors include copyright payments and payments made under the Public Lending Right (PLR) scheme. These are important sources of income in that they recognise that the retail sales-royalty nexus does not adequately recompense authors for all uses of their works. The Copyright Agency Limited (CAL) administers payments to both authors and publishers for use of their works which have been photocopied or otherwise reproduced. This payment system, based on sections of the *Copyright Act 1968*, recognises that works or parts of works are reproduced and used outside of the retail sales system. Drusilla Modjeska would be eligible for payments from the CAL, if part or parts of her copyright works were reproduced. Such payments may be either one-off, or regular, as part of a CAL licence agreement.

Similarly, the Public Lending Right scheme administers payments to creators and publishers in compensation for the lending of their books by public libraries. This scheme will be extended in 1996 with the introduction of an Educational Lending Right to cover books in educational libraries. The scheme compensates authors for loss of sales due to multiple library borrowing of their works; it is calculated by means of a sample survey of book stocks held and used in libraries by eligible authors. Payments are confined to Australian authors who are under royalty contracts with their publishers; it does not apply to authors who received a commission or a flat fee for their work; publishers are also eligible for payments under the scheme and are paid at lower rates than creators. Drusilla Modjeska would almost certainly be eligible to apply for payments under the Public Lending Right (PLR) scheme. If the annual survey of public library collections reveals that 50 or more copies of her books (those for which she receives royalty payments) are held in Australian public libraries, she could apply for payment under the scheme. Since payments under both the CAL and PLR are confidential, it is impossible to determine Modjeska's income from these schemes.

Author Frank Moorhouse sees these schemes as addressing the need for the 'social compensation' of authors for what he calls 'the social property component' of their works. He identifies a modern concept of media, including books, as 'social property' which consumers feel they have a right to copy, use and reproduce freely and at will. This concept has arisen as a result of "the historical combination of free universal education . . . and the evolution of media technology" (Moorhouse 1981: 1). It is not only possible but very easy and convenient to borrow, copy and use books or parts of books without having to pay directly for the right. Copyright Agency and Lending Right payments go some way to redressing the potential losses suffered by authors and publishers as a result of this concept of books. Government legislation and involvement in these schemes further legitimises authors' rights over and above the royalty system.

Literary Prizes

Another source of income for some authors, and one which Drusilla Modjeska has benefited from throughout her career, is prize money associated with literary awards. Drusilla Modjeska has been particularly successful in literary awards and, since 1982, has won approximately \$56,000 in prize money. This figure includes money awarded to all of her major works. *Exiles at Home* won the Australian Society for Australian Literature Walter McRae Russell Award in 1983, with prize money of about \$500. *Poppy* won a number of awards, including the \$15,000 National Book Council 'Banjo' Award for non-fiction; in total, *Poppy* won its author \$23,000. *The Orchard*, by September, 1995, had won Drusilla Modjeska several major awards, and \$33,000 in prize money. Prize money is obviously an income source for very few authors, and not one that any author could anticipate or rely on; it is also considered as taxable income by the Australian Taxation Office.

While there are a number of income sources for Australian authors, most rely on the inequitable royalty system and other minor payments which result in generally low levels of income. Some authors, like Drusilla Modjeska in recent years, are able to make a living from their work, but most are not.

Regularity of Income

Regularity of income is a significant issue for authors; the majority of writers (60%) surveyed in Throsby and Thompson's study were self-employed and worked independently, that is, not on salary or contract. They received income in the form of royalty payments, fees, commissions, copyright and Public Lending Right payments, and grants or prizes, all of which are irregular or infrequently paid sources of income. Only 13% of writers were in receipt of salaries or were on contracts (Throsby & Thompson 1994: 19). In spite of the fact that the total income generated by Drusilla Modjeska's writing from various sources may be significant, it, too, is likely to be irregular and uncertain. Royalties, for instance, are completely dependent on retail sales, while literary prizes have been described by one commentator as "acts of God" (Rodriguez 1995). Modjeska, like most income earners, no doubt also has a range of demands on her income, and the irregularity and uncertainty would make financial planning a difficult undertaking.

Agents

A significant expense associated with the earning of much of this income for Drusilla Modjeska is the employment of an agent. Although relatively few Australian authors employ agents (9%, according to Throsby & Thompson 1994: 19), Modjeska has retained an agent for a number of years. Her current agent, Barbara Mobbs, began to represent Modjeska with the negotiation of Australian publishing rights for *The Orchard*. While the relationship between author and agent is considered confidential by both Drusilla Modjeska and Barbara Mobbs, most agents receive a commission of

between 10% and 15% on all of an author's earning from his or her major literary works. Barbara Mobbs was responsible for contract negotiations with Pan Macmillan on Modjeska's behalf, as well as for the sale of the film option for *The Orchard*, and for the negotiation of its British publication rights (Mobbs 1995).

Other Rewards

The financial rewards of authorship in Australia are generally insufficient and irregular, yet writing continues to be a popular pursuit, suggesting that there are rewards other than financial for authors.

Fame, esteem, or social status can be seen as rewards for authors, either in addition to, or in the absence of adequate financial rewards. However, Dorothy Green believes that "writers are not held in particularly high regard unless they write books which make them a fortune, or win prizes abroad, or attract sensational headlines in the press" (Green 1991: 45). Relatively few Australian authors achieve fame or renown outside of small literary or specialist circles; examples of those who have achieved wider renown have done one or more of the things Dorothy Green mentions, for instance Colleen McCullough, Patrick White, and Helen Demidenko/Darville respectively.

The creation of a work of art, including a text, is often seen as a reward in itself, and to have a value unrelated to, and of a higher nature than monetary value. There appears to be an underlying yet widespread belief that the reward for the artist or author is in the creation of the work itself, and that artists should remain unsullied by commercial considerations. This, no doubt, contributes to the persistence of generally poor financial conditions for authors in Australia, and indeed, for practitioners of many of the other arts.

The process of creation in the arts can be a satisfying endeavour; however, it is also not always considered to be 'real work'. This attitude is noted in both the 1988 and 1994 survey reports on economic conditions for Australian artists, and is reflected in their titles, *When Are You Going to Get a Real Job?* (Throsby & Mills 1989) and *But What Do You Do for a Living?* (Throsby & Thompson 1994). Allan Ashbolt commented on the status of Australian authors in his last speech as chairman of the Australian Society of Authors:

The notion is pervasive in Australian society that writing is not merely a part-time activity but essentially a recreational activity something done for fun and out of high spirits . . . (Ashbolt 1984: 2)

Such a notion suggests several interesting beliefs about work and the arts. The first is a belief that work is not and should not be enjoyable or rewarding in any way other than financial. The second is the belief in a clear separation between work and leisure (or play); for most people, the arts are associated with leisure pursuits, not with work, it therefore follows that if one is working in the arts, one is not at work but at play.

Academic writing often has other rewards, particularly career enhancement which can ensue from publication for those employed by universities and other research organisations. Academics are generally in receipt of salaries when they write, and do not rely on the financial benefits of publication. The rewards for publication are professional esteem and the achievement of the prerequisites for promotion. Barbara Jefferis suggests that this situation has eroded authors' financial rights, and that as a result of this lack of concern for adequate payment, educational publishing contracts are more inequitable than others, particularly in financial areas (Jefferis 1989: 35).

Writing Processes

It is impossible to generalise about the processes involved in the creation of texts by authors; there are likely to be as many different styles and methods of writing as there are authors and books, given the individual nature of both the creative process and its products. An examination, therefore, of the writing of *The Orchard* by Drusilla Modjeska is indicative only of how this author wrote this particular book, not how authors write in general, or even how Modjeska may have written her other books. It is interesting, however, for its insights into the development and creation of the text which became *The Orchard*.

The Orchard was partly written at Varuna Writers Centre in Katoomba, NSW, where Drusilla Modjeska was granted a residency. Varuna is a writers' retreat run by the Eleanor Dark Foundation; it is located in the former family home of Australian author, Eleanor Dark. The Foundation offers residencies to working writers who "have reached a professional level of achievement" (Sharkey 1991: 39). The length of residencies vary from 3 weeks to 3 months, and they include meals, accommodation, and the use of a studio. Noting the assistance of the Foundation in the 'Acknowledgment' page of *The Orchard*, Modjeska writes:

Much of the book was written in two short bursts at Varuna, in the studio where Eleanor Dark herself once worked, looking out into the orchard, and the garden she planted.
(Modjeska 1994: 'Acknowledgments' page, un-numbered)

The Orchard is an unusual blend of genres and includes history, biography, autobiography, fiction, and essay. According to its author, it grew out of the idea of writing a book of essays. When she went to Varuna in order to complete the essays, Modjeska recalls:

I realised that I wasn't interested in the form as it was. But Ettie, Clara and Louise [the women in *The Orchard*] came hurtling in, and I realised I was writing this weird kind of book. I wasn't sure *what* I was writing - Ettie and Clara imbued the essays with a new form of life. (Modjeska quoted in Elliott 1994a: 8)

She sees this style of writing as a feminine, conversational form, as "the way women think" (Modjeska on *Books & Writing* ABC Radio National 2 Oct 1994). She said in another interview:

The essay, when it's reclaimed from the academy, is a form which is very horizontal, and allows very philosophical aspects at the same time as anecdotal or fictional or narrative aspects. And that suits my temperament very well. So I can move between the historical . . . to the fictional characters, to historical and theoretical questions, discursive writing to anecdotal. I find it attractive to read and fabulous to write. And it seems to form naturally for me . . . (Modjeska quoted in Sorenson 1994: 12-13)

The form of *The Orchard* could be said to be a development on Modjeska's previous work, *Poppy*, which has been described as "both fiction and biography" (Jones, M. 1994: 11A). *The Orchard* takes the blending of genres further in merging a greater number of traditional forms.

The mixture of genres in *The Orchard* did not seem to trouble publisher, Hilary McPhee. Modjeska spoke of McPhee's role in the writing process:

When I was writing this [*The Orchard*], I said to Hilary McPhee, my publisher, I don't know what I'm writing! She'd say, that's not your problem, that's our problem as publishers. Maybe it's just a book. And that's the way I've come to think of it. (Modjeska quoted in Sorenson 1994: 13)

and

Re *The Orchard*, the greatest debt I have is to Hilary McPhee who understood the shape of the book as it unfolded, supported me on this...endeavour, and went through the MS [manuscript] several times. It was my second time working with her and a very good editorial relationship. (Modjeska 1995a)

It was clearly the encouragement and support of Hilary McPhee which provided Modjeska with the confidence to pursue this unusual blend of genres.

Modjeska claims to employ no standard technique (such as the use of word processing or hand writing), or to set aside particular times for writing; "all of this varies", she states (Modjeska 1995a).

Authors and Publishers

The relationships between authors and their publishers are central in book culture, and reveal much about the status of authors in Australia; they also vary enormously. Drusilla Modjeska, for instance, as a successful author whose books sell very well, has a good relationship with her publisher. It is likely that Modjeska has a contract with Pan Macmillan which is fair and which ensures that she is adequately rewarded for the success of her books. It is obviously in the interests of Pan Macmillan to offer favourable conditions in order to hold onto Modjeska as long as she continues to be successful; no doubt other publishers, in the absence of a contract with Pan Macmillan, would be eager to publish Modjeska's works.

Drusilla Modjeska began her association with Pan Macmillan after Hilary McPhee moved there from Penguin. McPhee remained Modjeska's editor or publisher and an important source of encouragement and support, until McPhee suffered a major heart attack in late 1994, around the time *The Orchard* was released. Hilary McPhee has since recovered and resigned from Pan Macmillan; Modjeska's editor with the company is now Nikki Christer, publisher in charge of the Pan and Picador imprints.

Modjeska has an ongoing contract with Pan Macmillan which includes *The Orchard*; she is happy with her contract conditions and feels that she has a good working relationship with the publishers (Modjeska 1995a).

According to the Australian Society of Authors' study cited previously (Jefferis 1989), relationships between publishers and authors in Australia are not always happy ones. While the study reveals some very good relationships between the two, many authors experience unsatisfactory relationships with their publishers. Some contentious contract clauses are offered as evidence of this, these include many financial arrangements as well as clauses associated with the right to alter an author's text without consultation, the claiming of copyright, not setting publication dates or print-run numbers. Some publishers accept works only on condition that they are successful in attracting Literature Board or other assistance in publication. Jefferis quotes an Australian publisher as having said, "writers are the only flexible unit in making a book" (Jefferis 1989: 50). Lynne Spender, the Executive Officer of the Australian Society of Authors related an anecdote at the National Book Summit in 1993 which further illustrates this view:

A well-known publisher had put out a call for contributions to a book of stories stating that authors would not be paid as this would make the project unviable!! In other words printers, typesetters and presumably publishers etc. get paid but payment for authors is optional and in fact a damned nuisance as it eats into the profit margin that publishers could otherwise count on. (Spender, L. 1993: 38)

It appears that unless an author is successful or potentially successful, publishers are likely to offer poor conditions in order to ensure the payment of others involved in book production and to maximise their own profits. The above examples of publishers' attitudes to authors reveal a disregard for the adequate payment of authors for their work, a disregard which could be linked to the notion that literary creation and publication are reward enough for authors.

Authors have varying degrees of influence on editing and design decisions; in the case of Drusilla Modjeska and *The Orchard*, the editing process was a collaborative one rather than a directive one, and there was general agreement on editing decisions. The copy-editor of *The Orchard* was Melbourne-based freelance editor, Judith Lukin-Amundsen; Drusilla Modjeska thought highly of her work: "Judith Lukin . . . was also excellent. Meticulous and detailed." (Modjeska 1995a). The copy-editing was done both on disk and on paper copy and, as is common practice, page proofs were made available to the author for final approval (Modjeska 1995a).

Modjeska states that she had "a little" input into the book's design; in fact she found the drawing which appears on the book's cover, a 17th century drawing by Pierre Dumonstier le Neveu, of Artemesia Gentileschi's hand with a paintbrush. Mary Callahan, a Melbourne-based book designer, designed the book, incorporating the drawing as the major feature of the book's cover and title page (of the hardback edition). According to Sydney bookseller, David Gaunt, who was shown an advance copy of the book by its author, Drusilla Modjeska was "delighted with the cover and format" (Gaunt 1995). Many authors have no input into the design process, but are often shown preliminary designs or sketches of intended covers for approval; this consultation with the author, however, is usually a courtesy rather than an obligation.

It is unusual for authors to have any influence on price, print-run, or distribution, though they may have some input into decisions regarding the date of release, particularly if they are expected to be involved in promotional activities. In the case of *The Orchard*, Drusilla Modjeska had no input into decisions about the print-run size or price of the book, but did have some say about the publication date (Modjeska 1995a).

Drusilla Modjeska was involved in a range of promotional activities for *The Orchard*; her involvement in these activities was both contractual and voluntary. While the royalty system encourages the author's cooperation in the promotion of books, there may also be a clause in a contract which obliges an author to participate in promotional activities. Increasingly authors are expected to attend public events, to read their work, participate in media interviews, sign copies of their books in bookshops and at public events, attend literary festivals, and so on. Modjeska, for instance, spoke at the book's launch in Sydney, and undertook a number of media interviews and public appearances in Sydney, Melbourne, and Hobart to promote *The Orchard*. The promotional practice of employing the author to market books is somewhat ironic. The work of authorship is necessarily a solitary one, involving long periods of sustained and isolated endeavour. When books are promoted, authors are often required to become involved in a flurry of very public activity where they are made available to the media, photographed, filmed, recorded, interviewed, asked to sign copies of their work, and required to read and to speak publicly. The solitary writer becomes a public figure albeit temporarily, in order to assist in the sale of his or her work. Such promotions may involve travel, and result in authors being further distracted from their task of writing. Obviously there is no guarantee that authors will be particularly articulate, photogenic, or engaging, or indeed, enjoy such activities, yet the demands of a competitive marketplace require that authors play a public role in promotion. In fact, Drusilla Modjeska stated that she did "not at all" enjoy the media and other public appearances associated with *The Orchard's* promotion (Modjeska 1995a).

The promotional activities of publishers, nevertheless seek to elevate authors to celebrity status in order to make their books desirable. An increasing trend in recent years is the promotion of the author and images of the author, often at the expense of a book's subject matter or title. This is demonstrated by cover or dust-jacket designs which feature the author's name or photograph more prominently than the title; and by publisher's advertisements for books featuring prominent images of the author or, in

the following example, editor. An interesting example is a full-page Random House advertisement for a collection of Patrick White's letters edited by White's biographer, David Marr (see Figure 1). The advertisement features a full-length photograph of Marr which accounts for roughly one third of the page; the cover of the book which includes a drawing of Patrick White is also featured but is not as large as the image of Marr which dominates the page. Marr is the author of a successful biography of White and his renown as such is employed to market this follow-up volume of letters. The irony is that the biographer and editor becomes a drawcard as big or bigger than the letters' author, himself arguably Australia's best known novelist (*Australian Bookseller & Publisher* Feb 1994: 3).

Although the above example focuses on a well-known and, no doubt, well-remunerated author, the practice of using an author's image for promotion is widespread. Obviously images of better known authors are more effective in promotion, but many authors are used as marketing tools by publishers, and are elevated to celebrity status, at least for the duration of a particular promotion. This status or fame implies, as it often does in Australia, an accompanying fortune; this is most often not the case; most authors rely on a 10% royalty on retail sales, and participate in promotional activities at the behest of their publishers and in an unpaid capacity.

Unless an author is particularly well-known or their work is otherwise noteworthy, the balance of power in the author-publisher relationship is tipped obliquely in favour of the publisher. In a climate where there are far more authors with manuscripts than there is demand for these, and in which publishers are besieged by aspiring authors, publishers can be selective and, in most cases authors feel privileged and grateful to be taken up by publishers. In such cases, publishers can offer terms which are often very much in the interests of their companies at the expense of authors. Publishers would argue that the financial investment and the risk involved in publishing are equally great and need to be covered by contractual conditions which favour the publisher; they may also argue that publication is ample reward in itself for authors.

Authors' Organisations and Gatherings

Although authorship is, for the most part, a solitary pursuit, there are a variety of organisations in Australia which represent, support, and assist authors. These range from the large Literature Board-funded Australian Society of Authors (ASA), the Australian Writers Guild, and state-based writers centres or unions, to small, informal groups organised at a local level. Australian authors are well-represented by the larger organisations which involve themselves in lobbying for better conditions for authors from both publishers and government. The Australian Society of Authors, for instance, lobbied strongly in the 1960s and early 1970s for the introduction of the Public Lending Right; it also established, with the Australian Book Publishers Association, the Copyright Agency Limited which collectively administers the payments to authors and publishers under sections of the *Copyright Act 1968*. The ASA and the Australian Writers' Guild offer advisory services to their members regarding contracts with publishers, the selling of rights and so on; these

'Letters are the devil, and I
always hope that any I have
written have been destroyed ...'

PATRICK WHITE

THE LETTERS

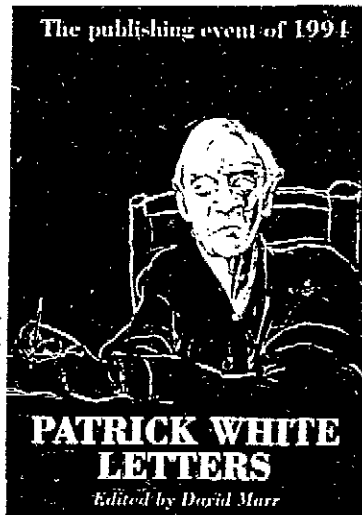
Patrick White spent his life writing letters. He wanted them all burnt, but thousands survive to reveal him as one of the great letter-writers of his time.

Patrick White: Letters is an unexpected and final volume of wonderful prose by Patrick White. Only a few scraps of his letters have been published before. Here his 70-year correspondence sees the light of day for the first time.

From the aftermath of the First World War until his death in 1990, letters poured from Patrick White's pen: they are shrewd, funny, hauntingly beautiful, dramatic, pig-headed, camp and above all relaxed. He wrote novels to sway a hostile world, but letters were for friends: Patrick White was an old man before he wrote fiction as free and open as the best of his letters.

Patrick White: Letters is the culmination of ten years' work and reflection by David Marr, author of the bestselling biography *Patrick White: A Life*. Marr searched for White's correspondence all over the world. There were thousands of letters in his hands when he wrote the biography; another thousand have been collected since. From this mountain of prose as high as ten novels, David Marr made this selection in which Patrick White tells the story of his own life in his own words.

The range of White's passions is vast: these are the letters of a great writer, a profound critic, a gossip with the sharpest eyes and tongue in the country, a man who loved and hated ferociously, a keen cook, an angry patriot, and a believer never free of doubt. Patrick White's letters deal with everything from the simplest pleasures of life to the most challenging issues facing us in this century.



THE EDITOR

David Marr (right) won many awards with *Patrick White: A Life* which achieved bestseller status. It was achieved by excellent research, excellent writing and excellent promotion. This time the writer is Patrick White himself and the promoter is his biographer, David Marr.

Patrick White: Letters will be launched in Sydney at the Art Gallery of NSW on Tuesday, October 4 and at the Melbourne Festival on Saturday, October 15. David will hit the publicity trail in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide, and Perth with literary lunches and massive media coverage and book signings over an extended period. David Marr, of course, also has his own program on Radio National from 10-11.00am weekdays. The end result? Excellent sales.



RANDOM HOUSE
AUSTRALIA

PATRICK WHITE: LETTERS
Edited by David Marr

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ISBN 009 1829925

organisations also set standards which they encourage their members to seek when negotiating with publishers. The ASA, for instance, encourages its members to use agents in the negotiating process, and to seek 'upfront' payment contracts in place of royalty contracts (Jefferis 1989: 39, 46). In spite of providing representation, information and advice, authors' organisations do not have much influence with publishers in a climate where contracts are negotiated individually, and often with a significant power imbalance.

State writers' centres exist in several states and provide a variety of facilities and activities for writers; the Victorian Writers' Centre, for instance, provides a library, computers, typewriters, writing space, and photocopiers, as well as regular classes and a *Handbook for Victorian Writers* (Sullivan 1995: 7).

While all of the authors' organisations assist in breaking down the isolation of authors, the smaller, informal groups also often provide forums for authors to discuss their work, ideas, difficulties, to read from their work in progress, and to receive informal feedback from peers.

Drusilla Modjeska is not currently a member of any writers' organisations, and cites lack of interest as a reason. She was involved in an informal women's writing group in the 1970s; this group operated as a forum for the discussion of feminist and literary issues and ideas, as well as for reading, and receiving feedback on works in progress. The group provided an important source of support and encouragement for a number of emerging women writers, including Modjeska, Jan McKemmish, Anne Spencer Parry, and Marjorie Pizer.

Modjeska does, however, attend, and participate in literary festivals, workshops, and other similar events; she often reads from her work, and takes part in discussions and debates on aspects of the literary enterprise. Every capital city in Australia holds a literary festival either annually or biennially at which authors present papers on areas of literary interest, participate in panel discussions, read from their works, and mingle with one another and with other festival-goers. These festivals often include visiting authors from overseas as well as local writers and, while the focus is generally on fiction writing, increasingly non-fiction authors, poets and dramatists are featured. Publishing firms are often involved in sponsorship of such events, and publishers participate as speakers and as panellists.. There is always a retail presence at festivals where books by participating authors can be purchased.

Literary festivals are not new in Australia. Maryanne Dever writes of the inaugural Australian Authors' Week held in Sydney in 1935, and quotes the organisers' aim as "at once cultural, patriotic and educational" (Dever 1992: 101). Activities in that first Writers' Week included personal appearances by authors, displays of books, dramatised scenes from books, lectures, and the Authors' Ball. The aims of contemporary writers' festivals are not dissimilar, although the term 'patriotic' has no doubt been replaced with a more fashionable synonym, and promotion, in a commercial sense, is central.

The Role and Status of Authors in Australia

The role of authors in Australian society is difficult to define precisely; authors have a range of different roles in different circumstances and, while it is dangerous to generalise, some particular roles can be identified. Obviously authors create reading material for any number of purposes: to entertain, engage, inform, amuse, provoke, distract, and so on. Academic authors create works of original research and discussion. Some authors provide detailed information about how to carry out particular tasks, for instance do-it-yourself books and cookbooks, or information on particular subjects such as gardening, sports, crafts, computers, travel, arts. Some provide accounts of lives or biographies, while others write fiction, in a variety of genres, as well as poetry and drama. Others write literary criticism, essays, history, autobiographies, reference works, philosophy, religious studies, popular science, and so on.

It could be said that authors are central to the intellectual life of a culture in their provision of food for thought in the printed form. Authors articulate ideas and present them in a variety of forms. In writing of different kinds, ideas are diffused through society and are considered, discussed, accepted, rejected, modified, reformulated, or re-presented.

Authors also function as social observers or critics, and many write works of fiction or non-fiction which reflect and explore aspects of Australian culture and society. Such authors are considered to have particular insights into the culture as well as the ability to present those insights in a thought-provoking and useful way. It is through such works that Australian readers can see themselves and aspects of their culture portrayed in print; readers can reflect on such portrayals and perhaps develop a better understanding of their own culture.

Drusilla Modjeska's work, *The Orchard* is both a vehicle for ideas and a reflection of particular aspects of Australian culture; it is a book about women's lives and the options that they face. In presenting glimpses into the lives of her female characters, Modjeska considers the issue of "how women can live as 'woman' and not as the seemingly more beguiling 'wife or mistress'" (Elliott 1994a: 8). Modjeska involves herself with this issue both within the text of *The Orchard*, and in interviews; she says of this notion:

At this historical point more women than ever before have the structures in place where they can begin to be themselves—that is as neither wife nor mistress . . . it is difficult to unhitch one's ego off the egos of men . . . but I feel optimistic that it can be done.
(Modjeska quoted in Elliott 1994a: 8)

In writing a work such as *The Orchard*, with its presentation and consideration of aspects of women's lives and relationships, Modjeska functions as a social or cultural observer as well as a conduit for ideas.

Australians are often keen to hear authors' views on subjects other than their writing; their expertise with words has established some authors as important spokespeople for various causes and issues. Dorothy Green begins her essay "Writers as Social Critics" with the suggestion: "If

Australian writers in less than two centuries can be said to have created a tradition, it is one marked by a strong social conscience" (Green 1991: 19). A number of writers were important figures, for instance, in the anti-Vietnam War protest movement of the 1960s and 1970s. Writers were, and continue to be at the forefront of the modern Women's Movement in Australia, and to lend their weight to conservation debates, and to the struggle for land rights and human rights for Aboriginal Australians. Authors are also prominent in the current constitutional debate regarding a proposed Australian republic.

Drusilla Modjeska is a feminist writer and, while she has not been a prominent and public spokesperson for the Australian Women's Movement, she is an active writer whose work is unselfconsciously feminist. Her works proceed from a feminist perspective which is not discussed, rationalised, or questioned; that perspective assumes that women are full human beings in their own right, who have strengths, weaknesses, and potential. All three of her independently authored books focus on women and women's lives as their subject matter, and her first book, *Exiles at Home* (1981) is highly regarded as a ground-breaking feminist work in Australian literary history.

Modjeska emerged as a writer in the Women's Movement of the 1970s, and was actively involved in feminist issues, political action, and debate. She writes of that period:

I joined a women's writing group . . . Although we were in a constant state of outrage - at what men were writing, at the rejection notes we were receiving - we had a lot of fun. We also had tremendous fights, mostly over the relative claims of politics and aesthetics. Should we be writing to some proscribed notion of ideological correctitude? Or were there imperatives that ran against correct lines? What if we wanted to say something unacceptable? The group eventually broke up under the weight of these arguments. (Modjeska 1991: x)

The above statement goes on to say that she came down on the side of aesthetics; however, Modjeska has maintained her focus on women's issues and feminist perspectives. She could be considered an important feminist writer for the facts that her books are both strongly feminist in nature and are widely read.

Modjeska is one of an increasing number of Australian authors who are valued for their ability to provoke thought and debate. It is often through the thought provoked, and the debate generated by authors that societal change takes place in Australia; such change is most often incremental rather than radical.

It is difficult to definitively determine the status of authors in contemporary Australian society. 'Ambivalent' might be the best description; while authors' roles are important to Australian culture, most authors are not adequately rewarded for their work either by money or status. A small number of Australian authors are well-known and highly successful, often as a result of success achieved overseas; these authors enjoy high status. Others, like Drusilla Modjeska are relatively successful in Australia, but are neither very highly paid, nor well-known outside of

small literary circles; such authors' status is mixed. The vast majority of authors in Australia, however, live and work in relative obscurity, receive inadequate financial returns for their efforts, and must undertake additional, unrelated employment in order to make a living. It could be said that such writers do not enjoy high status although some may, in small specialist circles.

Authorship in Australia is considered an arts-related activity; as such it enjoys similar status to the other arts. Writing is probably one of the more public arts in that its products are ubiquitous in Australian culture. Few Australians are untouched by the works of authors, and books are central to the lives of many, particularly those engaged in formal and informal education. The ambivalent status of authors in Australian culture, however, may suggest a similar ambivalence towards books, in spite of their ubiquity.

This examination of the nature and conditions of authorship in contemporary Australia suggests that while conditions vary for different authors, there are some conditions which are common to most authors. These relate largely to the nature, sources, and regularity of income, to the factors involved in author-publisher relationships, and to the role and function of writers' organisations and gatherings. Factors which vary widely include the actual process of writing as experienced by individual authors, the nature of the products of authorship, and the conception of the role and status of authors in Australian society.

The nature of authorship in Australia is also strongly influenced by a notion of rewards other than financial ones for authors, and particularly for authors of 'literary' or creative works. It seems likely that such a notion affects both the overall nature of authorship in Australia, as well as particular aspects of authorship such as remuneration and the status of authors.

The examination of the particular nature and conditions of authorship experienced by Drusilla Modjeska, author of *The Orchard*, suggests that she is a relatively successful and established Australian author. Obviously not all Australian authors are as established or as successful, nor are most able to pursue writing and associated activities in a full-time capacity. The examination of her work as an author, however, provides a concrete example of the conditions of authorship for one contemporary Australian author; it provides insights into her development as an author, the estimated sources, size, and regularity of her income, the role of government and other support in assisting in the establishment of her career, her relationship with those involved in the publishing process, and the nature and style of her work. It also illustrates Drusilla Modjeska's emergence as a writer from the Australian Women's Movement of the 1970s with a perspective and themes which are unselfconsciously feminist, and which are clearly both acceptable and popular in contemporary Australian book culture.

Chapter 4 PUBLICATION

Introduction

Publication is the central process in modern book culture; it is the process by which a single text becomes a book, and is produced in multiple, identical copies. Publication is the intermedium between author and reader, and comprises those activities which are requisite to modern book production. These include contracting of authors, editing, design, layout, choice of materials and typeface, typesetting, the organising of printing, marketing, promotion, and distribution. Publishers also often commission texts, buy publication rights for works created in other countries, repackage works for which they own the rights, and co-produce books with other publishers. The activities of publishers are wide-ranging and fundamental to the book and to book culture.

The contemporary Australian book is both a cultural artefact and a product of commercial trade; Australian publishers play dual and often conflicting roles as commercial entrepreneurs and as cultural gatekeepers and facilitators. The nature of the Australian publishing industry, therefore reflects, to some degree, that conflict and the cultural and commercial conditions existing in Australia at any given time.

This chapter examines the general nature and conditions of publishing in Australia, as well as the particular publication event of *The Orchard* and its publisher, Pan Macmillan Australia. The chapter begins with a brief survey of the history of publishing in Australia and an introduction to the company, Pan Macmillan Australia. This is followed by an examination of the nature of the publishing industry in contemporary Australia, and of factors such as government assistance, staffing and training. The publishing process is then examined, both in general and in relation to *The Orchard*. The chapter concludes with the consideration and exploration of several of the major issues involved in contemporary publishing in Australia, that is, ownership issues, the culture-commerce dichotomy, and the role of women in publishing.

Publishing in Australia: History

The early history of publishing in Australia is closely associated with British colonialism and control. Book publishing was slow to start in Australia since most European cultural products, including books, were imported from Britain for many years after white settlement. Costs were too high and the population too small and dispersed to sustain a profitable local publishing industry. Most printing and publishing of books was carried out in Britain, and the product imported to Australia; this included texts which originated in the Australian colonies. However, a strong retail book trade developed in Australia throughout the 19th century with booksellers operating as importers of British books.

Australia and the British colonies in general were important export markets for British books. British imperialism had a number of roles: as

well as having a 'civilising mission' to its colonies, it also had an important economic function which included providing markets for British goods. Toward the end of the 19th century, in what Wallace Kirsop describes as part of "a major commercial development" (Kirsop 1988: 42), British publishers began to establish offices in the major Australian cities. These offices functioned largely as distribution points, but many eventually became branches of their British parent companies, and began to undertake a small amount of local publishing (Wilson 1987: 119; Zifcak 1990: 23). The latter part of the 19th century also saw the phenomenon of the 'colonial edition' emerge and take hold. 'Colonial editions' were British books, mostly fiction, which were published in London or Edinburgh specifically for the colonial markets in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, India and South Africa. They were produced cheaply, often as run-ons of the printing of British editions, and had special series titles such as *Murray's Colonial and Home Library*, and *Kegan Paul's Indian and Colonial Series*. Most were identical to the British editions but with a separately printed title page and binding. 'Colonial editions' continued to be published well into the 20th century (Johanson 1986).

It was in the late 19th century that the local book publishing industry began to develop, but only in isolated instances. Several notable companies were established in this period including the New South Wales (NSW) Bookstall Company in 1879, and Angus and Robertson in 1888; the publishers of the *Bulletin* also produced books in this period. Angus and Robertson was founded by two young Scots, David Angus and George Robertson, as a bookselling business with an interest in publishing. Their first publication, in 1888, was a book of verse, *A Crown of Wattle* by H. Peden Steel (Ferguson 1978: 58); the company went on to play a major role in the publication of Australian literature in the late 19th century, and throughout the 20th century.

The NSW Bookstall Company franchised a chain of railway and ferry terminal bookstalls, and first sold paperback fiction printed in England under the Bookstall imprint. In 1904, its then owner, Alfred Cecil Rowlandson launched the successful local *Bookstall Series* with the publication of Steele Rudd's *Sandy's Selection*. The company tapped the market of travellers and country people with its widespread distribution network; it maintained regular supplies of new titles and kept its prices low. The company foundered with the premature death of Rowlandson in 1922, and the last *Bookstall Series* title appeared in 1927. By then the company had sold 4 million novels by Australian authors, most featuring Australian themes (Mills, C. 1991; Mills, C. 1992). The NSW Bookstall Company was an early Australian publishing success, and foreshadowed the popularity of fiction by local authors featuring Australian settings and themes.

The beginning of the 20th century saw the establishment of Australia as a sovereign nation within the British Commonwealth; it also saw, however, the continuation of British cultural and economic domination of the Australian booktrade. Angus and Robertson and the NSW Bookstall Company found a profitable niche in a market dominated by British imports. In the period between the wars, the Australian booktrade began to develop an identity of its own; a brief period of protectionism by the Scullin government in 1930, combined with an unfavourable exchange rate resulted in a large increase in import prices (McLaren 1988: 70). This proved profitable for local publishers; a number of small, local publishing enterprises were established in this

period, and interest in Australian writing increased (McLaren 1988; Dever 1992).

World War II was an important event for the further development of the Australian publishing industry. In 1939, Australia imported nearly 90% of its books and magazines (Cleary 1985); obvious problems with shipping and travel, along with paper rationing, led to Australian publishers filling the import gaps and publishing overseas material as well as works by Australians whose work might otherwise have gone to London to be published. There was an "unprecedented demand for books" during the war (Cleary 1985: 37), brought about partly by the establishment of the an extensive library service by the Australian Army Education Service; other factors contributing to the demand included increased participation in education, and "the influx of American servicemen, increased living standards, and the tendency of the public to give coupon-free goods [such as books] as gifts" (Cleary 1985: 37). The Australian Pocket Library was launched in 1943 and was sponsored by the Commonwealth Literary Fund; it published paperback reprints of Australian 'classics' for distribution to the troops.

Ground lost by British publishers in wartime was regained shortly after the war when they formalised their control over the Australian industry with the 'Traditional Market Agreement' (Wilson 1987: 119), and the 'closure' of the Australian retail market (these phenomena will be examined in more detail later in this chapter, and in subsequent chapters).

A number of university presses were established in the post-war period, including University of Queensland Press, joining Melbourne University Press which had been established in 1922. Other publishers emerged as important players in the Australian booktrade, including Georgian House, F. W. Cheshire, and Longman's. In 1948, the Australian Book Publishers Association was established. Much of this activity was prompted by a growth in demand for locally relevant and Australian produced materials for primary and secondary schools (McLaren 1988: 79). The profits promised by this expansion of the educational market in the post-war period also resulted in the further establishment in Australia of local offices and warehouses of British firms (McLaren 1988).

The 1960s and 1970s saw a boom in Australian-owned small publishing; this was assisted, in the 1970s, by the expansion of government intervention in the form of Literature Board grants. Michael Denholm in his *Small Press Publishing in Australia: the early 1970s* (1979) suggests that another reason for this boom in small publishing was the failure of both the large Australian, and foreign-owned publishers to meet the needs of Australian writers, particularly young writers. A number of small publishing companies emerged in this period, and began taking risks with publishing which the larger, established companies were reluctant to do. Some of these small publishers were successful, others were not, but the activity in these decades shaped the nature of future publishing in Australia, by demonstrating that new Australian writing had a substantial market.

The late 1970s and 1980s saw Australian publishing subject to the mergers and takeovers which had come to characterise international publishing. This period left the publishing industry in Australia dominated by very large, mostly foreign-owned companies which

incorporated local publishing units involved in producing Australian books for the Australian market.

Pan Macmillan Australia, Publisher of *The Orchard*

The Orchard was first published in September 1994 by Pan Macmillan Australia, a subsidiary company of the British-based Macmillan Limited. Macmillan Limited was an established British publishing company which, until recently was privately owned by the Macmillan family trusts. In early 1995, the German publishing group Von Holtzbrinck acquired a 70% share in Macmillan Limited. Von Holtzbrinck is a family-owned company with a broad range of publishing, research, printing, and other media interests, and has an estimated annual turnover of A\$2 billion ("Macmillan sells majority shareholding" 1995: 7; Maxwell 1995b: 24).

The change in ownership of Macmillan Limited marked the end of both British and the Macmillan family control of the company which was founded in 1843 by Scottish brothers, Alexander and Daniel Macmillan. The company became known for publishing high quality literary works as well as general trade books, and was an established and important force in British publishing throughout the 19th and 20th centuries (Feather 1988). In the 1880s, Macmillan, in common with other British publishers, established its Colonial Library which produced "standard works and popular fiction for circulation in India and the colonies" (Morgan 1943: 135); this included Australia. In the early 20th century, Macmillan established branches in a number of overseas locations: offices were opened in Toronto in 1904, in Melbourne in 1905, and in several Indian cities at around the same time (Morgan 1943). These branches were primarily for the purposes of distributing Macmillan's books in the colonies and former colonies; however, most operated as agents for other publishers and, some eventually began to undertake local publishing.

The Macmillan Company of Australia became active in the publication of educational books for the local market and later, in producing local trade books and overseas books for the Australian market. The company is now split into a number of related companies including Macmillan Educational, Pan Macmillan Australia, and Macmillan Distribution Services.

Pan Macmillan Australia was formed in 1990 with the merger of Pan Australia and the Macmillan Company of Australia, both of which were owned by the British parent, Macmillan Limited. Pan Books was established in Britain in 1944 by a consortium of British publishers which had earlier founded The Reprint Society to compete with Penguin Books. Pan was established as the paperback reprint publisher for the consortium which included Macmillan, Collins, Hodder and Stoughton, and Heinemann. Pan Books was successful in the 1960s with Ian Fleming's James Bond books, among others and, by 1982 had captured 20% of the British paperback market (St John 1990; Mumby & Norrie 1974). A number of changes in ownership occurred until Macmillan finally took over ownership and control of Pan in 1987.

Pan opened its Australian branch in the early 1980s, and hired local independent publisher, James Fraser to head its Australian operations and to develop an original Australian list (Rubbo 1985). James Fraser

remains with the company as Publishing Director at Pan Macmillan Australia.

The Picador imprint was established by Pan Books in 1972 as its high quality literary imprint; the large size, 'B format' (198 x 129mm) paperback was pioneered by Picador and by Abacus at this time, and has come to be identified with quality literary fiction and non-fiction. The Picador imprint is considered Pan Macmillan Australia's 'flagship' and 'prestige' imprint (Christer 1995), and is reserved for high quality fiction and some non-fiction. In an effort to maintain a distinctive style for the imprint, a single designer is contracted to design all Australian Picador books. Its market, according to current Picador publisher Nikki Christer, is Australia's literary buyers and readers, both female and male (Christer 1995).

Pan Macmillan Australia is the trade publishing, marketing, and sales division of Macmillan's Australian interests. In its 1995 annual return to the Australian Securities Commission, Pan Macmillan lists its principal activities as "importers of books published by parent co & Aust publishing" (Pan Macmillan Australia 1995: 1). The company employs 60 staff and has its head office in central Sydney; it operates a major sales office in Melbourne which is co-located with Macmillan Distribution Services.

Pan Macmillan publishes under a number of imprints, each with a distinctive style; the Pan imprint, for instance, is a mass market paperback imprint which covers fiction, science fiction, fantasy, and horror. The Macmillan imprint is used mostly for hardback fiction, non-fiction, and children's books; Picador remains the company's high quality literary fiction imprint. Other Pan Macmillan imprints include Sun, Ironbark, and Piper, while the company is agent for St Martin's Press, Sidgwick & Jackson, Bedrock Press, Harrop, Chambers, Guinness, and Prima.

The Book Publishing Industry in Australia

The Australian book publishing industry is currently dominated by large, foreign-owned corporations. A look at the twenty publishers operating in Australia in 1992 with estimated turnovers of \$10 million or more reveals only three Australian-owned companies (see table, Appendix B). There is some debate as to whether Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation should be considered an American or an Australian company since its owner holds dual citizenship and the company operates in both countries as well as in others. It should probably be considered a transnational company without allegiance to any country. Certainly the largest companies operating in Australia are owned by concerns outside of Australia, in either Europe, the United States, or Canada. The implications of this situation for Australian publishing are discussed in detail later in this chapter

As the table (Appendix B) indicates, the companies publish under a number of imprints or company names, many of which have been acquired by the parent company in mergers or take-overs, common occurrences in both Australian and international publishing in recent decades. Most companies maintain the imprints of acquired companies as well as having a number of their own since each imprint may have not only a specialised market, but also specific staff who work only on a

particular imprint within the larger company structure. For instance, when Penguin (owned by the British company Pearson) took over McPhee Gribble in 1989, it maintained the imprint and added its own name, so that books published carried the imprint "McPhee Gribble/Penguin". The large number of imprints in the Australian market masks the concentration of ownership and creates an erroneous impression of diversity and competition. The 149 imprints listed in the table (Appendix B), for instance, suggest a large, varied, and competitive range of publishing activities, however, the fact that these imprints are owned by only twenty companies reveals the existence of a smaller and less diverse publishing environment among the largest publishers operating in Australia.

However, there are also many small companies successfully operating in Australia, most of which are locally owned. Small publishing companies include general publishers as well as those which specialise in particular kinds of publishing such as Aboriginal, arts, children's, crafts, and feminist publishing. Also locally owned are most of the university presses, although several have been subjects of overseas take-overs.

It is difficult to estimate the number of commercial publishers currently operating in Australia, particularly since the advent of desktop publishing. However, *Australian Books in Print 1993* lists 3,370 publishers (*Australian Books in Print 1993*); these include each separate imprint, including those owned by large companies. These also include small one or two person firms as well as the large multinational conglomerates. It is probably a good indication of the number and range of publishers operating commercially in Australia in that year. The Cultural Ministers Council Statistical Advisory Group (SAG) provided estimates on the size of the book publishing industry which indicate a smaller number of publishers; this could be due to the non-inclusion of the various imprints of larger companies in these figures. The Group estimated that in 1988 in Australia, there were 1,000 book publishers employing 4,010 staff (Australia. Cultural Ministers Council SAG 1990).

The latest available figures on the value of the industry and size of its output are those from 1994. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) report *Book Publishing, Australia, 1994* (ABS 1996) indicates a profitable industry with a total wholesale revenue in that year of \$841.7 million (ABS 1996: 1). The total number of books published in Australia in 1994 was estimated to be 13,412, comprising 10,199 educational books (including professional and reference books), and 3,213 general books (ABS 1996: 3). It is interesting to note the large numbers of educational books published in relation to the total, indicating the importance of this market. The figures reveal significant growth when compared with the Australian Book Publishers Association figures from 1991 which indicated that the wholesale value of Australian publishing was \$549.28 million, and that only 7,991 books were published in that year (ABPA 1994b: 3, 22).

The Australian publishing industry is represented by its 'peak' industry body, the Australian Book Publishers Association (ABPA). The ABPA was established in 1948 and currently has a membership of about 150 companies, which includes most of the large publishers and many small companies (Curtain 1993c: 47). In 1990, a Small Publishers' Group of the ABPA was formed in order that the concerns of small publishers were

heard within the larger organisation. Failure for this to happen in the 1970s led to the formation of the Australian Independent Publishers Association (AIPA) which operated for several years, often in opposition to the ABPA ("Who Speaks for the Australians?" 1978). The AIPA was as much about a voice for small publishers as it was about a voice for local Australian publishers in an environment dominated by large foreign companies. It appears that small, independent and locally-owned publishers are now successfully accommodated and represented by the ABPA.

In 1995, the Australian Book Publishers Association announced a proposal to change its name by dropping 'Book' from it, and becoming the Australian Publishers Association (APA) in a "move [which] broadens our potential membership and encompasses new technology at the same time" (Sue Blackwell quoted in "ABPA to become APA" 1995: 7). This is an interesting move which indicates the radical changes occurring within the industry, particularly with the emergence of new multimedia technologies, and traditional book publishers' increasing involvement in them. The Association is seeking to attract publishers of new media products as well as of books but will continue to exclude magazine and newspaper publishers "whose interests may not necessarily reflect those of the current membership" ("ABPA to become APA" 1995: 7). It could also be seen as an indication of the diminishing importance and status of the book to its producers in a diverse media environment. It is certainly a significant move and, perhaps, a harbinger of change in both the role and status of the book in Australia.

The book trade in Australia, including both the book publishing industry and the retail sales sector is served by a common monthly journal, the *Australian Bookseller and Publisher* which provides news, advertisements, a forum for industry issues, and a list of books published in Australia each month. It is published by D. W. Thorpe and has appeared under a number of different titles since 1921 (McLaren 1988).

An interesting development in the ownership of publishing companies in Australia is the entrance of companies involved in other information and entertainment industries; Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation, for instance has significant involvement in newspapers, printing, film, and television, as well as owning the large book publishing group, HarperCollins. Simon and Schuster is owned by Gulf & Western which is a major player in the American film industry. The concentration of ownership has placed publishing in an increasingly diversified business environment, sharing stables with television, newspaper and magazine, film, multi-media, video, and music production companies, as well as other, completely unrelated concerns of the parent conglomerates. The presence of book publishing in such environments exposes it to influences from other industries; in the case of other media and entertainment industries, the effects of such influences might include closer relationships between books and other media, with more video, film, television and multimedia tie-ins, and cross references and promotions. It may also mean the possible replacement of some functions of the book (for instance, the reference function) with other media which can be produced within the same corporate structure. Another effect of the presence of book publishing in diverse corporate environments is the necessity for publishing to 'carry its weight' in terms of profits, lest it be jettisoned in favour of alternative industries

within the larger company. This latter point is examined later in this chapter.

The book publishing industry in Australia is currently in a period of change associated, in particular, with the influence of electronic technology. New opportunities for publishing have been created by electronic media, and a number of book publishers operating in Australia are becoming involved in electronic publishing. This is particularly the case in the educational market where multi-media products are increasingly popular, however it is also relevant to general publishing where, in some cases, multi-media versions of books are being produced with additional audio, video, and interactive features. The program of the Second National Book Summit, a forum held in Melbourne in 1995 and attended by publishers, librarians, writers, editors, and others involved in Australian book culture, focused heavily on issues associated with electronic publishing, including copyright, the creative potential of electronic media, and publishing opportunities offered by the Internet. The electronic focus of this Book Summit is a potent signal of the changing interests and preoccupations of many involved in Australian book culture, and of the changes affecting the publishing industry.

Government Assistance

While the book publishing industry is a major Australian industry with an annual wholesale value of some \$840 million, it is also a target of government assistance for both its cultural and commercial roles. The Literature Board of the Australia Council supports the cultural role of publishers by providing grants to assist with the publication of particular Australian books which may not be commercially viable. In the 1993-94 financial year, the Literature Board provided \$316,238 in direct assistance to publishers in Australia as book publishing subsidies (Australia Council 1994: 91-92). While Pan Macmillan received no assistance from the Literature Board for the publication of *The Orchard*, it did receive subsidies of \$6,500 for other Australian publishing projects in the 1993-94 financial year (Australia Council 1994: 91).

Publishers are also assisted by several schemes which compensate for factors within the commercial environment which affect publishers' revenue. The Book Bounty provides for payment of a percentage of production costs as a means of assisting the book production industry. While it can be claimed by publishing companies which carry out their own production work, it is more commonly claimed by printers. Publishers are eligible to claim for payments under the Public Lending Right scheme, and many are also eligible for payments from the Copyright Agency Limited.

The Federal government has also assisted the publishing industry with export incentives and assistance; a recent initiative in this area is the investigation by the Department of Communication and the Arts into export opportunities in Asia for Australian book publishers. Another avenue of Federal government assistance to Australian publishing is financial support from its Cultural Industries Development Program for the 'Publish Australia' network. 'Publish Australia' is a network, established in 1995, of about 45 independent Australian publishers who have come together to develop more effective distribution and marketing systems and opportunities (*Publish Australia: Background*

Information 1995). These two assistance initiatives mark a change in Federal government assistance to the industry which previously focused on assistance to publishers at the *production* stage; both of these programs are directed to the *distribution* stage of publishing, a significant change in focus and one which recognises distribution difficulties experienced by small publishers.

Staff and Training

Because of the difference in size of publishing companies operating in Australia, from the one person, desktop operation to the large multinational conglomerate, it is difficult to generalise about staffing in Australian publishing. Some employ a full complement of editorial, production, marketing, distribution, legal, and other staff, while others use the services of freelance workers or of other firms for particular purposes; some use a combination of inhouse and freelancers. Freelance, part-time, and casual workers are common in the Australian publishing industry and make up 17.5% of the Australian publishing workforce (ABS 1996: 3). In the case of *The Orchard*, both its copyeditor and designer were freelancers working on contract with Pan Macmillan, while the other editors involved with the book were salaried employees of the company.

Industrial conditions and award rates of pay for book publishing workers are set out in the Book Industry Award, and workers are eligible for membership of the Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance.

Until recently, there were no specialist education courses in Australia for people wanting to work in publishing; training for the industry was undertaken on the job. The expansion of higher education and training in Australia, and the increased importance of educational credentials in the labour market in the late 1980s saw the establishment of tertiary level courses in a number of diverse areas, including publishing and editing. While graduates of such courses are beginning to enter the industry, formal qualifications are not mandatory for publishing employees, in fact Australian publishing companies prefer to employ people with broad life experience and a sound and varied liberal educational background (ABPA 1994a).

The Australian Book Publishers Association is an active participant in industry training and provides a variety of training activities through its Training and Industry Development Committee.

The Publishing Process

Publishers occupy a central position in Australian book culture, not merely as the physical producers of books, but as participants in all aspects of the book's life-cycle, often from the conception of a text or idea, through its creation, design, production, distribution, and marketing. While these processes differ according to particular types of publishing, each process has features common to most contemporary Australian publishing. An examination of general publishing processes, as well as those undergone by *The Orchard*, clearly illustrates the nature of the contemporary publishing process in Australia.

The central figure in Australian publishing is the 'editor', also known as 'commissioning editor', or by the generic term 'publisher'. This person makes the crucial decisions about what will be published, and while they are often assisted by 'readers' who vet manuscripts for their suitability for a particular list or company; it is the editor who makes the final decision about publication. Editors must have a good sense of the nature of their particular market in order to know what will sell, how, and why. Decisions made by editors are critical, and result in the success or failure of their books. The Pan Macmillan editor responsible for *The Orchard* was Hilary McPhee, who was replaced after her resignation from the company, by Nikki Christer. McPhee played a major role in supporting Drusilla Modjeska throughout the writing of *The Orchard*, and was also instrumental in the design process, as well as the initial marketing of the book.

Editors are closely involved with authors in contract negotiations, encouragement, and assistance, and also often commission works from authors. A common misconception about publishing is that authors initiate the process with the production of a manuscript which is sent, unsolicited, to a publishing company. While this does happen, most books do not begin this way but are commissioned by editors to fill particular market gaps or, in the case of educational books, curriculum needs. This is particularly the case in educational book publishing which makes up about 75% of total Australian publishing (ABS 1996: 3).

Editors are the public face of publishing in Australia, representing their companies or imprints at literary festivals, conferences, book launches, and other events.

They tend to be closely involved in the editorial process at the development and overseeing levels while the detailed manuscript editing is carried out by specialist 'copy-editors' who edit word by word to ensure consistency of style and content, accurate spelling, punctuation, and syntax. The copy-editing of *The Orchard* was contracted to free-lancer, Judith Lukin-Amundsen.

Editors are also involved in aspects of the production process and, in particular, with the important aspect of design. It is the editor's task to ensure that the books which are produced are appropriate and desirable to their intended market. Book design decisions, including those which involve the choice of paper, layout, typeface, binding, and even ink, are crucial to this task.

Consideration in the design process is given not only to each book's intended market, but also to the imprint under which a book is published. Specific editors tend to be responsible for particular imprints within the larger companies, and it is common for imprints to have a consistency of design or style which is intended to be recognisable to buyers. This consistency plays a role in encouraging buyers toward a kind of 'brand loyalty'. Oxford University Press, for instance, maintains a standard and recognisable design for the covers of its reference books. Other imprints may have less obvious identifying features but may still maintain a recognisable consistency of style. Pan Macmillan's Picador imprint is a case in point; in an effort to maintain a distinctive style for the imprint, a single designer, Mary Callahan, is contracted to design all Australian Picador books.

The format and design of *The Orchard* were the result of ideas from the author, from Hilary McPhee, and from the designer. It was a particularly successful and popular book design, and was selected for the short-list of the 1994 ABPA Book Design Awards. The format is an innovative one since most Australian Picador titles appear first in 'B format' paperback; in this case, an unusually small sized (193 x 118mm) hardback format was selected. Nikki Christer, Picador publisher, considers the format decision "a punt which worked out perfectly"; she sees the book as a "perfect combination of content and design" (Christer 1995).

The format was certainly unusual for a contemporary Australian book, although the British Bloomsbury group had employed a smaller (150 x 105mm) hardback format for its "Classics" reprint series for several years. Sydney bookseller, David Gaunt believes that the choice of the small format allowed the price of the hardback edition of *The Orchard* to be kept low in relation to conventional hardback novels which, priced between \$30 and \$45, do not sell well in Australia (Gaunt 1995).

The format of *The Orchard* is reminiscent of the 'pocket hardbacks' of Everyman's Library of the 1930s and 1940s; its appearance in 1994, along with the recent appearance of the Bloomsbury Classics, and the popularity of both, are interesting phenomena. It is possible that publishers are seeking to reinforce the enduring qualities and uniqueness of books by the movement toward the use of book design features from previous eras.

It has been suggested that the development and uptake of electronic media are "returning the book to itself" (Hetherington 1995), that is, due to a challenge to particular functions of the book by electronic media, those involved in book production are identifying and highlighting the unique and particular attributes of the book. These attributes include the physical and sensual beauty of the book as an artefact, and the content of a meditative or contemplative nature (as opposed to practical information). It could be for this reason that books are becoming more sensuous in design, with the almost ubiquitous use of matt laminate covers, and a return to 'classic' or traditional formats. *The Orchard*, in hardback, is an excellent example of such a trend, both in its format and its content; in fact, it could be said that *The Orchard* is an Australian prototype of this phenomenon.

A more cynical analysis sees publishers simply capitalising on the current popularity, in many areas, of nostalgia and 'retro' design. Publishing is not the only consumer industry which employs marketing images of earlier decades to sell contemporary products.

After the design stage of publishing comes the work of typesetting, printing, and binding. While this work is most often carried out by separate firms contracted by the publisher, it is the production manager, within the publishing company, who oversees this stage. The distribution stage is also organised either by distribution sections within publishing companies, or by separate distribution companies. Printing and distribution are both examined in detail in subsequent chapters.

The Orchard was first published in hardback, and there is some question as to which of Pan Macmillan's imprints it first appeared under. The first hardback edition states it was "First published 1994 in Picador by

Pan Macmillan Publishers Australia" (Modjeska 1994: verso of title page, unnumbered), while the paperback edition states that the book was "First published 1994 in Macmillan by Pan Macmillan Australia" (Modjeska 1995b: verso of title page, unnumbered). The logo on the spine of the hardback edition, however, is that of the Macmillan imprint. The paperback editions are clearly Picador books and, both the hardback and paperback editions were designed by Picador's regular designer, Mary Callahan. It remains unclear from the information derived from the books whether *The Orchard* was first published under the Picador or the Macmillan imprint.

Pan Macmillan first announced its plans for publication of the book in the *Australian Bookseller and Publisher* in March 1994 when it was selected as "pick of the month" for release in June 1994 in paperback; it was then titled *The Silver Hands* ("Publishers' top tips for '94" 1994: 22). The book was, in fact, released in hardback in September of that year as *The Orchard*, suggesting that packaging and title decisions for the book were altered in the months leading up to its eventual release.

The Orchard's release was slightly early but still in time to be considered a 'Christmas release', that is, to have been reviewed and in bookshops for the Christmas shopping period. The unusual small format hardback with its relatively low price was ideal for the gift market. The September release date also maximised the book's exposure to the market, reviewers, the reading public, and potential judges of the various literary awards in which it was entered. Since the winners of most awards are not announced until the later part of the year, a release around that time in the previous year maximises a book's exposure and, therefore its chances of being assessed favourably by judges who cannot help but be influenced by a commercially successful book.

According to Pan Macmillan's Nikki Christer, the company's promotions and marketing departments organised no unusual marketing or promotional strategy for the book's release. Review copies were sent to selected media, and a number of public and media appearances were arranged by the promotions department (Christer 1995).

The book was launched in Sydney by Andrea Stretton, host of the SBS television program, "Bookmark", and Drusilla Modjeska spoke at the launch. Pan Macmillan organised readings by the author in Sydney and Melbourne, as well as a number of media interviews around the subject of *The Orchard*. In the months following the book's release, reviews appeared in a number of newspapers and magazines, and interviews with Modjeska appeared in the *Australian Book Review*, the *Age*, *Sydney Morning Herald*, and *Canberra Times* as well as on ABC Radio National's "*Books and Writing*". Several independent booksellers organised their own promotions for the book, these included readings by Modjeska at Gleebooks in Sydney, and Readings in Melbourne, and an appearance by the author at a dinner in Hobart. Other bookshops mounted window and other displays of the book, and featured it in their catalogues and newsletters.

The promotions department at Pan Macmillan provided little in the way of promotional material for *The Orchard's* initial release, although a 'header' (title poster) and a dump-bin were made available for the paperback edition on its release in June 1995. Pan Macmillan also entered *The Orchard* in a number of major literary awards including the Victorian and NSW Premier's awards, and The National Book

Council's 'Banjo' Award. Such awards can be powerful promotional tools since a great deal of publicity surrounds the announcement of each short-list, and of the eventual winners.

According to Nikki Christer, sales of *The Orchard* have been "extraordinary"; by August 1995, a total of 30,000 had been sold in roughly equal numbers of hardback and paperback copies. Christer compared this figure with the average sales expected for literary fiction in Australia of between 3,000 and 5,000 (Christer 1995). The staff at Pan Macmillan were "very surprised, and continue to be" (Christer 1995); this surprise was manifested by uncertainty about print-runs which were repeatedly too short, and the consequent difficulties experienced in keeping the book in stock. Several booksellers believed that Pan Macmillan was unaware of the popularity of the book for some months and, as a consequence, was slow to order reprints (Gaunt 1995; Tilsley 1995).

Tasmanian sales representative for Pan Macmillan, Robyn Pearce had trouble keeping some shops stocked with *The Orchard*, particularly the 'literary' independent bookshops. The book's popularity in such shops attests to its market, that is, readers of 'literary' works. Robyn Pearce sees *The Orchard* as "a thinking person's book" with a predominantly female market. She describes the book's design as "elegant and classy", and as appropriate to "a top of the list literary book" (Pearce 1995). Nikki Christer agrees, and also sees the market for *The Orchard* as the "literary market" (Christer 1995).

Export sales have not been a factor for *The Orchard*, and although Macmillan Limited in Britain was offered the UK rights, according to Robyn Pearce, it appears unlikely that the company will take them up. (Pearce 1995). However, Drusilla Modjeska's agent, Barbara Mobbs was negotiating the sale of the UK rights in September 1995.

Profit margins in publishing vary enormously, however, profit margins are not usually high in first edition publishing; those for first edition fiction publishing in Australia, for instance, are estimated to be between 5% and 10% net (Curtain 1993a: 105; Moran 1990: 141); these increase with subsequent editions. Australian publishers are limited in their ability to take advantage of economies of scale since the size of the market is relatively small. It is most profitable for publishers of first edition fiction to produce a number of short-run books each year in order to multiply the low profit margin obtained on each. Profits obviously increase with subsequent printings since the editing, design, layout, and pre-press work is covered by the first edition (Curtain 1993a; Moran 1990).

Publishers are reluctant to divulge details about profits, and it is difficult to estimate the profits that Pan Macmillan may have made on *The Orchard* without knowing the costs involved and exact margins taken. Profits would have increased, however, after the initial print-run which, as mentioned above, usually yield publishers an average net profit of between 5% and 10%. In the case of *The Orchard* then, a 7.5% profit on the first print-runs of both the hardback and paperback editions of (say) 5,000 each, at \$24.95 and \$14.95 respectively, is a profit of around \$15,000. Profits from subsequent printings would yield a substantially higher net profit since the one-off production costs such as editing, design, typesetting, and plate making would be covered by the first edition. A 30% net profit on subsequent printings would result

in a profit of almost \$200,000 (estimates based on average figures in Curtain 1993a; Moran 1990). While these estimates may not be accurate, they give some indication of the possible profit enjoyed by Pan Macmillan for its part in the publication, promotion, and marketing of *The Orchard*.

In many ways, the publishing process undergone by *The Orchard* is typical of contemporary publishing in Australia, particularly for 'literary' books. Much emphasis is placed on book design and format as primary marketing features, to ensure that the book is attractive, appealing, and appropriate to its market. The editorial and design processes in publishing are clearly linked to those of marketing and promotions, and there appears to be significant collaboration between all of these processes. Book publishing processes in Australia are largely pragmatic, and are concerned with producing high quality books which attract maximum profits for publishers.

Ownership and Control of Publishing in Australia

The issue of foreign ownership of Australian book publishing is a contentious one in Australia, particularly since there are no limits or quotas on overseas ownership of book publishing as there are on radio, television and newspaper ownership. Overseas publishers have dominated the Australian market since the establishment of the book trade, although the nature of the domination has changed.

The British, as the colonial power, were obviously the first to establish and to dominate the Australian booktrade; Australia remained, throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries, exclusively a British market with the emergence of few local products. British domination was later formalised with the 'Traditional Market Agreement', and with the closure of the Australian market. The 'Traditional Market Agreement' was made between British and American publishers, and divided the world's English-language book markets between the two countries; it tied publishing rights in former British colonies to British rights (Wilson 1987). Australian publishers could not bid for Australian rights since these were automatically acquired by the British rights holder who was under no obligation to exercise the rights or to release books onto the Australian market.

British publishers also effectively 'closed' the Australian market by preventing booksellers from buying directly from overseas publishers. Booksellers were forced to purchase books from publishers' local offices (or from their agents) at a price which reflected not only the exchange rate, but also a contribution towards the maintenance of a local office and warehouse, as well as the publisher's profit.

These restrictive market practices stayed in place for nearly 30 years, and largely determined the nature of the Australian book trade: prices were high in comparison with the USA and Britain, books first published overseas were often extremely slow in getting to Australia, while others were never released onto the market at all. Australian publishers could not obtain rights to certain books, and were restricted in their output.

The 'Traditional Market Agreement' was challenged in the early 1970s in the USA under American anti-trust legislation; the US Justice

Department deemed the Agreement illegal and, in 1976, forced 20 large US publishers to sign a 'consent decree' which broke the cartel and, theoretically, freed world markets (Summers 1978: 36). However, practices had been established in the lengthy period in which the Australian market was closed, Australian copyright law was also restrictive, and many publishing companies were part of transnational corporations. The cessation, therefore, of the 'Traditional Market Agreement' had little impact in Australia, although British domination has waned, and American involvement has increased. It was not until 1991 that amendments to the Australian Copyright Act put time limits on the exercise of territorial copyright in an attempt to increase the availability of international publications in Australia, and to lower book prices.

The local publishing industry which emerged in the late 19th century grew slowly with periods of relative boom and decline, always competing with imported books. The boom in small publishing of the 1960s and 1970s was followed by years of change and movement in Australian publishing which, as part of the international publishing scene, was characterised by take-overs, mergers and sell-outs. Many of the successful small publishers were bought by larger companies, and there was a series of successive take-overs resulting in the present situation in which a small number of large, mostly foreign-owned companies publish under numerous imprints. As mentioned elsewhere, the large number of imprints masks the concentration of ownership within the industry.

The effect of this situation on Australian cultural life has been an area of concern. In the late 1970s, when the success of small publishing companies was recognised, they began to be appropriated by foreign-owned firms operating in Australia. Media commentators were wary and forecast doom for Australian content in the hands of foreign-owned companies (Denholm 1984; Lorimer 1983; Wilson 1987). Concerns were raised about 'cultural imperialism', particularly in education (Wilson 1987), and the 'homogenisation of culture' (Lorimer 1983). While these concerns may not be unfounded, predictions regarding the diminution of Australian content have not been realised. In fact there has been a steady increase in the number of Australian books produced; in 1948, 15% of books sold were Australian in origin, in 1979 this figure was 42%, and in recent years Australian books make up over 50% of sales (Curtain 1993a; Korporaal 1990). This increase demonstrates the steady growth of local publishing in Australia, in spite of the predominance of foreign ownership. It is Australian readers who are supporting the increase in local publishing since export figures remain relatively low, and it is largely foreign-owned companies which are responsible for producing increasing numbers of Australian books.

Some commentators are questioning whether or not it matters that the bulk of Australian publishing is carried out by foreign companies; bookseller Michael Zifcak wrote in 1990:

The question "Who owns Australian publishing?" is, in my opinion, irrelevant. The question should be "Who publishes Australian books which are making the greatest contribution to Australian literature and culture?" (Zifcak 1990: 23)

John Curtain, himself a former employee of the British-owned Penguin company, points out that foreign-owned companies employ local staff to

produce Australian material, "the people making the publishing decisions . . . see themselves as Australian publishers and it is for this role they are employed" (Curtain 1993c: 45). These large multi-national publishing companies are able to accommodate small units within them which are both sensitive and responsive to local conditions, trends, and needs. It is a paradox of Australian publishing that the globalisation of ownership has resulted in increased production of local books and a sense of localism in publishing.

A number of large, foreign-owned publishing companies have employed successful local publishers to develop their Australian publishing programs; James Fraser, for instance, formerly of his eponymous company, was employed by Pan Books in the mid 1980s to develop their Australian list (Rubbo 1985); Fraser is now publishing director of Pan Macmillan Australia. Other local publishers instrumental in influencing foreign-owned companies to develop their Australian output include John Hooker and Brian Johns of Penguin (McLaren 1988). Obviously many foreign-owned companies operating in Australia have found that local publishing is a profitable enterprise.

Pan Macmillan Australia, publisher of *The Orchard*, is an example of a company which began in Australia as a branch of a British publisher, and which has developed into an active player in Australian publishing. It has moved from operating as a distribution depot for Macmillan's British publications to its present status as a locally active company which derives 50% of its annual turnover from locally originated books (Macmillan. Pan Macmillan Australia 1995).

The company has clearly benefited from its effort to establish itself as a successful local publisher. It had the foresight to appoint as directors innovative Australian publishers Brian Stonier, one of the founders of Sun Books, and James Fraser. The parent company devolved local control to its Australian branch, allowing the local company to be proactive within, and responsive to, Australian market conditions. Brian Stonier is quoted as saying:

Macmillan is 100% owned overseas but all the profits from the [local] business are retained in Australia except for the minimum distribution we are required to make under the requirements of the income tax act. So we have to return a minimum dividend to the UK for tax purposes but all other profits are retained here and the total editorial and management control is here. (quoted in Moran 1990: 134)

With its appointment, in 1992, of Hilary McPhee as publisher, Pan Macmillan increased its profile in Australian publishing, and gained a number of successful Australian authors including Tim Winton, Helen Garner, Kate Grenville, and Drusilla Modjeska. McPhee's move to Pan Macmillan from Penguin was a major coup for the company not only for the authorial talent she attracted and brought with her, but also for her energetic and innovative approach to publishing. McPhee is a central figure in modern Australian publishing; her partnership with Diana Gribble in the 1970s and 1980s saw the development of a distinctive style of Australian fiction publishing which involved some risk-taking as well as the development and nurturing of talented Australian writers. Drusilla Modjeska said of McPhee: "she's tough, she doesn't let you off the hook, but if Hilary says it's alright, it's alright. Everybody wants to be published by Hilary" (quoted in Chenery 1992:

20). McPhee resigned from Pan Macmillan, and retired from full-time publishing after suffering a serious heart attack in late 1994.

Pan Macmillan's success as a publisher of local books remains: in 1995, the company was awarded the title of the '1995 *Australian Bookseller & Publisher* Australian Publisher of the Year', an industry award which is determined by booksellers. Since early 1994, Pan Macmillan's business has grown by 52%, and it has published a number of award-winning books, including the last two Australian Booksellers' Association's 'Australian Book of the Year' winners (Maxwell 1995b: 22).

Small publishing companies still exist in Australia and continue to be the risk-takers and to push back the boundaries of traditional publishing. Such companies are vital to the cultural life of Australia and offset the commercially-motivated conservatism of larger publishing companies. Writers such as Sally Morgan and Peter Carey were given their starts in small publishing, with Fremantle Arts Centre Press and University of Queensland Press respectively. Often, successes for small publishers are taken up in the second or subsequent editions by larger companies which can provide better distribution, promotion, and sales. At times, smaller companies themselves are taken up by the bigger companies as a result of successful publishing gambles, thereby allowing the large companies to benefit from, but not necessarily participate in, risks such as the publication of new and unknown authors.

The Australian Society of Authors commissioned a report in 1990 into the Australian book publishing and distribution industry (Korporaal 1990); part of its brief was to consider the implications of changes to the industry for Australian authors. The report found that take-overs and consequent rationalisation and restructuring of companies led to layoffs of editorial staff and to a reduction in the overall number of titles published, as well as to an increase in 'predictable publishing', that is, of mass-market and non-fiction works, less risk-taking, and to less nurturing of new authors. These negative implications were seen as being offset to some extent by benefits, including the survival of some imprints which otherwise may have ceased to exist altogether, and by an increased world-wide interest in Australia as both a market and a source of creative talent (Korporaal 1990).

However, the ownership and control of a large part of Australian book publishing by foreign-owned and multi-national companies has not had a deleterious effect on the Australian content of local publishing as had been predicted in the 1970s and 1980s. In fact, the involvement of such large companies has provided capital and other resources which have contributed to the growth of publishing in Australia. Many of these companies have established local enterprises which are staffed with experienced Australians who operate as Australian publishers producing books by Australian authors with Australian content for Australian markets. The globalism of these companies, paradoxically perhaps, does not preclude their active participation in the local market, in fact a feature of large international publishing companies appears to be a capacity to produce books for specific markets, as well as books which sell across a number of international markets.

The involvement of large foreign-owned publishers nevertheless is not based on altruism or nationalism but on the capacity of local products to generate profits. Such companies play a major role in Australian

publishing and book culture; however, it remains the small, mostly locally-owned publishing companies which are often motivated by factors not exclusively related to profits, which tend to take the commercial risks.

Culture and Commerce in Publishing

A free and active publishing industry is generally considered to be a prerequisite for a democratic society; it is also responsible for the production and distribution of printed cultural and educational materials, and it is involved in commercial activities. These functions reflect the dual, and often conflicting roles of publishers, that is, cultural and commercial roles. The ABPA, in its *Introduction to Book Publishing* (1994a) highlights these dual roles:

Because of the special role that the book has traditionally played in the transmission of knowledge and culture in literature, entertainment, information and education, it is sometimes overlooked that book publishing is a business. (ABPA 1994a: 1)

The ABPA booklet goes on to deal solely with the business and commercial aspects of publishing, implying that the cultural role of the book is not a concern of business, or perhaps is seen as a by-product of book production.

Wallace Kirsop, in a number of his works on book history, stresses the importance of seeing publishers as capitalists who operate, like other capitalists, within prevailing economic conditions (Kirsop 1988; Kirsop 1982). He writes:

... we should not forget the truism that the trade is precisely that, a commercial activity which is simultaneously a vehicle for the transmission of useful information and lofty thoughts, and therefore more often subject to the laws of the marketplace than to the dictates of conscience or the stimuli of poetic inspiration. (Kirsop 1982: 90)

The imperatives of the market may cause publishers to produce only books which guarantee high sales, those which are popular, entertaining, but which may be of dubious quality, or cultural or educational value. Per Gedin, in his much-cited *Literature in the Marketplace* (1977), outlines the dilemma faced by publishers:

There is a risk of a kind of moral wear and tear on the literary editor at a publishing house. The constant demand for success often impinges on the demand for quality. (Gedin 1977: 189)

The fact that publishing output is largely market-driven is a concern to those who value publishing as a cultural industry, and as a barometer of Australian cultural life.

One of the aims of government intervention is to ensure the publication of commercially risky but culturally significant works. The Literature Board of the Australia Council provides assistance directly to publishers, as do some state arts councils. The Literature Board's aims and methods are expressed clearly in the *Australia Council Annual Report 1993-94*:

The Literature Board is committed to playing a key role in ensuring that Australian writing is an increasingly vital part of the country's life and culture.

The Board aims to achieve this by supporting writers whose work contributes to the development, diversity and excellence of Australian literature; by assisting the publication of high quality work by Australian creative writers; and by increasing access to Australian writers and their work both nationally and internationally. (Australia Council 1994: 36)

The book publishing subsidy program of the Literature Board, while it involves a relatively small amount of money, is a controversial program for several reasons. Firstly, it provides subsidies in the form of grants to, among others, large multi-national publishing companies with very high turnovers. Penguin, for instance, in 1992-93 received grants totalling \$48,510 while its parent company had an estimated turnover in that year of \$95 million (Australia Council 1994: 105; see also Appendix B). In response to this concern, there have been suggestions (for instance Slattery 1995) that Literature Board funding be confined to Australian-owned publishing companies. A second concern with subsidies for book publishing is the issue of grants based on literary merit or 'high quality work'; this raises the question of what criteria are employed to determine high quality work? Subsidies result in government-approved publishing which could be seen as government intervening in matters of taste, and practising what might be called 'cultural manipulation'. This is closely related to a third concern expressed by Industry Assistance Commissioner Boyer in the IAC's report *The Publishing Industry* (1979). The IAC recommended the cessation of most government assistance including Literature Board grants; Commissioner Boyer stated:

... the concept of the Government 'buying culture' seems to be at odds with the usual understanding of the word in that a 'true culture' may be considered to be the product of natural, not government guided development. (Industry Assistance Commission 1979: 70)

The government clearly did not agree with Commissioner Boyer's assessment of cultural development and did not implement the IAC's recommendations.

Whether or not it is accepted that publishers have cultural responsibilities as well as commercial responsibilities, publishers do function, to some extent, as cultural gatekeepers. Publishers determine a book's worth prior to its acceptance or rejection for publication; while this worth may include cultural worth, it is certain also to mean commercial worth.

Concern has been expressed that the balance of power within publishing houses has tipped away from editorial staff toward marketing and accounting staff (Wilson 1987 & 1993; Moran 1990). Barbara Jefferis, in discussing changes in publishing in Australia, articulates this view:

... we saw the disappearance of true book people from key positions in publishing houses; the ascendancy of the accountants who didn't care much what the product was as long as the percentages were right, and the take-over by multi-

nationals who didn't care what the product was as long as it was arranged alphabetically - beef, beer, bombs, books, bread, bromides. (Jefferis 1989: 2)

The implications of this increasingly commercial focus on the cultural role of books is of concern, although it could be argued that this is an example of the 'natural development' of culture favoured by Commissioner Boyer.

The issue of culture versus commerce in publishing will not easily be set to rest; it will continue to be a vexatious issue as long as books are considered to be important cultural artefacts, and are, at the same time, produced and distributed in a commercial environment.

Women in Publishing

A significant feature of Australian publishing in recent decades has been the increase in the participation of women in the industry. What was once considered an 'occupation for gentlemen' is now one in which women are well-represented, albeit at its middle and lower echelons. The increased presence of women in the Australian publishing industry has been attributed to a number of factors including the emergence of new electronic media, and the influence of the Women's Movement.

The Australian Cultural Ministers Council's Statistical Advisory Group (SAG) estimated that in 1988, women employed in the book publishing industry slightly outnumbered men (Australia. Cultural Ministers Council SAG 1990: 32). A close look at the SAG figures reveals that, at the highest managerial and administrative level, men made up 68% of the publishing workforce, compared with women's 32% of positions at this level. There were significantly more women (87%) than men (13%) in the clerical, secretarial, and word-processing areas, and in professional positions of designer, illustrator, photographer, writer, and editor, as well as in the sales area, there were roughly even numbers of men and women (Australia. Cultural Ministers Council SAG 1990: 32). It is clear then, that while women are active in Australian book publishing, they are still not equally represented and, therefore not equally influential, at the managerial and upper administrative level.

Albert Moran (1990) sees this "sexual division of labour" as a contributing factor to "the culture/commerce split in publishing houses" (Moran 1990: 128). He notes that women are generally employed in the editorial area of publishing, whereas men work in sales, marketing, and in chief executive positions; in other words, women represent cultural interests and men are concerned with, and are in control of, commercial interests. It was noted above that observers have expressed concern with the shift in power in publishing from editorial interests to that of finance and marketing, a shift, perhaps from female influence to male, although it is only in recent years that women have achieved prominence in the editorial area.

Pan Macmillan is an example of a company in which men are over-represented at the upper levels of its corporate structure. The most senior positions of Principal Executive Officer and Managing Director

are filled by men, and five of the company's eight directors are men (Pan Macmillan Australia 1995: 3). The lower and middle echelons of the company are populated largely by women, and while a number of the company's sales representatives are women, the Sales Director, as well as the Finance Director, are men. Such an employment structure by gender appears to be typical in contemporary Australian publishing.

Dale Spender is an Australian feminist who argues that women's current prominence in publishing is a direct result of the diminution in the power and influence of publishing in general. Men, she argues, who controlled publishing for hundreds of years, and certainly since the invention of the printing press, have now moved on to the more powerful electronic media. A disempowered printed book culture is left for women to control (Spender, D. 1995: 185; Spender, D. 1994b). She writes:

After five hundred years, women were just beginning to look as though they were drawing even with men. They have reached the stage in countries like Australia where, for the first time, more women than men have been gaining higher educational qualifications. But this success has been achieved in an education system still based on print . . .

. . . just when it looks as though equity is about to be realised - the rules of the game change. The society (and soon, the education system) switches to the electronic media. (Spender, D. 1995: 185)

While this is an interesting theory, it is clearly one which is based on speculation, and one which would be difficult to prove or to disprove.

The Women's Movement has had a significant influence on the Australian book publishing industry in the last 20 years. A number of small feminist publishing companies have emerged, and many mainstream publishers in Australia have taken up women writers and actively pursue the profitable feminist market. The 6th International Feminist Book Fair held in Melbourne in 1994 saw the participation of nearly 40 Australian publishers, including large firms such as Penguin, Random House, Reed Books, and Transworld (6th International Feminist Book Fair 1994). It is likely, however, that these firms were in pursuit of commercial rather than ideological ends.

Interest in Women's Studies, and the establishment of such courses in Australian universities has opened up a new area for women in publishing; a number of publishers in Australia are active in this area including Allen and Unwin which was also present at the Book Fair, and which maintains an extensive Women's Studies list.

Feminist writing once existed on the margins, and was published and unevenly distributed by small companies; much is now mainstream - published, promoted, and distributed in Australia by major publishing companies. The pervasiveness of Australian feminism has created a significant market for women's writing, and particularly for writing informed by feminism. An article in Melbourne's *Age* newspaper notes this phenomenon and the reasons for it:

These days, big publishers have recognised that there are big bucks in the 'women's market' and have extended their lists to

incorporate many more books by and about women from a feminist perspective. (Capp 1994: Extra 9)

Feminism has clearly had an impact on Australian publishing, and particularly on the development of a market made up of women keen to purchase and to read books by and about women. The presence of large numbers of women in publishing has also affected the output of Australian publishers, in spite of the fact that most are not in positions of significant power.

The nature and conditions of the publication of *The Orchard* exemplify a number of features of contemporary Australian book publishing. *The Orchard* is best described as a product of the 'literary' publishing sector, a sector in which Pan Macmillan operates its Picador imprint. The market for *The Orchard* is seen by its author, publisher, and publisher's sales representative as 'mostly women', 'literary', and 'predominantly female' (Modjeska 1995a; Christer 1995; Pearce 1995). There is no doubt that it has sold well. *The Orchard* and its market could be said to be products of both the modern Australian Women's Movement and of that tradition in Australian publishing which originated in the 1970s with the production by small, independent publishing companies, of 'literary' works of fiction and non-fiction. This latter tradition was appropriated to some extent by larger, mostly foreign-owned publishers in a number of industry buy-outs and mergers in the 1980s and 1990s. Such 'literary' publishing has become less commercially risky as markets for it have grown and become more established; many of the large publishing companies operating in Australia maintain a specific imprint for 'literary' works.

The format and design of *The Orchard* also exemplify a trend in Australian publishing which, since the publication of *The Orchard* in a small hardback edition reminiscent of book designs of previous decades, could be seen to signal a change in notions about books, and about 'literary' books in particular. This change involves a recognition of the unique qualities and value of books in relation to the more utilitarian electronic media. Book design which highlights the sensual and enduring nature of the book appears to be increasingly common and popular, particularly for works of a 'literary' or contemplative nature. Such design contrasts markedly with the bright, rapid-fire technicality of electronic media and its largely information-based content. In an era of rapidly expanding media options, there appears to be an increasing movement by book publishers toward the highlighting, through book design, of the book's unique features and role.

The publication of *The Orchard* by the large, foreign-owned Pan Macmillan company also illustrates the common Australian publishing paradox involving the localism which exists within large, globally active companies. Pan Macmillan entered the Australian market as an outpost of an established British firm, and has since developed and expanded its Australian publishing lists in both the educational and the general book markets. The company employs experienced Australian publishing staff to run its local operations, and makes use of Australian resources to produce its works. Pan Macmillan Australia is a profitable company which is largely autonomous in that it requires, and is subject to, little input from its overseas parent. Since profits and losses

generated by the branches of foreign publishers operating in Australia contribute to the overall profit and loss balance of the parent company, it is in the interests of companies to allow their locally-based enterprises to participate fully in Australian book culture in order to pursue profits unimpeded. These are factors which allow Pan Macmillan, and other foreign-owned publishers, to tailor their operations specifically to the Australian environment for which their books are produced.

The Orchard is a uniquely Australian book which was nurtured in its creation and was designed and produced by experienced Australian publishers and others, all in the employ of a large British company. Pan Macmillan was later acquired by the German Von Holtzbrinck group and, providing it remains profitable, it is likely to continue to publish Australian books for the local market.

The involvement of women in all aspects of *The Orchard's* publication is another factor which reflects the nature of publishing in contemporary Australia. The large numbers of women active in Australian publishing signals a change in an industry once dominated by men; however, while women are now involved at all levels of publishing, the higher levels remain largely a male province.

As an Australian book, *The Orchard* illustrates a number of both established and changing features of publishing in Australia. While in many ways it is a typical Australian book, it is also unique both in the sense that all individual books are unique, and in a ground-breaking sense, with its unusual design and content.