

# **The English Bestseller and the Bookmarket in the 1990s**

von

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For my mother

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## Introduction

The phenomenon of the bestseller has already received a lot of attention and still continues to fascinate a great number of people. The focus of interest within the secondary literature has not changed greatly during the last two decades and it has to be explained why the author of this work considers it legitimate to add yet another essay to the already huge collection.

In the past the bestseller was explained as being either a phenomenon of popular culture or of work-internal structural features and formulaic plots; as a product which has to survive on the capitalist market, as an element of mass communication, and as a psychological or sociological problem. All these methodological approaches contain a grain of true insight, but most of them have in common that, by narrowing the focus to only one aspect of the complex problem, like only discussing readers' needs or the structure of bestsellers' plots, they neglect other issues and are too limited.

This is the point where this dissertation wants to take up the discussion. It endeavours to go beyond the limits of intra-disciplinary research and wants to analyze all the factors which contribute to the prominent position the bestseller has reached within the contemporary literary system.

The first chapter tries to arrive at a practicable definition of the term "bestseller".

The second chapter contains a report on relevant research. This summarises all the works which regard the bestseller as a phenomenon of the bookmarket. Among other things it introduces concepts such as "primary" and "secondary" readers, opinion-leading, media tie-ins, conglomeratization and internationalization, "snob", "veblen", and "bandwagon" effects, and certain ideas stemming from the study of economics.

In the third chapter, which is descriptive by nature, the structure of the bookmarket is outlined, and the place the bestseller occupies within this system is made clear. This part of the essay is based on extensive empirical data. There are three main subdivisions dealing respectively with the production and distribution sectors, and the reception of the product by the reader and consumer.

As far as the production machinery is concerned, the structure and size of the different publishing houses, as well as their international links to other media and the position of the bestseller within their house policy are examined. Furthermore, the role which high-profile authors and media tie-ins play within the publishing houses is described. Product features such as format and external appearance are analyzed, taking into account the interests of the producers as well as those of the distributors.

As far as distribution is concerned, the different channels of distribution like wholesalers, traditional retailers, bookclubs, supermarkets, CTNs (confectioners, tobacconists, newsagents) and the Internet are scrutinized. Besides these, promotional measures taken by producers and distributors, as well as the effect of the formal ending of the Net Book Agreement (1997), will be of interest.

These last two elements form the connection to the third subdivision, i.e. reception by the readers. I employ findings on consumer motivation and readers' needs, as well as data from empirical research projects including my own questionnaires. The influence that awards, reviews, bestseller lists, and external features have on the buying behaviour of readers is examined.

The fourth chapter is devoted to the reader and his reception of the product. Different reader concepts and reader response theories will be discussed. On the basis of an extensive corpus of primary literature I have attempted to discover typical structural features, or rather tried to confirm or refute existing theories about the formulaic character of bestselling fiction. A structuralist approach based on Gerard Genette's narrative categories is used while looking at formal elements such as point of view, character, setting, and time. Intertextuality as a linking and identifying device in "genre" and "author bestsellers", as well as the readers' needs are examined. In addition to that, the "act of reading" (Iser) is analyzed and the reading of bestselling or formulaic fiction is linked to game theories.

The final chapter consists of a case study of the "Harry Potter" novels by the British authoress J.K. Rowling. As these books can be said to have become the contemporary synonym for the term "bestseller", the findings of the previous chapters will be illustrated by this series.

It has to be stressed that the methodological approach chosen here is partly descriptive and partly interdisciplinary, as it is essential to consult books from research areas other than the study of literature in order to be able to grasp the problem at hand. However, this involves a necessary limitation; in order not to become too long, some parts of this dissertation cannot be as extensive as the author would like them to be and sometimes the reader has to be referred to more detailed studies, which can only be mentioned here. The study moves from the general to the particular and leads from the macrolevel of the bookmarket to the microlevel of reception and reader response.

## I.) Definitions

### I.a.) The bestseller – various definitions of the term

The term “bestseller” is far from being unambiguous. On the contrary, at first glance one gets the impression that it virtually defies definition. I will not follow the tradition of listing various extracts from dictionaries at the beginning of this chapter, as this has already been done by a lot of my fellow researchers.<sup>1</sup> Apart from being fruitless, dictionaries just confirm what I consider common linguistic usage today, i.e. that the term denotes sales performance and can be applied to things as different as books, types of books, authors, films, records, etc.<sup>2</sup>

I have also decided to refrain from any attempt to trace historically the first use of the term, as this is of no consequence whatsoever for an essay on the bestseller of the 1990s. The usage of the term is bound to have changed over the decades.

I have rather chosen to side with Werner Faulstich’s typology of definitions of the term within the existing research literature (Faulstich, *Bestandsaufnahme Bestseller-Forschung*). According to him, within the literature about it there are four different kinds of answers to the question of what a bestseller is.

The first answer is that bestsellers are only “list bestsellers”. The idea is that only the appearance of a book on one of the various bestseller lists makes it a bestseller (7). This, according to Faulstich, is the oldest and original meaning of the term (7). The first list, which was American, appeared in the booktrade magazine *The Bookman* in 1895 (8), while the first systematic and widely publicized British lists only seemed to venture onto the market in the 1970s when the *Sunday Times* began its weekly survey (Sutherland 13). One typical voice representing the above-mentioned attitude towards the nature of the bestseller is Alice Payne Hackett’s. In *80 Years of Bestsellers* she writes:

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<sup>1</sup> Examples can be found in Marjasch, *Der Amerikanische Bestseller* (11-13) and Lauterbach, *Bestseller: Produktions- und Verkaufsstrategien* (7-9).

<sup>2</sup> As an Internet survey conducted by myself in 2004 has shown (the basis are 1011 returned questionnaires) 71.2% of the participants defined “bestsellers” according to their sales performance.

Best-selling books have often been in disrepute; many groups have tried to abolish the issuance of best seller lists. At present there seems to be less agitation against them. They exist and it is difficult to ignore them. Many readers look to the best seller lists for guidance and the infrequent book buyers, often selecting books as gifts, especially look to the lists for help. Best-selling books are not always the best in a critical sense, but they do offer what the reading public wants (3).

This statement has an evaluating undertone, but the main problem with Hackett's approach is that she tries to explain the success of certain books against the background of historical and social events, thus centering on the themes and topics, while neglecting the fact that the bestseller is a market phenomenon and not merely a reflection of social issues. Nevertheless, her distinction between "infrequent" and "frequent" book buyers is an important and valid one, as we will see later.<sup>3</sup>

Secondly, there is the notion in Faulstich's opinion that only "real" bestsellers deserve the name (14). This means that the word "best" is applied literally and no attempt at differentiating between fiction, non-fiction, "how-to-books", or even the Bible is made (16). One author even goes so far as to publish lists with a ranking of books according to their sales figures with no regard to the length of time they were on the market (Mott).

Thirdly, the bestseller is defined aesthetically as the best literary work within a certain period of time and a certain geographical area (17). Faulstich states that this attitude is typical of the German and English scholars who occupied themselves with the issue, and points out the problem that this approach tries to combine two completely different issues. It mixes artistic success, measured on an aesthetic scale, with commercial success (17). Critics following this school think that the bestseller is a fraud, as the quantitative success suggests quality, which most often, in their opinion, is not true. Therefore, these people argue, the reader is cheated into buying books of poor literary quality.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Another book in this tradition is: Richards, *The German Bestseller in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*.

<sup>4</sup> A book in this tradition is: Q.D. Leavis, *Fiction and the Reading Public*; the most cutting remarks came from Dieter E. Zimmer, "Die Diktatur der Bestseller: Steht der Büchermarkt vor dem Ruin?". He says that: „Der Bestseller ist nicht mehr nur ein Makel an einem sonst wunderschön funktionierenden System. Er ist auch eine über unsere Kultur zur Strafe für allzu viel Ignoranz verhängte Plage. Er ist das hervorstechendste Symptom einer Krankheit.“ (23) The bestseller is not just a flaw in an otherwise beautifully functioning system. It is also a punishment which has been imposed on our culture because of too much ignorance. It is the most striking symptom of a disease.

Finally, the bestseller is seen as a phenomenon of the bookmarket. It is a complex issue and the term can be applied to different aspects of the problem. The first theory treats the author of a book as the “bestseller”. It is his brand name that sells the book, not the story or content as such (24). The second idea is to see the bestseller as a “genre”, a “bestselling line of books (‘romance’, ‘gothics’ etc.)” meaning that certain formulaic structures account for the success of the bestseller (25). The final point of view is that the bestseller is dependent on a system (24). It implies that the structure of the bookmarket favours the production and publication of bestsellers, as mainly the big publishing companies can afford to and indeed need to produce them (27).<sup>5</sup>

Faulstich calls the above-mentioned groups of definitions “Nominaldefinitionen” which can be translated as definitions based on the meanings of the words “best” and “sell”. He introduces another group of definitions which he calls “Operationaldefinitionen” or “Case Histories” (32; 40). Basically, he says, these case studies comprise descriptions of the writing process of a given bestseller, descriptions of promotional campaigns (32), success stories of authors (40), descriptions of the “sedative” effect these books have on the reader (36), and the view that bestsellers are “books that helped mould a nation” (46).<sup>6</sup>

As mentioned above, I agree with this typology, but it has to be stressed that the second and third approach seem to have become more or less extinct. Surely, there is the odd contribution in one or the other newspapers where the author complains about the decline of literary culture, but all in all people seem to have become either more used to and less upset about the bestseller; or place their cultural criteria in a wider context.

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<sup>5</sup> The idea that the bookmarket is a system within which all factors interact and are in relation to each other, as opposed to the sociological idea that the factors can be analyzed separately, is expounded in: Faulstich, “Systemtheorie des Literaturbetriebs (125 – 133). Another essay in this tradition is: Sterner, “Ein großer Verlag braucht den Bestseller”( 31f). A further work is Schiffrin, *The Business of Books*. Books like the *Harry Potter* novels apparently contradict this theory. It is true that they are bestsellers published by a small publishing house; however, they only became bestsellers after a very modest first edition. Thus the publishing house did not have to pay huge royalty advances to Ms Rowling.

<sup>6</sup> The process of writing and the success stories of some authors can be found in: Riess, *Bestseller: Bücher, die Millionen lesen*. The idea that these books helped mould the taste of a nation is expounded in: Hart, *The Popular Book*.

I.b.) The bestseller-definition used within this inquiry

The hypothesis I am going to use throughout this inquiry is that the bestseller of the 1990s is clearly a phenomenon of the bookmarket. It is an international commercial mass product, serial by character, designed from the start with one eye on subsidiary rights and media-tie-ins and therefore it has to be considered against the background of the market and its structure.<sup>7</sup> All the participants in this market deserve equal attention and this is why it is necessary to examine very closely production, distribution, reception, and, above all, the product as such.<sup>8</sup>

Furthermore, it is of the utmost importance to separate the bestseller strictly from all aesthetic demands applied to “literary” works of fiction (only the fiction bestseller is discussed in this dissertation) and to describe and distinguish the typical features of these pieces of craftsmanship. For writing bestsellers is **craftsmanship** aimed at a certain target group of readers. Neither do most bestselling authors see themselves as literary artists, nor is it productive to apply the same demands and aesthetical criteria to their books as to the books of authors who clearly intend to produce a piece of art.<sup>9</sup> What Q.D. Leavis once said about literary fiction could be adapted to bestsellers.<sup>10</sup> If one is not aware of the fact that bestsellers are constructed according to their own, quite independent rules, one will not be able to understand them and their impact on the readers properly.

The above distinction does not imply any value judgement whatsoever. The author of this dissertation just thinks that a precise distinction is necessary, in order to overcome apologies on one side and depreciating verdicts on the other to do justice to books read by millions of people. The problem with aesthetic judgement is that it depends on the historical period and its predominant value system as to what is regarded as art. One can say that today the driving force of literary works is variation and “aesthetic distance” (Jauß 25), whereas the principle of bestselling fiction is imitation and formula (or variation only within a limited set of rules).<sup>11</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Subsidiary rights include sales of serial rights, book club rights, foreign rights, audio rights, film rights, electronic rights, merchandising rights, and other rights. A list of subsidiary rights can be found in: Woll (121). Another author who points out the deliberate use of key media and tie-ins is Schiffrin (147).

<sup>8</sup> With this approach I follow Faulstich’s definition of the book market as a system.

<sup>9</sup> Faulstich already noticed this in 1974. “Aus dem ‘kreativen’, ausgebeuteten Dichter im traditionellen Sinn, (...) wird der sprachlich und imaginativ begabte **Handwerker** (...)“ (bold print by me). The creative, exploited poet in the traditional sense turns into the linguistically and imaginatively talented craftsman. Faulstich, *Thesen zu Bestseller Roman* (54). See also Claud Cockburn (8).

<sup>10</sup> Leavis (223). “The reader who is not alive to the fact that To the Lighthouse is a beautifully constructed work of art will make nothing of the book.”

<sup>11</sup> The concept of variation and imitation is expounded in: Zimmermann (34).



I will only discuss list bestsellers and their status within the bookmarket, as I consider bestseller lists to be an important aspect of this market, which is proved by the fact that every season there is a virtual war between publishing houses to get their new publications on one of the important lists.<sup>12</sup> I will not launch into justifying or damning the statistical exactness of these lists, though, nor have I accumulated various lists in order to compare them. I will just examine the most important yearly list, which is the *Bookseller* list in Great Britain.<sup>13</sup> In the UK the problem of differing lists is close to non-existent, as today nearly all the official lists are based on the statistical data issued by Whitaker Booktrack.<sup>14</sup>

I will distinguish between “genre” bestsellers, with which I mean books dealing with certain topics or belonging to a certain line of books and “author” bestsellers, which use the brand name of the author as a sales pitch. As with all categorizations, there are borderline cases and sometimes the two categories overlap.

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<sup>12</sup> Schiffrin (147; 95; 23). He says that the #1 NY Times bestseller is the best predicate a book can get. It will surely sell it

<sup>13</sup> See Appendix A for the *Bookseller* lists for the 1990s.

<sup>14</sup> See Appendix E. The fact that Whitaker collects the data is also mentioned in Key Note Report (23).

## II.) Research Report

The author of this essay does not claim to have read all that exists on the topic of bestsellers in general. Apart from being impossible because of the sheer amount of publications, it is still a Sisyphean task to find articles on bestsellers, as many of them are buried in periodicals or hide as last chapters in books with completely obscure titles. In this research report I only consider works which treat the bestseller as a phenomenon of the bookmarket.

The earliest essay to be mentioned here is a dissertation in the sociological tradition by Sonja Marjasch written in 1946. It examines the success of English bestsellers in Switzerland, which was surrounded by Nazi-controlled countries during the period she is interested in. She defines the term bestseller extensively and divides representatives of this kind of book into “psychological”, “aesthetical”, “sociological”, and “statistical” bestsellers (22). According to her, these types are basically different and have to be distinguished clearly. Her parameters for definition are turnover, time, and place (13). The specimen she calls the “statistical” bestseller can be roughly equated with the modern list bestseller (19). She also establishes a range of terms depending on the factors turnover and time.

	turnover	time
1. seller	good	----
2. good seller	quite good	----
3. steady seller	good	long
4. fast seller	quite good	short
5. bestseller	very good	week, month, year (measured period)
6. steady bestseller	very good	two or more measured periods (16)

These definitions are interesting, although they lack precision (“good”, “quite good”, “long”, “short”).

It is fascinating to review one of the first steps towards seeing the bestseller as a phenomenon of the bookmarket. While examining list bestsellers (“statistical bestseller”), Marjasch considers authors, content/subject matter, form, editions, and period of success. Unfortunately, her descriptions are not very useful for today’s situation. She looks at the authors’ nationalities, age, literary career, and sex (27). Moreover, she divides bestsellers into eight topic categories which are very vague (29). Her approach bears the visible imprint of sociology, but it is an interesting contribution to the discussion, because as early as 1946 she realized that it was important to include authors, publishers and readers in the research, and to see the bestseller as both a work of literature **and** as a product (25).

Furthermore, she adds empirical data including the results of a survey conducted by using a questionnaire with information about the age, education and sex of the readers and about reading motivations (77). According to her, title and cover, the name of the author, and word-of-mouth propaganda are the most important incentives for buying a book. Moreover, she already mentions the importance of a film version for the success of a book (68).

Her most important contribution to bestseller research is the distinction between “primary” and “secondary” readers (46f). According to her definition, primary readers are the ones who buy a book on their own initiative, stimulated by the name of the author, the title, the cover, or the blurb. The other group, the secondary readers, buy books based on impulse from outside, which can be the choice of a book club, a movie, a written recommendation like a review or an advertisement, or, finally, word-of-mouth recommendation by a friend, a bookseller, or an influential person. She says that primary readers help the bestseller be born; secondary readers, who, she thinks, are the large majority, make it a bestseller by buying it in large quantities. She claims that up to her distinction between the above-mentioned groups of readers the main mistake was the use of strongly simplified abstract types of readers like “the middle-brow reader” (47). The author of this essay agrees with this theory and will try to prove it by means of her own questionnaires and other, official data.

The second contribution to the discussion was written by P.N. Furbank, a literary critic and later professor of English literature. “The Twentieth-Century Bestseller” (1961) recognizes the fact that bestsellers “express strong needs and deeply felt beliefs” (429). Apart from their intrinsic appeal, however, other “more or less accessory factors” contribute to making a book a bestseller (429). These factors are advertising, reviewing, media tie-ins, paperback editions,

success with circulating libraries, and the adoption by a book club (429). He traces the rise of the bestseller to the mid-nineties of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the three-decker novel was abandoned and a new reading public had been brought into being by the Education Act of 1870 (433). Moreover, Furbank lists a couple of peculiarities with regard to content, which may be equated with the concept of formula I will later introduce. Finally, he mentions the therapeutic value best-selling fiction has to its readers. It (especially the thriller and the detective novel) is “a game or pastime” (441).

The next treatise is Robert Escarpit’s *Die Revolution des Buches* from 1967. It is a sociological work whose title alludes to the shift in the balance of power from hardcover to paperback houses. He defines the bestseller on the basis of the form of its sales curve (107).<sup>15</sup> This was innovative, but is not very much to the point today, as very often the mere title “bestseller” is used in order to promote a book before it has even been released. Furthermore, if this definition was true, blockbusters like the “Harry Potter” novels, whose sales figures do not fit Escarpit’s pattern for bestsellers, would not fall into this category. He sees the importance of treating the bestseller as a product, but he is still too much captivated by the need to find a definition. He uses statistical data to describe the international book trade, but he does not take the step towards understanding the book as a proprietary article (129). The purpose of his book is to find an apology for the paperback book read by the masses (42).

The fourth contribution by Anthony Blond, an insider of the British publishing industry, *The Publishing Game*, dates back to 1971. It is the first useful description of the bookmarket factors which affect the bestseller and which, in turn, are affected by it. Apart from a thorough glossary of terms used in publishing (140), which includes the hint that there is no strict usage for the term “bestseller” even within the publishing industry, he describes phenomena like book auctions, sales of subsidiary rights (73), the difference between hardcover and paperback houses (chapter 7), bandwagonry, and the importance of “tie-ins” (88). Yet he uses the term “tie-in” with a different meaning than later writers. For him a tie-in does not mean cross-media exploitation of rights. He thinks that if a book deals with and reflects

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<sup>15</sup> If one compares these sales graphs to the ones in Bear, *The #1 New York Times Bestseller*, none of the books Bear listed would have been bestsellers, according to Escarpit’s definition. Escarpit differentiates between the “hit”-book, the “steady-seller”, and the “bestseller”. The sales curve of the “hit”-book peaks early and decreases steadily afterwards. There are no new editions. The sales curve of the “steady-seller” is flat with smaller peaks over a longer period of time. There are new editions after a while. The “bestseller’s” curve peaks early, flattens a little and then continues to have smaller peaks until, at the lowest point, the publisher decides to print a new edition.

important current events, it needs “simultaneous” publication in order to supply the public with “two versions of a title on the same day” (88). This means hardcover and paperback edition of the same book have to be published in quick succession.

For him the publisher is clearly a businessman who has to pursue efficiency, watch his turnover, and be concerned with cash-flow.

A publisher is no different to any other businessman in his pursuit of efficiency: viz, he must watch the ratio of his overheads to his turnover; he must be concerned with cash-flow; with the amount of times his stock turns over in a year; with the efficiency of his sales organization; with the amount of money he has out to authors in advances, particularly overseas; with the off-loading and sales of the paperback, book club, American, European and film rights, etc. and with the economic costing of his products (69).

Besides, he notes trends like quoting reviews and printing the title of a previous blockbuster by the same author on the cover of his new book. A practice which is still very much in vogue today.

However, the most interesting part of the book is his distinction between two categories of bestsellers. He calls them the “automatic” and the “unexpected” bestseller (56). An “automatic” bestseller, he says, is a book by an established writer. This is what I call the “author” bestseller in this essay. For the “unexpected” bestseller it is important that after discovering it the publisher can sell it to the bookselling trade. If they are not convinced that he has a potential bestseller at hand they will not stock it and the customer will never see it on sale (57). This leaves one question open, namely, how a publisher recognizes a potential bestseller. For this problem Blond gives us a catalogue of questions. If the majority of these are answered with “yes” by the publisher, he can be fairly sure of success.

1. Is the book worth publishing (why, and who’s going to buy it?)<sup>16</sup>
2. Is the book well-written?
3. If not, can it be improved (...)?
4. Will it sell?
5. If not, will it be of such literary prestige or importance as to reflect glory on our house?
6. Where did it come from?
7. What are we going to sell the paperback rights for, or aren’t we?
8. Is there a film in it, a serial?<sup>17</sup>
9. Will the Americans like it?<sup>18</sup>
10. Can we sell it to (a newspaper)?

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<sup>16</sup> He already considers target groups.

<sup>17</sup> This refers to media tie-ins as they are understood today.

<sup>18</sup> The US bookmarket is the biggest market in the world.

11. What about the author, is this a one-shot book? (Remember we publish authors and not manuscripts)
12. Has the author stamina?
13. Is he or she well-connected?
14. Can we afford the price the agent is asking?
15. Do we want any more books this year, next year, some time or ever?
16. Is it on a subject that has been rather overdone lately (...)?
17. Is the book obscene or defamatory? If so, to what extent? (58)

These questions are enlightening, as they show that all the considerations necessary to market a book successfully were already known at the beginning of the 1970s.

Another contribution from the 1970s - this time by Werner Faulstich, who is a literary and media specialist - is an analysis of British bestsellers of the year 1970 (Faulstich, *Thesen zum Bestseller Roman: Untersuchung britischer Romane des Jahres 1970*). He emphasizes that his work does not claim to be complete because it is, like my essay, a fragmentary synchronic examination of a momentary situation (13). He discusses the validity and influence of bestseller lists and, following Marjasch, distinguishes between readers who make books list bestsellers and readers who use the lists as a guideline (19). Furthermore, he divides them into the three categories: “active”, “inactive” and “non-“ readers (20). Like Marjasch he mentions the importance of word-of-mouth recommendation by primary or active readers, who can also be called “opinion leaders”, and hints at the fact that massive promotion only tends to set in after a book has been positively received by these opinion leaders (26).<sup>19</sup> Moreover, he introduces special terms regarding consumer motivation which stem from the study of micro - economics. Following Harvey Leibenstein he uses the following expressions to explain buying behaviour:

1. “Snob-effect” as an elitary disassociation from the masses (a desire to be ahead of the masses in terms of time).
2. “Veblen-effect”: “the demand for a consumers’ good is **increased** because it bears higher rather than lower price.” (This explains, according to Faulstich, why bestseller lists contain new and expensive hardcover titles).
3. “Bandwaggon-effect”: explains the imitation by secondary readers. Faulstich states: “The demand for a commodity is **increased** due to the fact that others are also consuming the same commodity. It represents the desire of people to purchase a

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<sup>19</sup> The concept of “opinion leader” was introduced by Katz in *Personal Influence*.

commodity in order to get into the ‘swim of things’; in order to conform with the people they wish to be associated with; or in order to be ‘one of the boys’.” (26f).<sup>20</sup>

I will examine in the course of this treatise, if these three “nonfunctional demands” still hold true today (58). Apart from that, Faulstich claims that, after genre, the name of the author is most important for active readers, or “customary” or “expert” readers, as I prefer to call them. He points out how important it is where books are placed in a bookshop and that in most shops bestsellers get a prominent position that makes it easy for the customers to find them (23).<sup>21</sup> The need for economic efficiency is mentioned, as well as the international character of the bestseller and the fact that, at least with the “author” bestseller, success can be planned (35f).

Der literarische Erfolg zeugt den Erfolg. Der Bestseller-Autor selber ist in die Kategorie der Waren einzureihen. (...) Der typische moderne Bestseller definiert sich formal somit kaum noch als ein erfolgreicher und international bekannter Roman eines Autors, sondern eher als ein international bekannter Autor, der regelmäßig (erfolgreiche) Romane publiziert (38).<sup>22</sup>

This reminds one strongly of Blond’s above-mentioned questions, especially the eleventh, and it is a reminder that a publishing house publishes authors and not manuscripts.

Faulstich also mentions the dichotomy inherent in the Net Book Agreement (NBA) of seeing books as having cultural and aesthetic values on the one hand, but an economic value on the other hand (43). This problem was fortuitously solved by the abolition of the NBA in 1997.

Another important point, he states, is that the production of the “planned” bestseller needs long-term planning and capital investment, something which is only possible for large

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<sup>20</sup> The explanation of the original terms can be found in: Leibenstein (231 – 253). Today there is something like a „negative snob effect“. 69 of the 1011 participants in my Internet survey could be classified as „snobs“. Typical statements were, e.g.: “Ich lese keine Bestseller, weil ich die Zeit benötige, um wichtigere Dinge zu lesen. Das Wort „Best-Seller“ schreckt mich ab, weil ich nicht lesen will, was die Masse liest und weil ich nicht Quantität, sondern Qualität lesen will. Außerdem kotzen mich die Begriffe aus der Welt der Angelsachsen an, weil damit eine Art Weltherrschaft über andere Kulturen angestrebt wird.“ I do not read bestsellers, as I need the time to read more important things. The term “bestseller” puts me off because I do not want to read what everybody reads. I want to read quality not quantity. Moreover, all the Anglo-Saxon expressions make me feel sick, because this aims at a kind of world domination over other cultures.

<sup>21</sup> For examples of the prominent positions that bestsellers get, especially during the pre-Christmas time. See appendix F

<sup>22</sup> Literary success generates success. The author is a product himself. The typical modern bestseller is rather an internationally known author who regularly produces books, than a famous international book by an author.

publishing houses (45). Promotion, subsidiary rights, media-tie-ins, and the tendency to write a bestseller especially for the cinema, are discussed<sup>23</sup>. I will later examine if the concentration trends he mentions have borne fruit or still continue. All in all, his analysis of the bestseller as a part of the bookmarket is very thorough and the mixed-methodological approach is similar to the one used in this dissertation. His essay contains five steps of which only the first two are considered here, namely the discussion of the role that lists play and of the economic efficiency of the product. His other three chapters deal with reception by the readers, the structural features of bestsellers, and the discussion of the super-bestseller as a form of myth or collective dream. I will go into these issues in more detail in my chapter on reader response.

Another contribution, a Master's thesis dating back to 1976, by Reiner Trabold, *Verkaufserfolge massenhaft produzierter Bücher*, is much along the same lines. His analysis, is based on data obtained from the German bookmarket, but as far as content is concerned, it does not differ much from Faulstich's study. He deals with the lists, the economic efficiency of the product and reception by the consumers, but not with structural features or myth. To sum him up, one can say he claims that mass production of books is the result of economic pressure. His opinion is that the production machinery has to be used to capacity in order to compensate for investment required because of competition and technical innovations. This production pressure leads to sales pressure on the market which increases with further production. Therefore, marketing is required, which is the prerequisite of the successful selling of mass-market books (94). Apart from that, he introduces the distinction between two kinds of lists, namely lists for participants in the trade and lists for the public (71).<sup>24</sup>

Burkhard Lauterbach's book *Bestseller – Produktions- und Verkaufsstrategien* from 1979 also describes the structure of the bookmarket and its various participants. He points out the importance of profit maximization and the trend towards conglomerates (36ff). Profit maximization can be reached by increasing productivity and technical progress or by sales promotion. In addition to that, he mentions the importance of market orientation as opposed to product orientation. This means that a proper business has to conduct market research in order

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<sup>23</sup> The importance of the television and film industry for the „birth of a bestseller“ are also discussed in Claud Cockburn (17).

<sup>24</sup> Today these lists are less likely to differ, as the methods of measuring sales have been improved a lot.



to find out what the consumers need and produce according to its findings, instead of trying to sell existing products (56).

Two aspects, he claims, can be used for extensive publicity by a publishing house – topic and author (74). Moreover, Lauterbach mentions the importance of the outward appearance of a book, as well as of blurb, price, title, sale of subsidiary rights, and the proper assessment of the target group (81ff). He concludes that the pressure to succeed, which weighs heavily on books, is a result of the fact that they only become profitable after they have been “sold” to other media, after licence and tie-in money has been received (85). Furthermore, he offers a detailed description of promotional and marketing measures, and notices the importance of the publishers’ different target groups for their promotional measures (95ff). These target groups are, for example, retailers and wholesalers, the mass media (either for advertising, or as potential users of subsidiary rights, or as potential reporters on the bookmarket), and, finally, the consumers. At the end of his book he discusses bestseller lists and their empirical exactness, or rather, inexactness, and concludes that the bestseller is in no way a statistically predictable success, but a produced one, possible because publishing houses invest more money in these books than in others (133; 181f).

The next study to be discussed, *Buchgemeinschaften und Lesekultur*, was written by Martin Hutter and Wolfgang Langenbacher for a communication research study-group in 1980. The book continues the consistently-followed tendency within Lauterbach’s essay to see the bestseller as a phenomenon of the bookmarket. Hutter’s and Langenbacher’s study is concerned with the status of bestsellers within book clubs. They conclude that the bestseller market is of the utmost importance for the magazines of book clubs. The success of a bestseller is the key to selection by a book club (120).

*The Blockbuster Complex* by Thomas Whiteside, an expert on publishing, written in 1980, deals with multimedia-tie-ins, chain stores, and publishing conglomerates. At the beginning he states the fact that publishing houses have grown bigger and bigger through corporate mergers and that “given the big-time, big-money, winner-take-all system so evident in the movie industry [...], it seems logical that the system should spread to the business of the publication and selling of books, under the financial control of vast organizations whose managers know about mass-merchandising techniques” (191). Authors, he says, are like the movie stars of the past. A bestseller is not just a bestseller but a “blockbuster”, a phenomenon

on which, according to him, “the entire economy of trade-book publishing seems to have become focused” (19). He states that paperback houses have taken over control from hardback publishers, a tendency already mentioned by Escarpit. This fact has made the hardcover houses more dependent on the sales of subsidiary rights (21). Another consequence of the competition among hardcover houses, he says, is that publishers concentrate their efforts on bestsellers and potential bestsellers.

Moreover, according to him, the result accompanying this development has been the implementation of practices usually applied in big business, like “image-building, marketing, and the setting of production and ‘performance’ quotas” (23). The appearance of authors in talk shows has also become an important marketing tool, especially for books which are not reviewed in print (29). He thinks that the talk-shows serve both the needs of the television producers and the needs of the publishers. It is promotion for the latter and “fodder for their shows” for the former (30).

He also notices the importance of “hot topics” because these form the basis for discussion about factual situations underlying a given story, which means that the talkmasters do not necessarily have to have read the book they want to discuss (35). If a book is not “boosted” on television, he states, it is not very likely to get a lot of advertising. If it gets advertising, the publishers often decide on the amount of money invested on the basis of quotable reviews (37). This is obviously still true today, as one can see if one looks at the covers of current bestsellers, which teem with positive quotations.<sup>25</sup>

In the third chapter he hints at the importance chain stores have acquired over the years. They are, in contrast to the traditional independent book shops, more like supermarkets with bold displays and long racks. The product is “mass-merchandised” (47). However, the blockbuster game is not apparently a safe game. According to Whiteside, paperback publishers are concerned over the risky nature of the “game”, especially where price increases are concerned (52). Furthermore, he quotes, publishers say that “[they] are dealing with a very crowded, competitive marketplace”(52). One of the reasons prices have risen are

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<sup>25</sup> One example can be found on the inside of the cover in James Patterson *When the Wind Blows*: “Reads like a dream”; “Patterson’s action – packed story keeps the pages flicking by”; “Fantastic reading entertainment”; “Truly scary ... Patterson takes the reader on a wild ride ... Alex Cross is to the nineties what Mike Hammer was to the fifties – just what readers of the genre want.”

authors' agents who demand more and more money for themselves and their clients (55). The final factor in complicating the situation he mentions is the film industry (64).

Conglomerates acquired both motion-picture companies and publishing houses which led to the increased practice of tie-ins. But not the traditional kind of tie-in whereby movie rights of hardcover books were sold to Hollywood. Now it is rather a "prearranged joint venture" where the publication of a bestseller may be "tied in" with the release of a film of the same title (65). Moreover, the "novelization", i.e. book after film, which is the reversed order, has become popular (66). "Multimedia packages" have come into being, promotion programs in which books, television programs, and films based on one work are "fused into a co-ordinated whole" (72). The aim of this is to achieve complementary promotion and to reach the best possible marketing effect (73).<sup>26</sup>

A result of the tie-in business is that "publicity" has been replaced by "hype". "Publicity concern[s] itself with affairs of the moment", whereas "hype" implies not "one event but a series of events (or pseudo-events)"(80). Part of such a series can be hardcover and paperback editions, an auction, the author's appearance in talk shows, a movie, etc.

Whiteside hints at the effect this concentration on the blockbuster could have on literary books, which may not be easily marketable. Although many publishers say that they use commercial books for subsidizing literary books, he thinks that there must be problems in an industry so much concentrated on the big deal (103). He claims that the writers of literary merit who are most likely to suffer are the so-called "middle-authors" (fairly successful authors, but no bestseller authors) and authors of first books (108). The extent of influence the blockbuster complex has on literary works can be measured by the amount of backlist books published (111). The fewer backlist books, the more harm to the more individually stocked independent bookstores, and the more concentration on the bestseller (113). A vicious circle. All in all, Whiteside's study is very thorough and enlightening and the tendencies and phenomena he noticed must be checked as to whether they are still in existence today.

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<sup>26</sup> The „Harry Potter“books and films are an example that this is still practiced today. As soon as the film rights were sold, the period of time that elapsed between the publication of the books increased, in order to close the gap between the film releases and the new volumes in the series. You can find more details about "Harry Potter" in my chapter on these books.

The next work, John Sutherland's *Bestsellers – Popular Fiction of the 1970s* (1981), discusses some major successes of this decade.<sup>27</sup> The books are categorized according to content features (insider novels, fashionable crime, women's fiction, etc.). He describes marketing measures, hints at the importance of media tie-ins, and illustrates certain tendencies like the formation of huge conglomerates. This trend, according to him, started in the USA and then spread to Europe (27). His thesis is that bestsellers are a supranational phenomenon, an assumption with which I agree (27).<sup>28</sup> The international bestseller, he writes, is a novel which "maximizes sales" (29). He also mentions the synergistic possibilities available to conglomerates and lists an "ensemble of productive and sales activities", which he calls the "bestseller machine" (33).<sup>29</sup> For him the bestseller has two functions. Firstly, an economic one: to make money. Secondly, an ideological one: comfort, therapy, reassurance, and stimulus for the readers (34).

However, he also notices that bestsellers are a heterogeneous phenomenon and that there is no such thing as a "coherent ideological function performed by the myriad intermediate products of the popular fiction industry" (35). Only in terms of economics do these books form a category (37). Another assumption I agree with.

The remainder of the book is devoted to the discussion of some blockbusters and bestseller categories. Apart from describing some facts behind the books, Sutherland also tries to filter the topics which made these books so appealing to the public and the social functions these books perform. He concludes that "[p]robably one of the most useful social functions of bestselling fiction is to make collective anxieties manageable by embedding them in heavily stereotyped, and therefore comfortably familiar, narrative forms" (212). However, he thinks that even where they touch on "real" social problems in an "enlightened frame of mind", the tendency "is for bestsellers to be safely behind the times" (246). Whether one agrees with this or not, his description of the bookmarket is lucid and very useful.

The next in line is a co-production by Werner Faulstich and Ricarda Strobel, two literary and media specialists, dating from 1986. Its title *Bestseller als Marktphänomen* makes the

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<sup>27</sup> Examples are *The Godfather*, *The Thorn Birds*, *Jaws*, ... John Sutherland is a literary critic, academic teacher of English, and *Guardian* columnist.

<sup>28</sup> „The machinery which produces a Frederick Forsyth winner or an Ira Levin winner are no longer distinctly English or American machineries, but the same machineries operating in different countries." (29)

<sup>29</sup> This „bestseller machine“ includes the launch, authors' tours, pre-publication ‚leaks‘, cover artwork, etc.

methodological approach clear. The essay examines bestsellers within various media, such as novel, comic strip, radio play, movie, film, and popsong and considers England, the USA, and Germany. The main question is to what extent literary bestsellers are subject to international media-tie-ins.

The authors make three synchronic cuts (1950, 1970, 1990) and compare tendencies and developments. Their points of reference for the year 1970 are no less than 87 bestseller lists. They realize that the lists are a very important factor for distributors and readers, that the bestselling novel is mainly international and of American origin, and that most bestsellers have or have had media-tie-ins (10-12). Furthermore, they notice that beside the huge amount of international bestsellers there are also national bestsellers on the different lists for the different countries. They enumerate the most important lists for America, England, and Germany and compare them, using mathematical methods in order to arrive at one complete yearly list for each country for the year 1970 (66). With this system they try to find out about all the lists, how much they overlap, which is a lot, and about the “real” bestsellers in all media and in all countries (26).

The result of all this compiling and comparing is the discovery that all the examined lists paint a similar picture and are astonishingly homogenous (72). An important finding is that in all three countries the paperback lists function as a chronologically transposed mirror of the hardcover lists and that the list bestseller has a **serial** character (94).<sup>30</sup> It is either the name of the author that sells the book, a serial hero or heroes, or a formulaic story. As early as the 1970s, the “international bestselling novel” existed (127). Sometimes a certain book appears later on the lists of countries different from the country of origin, but this is only logical, if one accounts for translations and sale of subsidiary rights. As mentioned before, there are a couple of non-international bestsellers on the lists, but this, the authors think, might be either due to the national-specific character of author or topic, or to the fact that these books are just manifestations of one and the same formula, such as romance or detective story (134f).

As far as list bestsellers and their media-tie-ins are concerned, they conclude that the combination of novel and movie is most common, followed by soundtracks accompanying movies (315, 331). Media-tie-ins, they state, are a typical feature of the list-bestseller, in

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<sup>30</sup> Indeed, as I will show later, most books feature serial heroes, and the cover designs are clearly standardized to make recognition easier. For examples see appendix D.

contrast to highly complex non-bestsellers on the one hand, and the kind of cheap serial bestsellers one can buy at the newsagent's on the other hand (351).

Media-tie-ins of paperback-bestsellers and hardback-bestsellers have been the rule. There is no top-seller, they claim, which is not made into a movie sooner or later and sometimes subsidiary rights are sold even before the book has been written (360). Moreover, they mention "novelizations" and the trend towards "audio books" and e-books and conclude that media tie-ins are closely connected to competition and concentration trends (363ff).

The third but last book to be discussed here is *The Myth of Superwoman* by an expert on popular culture, Resa L. Dudovitz, from 1990. It is a cross-cultural study of the phenomenon of women's bestsellers, focusing on French and American novels, authors, and bookmarket systems. For her women's popular fiction is a "compendium of contemporary myths about the modern woman" (11).

She points out the fact that – by the time the essay was written - there was a clear hegemony of North American culture throughout the world (7).<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, she also mentions that the advanced conglomeratization has made the bestseller an international phenomenon (3). She critically reviews the use of the term "bestseller" and comes to the conclusion that the lists, which are one of the most important bookmarket factors, do not function alone and are only "one part of the process of creation of bestsellers" (28). It is rather the combined effort of bookstore displays, advertising campaigns, and bookclub promotions that draws the public's attention to a particular book.

Besides, she points out the internationalization of the market and the profit-related thinking of the publishers, who "limit their choices to books of which they can be sure of making a profit" (30). Also, like Sutherland, she hints at the fact that bestsellers defy any definition as a "genre" (34). The importance of extratextual elements like cover presentation and placement in bookshops – in order for the reader to identify formula fiction instantly – is pointed out. Furthermore, she identifies the paperback, the chain stores, and the bookclubs as primary factors in the bestseller-related bookmarket system (58). Chain stores encourage the production and sale of the bestseller. Books which are to become bestsellers are the first a reader sees on entering a bookshop, because they will be the most prominently displayed (66).<sup>32</sup> Bookclubs assure the reader of "a constant supply of the latest and bestselling books"

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<sup>31</sup> This is still the case today.

<sup>32</sup> For examples of this displaying policy – especially in the pre-Christmas period – see appendix F.

(67). Apart from analyzing the facts behind the system, she also examines the social function these books fulfil. Her conclusion is that “those popular fictions which touch a large part of the reading population contain within their pages contradictions which would otherwise explode into demands for radical change” (188).<sup>33</sup> Not only are the financial aspects of the bestseller of interest, the issue of the bestseller as a book that has success because it touches upon topics which are important to the reader must, according to her, also be taken into consideration (37).

The second but last contribution is Celia Brayfield’s *Bestseller: Secrets of Successful Writing*, written in 1996. Herself an author of several novels, in this book she gives advice for future writers of bestselling fiction. She concentrates on plot elements, characters, suspense, and background research. Moreover, she conducted a survey asking readers about their buying behaviour. For her bestsellers are part of popular culture. “The ideas which begin in books are translated into films or television, into video games and cartoons, into plays, musicals, radio shows and cabaret acts, into catchphrases, fashion concepts, toys and marketing campaigns, into children’s rhymes and playground games” (4). There is no doubt that the bestseller is a market factor and, accordingly, she gives advice how to find an agent or publisher, how to get the right publicity, and how to sell film rights. Interestingly, she stresses the fact that, even though bestsellers claim to be mere entertainment, they in fact address the hopes and fears of the whole human race. They are myths disguised in a new “outfit” (5). They have also “become embedded in their own mythology of massive advances, mega-sales, formula writing, book doctors and super agents” (9). Her survey about which factors influence people when they buy a book will be discussed in chapter 3.

The most recent analysis of the phenomenon is John Sutherland’s *Reading the Decades* (2002). His central assumption is that bestsellers “fit their cultural moment as neatly as a well-fitting glove. And, typically, no other moment” (7). He traces British social history throughout the decades following World War II by examining fiction as well as non-fiction bestsellers. By this, he claims, he will be able to retrace the British public’s ambitions, anxieties, prejudices, fears, aspirations, and neuroses (7). A large part of the book consists of summaries of list bestsellers, whose content Sutherland links to events which must have occupied the public’s mind. He makes an important distinction between “longsellers” like

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<sup>33</sup> The gratifications bestsellers provide for their readers will be analyzed in my chapter on reception (Chapter IV).

Shakespeare or the Bible and “bestsellers”, which he considers to be a misnomer for what he calls “fastsellers” (8). These are the books recorded by the weekly and annual bestseller charts. They are “high-profile books which sell a lot very quickly and promptly make room for other titles which will also sell a lot quickly” (8). He then follows the developments of the twentieth century with its crises and moments of hope, superstition, and yearning for escape and delineates the disappearance and emergence of ever new genres and formulas. The 1970s saw the birth of synergy, verticality, and globalization (83). As in *Bestsellers – Popular Fiction of the 1970s* he points out the importance of the “bestseller machine” which emerged during this decade.

By the 1990s, Sutherland claims, this bestseller machine was in its “full technological maturity” (143). Computer chips allowed instant monitoring of sales, “shifting tides of popularity”, and reader preferences (143). New systems like EPOS (electronic point of sale) enabled booksellers to practice “just-in-time” order and delivery of titles. “Streamlined manufacture, distribution and retailing of books were, by the mid-1990s, reshaping patterns of consumption” (143). The hot markets of the 1990s were young adults and children. A lot of titles intended for these markets crossed over to the adult market, the most famous example being the *Harry Potter* novels by J.K. Rowling. Sutherland remains intrigued by the fact that a lot of titles on the bestseller charts – especially during the 1980s and 1990s – were highly sophisticated books by unknown authors and the fact that many of the bestsellers “seem to come from nowhere” (174).

Because I take the assumption for granted that the bestseller is a mass product resulting from economic forces, the emphasis of the following chapter is on the structure of today’s bookmarket and the importance of the bestseller in relation to it. Trends noticed in the foregoing literature will be examined and either corroborated or refuted. This means that the next chapter is intended to be a continuation of the descriptive works mentioned above in the context of the 1990s. However, by using an extensive body of empirical data, I will try to avoid the shortcomings of some of the studies cited and present a clear picture of the English bookmarket and the position the bestseller occupies within this system.



### III.) The Bookmarket

#### III.a.) Production

In the context of this essay the term “production” refers to the publishers. There are different kinds of publishers which are grouped according to the books they produce. According to Albert N. Greco, the major divisions of the publishing industry in the USA are:

- 1) Trade houses whose products can be fiction or non-fiction for adults or children. The books can either be hardcovers or paperbacks.
- 2) Mass market paperback houses whose products can be fiction and non-fiction.
- 3) Book clubs with hardcover and paperback fiction and non-fiction.
- 4) Mail order companies which publish hardcover and paperback books, either fiction or non-fiction.
- 5) Religious publishers with mainly non-fiction hardcover and paperback books.
- 6) Professional publishers for all sorts of professions, publishing non-fiction hard - and paperbacks.
- 7) University presses releasing non-fiction hardcovers and paperbacks.
- 8) ELHI (elementary and highschool publishers), and
- 9) College textbook publishers (21).

For the UK the groups are basically the same, however, the *Bookseller* publication *Book Publishing in Britain* lists six categories: consumer; educational; academic; scientific, technical and medical (STM) publishing; legal and professional publishing; and, finally, electronic publishing (ix). In its 1995 market report Key Note defined the three market segments as consumer books, academic/professional books, and school books (2). It has to be mentioned that besides specialist publishers there are also vanity publishers. These publishing houses let their authors bear the costs of publishing. If an unknown author wants his book published he has to pay for it by himself.

Trade books and mass market paperbacks are subsumed under the category of consumer publishing and this is the only category we are interested in, as, if one looks at the bestseller lists, traditionally, both fiction and non-fiction bestsellers come from this group. Book clubs are examined in the chapter about distribution rather than in this one.

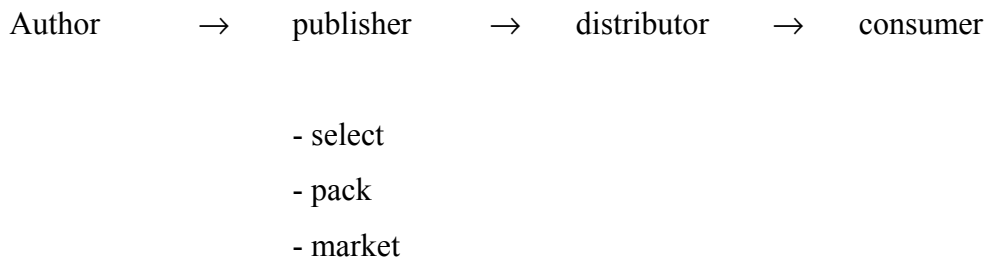
In the past a distinction was made between mass market paperbacks whose authors are well-known and regularly appear on the bestseller charts (23), and trade paperbacks, which “amongst other things would not be subject to the bestseller/high returns syndrome (...).” (Curwen 8). Their format was “typically larger than for normal paperbacks, and the subject matter more serious, either non-fiction or up-market fiction” (8).

In the 1983 *Publishers Weekly Yearbook* another writer informs us that “[t]here is no doubt at all that [these] trade paperbacks are on the rise” (83). Robert Dahlin, the author of this essay (“The Burgeoning of Trade Paperbacks”), tells us that apart from the size, which differs from the strictly formatted mass market paperbacks, the method of distribution sets them apart, too. He says that trade paperbacks have been reaching booksellers through channels of distribution which customarily handle hardcovers, at least in America. Furthermore, the method of returning unsold stock differs in so far as trade paperbacks have to be returned in one piece, whereas mass market paperbacks are stripped of their cover, which is the only part of the book returned to the publishers (183). The rest of the book is pulped or sold, not quite legally, in second-hand shops. The practice of remaindering also has to be mentioned here. Often unsold or returned books are sold by the publishers at a steep discount to bookstores or distributors. Some books, according to Albert Greco, are actually manufactured to be sold only as “remaindered” titles (317).

Yet, apparently, already in the 1970s when the phenomenon of the “mass market trade paperback” appeared it became hard to tell the two kinds of books apart (184). Dahlin states that the distinction between the two types will probably continue to blur, a statement, which, as there is no separate data on trade paperbacks anymore, can be confirmed.

Let us now turn to a survey of the British publishing houses which select and produce these books. According to *Book Publishing in Britain*, the three main activities followed by members of publishing houses are: selection, packaging, and marketing of copyright material (Bookseller 3). “This is the area between the author, the printer and the reader that those who

put forth books into the world have captured for themselves”(3). Thus, a preliminary model of the way that a book takes until it finally reaches the consumer is:



The report says that whenever editors buy and select a manuscript, they must have the other two components in mind (3). “Publishing is about seeing a market in a manuscript and betting on it”(3). The following questions found on the Internet might shed some light on the procedure editors follow when choosing a manuscript:

#### 10 Leading Questions for Targeting Fiction Readers

- 1) What subjects are important in the book?
- 2) What geographical area does the book relate to and depict?
- 3) What do the protagonists do?
- 4) Whose comments will send powerful signals to people who will like this book and talk it up?
- 5) Does the novel fit into a category that has well-developed sales and publicity networks?
- 6) Are there courses that could use the novel?
- 7) Is there a newspeg for the story?
- 8) Whom can the author attract?
- 9) What channels, besides bookstores, reach people interested in this story?
- 10) How can publicity and sales in target market lead to a novel’s entire audience? (Applebaum and Janovic)

These questions cover textual as well as paratextual elements.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, they aim at finding the right target group for a given book. By the year 2000 the application of market theory seems to have been a given. Securing the sales figures seems to be the uppermost goal of editors in the consumer book sector (Schiffrin 107).

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<sup>34</sup> Paratextual elements are described by Gérard Genette in *Paratexte*. They are divided into peritextual elements, which are in the direct sphere of the text (comprising cover, format, series, blurb, review clippings, book jacket, colour, author photos, design, etc.) and epitextual elements, which belong to the media or private communication (comprising interviews, newspaper articles, TV or radio comments or appearances, presentations, readings, etc.).

Having stated this, let us turn to the publishing houses and check whether the internationalization and concentration trends mentioned in the research report have continued or come to a halt during the 1990s. According to a *Bookseller* report, Whitaker, “the UK book industries sales measurement service”,<sup>35</sup> recorded over 25,000 publishers in the United Kingdom in 1995 (*Bookseller, Book Publishing in Britain* 5). The most crucial development was an “expansion in new title output”, a trend which continued up to 1999 with only one setback in 1997 (5).

One gets different figures from every source one consults and truth probably lies somewhere in between the figures of the following compilation:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Book Trade Yearbook<sup>36</sup></b>	<b>Book Retailing in Britain<sup>37</sup></b>	<b>Internet source<sup>38</sup></b>
1990	64,632 (total number of new titles and editions), of which 7,451 fiction	7,426 fiction titles	64,632 (UK titles published)
1991	68,348 (total number of new titles and editions), of which 7,867 fiction	7,852 fiction titles	68,632 (UK titles published)
1992	77,726 (total number of new titles and editions), of which 8,037 fiction	8,076 fiction titles	77,726 (UK titles published)

<sup>35</sup> See appendix E.

<sup>36</sup> The Publishers Association, *Book Trade Year Book* ( 55).

<sup>37</sup> Kirsten Schlesinger, *Book Retailing in Britain* ( 46).

<sup>38</sup> “UK Titles Published 1990 – 1999.”*The Book Sales Yearbook 2000*: 1p., online, Internet, 31 Oct. 2000.

1993	83,780 (total number of new titles and editions), of which 8,022 fiction	8,013 fiction titles	82,322 (UK titles published)
1994	89,738 (total number of new titles and editions), of which 8,704 fiction	8,448 fiction titles	88,718 (UK titles published)
1995	96,620 (total number of new titles and editions), of which 8,610 fiction	8,654 fiction titles	95,064 (UK titles published), of which 8,610 fiction (ca. 9%)
1996	102,102 (total number of new titles and editions), of which 9,155 fiction	9,209 fiction titles	101,504 (UK titles published), of which 9,155 fiction (ca.9%)
1997	98,477 (total number of new titles and editions ), of which 8,869 fiction	8,965 fiction titles	100,029 (Uk titles published), of which 8,869 fiction (ca. 8.9%)
1998		9,236 fiction titles	104,634 (UK titles published), of which 9,111 fiction (ca. 8.8%)

1999			110,155 (UK titles published), of which  9,730 fiction (ca.8.9%)
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Unfortunately, these figures tell us nothing about the sales value of these fiction titles. Value data was only available for the years 1998 and 1999 after coaxing some employees at Whitaker Booktrack into co-operation. I was sent two copies out of their virtually inaccessible Book Sales Yearbooks for 1999 and 2000.

The information for 1998 is: “Fiction sales in Book Track’s general retail market during 1998 totalled £ 215,406,157 or 25.4 % of all sales by value”.<sup>39</sup> Fiction as a whole is heavily dominated by the paperback market. Sales patterns show a steep rise towards Christmas, which is **the** selling season of the year. The marketing strategy of all the big publishing houses is to launch new titles during this period. According to Key Note’s 1995 *Market Report*, “around a third of books sold are bought in the run up to Christmas”(9).

For 1999 the figure is an even more impressive: £ 235,887,443 or 26.6% of sales by value.<sup>40</sup> However, more important, as it sheds light on the concentration issue, is the fact that the top 10 publishing groups Random House; Transworld; Hodder Headline; Penguin; HarperCollins; Macmillan; Little, Brown; Orion; Simon & Schuster and Harlequin Mills & Boon accounted for 92.8% of sales by value and 92.9% of sales by volume of all fiction title sales. In 1999 there were nearly 10,000 new fiction books, a figure which roughly corresponds to the one mentioned above. The new editions, of which we get no exact number or definition, always slightly blur the picture, but no better figures were available.

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<sup>39</sup> “This general retail market consists of data from the largest sales channel, i.e. the main bookshop chains like WH Smith, Waterstone’s, Ottakars, Hammicks, Thins (now Blackwells), etc.; the general independent bookshops; supermarkets like Tesco and ASDA; and mixed multiple stores like Woolworth. This GRM panel has until now been the source for the National Bestseller Lists as well as the management information sent to retailers and publishers.” This information is given on the official infosheet of Whitaker’s. See information sheet in appendix B

<sup>40</sup> See appendix B.

The importance of the frontlist titles, i.e. new titles, increased by 1.8% to 55.6% in 1999. This is important for this thesis, as most bestsellers are either new books published in hardcover or new paperback editions quickly following these hardcover books.

What does this tell us about concentration and internationalization? The fact that just ten publishing houses accounted for over 90% of all sales makes the situation clear. Not only is the publishing sector highly dominated by a small number of groups, but some of these, as I will show in detail, are part of even bigger international conglomerates.<sup>41</sup>

*Book Publishing in Britain* gives a couple of reasons for this high level of concentration or conglomeratization. Among these are:

- 1) If, by greater horizontal integration, publishing groups get involved in a wider variety of different markets, publishers can balance and calculate their risks better.
- 2) Skills which are used for publishing one kind of book can be easily applied to publishing other kinds of books (*Bookseller, Book Publishing in Britain* 6).

André Schiffrin goes a step further. He calls the conglomeratization “oligopoly approaching monopoly” (147). He says that the conglomerates’ links to other media (through common ownership) give them “incredible advantages in press, television, and newspaper coverage and publicity” (147). According to him, firms that own publishing houses as well as magazines do not hesitate to “give a disproportionate amount of attention to books emanating from the companies they control” (147).

The *Bookseller* report adds that, especially in consumer publishing, the concentration trend was a result of the fusions of hardcover and paperback houses, which came about in the 1980s when paperback houses, worried about access to rights, bought hardback imprints and hardback houses started to do the same vice versa. Now rights could be exploited all the way down within the same house (*Book Publishing in Britain* 6).<sup>42</sup> This desire to exploit rights led to the already-mentioned increasing internationalization, with publishing groups making cross-border takeovers, mergers or alliances to “enable them to exploit their rights around the

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<sup>41</sup> André Schiffrin writes that 93% of annual sales are controlled by the top 20 firms (142).

<sup>42</sup> This fusion trend is called „merger mania“ by the authors of the Key Note market report (34).

world”, and cross-media ownership, “with companies increasingly working to exploit their rights across different media and to cross-promote these rights among media” (6).

Thus, Whiteside, Faulstich and the others, who predicted further concentration and mergers, have been proved right. Their fears that this would lead to a reduction in title output appear, however, unfounded. Yet internationalization and concentration not only affected the bestseller, but the bestseller became the driving force behind this phenomenon. A thorough look at the bestseller lists of the 1990s tells the whole story. At first sight, if one examines the *Bookseller*'s yearly hard- and paperback fiction lists, which from 1990-1996 were compiled by Bookwatch Ltd. from sales figures provided by a nationwide panel of bookshops, and from 1997 on by Whitaker Booktrack using EPOS data (electronic point of sales), one gets the impression that the number of players is quite diverse.<sup>43</sup> One recognizes names as one moves along, but all in all, there are about fifty different publishers' names on these lists. However, if one consults *International Literary Market Place* (ILMP), a directory of all the participants in the bookmarket, the picture is corrected quickly.

The following is a list of the names appearing on the bestseller charts and the “family trees” of these houses. The data reported here presents a picture of the situation as it was in 1995 and 1998 (The ILMPs were published then).<sup>44</sup> Some information about the situation today could be found on the Internet, but this material is far less comprehensive than the directories. Furthermore, as the bookmarket keeps changing rapidly, with companies merging or acquiring other companies all the time, every description must be understood as something like a “photograph of the finish” in sports, with the scene changing very quickly after it has been taken.

Arrow Books                      paperback imprint of Random House UK Ltd. (476), which in 2000 was owned by Bertelsmann, including the imprint.<sup>45</sup> The situation is still the same in 2005 ([www.brookes.ac.uk](http://www.brookes.ac.uk)).

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<sup>43</sup> See appendix A for the lists. The information about how the data was collected can be found at the bottom of the pages.

<sup>44</sup>The numbers in brackets refer to the 1995 edition. If nothing else is mentioned, the data for 1998 was the same.

<sup>45</sup> „Major UK Publishing Groups.“ *BA Reports Library* (Oct. 2000): 2pp., online, Internet, 31 Oct. 2000. From now on referred to as “Internet” in brackets.



- Bantam Books imprint of Transworld Publishers (478). In 2000 both belonged to the German media group Bertelsmann (Internet).<sup>46</sup> This is still the case today ([www.ketupa.net/bertelsmann](http://www.ketupa.net/bertelsmann)).
- BBC Books owned by BBC Enterprises (478); Still owned by this group in 2005 but a sell-off has been rumoured.
- Black Swan paperback imprint of Transworld Publishers Ltd. (480), which in 2000 was owned by Bertelsmann (Internet). No information for today could be found.
- Blake Publishing Ltd. independent publisher (481).
- Bloomsbury Books Ltd. independent publisher (481; also BBPI) up to today.
- Century imprint of Random House UK Ltd. (487; BBPI), both owned by Bertelsmann in 2000 (Internet). This is still the case today ([www.brookes.ac.uk](http://www.brookes.ac.uk)).
- Chatto & Windus imprint of Random House UK Ltd. (488). In 2000 both belonged to Bertelsmann (Internet). The situation has not changed ([www.ketupa.net/bertelsmann](http://www.ketupa.net/bertelsmann)).
- Corgi paperback imprint of Transworld Publishers Ltd. (491), both owned by Bertelsmann in 2000 (Internet), who still owned the imprint in 2005 ([www.google.co.uk](http://www.google.co.uk)).
- Coronet paperback imprint of Hodder Headline (491), in 2000 owned by WH Smith, which holds 51% of Hodder Headline's stocks (Schlesinger 175). Hodder Headline was sold to Hachette in 2004 ([www.ukbusinesspark.co.uk](http://www.ukbusinesspark.co.uk)).

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<sup>46</sup>Another source verifying this is Jordan & Sons Lt., *Britain's Book Publishing Industry*( A34). From now on referred to as BBPI in brackets.

Doubleday	imprint of Transworld Publishers Ltd. (494), both owned by Bertelsmann in 2000 (Internet; BBPI). This is still the case today ( <a href="http://www.ketupa.net/bertelsmann">www.ketupa.net/bertelsmann</a> ).
Faber and Faber Ltd.	owned by Geoffrey Faber Holdings (498), which include Faber Music and Faber Inc. (USA).
Flamingo	“intellectual” paperback imprint of HarperCollins Publishers (499), both owned by News Corporation. This was still the case in 2000 (Internet). The situation has not changed ( <a href="http://www.brookes.ac.uk">www.brookes.ac.uk</a> ).
Fontana	imprint of HarperCollins Publishers (499), owned by News Corporation. This imprint merged with Grafton into HarperCollins imprint (Internet).
Victor Gollancz Ltd.	owned by Cassell PLC (Harland 45), in 2000 both were owned by Hachette (Internet). Today nothing has changed ( <a href="http://www.brookes.ac.uk">www.brookes.ac.uk</a> ).
Grafton	imprint of HarperCollins (Harland 45), owned by News Corporation in 1995. No data covering the time after that was available.
HarperCollins Publishers	owned by News Corporation up to today ( <a href="http://www.brookes.ac.uk">www.brookes.ac.uk</a> ).
Headline Feature	imprint of Headline Book Publishing PLC (506), now Hodder Headline, owned by WH Smith in 2000 (Internet).
Heinemann	imprint of Reed Elsevier (Schlesinger 248). Heinemann was owned by Bertelsmann in 2000 (Internet). This is still the case today ( <a href="http://www.brookes.ac.uk">www.brookes.ac.uk</a> ).

Hodder Headline	independent in 1995, owned by WH Smith by 2000 (Internet). Sold to Hachette in 2004.
Hutchinson	imprint of Random House UK Ltd. (509), both owned by Bertelsmann in 2000 (Internet). In 2005 the situation is still the same ( <a href="http://www.brookes.ac.uk">www.brookes.ac.uk</a> ).
Indigo	paperback imprint of Cassell PLC; both belonged to Hachette in 2000 (Internet). Up to 2005 nothing has changed ( <a href="http://www.brookes.ac.uk">www.brookes.ac.uk</a> ).
Little, Brown & Co. (UK) Ltd.	owned by Time Warner Inc. (516). This had not changed by the year 2005 ( <a href="http://www.brookes.ac.uk">www.brookes.ac.uk</a> ).
Macdonald	owned by Little, Brown & Co. (310), no information for the situation after 1998 could be found.
Macmillan Ltd.	owned by Verlagsgruppe Georg von Holtzbrinck (Schlesinger 201). This had not changed by the year 2000 (Internet). The situation is still the same in 2005 ( <a href="http://www.brookes.ac.uk">www.brookes.ac.uk</a> ).
Mandarin	imprint of Reed Consumer Books Ltd. (518), in 1998 imprint of Random Century House, in 2000 paperback imprint of Bertelsmann (Internet).
Methuen	in 1995 owned by Reed Elsevier (521), who still owned them in 2005 ( <a href="http://www.google.co.uk">www.google.co.uk</a> ).
Michael Joseph	imprint of Penguin (Harland 45; BBPI), which was owned by Pearson. Both still belonged to Pearson in 2000 (Internet). The situation remains the same in 2005 ( <a href="http://www.brookes.ac.uk">www.brookes.ac.uk</a> ).

- Minerva imprint of Reed Consumer Books Ltd. (522), owned by Reed Elsevier. In 2000 owned by Bertelsmann (Internet), who still owned the imprint in 2005 ([www.google.co.uk](http://www.google.co.uk)).
- New English Library imprint of Hodder & Stoughton Ltd. (525; BBPI). In 2000 both were owned by WH Smith (Internet). Since 2004 the imprint has belonged to Hachette ([www.google.co.uk](http://www.google.co.uk)).
- Orion owned by Orion Publishing Group (528), belonging to Hachette in 2000 (Internet). This is still the case today ([www.brookes.ac.uk](http://www.brookes.ac.uk)).
- Pan Books paperback imprint of Macmillan Ltd. (529; BBPI), owned by Verlagsgruppe Georg von Holtzbrinck up to 2000 (Internet). The situation has not changed in 2005 ([www.brookes.co.uk](http://www.brookes.co.uk)).
- Peerage/Bounty imprint of Reed Group (Harland 45). No information could be found for the year 2000 and later.
- Penguin owned by Pearson Group in 2005 (531; Internet; [www.brookes.co.uk](http://www.brookes.co.uk)).
- Phoenix House imprint of Orion Group (Harland 45). In 1998 owned by Simon & Schuster. In 2000 both were owned by Hachette (Internet). This is still the case today ([www.brookes.ac.uk](http://www.brookes.ac.uk)).
- Picador paperback imprint of Pan Macmillan Ltd. (532), owned by Verlagsgruppe Georg von Holtzbrinck in 2005 (Internet; [www.brookes.ac.uk](http://www.brookes.ac.uk)).
- Random House UK Ltd. in 1995 owned by Condé Nast UK, which in turn was owned by Advance Publications, a US-based media group (Schlesinger 237). In 2000 owned by Bertelsmann (Internet). This is still the case today ([www.brookes.ac.uk](http://www.brookes.ac.uk); [www.ketupa.net/bertelsmann](http://www.ketupa.net/bertelsmann)).

Sceptre	paperback imprint of Hodder & Stoughton Ltd. (539), in 2000 both were owned by WH Smith (Internet). Since 2004 the imprint has belonged to Hachette ( <a href="http://www.google.co.uk">www.google.co.uk</a> ).
Secker & Warburg	imprint of Reed Consumer Books Ltd. (540); in 1998 imprint of Random Century House. In 2000 owned by Bertelsmann (Internet), who still owned the imprint in 2005 ( <a href="http://www.google.co.uk">www.google.co.uk</a> ).
Sinclair-Stevenson	owned by Reed Elsevier; in 1998 imprint of Random Century. In 2000 owned by Bertelsmann (Internet), who still owned it in 2005 ( <a href="http://www.google.co.uk">www.google.co.uk</a> ).
Sphere	in 1995 belonging to Little, Brown & Co.(Harland 45), which in turn belonged to Time Warner. The situation was still the same in 2005.
Vintage	paperback imprint of Random House UK; in 2000 both were owned by Bertelsmann (Internet). This is still the case today ( <a href="http://www.brookes.ac.uk">www.brookes.ac.uk</a> ).
Warner Books	imprint of Little, Brown & Co., owned by Time Warner Inc. The situation was the same in 2000 (Internet). It is still the same in 2005 ( <a href="http://www.brookes.ac.uk">www.brookes.ac.uk</a> ).

This list paints a clear picture. The bestseller charts are obviously dominated by big media corporations the most prominent of which is Bertelsmann. This multi-media group comprises book clubs, literary and scientific publishers, daily newspapers, magazines, music and film companies, radio stations, television, and online services.<sup>47</sup> Most of the publishers listed were imprints of one of the 10 big players in the publishing industry mentioned in Whitaker's

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<sup>47</sup> This information can be found on the homepage of the group: [www.bertelsmann.de](http://www.bertelsmann.de)

report.<sup>48</sup> Not much has changed concerning ownership status by 2005.<sup>49</sup> The houses which interest us are:

HarperCollins

Hodder Headline

Macmillan

Orion

Pearson

Random House

Reed Elsevier

Time Warner Inc.

Transworld

We leave out Simon & Schuster and Harlequin Mills & Boon, as they had no titles on the lists. The “big shots” will be examined closer and compared to the smaller publishers appearing on the lists, which are BBC, Blake, Bloomsbury, Cassell, and Faber and Faber.

The questions which are most important here are:

- How international are these companies ? A question partly answered by the above “family trees” .
- How many different media do they cover ?
- How much turnover do they make ?
- How many titles do they publish ?
- How often do their books appear on the lists, and
- which authors belong to their houses ?

Answering these questions will help to discover how important bestsellers were for the publishing houses. Furthermore, it will be possible to check whether the fears that further concentration in the book business would lead to reduced title output were justified or not. This question has partly been answered by the table showing yearly title output during the

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<sup>48</sup> See appendix B.

<sup>49</sup> [www.mediachannel.org](http://www.mediachannel.org)

1990s, but it might be possible that the big publishers cut down their title output heavily and the increased number of titles was due to smaller publishers.

The following analysis is based on figures from 1995, however, as no later survey was available. Therefore, it has to be understood as a “frozen picture”, which might have changed substantially by the present moment.

### *III. a. 1.) HarperCollins*

The first big publishing house we are interested in is HarperCollins (UK), which is a subsidiary of News Corporation, 40% of whose equities belonged to the media magnate Rupert Murdoch in 1995. It is the largest media group in the world in terms of sales comprising book publishers, satellite and terrestrial TV stations, newspaper publishers, magazines and digital publishers, and film studios (20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox) ([www.brookes.ac.uk](http://www.brookes.ac.uk)). As far as international activities are concerned, HarperCollins had offices in the UK and in the US, in London and New York, respectively (ILMP, *International Literary Market Place 1995* 505). The history of the development is interesting. When Wm Collins was acquired by Rupert Murdoch’s News Corporation in 1989, the formation of HarperCollins was the result.<sup>50</sup> According to *Book Publishing in Britain* Wm Collins had bought 50% of the shares of the US publisher Harper & Row from News Corporation in 1987 and the two were merged into HarperCollins after News Corporation had got control of both of them. This illustrates the tendency towards increasing internationalization and conglomeratization. From 1990-1992 HarperCollins had two of its imprints, Fontana and Grafton, which then merged into HarperCollins paperback imprint, on the bestseller lists (182). The big “name” writing for Fontana was Tom Clancy (one title in 1990, one in 1992), Grafton’s author was the romance writer Barbara Taylor Bradford, who had three appearances, one in each year. A fourth imprint of the HarperCollins group was Flamingo. They had two authors, Arundhati Roy and Jung Chang, on the hardcover and paperback lists respectively. Chang occupied the no.1 position in the two consecutive years of 1993 and 1994 with his bestseller *Wild Swans*. He did not appear on the lists in the following years. Roy’s title was second on the hardback list in 1997 and fifth on the paperback list in 1998. This shows how the publishing houses try to exploit their rights in hardcover and paperback.

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<sup>50</sup> Bookseller, *Book Publishing in Britain* (181). If not otherwise stated, the numbers in brackets refer to this edition.

The authors appearing under the HarperCollins imprint were, apart from two exceptions, again well-known. The American writer of militaristic thrillers, Tom Clancy (4 appearances), showed up again, as well as the British mystery and thriller writer Jeffrey Archer (6 appearances), who had made headlines because of the huge advance paid to him in the course of the takeover. This evidence tells us that HarperCollins were very author-oriented and that they had some of the really big names writing for their house, which might be due to the fact that, according to *Book Publishing in Britain*, they followed the policy of paying large advances (183).

Apart from recruiting star authors, they often bought world rights, and the US and UK subsidiary worked closely together when marketing British or American bestselling authors (183). Furthermore, the report tells us, that HarperCollins “ensured that the rights were fully exploited in all markets”(183). The concentration on bestsellers might be the reason why HarperCollins had lower overheads than their rivals (183). The report says that their policy was based on the so-called “80-20 rule” which means that 20% of the published books made 80% of the money for their house (183). Some houses use the extra margin to subsidize less profitable books, but at HarperCollins, *Book Publishing in Britain* informs us, the extra money was used to pay advances to the authors, which in turn ensured that the bestselling authors would not “run away” to other houses (184).

What about use of other media? As HarperCollins belonged to News Corporation by 2000, it is obvious that they would try to exploit their rights in other mass media. “Ideally Rupert Murdoch would like to see HarperCollins acquire books that can be sold worldwide, serialized in newspapers, turned into films, and then become the subject of television series” (184). This strategy is called “cross-media synergies” (184). It needs celebrity authors with a fan potential, who are able to turn out one or two novels on hot topics every year. These books will most certainly become bestsellers if promoted properly.

If one reads Tom Clancy’s books, for instance, it becomes clear after a couple of pages that his anti-terrorism stories, where the “good guys” always defeat the “bad boys” in a series of spectacular shoot-outs, are written for the cinema. And, indeed, some of them were made into action films, among them *Hunt for Red October* starring Sean Connery. Other famous authors on HarperCollins’ payroll were Robert Ludlum and Sidney Sheldon, whose books were made



into movies (Sheldon's *The Naked Face* starring Roger Moore) and into "highly successful television mini-series" (Sheldon 1). This is something which is typical of the bestseller of the 1990s. Moreover, the covers always sell the books as either New York Times #1 international bestsellers or as international bestsellers, thus assuring the customer of the popularity and quality of the titles.

HarperCollins' policy of attracting writers of blockbusters with high advances, and of exploiting their rights as far as possible seems to have worked and, more importantly, to have paid. Their trade division had an average title output of 800 titles yearly (185), which was about one third of their overall title output (191). For 1992 this was 2,202 titles; for 1993 2,216; and for 1994 1,963. This means they reduced their title output, thus improving their margins due to the many bestselling books in their program. A look at HarperCollins' sales curves is also very interesting. Whereas in the US sales increased from \$491.0 million in 1990 to \$822.6 million in 1994, in the UK sales dropped from £195.3 million in 1990 to £162.3 million in 1994. This might be due to the fact that the English market is more limited than the American and that most of HarperCollins' authors are American.

### *III. a. 2.) Hodder Headline*

The next participant in the "game" is Hodder Headline. It was a public limited company, quoted on the London Stock Exchange in 1995 (193). Hodder Headline resulted from a merger of Hodder & Stoughton Ltd. and Headline Book Publishing plc in June 1993 (191). Books from five different imprints, four of them belonging to Hodder & Stoughton, one belonging to Headline, appeared on the lists from 1990-2000. The four belonging to Hodder & Stoughton were Hodder & Stoughton hardback, Coronet mass market paperback, New English Library, publishing horror and science fiction in paperback, and Sceptre with literary fiction. (196)

Hodder Hardbacks had six appearances, all by famous authors (one Jean M. Auel, one Jeffrey Archer, one Stephen King and three John le Carré) one of whom, as we have seen, moved on to HarperCollins later. The seven Coronet mass market paperback listings were again by celebrity authors, adding Rosamunde Pilcher and Maeve Binchy to the list. New English Library had two Stephen King successes, one Pilcher and one James Herbert. An Australian author appearing on the list in 1994 was Thomas Keneally with the book

*Schindler's List*. It was about one of the topics that never fail to sell, i.e. Nazi Germany, and was promptly made into a blockbusting movie directed by Stephen Spielberg. The one book on the list by Headline was a paperback written by James Patterson, another author who turns out easily recognizable bestsellers about once a year and whose Alex Cross series was turned into movies by Paramount Pictures starring Morgan Freeman.<sup>51</sup>

This shows us that this publishing group also made sure to have a couple of bestsellers every year. Other authors belonging to Headline and Hodder & Stoughton were Dean Koontz, Ellis Peters, Josephine Cox (Headline) and James Clavell and Mary Stewart (Hodder & Stoughton). Dean Koontz' novels were made into films and miniseries; by the end of the 1990s he was writing for Random House.<sup>52</sup>

Title output at Headline was 600 titles in 1994, 25% of which were from the backlist leaving 75% to new titles from the frontlist. At Hodder title output increased from 300 in 1993 to 600 in 1994, 34% coming from the backlist in 1994 (196). An important and interesting fact about Hodder Headline is that, according to *Book Publishing in Britain*, the management was decentralized to such an extent that sometimes Hodder & Stoughton and Headline could be found bidding against each other for the same titles (195). Their sales jumped from £51.1 million in 1993 to £80.6 million in 1994. All in all, their marketing strategy seems to have paid.

### *III. a. 3.) Macmillan*

Our third “big shot” is Macmillan, a private limited company, 70% of whose equity was owned by Verlagsgruppe Georg von Holtzbrinck, 30% by the Macmillan family trust (201). The company had three imprints on the lists, namely Macmillan hardback, Pan paperback and Picador paperback. The authors of Macmillan hardback and Pan paperback were again star writers, such as Wilbur Smith, author of historical romances and adventure stories, Colin Dexter, Jack Higgins and Peter Mayle.

The names listed under the Picador imprint are less known, but this is not surprising, as this imprint was for “literary fiction with a bias towards challenging books by young authors”

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<sup>51</sup> This information can be found on “The Official James Patterson Website,” online, Internet, 15 Aug. 2001. Available <http://www.Twobookmark.com/features/jamespatterson>.

<sup>52</sup> This information can be found on „Dean Koontz: The Official Website,“ online, Internet, 15 Aug. 2001. Available <http://www.randomhouse.com/features/koontz>.

(205). One of the titles appearing in 1997 was the novel *The English Patient* by Michael Ondaatje, which had been a huge success in the cinemas, a fact illustrated by the appearance of the film-tie-in version of the same book on the same list only four ranks lower than the original (position 11). In 1995 Macmillan had subsidiaries in the US, Australia, New Zealand, China, Japan, Africa, Malaysia, Mexico, and Singapore (ILMP, *International Literary Marketplace 1995* 518). A truly international company.

Sales constantly grew from 1990 to 1993. Roughly one third of these sales were in the UK, one third in the US and the last third in the rest of the world. Sales increased from £190.0 million in 1990 to £219.4 million in 1993, with sales for the rest of the world growing more than sales for the UK and US, which seemed rather stagnant (209). This might be due to the fact that the English and American markets were saturated. Title output made an enormous leap from 982 titles in 1992 to 1,457 titles in 1993, but in 1994 it dropped to 1,323 (210).

### *III. a. 4.) Orion*

The fourth big publisher, Orion Group, was a private limited company mainly funded by venture capital (316). Today it is owned by Hachette, a French media group ([www.brookes.ac.uk](http://www.brookes.ac.uk)). It was completely orientated towards the consumer trade and had six business divisions. We are particularly interested in Orion paperbacks, hardbacks and in the imprint Phoenix, as these were the names which appeared on the charts. Orion hardback and paperback listings consisted exclusively of books by Maeve Binchy, Irish bestselling writer of family stories, who wrote for Random House in the 1990s.<sup>53</sup> Her books *The Glass Lake* and *Evening Class* appeared first on the hardback lists and then, always one year later on the paperback lists. The same can be said of the Phoenix appearances. They were by two less well-known authors, Jostein Gaarder and Vikram Seth, but both showed up on the hard – and paperback lists, the paperback always one year later than the hardcover. Jostein Gaarder's *Sophie's World* was a no.1 success. Sales kept rising from £8,817,000 in 1992 to £19,911,000 in 1993 and £23,524,000 in 1994. Title output more than doubled from 250 in 1992 to 600 in 1993, but then it fell again to 500 in 1994 (317).

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<sup>53</sup> This information can be found on „Maeve Binchy,“ online, Internet, 16 Aug. 2001. Available <http://www.randomhouse.com/features/binchy>

### *III. a. 5.) Pearson*

Let us examine Pearson next. Pearson is a conglomerate that comprises businesses which belong to the overlapping markets of information, education, entertainment, and engineering (221). We are especially interested in the entertainment sector. This included Penguin, a software publisher, a magazines and video publisher and various television companies. (221) The Pearson multimedia group was a public limited company, quoted on the London Stock Exchange (220).

Our main interest lies with Penguin. During the 1980s Penguin changed its strategy from relying heavily on the backlist to pushing faster selling frontlist titles (223). Penguin, as a result of belonging to a huge conglomerate, could exploit its copyrights through hardcover and paperback, videos, audio tapes and electronic versions (225). Apart from Penguin UK there was Penguin USA, which at the time the Bookseller report, *Book Publishing in Britain*, was written, was the fourth largest consumer book publisher in the US. Furthermore, there were Penguin Australia, New Zealand, Canada, South Africa, and Penguin sales and marketing companies operated in The Netherlands, Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Greece and Japan (230).

We concentrate on Penguin UK and its imprint Michael Joseph here. From 1990-2000 Penguin had seven paperback titles on the list, all from less-well-known or more “serious” authors. The hardback imprint Michael Joseph, on the other hand, had twelve books on the charts, most of which were by Dick Francis, a famous mystery writer. One was by Tom Clancy and one was the latest volume in the *Adrian Mole* series by Sue Townsend (1999, *The Cappuccino Years*), which had been made into a TV series.

Michael Joseph had a title output of 100 titles per year, whereas Penguin had 425 titles per annum (230f). The complete title output of Penguin UK, to which both Penguin and Michael Joseph belonged, rose from 980 in 1992 to 1,000 in 1993 and 1,010 in 1994. Sales of Penguin Books Ltd. rose from £89.2 million in 1989 to £90.6 million in 1993.

### *III. a. 6.) Random House*

The next to be considered is Random House UK, which in 1995 was a collection of private limited companies operating as a subsidiary of an overseas parent group (237). In 1998 they were acquired by the Bertelsmann group. In June 1999, the company merged with the Bertelsmann-owned Transworld to form Random House Group Ltd. ([www.brookes.ac.uk](http://www.brookes.ac.uk)).

Today Bertelsmann is the third largest media group in the world in terms of sales, and the largest book publisher and book club operator in the world ([www.brookes.ac.uk](http://www.brookes.ac.uk)).

Random House UK was completely dedicated to consumer publishing (237). Five of Random House General Books' imprints appeared on the lists throughout the 1990s. Three of them, Hutchinson Books Ltd., Century, and Arrow were trade imprints (240), the other two, Chatto & Windus and Vintage, were literary imprints (241).

Arrow led the trade imprints with 11 titles, all by famous authors. Firstly, Michael Crichton's *Jurassic Park*, which became a blockbusting movie (with several sequels) directed by Stephen Spielberg. Secondly, John Grisham, who accounts for the majority of appearances, with one film- tie-in version of *The Firm* on the paperback list of 1993 and his other blockbusters, *The Pelican Brief* (pb 1993), *The Client* (pb 1995), *The Chamber* (pb 1995 rank 1), and *The Rainmaker* (pb 1996), most of which were turned into movies successfully by Hollywood. Another no. 1 success was *Hannibal* by Thomas Harris on the paperback list of 2000. This sequel of *The Silence of the Lambs*, a gruesome story of a cannibal psychopath, could be enjoyed in the cinemas in 2001. It was surely, from the start, like Crichton's and Grisham's books, bought because of its potential of becoming a major cinema success.

The hardback bestsellers of the Century imprint paint a similar picture. Apart from Terry Brook's *Star Wars Episode One: The Novel*, clearly trying to recapture the success of the film, the books were written by Crichton and Grisham again. Some of the Grishams appeared on the paperback list under the Arrow imprint the following year. This illustrates the already-mentioned policy of vertical exploitation of rights within the same house. The four appearances under Hutchinson and the one appearance under Chatto & Windus, on the other hand, were by less famous writers, as were four of the six listings in Vintage. This might be due to the fact that the policy of these publishers differed from the bestseller- hunting policy of Arrow and Century, as they are described as general fiction and quality fiction publishers in the *Bookseller* report (240f). The look at the lists has shown that, at least as far as the international celebrity authors are concerned, it was made sure that they appeared in as many media as possible.

Random House was an international company, whose sales increased from £45.9 million in 1990 to £52.0 million in 1994. In contrast to that, title output was reduced from 1,500 in

1992 to 1,200 in 1993 and 1,100 in 1994.<sup>54</sup> This seems to have had the desired effect, as, at the same time that title output was cut back, Random House titles reached a bigger prominence on the bestseller lists (239). In 1999 Random House held about 40% of all hardcover and about 30% of all paperback bestsellers ([www.american-book.com/prexsum](http://www.american-book.com/prexsum)).

### *III.a. 7.) Reed Elsevier*

The next group, Reed Elsevier, was by far the largest publisher in the UK in 1995. Its sales from consumer books rose from £796 million in 1992 to £909 million in 1994. Volume title output of all its companies rose from 2,446 in 1992 to 2,876 in 1994, but, unfortunately, it is not itemized in *Book Publishing in Britain*. However, despite the fact, or maybe rather **because of** the fact that they were leading the market in Britain, they had relatively few titles on the lists from 1990-2000. It might be possible that, because they were so huge and diverse, they had to put less emphasis on the production of bestsellers. They seemed to be more active in the professional publishing sector. We are only interested in the last of the four main business groupings of Reed Elsevier - scientific and medical, business, professional and consumer publishing (250). The consumer division consisted of IPC Magazines, Reed Regional Newspapers and Reed Books in the UK (251). In the Trade Division of Reed Books there were Methuen, Sinclair-Stevenson, Heinemann, Secker & Warburg, Mandarin, and Minerva, most of which belonged to Bertelsmann in 2000. All of these imprints had some, although not many, listings on the bestseller charts. However, the listings they had were all by established authors like Sue Townsend, Douglas Adams, Thomas Harris, Ben Elton, Roddy Doyle and Irvine Welsh, whose book *Trainspotting* became a tremendous success in the cinemas. Other books like *The Silence of the Lambs*, *Hannibal* (appearing here for the second time) and *Captain Corelli's Mandolin*, written by the little known author Luis de Bernières, were made into films, too.

Expansion and internationalization seems to have been very important for Reed Elsevier. *Book Publishing in Britain* quotes the chairman Pierre Vinken: "Our strategy emphasises future growth from the English speaking world, particularly the USA ... " (251).

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<sup>54</sup> This information can also be found in Key Note, *1995 Market Report* 32.

### *III. a. 8.) Time Warner*

The last but one big player is the American company Time Warner Inc., the parent company of Warner, Little, Brown & Co., and Sphere. Today they are the second largest media group in the world (in terms of sales). In January 2000 they merged with the Internet service provider AOL. The group comprises bookclubs, TV and film studios, theme parks, and music publishers ([www.brookes.ac.uk](http://www.brookes.ac.uk)). One of the subsidiaries of this Internet-powered media and communications company is the film company Warner Brothers, a fact, which comes in useful when film tie-ins of bestsellers are planned. Besides, cable and television networks, music and magazine publishers belonged to this media conglomerate in 2001.<sup>55</sup> As there was no data on the parent company in the Bookseller report *Book Publishing in Britain*, we have to limit ourselves to the subsidiaries.

Little, Brown & Co. were completely dedicated to consumer trade publishing and had five imprints, one of which was the mass market fiction and non-fiction publishing house Warner (310). For the years 1990-2000 Warner and Little, Brown had 9 titles on the list, 4 paperback titles from Warner, all of which were by the American pathologist-turns-detective-novel writer Patricia Cornwell, most of which featured the same female protagonist. The other 5 titles were by Little, Brown, all in hardcover, and, apart from one exception by the same authoress again (although not the same titles). This makes their policy clear which seems to have been one of promoting only a (very) limited number of bestselling authors and putting a lot of promotional effort behind them.

Until 1992 Little, Brown (UK) only published a very small amount of books, but then they acquired Macdonald and thus became one of the bigger players within the publishing industry (310), their sales rising from barely £ 2,293,000 in 1991 to around £17 million in 1992 (311) and their operating profit increasing from £265,000 in 1991 to £778,000 in 1992 and £915,000 in 1993. As a result of this, they cut the paperback list by one third and merged Sphere, another publishing house, with the rest of the company (310). This led to sales of around £22 million (310). Sphere had only two titles on the lists, one paperback by Danielle Steel in 1990 and one paperback by Ben Elton in 1992. Again, well-known names. Not only did sales increase at Little, Brown, volume title output did so too. It rose from 475 titles in

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<sup>55</sup> "Time Warner: Business Summary," *Yahoo!Finance* (Aug. 2001): 3pp, online, Internet, 14 Aug. 2001. Available. <http://biz.yahoo.com/p/a/aol.html>.

1992 to a little over 483 titles in 1993 and then to around 553 titles in 1994. Nothing could be found out about film tie-ins of the mentioned bestsellers.

### *III. a. 9.) Transworld*

The last house is Transworld Publishing Ltd., which in 1995 was 100% owned by the German media group Bertelsmann (335), which still owned it in 2000. In 1999 they had merged with Random House to form Random House Group Ltd. ([www.brookes.ac.uk](http://www.brookes.ac.uk)). After Random House, *Book Publishing in Britain* informs us, Transworld was the largest British publisher exclusively occupied with consumer trade publishing (335). This is easily believable, as its imprints clearly dominated the lists throughout the 1990s. In 2000, two of these imprints, Doubleday and Bantam, belonged to Random House, which in turn belonged to Bertelsmann.<sup>56</sup> Yet, as we are describing Transworld here, we only consider the listings up to 1995 when the above-mentioned imprints still belonged to them. The two other imprints making their appearance on the charts were Black Swan and Corgi, the latter leading all with 25 titles.

Nearly all the authors appearing under the different imprints were well-known. The names included Jilly Cooper, Frederick Forsyth, Mary Wesley, David Eddings (Bantam), Joanna Trollope (Black Swan), Frederick Forsyth, Catherine Cookson, Danielle Steel, Thomas Harris and Terry Pratchett (Corgi), as well as Nicholas Evans (unknown before his big success), whose novel *The Horse Whisperer* was turned into a cinema success by Hollywood. Transworld's sales figures showed a steady and large growth starting with £35.63 million in 1990, increasing to £37.25 million in 1991, further climbing to £41.4 million in 1992, and, finally, reaching £52.34 in 1994 after passing £46.1 million in 1993 (336). Volume title output was stable around 300 titles in 1992, 1993 and 1994 (336). This means they must have had tremendous success with their policy of employing bestselling authors. They had a very high profit margin, which enabled them to pay large advances to their authors in order to keep them happy.

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<sup>56</sup> "Major UK Publishing Groups," *BA Reports Library* (Oct. 2000): 2pp, online, Internet, 31 Oct. 2000.



*III. a. 10.) BBC, Bloomsbury, Cassell, and Faber & Faber*

We now turn to the other, smaller houses which had titles on the lists. These were BBC Publishing, Bloomsbury, Cassell, and Faber & Faber Ltd.

BBC had only four books on the charts, all by unknown authors. As they were part of the British Broadcasting Corporation, books had good chances of being transferred to other media. No detailed data for the book division, as far as title output and sales volume are concerned, was available.

Bloomsbury, a public limited company, was the success story of the late 1990s. They had eight titles on the lists, one, in 1995 by Joanna Trollope, the others, starting in 1999 by J.K. Rowling, the mega-selling authoress of the *Harry Potter* novels. *Book Publishing in Britain* informs us that Bloomsbury had a very strong reputation in the field of literary fiction and that books published by them were often shortlisted for the “Booker Prize” (278). It seems as if they did not go hunting for bestselling authors, most probably because in the past they could not afford it, but that, when they got a manuscript which had the potential for becoming a bestseller, they recognized it. Their sales increased from £6.7 million in 1990 to £9.7 million in 1994, but the figures for the late 1990s are likely to be higher, as they sold alone around 4 million copies of the *Harry Potter* novels.<sup>57</sup> Surely, these books had some effect on the small publishing house, making it a bigger player than before. The paperback rights for the US were sold to Scholastic and the novels were translated into dozens of languages.<sup>58</sup> Film rights were sold to Time Warner and the publication of the later books was delayed more and more, most probably to achieve a co-ordinated book and film release for the last couple of volumes in this seven-book series. Furthermore, Time Warner bought the right to mass merchandise *Harry Potter* articles, a trend which seems to have been in vogue since the *Star Wars* movies. I will go into further detail about the *Harry Potter* phenomenon in my final chapter.

Another smaller company, appearing four times on the charts, is Cassell, a public limited company, quoted on the London Stock Exchange (286). Sales and volume title output were growing steadily during the early 1990s. Sales reached £22.6 million in 1994, title output

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<sup>57</sup> See appendix E for sales figures.

<sup>58</sup> „Harry Potter Once-in-a-Lifetime Dream for Agent,“ *Yahoo!News* (Oct. 2000):2pp, online, Internet, 30 Oct. 2000.

climbed from 400 in 1992 to 600 in 1994. Three of their appearances on the charts were by the well-known author of mock-fantasy novels Terry Pratchett.

The last publishing company to be considered in this bestseller-list-related survey is Faber & Faber Ltd., a private limited company (289), which had four authors on the lists. P.D. James (twice), famous great lady of crime fiction, Alan Bennett, Kazuo Ishiguro, and Ted Hughes. Their list of authors was heavy with big names, but sales from these authors came mainly from the backlist. The names included William Golding, Tom Stoppard, Seamus Heaney, and Peter Carey (289), all well-known, but not writers of current blockbusting bestsellers. Accordingly, *Book Publishing in Britain* informs us, 45% of their total turnover came from backlist sales, i.e. sales of older books (289). A fact which “has generated a healthy income from licensing and rights” (289). Their sales rose from £7.5 million in 1990 to £9.5 million in 1994. Title output increased from 147 titles in 1992 to 248 titles in 1994 (289).

### *III. a. 11.) Summary*

The publishers discussed above were the most important players in the 1990s. All of them were operating on an international scale and, especially the large houses, were heavily involved with other media. A proliferation of mergers and acquisitions in the publishing industry had taken place during the 1980s. Corporate “marriages” between publishing and film and video industry had created global media empires ([www.brookes.ac.uk](http://www.brookes.ac.uk)). There was a tendency towards “in-house”, or rather “in-conglomerate” exploitation of most of the rights, and famous authors played an outstanding role for the large majority of them. The ability to attract as many famous authors as possible to a house seems to be a prerequisite of success and expansion up to today. Moreover, media tie-ins are necessary in order to rise to the ranks of the market leaders. As many of the houses were public limited companies, they were under an obligation to make profit, in order to satisfy their stockholders.<sup>59</sup> Concentration trends, which started in the 1980s, continued throughout the 1990s and still do so today. Only a limited number of groups dominated the fiction-bestseller market. Fiction title output rose throughout the 1990s, which means that the fears that increased concentration would lead to a

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<sup>59</sup> As Thomas Woll wrote in 1998: „Publishing might best be defined in the same context as many other businesses: There is a very fine line between maximizing your revenue while optimizing your cash flow. Your editorial programme (that is, your product development function) is, in effect, the basis of your cash-flow”. 97

reduced range of titles were unfounded. About 9% of the titles accounted for over one quarter of sales, at least in 1998 and 1999. The frontlist, i.e. new titles, became more and more important, but again, unfortunately, we only have detailed figures for the last two years of the decade. In 1998 53.8% on the titles came from the frontlist, in 1999 55.6%.<sup>60</sup> However, naturally, this concentration of frontlist titles hardly fostered “literary” fiction. The top ten publishing houses have come to completely control the fiction market. Furthermore, paperbacks became increasingly dominant, either taking over market share from the hardcover books or extending the market (The Publishers Association, *Book Trade Yearbook 1998 55*). No detailed data has been available, however.

During the 1990s there was considerable polarisation between titles that became blockbusters and which were exploited in as many media as possible, and other books that had to fight for shelf space in the bookshops (84). Advances paid to bestselling authors rose (85). Publishers know that they make most profit from bestsellers by well-known authors, and, therefore, they can be sure that these authors will earn their advances and, furthermore, secure the publisher some nice profit.<sup>61</sup> It is, thus, very important to get hold of the right to publish books by one of these star authors.

### *III. a. 12.) Promotion*

As far as promotion within the book publishing industry is concerned, only around 2% of sales were used for it during the early 1990s (87). The figure might have risen a bit, as the rule of thumb is 5%, as everyone working in some kind of business or other can tell you. The low percentage spent on promotion explains why publishers prefer producing a relatively high number of new products and why they are heavily dependent on authors whose books sell automatically because of their names. The pages of the trade magazine *Bookseller* teem with advertisements for new books by prominent writers. The main addressees of these advertisements are the retailers and wholesalers, not the customer. It is important that they buy a certain book, in order for it to reach the customer. Films and other media-tie-ins, which have a huge promotional effect, are announced to the trade and there is a weekly newsletter, called *Books in the Media* issued by *The Bookseller*, which supplies the book trade with

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<sup>60</sup> See appendix B

<sup>61</sup> In his book *Publishing for Profit* Thomas Woll hints at the importance of Title Profit and Loss Forecasts. They include estimated sales, returns, royalties, cost of goods, and net profitability and should be completed for every book that passes the editorial meeting (110).

“comprehensive and up-to-date information about books featured in the mainstream media.”

<sup>62</sup> This includes a listing of books featured in the national broadsheet and quality tabloid press, listings of current and forthcoming radio, film or TV tie-ins, *Whitaker Booktrack's* bestseller lists, and details of literary prizes, just to mention the most important issues.

“The Name Makes the Game” as an article in *Publishers Weekly* correctly states (Maryles 35). The author is a brand. When one looks at the books of a couple of celebrity authors, one realizes that it is not just the name which is easily recognizable. As a rule, books by the same brand-name writer have a standardized design, which catches the eye of potential readers as soon as they face the shelf which holds the book. This is aimed especially at readers who tend to buy books by the same author, just because of his or her name. It is either the typical characters in which name and title are printed on the cover, or the make-up of the cover design. The more famous the author, the more prominent the name on the cover.<sup>63</sup> Often in the big bookshops whole divisions of shelving are given over to multiple copies of key authors. With some authors, like James Patterson, standardized design extends to the single pages. His books always have little icons on each page, which are connected to the topic. If you leaf through the books, these icons will move like in a “flick book”.<sup>64</sup>

### *III.a.13.) Agents*

There remains something to be said about authors' agents, some of whom are also part of large, international companies. They represent the authors' interests when dealing with the publishing houses. As today most publishing imprints have dissolved within vast media conglomerates, many authors now depend on their agents as they once did on their publishers (Epstein 6). Their job is to screen material, and sell the books to the trade (Woll 107). Nowadays, they perform a lot of functions which in the past were part of an editor's job, and they have become “dominant figures in the lives of authors” (Epstein 6). They generally charge 15% of the author's advance (i.e. an advance against future royalties) as well as of all other earnings. Agents also collect advance and royalty cheques from the publishers, make

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<sup>62</sup> „Books in the Media,“ *The Bookseller.com* (April 2001): 1, online, Internet, 24 April 2001.

<sup>63</sup> See appendix D for some examples.

<sup>64</sup> Little books with a drawing of a character on each page. If on flicks through it, the character starts moving.

sure that the houses comply with all contractual matters, and other details (contacting book reviewers, arranging the author's tour and publicity, etc.) (Greco 142).

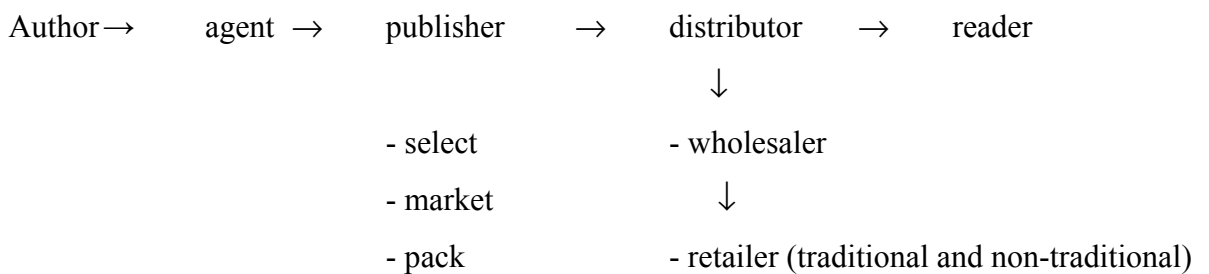
The fact that, with the help of their agents, name-brand authors might become their own publishers (as proved by Stephen King, who published a book via the Internet – unfortunately this was a failure), forces the publishing houses to pay huge royalty guarantees in order to retain these authors. These excessive royalty payments demanded by authors of predictable bestsellers render their profitability problematic while, on the other hand, the profitability in the “broader category” is made problematic by the unpredictability of their sales (Epstein 35). Another thorn in the flesh of the publishing houses is the fact that agents defend the copyright rights of their authors, especially if an author wants to withhold subsidiary rights.

For authors of new books it is virtually impossible to access British or American publishing houses directly. The only way they can go is sending their material – at first a query letter, which describes the kind of project they are offering, together with a two-page synopsis of the plot – to an individual agent or a larger agency and wait for them to assess the prospects of success. If the agency accepts the manuscript, a member of the company will make contact with editors he or she knows and will offer the book to them. The disadvantage of this system is that a lot of manuscripts which do not exactly fit into the neat categories the agencies offer will never be considered. Far from being literary experts, many of the agents seem to choose the material they want to represent by following their experience or feeling.

### III.b.) Distribution

Let us now turn to consider the distributing sector of the booktrade at which most of the above-mentioned promotional measures are directed.

The model of the supply chain can now be improved:<sup>65</sup>



With the following description of the distributing sector I had to rely heavily on a *Bookseller* publication, called *Book Retailing in Britain*. On the effects of the abandonment of the Net Book Agreement and on consumers' spending on books, other sources have been available.

#### *III. b. 1.) Wholesalers*

At first the wholesalers, which act as intermediaries between publishers and retailers, will be examined. In the past booksellers used to place large opening orders with the publishers for a new and probably well-promoted title and reordered when it was nearly sold out (30). However, apart from the tediousness caused by ordering various books from different publishers, the publishers were slow to deliver and since the introduction of the EPOS system (electronic point of sale), booksellers have preferred to order more often and in smaller quantities (31). Small bookshops especially, which do not have much space, need to be able to order titles quickly and in small numbers.<sup>66</sup> The slowness of the publishers led to increased

<sup>65</sup> Kirsten Schlesinger, *Book Retailing in Britain* (30). A complete model containing all the participants in the supply chain can be found here. If not otherwise stated, the numbers in brackets refer to this edition.

<sup>66</sup> In business this is called a „Just-in-Time“ strategy. Wöhe and Döring (41).

use of wholesalers, *Book Retailing in Britain* reports, which could deliver the ordered titles more quickly (31). Information technology helped a lot and in the early 1990s Gardners, one of the three market leaders, introduced a system called “Gardlink”, which was an “electronic order and bookshop management system” (68). The description of this management system in the above-mentioned report sounds like an advertisement in a trade journal:

In addition to ordering and stock and shop management, the system offers a customer loyalty card scheme for use in the bookshop, home delivery (for mail order and Internet booksellers), data-bases with online availability data and a bibliographic CD-ROM. It also incorporates an illustrated new title and stock catalogue CD-ROM (68).

Other systems like “Buyline” (68), “First Edition” (67), or “PubEasy” (67) followed.

The other big wholesalers, Bertram and THE, took till 1995 to launch their systems, “Bertline” and “THEsis” (69). The increased availability of electronic ordering devices gave a chance to the smaller independent booksellers, which did not have as much space as the chains, to survive (69). According to *Book Retailing in Britain*, the wholesalers were the winners of the changes which took place during the 1990s (14).<sup>67</sup> At the end of the 1990s three companies dominated the market. Bertrams with 155,000 titles stocked, Gardners with 165,000 titles and THE with 100,000 titles (114).<sup>68</sup>

Before the mid-1990s, when publishers had to give in to the pressure from the growing wholesale industry for increased margins, discounting had been the main reason for not using wholesalers. Their terms to booksellers were not as good as those of the publishers (114). However, after pressing for additional discount with the publishers, the wholesalers could pass this additional discount on to their customers (115).

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<sup>67</sup> This information can also be found in Woll (2).

<sup>68</sup> Today, THE is “the UK’s largest independent distributor of DVD, video, multimedia, music and books” (160,000 lines in stock; [www.the.co.uk](http://www.the.co.uk)). Interestingly, on their homepage Gardners also claim to be “Britain’s leading book wholesaler, stocking in excess of 400,000 + titles from a range of more than 3,000 publishers” ([www.gardners.com](http://www.gardners.com)). No information about ownership was available, but, as THE stresses to be the “largest independent” distributor, it seems reasonable to suppose that Gardner’s are not independent. It gets complicated when one looks at the third wholesaler, Bertrams, however. They inform the interested researcher that they started (35 years ago) as a “family-owned Norwich business” and that today they are one of the largest wholesalers of trade books in the UK ([www.bertrams.com](http://www.bertrams.com)); however, no figures are given. Then they go on to claim that they are “the UK’s leading book wholesaler with an ever increasing number of international customers”, a claim they support with the information that in 2002 they won the award of Supply Chain Performer of the Year. It was impossible to find out the real figures, as no objective market report was available for the time after the 1990s.

### III. b. 2.) Retailers

What about the retailers, i.e. those businesses which sell books directly to the consumers? What kinds of retailers are there? How important are the different outlets for the consumers, and which place do bestsellers occupy within their product range? The survey *Books and the Consumer* from 1994 states that the majority of people (ca. 60%) bought only from retail outlets (Book Marketing Ltd. 13). Within this group of retail outlets, books and stationery stores led in terms of use, followed by specialist bookshops. Next came CTNs (confectioners, tobacconists and newsagents), chain stores, and supermarkets; gift shops and school/college outlets were at the bottom of the list (Book Marketing Ltd. 14). The development from 1994 to 1996 had no effect on ranks one and two, but the others underwent substantial re-ranking. In 1996 rank three was occupied by supermarkets (27%), fourth were bargain bookshops (21%), fifth came chain stores (19%), and the big losers were the CTNs (15%), which had lost over 20% (Schlesinger 88).

Unfortunately, this does not tell us anything about the importance of these different kinds of outlets as far as market share is concerned. However, *Book Retailing in Britain* supplies useful figures. According to Kirsten Schlesinger, the author of the report, bookshops (chain and specialist) led the field with 28 % of market share (71). They were followed by book/stationery outlets (22%), book clubs were third (19%). Fourth were supermarkets and bargain bookshops with 5%. CTNs had only 1%, whereas “others” had 20% (71). No information about the nature of these “other” outlets is given. These sales might include books sold through discounts from newspapers, bookshops in libraries, mail order, National Trust, etc.

What does this tell us? Obviously, the spine of the trade was, and is up to today, the bookshop.<sup>69</sup> There was increased competition and polarisation and books continued to be sold in a greater number of outlets (13). Furthermore, according to Schlesinger’s data, supermarkets, bargain booksellers and Internet retailers achieved significant growth since 1992 (14). The ones to suffer seem to have been the CTNs with a decline of 25%.

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<sup>69</sup> In an Internet survey conducted by myself in 2004 (1011 returned questionnaires), 57.8% of the participants stated that they bought from independent bookshops. 42% used the Internet; 28% bought from chain stores; 12.4 % had no preference as far as the outlet was concerned; 11.7% bought from clubs or department stores; 8.4% used station bookshops; 5.6% bought in supermarkets; and 5.3% got their bestsellers from second-hand shops.



Why did this happen? What is important to the consumers? According to *Books and the Consumer*, the most common reason for preferring a certain type of outlet given by participants in the survey was the availability of a good range of books (58%) (Book Marketing Ltd. 39). This could explain why CTNs, which do not have as much space available for books as bookshops or supermarkets, were on the side of the losers. The reasons ranking second, third and fourth were convenience of reaching an outlet (15%), preferring a specialist outlet (13%) and being able to browse without being harassed (10%). Only 8% preferred a certain shop type because it sold cheap books or had special offers. For only 7%, respectively, it was important that the shop sold other things, had friendly staff, or a good layout which made it easy to find what they were looking for. And for only 5% each, the atmosphere or the fact that they could order books was a crucial factor determining their choice of outlet (Book Marketing Ltd. 39).

The first four reasons given by the participants in the survey might explain the success of chain booksellers and Internet retailers (good range of books, easily reachable, specialist outlet, not being harassed by the shop assistants).

The total number of shops selling books, *Book Retailing in Britain* informs us, was around 35,000 in 1997 (71). This figure includes bookshops, supermarkets, garden centres, craft shops, etc. Around 50% of the value and 45% of the volume of the UK bookmarket were made up of the specialist retail sector which comprises bookshops, books/stationery outlets, book clubs, mail order companies, supermarkets and bargain bookshops, and CTNs whose market shares have been itemized above.

The chains were getting bigger and bigger and an estimated 70% of retail book sales came from only 25 retailers (71).<sup>70</sup> This concentration parallels the concentration trend within the publishing industry. However, the remaining 30% of sales came from over 3,000 smaller businesses (71).

Schlesinger distinguishes between four groups within the retail sector, which she calls the “superleague” (including WH Smith, Waterstones/Dillons, and Ottakars), the “majors” (including Borders – a US enterprise, James Thin – today owned by Blackwell’s, and Hammicks), the “medium-sized chains” with ten to twenty-four branches, and the

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<sup>70</sup> Woll notices the same trend. The US lead the way in an increasing internationalization of the market (2). Also to be found in Epstein (12).

“independents/small chains” (74). She states that the group of the medium-sized businesses was the one most reduced during the 1990s. Some of them were swallowed, some expanded, thus moving up into the next category (74). The American kind of “superstore” (30,000 sqft + ) did not dominate the UK market, a fact which might be linked to the relative lack of space in Britain (76f), but it is surely “gaining ground”. Today most of the big chains have several superstores in big cities.

For the independents the strategy for the future might be either specialization or co-operation with other small booksellers, Schlesinger proposes (77).

### *III. b. 3.) Traditional Retailers*

Which are the most important retail booksellers in the UK? First the big chains will be analyzed, as they became more and more important during the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and represent the traditional retail channel, next to the independent bookshops and small and medium-sized chains. Unfortunately, for the small chains and independents no data has been available. WH Smith & Sons led the field of the major chains together with Waterstones/Dillons, for which no detailed figures could be found. WH Smith had a turnover in books of £237 million per year. Third place was occupied by Blackwells with around £62 million turnover (195). Number four was Ottakars (£57 million), followed by Borders/Books Etc. with ca. £40 million (14). Sixth place was held by James Thin (£26.7 million) and last came Hammicks Bookshop making £25 million. These seven suffice to illustrate the importance of the chains for the bestseller and the consumer alike. It is not surprising that – from the top to the bottom of our list - the number of branches decreases from 559 (WH Smith) to 25 (Hammicks). The logical conclusion is that the chains with the most branches have the highest turnover.

What are the typical features of these chains and to what extent are they important to an analysis of the English bookmarket in relation to the bestseller?

Apart from branches carrying their own name, the WH Smith group, which, according to Schlesinger dominated the British retail market throughout the 1990s, comprised John Menzies, Playhouse video shops, HMV and Virgin Megastores, as well as the Waterstone’s chain of bookstores up to 1998 ([www.ukbusinesspark.co.uk](http://www.ukbusinesspark.co.uk)) when they sold it to an EMI

joint venture for £300m ([www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk)).<sup>71</sup> According to BBC, this joint venture with US venture capital group Advent International also bought EMI's HMV music chain and Dillon's book shops for £500m, creating a new retail giant with more than 450 stores. Also in 1998 WH Smith acquired the Internet Bookshop, which then claimed to be Europe's largest internet bookshop ([www.ukbusinesspark.co.uk](http://www.ukbusinesspark.co.uk)). In 1999 they bought Hodder Headline, the book publisher, for £185m, as part of a strategy to sell more books through own-label and proprietary brands. Hodder Headline was sold to Hachette Livre of France for £210m in 2004. At the beginning of the new Millennium WH Smith was experimenting with expanding into the European market.

Waterstone's, the second chain giant in an overcrowded retail marketplace, was sold to HMV Media Group plc., which also includes Dillons ([www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk)). HMV Media Group was formed in March 1998 to acquire Waterstone's, WH Smith Group plc, and to acquire HMV and Dillons from EMI Group ([www.google.co.uk](http://www.google.co.uk)). Waterstone's started an Internet site in 1996, on which they offer more than one million titles with discounts on recommended books (Schlesinger 191). Today, they are working together with Amazon. Waterstone's tries to provide a "welcoming and enjoyable environment in which customers can browse and choose books" ([www.amazon.co.uk/waterstones-info](http://www.amazon.co.uk/waterstones-info)). They run regular national promotions including Waterstone's Book of the Month and children's book of the Month. According to their homepage, "customers have grown used to the reliability of these recommendations". They have a "Paperbacks of the Year" promotion in the run-up to Christmas. They also issue a "magazine for booklovers", *Waterstone's Books Quarterly* (since 2001). This magazine brings together an "entertaining mix of news, author features, and interviews as well as reviews of over one hundred books in each issue" ([www.amazon.co.uk/wartersones-info](http://www.amazon.co.uk/wartersones-info)). It aims to recommend across all genres and "encourage readers to experiment with books and writers previously unknown to them".

Blackwell Retail Ltd. has been family-owned ever since it was founded as the main Oxford bookshop in 1879 ([www.blackwell.co.uk](http://www.blackwell.co.uk)). In 1995 they became the first bookselling chain shop to open on the Internet. Since then the business has comprised "Blackwell's Online Bookshop" with access to 1.5 million titles searchable by author, title, ISBN, publisher or date of publication (Schlesinger 129f). They are the leading academic bookseller in the UK and

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<sup>71</sup> Smith's were the original railway bookstall people, and now have a monopoly since they took over John Menzies book business in 1998 ([www.google.co.uk](http://www.google.co.uk)).

have owned James Thin since 2002. The Blackwell family owns two independent and separate companies: Blackwell Publishing and Blackwell UK Ltd.

Ottakars, which began in 1987, as their homepage informs us ([www.ottakars.co.uk](http://www.ottakars.co.uk)), has been a public limited company since 1998. They place great emphasis on the individualism and expertise of their staff. Ottakar's is "a collection of intensely individual bookshops, run with great autonomy by staff whose commitment to books is matched only by their commitment to provide a bookselling service tailor-made for their communities". A central feature of this chain is the freedom they allow their staff in creating very original and individual bookshops. In April 2003 they acquired 24 branches of Hammicks Bookshops Ltd. They are now under threat and about to be taken over by Waterstones in October 2005.

Borders/Books Etc. came into being as the result of a buy-out of Books Etc. by the US-based Borders Group, which owns more than 245 superstores in America. They have an Internet site ([www.borders.com](http://www.borders.com)) where you can buy their books. Like Waterstones, they have teamed up with Amazon, in order to "enhance your online shopping experience and bring you an unparalleled service with a familiar look and feel" ([www.amazon.com/amazon-borders-partnership](http://www.amazon.com/amazon-borders-partnership)). The group sells books, music, videos, and other entertainment items through its Borders and Waldenbooks stores ([www.bordersgroupinc.com](http://www.bordersgroupinc.com)).

James Thin was privately owned by family shareholders. In 1994 they acquired Volume One and in 1997 Greenhead Bookshop, Huddersfield. They dominated bookselling in Scotland and were, it seems, keen on expanding further in the future. They made some mistakes, however, and in 2002 they were taken over by Blackwell's ([www.business.scotsman.com](http://www.business.scotsman.com)).

Hammicks Bookshops Ltd., finally, want to reach beyond the traditional bookbuying market in the future. They want to cater for people living in areas lacking bookshops, which can be easily done via the Internet. They, like many of the others, have a homepage ([www.thebookpl@ce.com](http://www.thebookpl@ce.com)). As mentioned above, they have been a part of Ottakar's since April 2003. Trevor Goul-Wheeker, Managing Director of Hammicks since 1994, said: "This is extremely good news for the Hammicks local business, which as part of Ottakar's will achieve the economies of scale and buying power required to prosper in an increasingly competitive market." ([www.hammicks.com](http://www.hammicks.com))

What can be concluded from the above short company descriptions?

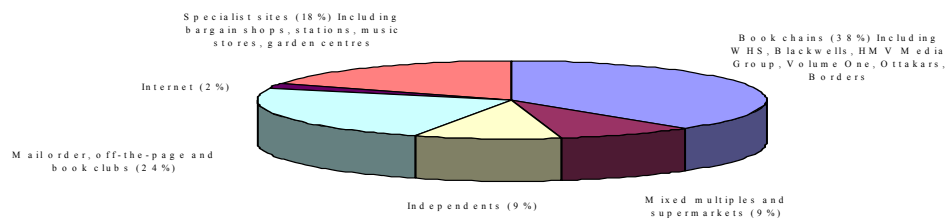
Like the publishing houses, the big booksellers became more and more international during the 1990s, some being part of larger international companies. One factor furthering internationalization was most certainly the Internet, which can be accessed from all over the world, and which makes it easy to reach less-developed areas. In an over-crowded and over-saturated marketplace the Internet represented very dangerous competition, a danger averted by teaming up with Internet providers and already existing Internet retailers (like Amazon). One effect the concentration trend had, *Book Retailing in Britain* states, is that the balance of power shifted from publishers to retailers and wholesalers (23). Because they had gained more power, wholesalers and retailers could insist on increased discounts. Moreover, because the chains controlled the market for books, they were able to demand almost whatever terms they wanted from the big publishing houses. These were forced to pay large amounts of “co-op advertising money”, if they wanted their books to be placed prominently in the shops (Schiffirin 125). In traditional bookshops, an Internet publication called *The Supply Chain Challenge*, tells us only 3% of titles account for half the total sales. The major chains with their high operating costs needed high rates of turnover. Therefore, they were highly dependent on a constant supply of bestsellers (Eppstein 12). Of course, this focus on bestsellers also affected the decisions of the publishing houses. The importance the bestseller had, and still has, for these houses is reflected in their decorating and advertising policy (it is not the place here to lament the effect this development could have on more “literary” fiction in the future, however). In order to be able to follow the sales of these books, in the mid-1990s Whitaker started *Book Track*, an electronic sales data analysis service. As Key Note’s 1995 *Market Report* states: “Book Track will show exactly what is selling where” (23). Since then *Book Track* has also been the source for a variety of bestseller charts for “publication in the national media” (Key Note 23).

### *III. b. 4.) Non-Traditional Retailers*

What about non-traditional retailers? Following Schlesingers categorization, this group comprises supermarkets and other mixed retailers, CTNs, book clubs and other direct mail operations, bargain booksellers, and display marketing businesses (87). In 1998 their market shares differed from those given above for 1997, but this is due to the fact that in the 1997

survey, the definition of bookshop included both specialist chains and independents, and books/stationery comprised outlets such as WH Smith and Menzies (71).

### Book Market in Great Britain 1998: £1.7 billion



Source: Kirsten Schlesinger, *Book Retailing in Britain* (London: Whitaker Business Publishing, 1999) 87.

In the following section I will focus on the Internet, supermarkets, and book clubs, as the Internet represents an ever-increasing market, supermarkets discounted bestsellers heavily, and most of the “editor’s choice” books sold by book clubs were and still are bestsellers.

The Internet bookseller Amazon, which set up business in 1995 in the US, was the biggest of the Internet retailers. It opened its British subsidiary Amazon.co.uk in 1998 with 1.5 million titles, but did not publish separate figures for this operation. Its turnover was said to be above \$30 billion and it went public on 15<sup>th</sup> May 1997 (124). It offers a wide selection of titles, allows the customer to browse without being harrassed and offers discounts up to 60% off a large number of titles, many of them bestsellers ([www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)). Furthermore, the customer does not have to leave the house, in order to get hold of a certain book he or she wishes to acquire, but gets it delivered to his home. It is possible to buy books earlier than they are available on the local market. This is very important for bestsellers promoted with

such hype as the *Harry Potter* novels, as everyone wanted to have the fourth volume, for example, before his or her friends. The fact that this is possible has led to a discussion about territorial rights. American and English publishers are not happy when a not yet released book, for which a huge amount of copyright money has been paid, appears on the local market from a different country (56). In spite of the chances the Internet offers, Amazon have had the problem of insufficient margins ever since they set up business. The instantaneous price comparisons available on the net forced them to practice suicidal price-cutting (Epstein 162).

Book Club Associates (BCA) was the largest of the book clubs in the UK with around 65% of total book club members reported in 1997. The other big ones were Readers Union (10%), Red House (8%), and Time Life (12%).<sup>72</sup> In 1990 the first paperback clubs appeared on the scene, briefly giving the others a hard time. During the remainder of the 1990s, book clubs steadily increased their market share, giving new impetus to the old debate that they diverted sales from bookshops (94f). However, the survey *Books and the Consumer* shows that the majority of postal buyers are the heavy buyers (59%), who also buy in other retail outlets (Book Marketing Ltd. 22). Book clubs will probably feel the Internet competition more in the future, as they offer the same services (convenience of buying books from your home; a wider range of titles). Most of them have Internet sites and homepages today.

Let us consider the biggest of these clubs, BCA, in more detail. It belonged to the Bertelsmann group, had an annual turnover of £100 million +, 2 million members, and offered 3,000 titles per year (133). As I used to be a member of one of the subsidiaries, The English Book Club, it is easy to decide on the importance of bestselling novels, at least for this club. They had a spring, summer, autumn, Christmas and New Year catalogue, and informed the customer on the cover of these catalogues that “every book is discounted”. This was the case in 1999 and 2000, at least. Unfortunately, I did not keep the older magazines, however, if one looks at their homepage today, the pattern is still the same. Their editor’s choice was always a current bestseller and sometimes they included exclusive extracts of these books for their customers. They had a number of categories, such as reference and non-fiction, English language, non-fiction bestsellers most of which were fairly expensive books on history, art, and literature lifestyle, lifestyle bestsellers, children’s books, fiction, and fiction bestsellers.

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<sup>72</sup> BCA is owned by Bertelsmann, Time Life by AOL Time Warner. For the others no information concerning ownership could be found ([www.mediachannel.org](http://www.mediachannel.org)).

The categories fiction and fiction bestsellers did not differ very much, both being made up of bestselling books by famous authors. Most of these books were discounted at 25% and all were in hardcover. This means that they tried to exploit the market for bestsellers, but most of the titles offered in the other categories came from the backlist and had appeared in their magazines for a couple of years.

What about the supermarkets? One major change that took place during the 1990s within the English bookmarket has to be explained before we can define the role they played and the role the bestseller played for them. It is also important to analyse how these changes affected the bestseller itself. These books which comprised 3% of titles sold in the UK make up 50% of the total volume, which made them an important factor for every player in the market (32).

### *III. b. 5.) The End of the Net Book Agreement*

The crucial change that took place during the 1990s was the formal ending of the Net Book Agreement (NBA) in 1997. What was the NBA? It was a trade agreement introduced during late-Victorian times. In the 1890s, the booktrade had tried to find a solution to the problem of “underselling”, the practice of selling books (particularly bestsellers) at less than their advertised price. In 1889 a petition was signed by 136 booksellers to publishers to get them to discontinue selling to anyone who sold at greater discount than 3 pence in a shilling. In 1897 the Associated Booksellers found that the vast majority of retailers were in favour of net books and fixed a rate of discount. Even though the NBA was not in the publishers’ interest (they wanted to get as many of their products sold as possible, and underselling did not directly affect their profits), they realised the need for a well-organised retail structure, and in 1890 Macmillan introduced 16 net books, thus originating the scheme that was to become the Net Book Agreement. The terms of the NBA were eventually agreed by the Publishers Association, the Association of Booksellers and the Society of Authors in 1899, and the agreement was implemented on January 1<sup>st</sup> 1900 ([www.brookes.ac.uk/publishing/contexts/20thcent/nba](http://www.brookes.ac.uk/publishing/contexts/20thcent/nba)).

The NBA, which had been upheld in the Restrictive Practices Court in 1962, was formally abolished in 1997 (Utton 116). For practical purposes it had ceased to operate since September 1995, when the Publishers Association, its main supporter, abandoned it (Utton 130). In 1962 the Court had predicted three effects if the NBA was abandoned: there would



be fewer outlets selling books, fewer titles, and higher prices for most books. However, in 1997, the court decided that on the basis of major changes in the bookmarket, which had occurred since 1962, it no longer made sense to uphold the NBA (Utton 121).

The most important changes reported were:

In 1962 there had been only 400 – 700 mainly independent stockholding booksellers, whereas in 1997 about one third was made up of big chains with many branches. Widely spread organizations with many individual units were less likely to suffer from price competition, the court decided (Utton 121).

In 1962 much was made of the vulnerability of small independent booksellers, which did not have as much bargaining power as the large retailers when it came to dealing with publishers. The developments that had counteracted this were the above-mentioned growth of wholesalers, which offered very good terms to small bookshops, and the spread of the practice of sale or return, whereby unsold books could be returned to the publisher (Utton 122).

Non-traditional outlets selling at reduced price had grown.

The Internet as a means of researching, ordering and distributing had come into being.

As far as the fear of “fewer and less well stocked bookshops, higher average prices of books and fewer published titles” was concerned, the court concluded in 1997 that, as 80% of the sales by value of Waterstones came from backlist titles, the fear of fewer published titles (if publishers concentrated on fast-selling discountable bestsellers) was unfounded (Utton 126,129). The fear of higher prices was countered by the argument that even when the NBA had still been in existence, the price of the group of mass market paperbacks “had increased about twice the rate of inflation” (Utton 129). Finally, concerning the fear of fewer and less well stocked bookshops, it was agreed that “unless consumers respond to discounts by switching purchases between different outlets the absence of resale price maintenance will have little effect” (Utton 126).

Thus the questions are:

- **Did** consumers start switching outlets?
- Which kinds of books were discounted, and
- where did discounting take place?

According to a survey printed out from the Internet, price was the third most important influence on book purchasing for the consumers.<sup>73</sup> With 57% it ranks after recommendation (62%) and jacket blurbs (73%), but, interestingly, before author (55%), reviews (42%) and special promotion (38%).<sup>74</sup>

According to *Effects of the Abandonment of the Net Book Agreement*, another survey conducted by the Cranfield School of Management, the larger a bookseller was, the more willing it was to discount any titles (Fishwick 5). As this interim report only covers the early days of uninhibited discounting, it might be possible, that the following numbers are excessive. The “specialist book chains” Dillons and Waterstones discounted 40 (Dillons) and 44 titles (Waterstones) as reported 13<sup>th</sup> December 1996. Of these 31 (Dillons) and 27 (Waterstones) were titles “in one of the six bestseller lists” (Fishwick 8f). The “mixed goods chains” WH Smith and John Menzies discounted 141 titles (WH Smith ) and 76 titles (John Menzies) of which 89 (WH Smith) and 40 (John Menzies) were bestsellers. The “supermarket chains” ASDA, Safeway, Tesco and Woolworth’s discounted 23 (ASDA), 21 (Safeway), 22(Tesco) and 32 (Woolworth’s) titles, all of which were bestsellers (Fishwick 8). This means that supermarkets automatically discounted all bestsellers. They were able to buy a large number of them and still make profit when discounting them. It is, therefore, highly probable, that they did not stock a large number of other titles (e.g. backlist titles) and were highly dependent on bestsellers. In all the other outlets mentioned above more than 50% of the discounted books were bestsellers. The average percentage of discount (relating to the original price) was between 24.6% and 29.9% at the bookseller chains, 27% at WH Smith’s and 29.5% at John Menzies’ and between 32.6% and 36.5% at the supermarkets (Fishwick 8).

Let us examine which effect discounting had on the customers. According to *The Effects of the Abandonment of the Net Book Agreement*, only 7.7% of the book buyers who took part in the survey compared prices before buying a book (Fishwick 12). Customers were, apparently,

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<sup>73</sup> However, rather than with the “Veblen-effect” mentioned in the research report, which causes increased interest because of higher price, today’s customers prefer cheaper paperback books to expensive hardback editions.

<sup>74</sup> „Influences on Book Purchasing“ *BA Reports Library* (May 1999): 1, online, Internet, 21 Oct. 2000.

willing to pay full prices for books which were discounted elsewhere. My assumption is that, most likely, people generally cannot be bothered to walk around hunting for bargains. I think it is highly probable that someone who only reads bestsellers will buy them in a supermarket assuming he knows that the supermarket stocks his favourite author or genre. However, people who want to browse will not take great pains to compare prices, if they find a book they like in the bookshop they are in. But these are only assumptions, as no further empirical data has been available.

Nevertheless, books were discounted and bought at discounted price. Who were the winners and who were the losers? Apparently, the smaller retailers were on the side of the losers (Fishwick 17). Their turnover decreased following the abandonment of the NBA. The winners seem to have been the bigger chains and the supermarkets, which had more shelf space. Moreover, it may well be that the consumers will also lose, as, since the NBA was abolished, the average list price of hardback bestselling fiction increased. There had been a drop in average price following the change, but from December 1995 on, the average list price rose by 10.0%, contrasting with a general inflation rate of 2.7% (Fishwick 19). No data has been available for the development after 1996, though. Yet, one can assume, that this continued, in order to provide retailers with a higher margin, if they discounted hardback fiction titles. The retailers seemed to have lost their enthusiasm for early discounting. The practice of discounting decreased following the early days of the price war. In 1996 20% of booksellers surveyed by the Cranfield School of Management said that they did not discount any titles. A year later it was 33% (Fishwick 39).

However, of the various forms discounting took (loyalty cards, newspaper offers, discounts for students, discounts on subsequent purchases, etc.) the regular discounting of bestsellers and other specially selected titles seems to have had the biggest impact on the market, especially before Christmas when people usually go looking for presents (Fishwick 25).<sup>75</sup> For our analysis of the bestseller within the system of the bookmarket, it is most important to notice that “the proportion of titles subject to price cutting was small and that the discounting focused on bestsellers” (Schlesinger 39).

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<sup>75</sup> See appendix F for photos.

What were the effects of this focused discounting? Apart from the increase in average list price for hardback fiction titles, discounting, rather than expanding the market, seems to have redistributed sales (Schlesinger 40). It seems to have had an effect on the structure of the trade in so far as it encouraged many non-traditional outlets (e.g. supermarkets) to increase their bookselling activities. The smaller bookshops, which were not able to participate in the price war, seem to have concentrated on service (Schlesinger 43). As only 7% of purchasers compared prices before buying a book, this seems to be a good alternative to discounting, in order to satisfy the customer.

### III. c.) Reception/Consumption

In this part I will concentrate on the reader/consumer, who, as we have seen, was not overly impressed with the discounting strategy adopted by supermarkets, chains, and book clubs.

What are the factors influencing the purchase of a book? What kinds of readers are there? How important are the readers' needs and expectations, and how are they motivated to buy a certain type of book?

First of all, the results of three questionnaires, my own two, and one appended to Celia Brayfield's book *Bestseller*, are analyzed, supplemented by findings from the Internet and the above-mentioned survey *Books and the Consumer*.<sup>76</sup> As far as the reasons given for buying books are concerned, the results are similar. Brayfield, who sent out 100 questionnaires, but does not inform the reader about how many of these were returned, arrived at the following ranking in answer to her question : "When you buy a new book, what do you feel influences you most?" (Brayfield 25, 251)

1. Liking the author's other books
2. Word-of-mouth recommendation
3. Reading the cover
4. A book review
5. The cover design
6. Interview or other publicity
7. Enjoying film or TV adaptation
8. Price cuts
9. Advertising

Multiple answers were allowed. It was also possible to give more than one answer to a question in my own questionnaire, the results of which (answering the question "Why did you buy the book?") are presented below. I had sent out 200 forms, 85 of which were returned.

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<sup>76</sup> See appendix C for my questionnaires.

1. Recommended by a friend (30%)
2. Saw it in a bookshop (17%); read books by the same author before (17%)
3. Advertising (10%)
4. Saw the film (7%)
5. Saw it on a bestseller list (2%)
6. The cover appealed to me (1%)

I had left a blank space for alternative answers, some of which were: “it seemed interesting”, “it had a funny name”, “I did not buy it, I got it as a present” (3%), but none of the people asked mentioned the price. Another survey conducted by myself via the Internet ([www.bestseller-questionnaire.de](http://www.bestseller-questionnaire.de)) received a much more representative feedback of 1011 forms.<sup>77</sup> In answer to the question “how do you choose the bestsellers you buy” I got the following results (again multiple answers were allowed):

By reading the blurb	53.7%
By author	44.3%
Because of recommendation by a friend	43.2%
By browsing	31.9%
By genre	24.6%
By topic	18%
By title	14.9%
Because of an advertisement	11.5%
No preference	10.7%
By cover	8.8%

0.9 % decided because they had read a review, 0.6% made a decision due to the charts, and only 1 person mentioned a literary award as an important factor influencing his buying decision.

We can conclude that the three factors which seem to influence book purchase most are word-of-mouth recommendation, prominent position and blurb or cover, and knowledge of the author’s previous books. Many of the people who gave “saw it in a bookshop” as a reason,

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<sup>77</sup> I had turned to SWR 3, a German radio station, for help with making the survey known. An interview with myself, conducted by Nicole Köster of SWR 3, was broadcast on 13 July 2004.

had also ticked the author category. This leads to the conclusion that book buyers, although they like browsing, prefer the familiar.

What does the Internet say?

A survey conducted by Penguin books presented the following results:

Jacket Blurb	73%
Recommendation	62%
Price	57%
Author	55%
Reviews	42%
Special Promotion	38% <sup>78</sup>

No information about the number of people questioned is given. The results are similar to the ones mentioned above. Jacket blurb can be equated with browsing, I think, which confirms the importance of browsing, word-of-mouth, and author's name.<sup>79</sup> The only finding that differs from the other questionnaires is the high importance of the price. But Brayfield only asked for the influence of price cuts, and my forms did not mention price. This confirms my assumption that people prefer ticking boxes to using their own ideas. Of course, this is a major obstacle when designing questionnaires. One has to try to avoid asking leading questions and manipulating the answers by giving the impression that certain answers are expected.

The next question is what kind of book buyers there are. According to *Books and the Consumer*, females buy slightly more books than males do (52% as opposed to 48%) (Book Marketing Ltd. 20). Women are also dominant in the category of "heavy buyers", which they lead with 61% compared to 39% of men. The typical heavy buyer is female, between 25 and 44, from the social grades ABC1, and, to a lesser extent, is "better educated" (Book Marketing Ltd. 20). As word-of-mouth recommendation has shown itself as one of the most important factors influencing the purchase of a book, these people can be assumed to have

<sup>78</sup> „Influences on Book Purchasing“, *BA Reports Library* (May 1999): 1, online, Internet, 31 Oct. 2000.

<sup>79</sup> This confirms the concepts of „secondary reader“ (Marjasch) and “bandwagon effect” (Faulstich) mentioned in the research report.

some influence on the “medium” and “light” buyers.<sup>80</sup> The medium buyer is either male or female, exists in every age group, covers all social classes, has no children, can be found in all regions and typically ended his or her education up to the age of 16. The picture for the light buyer is approximately the same. My Internet survey confirms these findings.

Why, where, what and how often do people read? According to my questionnaire, the majority of people read for entertainment (60%), followed by educational purposes (26%), information and escape into a dream world (20%). Reading for one’s profession received only 6%, but the picture might be blurred as far as education and profession are concerned, as the sample of my first survey consisted mainly of students. 5% read for meditation, and 3%, respectively, in order to get ideas for their own lives and to solve problems.

An opinion poll printed out from the Internet tells the reader that 95% of British people think reading is an important and positive part of their lives and that 65% describe it as relaxing and enjoyable. They also asked people where they read. The result was that 79% love reading in the living room. Two thirds read in bed, but this activity tends to be preferred by women, the poll says.<sup>81</sup>

Brayfield’s results are a bit different, but this was to be expected, as she only questioned 100 people. She found out that 77% read in bed at night, (again multiple answers were allowed), 75% on holiday, 60% on long journeys, 51% while travelling to work, 49% at the weekend, 41% whenever they have nothing to do, 23% in the bath and 4% in traffic jams (Brayfield 249). Obviously, a cosy atmosphere is preferred by the majority of people, which makes it easier to switch off after a day’s work and devote oneself to a book.

My Internet survey confirms these findings. People read in bed, on the sofa, in the bathtub, generally during their holidays, in the garden or on the beach, on the train or bus when commuting to work, in doctors’ waiting rooms, and even on the toilet. The preferred times are evening/night, the weekend, holidays, free time, and waiting time. 88.5% said that they forgot the world around them while reading, and 90.3% answered that reading relaxed them (the most frequent reason given for this was that you could forget your every-day problems, switch off the stress of the working day, and “dive” into another world).

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<sup>80</sup> They are the so-called „opinion leaders“.

<sup>81</sup> „Britons are a Nation of Book Worms“, *Polls Active* (July 1999): 1, online, Internet, 31 Oct. 2000.



What kind of fiction do people read during their free time, and how often do they read? According to my first questionnaire, most people like reading crime and mystery fiction (49%), followed by books treating relationships, sex and love (43%), science fiction (18%), fantasy (17%) and horror (14%). The sample was half male/half female with over 70% students, however. Moreover, both of my surveys focused on the German bookmarket. Brayfield does not give us any figures, but the Internet does. They state that biographies and autobiographies (non-fiction) are the most popular types of books (18%), followed by thrillers with 14%, humor (14%) and detective novels with 13%.<sup>82</sup> The results of my Internet survey were that 40.5% preferred crime novels. 25.6% read historical novels, whereas 16% preferred thrillers, followed by fantasy (13.8%), and love stories (9.2%). At the bottom of the list were science fiction (6.4%), adventure/romance (5.5%), and horror (3%). It has to be stressed here that only bestsellers were taken into consideration, not the cheap serial kitsch novels one can buy in station shops which often do not even mention an author.

*Books and the Consumer* informs us that 48% of those reading for pleasure read mainly fiction, of which the most common genre was crime/thriller/detective, mentioned by about a third, followed by romance/love stories and historical novels/romance, each read by about a quarter. War and adventure stories were read by 20%, science fiction/fantasy by 16% and horror/occult by 13% (Book Marketing Ltd. 35). According to my Internet survey, Crime/thriller/detective still lead the field with 56.5%. However, it seems that the other categories have undergone some reranking with science fiction/fantasy (20.2%)“overtaking” adventure/romance/love (14.7%).

I cannot hope to be able to find out how often people read their preferred type of books, but at least, it is possible to get some information about how often they read any book. In 1993 51% of the adults questioned by *Books and the Consumer* said they were currently reading for pleasure (Book Marketing Ltd. 30). Nearly half of those who had finished reading a book within the last year said that they picked up a book to read nearly every day, and nearly three quarters said they did so at least once a week. One in eight stated to do so less than once a month (Book Marketing Ltd. 33). Furthermore, the ones conducting the survey asked those people who had claimed to be reading for pleasure, how much time a week they

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<sup>82</sup> „Britons are a Nation of Book Worms“, *polls active* (July 1999): 1, online, Internet, 31 Oct. 2000

spent on it. The overall answer was about seven hours. About a third spent three hours or less and about the same number spent three to seven hours. One in five spent over ten hours.<sup>83</sup>

Brayfield gives us information about how many books her participants read for pleasure in a year. 17% read 2-4, 23% read 4-6, 10% read 7-10, 19% read 10-20, and 21% read more than 20 (Brayfield 245).

After having examined the influences on book purchasing, the different types of readers and the books they prefer, I turn to a more theoretical discussion of influences on buying behaviour and to the question of how readers' needs are promised to be satisfied by the manufacturers.

According to *Marketing Management* (Kotler), there are four distinct factors which influence buying behaviour. Cultural, social, personal and psychological factors.<sup>84</sup>

- Cultural factors include the buyer's culture, subculture (nationality, race, religion, etc.) and social class (174).
- Social factors comprise reference groups, i.e. "the groups that have a direct (face-to-face) or indirect influence on the person's attitudes of behaviour", family and social roles and statuses (178). It is within this sector that word-of-mouth recommendation plays an important role.<sup>85</sup> "Opinion leaders" have to be targeted by the manufacturers of products in order for them to influence others (178). Such opinion leaders, or "primary readers" in our case, can be friends, booksellers, reviewers or celebrities. One such celebrity, for example, is Oprah Winfrey of Oprah's Bookclub in the USA.<sup>86</sup> When she selects a certain book, success automatically follows (Maryles 41). Thus, it

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<sup>83</sup> Book Marketing Ltd, ed. *Books and the Consumer* (32)

<sup>84</sup> Philip Kotler, ed. *Marketing Management* (174). If not otherwise stated, the numbers in brackets refer to this edition.

<sup>85</sup> A particularly striking phenomenon these days is the abundance of online reviews encouraging customers at amazon and other online booksellers to buy a particular book. According to "The Effects of Word of Mouth on Sales: Online Book Reviews" by Judith Chevalier and Dina Mayzlin (*Journal of Marketing Research*), the impact of a negative review is more powerful in decreasing book sales than a positive review in increasing sales. The authors attribute this to the credibility consumers place on the reviews. Multiple positive reviews might be perceived as hype generated by the publisher. Some general remarks about word-of-mouth: It seems to be the centre of the marketing universe, offering much more authenticity than advertisements by the producer, as the source is normally independent of the company. In contrast to other marketing measures, it is free. There are no limits to it, the internet, websites, chat rooms and even video conferencing encouraging the exchange of opinion.

<sup>86</sup> A British equivalent is "Richard and Judy's Book Club" on UK TV since 2004.

is very important for the producers or sellers to direct their messages at these opinion leaders (178).

- Personal factors influencing buying behaviour include “age and life-cycle stage” (180), occupation, and economic circumstances (181), lifestyle (182) and personality and self-concept (183). There is an important distinction between “actual self-concept” (how a person views herself), “ideal self-concept” (how she would like to view herself), and “other-self concept” (how she thinks others see her) (184).
- Psychological factors include motivation, perception, learning, and beliefs and attitudes. The author distinguishes between “biogenic” (physiological) and “psychogenic” (psychological) needs and motives (184). A motive, he says, is a need that is urgent enough to cause a person to act (184). Sigmund Freud’s, Abraham Maslow’s, and Frederick Herzberg’s theories of motivation and the implications they carry for consumer and marketing analysis are discussed in *Marketing Management*.

Freud’s theory is that behaviour is driven by unconscious factors which leads to the result that people cannot truly understand their own motivations (184). Maslow’s “Hierarchy of Needs” explains why people are driven by different needs at different times.<sup>87</sup> Physiological needs like hunger and thirst are the most important ones which have to be satisfied before all the other needs (185). Herzberg’s theory distinguishes “satisfiers” (factors causing satisfaction) and “dissatisfiers” (factors causing dissatisfaction) and is much more useful in this context than the other two. Manufacturers, *Marketing Management* states, have to identify the satisfiers and supply them (186). All these factors surely influence buying behaviour, but they can only be reported here, no critical discussion of the theories behind them is possible. The interested reader is referred to works on psychology and motivation theory. All I can do here is to analyze the outward appearance of a couple of books and try to draw some conclusions about the intended motivational effect on the buyer.

Apart from discussing the factors influencing buying behaviour, the buying decision process is described. The authors distinguish between “complex buying behaviour”, with high

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<sup>87</sup> At the bottom of his pyramid of needs are physiological needs, above them are safety needs, followed by the need to be loved. On top of love is the need for esteem; the need which is last to be satisfied is the need for self-actualization. A short explanation of Freud’s theory can be found at [www.a2zpsychology.com](http://www.a2zpsychology.com), a short description of Maslow’s theory is available at [www.web.utk.edu/maslow](http://www.web.utk.edu/maslow).

involvement of the consumer and significant difference between available brands, “variety-seeking buying behaviour” with low involvement and significant difference between brands. The other pair with few differences between brands, comprises “dissonance-reducing buying behaviour” with high involvement and “habitual buying behaviour” with low involvement of the consumer (190).

Book buying appears to me to fall into the category of “variety-seeking buying behaviour”, as the consumer is not highly involved, due to the fact that the purchase is neither extremely expensive nor risky (191), and that there are significant “brand differences”. When showing this kind of buying behaviour, consumers do a lot of “brand switching” (192). Today it is also possible to buy DVDs, video games, or videos instead of books, depending on the age of the customer.

Let us check the product in question for features trying to motivate the customer to buy. I am most interested in social factors like opinion leading, personal factors, especially self-concept, and Hertzberg’s “satisfiers”, which must be highlighted somehow. First of all, it has to be said that the sample of 50 books discussed here was partly bought after looking at the bestseller lists, and, partly, because of external features which definitely declared the book to be a bestseller. Nearly all of the books bought as an experiment turned out to be list bestsellers after consulting the charts.

The market leaders make sure that they have enough prominent shelf space and the brands, i.e. the authors, are easily recognizable.<sup>88</sup> Publishers endeavour to offer prospective readers enough satisfiers by triggering expectations using the cover design, and, more importantly, ingeniously assorted review clippings and blurbs. They make sure that the target groups or fans feel that the book promises all they usually enjoy with a certain kind of book. The name of the “brand author” works in a kind of star system which simplifies advertising. Advertisements only need to invoke the names. These names promise certain standards of performance, generic forms, and styles (Hagen and Wasko 80). Brand recognition, i.e. recognition of the author’s name, is ensured by highly standardized design including style and colour of writing, the writing of the author’s name (the more famous the author, the bigger his name) and the style of the jacket. All Grishams have the same pattern, so have all Pratchetts,

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<sup>88</sup> Robertson and Kassarian call this “name recognition” and “Accessibility of product positioning” (11 and 13).

Pattersons, Rowlings, Steels and Cornwells.<sup>89</sup> Not only does the design tell the prospective buyer the name of the author and the title of the book, but the make-up of the cover also tells about the genre (we will see later how important this is for successful formula recognition).

Format has a limited influence, I think, as nearly all paperbacks have the same format. Hardbacks are bigger and look better on a book shelf. A recent development have been large-format paperbacks which enable people to buy books which their acquaintances will notice on their shelves. However, the real difference between hard - and paperback is the price, an economic circumstance. Most people probably prefer buying the cheaper paperback to buying the more expensive hardback, unless it is remaindered. The most important thing speaking for the hardback is that it is mostly available before the paperback, which means that if somebody wants to be up-to-date, he has to buy the hardback.<sup>90</sup> The mentionings of awards, reviews and list rankings seem to aim at the “bandwaggon effect” or, in other words, seem to function as “surrogate opinion leaders”.<sup>91</sup> All 50 books contain clippings of favourable reviews, some up to 6 pages, thus telling the future reader that this is a really good book. Others sport awards (Toni Morrison or J.K. Rowling). 29 out of the sample of 50 had phrases like “The New Bestseller”, “The no. 1 International Bestseller”, or “The #1 New York Times Bestseller” printed on the frontcover. With some of them one suspects that they had not appeared on any list, yet, and that the tag “bestseller” was used for purely promotional purposes.

As far as the influence of self-concept, or more probably ideal self-concept is concerned, we have to rely on assumptions. However, at least with the highly-researched scientific thrillers, which mention lots of universities, professors, librarians and laboratories the author consulted while writing the book, it is obvious that people who feel guilty about purely reading for pleasure and entertainment, are reassured that the book they intend to buy includes a lot of information about serious topics.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> For examples see appendix D.

<sup>90</sup> This confirms the snob-effect mentioned above (Faulstich). The way consumers think about themselves and their social world influences their behaviour in the marketplace (Robertson and Kassarian 281). In my sample of 1011 feedback forms I had 63 “snob readers” who flatly refused to read bestsellers, because they are “shallow entertainment for the masses”

<sup>91</sup> On the concept of “opinion leaders” see Katz, *Personal Influence*.

<sup>92</sup> Examples can be found in Michael Crichton’s, Robert Ludlum’s and Colleen McCullough’s books. Some of Crichton’s bestsellers have a bibliography of up to six pages.

*III. c. 1.) Summary*

The preceding chapter has attempted to present the most important facts about the bookmarket and the position the bestseller occupies within this system. We have seen that many publishers have become part of big media conglomerates for which the exploitation of bestselling authors and their titles with all the subsidiary rights is very important. We have also seen that, as far as the distributing channels are concerned, wholesalers have become bigger and more important than in the past, offering quick service to retailers and also processing small orders.

As far as the retailers are concerned, we have learnt that the chains have become bigger and bigger, too, and that supermarkets, book clubs and the Internet have increased their market share and importance. Discounting, which was made possible by the end of the NBA, has focused on bestsellers, leaving smaller retailers the possibility to offer better service instead. Regarding the buyers and readers, we have noticed that the most important factors influencing book purchase are the name of the author, position, cover/blurb, and word-of-mouth recommendation. I have, furthermore, stated some of the promotional measures taken by publishers in order to make their books sell.

In the next chapter I will focus on the content of a sample of bestsellers and try to determine how readers choose the books which editors and publishers intend to become bestsellers. The concept of “the reader” will be examined, as well as several reader-response and reception theories. Furthermore, I will scrutinize literary formulas and genres and the psychological gratifications that readers gain from reading – mostly serial – bestselling fiction. This reading activity will be put in the context of game theory and extensive empirical findings will be used to confirm my theses.

## IV.) Readers and Bestsellers

Let us now turn to the reader and his or her reception of bestselling fiction. The questions that will interest us most in this chapter are:

- What exactly is a reader?
- How does the “act of reading” work?
- Which gratifications do readers gain from reading formulaic bestselling fiction?
- What is formulaic fiction?
- What are the social functions of formulaic fiction, and
- is reading a game?

As most of these questions entail the necessity of mentioning theories from research areas outside the field of literary studies, the following overview is bound to be schematic and not very detailed. The interested reader has to be referred to works which treat these problems in depth.

### IV.a) Reader Categories

What is a reader? What happens in the mind of a reader while reading? How is meaning constructed? There have been myriads of answers to these questions and countless reader concepts have been developed, a chronological selection of which is presented below. Let us first concentrate on the definition of the term “reader”.

For Werner Faulstich, a literary and media specialist, readers in 1970 were simply members of different social classes (*Thesen zum Bestseller Roman* 65).

The structuralist Michael Riffaterre introduced the concept of the “super-reader” in 1973.<sup>93</sup> This “super-reader” is a hypothetical construct, a reader devoid of all prejudices who can decode the message encoded by the author of a text without any intervening subjectivity (Riffaterre 46).

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<sup>93</sup> In German the term for this is “Archileser”. The English term was taken from Bennett ( 3).

In 1975 Jonathan Culler, another structuralist, also introduced a hypothetical construct: the “ideal reader” (122). According to his theory, the “question is not what actual readers happen to do but what an ideal reader must know implicitly in order to read and interpret works in ways which we consider acceptable, in accordance with the institution of literature” (118). Literary conventions steer the reception process and a reader possesses “literary competence”, if he has a set of conventions at his disposal for reading literary texts (118). A reader always brings expectations and preconceptions to a text (113).

Wolfgang Iser’s phenomenological concept of the “implied reader” or “Leserrolle” describes the role the reader has to take when following the changing points of view in a work of fiction.<sup>94</sup> It is a series of textual moves and responses.

Stanley Fish, an academic and literary specialist, whose “informed reader” is also a theoretical construct, states that texts are not stable and readers are not free and independent, but that both are the property of “interpretive communities” (323).

A psychological reader concept comes from Christian Scherg, who calls his reader type – a reader who reacts to an author’s books (in his case to Thomas Mann’s books) in a typical way - the “modal reader” (56).

Peter J. Rabinowitz, a critic and literary specialist, distinguishes between the “actual audience”, that is the “flesh and blood people who read the book” and the “hypothetical” or “authorial audience”, i.e. the readers imagined by the authors (20).

J. Brooks Bouson’s “empathic reader” is simultaneously a participant in the fictional action and its observer (6). He becomes “immersed in the illusiory world of the fictional text and is actively aware of the text’s designs upon its readers” (6). She uses the psychoanalytical framework of Hein Kohut’s “self-psychology”.

For J.A. Appleyard, another academic, the role a reader can play depends on his or her age. He sees the reader as a player (pre-school age), the hero (school age), the thinker

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<sup>94</sup> The concept of the “implied reader” is expounded in *Prospecting*. Remarks on the “Leserrolle” can be found in *Der Akt des Lesens*, first edited in 1976.



(adolescence), the interpreter (student of literature), and as the “pragmatic reader” who can choose the way he wants to read from the above-mentioned modes (14). He follows the psychological development of readers from childhood to adulthood.

The “involved reader” described by Ellen Esrock is either a reader who identifies with the protagonist(s) of a fictional text, or a reader whose reading activity is guided by empathy (144).

This list is by no means exhaustive and could be continued almost endlessly, but it gives an impression of the diversity of the theories about readers and reading.<sup>95</sup>

Before proceeding to a more detailed analysis and discussion of the theoretical movements which have produced these reader concepts, some remarks have to be made about the widely and carelessly used term “identification”.

According to my questionnaire, the most important issues for readers are the story (55%), the characters (37%) and the ideas/topics (31%) which are expressed in a novel. 66% thought that the characters in the book they had read were realistic, 51% found the story realistic. An interesting finding was that 33% stated they could identify with one of the characters, 18% (6% of the total participants) of which did not find the characters realistic. 31% said they could not identify with the characters, 46% (14% of the total participants) of which found them realistic, however. The second figure is not as interesting as the first, I think, as I have read many very “realistic” stories with many very “realistic” characters myself, with which I could not identify at all. Mainly, this was due to the fact that the characters seemed “realistic”, because of highly complicated details and technical terms which were so removed from my reality that just the mentioning of all these fancy details created the illusion of the story being “real”. The problem was, I simply had trouble identifying, for example, with one of a number of male anti-terror troopers, myself being female.

The other figure of 18% is much more interesting. How can readers identify with characters they find unrealistic?

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<sup>95</sup> A comprehensive list can be found in Bennett (appendix).

According to the psychologist Josephine Hilgard, “it is useful to make a distinction between character identification and empathic identification” (26). In the first one participates in the action and feelings as if one were one of the characters. In the second one participates in the “feeling of the story” even though one maintains the separation of the self from the characters (20).

Wolfgang Iser explains the involvement of the reader by using the game concept. The uniqueness of play lies in the fact that the player is involved in an illusion and, at the same time, he is aware that it is an illusion (*Prospecting* 259).

A similar explanation is offered by J. Brooks Bouson, whose “empathic reader” is the above-mentioned “participant-observer” (6). She assumes that empathy is central to the reading experience, an assumption which I share and which I can support with findings from my Internet survey (26). Some comments on “identification” in my survey were:

- You can project your mind into another world for a while, you can slip mentally into the role of another person with who you identifies yourself.<sup>96</sup>
- I identify with the characters.<sup>97</sup>
- You can ‘switch off’ completely by entering the world created by the author und living the lives of the characters.<sup>98</sup>
- A good bestseller captivates you, takes you on a journey which is far removed from every-day life, usually with sympathetic protagonists with who you can identify.<sup>99</sup>
- I can ‘switch off’ while reading, put myself in the position of the characters, and forget the stress and problems around me.<sup>100</sup>
- I can imagine being at different places, times, and a different person. This gives me a reassuring feeling.<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> German: Man kann in eine andere Welt abtauchen und seine eigene für eine Zeit verlassen, man schlüpft im Geist in die Rolle einer anderen Person, mit der man sich identifiziert.

<sup>97</sup> German: Ich identifiziere mich mit den Personen.

<sup>98</sup> German: Man schaltet vollkommen ab, indem man sich in die geschaffene Welt des Autors begibt und mit den Protagonisten mitlebt.

<sup>99</sup> German: Ein guter Bestseller nimmt einen gefangen, mit auf eine Reise, die weit weg ist vom täglichen Trott, üblicherweise mit netten Identifikationsfiguren/Helden.

<sup>100</sup> German: Beim Lesen kann ich abschalten, mich in die Figuren des Buches hineinversetzen und den Trubel um mich herum ein wenig vergessen.

<sup>101</sup> German: Ich kann mich in andere Handlungen, Orte, Menschen, Zeiten hineindenken und das gibt mir ein beruhigendes Gefühl.

- Reading bestselling fiction relaxes me, because I can “dive into” another world when I read a really good story. I identify with the acting persons, share joy and sorrow with them, and I am constantly keen on finding out what will happen next.<sup>102</sup>

J.A. Appleyard also points out the dichotomy of participant and observer. The reader empathizes with the characters as a “participant” in the story, but evaluates and reacts to the characters as a “spectator” (104). Or, as Guy Cook puts it: “The reader is simultaneously an outsider and intimately involved” (13). This apparent paradox will be explained by the concept of “play” later on.

Susan L. Feagin distinguishes between “empathy” and “sympathy”. If you react empathically, you feel the fear of the protagonist; a sympathetic reaction would be the fear for what they will do to the protagonist (121).

In the following the term “identification” will denote “empathy” as a “participant” in the fictional action. The 18% (or 6% of the total participants) of the readers who could identify with characters they did not find realistic, illustrate the concept of “homo ludens”. According to Ingeborg Weber’s lecture “Leser und Schurke: Überlegungen zur ‘Gothic Novel’” given during the Anglistentag 1981, “homo ludens”, a concept she borrowed from Johann Huizinga, is the reader who knows that he participates in a game (Weber 251). He is aware of the “pretending” nature of the game, of its non-seriousness. This knowledge, she says, does not disturb the game-in-action, as the players are involved in the game empathically. They are wrapped up in the story without becoming totally absorbed in it (Weber 251). The text is intended to create distance and empathy. This theory is, at least, able to explain the otherwise contradictory answers of 6% of the participants in my first (smaller) survey. I will go into more detail about play theory later. However, before I can do this, I have to examine some works on reader response and reception theory.

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<sup>102</sup> German: Das Lesen von Bestsellern entspannt mich, weil man beim Lesen einer richtig guten Geschichte abtaucht in eine andere Welt. Man identifiziert sich mit den agierenden Personen, teilt Freud und Leid mit ihnen und ist ständig gespannt, was als nächstes passiert.

#### IV.b) Reader Response Criticism and Reception Theory

In contrast to German reception theory, which is a cohesive enterprise with authors reacting to previous works and mutually influencing each other, reader response criticism is an umbrella term used mainly for theories originating from American scholars (Bennett 54).<sup>103</sup> As reading is far too complex an activity to be exhausted by a single theory, the author of this dissertation considers it important to point out some of the milestones in reader response criticism and reception theory and relate them to the reading of bestselling fiction.

In 1968 Norman N. Holland asked himself what a reader's responses to literature were. For him meaning was something the reader constructed from the text within the limits of the text (*The Dynamics of Literary Response* 25). According to him, literature transformed primitive and childish fantasies into "adult, civilized meanings" (32). An author expressed and disguised childhood fantasies in a text. An interesting point for us is the way he explains the total absorption typical for bestseller readers.<sup>104</sup> This, he writes, is due to a fusion of the self and the book (67).<sup>105</sup> In a later work, *5 Readers Reading*, he used the responses of five of his students to filter out the phases of the reader-text-transaction. The reader, he states, used the literary work "to create in himself a dynamic psychological process that transform[ed] raw fantasy materials to conscious significance" (16). Each reader had an "identity theme" which influenced his or her interpretation (61). The phases of response involved defenses, expectations, fantasies, and transformations – a principle he called DEFT (xiii). This is an interesting theory, but the data-basis of five readers is not considered representative by the author of this dissertation. Besides, psychological theories can neither be confirmed nor refuted with the tools of the literary scientist.

A structuralist framework of interpretation is given by Riffaterre. He sees the author as the encoder of a message and the reader as the decoder of this message (33). The problem is that the system of references a decoder uses changes in the course of history. Tastes change and all readers have prejudices (40). Therefore, the critic needs a tool (the "super-reader") to analyze the stimuli of a given text. The reactions and prejudices of the reader have to be "switched off" (44). By doing this, the critic is able to carry out a formalistic micro-analysis focused on

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<sup>103</sup> Neat summaries can be found in Bennett and Holub.

<sup>104</sup> This has been proved by my Internet survey. 88.5% claimed that they forgot the world around them.

<sup>105</sup> In our case this means that the reader "participates" in the action.

“significant peculiarities” (45). This encoder-decoder model is, however, too inflexible and microscopic for my purposes.

Another structuralist theory comes from Culler. He points out the importance of literary conventions and intertextuality, and introduces the concept of “literary competence”, which is a “set of conventions for reading literature” (139). I am especially interested in the functions he attributes to genre conventions. The function of genre conventions is, according to him, “to establish a contract between writer and reader so as to make certain relevant expectations operative and thus to permit both compliance with and deviation from accepted modes of intelligibility” (147). Readers, he says, will take statements differently in different genres – his example is the detective story (148). This theory, especially its connection to the concept of a “horizon of expectations” will be of further interest later (Jauß 20).

Fish sees meaning as an event, something that “is happening between the words and in the reader’s mind ...” (28). He has enlarged his earlier view of the “informed reader” by the concept of “interpretive communities” (323). Texts always appear within a structure of norms, there is never a moment when one is completely free of prejudices (318f).<sup>106</sup> Our educational systems precede our interpretations (323). I agree with this view, however, I have to oppose his idea that “no reading, however outlandish it might appear, is inherently an impossible one” (347). This contradicts my opinion that certain readings are “programmed” or “conditioned” by the text.

For Peter J. Rabinowitz readers always “stand somewhere before they pick up a book” (3). This significantly influences the way they read. Prior knowledge of the conventions of reading shapes their experiences and expectations (24). There are conventional limitations on the choices writers can make, because the readers have certain expectations (24). An author who wants to be understood must work within these conventional constraints (24). His remarks on genre and formula are especially relevant for this thesis. He claims that in order to be able to read a mystery story correctly, “you have to know what its genre is before you read it” (42). Genres have to be looked at in terms of “shared conventions” (184). What counts as a formula, he states, varies from genre to genre. It can be based on previous works by the same author or on other books belonging to the same genre. I agree with this idea.

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<sup>106</sup> On this view also see Gadamer (283).

As many of the above-mentioned authors used or referred to ideas expounded by the two most influential German reception theorists, I shall devote the next and biggest part of this section to Wolfgang Iser and Hans-Robert Jauß. Both have been associated with a study group called the Konstanz school of literary studies. The members of this movement practiced a specific way of investigating and teaching literature. It was a liberal association of scholars, informally united by methodological concerns that allowed for considerable diversity.<sup>107</sup> Their methodology is called “Rezeptionsästhetik” and the main interest of their members lies with Poetics and Hermeneutics, the one concerned with formal analysis, the other with the determination of meaning.

Hans-Robert Jauß, a sociological-historical critic, published his most important essays in the 1970s. The work which interests us here is called “Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory”. This essay deals with the macrocosm of reception. Jauß criticizes the one-sidedness of Marxist and Formalist literary theories and emphasizes the historicity of literature (17). Using the key concept of “horizon”, derived from Edmund Husserl’s phenomenology of perception, he develops the notion of “horizon of expectations” (23).<sup>108</sup> Each reader has a certain “horizon of expectations” when encountering a work of literature. These expectations stem from his or her preceding experiences with literature (20).<sup>109</sup> Every literary work “predisposes its audience to a very specific kind of reception by announcements, overt and covert signals, familiar characteristics, or implicit allusions” (23). This awakens memories of books read in the past and arouses expectations for “the middle and end” (23). These expectations can be fulfilled (also ironically) or altered depending on the type of text. Every book belongs to a genre, meaning that for each work there is a preconstituted horizon of expectations (79). This is very important for the study of popular literature, as this kind of literature depends very much on preconceived opinions and expectations as we will see later. Jauß then goes on to distinguish entertainment art from “real” art by using the concepts of “change of horizons” and “aesthetic distance” (25). Aesthetic distance is the disparity between a horizon of expectations and a new work. The bigger the distance, the better the work. A new work can alter the horizon of expectations. I consider the concept of “horizon of expectations” useful but I cannot agree with Jauß’s judgement that “[t]he more stereotypically a text repeats

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<sup>107</sup> Hans-Robert Jauß, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception* (viii).

<sup>108</sup> The concept of “horizon” can be found in Husserl (33) and Gadamer (307f).

<sup>109</sup> Dove calls this a reader’s “individual genre” (48).

the generic, the more inferior is its artistic character ...” (89). First of all, what is considered “valuable” is a question of the prevailing aesthetical norms. Moreover, one can not measure “literature” and popular fiction along the same scale.

Wolfgang Iser occupied himself with the microcosm of response. His big phenomenological work *Der Akt des Lesens*, first published in 1976, analyzes the processes that go on during the act of reading. As in the tradition of Husserl and Gadamer, for him a text only exists in the process of reception. One cannot isolate the two poles of text and reader (as the structuralists and psychoanalytic critics had done), nor is it important to find out what the “correct” interpretation of a given work might be, but the meaning potential (Sinnpotentiale) a text carries has to be pointed out (40ff). Each text has an inherent structure (the implied reader) and the central prerequisite for the interaction between reader and text are the text’s points of indeterminacy (60; 45).

Using the speech act theory of Austin and Searle, Iser comes to the conclusion that text and reader are connected by a dynamic feedback mechanism (90; 111), making the text as a whole impossible to grasp in one go. He also mentions the expectations a reader might bring to a text and introduces the term “repertoire” (132). The repertoire comprises extra-textual norms as well as earlier literature and generic traditions (132). He develops the idea of “figure and ground” or “topic and horizon” (158; 163). So when following the change of the points of view in a given text, there is a continual change of topic and horizon for the reader (170).

Every moment of reading, according to Iser, involves “retentions”, “protentions”, and “horizons” (181). During the act of reading the reader is always in the middle of the text, he always moves (177). “Protentions” are expectations of future events, “retentions” are expectations built up from past acts of consciousness. Every moment of reading is a dialectical relationship between protentions and retentions. An empty future horizon interacts with a satiated but fading past horizon in such a way that through the moving point of view of the reader, both these internal horizons in the text can be opened up all the time, in order to mingle (182). Because the reader participates in the forming of this “gestalt” (Gestaltbildung), he is captivated by the product of his or her imagination. This productive activity is the reason why we often have the feeling of having lived another life while reading, Iser says (207). The reader tries to paint a picture in his mind, he “composes” the story (225). This explains the fact that most people are disappointed when watching a film based on a book. I can confirm

this by the findings from my Internet survey. Some remarks on films based on bestsellers were:

- I do (watch films based on bestsellers) but often regret it as the plot is changed or the actors are unlike the characters I have made in my mind.
- I watch films in order to compare. Afterwards one is usually disappointed, because in the film everything looks so different from the picture one has made in one's mind when reading the book.<sup>110</sup>
- Films are rarely better than the books.<sup>111</sup>
- I watch films to confirm that the book is ALWAYS better than the film.<sup>112</sup>
- To see again and again that my imagination and written words are much better.<sup>113</sup>
- I am just interested in how the directors have translated the usually super story into pictures. Moreover, I always find it exciting to compare to which extent the film matches the "picture in my head" during reading.<sup>114</sup>
- Usually the books are better, as you cannot film feelings and thoughts.<sup>115</sup>

The printed text gives the reader a "plan", a "map" he has to fill out. A text has central structures of indeterminacy, called "gaps" and "negations" (283). These gaps are the "joints of the text" (284). They stimulate the interaction between text and reader (264). The reader has to fill the gaps in order to go on reading. In order to keep up the "good continuation" of the text, which is interrupted by these gaps, the reader is forced to increase his compositional activities (288). If there is a change between scenes or points of view, the reader has to fill in the missing information (287).

In the other work to be mentioned here, *Prospecting*, from 1989, Iser elaborates on his concept of indeterminacy. At the beginning of this book, which he translated into English himself, he once more asks what the process of reading consists of. His brief answer is that "it

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<sup>110</sup> German: Ich schaue mir Filme an, um Vergleiche ziehen zu können. Hinterher ist man meistens enttäuscht, denn im Film sieht es ganz anders aus, als man es sich im Buch vorgestellt hat.

<sup>111</sup> German: Selten, dass die Filme besser abschneiden, als das Buch.

<sup>112</sup> German: Um mir zu bestätigen, dass das Buch IMMER besser ist als der Film

<sup>113</sup> German: Um immer wieder festzustellen, dass meine Phantasie und geschriebene Worte um Welten besser sind.

<sup>114</sup> German: Es interessiert mich einfach, wie die Regisseure die meist super Story in Bilder umsetzen. Außerdem finde ich es immer wieder spannend, wie viel in dem Film mit meinem „Bild im Kopf“ während des Lesens übereinstimmt.

<sup>115</sup> German: Meist ist jedoch das Buch besser, da man Gefühle und Gedanken nun mal nicht filmen kann.



might be described as the reader's transformation of signals sent out by the text" (4). Because of the schematized views presented to the readers, links have to be inferred. These gaps that have to be filled are a "basic element for the aesthetic response" (9). Such gaps are typically produced by cutting techniques like cliffhangers, abrupt introduction of new characters, the temporary withholding of information, or new threads of plot (11).<sup>116</sup>

The intentions of the literary text are fulfilled by the "guided projections of the reader's imagination" (19). The indeterminate elements of a fictional text represent a vital link between reader and text. They are the "switch that activates the reader into using his own ideas in order to fulfil the intention of the text" (28). This means that they are the "basis for a textual structure in which the reader's part is already incorporated" (28).

Iser's view that meaning lies in the intersection between text and reader has been corroborated by the findings of an experiment described in the essay "Convergence and Divergence of Reader Response to Literature" (Golden and Guthrie). The authors found that variations in interpretation of the same text were the result of "differences in readers' subjective stances and the polysemous nature of texts" (Golden and Guthrie 410). They distinguish between "reader-oriented factors", such as beliefs and empathy and "text-oriented factors", such as story events and character conflicts (Golden and Guthrie 411). Thus, if one wants to understand the power popular fiction exerts, one has to examine both readers' needs and beliefs and the structural make-up of these texts.

#### IV. c.) Psychological Gratifications

What are the psychological needs which are gratified by reading popular fiction for pleasure and entertainment?

John Cawelti states in *Adventure, Mystery, and Romance* that there are two contradictory needs which are fulfilled by reading formulaic literature: firstly, the need to escape boredom through excitement, and, secondly, the need to escape fears through the reassurance that there is order in the world (15). Formulaic literature allows the reader to confront death and

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<sup>116</sup> These techniques are also mentioned by Faulstich (102ff) and Dunker (63ff).

violence, but with security, as he knows how the story will end. This knowledge is due to his previous experience with conventional literature (his “horizon of expectations” or “personal/individual genre”). The devices he mentions are suspense (cliffhangers), “identification”, and a “slightly removed imaginary world” (17). He uses the analogy of a game whose rules are fixed, but which can be played in various ways (19).

Norman N. Holland writes in *The Dynamics of Literary Response* that either by conventions or by our past experience we expect works of art and literature to give us pleasure (74). Reading is, like dreaming, wish-fulfilment. The work is “introjected”, an activity by which the fantasies expressed in it can be felt and then formally managed (90). It is this management of the fantasies (the reader’s own and the work’s) that “permits their partial gratification and gives literary pleasure” (52).<sup>117</sup>

For Werner Faulstich (*Thesen zum Bestseller Roman*) „angst“ is the basic feeling experienced by individuals living in a capitalist society (72). The feelings of powerlessness, injustice, and insecurity are momentarily suspended by the reading of bestselling fiction. Love, security, and self-confirmation can be bought, but only as surrogate satisfactions (72). However, he concedes that these fantastic surrogate actions can – under certain circumstances – afford “real” relaxation and satisfaction. This is something I can prove by my Internet survey in which 90.3% of the participants stated that reading fiction in general relaxed them.

According to Victor Nell, who examines the “psychology of reading for pleasure”, reading is either used to “dull consciousness” or to “heighten consciousness” (229). The second type, or “ludic reader”, may use reading to satisfy his “news hunger” (51). In bestselling fiction this news hunger is satisfied by realistic scene-by-scene construction, full dialogues, camera-eye point of view, and abundance of details (51). As the reader knows he is playing a game, he can master fears by experiencing terrible situations with the full knowledge that the fear is under his entire control (244).

For J.A. Appleyard readers use books to escape the frustration and boredom of everyday reality, and, by reading formulaic works which repeat the same story with some variations on the theme, experience “ultimate security” (165). Like Nell and Cawelti he thinks that one

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<sup>117</sup> He resumes the fantasy-concept in *5 Readers Reading*: He claims that a reader uses the literary work to create in himself a psychological process which transforms fantasies into “conscious significance” (16).

important gratification is that readers can deal with anxieties under controlled conditions (167). They can experience a maximum of excitement with a minimum of danger.

The last, and psychologically most detailed theory, is by Karen Odden, who believes that when growing up we have to relinquish certain fantasies (e.g. the world is a safe place; we are one with our mothers; we are at the centre of the world; good and bad are easily identifiable and clearly distinct) and accept the “real world” (130ff). She calls this relinquishing of fantasies the “dramas of childhood”. At times of stress, she states, we therefore retreat to a world where we can recover the belief in our fantasies (132). Serial and popular fiction in particular satisfies this need (132).

All these theories seem to contain some valuable information and insights. In my opinion, the primary gratification to be gained from reading bestsellers is stress-reduction and escape from every-day worries and problems (the 90.3% of my survey seem to prove this). However, I am no psychologist and can only rely on my empirical findings.

It is impossible to try to offer a solution to this problem here. All the author of this dissertation can do is report the findings of a study from 1974 by William J. McGuire, called “The Uses of Mass Communications”, under which the above-mentioned theories can be subsumed, and try to illustrate their findings with a selected body of works. McGuire sees how important it is to know something about people’s unfulfilled needs and the potential rewards offered by a certain type of mass media, in order to find out about the gratifications that people derive from it (167). He offers sixteen different categories the main dimensions of which are the pairs of opposites: cognitive vs. affective, active vs. passive, internal vs. external, and growth vs. preservation (171). The following presents a table of these categories.

	<b>Initiation</b>	<b>Active</b>	<b>Active</b>	<b>Passive</b>	<b>Passive</b>
<b>Mode</b>	Orientation→ Stability ↓	Internal	External	Internal	External
<b>Cognitive</b>	Preservation	1. Consistency	2. Attribution	3. Categorization	4. Objectification
<b>Cognitive</b>	Growth	5. Autonomy	6. Stimulation	7. Teleological	8. Utilitarian
<b>Affective</b>	Preservation	9. Tension- Reduction	10. Expressive	11. Ego- Defensive	12. Reinforce- ment
<b>Affective</b>	Growth	13. Assertion	14. Affiliation	15. Identification	16. Modeling

Source : J.G. Blumer, and Elihu Katz, eds. *The Uses of Mass Communications* (London: Sage Publications, 1974) 172.

The first group of theories discussing motivations fall under the cognitive category. “Consistency Theories” see the person as striving to maintain internal balance of the numerous conflicting forces besetting him or her. Mass communication might cater for this need in rationalizing the world or offering the insight that other people have bigger problems (171). “Attribution Theories” describe the external orientation toward maintaining an interpretation of one’s environment. Stereotypes and the simplification of a complex reality in mass communication might offer help (175). “Categorization Theories” see the person as trying to put aspects of a complex world into ready-made categories. Stock characters and formulaic plots might suit this need (176). “Objectification Categories” see the person as non-reflective and dependent on external guidelines. A lot of these can be found in mass-communication (177).

“Autonomy Theories” depict the person as trying to develop a feeling of personal autonomy and an integrated “Weltanschauung”. Individuals are seen as trying to reach the feeling that they can control their lives. Popular fiction often suggests exactly this (178). “Stimulation Theories” stress the hunger for varied, novel experiences. Mass communication presents a lot more action, excitement and stimulation than real life does (179). “Teleological Theories” view the person as a kind of data processor constantly checking the progress

towards a certain pattern of end states he wants to match. Fiction helps with constant reaffirmation of conservative life-styles (180). “Utilitarian Theories” see the individual as a “problem solver who approaches any situation as an opportunity to acquire useful information or new skills for coping with life” (181). The information content of mass media might appeal to people as being instructive.

The affective motives are led by “Tension-reduction Theories” which view people as a tension system. These are the oldest theories and they include Aristotle’s catharsis concept and Sigmund Freud’s theories. Negative emotions need to be vented and violent fiction offers the opportunity of abreaction (183). “Expressive Theories” claim that a person gets satisfaction from self-expression and acting out. “Ludic readers” fall within this category, as, according to McGuire, the play concept is important. Identification with characters is gratifying, because their experiences are richer than real life (184). “Ego-defence Theories” claim that people want to maintain the image of themselves developed during the course of their lives. Mass media might help by presenting information useful to construct a self-concept or useful to bolster an existing one (185). “Reinforcement Theories” contend that people behave in a way that had a positive effect in the same situation in the past. The most famous representative of this school is Pavlov. Attractive and reassuring content in fiction might serve this need (186).

“Assertion Theories” see the individual as seeking success, admiration, and dominance. Famous representatives are Hobbes and Nietzsche. Mass communication offers powerful, conquering figures with which one can identify (187). “Affiliation Theories” view people as longing for acceptance and affection. Readers of romance might be placed here (188). “Identification Theories” perceive individuals as role players seeking “ego enhancement through the addition of satisfying roles to their self-concepts” (189). Novels present the opportunity to identify with standardized roles or glamorous people. “Modeling Theories”, finally, stress people’s tendency to empathize with the feelings of other people and to imitate models. Again, mass communication offers a lot of models (190).

Some of the above-mentioned theories are imprecise, but, as my Internet survey shows, bestsellers do have a potential for the following gratifications:

- 1) Rationalizing the world/ see that others have bigger problems.
- 2) Stereotypes and simplified reality.

- 3) Guidelines.
- 4) Excitement, violence and varied experiences.
- 5) Reaffirmation of conservative values.
- 6) Information content (instructiveness, Nell's "news hunger").
- 7) Characters inviting identification ("ludic reader"). Role play with characters which are richer than real life.

The following are quotes from the questionnaires submitted during my survey:

1) Rationalizing the world/see that others have bigger problems:

- You are distracted, you are not bored when reading, you do not have to think about problems when you read about other people's problems.<sup>118</sup>
- Bestsellers take you to another world in which you are free of your own worries – dangerous things are pleasant, as you can always stop reading.<sup>119</sup>
- Because you can leave your everyday problems behind you have a clear head after reading. With a little distance some things do not look as bad as you first thought.<sup>120</sup>
- I get a clear head. I can concentrate on something which does not affect me.<sup>121</sup>
- Distraction from the worries of every-day life.<sup>122</sup>

2) Stereotypes and simplified reality:

- Some science fiction and historical novels often resemble books from the same genre. It is fun to "move into" another world with other situations and other laws.<sup>123</sup>
- If I liked a book, I often buy other books by the same author. This often results in familiar plot elements.<sup>124</sup>
- I like books to have common plot lines but to differ in the element to add surprise.

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<sup>118</sup> German: Man ist abgelenkt, man hat keine Langeweile, man muss sich keine Gedanken über Probleme machen, wenn man von den Problemen anderer liest.

<sup>119</sup> German: Bestseller entführen in eine andere Welt, in der man von eigenen Sorgen befreit ist – auch Gefährliches wird als angenehm empfunden, man könnte auch jederzeit aufhören mit dem Lesen.

<sup>120</sup> German: Weil man den Alltag hinter sich lassen kann und nach dem Lesen mit einem klaren Kopf an die Dinge geht. Mit ein bisschen Abstand schauen manche Dinge gar nicht so schlimm aus wie zuerst angenommen.

<sup>121</sup> German: Ich bekomme den Kopf frei. Ich kann mich auf etwas konzentrieren, das mich gar nicht betrifft.

<sup>122</sup> German: Ablenkung von den Sorgen des Alltags.

<sup>123</sup> German: Historische und bestimmte SciFi Romane ähneln sich meist. Es macht Spass, sich da in eine andere Welt mit anderen Gegebenheiten und Gesetzmäßigkeiten heineinzubegeben.

<sup>124</sup> German: Wenn mir ein Buch gut gefallen hat, kaufe ich mir oftmals noch andere Bücher des jeweiligen Autors, was dann in vielen Fällen dazu führt, dass die Handlungsmuster immer wiederkehren.

- No matter in which context, I love stories in which people behave in a brave and noble way and by doing so become apparently unhappy at first – often everything turns out well in the end, however.<sup>125</sup>

### 3) Guidelines:

- Withdraw from every-day reality, get ideas to think about.<sup>126</sup>
- Gives me the feeling that you can reach something when you really, really want it.<sup>127</sup>
- On the one hand you can leave your every-day problems behind, you occupy yourself with something different. On the other hand you meet problems and situations again which you know from your own life. Sometimes you even get ideas for your own life.<sup>128</sup>

### 4) Excitement, violence, and varied experiences:

- I have the feeling of being in another world. Mostly, I am present in the setting as an independent person and can experience many things vividly. Moreover, you forget your own routine for a couple of hours. Sometimes I have the feeling of being allowed to experience those things with other people which are missing in my own life.<sup>129</sup>
- Fiction gives me the opportunity to experience adventures, which I cannot or do not want to experience in my “normal” life.<sup>130</sup>
- Reading stimulates my imagination.

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<sup>125</sup> German: Egal in welchem Kontext liebe ich Geschichten, in denen sich Menschen edel/mutig verhalten und dadurch zunächst scheinbar unglücklich werden – oft wird dann aber ja doch alles gut.

<sup>126</sup> German: Weg vom Alltag. Anregung zum Weiterdenken.

<sup>127</sup> German: Gibt mir das Gefühl, dass man etwas erreichen kann, wenn man es ganz arg möchte.

<sup>128</sup> German: Einerseits kann man aus dem Alltag abtauchen, man beschäftigt sich mit etwas ganz anderem als Alltagsdingen. Andererseits begegnen einem Situationen oder Probleme wieder, die man aus dem eigenen Leben kennt. Manchmal bekommt man sogar neue Denkanstöße für das eigene Leben.

<sup>129</sup> German: Ich habe das Gefühl in einer anderen Welt zu sein und stehe meist als unabhängige Person am Handlungsort und erlebe so vieles hautnah mit. Zudem vergisst man selbst seinen Alltag für ein paar Stunden. Manchmal habe ich das Gefühl, am Leben anderer Personen das erleben zu dürfen, was im richtigen Leben manchmal fehlt.

<sup>130</sup> German: Belletristik eröffnet mir die Möglichkeit, Abenteuer zu erleben, die ich in meinem „normalen“ Leben nicht erleben kann oder möchte.

## 5) Reaffirmation of conservative values:

No explicit statement regarding this item could be found in the questionnaires. This is only logical, as this is an underlying function which would not be consciously rationalized by the readers.

## 6) Information content:

- I like reading bestsellers because I can enlarge my knowledge without learning when I read realistic stories. On the other hand, my imagination is stimulated.<sup>131</sup>
- Dive into another world. Experience things you cannot or will not experience in your “normal” life. Gather “experiences”, or rather learn from the experiences of other people. Collect knowledge. Therefore, it is important that the stories are realistic; especially with historical novels the correct historical background is very, very important.<sup>132</sup>
- I like reading bestsellers, because I can learn new things without great effort when reading realistic stories.<sup>133</sup>
- I like Ken Follet, because his novels are well-researched.<sup>134</sup>
- .... and, moreover, I am always up to date with bestsellers.<sup>135</sup>

## 7) Characters inviting identification:

- I can “switch off” completely and transpose myself into the story. I do not react at once then, if somebody calls me.<sup>136</sup>
- One mentally slips into the role of another person with who one can identify – wishful thinking?<sup>137</sup>
- I become part of the book.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> German: Ich lese gerne Bestseller, weil bei realistischen Geschichten mein Wissen ohne großen Lernaufwand erweitert wird. Andererseits wird meine Phantasie angeregt.

<sup>132</sup> German: Abtauchen in eine andere Welt. Dinge erleben, die man im normalen Leben nicht erleben kann oder wird. „Erfahrungen“ sammeln, bzw. aus den Erfahrungen anderer lernen. Wissen sammeln, daher ist es wichtig, dass die Geschichten realistisch sind, v.a. bei historischen Romanen ist der korrekte historische Hintergrund sehr, sehr wichtig.

<sup>133</sup> German: Ich lese gerne Bestseller, weil bei realistischen Geschichten mein Wissen ohne großen Lernaufwand erweitert wird.

<sup>134</sup> German: Ich mag Ken Follet. Er recherchiert gut.

<sup>135</sup> German: ... und ausserdem bin ich mit Bestsellern auch gleich noch „up to date“.

<sup>136</sup> German: Ich kann vollständig abschalten und mich in die Geschichte hineinversetzen. Ich reagiere dann auf Zurufe nicht beim ersten Mal.

<sup>137</sup> German: Man schlüpft im Geist in die Rolle einer anderen Person mit der man sich identifiziert – Wunschenken ?

<sup>138</sup> German: Ich werde sozusagen zu einem Teil des Buches.



- Reading bestsellers is relaxing, because you can forget everything around you. You can imagine being a different person in a different situation and you can laugh, cry or love with the protagonists of the story.<sup>139</sup>

#### IV. d.) Literary Formula

Apart from what books do to cater for the above-mentioned needs, we are interested in how conventional or formulaic bestsellers are. My hypothesis is that editors either choose a book by a well-known author, or a book which belongs to a certain “genre”, i.e. a certain typical line of fiction. After surveying a sample of fifty books which form the basis for this examination, I found out that 56% featured a serial protagonist or belonged to a clearly identifiable series. Nearly all books belonged to one of the categories mentioned in “Books and the Consumer” to which we want to stick here, as these are the ones for which figures were presented in the previous chapter. The following shows a table of percentages from my sample.

56% Crime/Thriller/Detective  
 16% Fantasy  
 10% Horror/Occult  
 8% Romance/Love Story  
 6% Historical Novel/Romance

Some of the bestsellers covered more than one category. The three works which did not fit into any category could be named “American Nostalgia” and “British Social Satire”.<sup>140</sup> However, they will be neglected. As mentioned above, there are some overlappings, but, as the author of this work is not interested in developing a new, highly detailed genre theory of popular fiction, this does not represent an obstacle.<sup>141</sup> I am interested in how these books succeed in informing their readers about their belonging to a special category, as far as content is concerned. The concept of “intertextuality” as the concrete reference to certain “pretexts” or groups of pretexts as described in Manfred Pfister *Intertextualität* is used here

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<sup>139</sup> German: Es beruhigt, da man alles andere um sich herum vergessen kann und sich in manche Situationen und Personen direkt hineinversetzen kann und dann auch mitlachen, mitweinen, mitlieben, etc. kann.

<sup>140</sup> These books are by Elton, Townsend, and Wolfe.

<sup>141</sup> As noticed earlier, bestsellers are too different to be considered as a „genre“ on the basis of their content.

(15).<sup>142</sup> Moreover, I will try to find out how intertextuality is made visible for the reader.<sup>143</sup> Characters, names and plot features are scrutinized. However, before doing this, something must be said about the line of works which have interested themselves in the study of formulaic literature.

What is a formula? This is the most important question in this context, and I will attempt to find a definition which can be used here fruitfully.

The first study of formulaic fiction to be considered does not really help to understand the concept. James D. Hart's *The Popular Book* (1950) merely links fashionable topics and formulas to historical events in America without explaining the term. As a former teacher he is interested in the social and cultural aspects of the mass media. He thinks that it is possible to discover the spirit of an age through popular books (280). For him, it is clear that stress and turmoil lead to the desire to escape, which explains the preference for certain story-types during various times of distress (260).

The second contribution, "Content Characteristics of Best-Selling Fiction" by John Harvey, establishes six categories with a myriad of variables for analyzing the typical content features of a number of books.<sup>144</sup> Percentage points are distributed and the author tries to find shared characteristics by mathematical means while using different variables (Harvey 91-114). Too much emphasis is placed on figures and statistics. This approach does not help to understand the nature of formulaic plots.

A more sophisticated study is contained in Northrop Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957). Nearly all scholars who have discussed the idea of genre have drawn heavily on his classic study of literary criticism. His genre theory comprises no less than six different classifications.

- The first classification is based on the relation between the protagonist and the reader and the laws of nature (33f). In "Myth" the hero is superior to the reader and nature.

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<sup>142</sup> Intertextual markers arouse certain expectaions in the reader.

<sup>143</sup> Possible markers within the text are names, plot features, print features, and characters from other stories. Reference to myths is a borderline case. (31 – 48).

<sup>144</sup> These categories cover action, emotion, personalities of the major characters, plot themes, romanticization, and simplicity (Harvey 95).

Typical manifestations are myths. In “folk tales or legends” the hero is “superior in degree” to both. Romance typically has this kind of hero. In the “high mimetic mode” represented, e.g. by epic tragedy, the hero is superior to men, but not to nature. In the “low mimetic mode”, often used in realistic fiction, the hero is like the reader. In the “ironic mode”, finally, the hero is inferior to the reader. As the name suggests, this constellation is typical of irony.

- His second classification moves between the two poles “verisimilitude” and a “story about a character who can do anything” (61).
- Thirdly, he describes the two main tendencies of literature as being “comic”, where the hero is integrated with society, and “tragic”, where the hero is isolated (54).
- The apparently most important classification for Frye is the fourth based on four narrative categories or “mythoi/generic plots” as he calls them (162). The first is “romantic”, the mythos of summer, the second “tragic”, the mythos of autumn, the third “comic”, the mythos of spring, and the fourth “ironic or satiric”, the mythos of winter.
- The fifth classification he offers is based on genres (248). “Epos” is orally addressed to an audience, “fiction” is read, in “drama” an audience is confronted and the author is concealed, and in “lyric” the audience is concealed. It is an “utterance that is overheard” (248).
- The final classification is determined by the two pairs of opposites introverted/extroverted and intellectual/personal (308-312). “Confession” and “Anatomy” are intellectual, the first being introverted, the second extroverted. “Novel” and “Romance” are personal, again the first being introverted, the second extroverted.

If one follows Frye’s anthropological theory, the basis of every artistic text are archetypes of the collective unconscious: the archetype of death and rebirth in tragedy and comedy, the archetype of the scapegoat in tragedy and satire, and the archetype of quest and initiation in epos, romance and novel. This is independent of the intention of the author.

Elaborate as it is, this theory is of no use for this essay, as it does not justify or explain the choice of categories and thus seems haphazard. Unfortunately, the same is true of Frye’s “Archetypal Criticism”, which at first glance seemed really appealing, as it appeared to be

able to explain all the existing diversity away into neat, age-old categories. This “archetypal criticism” uses the symbolism of the Bible and of Classical Mythology as a “grammar of literary archetypes” (135). His comparison rests on an analogy with music with its limited number of keys and rhythms (133). Interesting as it is, this system of archetypal criticism does not help us when analyzing the typical features of modern bestsellers, as it can be applied to nearly anything that has ever been written.

The same holds true for Foster’s *The Basic Formulas of Fiction* (1977). For the writer of this “how-to-manual” for popular-fiction writers every text can be brought down to one of the two following formulas:

$1 + 1 = ?$

$1 - 1 = ?$  (Foster 6).

$1 + 1$  means that two conflicting forces are dissolved into a happy ending.  $1 - 1$  means they lead to disaster or an unhappy ending. These conflicting forces must be emotional states (6). This constellation can be found in every piece of story writing as, without any conflict, no story would exist. Therefore, this framework is equally useless for our analysis.

The next work, *Myth and Reality* (1963), by Mircea Eliade is – like Frye’s – rooted in anthropological research. The author claims that the novel has taken the place of the recitation of myths in traditional and popular societies (191). “Myths”, she says, are “true stories which are sacred, exemplary and significant to a certain culture.” They are about life and death and narrate the origin of the world. At the other end of his continuum are “fairy tales and fables” (8). They are “false” and secular stories which may be told by everyone as the hero is not sacred. They usually have a happy ending because the hero can rely on magic and other aid. Next to myth is the “saga”, which is tragic, because it tells the whole life of a hero, including his death (196). Next to fairy tales are “legends” which are not further defined. For Eliade the detective novel is the typical manifestation of the old fight between good and evil.

The most useful works on formulaic literature are by John Cawelti. “The Concept of Formula in the Study of Popular Literature”, written in 1969, states that cultural products always contain a mixture of “conventions” and “inventions” (71). Conventions are known to the author and his audience beforehand. They consist of “things like favourite plots, stereotyped characters, accepted ideas, commonly known metaphors and other linguistic devices, etc.” (71). Inventions, on the other hand, are elements which are “uniquely imagined

by the creator” (71). A formula, according to this early definition, is a “conventional system for structuring cultural products” (72). It represents the way in which a culture embodies its own preoccupations and mythical archetypes in narrative form (72). Formulas represent social or cultural ritual in heterogeneous societies (73).<sup>145</sup>

In *Adventure, Mystery and Romance*, written in 1976, Cawelti elaborates on the concept of formula. He claims that adults, like children, find a special delight in familiar stories (1). They have an “interest in certain types of stories which have highly predicative structures that guarantee the fulfilment of conventional expectations” (1).<sup>146</sup> This serves the purpose of relaxation, entertainment and escape. He defines a formula as being “a combination or synthesis of a number of specific cultural conventions with a more universal story form or archetype” (6). This means that archetypes have to be seen within the context of actual cultural conventions. Formula literature, or “Schemaliteratur”, he says, is essentially standardized (8).<sup>147</sup> Giving new vitality to stereotypes or inventing new touches of plot and setting are welcomed, but only within the limit of the given formula (10). This statement can be proved by the case of Patricia Cornwell. She used to write highly successful serial bestsellers featuring a female coroner. Then, suddenly, she dropped this series and started a new one which turned out to be a mistake. Such mistakes are exploited by other authors who promise to stick to the expected formula faithfully.<sup>148</sup> Cawelti sees the capacity of formulaic literature for entertainment, because intense excitement can be enjoyed with the security of a happy outcome (14).

His most important contribution to the discussion is his proposal to replace the “ambiguous notion of myth with a conception of literary structures that can be more precisely defined” (29). An enumeration of five “primary moral fantasies” of a more exciting world under which, he thinks, all formulas can be subsumed, presents the reader with the following categories: “Adventure” where the hero has to overcome obstacles on his mission, opposed by a villain, and sometimes rewarded by a lady or ladies. “Romance” with the development of love relationships, sometimes including elements of adventure. “Mystery”, in which hidden secrets

<sup>145</sup> This reminds one of J. Huizinga’s definition of ritual as play (27).

<sup>146</sup> A similar attitude can be found in Orwell, *Shooting an Elephant* (185): “The books one reads in childhood, and perhaps most of all the bad and good-bad books, create in one’s mind a sort of false map of the world, a series of fabulous countries into which one can retreat at odd moments throughout the rest of life, (...)”

<sup>147</sup> Zimmermann, *Schemaliteratur*. The book is much along the same lines as Cawelti’s.

<sup>148</sup> An example for this is the following quotation on the first page of a Jeffrey Deaver thriller: „Recently, authors such as Patricia Cornwell have come adrift when trying to create a fresh formula for their books...“ (unnumbered page).

are investigated and discovered. “Melodrama”, which is a “fantasy of a world that operates according to our hearts’ desires.” And “Alien Beings and States”, under which horror stories, monster stories and science fiction stories can be subsumed (39).

The categories I am going to use for my analysis can be nicely adapted to Cawelti’s: “Crime/thriller/detective” comprises “Adventure” and “Mystery”, sometimes even including “Alien Beings and States”, when the book is a science fiction thriller. “Fantasy” and “Horror/occult” can be roughly equated with “Alien Beings and States”, often including elements of “Adventure”. “Historical romance/romance/love story” correspond to “Romance”. The many overlappings and the mingling of elements stemming from various of Cawelti’s basic formulas might be a way of keeping them fresh and entertaining. The great abundance of diverse formulas is explained by Cawelti as follows: “the archetypal patterns embodied in formulas are few, but the way in which these patterns are expressed in different cultural materials leads to a great diversity of particular formula” (296).

Cawelti is criticized by Donald R. Arbuckle in his dissertation *Popular Western: The Theory of a Commercial Literary Formula* written in 1977. Formula, he says, cannot be “thought of as possessing an independent agency of its own, (...)” Rather, formulas are “a scholarly construct, an abstraction employed for analytical purposes” (16). This means that the literary scholar needs some tool in order to account for the numerous similar and conventional stories and this tool is the concept of formula, with which one can examine plots, character and setting. I do not agree with this, as I think that authors and editors likewise are aware of the conventional plot features and use them deliberately to cater for the needs of a clearly defined target customer (the reader in this case). This becomes clear when one looks at the review clippings which cover the first pages of most bestsellers. They always extol the formulaic or generic qualities of the books.<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> Some examples are: „A heart-racing thriller. This story has so many twists – all satisfying, most unexpected – that it would be a sin to reveal too much of the plot in advance...If this novel doesn’t get your pulse racing, you need to check your meds” (Brown, unnumbered page); “Will have readers eagerly turning the pages to follow the wily twists and turns of Patterson’s fast-paced and menacing new novel...an enrapturing thriller” (Patterson, *Four Blind Mice* unnumbered page); “Once again displays his penchants for multiple false endings...This is the most ambitious attempt yet to turn computer crime into fiction...Deaver’s customary brilliant plotting” (Deaver, unnumbered page).

Furthermore, there are some very detailed analytic frameworks for formal elements by Propp, Greimas Todorov and Bremond, but to transfer their methods to the present macroscopic study would be beyond my scope and of no great use.<sup>150</sup>

Neither does the author of this thesis try to emulate Arbuckle or Cawelti with their very thorough analyses and elaborations of the steps of different formulas. I am satisfied with putting the books discussed into one, sometimes more categories and with examining their content and formal characteristics. For the analysis of their structural features Gérard Genette's narrative categories are used supplemented by some remarks on character and setting. In contrast to other narrative theories like the approaches used by Stanzel, Booth, Vogt, Propp, Stierle, etc., which are either too detailed or not comprising enough, Genette's approach links grammatical categories deduced from the verb with traditional concepts, such as point of view, telling/showing, etc. and thus provides a detailed and thorough framework for formal analysis. A short summary of Genette might be helpful. He has been chosen, as his theory is very detailed and comprising.

#### *IV. d. 1.) Narrative Categories*

I am interested in the relations of story, plot and narrative point of view here. Genette calls the main points of interest "tense", "mood", and "voice".<sup>151</sup> "Tense" describes the relation of narrated and narrating time (21). "Order", "duration", and "frequency" are subsumed under "tense" (22). In the category of "order" only "prolepsis" and "analepsis" will concern us, as the examination of these categories might render some insight into the phenomenon of suspense. "prolepsis" means telling an event which has yet to happen, "analepsis" mentions something that has already happened (25). Both are variants of "anachrony". They can have various extent and reach (31), but, as my study is macroscopic by nature, such detail can not be dwelt on. "Duration" comprises four "tempi" (67): "ellipsis", "scene", where narrated and narrating time are congruent, "summary", and "descriptive pause" (67). "Frequency", finally, tells us about the repetitive relationship between story and plot. It includes "singulative narration", where something that happened once is narrated once. "Repeating narration" tells one event more than once. "Iterative narration" tells once what happened often (83).

<sup>150</sup> A summary of these theories can be found in Ludwig, *Arbeitsbuch Romananalyse* (70).

<sup>151</sup> Gerard Genette, *Die Erzählung* (München: Fink, 1994). The numbers in brackets refer to this edition.

“Mood”, the second big category, includes “distance” and “perspective” (115). “Distance” comprises the opposing pair “mimesis” and “diegesis”, or “telling” and “showing” (116). It describes how the events in a story are presented. Telling is more indirect than showing. This is important, as it might lead us to understand how control of sympathy and identification with certain characters are achieved. As far as the narration of words is concerned, the most distanced mode is “narrated speech” (122; Ludwig, *Arbeitsbuch Romananalyse* 177). “Transposed speech” or indirect speech comes next. More “mimetic” in character is the subcategory of “free indirect speech”, which gives the reader the illusion of being within the “head” of a character. The most mimetic form is “immediate” or “reported speech”. Here the narrator pretends his characters are speaking (123). One could add free direct speech or interior monologue to this end of the continuum (Ludwig, *Arbeitsbuch Romananalyse* 70). “Perspective” is about “focalization” or the choice of point of view. There is “zero focalization” which is equivalent to the traditional “omniscient narrator”. The narrator sees more than his protagonists. “Internal focalization” fixes the point of view to one character or changes it between various characters. (“multiple”). This has also been called “reflector” or “camera-eye” point of view (Stanzel 16). “External focalization” means that no view of the thoughts and emotions of the characters is given (134f). It can also be called “neutral” point of view (Vogt 50).

The last big category, “voice”, subsumes “time of the narrating”, “narrative levels”, and “person” (153). “Time of the narrating” can be “subsequent” (meaning narration in the past and of the past). According to Genette, this is the most common manifestation. “Prior” narration is the narration of future events like dreams or prophecies. “Simultaneous” narration, represented by interior monologue, for example, accompanies the action. “Interpolated” narration takes place between moments of the action (154f). “Narrative levels” are “extradiegetic” (first level), “intradiegetic” (second level) and “metadiegetic” (relations between first and second narrative) (163).

The narrative instance of the first narration is by definition “extradiegetic”. The instance of a second (“metadiegetic”, or embedded) narration is by definition “intradiegetic”. The final category belonging to “voice” is “person”. Because he finds the expressions 1<sup>st</sup>-person and 3<sup>rd</sup>-person narrative awkward, Genette introduces new terms. His two main divisions are the “heterodiegetic” narrator (the narrator is absent from the story he tells), and the “homodiegetic” narrator (the narrator is present as a character in the story he tells) (175).



Within the “homodiegetic” type there are two variants. The first where the narrator is the hero of his own story is called “autodiegetic”. The second comprises the narrator as observer or eye-witness (176).

Using “person” and “perspective” as defining categories, he arrives at a table of “narrative possibilities” presented below (277).

Narrative level → Relation ↓	<b>Extra -</b>	<b>dieget-</b>	<b>ic</b>	<b>Intra-</b>	<b>dieget-</b>	<b>ic</b>
Focalization	0	Inter- nal	Exter- al	0	Inter- nal	Exter- nal
Hetero- diegetic						
Homo- diegetic						

Theoretically, all combinations are possible. I will try to define the narrators of the examined bestsellers according to this table. As far as character is concerned, I will use Manfred Pfister’s categories, which are summarized below.

These categories are based on pairs of opposites. Static vs. dynamic characters, i.e. characters who do or do not develop. One-dimensional vs. multiple-dimensional characters, meaning characters with few and many traits. Typical examples are stock characters or stereotypical characters as opposed to “individuals”. Open vs. closed; closed characters are completely defined for the audience or reader, whereas open ones remain miraculous.

Transpsychological vs. psychological, describing characters who act outside the framework of the psychologically plausible and others who remain within this framework (Pfister 240-264). There are four categories of techniques for characterisation of characters. These are either “figural”, supplied by the characters, or “auktorial”, supplied by the narrator. Characterization can be “explicit” or “implicit” and can either refer to the person uttering it or to another person (Pfister 252).

As far as setting is concerned, I refer to a list of possible meanings of settings in Hans Werner Ludwig’s *Arbeitsbuch Romananalyse* (172). Settings can simply serve as the place where the action takes place, they can express a certain atmosphere; they can mirror the feelings of a character; they can be used as a means of contrasting different attitudes, feelings, life-styles, etc.; as a symbol; as a means of creating an illusion of reality; as a “requisite”; or simply as an expression of artistic ability (172).

With these theoretical tools I will be able to examine the form of the selected bestsellers closely. After the analytical framework has been made clear, it remains to explain the play concept mentioned earlier in this essay before I can proceed to the analysis of the books

#### *IV. d. 2.) Ludic Reading*

How do all the above-mentioned factors interact in the processes of choosing and reading bestsellers ?

My theses are:

- 1) The urge to play, to escape everyday life and its problems is basic to human nature. It is not limited to certain epochs or classes of society. Some people satisfy this need by doing or watching sports, playing with their computers, cars, or bicycles, others satisfy the need by reading. In order to avoid misunderstandings it has to be stressed, however, that ludic reading represents only one manifestation of the urge to play.
- 2) The reading activity is a play activity. Readers consciously and deliberately choose a type of book (or “game”) by looking at the paratextual signals that cover, blurb, author

name, or genre give them. Publishers make sure that the books are marked accordingly so as to enable the readers to identify the type of game they are buying. These paratextual elements, as well as intertextual genre and formula markers, open up the “horizon of expectations”.

- 3) The primary gratification to be gained from reading fiction is relaxation and entertainment (my Internet survey proves this; 90.3% stated that reading relaxed them). In times of stress, it is a basic human need to escape every-day problems and to be entertained. Bestsellers perform the extremely important social function of satisfying this need.
- 4) Readers want to be manipulated and play and be played like figures in a roleplay (participant-observers; 37.1% of the participants in my survey found it positive that their emotions were manipulated while reading). They want to be able to assume different personas, which is made possible by the shifting point of view in most bestsellers, and experience adventures with the protagonist(s). Certain structural characteristics of bestsellers ensure successful play.

How does this play activity work? How do readers recognize the “playground” they are entering? Who are the players? Before I can answer these questions, I must briefly introduce some theories on the concept of play. I do not intend to give an exhaustive overview, just a short introduction.

The primary work referred to by all the later theorists is *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture* by the historian J. Huizinga, written in 1944 while he was held prisoner by the Nazis. Huizinga claims that “civilization arises and unfolds in and as play” (foreword). It is a cultural phenomenon. Play possesses certain formal characteristics, which shall be listed here for the sake of clarity:

- It is a free activity standing outside “ordinary” life as being “not serious” but at the same time absorbing the player intensely and utterly (13).
- It is an activity which is not connected to any material interest (13).
- “It proceeds within its own proper boundaries of time and space according to fixed rules and in orderly manner” (13).

- It fosters the formation of groups which like to surround themselves with secrecy and stress their difference from the world around them by means such as disguise (13).

The phenomenologist Hans-Georg Gadamer used this concept to develop his theory of the work of art as play. The artefact is no object, it is an experience that changes the one who experiences (108). He follows the use of the word “play” and defines it as a “to-and-fro movement which constantly renews itself in repetition (109). The urge for repetition is inherent in it. There always has to be an “other”, a partner with whom the player can play and who/which answers with a countermove (111). The appeal of the game is the risk: whether it will work out or not (112). The work of art is play because it only reaches its full existence in being played (127).<sup>152</sup>

*Prospecting* by Wolfgang Iser also follows the track of Huizinga and Gadamer. He attempts to “raise play above representation as an umbrella concept to cover all the ongoing operations of the textual process” (250). Authors play games with readers and their playground is the text (250). According to him, there is a contract between author and reader (based on conventions) that the textual world must be treated not as reality, but **as if it were reality**. This “as if” can be equated with play (251). What happens in this world is free of all the consequences of the real world.<sup>153</sup> His thesis is that the difference from reality constitutes the “basic blank of the text which sets the game in motion” (251). There are clearly distinguishable positions which are confronted with each other; this confrontation triggers the to-and-fro movement mentioned above, and the result of the textual game is meaning (252).

I will not go as far as the musician Pat Kane, who, in his book *The Play Ethic*, published in 2004, wants to replace the Puritan work ethic by a play ethic. He thinks that it is the “richness and variety of our human games which make for a healthy and vibrant society” (4). A statement I agree with. We have to become “literate in all forms of play that humans pursue” (4). This statement goes too far for the purposes of this dissertation, however. I agree that it is important to become fully conscious of the players we are and that we have to understand the forms of play that we use. People do not only play with books nowadays, they also play with

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<sup>152</sup> Like Huizinga’s ritual. Another contribution, *Man, Play, and Games* by Roger Caillois offers a detailed classification of games. He divides game activities into agon (competition), alea (chance), mimicry (simulation), and ilinx (vertigo). These modes move between the poles of paidia (uncontrolled fantasy) and ludus (effort, patience, skill) (13). However, this framework is too detailed for my purposes.

<sup>153</sup> This idea can also be found in Nell (75,244), Cawelti (73,74,94), and Holland (102).

the Internet, digital toys, the media, art, power, etc. In the framework of my investigation, it would go too far, however, to think about redesigning our “institutions and constitutions, our marketplaces and infrastructures, even our relationships of time and space, so that we can follow this playful nature – rather than constantly shave the blade against, across and through it” (7). One important thing has to be mentioned here: the elite which defines our cultural standards should definitely stop disdaining popular art, as it affects much more people than so-called “serious” art.

How can these theories be linked to the reading of bestselling fiction? I am going to assume the reception theories of Iser and Jauß, as well as the game theories of Huizinga and Gadamer as a theoretical basis for the following discussion.

Following Huizinga’s definition of play, the bestseller-reading activity can clearly be put into this category.<sup>154</sup>

- 1) It is definitely a voluntary, “free” activity, standing outside ordinary life. This becomes clear when one looks at the times and places when and where reading is practised. All of the participants in my Internet survey read during their leisure time and in places which are not connected to work (apart from the commuters who read on the train). Ranking topmost were evening, night, the weekend, and holidays. As far as the places were concerned, the order is bed, sofa, beach or garden, bathtub, and even the toilet.
- 2) It absorbs the readers intensely and utterly. 88.5% of the participants in my Internet survey stated that they forgot the world around them while reading. Some examples are:
  - I can lose myself in a good story, relax completely. I do not see and hear the world around me any more. I do not realize that I am turning the pages and in my head I watch a great film.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> See also Nell (1,2).

<sup>155</sup> German: Ich kann in einer guten Story regelrecht versinken, mich total entspannen und nehme die Welt um mich herum nicht mehr wahr. Ich bekomme das Umblättern nicht mehr mit und in meinem Kopf läuft einfach nur ein toller Film ab.

- I can “switch off” completely and put myself in the place of the characters in the story. I do not hear it at once, if people call me.<sup>156</sup>
  - You can “read yourself away” into another world.<sup>157</sup>
  - I do not hear anything when I am reading, I am in the book.<sup>158</sup>
  - While reading I experience a “parallel universe”, which helps me to relax.<sup>159</sup>
  - You can switch off completely by getting into the world created by the author and by living the lives of the protagonists.<sup>160</sup>
  - When I am reading I can switch off, identify with the characters of a novel and forget the hustle and bustle around me.<sup>161</sup>
  - By living the lives of the characters of a novel one can completely forget the stress of every-day life.<sup>162</sup>
  - Total switch off and “diving” into another world. I become a part of the book.<sup>163</sup>
- 3) It has its own boundaries of space and time and a set of fixed rules. The own boundaries, the special time and place are the bed, the sofa, the bathtub, and the time after work.<sup>164</sup> Another understanding of “playground” could be the genre-or formula-related field that operates with the “horizon of expectations”. This means the typical, expected, formula-related settings, characters, and moves. These patterns of expectations governed by formula represent the set of rules.<sup>165</sup>
- 4) It fosters the formation of groups which stress their difference from the world around them. This explains the phenomenon of fan clubs. There are lots of fan clubs for all kinds of authors and protagonists on the Internet (the best examples are the *Harry Potter* and *Lord of the Rings* hype). 48.7% of the participants in my Internet survey

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<sup>156</sup> Ich kann vollständig abschalten und mich in die Geschichte hineinversetzen. Ich reagiere dann auf Zurufe nicht beim ersten Mal.

<sup>157</sup> Man kann sich in eine andere Welt weglesen.

<sup>158</sup> Ich höre dann nichts ... ich bin im Buch drin.

<sup>159</sup> German: Ich erlebe in der Zeit des Lesens ein „Paralleluniversum“, das mich zum Abschalten bringt.

<sup>160</sup> German: Man schaltet vollkommen ab, indem man sich in die geschaffene Welt des Autors begibt und mit den Protagonisten mitlebt.

<sup>161</sup> German: Beim Lesen kann ich abschalten, mich in die Figuren des Buches hineinversetzen und den Trubel um mich herum ein wenig vergessen.

<sup>162</sup> German: Durch „Mitleben“ im Roman kann man den Alltagsstress komplett aussen vor lassen.

<sup>163</sup> German: Totales Abschalten und Eintauchen in eine andere Welt. Ich werde sozusagen zu einem Teil des Buches.

<sup>164</sup> See also Nell (250).

<sup>165</sup> On formulas as games see also Cawelti, *The Concept of Formula in the Study of Popular Literature* 73.

stated that they preferred a certain author, many of them writing about these authors with such infatuation that they have to be called fans.

- 5) There are “partners” who play the textual game together. These partners are the authors, the texts, and the readers.<sup>166</sup> Authors play with the readers’s expectations and these expectations, in turn, influence the choices of the authors. After the game has been set in motion by the “basic blank of the text”, there are certain structural devices, common to all bestsellers, which supply the reader with gaps he has to fill, thus keeping him busy with the “Gestaltbildung” (Iser, *Akt des Lesens* 207). Such devices are, as mentioned above, cliffhangers, abrupt introduction of new characters, withholding of information, new threads of plot, change of point of view, the foreshadowing of plot elements, control of sympathy, double bluffs, etc.<sup>167</sup>

The basic function of all these elements is to create suspense, which is the one indispensable ingredient of bestselling fiction. Readers know how to take certain elements in certain kinds of books. The formula (author or genre) conditions or programs the responses of the reader to a certain extent. The gap-filling proceeds according to the type of game.<sup>168</sup> Dove introduces the concept of “individual genre” – the personal horizon born of reading experience (48). According to him, programming can not be realized in text or author alone; the major partner is the individual genre, the reader’s own perception of the formula, which conditions the signals of the text into guides or expectations for further development (48).

How is the gap-filling achieved ? As described above, the reader constantly moves between a fading past horizon and an opening future horizon filled with “protentions”. He has to “paint” the “picture” of the text. There are a lot of theories about how the process of imaging works, it would lead too far to go into detail here, however. Let it suffice to say that, apparently, Victor Nell was wrong when he assumed that “image generation will seldom form part of ludic reading” (220). The majority of the participants in my Internet survey (65%) admitted to imaging when asked, if they watched films based on bestsellers, and why. This

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<sup>166</sup> Dove claims that there is a feedback between expectations – genre – expectations (74).; Dunker states that, as the author of formulaic literature wants to maintain the popularity of his works, he considers the reader when composing his text (181).

<sup>167</sup> Lists of such elements can be found in Iser, *Prospecting*, Faulstich, *Thesen zum Bestseller Roman*, and Dunker.

<sup>168</sup> There are two works on the special character of the detective story, which also point out the above-mentioned elements; however, they limit themselves to the detective story and see it as a special case. The works are by Dunker and Dove, respectively.

level of active imaging is also the reason why I think that reading and watching TV or listening to books on audio CDs cannot be compared. Some examples are:

- I watch a film in my head. The advantage over a real film is: everything looks like I have imagined it.<sup>169</sup>
- Like cinema in my head.<sup>170</sup>
- I see the things I read in my mind's eye like a film and, if I have a good day, it is nearly as if I was part of the whole story.<sup>171</sup>
- It relaxes, because it is like watching TV. Only that the film is produced by myself and runs in my own head.<sup>172</sup>
- I like reading bestsellers, because it is like watching TV. The difference is that you can produce the film yourself and play it in your head.<sup>173</sup>
- It is always interesting to see how much of a film corresponds to the pictures I form in my head while I am reading.<sup>174</sup>
- I can switch off and give the characters faces.<sup>175</sup>
- Will I be disappointed or do the characters correspond to my imagination?<sup>176</sup>

I also tested the readers's sensitivity to "ludic elements" with my Internet survey. However, as I only consider the expert or veteran reader to be a player, I limit myself to readers who stated that they read frequently.<sup>177</sup> The questions aiming at these elements were:

- 1) Do you have a favourite author? 48.7% of the total participants answered this question with "yes". Most of them mentioned the style of the author and his "typical" stories as reasons.

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<sup>169</sup> German: In meinem Kopf läuft ein Film ab. Vorteil gegenüber dem wirklichen Film: Alles ist so und sieht so aus, wie ICH es mir in meiner Fantasie vorgestellt habe.

<sup>170</sup> German: Wie Kino im Kopf.

<sup>171</sup> German: Das Gelesene sehe ich vor meinem inneren Auge wie einen Film und wenn ich einen guten Tag habe, ist es fast so als wäre ich Bestandteil des Ganzen.

<sup>172</sup> German: Entspannt weil es wie Fernsehen ist, nur dass der Film selbst produziert wird und im eigenen Kopf abgespielt wird.

<sup>173</sup> German: Ich lese gerne Bestseller, weil es wie Fernsehen ist, nur dass der Film selbst produziert wird und im eigenen Kopf abgespielt wird.

<sup>174</sup> German: Es ist immer wieder spannend zu sehen, wie viel in dem Film mit meinem Bild im Kopf während des Lesens übereinstimmt.

<sup>175</sup> German: Ich kann abschalten und den Figuren Gesichter geben.

<sup>176</sup> German: Werde ich enttäuscht oder entsprechen die Personen meiner Fantasie beim Lesen?

<sup>177</sup> Genre preferences are, in my opinion, also rooted in this game concept. In order to play successfully, you must know the rules of the game. If you do not know the rules, you can make little or less of a book.



- 2) Do you think you have a preference for certain basic/underlying plots? 15.4% of the total participants answered this question with “yes”. 23.3% of these favoured love and relationship. For most of them a happy ending was essential.<sup>178</sup> 19.9% preferred the detective or crime formula.<sup>179</sup> Also 19.9% stated that they prefer formulaic stories with serial heroes.<sup>180</sup> 6.2% liked historical novels, and 4.1% preferred mythical or magical stories where good fights against evil.
- 3) Does reading bestsellers relax you? As mentioned above, 90.3% of the total participants stated that reading (fiction in general) relaxed them, because they can escape every-day problems and escape to another world.<sup>181</sup>
- 4) Is the amount of “real life” in the story/plot important to you ? Is it part of a positive or negative reading experience, if the plot does **not** reflect every-day reality ? 72.6% found “real life” not important at all, for 60.5% it was part of a positive reading experience, if the plot did not reflect every-day reality.
- 5) Is it part of a positive reading experience, if your emotions are manipulated ? 37.1% answered with “yes”.
- 6) Do you experience emotions (positive, negative, or none) while reading bestsellers ? 80.7% of the total participants experienced positive emotions. For 14.7% the emotions were negative, and only 11% claimed to experience no emotions at all.
- 7) Do you forget the world around you when reading bestsellers? 88.5% did.
- 8) Does it disturb you, if you can guess the outcome of the story/plot? If you can guess the outcome, is it part of a positive or negative reading experience ? 30.5% said it did

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<sup>178</sup> I want a happy ending (German: Ich will ein Happy End); Hero and happy ending.

<sup>179</sup> I like reading exciting thrillers where an investigator solves difficult cases (German: Ich lese gerne spannende Krimis, bei denen ein Ermittler in verzwickten Situationen Licht ins Dunkel bringt); Thrillers/mysteries must be absolutely baffling, or bluff you. As I am an **expert thriller reader**, the books are otherwise boring (German: Krimis müssen absolut undurchschaubar sein, bzw. einen zwischendrin auf falsche Fährten führen. Da ich in Krimis sehr bewandert bin. Sonst reizt mich das Buch nicht).

<sup>180</sup> If I liked a book, I often buy other books by the same author. This often leads to similar plots which repeat the same elements (German: Wenn mir ein Buch gut gefallen hat, kaufe ich mir oftmals noch andere Bücher des jeweiligen Autors, was dann in vielen Fällen dazu führt, dass die Handlungsmuster immer wiederkehren); It is exciting to find out how the story develops; after the same pattern [like in books by the same author] or with surprising twists (German: Es ist spannend rauszufinden, wie sich die Geschichte entwickelt; nach dem gleichen Muster (wie in Büchern vom gleichen Autor) oder mit überraschenden Wendungen).

<sup>181</sup> I can concern myself with a different world which is not predictable for me. I do not have to “work” myself, but can only consume. I feel entertained (German: Ich kann mich mit einer anderen Welt befassen, die für mich nicht vorhersehbar ist. Muß nicht selbst „arbeiten“, sondern kann einfach konsumieren. Fühle mich unterhalten); I can project myself into different actions, settings, people, times... and this gives me a reassuring feeling. I feel like among „friends“. It can also be very relaxing just to take in the story (German: Ich kann mich in andere Handlungen, Orte, Menschen, Zeiten, ... hineindenken und das gibt ein beruhigendes Gefühl. Ich fühle mich wie unter „Freunden“. Auch die Geschichte wirken lassen kann sehr entspannend sein); It is like a short holiday from reality and every-day life (German: Es ist wie ein Kurzurlaub von der Realität und dem Alltag).

not disturb them, that it was part of a positive experience when they could guess it. For 53.3% of these, suspense was connected to the question what would happen next. 45% were more interested in the reasons why things happened.

- 9) Do you think the stories/plots of the books resemble each other? If yes, does it contribute to a positive or negative reading experience? 19.5% found it positive.

The first two questions, as well as questions 8 and 9 aimed at the awareness of author and genre formulas. As we have seen, those readers who read a lot, definitely prefer the formulaic and are aware of what they want and why they want it. Questions 3-7 tested the psychological gratifications that can be gained from reading bestsellers. People want to escape their problems and they want to experience emotions, preferably positive ones.

These results certainly confirm the game theory described above. Let us now turn to the sample of bestsellers and check how, after it has been chosen (aided by paratextual markers), the game is played. Which are the formal elements used for “conditioning” the reader’s response? Do point of view and character description invite “identification”? Are expectations fulfilled, needs gratified? Do the stories fit into formulaic patterns?

#### *IV. d. 3.) The Sample*

##### *a) Form*

A clear picture emerges showing patterns of preferences for certain formal elements. In the category of “distance” (the relation of “telling” and “showing”) “narrated speech” (“telling”) occupies the most page-space. According to findings by Werner Faulstich and Hans-Werner Ludwig in *Erzählperspektive empirisch*, “telling” increases the vividness of the narration (Faulstich and Ludwig 125). Indirect speech is not very popular, but “free indirect speech” and “reported speech” (direct speech) are frequent. They intersperse the narrated passages, thus creating the illusion of immediacy. Use of “focalization” is dominated by “internal focalization”, which presents the action through the eyes of one or several characters. The device of an abrupt change of scene and point of view can be found everywhere. Apart from causing the reader to perform his compositional activity, this also creates the illusion of immediacy and invites identification. No example of “external focalization” could be found. About one fourth of the sample favours “zero focalization”, or an omniscient narrator. It is

interesting that nearly all science-fiction novels use this mode of narration. This makes sense, as they need to present something unusual and fantastic from a point of view that can claim authority.

“Order” is dominated by scene-by-scene presentation, but nearly all books start “in medias res”, thus arousing the curiosity of the reader. This leads to a high percentage of backflashes or “analepses” which are necessary to feed the story preceding the starting point to the reader bit by bit. In most cases the backflashes explain situations which, otherwise, would become implausible. “Prolepsis” is not very common, but whenever it appears, it is clearly designed to induce the reader to carry on reading, in order to find out how the foreshadowed situation was brought about (“to fill the gaps”). As far as “duration” is concerned, “summary” is predominant. Necessary to speed up the action, it is supplemented by “scene” whenever there are crucial encounters between major characters. Nearly all the bestsellers in the sample used “singulative narrarion” and the “time of the narrative” can be said to be universally “subsequent”. The “extradiegetic level” is used almost exclusively. Only three out of fifty books employed a “metadiegetic level”. Short reports of past events by characters in the story are not considered to be “metadiegetic”. The findings concerning “heterodiegetic narration” are parallel to the ones noticed above regarding “zero focalization”. “Homodiegetic narrators” are the same number as “internal focalizations”. This shows a clear link between these two categories. All of the “homodiegetic narrators” are “autodiegetic”, i.e. the heroes of their stories.<sup>182</sup>

The majority of the characters were “static”, “one-dimensional”, “closed” and “psychological”. All kinds of characterization techniques were used, no clear pattern of preference for one or the other is discernible. “Setting” is mainly designed as the background of the action, the place where the story happens. Apart from that, it is frequently used to create certain atmospheres, especially sinister and threatening ones. Sometimes it was also used to contrast locations with different sets of values. Regarding the endings of the stories, it is interesting that for “romance” and “fantasy” a happy ending is compulsory, whereas “thrillers” and “horror stories” do not necessarily end happily. But this should not be surprising, as the aim of the thriller or mystery is to solve a riddle, and the aim of horror stories is to scare people.

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<sup>182</sup> The theoretical concepts used here have been explained in my summary of Genette in chapter IV.d.1.

b) *Content*

What is the thematic content of these books? Do they belong to one of Cawelti's "moral fantasies", are there overlaps, or are they non-formulaic? Are there intertextual features like plot characteristics, "telling names" or even quotes that link these books to certain pretexts or groups of pretexts? And, finally, do they contain some of the elements mentioned above, which satisfy psychological needs? As it would occupy too much space to discuss all the bestsellers which make up the sample, typical representatives of the different "genres" have been chosen. The two representatives for "horror/occult" are *Hannibal* by Thomas Harris and *The Vampire Armand* by Anne Rice. The "fantasy" books are *Cradle and All* by James Patterson and *The Fifth Elephant* by Terry Pratchett. "Historical novel/romance/love story" is represented by *Mirror Image* by Danielle Steel and *Monsoon* by Wilbur Smith. The last category, "crime/thriller/detective" was split into "science-fiction thrillers", typical examples of which are *The Hades Factor* by Robert Ludlum and *The Lost World* by Michael Crichton; "detective" with *The Best Laid Plans* by Sidney Sheldon and *Pop Goes the Weasel* by James Patterson; and "courtroom" represented by John Grisham's *The Partner*.

*The Partner* tells the story of a partner in a big law firm who fakes his own death and disappears for four years after having stolen ninety million dollars from his colleagues. He is found in Brazil by head-hunters, tortured and, finally transferred to prison in the US. With an immense number of subterfuges he tricks his way back to freedom, even being able to keep the stolen money. But just when everything seems perfect, his girlfriend disappears with the fortune and is never seen again. The story clearly belongs to Cawelti's "Mystery" formula and contains elements of "Adventure". As the mystery genre is well-known and easily recognizable by paratextual elements, one expects no great number of intertextual links which are necessary to signal that the text belongs to a certain genre (Pfister and Broich 68). Apart from the plot features typical of mystery novels, the book contains a lot of elements typical of Grisham thrillers. The expert Grisham reader surely knows what to expect. What about gratifications? While reading the book, one is definitely assured that life is not too bad compared to "the partner's" problems. The stereotypical characters and the "internal focalization" invite empathy and role play. Quick shift of scenes with a lot of cliff-hangers, which create suspense, as well as the violent torture scenes offer excitement and varied experience. Conventional values are reaffirmed, although the reader is allowed to indulge in

sympathy for the “bad boy” for a while. Moreover, the story has a high informational content, giving a lot of insider facts about legal and banking tricks.

The “science-fiction thrillers” mix “Adventure” and “Mystery” formulas, too. One story is about genetically engineered dinosaurs and unscrupulous scientists who exploit nature and wreak havoc. The other story deals with a pharmaceutical company which develops a deadly virus and spreads it all over the world by using antibiotics. Being able to supply a vaccine, they anticipate an unbelievable amount of money. The good forces opposing and, finally, beating the bad forces are represented by conscientious scientists who respect life and nature. The books teem with highly specialized information, violence and excitement, as well as with stereotypical black and white characters. There is always one conservative value at the centre of these stories which is violated by the villains and defended and restored by the heroes. Again, “internal focalization” invites empathy with the good characters, while quick shift of scenes and cliff-hangers cause suspense, thus satisfying the need for excitement. Violence is everywhere. Intertextuality is marked by plot features and the use of highly complicated “insider” abbreviations typical of these novels. Furthermore, *The Hades Factor* marks its belonging to a certain line of fiction by the biohazard sign on its front cover. *The Lost World* refers to its precursor *Jurassic Park* text-internally and on the cover, as well as to works on evolution theory by expounding Cuvier’s and Darwin’s ideas (1<sup>st</sup> chapter).

The detective novel *The Best Laid Plans* by Sidney Sheldon clearly belongs to the “Mystery” formula. It is the story of two highly ambitious and beautiful people, one male, one female. They are opposed by a selfless reporter. The male lawyer leaves his manager-girlfriend, in order to become President of the USA. She is furious and swears to ruin his career. The candidate only becomes President, because of the money of his very influential father-in-law. A murder takes place and the ex-girlfriend tries to pin suspicion on the President. The reader is thoroughly deceived, and the solution of the crime comes as a surprise. In the end both careers are ruined. This story is accompanied by a parallel plot line featuring the female reporter, who is staying in Bosnia during the war. She represents humanity, selflessness and serious reporting, as opposed to greed, selfishness and manipulation of the media. For her there is a happy ending. Explicit intertextual links were not found, the genre being well-established. Yet the story is rich with gratifications for the reader. Short, quick-shifting scenes guarantee excitement. The “zero focalization” results in an authoritative voice giving guidelines and reaffirming values. The character of the “good”

reporter invites empathy, especially as she is used as a reflector. Moreover, the reader's news hunger is satisfied by a lot of detailed information about a topic that was quite "hot" when the book was published. The history of Yugoslavia and the roots of the conflict are explained.

The other detective novel is *Pop Goes the Weasel* by James Patterson featuring the serial hero Alex Cross. Role play is a central theme. A group of British ex-spies calling themselves "The Four Horsemen" (Death, War, Famine and Conqueror) are involved in a highly complicated game. One of them, Death, loses his grip on reality and role playing becomes his only reality. He starts murdering women and plays with Alex Cross, the detective in charge of the investigation. After having abducted his girlfriend, he is found by Cross and nearly killed. However, he survives and is allowed to go on killing. This, of course, is due to the necessity of a sequel. No explicit intertextual links could be found, as with most of the detective novels. The only links were to the other books by the same author which belong to the same series, and to the Bible (Revelation 6). The stereotypical black and white characters, as well as the deliberate switching from the hero's point of view to the villain's point of view, make identification on either side a possibility. The reader is allowed to indulge in violence while at the same time conservative values are being preached. Suspense is created effectively by the quick shift of scenes, from scenes describing the villain's actions to scenes describing the hero's actions. Thus, cliff-hangers are created after, approximately, every third chapter. Although the reader is free to identify with the villain, it is clear by the nature of his thoughts and implicit figural characterization, that he is on the wrong side. As far as formula is concerned, the story is a good mix of "Adventure", "Mystery" and "Romance", offering something to everybody.

The two examples representing "fantasy" here are from opposite ends of a continuum. One is "real" fantasy, the other parodies the genre. The "real" specimen is *Cradle and All*, in which two teenage girls are thought to have conceived the new Saviour by immaculate conception. One of them, it turns out, got pregnant the natural way while the other bears Satan's child. A female detective hired to find out who is going to be the true Mother of God finally discovers that it is herself. The book relies heavily on apocalyptic imagery which links it to the Book of Revelation and to the earlier-mentioned *Pop goes the Weasel* by the same author. Before the arrival of the new Saviour, Satan spreads pestilence and war all over the world. The plot features link the story to the detective novel. It is a mixture of the "Adventure", "Mystery" and "Melodrama" formulas. "Internal focalization" allows

identification, quick shift of scenes and suspense create excitement. Stereotypical good and bad characters illustrate the Christian value system.

*The Fifth Elephant* parodies the genre, especially the Gothic Novel and the imitators of Tolkien, at the same time mixing it with the “Mystery” formula. There are a lot of intertextual links, for example the characters which are werewolves, dwarves and vampires. So are place names like “Uberwald” (German for Transsylvania). There are some hidden allusions to other pretexts, the best of which is:

’How beautiful the snow is, sisters ...?’  
Three women sat at the window of their lonely house, looking out at the white Uberwald winter. ‘And how cold the wind is,’ said the second sister. The third sister, who was the youngest, sighed. ‘Why do we always talk about the weather?’ (Pratchett, *The Fifth Elephant* 328)

Everybody who has ever read *Macbeth* will recognize this. The story of the book is deliberately nonsensical. The chief of police of the capital of “Discworld” (this is the name of the series the book belongs to), who is also a very democratic-minded duke, has to move to Uberwald as an ambassador. He gets into all sorts of trouble with dwarves and vampires, as he is not very diplomatic, and ends up being chased by werewolves. Luckily, before he is caught, he is rescued by a nice vampire lady. The abundance of details and the funny dialects and idiolects, as well as the story line make reading the book a hilarious experience. The main gratifications are probably entertainment and fun. However, one has to be an experienced fantasy-reader to get most of the allusions.

“Horror/occult” is represented by *Hannibal* and the *Vampire Armand*. In *Hannibal* the man-eating yet sophisticated psychopath Dr. Lecter from *The Silence of the Lambs* is back. He is hunted by the FBI and one of his former victims. His strange appetite is explained by a traumatic childhood experience. At the end of the book he brainwashes the beautiful female detective who tries to hunt him down and lives peacefully together with her. The book mixes “Mystery” and “Adventure”, but the roles of hero and villain seem to be reversed. The reader is clearly encouraged to feel sympathy for Dr. Lecter. Although “zero focalization” is predominant, Dr. Lecter and the female detective come close to being reflectors. Change of scenes and cliff-hangers create suspense, thus satisfying the need for excitement. Violence and gory details are in abundance. The many explicit intertextual allusions to classical literature give the reader the feeling of reading a “serious” book. Dante’s *Inferno* and

Machiavelli are mentioned, just to name a few. The most “interesting” link is a quotation from Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* which introduces the sixth chapter. “Therefore bihoveth hire a ful long spoon/ That shal ete with a feend” (Harris 505). The reader is told the source on the same page. The chapter headed by this quote is the one in which the detective and Dr. Lecter eat the brains of one of her colleagues. Control of sympathy is strange, as, after the killer is made likeable and sympathetic, the narrator makes sure to give him the attribute “the monster” every now and again.

The story of *The Vampire Armand* starts in medias res. Then hundreds of years of his life are narrated in one big chronologically presented backflash. The main topics are sex and violence, as well as Christianity and its values. Explicit intertextual links are not necessary, as the genre has been well-known ever since Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*. The “internal focalization” nearly forces the reader to identify with the protagonist. The main gratification is probably arousal caused by violence and sex. The story is a mix of “Romance”, “Adventure” and “Alien Beings and States”.

This only leaves the “historical novel/romance/love story” to be discussed. The first example, *Mirror Image*, is the story of two identical twins with completely contrasting characters. One is dutiful, the other rebellious. They experience a lot of adventures, during the beginning of World War I. The story ends with the rebellious sister being killed and the dutiful one getting her sister’s husband. The very stereotypical characters offer the possibility to identify with either of the twins. The war scenes create excitement and suspense. The book is a mixture of “Adventure” and “Romance” and links itself to Jane Austen’s *Sense and Sensibility* by the use of the name Willoughby. The topic of the two different sisters furthermore links it to other romantic novels, like Joanna Trollope’s *A Spanish Lover*. Again you gain most from it, if you are an experienced romance-reader who recognizes the ploys typical of romances. I myself was a little lost occasionally, because I did not understand important clues (not being a romance reader).

The last work to be discussed is *Monsoon* by Wilbur Smith. It is a family story, part of a series, set in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Again twins with contrasting temperaments make their appearance. They have two more brothers, the eldest black and vicious, the youngest golden-haired and angelic. The brothers encounter a lot of adventures all over the world and, finally, the likeable twin and the youngest brother settle in Africa with their wives. Change of scenes



and backflashes create suspense, characterization controls empathy. Stereotypical characters with opposite traits like good/bad, strong/weak etc., embody a value system. Excitement is guaranteed by a lot of sex and violence. The amount of historical information is huge. The story mixes features of “Adventure” and “Romance” and plot characteristics link it to other historical novels. The horizon of expectations is opened for the first time, as in all the other books, by the front cover.

*c) Summary*

The findings reported here can be said to be representative of all the books in the sample. At first sight, the summaries make the formulas look absurd. However, these formulas summon expectations of certain plot elements and guarantee successful play.

“Historical novel/romance/love story” mixes “Adventure” and “Romance” formulas, as mentioned by Cawelti. “Horror/occult” mixes the “Adventure”-formula with any of the others, usually “Alien Beings and States”. “Fantasy” always includes “Mystery” features, sometimes mixed with “Adventure” or “Alien Beings”. “Crime/thriller/detective” is either pure “Mystery” or mixed with “Adventure”.

The most important gratifications seem to be:

- identification with stereotypical characters;
- information;
- reaffirmation of values;
- and excitement, violence and varied experience.

These gratifications are skilfully brought about by employing the above-mentioned formal elements. Within the well-established categories explicit intertextuality as a means of linking texts to a certain tradition is rare. It is reserved for irony or parody and information. This supports the assumption that readers recognize the “game” they are buying because of paratextual elements. While they are playing the game, it suffices that the author links his work to other books by using implicit intertextual markers and formulaic conventions.

## V.) Case Study

Let us now turn to the *Harry Potter* novels by the Edinburgh-based authoress J.K. Rowling, which have dominated the bestseller scene since the late nineties. Five of the seven-book series have been published up to today, number six being eagerly awaited by millions of people. I shall limit myself to the first four volumes, however, as they were published during the 1990s.

The first volume, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, was published by Bloomsbury in June 1997. The initial edition was a modest 500 hardback copies. This was followed by a second edition which, judging by the figures released by Whitaker Booktrack, was much more successful.<sup>183</sup> The book's sales increased steadily and during the Christmas period of 1997 over 10,000 copies were sold. The hardback edition seems not to have been very popular. In contrast to the modest figure of 500, the first edition of the second volume, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (published in 1998) reflects more confidence in the ability of the book to sell well. And, indeed, in the first month after its appearance, it sold 4,421 copies, sales rising steadily afterwards. One or two months always showed a decline in sales, usually September, October, or November.<sup>184</sup> With the appearance of the paperback edition, sales of the hardback version slumped dramatically.

*Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, the third book in the series (published in 1999), had an initial edition of 100,000 and sold 68,217 copies in the first month following publication. It is interesting to note, that, whenever a new volume appeared, the sales figures of the other books jumped up again. This illustrates the bandwaggon effect a series can have. As soon as a sequel is published, everybody who buys this sequel has to buy the preceding volumes, too, in order to understand the story.

The fourth volume, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* (published in 2000), whose sensational first print comprised more than one million copies in the UK and 3.8 million in the US (Jones 56), sold 256.246 copies in week 27 of 2000. This figure only refers to

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<sup>183</sup> See appendix E.

<sup>184</sup> See appendix E.

bookshops, however. According to an Internet source, the sales through bookshops, the Internet and via newspaper deals, for only one day was 372,775.<sup>185</sup>

At the end of 2000, the total sales for the four volumes in the total consumer market was: 1.520,462 copies (*Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*), 1.199,021 copies (*Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*), 1.169,373 copies (*Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*), and 1.054,782 copies (*Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*), respectively.<sup>186</sup> These are only the figures for the UK. Other countries have refused to give this kind of information to the author of this dissertation. In 1999 the books made the *Bookseller* yearly bestseller list, with the first two volumes heading the "Top 15 mass market fiction titles" and the third volume occupying first rank on the hardback list. In 2000 there was a change, as it was decided to place them on the list for children's books, probably giving in to pressure from the other publishers, who can be assumed not to have been too happy with the situation.<sup>187</sup>

*Hannibal* by Thomas Harris (published by Arrow) would have been the loser in 2000 had the "Potter" series remained on the general fiction list. Occupying first place with 407,899 copies sold, it does not quite look **the** bestseller, when compared to the "Potter" sales figures. *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* occupied first place on the children's list with 956,232 copies sold, followed by *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* with 684,433 copies. Third was *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* with 645,780 copies and the fourth position was held by *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* with 573,229 copies sold. There was a heavy discounting, especially in the case of the latest volume, as the recommended retail price was £14.99, the average selling price only £11.33.<sup>188</sup>

The "Potter" series demonstrates the mechanism by which a book or books by an unknown author can become bestsellers. As mentioned earlier, word-of-mouth recommendation plays an important role regarding the buying motivation of readers. We have noticed that opinion leaders discover a new book and then create something like a snowball effect. Once the name of the author is known, he or she can be marketed like any other celebrity, the name functioning as a brand. This is exactly what happened in the case of J.K. Rowling. About the beginning of her success she says: "My publisher was very encouraging and told me it (the

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<sup>185</sup> „Wizard breaks book record,“ *The Times Online* (July. 2000): 2, online, Internet, 14 Aug. 2000.

<sup>186</sup> See appendix A.

<sup>187</sup> See appendix A

<sup>188</sup> See appendix A

first volume) was selling surprisingly well. There was no great fanfare – a good review in *The Scotsman*, followed by some others – but mostly it seems to have been word of mouth” (Fraser 27).

After its initial, modest success, Rowling’s breakthrough came when the independent American publisher Scholastic bought the rights for the first volume for over £100,000 during an auction in 1998 (Maugham 31). This was probably a result of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone* winning the Smarties Book Prize Gold Award in 1997 (Fraser 57). Quickly afterwards the next volume appeared, as well as translations and licensed editions of the book in the US, Germany and over forty other countries. In 1998 Time Warner bought the film and merchandising rights and by the end of 2000 over 57 million copies of the four books had been sold in 200 countries worldwide. By then the books had been given numerous different awards, which assured further success (Fraser 57).<sup>189</sup> The next three volumes will eventually dominate the charts, as by now there is a knock-on effect in the series.

With success gaining momentum, promotional measures exploded. Starting with signings in small bookshops and tours with an audience of no more than a hundred people, the author soon moved on to signings with huge queues of people in front of bookshops in America (Fraser 32). However, the hype reached its peak with the release of the fourth volume. The book was published by Bloomsbury on July, 8 2000, but before anyone had even seen or read it, it appeared on the bestseller lists, due to preordering, especially via Amazon (Jones 56). These Internet sales fuelled a debate between publishers about territorial rights, as many readers in the US and elsewhere, apparently do not have the patience to wait until the books are published in their countries. The night before the fourth volume was released, millions of people queued before bookshops all over the world, in order to get hold of a copy. The phenomenon was called different names, but “Potter Mania” hits the nail on the head.<sup>190</sup> It was “puffed and promoted in a frenzy of international publicity” , and, according to Robert McCrum, literary editor of the *Observer*, “represents the marriage of hype and expectation”.<sup>191</sup> Maybe the biggest event connected to the promotion of volume four was Rowling’s reading in the SkyDome sports arena in Toronto, which held thousands of

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<sup>189</sup> At the end of the book there is a list of all the awards the books have won.

<sup>190</sup> “Potter Mania,” *The Week* (July 2000): 5pp, online, Internet, 30 Oct. 2000.

<sup>191</sup> “Speed-reading after lights out,” *Books Unlimited* (July 2000): 3pp, online, Internet, 30 Oct. 2000.

screaming fans.<sup>192</sup> This shows that from being the unknown writer of a good story, promoted by word-of-mouth recommendation, she has risen to the ranks of the megastar authors, whose names suffice to sell a book.

The little magician, “Harry Potter” also did some magic for his publishing house, as the success of the series brought about a 78% rise in revenues for the first half of the year 2000 to £11.4 million.<sup>193</sup> This confirms my guess that Bloomsbury is on the way to becoming a bigger player in the publishing game. They might also sell out profitably. The “Potter” books will also have an overall effect on the bookmarket, as they help extend the market. After all, children are the bookbuyers of the future.

The hype has not been limited to the books, however. Toy manufacturers have arrived on the scene, and, if one browses Amazon, one can find all sorts of things connected to the novels.<sup>194</sup> Computer and video games, board and card games, plush owls, audio books, etc. Cloaks, pointed hats, wands and broomsticks seem to be particularly popular around Hallowe’en. Moreover, Rowling has started to write some books (for charities) mentioned in the “Harry Potter” novels, like *Quidditch Through The Ages*, and *Fantastic Beasts and where to Find Them*.<sup>195</sup> All this illustrates the above-noticed tendency to exploit rights wherever possible.

What do the books offer the reader that makes them so appealing? As J.K. Rowling was an unknown authoress, the editor’s decision to publish the seven-book series must have been based on the content. Before analyzing the gratifications they might offer their readers, I will shortly summarize the stories, in case the reader of this essay is not familiar with the novels.

In the first novel, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone*, we are introduced to Harry, an “ordinary” eleven-year-old boy, who lives with his aunt, uncle and cousin, the Dursleys, in Privet Drive. The only outstanding feature about Harry is a strange, lightning-shaped scar on his forehead. His relatives hate him and the orphan boy has to sleep in a cupboard under the stairs. The reason why they hate him becomes clear when Harry approaches his eleventh

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<sup>192</sup> “Harry Potter Festivals,” *ICulture* 5pp, online, Internet, 30 Oct. 2000.

<sup>193</sup> „Wizard Wheeze Bloomsbury Profits from Harry Potter,” *Guardian Unlimited* (Sept. 2000), online, Internet, 23 Apr. 2001.

<sup>194</sup> „Small Toy Co. Rises As Superstar,” *Yahoo!News* (Oct. 2000), onlin, Intenet, 30 Oct. 2000.

<sup>195</sup> „Harry Potter Comes to Aid of Charity,” *Yahoo!News* (Oct. 2000), onlin, Internet, 30 Oct. 2000.

birthday and letters for him keep arriving addressed to wherever he is staying at the moment. His aunt and uncle do everything in their power to destroy these letters, but they fail, and Harry is visited by a giant called Hagrid, who tells him the story of his parents' life. Harry learns that his parents were wizards, like himself, who were killed by the dark Lord Voldemort, who embodies evil. Harry survived the attack and the curse intended to kill him rebounded on Voldemort, thus robbing him of his powers and his body. The only effect the curse had was the lightning-shaped scar on Harry's forehead. Hagrid tells him that he is now of the right age to enter Hogwarts, school of magic and witchcraft. He takes Harry with him and together they go shopping. The list of things needed for school is very long and detailed, and Harry buys a wand which is the brother to Lord Voldemort's. Reaching the school is not easy, as the train taking the pupils there leaves from a hidden platform (9 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>) at King's Cross station. On the train, Harry meets his friends, the "Muggle"-born Hermione Granger ("Muggle" is the term for non-magic people), and Ron Weasley, who comes from an old, but poor wizard family. Harry is a celebrity, due to his scar, and upon their arrival, the new pupils are sorted into one of the four houses, Slytherin, Gryffindor, Hufflepuff, and Ravenclaw, by means of a magic, talking "Sorting Hat". Harry lands in Gryffindor and soon finds out that he has several enemies among the teachers and students. But the headmaster, Professor Dumbledore and the head of his house, Professor McGonagall, are on his side. Every year there is a Quidditch House Cup. This game is a mixture between basketball, football and hockey, played in the air, on broomsticks. During the schoolyear, Harry experiences a lot of conflicts with his enemies and meets a lot of fantastic creatures, especially in the Forbidden Forest (centaurs for example). The most dangerous adventure is the "Philosopher's Stone", though. It is stored and guarded (by a dog with three heads ) at Hogwarts, and Harry prevents Lord Voldemort, who has attached his remaining self to the Defence Against the Dark Arts teacher, Quirrel, a nervous young man, from getting hold of it. Thus, Harry thwarts Voldemort's plan to regain power.

The second volume, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, starts with the summer holidays, which Harry always has to spend at boring Privet Drive, being bullied by his cousin and uncle. His relatives lock him in his room to prevent his returning to Hogwarts, but he is rescued by the Weasley boys by means of a flying car. This car also takes Ron and Harry to Hogwarts. They have missed the train, because of a trick played by Dobby, a house elf (little slave workers). The new Defence Against the Dark Arts teacher is one Gilderoy Lockhart, a narcissistic braggart, whom Harry met during the shopping tour that always precedes the

departure to Hogwarts. Harry starts hearing strange voices and a couple of students are found “stunned”. The rumour of a Chamber of Secrets, which had been built by Salazar Slytherin, in order to prevent “mudbloods” (students with “Muggle” parentage) from attending the school, gets around and people start fearing Harry, as they think, he must be the heir of Slytherin. Only this heir would have the power to open the chamber, and, as Harry speaks the language of snakes, everybody suspects him. Ron, Harry, and Hermione finally solve the riddle, having first survived a couple of adventures, including a Quidditch match, and the encounter with a monstrous spider in the Forbidden Forest. After Ron’s little sister, Ginny, has disappeared, Harry makes the connection to a magic diary he found earlier which Ginny had used. Following the clues, he ends up in the Chamber of Secrets, which contains a Basilisk, a huge snake, whose look is deadly. The chamber had been opened by Tom Riddle, which was Lord Voldemort’s name when he attended Hogwarts. This was achieved by means of the diary, which gave him new strength. However, Harry defeats him and the snake with the help of a Phoenix and the sorting hat, thus averting the danger of the resurrection of the Dark Lord once more.

The third volume, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* starts at the Dursley’s again. Harry escapes after having put a curse on a relative and is taken to an inn in Diagon Alley, where he always does his school shopping, by a magic bus. He is awaited by the Minister of Magic, Cornelius Fudge, and is allowed to stay at the inn till the beginning of the new school-year. The minister is worried about his safety because a convicted murderer, Sirius Black, has escaped from the high-security prison of Azkaban. Sirius Black is suspected of having betrayed Harry’s parents to Lord Voldemort. Azkaban is guarded by creatures called Dementors. Again, the school has a new Defence Against the Dark Arts teacher, Professor Lupin, who turns out to be a werewolf. Harry reacts strangely to the Dementors, who have been hired to guard the grounds of Hogwarts to prevent Black from killing Harry. Incidentally, Black was overheard muttering “he is at Hogwarts”, while still in prison. Whenever the Dementors are close, Harry faints. Lupin teaches him a protective “charm”, which rescues Black, Lupin, Harry and his friends later. There is the obligatory Quidditch match and in the course of the school-year Hagrid, who has been appointed teacher for Care of Magical Creatures gets into trouble when one of his animals, a Hippogriff (half horse, half eagle) attacks one of the Slytherins who has provoked him. This Hippogriff is sentenced to death and later used, together with a clock that can turn back time, to rescue Sirius Black, who had been caught by the Dementors when chasing the real villain. It turns out that Black had

been cheated by one of his old mates, Wormtail, who had hidden for over a decade by turning into a rat and staying as a pet with the Weasleys. Wormtail escapes, however, in order to find his old master, Voldemort.

The fourth volume, *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*, breaks the formula, as it begins with showing Wormtail and his master at the old home of the Riddles'. Voldemort is gaining power and is scheming against Harry. Meanwhile, Harry, who is staying at the Dursley's once more, has nightmares about him, waking up with his scar hurting. He is taken to the Quidditch World Cup by the Weasleys, where some old followers of Voldemort conjure up the "Dark Mark", the sign of evil. At Hogwarts a surprise awaits them, when they learn that this year the "Triwizard Tournament" is going to take place at Hogwarts. Three schools, one from Bulgaria, one from France, and Hogwarts are the competitors. Harry's name ends up in the "Goblet of Fire", which chooses the champions, and he is compelled to take part in the tournament, even though he is too young. Again there is a new Defence Against the Dark Arts Teacher, Mad-Eye Moody, who turns out to be a villain in disguise. The pupils become interested in members of the opposite sex, and there are a lot of conflicts. After surviving two very dangerous tasks, Harry gets into mortal danger, when winning the tournament. After touching the Cup at the end of a maze, he offers a co-competitor, Cedric, to share the victory. The two of them find themselves being transported to a graveyard, where Cedric is instantly killed by the dark wizard. Harry is used in a ritual, which gives Voldemort his power back, and ends up in a duel with him. With the help of his wand and the ghosts of his parents and friends, he is nevertheless able to escape. The story ends with the denial of the imminent danger by the ministers and Dumbledore's taking preventive action. A renewed war between the good and bad forces is foreshadowed.

All the books stick to a fairly fixed story pattern with ritualistic, recurring elements. They are a mixture of a couple of well-known formulas, the first of which I call the "Cinderella" formula. Like Cinderella, Harry, the orphan, is maltreated by his relatives and rescued by magic. The stories teem with elements and characters known from fairy tales and classical mythology. Examples are the Forbidden Forest with unicorns and centaurs, dragons, werewolves, the Mirror of Desire, showing one's hidden wishes, a phoenix, mermaids, wands, etc. Rowling opens up a multi-layered horizon of meaning potentials, which the reader can relate to according to his experience with and knowledge of the myths she alludes to. By giving the reader the opportunity to – mentally – go back in time to the bedside stories of his



childhood, she offers a framework of familiar situations, in which the “participant-observer” can enjoy a maximum of excitement with a minimum of danger. By her detailed and “realistic” treatment of fantastic events and items, Rowling gives a freshness to these elements. Taking the traditional rituals of public school life and adapting them to the fantastic, “defamiliarises” the expected and makes the reader look at these things with a fresh pair of eyes (Mynot 13).

Apart from the “Cinderella” formula, the books mix Cawelti’s formulas of “Mystery” (solving a riddle) and “Adventure” (quest [for self-knowledge] and initiation), the last volume containing a couple of “Romance” elements. Following the conventional formula of adventure fiction, Harry Potter, the youthful protagonist, overcomes obstacles on his mission to save the magic world from the Dark Powers, opposed by the archenemy, Lord Voldemort, and is later (volume 6) rewarded by a lady. In the tradition of mystery fiction, hidden secrets are investigated and discovered. All these formulas are used within the context of the public school story, which, according to Alexandra Mullen is a subcategory of the “Bildungsroman” (Mullen 128). Anyone who has ever read a book by Enid Blyton, will recognize the similarities. The stories are structured according to one pattern, with minimal variations. The school year prescribes certain ritualistic events, which are interspersed with a variety of adventures. The plot embodies a ludic or play pattern illustrated by the annual Quidditch match. The overall story of a relatively powerless, inexperienced protagonist, fighting against the Dark Powers, clearly reminds one of Frodo in *The Lord of the Rings*. Harry’s movement between the two worlds of everyday life and magic is reminiscent of Lewis Carroll’s *Alice in Wonderland*, and L. F. Baum’s *The Wizard of Oz*. Because of the many links to well-known works of fantasy, Rowling has been repeatedly accused of plagiarism; however, among experts, this is called intertextuality. These are the elements that set the rules for the reading game, that make the playground recognizable.

It is important to stress the relationship between Harry’s every-day world, the world of the Dursleys, and the world of magic. Although Hogwarts has new enemies and frustrations in store for Harry, this parallel universe also equips him – formerly powerlessly exposed to arbitrary harassment – with means of defending himself against his opponents. For the reader, especially the young reader, identifying with Harry Potter is the closest way he or she can get to the fulfilment of the secret wish of paying back class mates or family members for past acts

of injustice. For many readers, this might also be a way of satisfying fantasies which are rooted deeply in their early childhoods.

What are the main topics in these books ? Obviously, the most important topic in all four volumes is the moral and intellectual development of the central character. Insecure about his nature and his ancestry, Harry is constantly afraid of the dark side of his character, his potential for evil. He is told by Dumbledore, the headmaster, that things do not happen by chance, but because we choose. Once, when Harry is devastated, because the sorting hat wanted to put him into Slytherin, due to his similarities with the founder of the house, he is told not to worry.

‘It only put me in Gryffindor,’ said Harry in a defeated voice, ‘because I asked not to go to Slytherin...’ ‘*Exactly,*’ said Dumbledore, beaming once more. ‘Which makes you very *different* from Tom Riddle. It is our choices, Harry, that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities.’<sup>196</sup>

In a time of ‘Werteverlust’, of widespread moral insecurity, these statements offer a crutch to the emotionally insecure reader, the reader who is in search of guidelines and values.

Other topics touched upon are social issues like class snobbery, celebrities, politics, and race, all treated with a satirical undertone by Rowling. Class snobbery and racial discrimination are expressed in the second and third volume, in particular where “pureblood” pupils, students from all-wizard families, stir up opinion against “mudbloods”, pupils with “Muggle” parents.

Moreover, the situation of the house elves, little slave workers, cause a lot of debate.

Politicians are heavily satirized using the characters of Minister Fudge and Ludo Bagman, both completely incompetent and in no way fit to serve their offices. Gilderoy Lockart, a narcissistic teacher, is a clear parody of self-centered celebrities and the bookmarket system.

The books make the reader realize the intricate and frustrating power structures inherent in a modern, bureaucratic society and affirm his mistrust of these structures by cleverly and ironically undermining the credibility of the “spine” of the magic society. Rowling uses the same strategy for uncovering alliances and power groupings within the school system. Teachers who abuse their power to torture students are an equally important topic as the

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<sup>196</sup> J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (358).

different philosophies represented by the founders of the four “houses”. By smartly manipulating the reader’s emotions, she succeeds in enraging the participant-observer at the lack of objectivity on the side of the adults in charge. Successful role play is guaranteed by Harry Potter’s stereotypical traits and the use of internal focalization, the representation of the events through the eyes of the protagonist. He is the typical school boy – overtaxed with the expectations of his teachers, involved in complicated games of adolescent power assertion - , whose development is aided by a sage mentor, Professor Dumbledore. One of the most important characters in the books, Dumbledore represents the guiding father figure that most people want in their lives. As yet another feat of plot and meaning organization, Rowling manages to paint school life so stereotypically that it fits other areas of society like a glove. Patterns of behaviour on the job do not greatly differ from what she eloquently describes as school routine, thus enabling the grown-up to dive as deeply into the action as the child. This concept of “diving” into a story is symbolized by the thought-storing device of the “pensieve”. Used as a kind of external hard drive for human memories and recollections, it can be entered by everyone – the visitor being able to experience intimate situations from the life of another person.

One of the most striking features of the stories are the telling names employed by Rowling. She manages successful characterization of her stereotypical characters by employing names which have clear connotations. The Dark Lord is called Voldemort (I want death), Harry’s opponents are the Malfoys, the name reminiscent of Spenser’s *Faerie Queene* where one of the characters goes by the name of Sansfoy. Malfoy means “bad faith”. The name of the teacher who hates Harry is Snape (he is the head of Slytherin). The werewolf is called Lupin (the Latin word “lupus” means wolf), the very strict female head of Gryffindor’s name is McGonagall, the benign headmaster is Professor Dumbledore which, according to Rowling, is the old English word for bumblebee (Fraser 33). Just to name a few.

The names always illustrate one central trait of the characters. Only Harry is allowed to develop his personality before the reader’s eyes while facing challenges year after year. The other characters remain static and one-dimensional. Thus, the reader’s empathy is concentrated on Harry, as one learns more about his thoughts and emotions than about those of the others. Nearly as important as the names are the settings. They are used to emphasize opposite “worlds” or systems of value. All the bad wizards have originated from Slytherin. The Forbidden Forest is inhabited by fierce and fearsome creatures, while the school is a

place of order and security - for most of the time at least. Privet Drive, the home of the Dursleys, has all the characteristics of a bourgeois dwelling, while the home of the Weasleys, "The Burrow" is chaotic, warm and cosy. This kind of polarisation is typical of board games. My Internet survey showed that for a lot of readers (30.4%) suspense is the central element. Rich imagination and detailed descriptions were important for 19.5%. The only negative feedback concerned the increasing level of cruelty. 4.4% of the readers were bothered by this.

By using well-known story patterns and ordinary everyday events "with a twist", Rowling manages to make her stories entertaining, exciting and didactic at the same time. She offers guidelines and confirms conservative values which are not only important for children, but equally so for adults. The reader gets a great deal of information about her fictional universe and is sometimes invited to transfer it to his own reality. Moreover, he can act out the age-old fight between good and evil. The books contain lots of layers for all kinds of readers. The expectations that trigger reactions in the reader are extremely different depending on the age, sex, nationality or genre preferences of the readers. Therefore, it is possible to read the books with the eyes of a child, with the eyes of an adult, or even with the eyes of a literary expert. With each mode of reading the manifold allusions open up a different horizon.

## VI.) Conclusion

This essay has shown that the modern fiction bestseller (like its brothers DVDs, videos, CDs, etc.) is an international product, dependent on capital investment. Publishing houses that want to appear on the bestseller lists need famous “brand-name” authors, who are able to deliver at least one book per year on average. The tendency within the bookselling industry is towards further concentration and internationalization, in order to make the most possible profit from bestselling books. The readers of these novels are influenced, above all, by price, external features, opinion leaders and the content of the books. Editors and blurb writers seem to have a clear idea about how to make their target groups buy books. The average bestseller is a mixture of diverse formulaic story patterns. Readers appear to prefer the familiar, a fact which explains the success of well-known authors and conventional stories. For “expert”, “customary”, or “veteran” readers, reading is a play activity guided by certain paratextual, as well as textual elements. It is not the place here to lament the effects which the bestseller machinery might have on “literary” or “quality” fiction. Only the future can show. However, it has to be remarked that some of the best works of literature were looked down upon in the time they were written. Values change, so do horizons of expectations.<sup>197</sup>

Even though I have attempted to shed some light on the gratifications gained from reading by using an extensive body of empirical data, there is still much research to be carried out into the psychological effects reading for pleasure has on the reader. Within the framework of this essay it has not been possible to go into further detail, as far as this field of interest is concerned. However, as the readers are part of the system of the bookmarket, the possible gratifications they gain from reading had to be mentioned.

The situation concerning the availability of empirical bookmarket data leaves a great deal to be desired. It is nearly impossible to get access to sensitive material, especially sales and marketing figures. A crystal-clear analysis of the bookmarket is dependent on a huge amount of information. As long as this kind of information is kept under lock and seal by the

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<sup>197</sup> A general remark concerning the difference between the Anglo-American bookmarket and the more literary German bookmarket might be appropriate here. Due to the fact that the German bookmarket is still governed by the equivalent to the NBA, the „Buchpreisbindung“, it is easier for smaller, more literary houses to publish manuscripts by first authors or authors of books which would be considered too special or demanding for the common reader in the US or the UK. The exploitation of celebrities for both the fiction and the non-fiction market has not yet progressed as far as on the Anglo-American market, where virtually everything written under the name of a famous person sells.

publishers and retailers, researchers will have to depend on interpretation and conjecture. The Internet presents a great opportunity of gathering data. However, as this data is often very short-lived, it also poses a threat to serious scientific research. It might be abused for supporting theses with “data” that cannot be accessed and verified anymore once an essay has been published.

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[www.american-book.com/prexsum](http://www.american-book.com/prexsum)  
[www.a2zpsychology.com](http://www.a2zpsychology.com)  
[www.bbc.co.uk](http://www.bbc.co.uk)  
[www.bertelsmann.de](http://www.bertelsmann.de)  
[www.bertrams.com](http://www.bertrams.com)  
[www.bestseller-questionnaire.de](http://www.bestseller-questionnaire.de)  
[www.blackwell.co.uk](http://www.blackwell.co.uk)  
[www.thebookpl@ce.com](mailto:www.thebookpl@ce.com)  
[www.borders.com](http://www.borders.com)

[www.bordersgroupinc.com](http://www.bordersgroupinc.com)

[www.brookes.ac.uk](http://www.brookes.ac.uk)

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## VIII.) German Summary / Deutsche Zusammenfassung

Die vorliegende Arbeit untersucht den englischen Bestseller der 90er Jahre im Kontext des Buchmarktsystems.

Im ersten Kapitel werden kritisch verschiedene Auffassungen des Begriffs „Bestseller“ erläutert und die Autorin gelangt zu einer Definition, die der vorliegenden Untersuchung zugrunde liegt. Der Bestseller des ausgehenden 20. Jahrhunderts wird als ein Phänomen des Buchmarktes gesehen. Er ist ein internationales, kommerzielles Massenprodukt, das deutlich Seriencharakter aufweist. Zudem muß er streng von allen Anforderungen, die an „Literatur“ gestellt werden, befreit werden, da er seiner Natur nach eine handwerkliche Leistung darstellt, die nach festgelegten Regeln angefertigt wird.

Das zweite Kapitel enthält den Forschungsbericht. Dieser umfasst allerdings nur diejenigen Werke, die den Bestseller vom gleichen Standpunkt aus, also als Teil des Buchmarktsystems, betrachten.

Im dritten Kapitel, welches auf empirischen Daten basiert, wird die Struktur des englischen Buchmarktes umrissen und die Stellung des Listenbestsellers innerhalb dieses Systems erläutert. Das Kapitel ist dreigeteilt und behandelt Produktion, Distribution und Rezeption. Die Struktur der wichtigsten Verlagshäuser wird beschrieben, sowie deren Vernetzung mit anderen Massenmedien und die Listenpräsenz ihrer Produkte. Zudem wird untersucht, welchen Stellenwert international bekannte Autoren einnehmen. Für den verteilenden Buchhandel wird dieselbe Tendenz zur Internationalisierung und Bildung von Konglomeraten festgestellt wie für die Verlagshäuser. Die Folgen der Abschaffung der Buchpreisbindung in England werden erläutert. Diese einschneidende Veränderung hat sich vor allem auf den Bestseller ausgewirkt, da eine eindeutige Tendenz dazu, diesen verbilligt anzubieten, festgestellt werden konnte. Das dritte Unterkapitel befasst sich mit der Rezeption durch den Leser, bzw. Konsumenten. Faktoren, die das Buchkaufverhalten beeinflussen, werden untersucht. Die wichtigsten dieser Faktoren sind Empfehlung durch Bekannte oder Meinungsführer und der Name des Autors, der als Marke fungiert.

Im vierten Kapitel wird der Inhalt einer repräsentativen Stichprobe von 50 aktuellen Bestsellern untersucht. Spieltheorie, psychologische Bedürfnisbefriedigung, sowie die Auffassung, dass es sich bei Bestsellern um Schemaliteratur (formelhafte Literatur) handelt, werden diskutiert. Anschließend wird der Textkorpus auf Strukturelemente hin untersucht. Dabei sind vor allem Erzählperspektive, Charakter, Raum und Zeit von Interesse. Zudem werden die Bücher in Kategorien eingeteilt, die auf ihrem Inhalt basieren. Es wird dann versucht, typische Form- und Inhaltsmerkmale festzustellen. Das Ergebnis ist, dass der moderne Bestseller vorwiegend formelhaft ist und bestimmte Strukturelemente bevorzugt werden, um Effekte zu erzielen, welche psychologische Bedürfnisse befriedigen. Anhand dieser Untersuchung wird versucht, die vorher dargelegten Theorien zu illustrieren.

Das letzte Kapitel schließlich besteht aus einer Fallstudie der „Harry Potter“ – Romane der schottischen Autorin J.K. Rowling. Diese Fallstudie bestätigt im Detail die Schlussfolgerungen der vorherigen Kapitel.

Ergebnis der Arbeit ist die Erkenntnis, dass die Ausgangshypothese, welche den Bestseller als Marktphänomen und Massenartikel begreift, bestätigt worden ist. Kritisch angemerkt werden muß, dass psychologische Theorien, die nötig waren, um eventuelle Gratifikationen zu beschreiben, nicht im Detail diskutiert oder kritisch beleuchtet werden konnten.

## Appendix A

## BESTSELLERS OF 1990

## Hardbacks

1	<b>The Trials of Life</b> David Attenborough. Collins/BBC	£16.95	0 00 219912 2
2	<b>Delia Smith's Christmas</b> Delia Smith. BBC	£12.95	0 563 36048 8
3	<b>Around the World in 80 Days</b> Michael Palin. BBC	£15.00	2 563 20826 0
4	<b>Hugh Johnson's Pocket Wine Book</b> Hugh Johnson. Mitchell Beazley	£6.95	0 85533 795 8
5	<b>A Brief History of Time</b> Stephen Hawking. Bantam Press	£14.95	0 593 01518 5
6	<b>The Guinness Book of Records</b> ed Donald McFarlan. Guinness	£11.95	0 85112 374 0
7	<b>The RHS Gardeners' Encyclopedia of Plants and Flowers</b> ed Christopher Brickell. Dorling Kindersley	£27.50	0 86318 386 7
8	<b>Longshot</b> Dick Francis. Michael Joseph	£13.99	0 7181 3447 9
9	<b>Michelin Red Guide: France</b> Michelin	£10.50	2 06 006409 0
10	<b>Delia Smith's Complete Illustrated Cookery Course</b> Delia Smith. BBC	£17.95	0 563 21454 6
11	<b>A Sensible Life</b> Mary Wesley. Bantam Press	£12.95	0 593 01930 X
12	<b>The Oxford Book of Humorous Prose</b> ed Frank Muir. OUP	£17.95	0 19 214106 6
13	<b>September</b> Rosamunde Pilcher. NEL	£14.95	0 450 52868 5
14	<b>Viz 5: The Spunky Parts</b> Chris Donald et al. John Brown	£6.99	0 870870 15 8
15	<b>A Sparrow's Flight</b> Lord Hailsham. Collins	£17.50	0 00 215545 1

## Hardback fiction

1	<b>Longshot</b> Dick Francis. Michael Joseph	£13.99	0 7181 3447 9
2	<b>A Sensible Life</b> Mary Wesley. Bantam Press	£12.95	0 593 01930 X
3	<b>September</b> Rosamunde Pilcher. NEL	£14.95	0 450 52868 5
4	<b>Possession</b> A S Byatt. Chatto	£13.95	0 7011 3260 4
5	<b>Golden Fox</b> Wilbur Smith. Macmillan	£14.95	0 333 53577 4
6	<b>The Women in His Life</b>		

## Paperbacks

1	<b>The Negotiator</b> Frederick Forsyth. Corgi	£4.99	0 552 13475 9
2	<b>Devices and Desires</b> P D James. Faber	£6.99	0 571 14304 0
3	<b>A History of the World in 10½ Chapters</b> Julian Barnes. Picador	£4.99	0 330 31399 1
4	<b>The Shell Seekers</b> Rosamunde Pilcher. Coronet	£4.99	0 340 49181 1
5	<b>Rosemary Conley's Inch Loss Plan</b> Rosemary Conley. Arrow	£6.99	0 09 974120 2
6	<b>A Time to Die</b> Wilbur Smith. Pan	£4.99	0 330 31185 9
7	<b>Rosemary Conley's Complete Hip and Thigh Diet</b> Rosemary Conley. Arrow	£3.99	0 09 963710 3
8	<b>The Russia House</b> John le Carré. Coronet	£4.50	0 340 51121 4
9	<b>The Harrogate Secret</b> Catherine Cookson. Corgi	£3.99	0 552 13300 0
10	<b>The Remains of the Day</b> Kazuo Ishiguro. Faber	£3.99	0 571 15491 3
11	<b>A Season in Hell</b> Jack Higgins. Pan	£3.99	0 330 31210 3
12	<b>A Year in Provence</b> Peter Mayle. Pan	£4.99	0 330 31236 7
13	<b>Star</b> Danielle Steel. Sphere	£3.99	0 7221 8317 8
14	<b>Clear and Present Danger</b> Tom Clancy. Fontana	£4.99	0 00 617730 1
15	<b>The Black Candle</b> Catherine Cookson. Corgi	£4.99	0 552 13576 3

## Paperback non-fiction

1	<b>Rosemary Conley's Inch Loss Plan</b> Rosemary Conley. Arrow	£6.99	0 09 974120 2
2	<b>Rosemary Conley's Complete Hip and Thigh Diet</b> Rosemary Conley. Arrow	£3.99	0 09 963710 3
3	<b>A Year in Provence</b> Peter Mayle. Pan	£4.99	0 330 31236 7
4	<b>Seasons of My Life</b> Hannah Hauxwell. Arrow	£3.99	0 09 972970 9
5	<b>The Flower Expert</b> Dr David Hessayon. pbi	£3.75	0 903505 19 3
6	<b>Callanetics</b>		

## BESTSELLERS OF 1991

## Hardbacks

1	<b>Delia Smith's Christmas</b> Delia Smith. BBC	£12.95	0 563 36048 8
2	<b>Guinness Book of Records</b> ed Donald McFarlan. Guinness	£12.99	0 85112 378 3
3	<b>Polo</b> Jilly Cooper. Bantam Press	£14.99	0 593 01836 2
4	<b>The Ultimate Teddy Bear Book</b> ed Pauline Cockrill. Dorling Kindersley	£12.99	0 86318 655 6
5	<b>Viz: The Sausage Sandwich</b> Chris Donald et al. John Brown	£6.99	1 870870 23 9
6	<b>Hugh Johnson's Pocket Wine Book</b> Hugh Johnson. Mitchell Beazley	£6.99	0 85533 916 0
7	<b>The Power and the Glory</b> Ivan Rendall. BBC	£17.95	0 563 36093 3
8	<b>Delia Smith's Complete Illustrated Cookery Course</b> Delia Smith. BBC	£19.95	0 563 21454 6
9	<b>Toujours Provence</b> Peter Mayle. Hamish Hamilton	£14.99	0 241 12856 0
10	<b>The RHS Gardeners' Encyclopedia of Plants and Flowers</b> ed Christopher Brickell. Dorling Kindersley	£27.50	0 86318 386 7
11	<b>Michelin Red Guide: France</b> Michelin	£11.25	2 06 006419 8
12	<b>As the Crow Flies</b> Jeffrey Archer. Hodder	£14.99	0 340 54159 8
13	<b>Around the World in Eighty Days</b> Michael Palin. BBC	£15.00	0 563 20826 0
14	<b>A Brief History of Time</b> Stephen Hawking. Bantam Press	£14.99	0 593 01518 5
15	<b>Millers's Antique Price Guide</b> Judith and Martin Miller. Millers	£19.99	0 905879 66 x

## Hardback fiction

1	<b>Polo</b> Jilly Cooper. Bantam Press	£14.99	0 593 01836 2
2	<b>As the Crow Flies</b> Jeffrey Archer. Hodder	£14.99	0 340 54159 8
3	<b>The Secret Pilgrim</b> John le Carré. Hodder	£14.95	0 340 54381 7
4	<b>Elephant Song</b> Wilbur Smith. Macmillan	£15.99	0 333 55509 0
5	<b>Gridlock</b> Ben Elton. Macdonald	£9.95	0 356 19702 6
6	<b>Seeress of Kell</b> David Eddings. Bantam Press	£14.99	0 593 01207 0
7	<b>Scarlett</b> Alexandra Ripley. Macmillan	£15.99	0 333 49099 1
8	<b>Comeback</b> Dick Francis. Michael Joseph	£14.99	0 7181 3468 0

Compiled by Bookwatch Ltd from sales figures provided by the nationwide panel of bookshops which contribute to the weekly bestseller lists in *The Bookseller*.

THE BOOKSELLER 20 & 27 DECEMBER 1991

## Paperbacks

1	<b>The Silence of the Lambs</b> Thomas Harris. Mandarin	£4.99	0 7493 0054 x
2	<b>A Year in Provence</b> Peter Mayle. Pan	£5.99	0 330 31236 7
3	<b>Red Dragon</b> Thomas Harris. Corgi	£4.99	0 552 12160 6
4	<b>Circle of Friends</b> Maeve Binchy. Coronet	£4.99	0 340 55133 x
5	<b>September</b> Rosamunde Pilcher. Coronet	£4.99	0 340 54287 x
6	<b>Daddy</b> Danielle Steel. Corgi	£3.99	0 552 13522 4
7	<b>Possession</b> A S Byatt. Vintage	£6.99	0 09 980040 3
8	<b>The Women in His Life</b> Barbara Taylor Bradford. Grafton	£4.99	0 586 07035 4
9	<b>The Gillyvors</b> Catherine Cookson. Corgi	£4.99	0 552 13621 2
10	<b>Lady Boss</b> Jackie Collins. Pan	£5.99	0 330 31294 4
11	<b>The Wingless Bird</b> Catherine Cookson. Corgi	£4.99	0 552 13577 1
12	<b>Golden Fox</b> Wilbur Smith. Pan	£5.99	0 330 31750 4
13	<b>The Burden of Proof</b> Scott Turow. Penguin	£4.99	0 14 013863 3
14	<b>Creed</b> James Herbert. NEL	£4.50	0 450 54743 4
15	<b>Wings</b> Terry Pratchett. Corgi	£2.99	0 552 52649 5

## Paperback non-fiction

1	<b>A Year in Provence</b> Peter Mayle. Pan	£5.99	0 330 31236 7
2	<b>Giles Cartoons</b> Express Books	£2.95	0 85079 232 0
3	<b>Around the World in Eighty Days</b> Michael Palin. BBC	£9.99	0 563 36213 8
4	<b>Rosemary Conley's Complete Hip and Thigh Diet</b> Rosemary Conley. Arrow	£4.50	0 09 963710 3
5	<b>The Bedding Plant Expert</b> Dr David Hessayon. pbi	£3.95	0 903505 34 7
6	<b>Proms '91</b> BBC	£2.50	0 563 40966 5
7	<b>Daughter of the Dales</b> Hannah Hauxwell. Arrow	£4.50	0 09 981480 3
8	<b>Your Driving Test</b> Driving Standards Agency/Nick Lynch. HMSO	£2.25	0 11 550976 3

## BESTSELLERS OF 1992

## Hardbacks

1	<b>Diana: Her True Story</b> Andrew Morton. O'Mara	£14.99	1 85479 191 5
2	<b>Sex</b> Madonna. Secker	£25.00	0 436 27084 6
3	<b>Guinness Book of Records</b> ed Peter Matthews. Guinness	£13.99	0 85112 978 1
4	<b>Pole to Pole</b> Michael Palin. BBC	£16.95	0 563 36283 9
5	<b>The Queen and I</b> Sue Townsend. Methuen	£9.99	0 413 65000 6
6	<b>Mr Bean's Diary</b> Rowan Atkinson and Robin Driscoll. Boxtree	£6.99	1 85283 768 3
7	<b>A Brief History of Time</b> Stephen Hawking. Bantam Press	£14.99	0 593 01518 5
8	<b>Michelin Red Guide: France</b> Michelin	£11.95	2 060065 29 1
9	<b>The RHS Gardeners' Encyclopedia of Plants and Flowers</b> ed Christopher Brickell. Dorling Kindersley	£29.95	0 86318 386 7
10	<b>Wild Swans</b> Jung Chang. HarperCollins	£17.50	0 00 215357 2
11	<b>Mostly Harmless</b> Douglas Adams. Heinemann	£12.99	0 434 00926 1
12	<b>Complete Illustrated Cookery Course</b> Delia Smith. BBC	£19.95	0 563 21454 6
13	<b>Driving Force</b> Dick Francis. Michael Joseph	£14.99	0 7181 3482 6
14	<b>The Six Wives of Henry VIII</b> Antonia Fraser. Weidenfeld	£20.00	0 297 81242 4
15	<b>Storm Command</b> Peter de la Billière. HarperCollins	£18.00	0 00 255138 1

## Hardback fiction

1	<b>The Queen and I</b> Sue Townsend. Methuen	£9.99	0 413 65000 6
2	<b>Mostly Harmless</b> Douglas Adams. Heinemann	£12.99	0 434 00926 1
3	<b>Driving Force</b> Dick Francis. Michael Joseph	£14.99	0 7181 3482 6
4	<b>Fatherland</b> Robert Harris. Hutchinson	£14.99	0 09 174827 5
5	<b>The Silence of the Lambs/Red Dragon</b> Thomas Harris. Peering/Bounty	£6.99	1 85052 231 6
6	<b>A Dubious Legacy</b> Mary Wesley. Bantam Press	£14.99	0 593 02537 7
7	<b>Gerald's Game</b> Stephen King. Hodder	£14.99	0 340 57493 3
8	<b>Small Gods</b> Terry Pratchett. Gollancz	£14.99	0 575 05222 8

## Paperbacks

1	<b>Polo</b> Jilly Cooper. Corgi	£5.99	0 552 13552 6
2	<b>As the Crow Flies</b> Jeffrey Archer. Coronet	£5.99	0 340 55876 8
3	<b>The Rector's Wife</b> Joanna Trollope. Black Swan	£5.99	0 552 99470 7
4	<b>The Liar</b> Stephen Fry. Mandarin	£4.99	0 7493 0540 1
5	<b>A Year in Provence</b> Peter Mayle. Pan	£5.99	0 330 31236 7
6	<b>Reaper Man</b> Terry Pratchett. Corgi	£3.99	0 552 13464 3
7	<b>Paradise News</b> David Lodge. Penguin	£4.99	0 14 016728 5
8	<b>Toujours Provence</b> Peter Mayle. Pan	£5.99	0 330 31947 7
9	<b>Gridlock</b> Ben Elton. Sphere	£4.99	0 7474 0568 9
10	<b>My Beloved Son</b> Catherine Cookson. Corgi	£4.99	0 552 13302 7
11	<b>The Silence of the Lambs</b> Thomas Harris. Mandarin	£4.99	0 7493 0942 3
12	<b>The Firm</b> John Grisham. Arrow	£4.99	0 09 983000 0
13	<b>Remember</b> Barbara Taylor Bradford. Grafton	£4.99	0 586 07032 2
14	<b>The Sum of All Fears</b> Tom Clancy. Fontana	£4.99	0 00 647116 1
15	<b>Heartbeat</b> Danielle Steel. Corgi	£4.99	0 552 13525 9

## Paperback non-fiction

1	<b>A Year in Provence</b> Peter Mayle. Pan	£5.99	0 330 31236 7
2	<b>Toujours Provence</b> Peter Mayle. Pan	£5.99	0 330 31947 7
3	<b>Seasons of My Life</b> Hannah Hauxwell. Arrow	£4.99	0 09 972970 9
4	<b>The Tree and Shrub Expert</b> Dr David Hessayon. pbi	£3.75	0 903505 17 7
5	<b>Proms '92</b> BBC	£3.00	0 563 36410 6
6	<b>The Flower Expert</b> Dr David Hessayon. pbi	£3.75	0 903505 19 3
7	<b>Gardens of England and Wales Open to the Public 1992</b> National Gardens Scheme	£2.00	0 900558 24 5
8	<b>Complete Hip and Thigh Diet</b> Rosemary Conley. Arrow	£3.99	0 09 963710 3

Compiled by Bookwatch Ltd from sales figures provided by the nationwide panel of bookshops which contribute to the weekly bestseller lists in *The Bookseller*.

**BESTSELLERS OF THE YEAR****Hardbacks**

1	<b>Delia Smith's Summer Collection</b> Delia Smith. BBC £14.99	0 563 36476 9
2	<b>The Downing Street Years</b> Margaret Thatcher. HarperCollins £25	0 00 255049 0
3	<b>Some Other Rainbow</b> John McCarthy and Jill Morrell. Bantam Press £14.99	0 593 02729 9
4	<b>Bravo Two-Zero</b> Andy McNab. Bantam Press £14.99	0 593 03421 X
5	<b>The Guinness Book of Records</b> ed Peter Matthews. Guinness £14.99	0 85112 512 3
6	<b>Taken on Trust</b> Terry Waite. Hodder £14.99	0 340 58196 4
7	<b>Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha</b> Roddy Doyle. Secker £12.99	0 436 20135 6
8	<b>Honour Among Thieves</b> Jeffrey Archer. HarperCollins £14.99	0 00 224288 5
9	<b>Adrian Mole: The Wilderness Years</b> Sue Townsend. Methuen £8.99	0 413 65010 3
10	<b>Hugh Johnson's Pocket Wine Book</b> Hugh Johnson. Mitchell Beazley £7.99	1 85732 164 2
11	<b>The Man Who Made Husbands Jealous</b> Jilly Cooper. Bantam Press £15.99	0 593 02587 3
12	<b>Decider</b> Dick Francis. Michael Joseph £14.99	0 7181 3602 0
13	<b>A Suitable Boy</b> Vikram Seth. Phoenix House £20	1 897580 20 7
14	<b>Diaries</b> Alan Clark. Weidenfeld £20	0 297 81352 8
15	<b>The Night Manager</b> John le Carré. Hodder £15.99	0 340 59281 8

**Hardback fiction**

1	<b>Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha</b> Roddy Doyle. Secker £12.99	0 436 20135 6
2	<b>Honour Among Thieves</b> Jeffrey Archer. HarperCollins £15.99	0 00 224288 5
3	<b>Adrian Mole: The Wilderness Years</b> Sue Townsend. Methuen £8.99	0 413 65010 3
4	<b>The Man Who Made Husbands Jealous</b> Jilly Cooper. Bantam Press £14.99	0 593 02587 3
5	<b>Decider</b> Dick Francis. Michael Joseph £14.99	0 7181 3602 0
6	<b>A Suitable Boy</b> Vikram Seth. Phoenix House £20	1 897580 20 7
7	<b>The Night Manager</b> John le Carré. Hodder £15.99	0 340 59281 8
8	<b>Mrs de Winter</b> Susan Hill. Sinclair-Stevenson £12.99	1 85619 330 6
9	<b>River God</b> Wilbur Smith. Macmillan £15.99	0 333 56874 5
10	<b>The Queen and I</b> Sue Townsend. Methuen £9.99	0 413 65000 6

**Paperbacks**

1	<b>Wild Swans</b> Jung Chang. Flamingo £7.99	0 00 637492 1
2	<b>Jurassic Park</b> Michael Crichton. Arrow £4.99	0 09 988700 2
3	<b>The Bridges of Madison County</b> Robert James Waller. Mandarin £3.99	0 7493 1678 0
4	<b>The Men and the Girls</b> Joanna Trollope. Black Swan £5.99	0 552 99492 8
5	<b>The Queen and I</b> Sue Townsend. Mandarin £4.99	0 7493 1352 8
6	<b>Fatherland</b> Robert Harris. Arrow £4.99	0 09 926381 5
7	<b>The Firm (film tie-in edition)</b> John Grisham. Arrow £4.99	0 09 930119 9
8	<b>The Secret History</b> Donna Tartt. Penguin £5.99	0 14 016777 3
9	<b>The Copper Beech</b> Maeve Binchy. Orion £4.99	1 85797 999 0
10	<b>The Firm</b> John Grisham. Arrow £4.99	0 09 983000 0
11	<b>The Rector's Wife</b> Joanna Trollope. Black Swan £5.99	0 552 99470 7
12	<b>The Pelican Brief</b> John Grisham. Arrow £4.99	0 09 999380 5
13	<b>An Evil Cradling</b> Brian Keenan. Vintage £6.99	0 09 999030 X
14	<b>The Choir</b> Joanna Trollope. Black Swan £5.99	0 552 99494 4
15	<b>The Way Through the Woods</b> Colin Dexter. Pan £4.99	0 330 32838 7

**Paperback non-fiction**

1	<b>Wild Swans</b> Jung Chang. Flamingo £7.99	0 00 637492 1
2	<b>An Evil Cradling</b> Brian Keenan. Vintage £6.99	0 09 999030 X
3	<b>Diana: Her True Story</b> Andrew Morton. O'Mara £6.99	1 85479 128 1
4	<b>Food Combining for Health</b> Doris Grant and Jean Joice. Thorsons £4.99	0 7225 2506 0
5	<b>Fever Pitch</b> Nick Hornby. Gollancz £4.99	0 575 05635 5
6	<b>Proms 93</b> BBC. £3	0 563 36945 0
7	<b>The Rock and Water Garden Expert</b> Dr David Hessayon. pbi £4.99	0 903505 38 X
8	<b>Gardens of England and Wales Open to the Public</b> National Gardens Scheme £2.50	0 900558 25 3
9	<b>Every Living Thing</b> James Herriot. Pan £4.99	0 330 33025 X
10	<b>The Food Combining Diet</b> Kathryn Marsden. Thorsons £4.99	0 7225 2790 X

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**BESTSELLERS OF THE YEAR****Hardbacks**

1	<b>Writing Home</b> Alan Bennett. Faber £17.50	0 571 17388 8
2	<b>Botham: My Autobiography</b> Ian Botham and Peter Hayter. CollinsWillow £15.99	0 00 218316 1
3	<b>Magic Eye 2</b> NE Thing Enterprises. Michael Joseph £11.99	0 7181 3848 1
4	<b>Della Smith's Summer Collection</b> Della Smith. BBC £14.99	0 563 36476 9
5	<b>Wild Horses</b> Dick Francis. Michael Joseph £14.99	0 7181 3603 9
6	<b>Politically Correct Bedtime Stories</b> James Finn Garner. Souvenir £6.99	0 285 63223 X
7	<b>Crossing the Threshold of Hope</b> Pope John Paul II. Cape £9.99	0 224 04015 4
8	<b>Magic Eye</b> NE Thing Enterprises. Michael Joseph £11.99	0 7181 3804 X
9	<b>The Terrible Twos</b> Sarah Kennedy. BBC £4.99	0 563 37114 5
10	<b>The New Guinness Book of Records</b> ed Peter Matthews. Guinness £14.99	0 851 12736 3
11	<b>The Chamber</b> John Grisham. Century £15.99	0 7126 5454 2
12	<b>Original Sin</b> P D James. Faber £14.99	0 571 17253 9
13	<b>The Friendship Book</b> Francis Gay. D C Thomson £3.95	0 8511 6588 5
14	<b>Twelve Red Herrings</b> Jeffrey Archer. HarperCollins £14.99	0 00 224329 6
15	<b>The Fist of God</b> Frederick Forsyth. Bantam Press £15.99	0 593 02798 1

**Hardback fiction**

1	<b>Wild Horses</b> Dick Francis. Michael Joseph £14.99	0 7181 3603 9
2	<b>The Chamber</b> John Grisham. Century £15.99	0 7126 5454 2
3	<b>Original Sin</b> P D James. Faber £14.99	0 571 17253 9
4	<b>Twelve Red Herrings</b> Jeffrey Archer. HarperCollins £14.99	0 00 224329 6
5	<b>The Fist of God</b> Frederick Forsyth. Bantam Press £15.99	0 593 02798 1
6	<b>Debt of Honour</b> Tom Clancy. HarperCollins £15.99	0 00 224577 9
7	<b>The Daughters of Cain</b> Colin Dexter. Macmillan £14.99	0 333 63004 1
8	<b>The Hippopotamus</b> Stephen Fry. Hutchinson £14.99	0 09 178412 3
9	<b>An Imaginative Experience</b> Mary Wesley. Bantam Press £14.99	0 593 03577 1
10	<b>The Glass Lake</b> Maeva Binchy. Orion £15.99	1 85797 950 8

**Paperbacks**

1	<b>Wild Swans</b> Jung Chang. Flamingo £7.99	0 00 637492 1
2	<b>Schindler's List</b> Thomas Keneally. Sceptre £5.99	0 340 60651 7
3	<b>Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha</b> Roddy Doyle. Minerva £5.99	0 7493 9735 7
4	<b>Bravo Two-Zero</b> Andy McNab. Corgi £5.99	0 552 14127 5
5	<b>The Man Who Made Husbands Jealous</b> Jilly Cooper. Corgi £5.99	0 552 13895 9
6	<b>A Spanish Lover</b> Joanna Trollope. Black Swan £5.99	0 552 99549 5
7	<b>A Sutable Boy</b> Vikram Seth. Phoenix £8.99	1 85799 088 9
8	<b>Some Other Rainbow</b> John McCarthy and Jill Morrell. Corgi £5.99	0 552 13953 X
9	<b>The Client</b> John Grisham. Arrow £5.99	0 09 917941 5
10	<b>Cruel and Unusual</b> Patricia D Cornwell. Warner £4.99	0 7515 0168 9
11	<b>Without Remorse</b> Tom Clancy. HarperCollins £5.99	0 00 647641 4
12	<b>The Night Manager</b> John le Carré. Coronet £5.99	0 340 59765 8
13	<b>Honour Among Thieves</b> Jeffrey Archer. HarperCollins £5.99	0 00 647606 6
14	<b>Have I Got News for You</b> Angus Deayton et al. BBC £6.99	0 563 37111 0
15	<b>100 Recipes in No Time at All</b> Challenge Anneka. BBC £4.99	0 563 37133 1

**Paperback non-fiction**

1	<b>Wild Swans</b> Jung Chang. Flamingo £7.99	0 00 637492 1
2	<b>Bravo Two-Zero</b> Andy McNab. Corgi £5.99	0 552 14127 5
3	<b>Some Other Rainbow</b> John McCarthy and Jill Morrell. Corgi £5.99	0 552 13953 X
4	<b>Have I Got News for You</b> Angus Deayton et al. BBC £6.99	0 563 37111 0
5	<b>100 Recipes in No Time at All</b> Challenge Anneka. BBC £4.99	0 563 37133 1
6	<b>Diarles</b> Alan Clark. Phoenix £6.99	1 85799 142 7
7	<b>Tell Me the Truth About Love</b> WH Auden. Faber £2.50	0 571 17444 2
8	<b>An Evil Cradling</b> Brian Keenan. Vintage £6.99	0 09 999030 X
9	<b>Taken on Trust</b> Terry Waite. Coronet £5.99	0 340 60969 9
10	<b>Calvin and Hobbes: Homicidal Psycho Jungle Cat</b> Bill Watterson. Warner £7.99	0 7515 1127 7

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**BOOKSELLER BESTSELLERS OF THE YEAR****Hardbacks**

<b>1 Delia Smith's Winter Collection</b> Delia Smith. BBC £15-99	0 563 36477 7
<b>2 Immediate Action</b> Andy McNab. Bantam Press £15-99	0 593 03782 0
<b>3 The One That Got Away</b> Chris Ryan. Century £15-99	0 7126 7616 3
<b>4 Sophie's World</b> Jostein Gaarder. Phoenix House £16-99	1 89758 042 8
<b>5 Delia Smith's Summer Collection</b> Delia Smith. BBC £14-99	0 563 36476 9
<b>6 Enigma</b> Robert Harris. Hutchinson £15-99	0 09 177923 5
<b>7 The Seventh Scroll</b> Wilbur Smith. Macmillan £15-99	0 333 58321 3
<b>8 The Rainmaker</b> John Grisham. Century £15-99	0 7126 5459 3
<b>9 More Rhodes Around Britain</b> Gary Rhodes. BBC £15-99	0 563 37158 7
<b>10 Come to Grief</b> Dick Francis. Michael Joseph £15-99	0 7181 3753 1
<b>11 The Private Life of Plants</b> David Attenborough. BBC £17-99	0 563 37023 8
<b>12 Notes from a Small Island</b> Bill Bryson. Doubleday £15-99	0 385 40534 0
<b>13 Rick Stein's Taste of the Sea</b> Rick Stein. BBC £16-99	0 563 37160 9
<b>14 The State We're In</b> Will Hutton. Cape £16-99	0 224 03688 2
<b>15 The Best of Friends</b> Joanna Trollope. Bloomsbury £15-99	0 7475 2000 3

**Hardback fiction**

<b>1 Sophie's World</b> Jostein Gaarder. Phoenix House £16-99	1 89758 042 8
<b>2 Enigma</b> Robert Harris. Hutchinson £15-99	0 09 177923 5
<b>3 The Seventh Scroll</b> Wilbur Smith. Macmillan £15-99	0 333 58321 3
<b>4 The Rainmaker</b> John Grisham. Century £15-99	0 7126 5459 3
<b>5 Come to Grief</b> Dick Francis. Michael Joseph £15-99	0 7181 3753 1
<b>6 The Best of Friends</b> Joanna Trollope. Bloomsbury £15-99	0 7475 2000 3
<b>7 Our Game</b> John le Carré. Hodder £16-99	0 340 64026 X
<b>8 The Lost World</b> Michael Crichton. Century £15-99	0 7126 7690 2

**Paperbacks**

<b>1 The Chamber</b> John Grisham. Arrow £5-99	0 09 917951 2
<b>2 The Glass Lake</b> Maeve Binchy. Orion £5-99	1 85797 801 3
<b>3 Debt of Honour</b> Tom Clancy. HarperCollins £5-99	0 00 647974 X
<b>4 The Fist of God</b> Frederick Forsyth £5-99	0 552 13990 4
<b>5 Twelve Red Herrings</b> Jeffrey Archer. HarperCollins £4-99	0 00 647723 2
<b>6 The Body Farm</b> Patricia Cornwell. Warner £5-99	0 7515 1221 4
<b>7 Bravo Two Zero</b> Andy McNab. Corgi £5-99	0 552 14127 5
<b>8 Soul Music</b> Terry Pratchett. Corgi £4-99	0 552 14029 5
<b>9 The Ghosts of Sleath</b> James Herbert. HarperCollins £4-99	0 00 647597 3
<b>10 Justice Is a Woman</b> Catherine Cookson. Corgi £4-99	0 552 13622 0
<b>11 A Brief History of Time</b> Stephen Hawking. Bantam £6-99	0 553 17521 1
<b>12 Birdsong</b> Sebastian Faulks. Vintage £5-99	0 09 938791 3
<b>13 Insomnia</b> Stephen King. NEL £5-99	0 450 60848 4
<b>14 Writing Home</b> Alan Bennett. Faber £7-99	0 571 17389 6
<b>15 Wild Swans</b> Jung Chang. Flamingo £7-99	0 00 637492 1

**Children's**

<b>1 Pocahontas Book of the Film</b> Ladybird £1-99	0 7214 4496 2
<b>2 The Very Hungry Caterpillar</b> Eric Carle. Puffin £4-50	0 14 050087 1
<b>3 Letterland ABC</b> Richard Carlisle and Lyn Wendon Nelson £8-99	0 17 410166 X
<b>4 Point Horror: Twins</b> Caroline B Cooney. Scholastic £2-99	0 590 55902 8
<b>5 Funfax Organiser</b> Henderson £4-99	1 85597 011 2
<b>6 The Lion King Book of the Film</b> Ladybird £1-99	0 7214 4302 8
<b>7 After the Storm</b> Nick Butterworth. Collins £4-99	0 00 664252 7
<b>8 The Secret Path</b> Nick Butterworth. Collins £4-99	0 00 664505 4

This list is produced for *The Bookseller* by Bookwatch Ltd. First figures on the right show position in the last list. Bold figures show the number of times the title has previously appeared—usually but not necessarily consecutively in the list. Since 1st January 1988 dictionaries and the *Highway Code* have been excluded from these lists, though new editions will be tracked for the initial weeks of publication.

**BOOKSELLER BESTSELLERS OF THE YEAR****Hardbacks**

1 <b>Winter Collection</b> (316,111) Delia Smith. BBC £15-99	0 563 36477 7
2 <b>Appassionata</b> (108,295) Jilly Cooper. Bantam Press £16-99	0 593 03861 4
3 <b>Summer Collection</b> (106,588) Delia Smith. BBC £14-99	0 563 36476 9
4 <b>The Guinness Book of Records</b> (98,816) Guinness Publishing £16	0 85112 693 6
5 <b>Longitude</b> (84,213) Dava Sobel. Fourth Estate £12	1 85702 502 4
6 <b>To the Hilt</b> (76,914) Dick Francis. Michael Joseph £15-99	0 7181 3754 X
7 <b>Evening Class</b> (75,475) Maeve Binchy. Orion £16-99	0 7528 0451 0
8 <b>The Fourth Estate</b> (74,776) Jeffrey Archer. HarperCollins £16-99	0 00 225318 6
9 <b>The Runaway Jury</b> (74,739) John Grisham. Century £16-99	0 7126 6131 X
10 <b>Ken Hom's Hot Wok</b> (73,715) Ken Hom. BBC £16-99	0 563 37100 5
11 <b>Hogfather</b> (69,092) Terry Pratchett. Gollancz £15-99	0 575 06403 X
12 <b>Immediate Action</b> (68,941) Andy McNab. Bantam Press £15-99	0 593 03782 0
13 <b>Cause of Death</b> (62,273) Patricia Cornwell. Little, Brown £16-99	0 316 87886 3
14 <b>Executive Orders</b> (58,401) Tom Clancy. HarperCollins £17-99	0 00 224578 7
15 <b>The X-Files Book of the Unexplained</b> (54,223) Jane Goldman. Simon & Schuster £16-99	0 684 81633 4

**Hardback fiction**

1 <b>Appassionata</b> (108,295) Jilly Cooper. Bantam Press £16-99	0 593 03861 4
2 <b>To the Hilt</b> (76,914) Dick Francis. Michael Joseph £15-99	0 7181 3754 X
3 <b>Evening Class</b> (75,475) Maeve Binchy. Orion £16-99	0 7528 0451 0
4 <b>The Fourth Estate</b> (74,776) Jeffrey Archer. HarperCollins £16-99	0 00 225318 6
5 <b>The Runaway Jury</b> (74,739) John Grisham. Century £16-99	0 7126 6131 X
6 <b>Hogfather</b> (69,092) Terry Pratchett. Gollancz £15-99	0 575 06403 X
7 <b>Cause of Death</b> (62,273) Patricia Cornwell. Little, Brown £16-99	0 316 87886 3
8 <b>Executive Orders</b> (58,401) Tom Clancy. HarperCollins £17-99	0 00 224578 7

Source: Bookwatch

**Paperbacks**

1 <b>The Horse Whisperer</b> (406,521) Nicholas Evans. Corgi £5-99	0 552 14377 4
2 <b>Sophie's World</b> (393,850) Jostein Gaarder. Phoenix £6-99	1 85799 291 1
3 <b>The Rainmaker</b> (387,194) John Grisham. Arrow £5-99	0 09 917961 X
4 <b>High Fidelity</b> (358,627) Nick Hornby. Indigo £5-99	0 575 40018 8
5 <b>Behind the Scenes at the Museum</b> (352,086) Kate Atkinson. Black Swan £6-99	0 552 99618 1
6 <b>Coming Home</b> (325,031) Rosamund Pilcher. Coronet £6-99	0 340 64685 3
7 <b>Notes from a Small Island</b> (321,629) Bill Bryson. Black Swan £6-99	0 552 99600 9
8 <b>From Potter's Field</b> (320, 342) Patricia Cornwell. Warner £5-99	0 7515 1630 9
9 <b>A Ruthless Need</b> (280,126) Catherine Cookson. Corgi £5-99	0 552 14039 2
10 <b>The Best of Friends</b> (254,910) Joanna Trollope. Black Swan £6-99	0 552 99643 2
11 <b>Complete Theory Test for Cars and Motorcycles</b> (207,965) Driving Standards Agency. HMSO £9-99	0 11 551779 0
12 <b>Lightning</b> (207,737) Danielle Steel. Corgi £5-99	0 552 13749 9
13 <b>Trainspotting</b> (185,317) Irvine Welsh. Minerva £6-99	0 7493 9606 7
14 <b>Grantchester Grind</b> (175,855) Tom Sharpe. Pan £5-99	0 330 32307 5
15 <b>Therapy</b> (169,131) David Lodge. Penguin £6-99	0 14 025358 0

**Children's**

1 <b>The Beano Book</b> (160,544) D C Thomson £4-99	0 85116 618 0
2 <b>Goosebumps: It Came from Beneath the Sink</b> (70,685) R L Stine. Hippo £3-50	0 590 13539 2
3 <b>James and the Giant Peach</b> (57,145) Roald Dahl. Puffin £4-99	0 14 037156 7
4 <b>Horrible Histories: The Terrible Tudors</b> (49,348) Terry Deary. Hippo £3-50	0 590 55290 2
5 <b>Goosebumps: The Barking Ghost</b> (48,137) R L Stine. Hippo £3-50	0 590 13739 5
6 <b>The Very Hungry Caterpillar</b> (46,139) Eric Carle. Puffin £4-99	0 14 050087 1
7 <b>Goosebumps: Ghost Beach</b> (44,835) R L Stine. Hippo £3-50	0 590 13545 7
8 <b>Babe</b> (The Sheep Pig) (44,535) Dick King-Smith. Puffin £3-99	0 14 037376 4

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## Bookseller bestsellers for 1997

49 weeks to  
6th December 1997



## Top 15 paperback fiction titles

Pos	Title	Author	Publisher	ISBN	Pub date	RRP	Qty sold
1	Bridget Jones's Diary	Fielding, Helea	Picador	0330332775	Jul 11, 97	5.99	160763
2	High Fidelity	Hornby, Nick	Indigo	0575400188	Apr 25, 96	5.99	101962
3	Captain Corelli's Mandolin	Bernières, Louis de	Minerva	0749397543	May 1, 95	6.99	95230
4	Evening Class	Binchy, Maeve	Orion	0752809636	May 2, 97	6.99	79736
5	The Woman Who Walked into Doors	Doyle, Roddy	Minerva	0749395990	May 5, 97	6.99	72309
6	Last Orders	Swift, Graham	Picador	0330345605	Feb 21, 97	5.99	66137
7	The English Patient	Ondaatje, Michael	Picador	0330330276	Jul 1, 93	6.99	63875
8	Sophie's World	Gaarder, Joestein	Phoenix	1857992911	Mar 4, 96	6.99	63080
9	Next of Kin	Trollope, Joanna	Black Swan	0552997005	Jun 5, 97	6.99	62990
10	Feet of Clay	Pratchett, Terry	Corgi	0552142379	May 1, 97	5.99	60874
11	The English Patient (film tie-in)	Ondaatje, Michael	Picador	0330349937	Feb 1, 97	6.99	58883
12	The Horse Whisperer	Evans, Nicholas	Corgi	0552143774	Jun 1, 96	5.99	56644
13	The Runaway Jury	Grisham, John	Arrow	0099410214	Apr 3, 97	5.99	56620
14	Mad Cows	Lette, Kathy	Picador	0330334026	Jun 20, 97	5.99	56614
15	The Beach	Garland, Alex	Penguin	0140258418	Jun 26, 97	5.99	54868



## Top 15 paperback non-fiction titles

Pos	Title	Author	Publisher	ISBN	Pub date	RRP	Qty sold
1	The Little Book of Calm	Wilson, Paul	Penguin	014026065X	Oct 31, 96	1.99	179273
2	Notes from a Small Island	Bryson, Bill	Black Swan	0552996009	Aug 1, 96	6.99	159739
3	Highway Code	Transport, Dept of	HMSO	0115518436	Jul 1, 96	0.99	94524
4	Men Are from Mars, Women Are . . .	Gray, John	Thorsons	072252840X	May 24, 93	8.99	93806
5	Angela's Ashes	McCourt, Frank	Flamingo	000649840X	Jul 10, 97	7.99	89421
6	The Nation's Favourite Poems		BBC	0563387823	Sep 19, 96	5.99	74659
7	Fever Pitch	Hornby, Nick	Indigo	0575400153	Jul 25, 96	5.99	65758
8	The Lost Continent	Bryson, Bill	Abacus	034910056X	Jul 19, 90	6.99	45345
9	The Celestine Prophecy	Redfield, James	Bantam	0553409026	Oct 1, 94	7.99	44177
10	Mr Nice	Marks, Howard	Mandarin	0749395699	Jun 2, 97	5.99	41808
11	Take Care of Yourself	Sach, Penelope	Penguin	014026261X	Mar 27, 97	1.99	38661
12	Neither Here Nor There	Bryson, Bill	Minerva	07049398159	May 7, 92	6.99	35722
13	The Art Book		Phaidon	0714836257	Apr 1, 97	6.95	34604
14	Official Theory Test for Car Drivers	DSA	Stationery Office	0115519254	Jun 16, 97	10.99	33763
15	Letter to Daniel	Keane, Fergal	Penguin	014026289X	Nov 18, 96	6.99	31626

This information is extracted from sales data gathered by BookTrack (tel 01420 545420) and reflects retail sales through the general bookshop market of about 1,500 outlets. The figures showing the quantity sold represent actual sales through those shops.

## Bookseller bestsellers for 1997

49 weeks to  
6th December 1997

## Top 15 hardback fiction titles

Pos	Title	Author	Publisher	ISBN	Pub date	RRP	Qty sold
1	Jingo	Pratchett, Terry	Gollancz	0575065400	Nov 6, 97	16.99	42030
2	The God of Small Things	Roy, Arundhati	Flamingo	0002255863	Jun 9, 97	15.99	35729
3	10-1b Penalty	Francis, Dick	Michael Joseph	0718142454	Sep 4, 97	16.99	30774
4	The Partner	Grisham, John	Century	0712661360	Apr 3, 97	16.99	27876
5	Birds of Prey	Smith, Wilbur	Macmillan	0333653300	Mar 7, 97	16.99	25326
6	Unnatural Exposure	Cornwell, Patricia	Little, Brown	0316883344	Oct 2, 97	16.99	24251
7	Polgara the Sorceress	Eddings, David and Leigh	Voyager	0246138440	Jul 10, 97	17.99	20232
8	London	Rutherfurd, Edward	Century	0712654194	May 1, 97	16.99	19666
9	Hornet's Nest	Cornwell, Patricia	Little, Brown	0316882534	Mar 13, 97	16.99	18396
10	A Certain Justice	James, P D	Faber	0571191649	Oct 6, 97	15.99	16360
11	Remote Control	McNab, Andy	Bantam Press	0593042360	Nov 1, 97	16.99	16176
12	Sharpe's Tiger	Cornwell, Bernard	HarperCollins	0002250101	Jun 2, 97	16.99	16035
13	A Song of Stone	Banks, Iain	Little, Brown	0316640166	Aug 7, 97	16.99	14002
14	Excalibur: Warlord Chronicles	Cornwell, Bernard	Michael Joseph	0718100573	Oct 2, 97	16.99	13960
15	3001: The Final Odyssey	Clarke, Arthur C	Voyager	0246126892	Mar 20, 97	16.99	13476



## Top 15 hardback non-fiction titles

Pos	Title	Author	Publisher	ISBN	Pub date	RRP	Qty sold
1	Diana: Her True Story	Morton, Andrew	Michael O'Mara	1854792709	Oct 6, 97	15.99	100407
2	Full Circle	Palin, Michael	BBC	0563371218	Sep 1, 97	19.99	77801
3	Longitude	Sobel, Dava	Fourth Estate	1857025024	Aug 19, 96	12.00	51056
4	A Walk in the Woods	Bryson, Bill	Doubleday	0385408161	Nov 1, 97	16.99	46779
5	Dickie Bird: My Autobiography	Bird, Dickie	Hodder	0340684577	Sep 4, 97	17.99	39334
6	Guinness Book of Records		Guinness	085112044X	Oct 3, 97	17.00	27989
7	Diana, Princess of Wales	Graham, Tim	Weidenfeld	0297824163	Sep 12, 97	12.99	27514
8	Rick Stein's Fruits of the Sea	Stein, Rick	BBC	0563387629	Jan 9, 97	17.99	26940
9	The Dilbert Principle	Adams, Scott	Boxtree	0752222872	Aug 26, 96	9.99	26031
10	Fermat's Last Theorem	Singh, Simon	Fourth Estate	1857025210	May 1, 97	12.99	21777
11	The Diving-Bell and the Butterfly	Bauby, Jean-Dominique	Fourth Estate	1857027795	Apr 17, 97	9.99	20763
12	Concise Oxford Dictionary	Fowler, H W and F G (eds)	OUP	0198613199	Jul 27, 95	15.99	19919
13	The Lost Gardens of Heligan	Smit, Tim	Gollancz	0575064226	Mar 6, 97	20.00	19857
14	Moab Is My Washpot	Fry, Stephen	Hutchinson	0091801613	Oct 2, 97	16.99	19682
15	Complete Baby and Toddler Meal Planner	Karmel, Annabel	Ebury	0091751047	Oct 3, 91	10.99	19127

This information is extracted from sales data gathered by BookTrack (tel 01420 545420) and reflects retail sales through the general bookshop market of about 1,500 outlets. The figures showing the quantity sold represent actual sales through those shops.

# Sales up again—but down on last year

Sales of books in the general retail market rose a further 17% last week after the 20% rise seen the week before. But this year's figures are 3.3% down on sales in the comparable week last year.

The figures, from Whitaker BookTrack, show that sales in the general retail market were £35.38m in the week ending 12th December, compared with £30.3m the week before.

According to Whitaker BookTrack, sales through the general retail market in the week ending 13th December 1997 were £36.6m. In the first two weeks of December sales last year were £2m ahead of this year's £65.7m.

In volume terms 4,348,269 books were sold last week, up 13% on the week before, but down 7.4% on last year's figures.

The remainder of this page is devoted to a review of the general high street (which does not include sales from W H Smith or other mixed multiples) in the first 11 months of 1998.

The charts (right) show the top selling books of 1998. Ted Hughes' *Birthday Letters* was the surprise bestselling hardback title, and Louis de Bernières' *Captain Corelli's Mandolin* was the less surprising number one paperback.

The tables (below left) show the market share of the top 10 publishers and the top 10 subject categories in 1998.

ers and the top 10 subject categories in 1998.

The top three publishers were Penguin, Random House and HarperCollins. The number one publisher was Penguin, with total sales of £42m, giving it a market share of 8.5%. Random House had sales of £41m and a market share of £41.2m. HarperCollins has fallen back to third with total sales of £40m. In total the top 10 publishers had a market share of 49% of the general high street.

Fiction titles made up 22% of the market, non-fiction 67% and children's books 10.7%. Because of changes to BookTrack's universe figures for 1997 are not available.

## BOOK SALES\* W/E 12TH DEC

Unit sales	4,348,269
Sales value	£35.38m
Average price	£8.14

## CHRISTMAS SALES

**SALES UP 17%<sup>†</sup>**

**Total sales £65.72m<sup>§</sup>**

\*General retail market, incl W H Smith  
<sup>†</sup>Shows percentage change on the previous week  
<sup>§</sup>Sales since 29/11/98

### TOP 10 PUBLISHERS OF THE YEAR (GENERAL HIGH STREET)

Rank (last period)	Sales (£000)	Volume ('000)	% market share*	Average price
1 (2) Penguin Group	42,241	7,013	8.5	£6.02
2 (3) Random House Group	41,226	5,444	8.3	£7.57
3 (1) HarperCollins Group	40,442	5,151	8.1	£7.85
4 (5) Transworld Group	25,414	3,182	5.1	£7.99
5 (4) Hodder Headline	24,102	3,325	4.9	£7.25
6 (6) Macmillan Trade	17,587	2,391	3.5	£7.35
7 (7) Little, Brown Group	14,793	1,906	3.0	£7.76
8 (8) Dorling Kindersley	13,472	1,453	2.7	£9.27
9 (9) Reed Group	12,689	1,212	2.6	£10.47
10 (10) OUP	12,017	1,482	2.4	£8.11

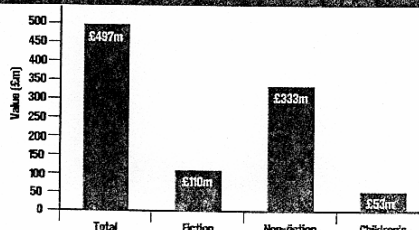
48 weeks to 28th November 1998. \*market share by value; total market was £497m

### TOP 10 CATEGORIES OF THE YEAR (GENERAL HIGH STREET)

Rank	Sales (£000)	Volume ('000)	% market share*	Average price
1 Fiction, general	65,167	9,639	13.1	£6.76
2 Children's books	53,127	12,326	10.7	£4.31
3 Computers (software)	22,566	973	4.5	£23.18
4 School textbooks	18,575	2,757	3.7	£6.74
5 Fiction, mystery	18,342	2,745	3.7	£6.68
6 Fiction, science fiction	15,143	2,101	3.1	£7.21
7 Language	14,864	1,640	3.0	£9.06
8 Autobiographies	14,438	1,520	2.9	£9.50
9 Biographies	13,897	1,189	2.8	£11.69
10 Food and drink	12,628	1,184	2.5	£10.66

48 weeks to 28th November 1998. \*market share by value; total market was £497m

### BREAKDOWN OF SALES IN THE GENERAL HIGH STREET



48 weeks to 28th November 1998

General high street includes sales from independent bookshops and bookshop chains, but does not include W H Smith and other mixed multiples

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### TOP 10 HARDBACK BESTSELLERS OF 1998 IN GENERAL HIGH STREET

1 Birthday Letters	Hughes, Ted	quantity sold 48453
Faber	£14.99	0571194729
2 The Last Continent	Fratchett, Terry	quantity sold 47063
Doubleday	£16.99	0385409893
3 Delia's How to Cook	Smith, Delia	quantity sold 43533
BBC	£16.99	0563384301
4 The Street Lawyer	Grisham, John	quantity sold 36289
Century	£16.99	0712678212
5 Ainsley Harriott's Meals . . .	Harriott, Ainsley	quantity sold 31586
BBC	£14.99	0563384271
6 The Guv'nor	McLean and Gerrard	quantity sold 31125
Blake	£14.99	1857823354
7 Charlotte Gray	Faulks, Sebastian	quantity sold 30474
Hutchinson	£16.99	0091784425
8 About a Boy	Hornby, Nick	quantity sold 29712
Gollancz	£15.99	0575061596
9 Carpe Jugulum	Pratchett, Terry	quantity sold 29059
Doubleday	£16.99	0385409923
10 Notes from a Big Country	Bryson, Bill	quantity sold 27131
Doubleday	£16.99	0385410190

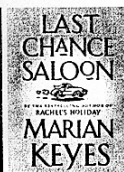
### TOP 10 PAPERBACK BESTSELLERS OF 1998 IN GENERAL HIGH STREET

1 Captain Corelli's Mandolin	Bernières, Louis de	quantity sold 217017
Minerva	£6.99	0749397543
2 Children's Book of Books	Random House	quantity sold 202657
Random House	£1.00	0099264641
3 The Little Book of Calm	Wilson, Paul	quantity sold 201647
Penguin	£1.99	014026065X
4 Bridget Jones's Diary	Fielding, Helen	quantity sold 170645
Picador	£5.99	0330332775
5 The God of Small Things	Roy, Arundhati	quantity sold 153978
Flamingo	£6.99	0006550681
6 Angela's Ashes	McCourt, Frank	quantity sold 126545
Flamingo	£7.99	000649840X
7 Men Are from Mars . . .	Gray, John	quantity sold 118409
Thorsons	£8.99	072252840X
8 Enduring Love	McEwan, Ian	quantity sold 109389
Vintage	£6.99	0099276585
9 The Highway Code	Transport, Dept of	quantity sold 97962
Stationery Office	£0.99	0115518436
10 Notes from a Small Island	Bryson, Bill	quantity sold 97238
Doubleday	£6.99	0552996009

18/25 DECEMBER 1998

## BOOKTRACK

## Bookseller bestsellers

48 weeks ending  
29th November 1999

## Top 15 original fiction titles

Pos	Title	Author	Publisher	ISBN	Pub date	Binding	RRP	Qty sold
1	Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban	Rowling, J K	Bloomsbury	0747542155	Jul 99	H	£10.99	275,126
2	Hannibal	Harris, Thomas	Wm Heinemann	0434009407	Jun 99	H	£16.99	252,253
3	Monsoon	Smith, Wilbur	Macmillan	0333637712	Mar 99	H	£17.99	87,741
4	The Testament	Grisham, John	Century	0712678263	Feb 99	H	£16.99	73,369
5	Adrian Mole: The Cappuccino Years	Townsend, Sue	Michael Joseph	0718143671	Oct 99	H	£14.99	73,292
6	Score!	Cooper, Jilly	Bantam Press	0593042263	May 99	H	£16.99	58,811
7	The Remorseful Day	Dexter, Colin	Macmillan	033376157X	Sep 99	H	£16.99	57,116
8	The Fifth Elephant	Pratchett, Terry	Doubleday	0385409958	Nov 99	H	£16.99	55,472
9	Black Notice	Cornwell, Patricia	Little, Brown	0316646377	Sep 99	H	£16.99	53,309
10	Second Wind	Francis, Dick	Michael Joseph	0718144082	Sep 99	H	£16.99	51,122
11	Star Wars Episode One: The Novel	Brooks, Terry	Century	0712680578	May 99	H	£15.99	49,328
12	Last Chance Saloon	Keyes, Marian	Michael Joseph	071814385X	Oct 99	P	£9.99	48,201
13	Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason	Fielding, Helen	Picador	033036734X	Nov 99	H	£12.99	44,895
14	Crisis Four	McNab, Andy	Bantam Press	0593042379	Oct 99	H	£16.99	40,406
15	Granny Dan	Steel, Danielle	Bantam Press	0593040759	Aug 99	H	£9.99	36,973

## Bookseller bestsellers

48 weeks ending  
29th November 1999

## Top 15 mass market fiction titles

Pos	Title	Author	Publisher	ISBN	Pub date	RRP	Qty sold
1	Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone	Rowling, J K	Bloomsbury	0747532745	Jun 97	£4.99	390,982
2	Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets	Rowling, J K	Bloomsbury	0747538484	Jan 99	£4.99	328,201
3	Tara Road	Binchy, Maeve	Orion	0752826026	Apr 99	£6.99	269,587
4	About a Boy	Hornby, Nick	Indigo	0575400951	Mar 99	£6.99	205,746
5	Point of Origin	Cornwell, Patricia	Warner	0751523224	Jun 99	£5.99	204,227
6	The Long Road Home	Steel, Danielle	Corgi	0552145025	Mar 99	£5.99	204,119
7	The Street Lawyer	Grisham, John	Arrow	0099244926	Feb 99	£5.99	200,452
8	Charlotte Gray	Faulks, Sebastian	Vintage	0099394316	Jul 99	£6.99	186,307
9	When the Wind Blows	Patterson, James	Headline Feature	0747257892	Jul 99	£5.99	176,403
10	Other People's Children	Trollope, Joanna	Black Swan	0552997889	Feb 99	£6.99	167,177
11	Captain Corelli's Mandolin	Bernières, Louis de	Vintage	0749397543	May 95	£6.99	166,130
12	Bag of Bones	King, Stephen	NEL	034071820X	Jun 99	£6.99	160,639
13	Solace of Sin	Cookson, Catherine	Corgi	0552145831	Feb 99	£5.99	156,062
14	The Loop	Evans, Nicholas	Corgi	0552144959	Jul 99	£5.99	146,681
15	The Eleventh Commandment	Archer, Jeffrey	HarperCollins	0006496466	Apr 99	£5.99	139,970

This information is supplied from the Whitaker BookTrack (tel 01252 742555) general retail market, representing sales through 4,600 outlets. The figures showing the quantity sold represent actual sales through those shops; the column showing previous position represents the previous position of titles in *The Bookseller* lists. Original fiction titles cost £8.50 and above.



## Bookseller bestsellers 48 weeks ending 2nd December 2000

### Top 15 original fiction

Pos	Title	Author	Publisher	ISBN	Pub date	RRP	ASP	Sales
1	Scarlet Feather	Binchy, Maeve	Orion	0752838245	Aug 00	£16.99	£13.43	103976
2	The Brethren	Grisham, John	Century	0712680012	Feb 00	£16.99	£13.80	86019
3	Winter Solstice	Pilcher, Rosamunde	Hodder	0340767464	Jul 00	£16.99	£13.73	75167
4	The Truth	Pratchett, Terry	Doubleday	0385601026	Nov 00	£16.99	£13.98	70185
5	The Bear and the Dragon	Clancy, Tom	Michael Joseph	071814337X	Aug 00	£17.99	£13.72	68666
6	The Last Precinct	Cornwell, Patricia	Little, Brown	0316646245	Oct 00	£16.99	£13.77	61772
7	Shattered	Francis, Dick	Michael Joseph	0718144538	Aug 00	£16.99	£14.17	56191
8	Firewall	McNab, Andy	Bantam Press	0593046161	Oct 00	£16.99	£12.84	52878
9	Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason	Fielding, Helen	Picador	033036734X	Nov 99	£12.99	£10.82	50912
10	Sharpe's Trafalgar	Cornwell, Bernard	HarperCollins	0002258749	Apr 00	£16.99	£14.43	41893
11	The House on Hope Street	Steel, Danielle	Bantam Press	0593043626	Aug 00	£10.99	£7.77	37950
12	Marrying the Mistress	Trollope, Joanna	Bloomsbury	0747547270	Feb 00	£16.99	£15.31	37484
13	Broken	Cole, Martina	Headline	0747277524	Nov 00	£9.99	£8.40	36473
14	Cradle and All	Patterson, James	Headline Feature	0747274355	Apr 00	£9.99	£8.52	34889
15	The Redemption of Althalus	Eddings and Eddings	Voyager	0002247542	Jul 00	£17.99	£15.99	34771

Paperbacks in *italic*

### Top 15 mass market fiction

Pos	Title	Author	Publisher	ISBN	Pub date	RRP	ASP	Sales
1	Hannibal	Harris, Thomas	Arrow	0099297701	Apr 00	£6.99	£5.08	407899
2	The Testament	Grisham, John	Arrow	0099245027	Dec 99	£6.99	£4.57	349470
3	Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason	Fielding, Helen	Picador	0330367358	Jun 00	£6.99	£5.63	299854
4	Man and Boy	Parsons, Tony	HarperCollins	0006512135	Mar 00	£6.99	£6.21	273377
5	Black Notice	Cornwell, Patricia	Warner	075152543X	May 00	£5.99	£4.60	250766
6	Monsoon	Smith, Wilbur	Pan	0330376799	Jun 00	£6.99	£3.35	204004
7	Score!	Cooper, Jilly	Corgi	0552145793	Apr 00	£6.99	£5.10	190927
8	The Beach	Garland, Alex	Penguin	0140270051	Jan 00	£6.99	£5.70	181347
9	Inconceivable	Elton, Ben	Black Swan	0552146986	Jun 00	£6.99	£5.64	168216
10	Chocolat	Harris, Joanne	Black Swan	0552998486	Mar 00	£6.99	£6.78	162739
11	Bittersweet	Steel, Danielle	Corgi	0552145033	May 00	£5.99	£4.23	154546
12	Birdsong	Faulks, Sebastian	Vintage	0099387913	Jul 94	£6.99	£6.82	148995
13	Granny Dan	Steel, Danielle	Corgi	0552145084	Aug 00	£5.99	£4.34	129908
14	Last Chance Saloon	Keyes, Marian	Penguin	0140271805	May 00	£6.99	£5.37	129596
15	The Blind Years	Cookson, Catherine	Corgi	0552146099	Mar 00	£5.99	£4.40	123107

- The bestselling title so far this year? *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* by J K Rowling (Bloomsbury), with over one million copies sold since July.
- *Hannibal* by Thomas Harris (Arrow) is this year's bestselling paperback, after it was last year's bestselling fiction hardback.
- *Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason* by Helen Fielding (Macmillan) appears in both the original and mass market fiction charts.
- *Birdsong* by Sebastian Faulks (Vintage) is still in the top 15 mass market fiction list six years after it was published.

RRP=recommended retail price; ASP=average selling price. Original fiction titles cost £8.50 and above.

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## Children's bestsellers 48 weeks ending 2nd December 2000

### Top 50 children's fiction all categories

Pos	Title	Author	Publisher	ISBN	Pub date	RRP	ASP	Sales
1	Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire	Rowling, J K	Bloomsbury	074754624X	Jul 00	£14.99	£11.33	956232
2	Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone	Rowling, J K	Bloomsbury	0747532745	Jun 97	£5.99	£5.26	684433
3	Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban	Rowling, J K	Bloomsbury	0747546290	Apr 00	£5.99	£5.05	645780
4	Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets	Rowling, J K	Bloomsbury	0747538484	Jan 99	£5.99	£5.19	573229
5	The Children's Book of Books	-	Macmillan	0330482432	Mar 00	£1.00	£0.99	256199
6	The Official Pokémon Handbook	Barbo, Maria S	Scholastic	0439103975	Nov 99	£5.99	£5.60	235647
7	The Official Pokémon Collector's ...	Barbo, Maria S	Scholastic	0439106591	Nov 99	£3.99	£3.98	164991
8	The Illustrated Mum	Wilson, Jacqueline	Yearling	0440863686	Mar 00	£4.99	£4.10	129350
9	I Choose You	-	Scholastic	0439104645	Nov 99	£2.99	£2.88	115108
10	Island of the Giant Pokémon	-	Scholastic	0439104661	Nov 99	£2.99	£2.87	108410
11	Night in the Haunted Tower	-	Scholastic	043913742X	Dec 99	£2.99	£2.87	106646
12	Attack of the Prehistoric Pokémon	-	Scholastic	0439135508	Dec 99	£2.99	£2.87	104686
13	Pokémon Junior Movie Novelisation	-	Scholastic	0439159865	Mar 00	£2.99	£2.99	95722
14	The Beano Annual: 2001	-	D C Thomson	0851167284	Sep 00	£6.20	£5.27	84673
15	Pokémon: The First Movie	-	Scholastic	0439137411	Nov 99	£3.99	£3.98	84450
16	Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban	Rowling, J K	Bloomsbury	0747542155	Jul 99	£10.99	£10.17	72897
17	Charizard Go!	West, Tracey	Scholastic	0439154219	Nov 00	£2.99	£2.81	70316
18	Toy Story 2: Fun To Colour	-	Ladybird	0721479243	Jan 00	£1.50	£1.28	70311
19	Toy Story 2 (tie-in)	-	Ladybird	0721479227	Jan 00	£2.50	£2.48	68799
20	Girls Under Pressure	Wilson, Jacqueline	Corgi	0552545228	Nov 99	£3.99	£3.97	64738
21	Team Rocket Blasts Off!	West, Tracey	Scholastic	0439154189	Apr 00	£2.99	£2.79	62822
22	Northern Lights	Pullman, Philip	Scholastic	0590660543	Nov 00	£5.99	£5.97	60987
23	Pokémon: The Official Annual	-	Pedigree Books	1902836308	Sep 00	£5.99	£5.08	57741
24	Girls in Love	Wilson, Jacqueline	Corgi	055254521X	Nov 98	£4.99	£4.05	56899
25	Double Act	Wilson, Jacqueline	Yearling	0440863341	May 96	£3.99	£3.90	51566
26	The Lottie Project	Wilson, Jacqueline	Yearling	044086366X	Jun 98	£4.99	£3.92	48193
27	The Story of Tracy Beaker	Wilson, Jacqueline	Yearling	0440862795	Jul 92	£4.99	£3.96	47949
28	Bad Girls	Wilson, Jacqueline	Yearling	0440863562	May 97	£4.99	£3.96	46983
29	The Dandy Annual: 2001	-	D C Thomson	0851167276	Sep 00	£6.20	£5.43	42044
30	Buried Alive!	Wilson, Jacqueline	Yearling	0440863678	May 99	£3.99	£3.97	40351
31	How To Survive Summer Camp	Wilson, Jacqueline	OUP	0192750194	Jun 99	£3.99	£3.97	39709
32	Toy Story 2: Sticker Activity Book	-	Ladybird	0721479340	Jan 00	£2.99	£2.99	39500
33	The Subtle Knife	Pullman, Philip	Scholastic	0590112899	Oct 98	£5.99	£5.98	39053
34	The Suitcase Kid	Wilson, Jacqueline	Yearling	0440863112	Jul 93	£3.99	£4.07	38408
35	The Bed and Breakfast Star	Wilson, Jacqueline	Yearling	0440863244	Jan 95	£4.99	£3.97	38220
36	The Dare Game	Wilson, Jacqueline	Doubleday	038540901X	Mar 00	£10.99	£10.55	37202
37	The Amber Spyglass	Pullman, Philip	Scholastic	0590542443	Nov 00	£14.99	£14.26	36514
38	Return of the Squirrel Squad	West, Tracey	Scholastic	0439154294	May 00	£2.99	£2.99	36166
39	Toy Story 2: Disney Read-to-Me	-	Ladybird	0721479219	Jan 00	£2.99	£2.99	35740
40	Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone	Rowling, J K	Bloomsbury	0747532699	Jun 97	£10.99	£10.94	35343
41	Glubbslyme	Wilson, Jacqueline	Yearling	0440862310	Aug 95	£3.99	£3.97	34445
42	Splashdown in Cerulean City	West, Tracey	Scholastic	043915426X	May 00	£2.99	£2.99	30180
43	Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets	Rowling, J K	Bloomsbury	0747538492	Jul 98	£10.99	£10.94	28370
44	The Mum-minder	Wilson, Jacqueline	Yearling	0440863023	May 94	£3.99	£3.95	28357
45	Woeful Second World War	Deary, Terry	Scholastic	0439011221	Aug 99	£3.99	£3.96	28301
46	Tweenies: Storybook Four	-	BBC	0563556986	Mar 00	£3.50	£3.49	27976
47	Tweenies Annual	-	BBC	0563475153	Aug 00	£5.99	£5.54	27947
48	Vicky Angel	Wilson, Jacqueline	Doubleday	0385600402	Nov 00	£10.99	£9.97	27815
49	Tweenies: Storybook Three	-	BBC	0563556978	Mar 00	£3.50	£3.44	27426
50	The Very Hungry Caterpillar	Carle, Eric	Harnish Hamilton	0241003008	Sep 94	£4.99	£4.99	26678

RRP=recommended retail price; ASP=average selling price.



# RED NOSE DAY

## FRIDAY 16 MARCH 2001

TAKE A BREAK · HAVE A LAUGH · MAKE A DIFFERENCE

[www.comicrelief.com](http://www.comicrelief.com) / 09068 20 2001

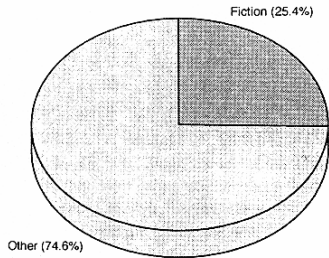
# Appendix B

## Fiction

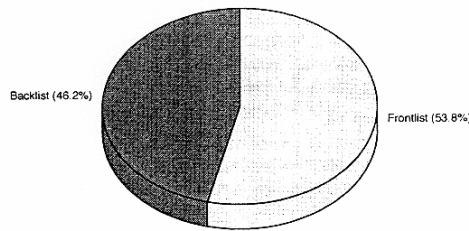
Fiction sales in BookTrack's general retail market during 1998 totalled £215,406,157 or 25.4% of all sales by value. Fiction as a whole is heavily dominated by the paperback market; the sales patterns show the distinctive curve of consumer sales with a steep rise towards Christmas, and that for fiction as a whole mirrors almost exactly the pattern for paperback fiction.

The top 15 imprints were Penguin, Corgi, Arrow, HarperCollins, Vintage, Pan, Headline, Warner, Orion, Picador, Coronet, Black Swan, Bantam, Flamingo and Mills & Boon.

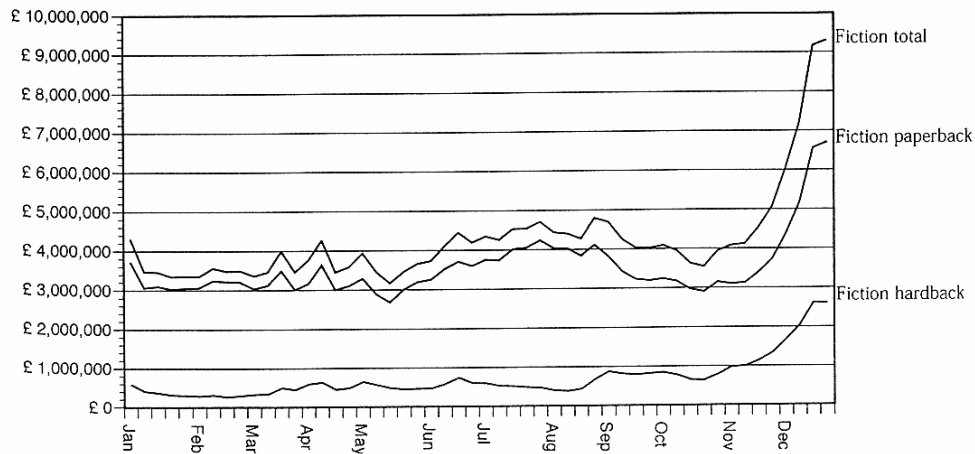
**Fiction 1998**  
Sales value as a % of total grm



**Fiction 1998**  
Value of frontlist vs backlist sales



**Fiction titles 1998**  
Weekly sales in the general retail market



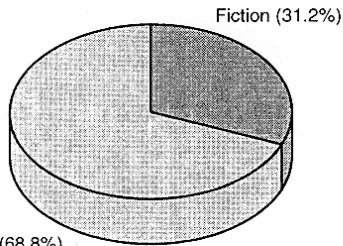
# Fiction

Sales of fiction rose 9.5% in BookTrack's general retail market during 1999 to £235,887,443 or 26.6% of sales by value. Unit sales at just under 38,374,808 represented nearly 31.2% of volume sales. The weekly pattern showed sales fluctuating around £4m, rising to £12m a week in the week before Christmas.

The top 10 publishing groups were Random House, Transworld, Hodder Headline, Penguin, HarperCollins, Macmillan, Little, Brown, Orion, Simon & Schuster and Harlequin Mills & Boon. Their sales represented 92.8% by value and 92.9% by volume of all fiction title sales.

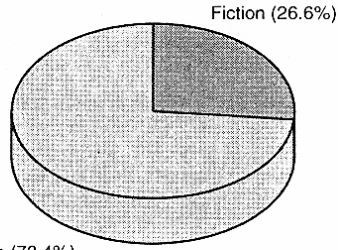
There were nearly 10,000 new fiction books (new titles and new editions) published during 1999; 55.6% of sales in the general retail market were from those books, an increase from 53.8% the year before. General fiction took 16.4%, mysteries 4.7% and science fiction 2.8% of all sales in the general retail market.

**Fiction 1999**  
Volume sales as a % of total grm



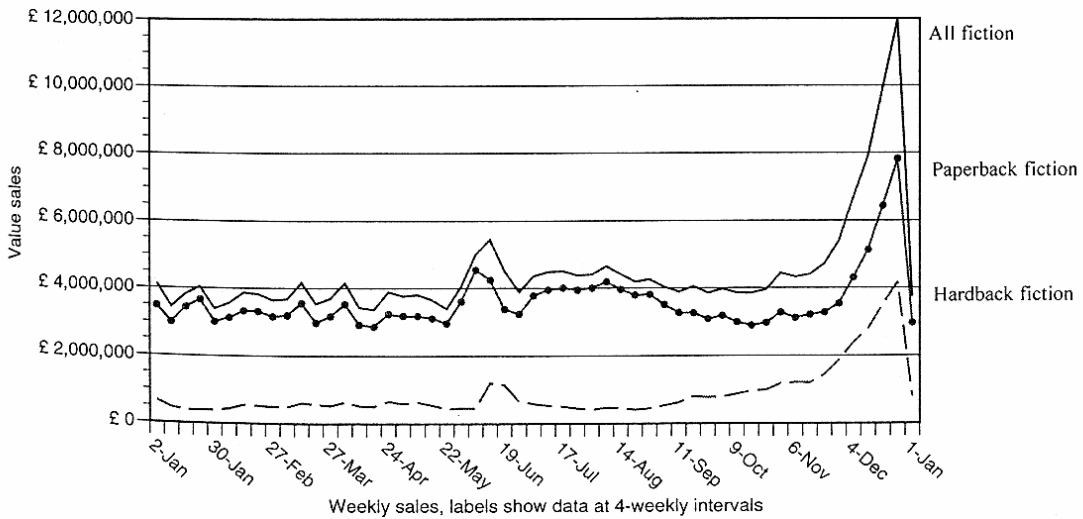
1998: fiction = 29.9%

**Fiction 1999**  
Sales value as a % of total grm



1998: fiction = 25.4%

**Fiction 1999**  
Weekly sales in the general retail market



## Appendix C

### Best-seller Questionnaire

This form has been designed for a literary research project about recent fiction. If you have read any of the following best-selling novels, please mark the respective title and fill in the questionnaire. Thank you very much for your help. Please use one form per title.

- |                       |   |                       |                                       |
|-----------------------|---|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="radio"/> | Grisham <i>The Testament</i>                  | <input type="radio"/> | Cornwell <i>Hornet's Nest</i>         |
| <input type="radio"/> | Grisham <i>The Street Lawyer</i>              | <input type="radio"/> | Cornwell <i>The Body Farm</i>         |
| <input type="radio"/> | George <i>Deception on his Mind</i>           | <input type="radio"/> | Cornwell <i>Cause of Death</i>        |
| <input type="radio"/> | George <i>In Pursuit of the Proper Sinner</i> | <input type="radio"/> | Wolfe <i>A Man in Full</i>            |
| <input type="radio"/> | Rowling <i>Harry Potter I</i>                 | <input type="radio"/> | Trollope <i>A Passionate Man</i>      |
| <input type="radio"/> | Rowling <i>Harry Potter II</i>                | <input type="radio"/> | Trollope <i>A Spanish Lover</i>       |
| <input type="radio"/> | Rowling <i>Harry Potter III</i>               | <input type="radio"/> | Townsend <i>Adrian Mole 13 3/4</i>    |
| <input type="radio"/> | Rowling <i>Harry Potter IV</i>                | <input type="radio"/> | Townsend <i>A.M. True Confession.</i> |
| <input type="radio"/> | King <i>Bag of Bones</i>                      | <input type="radio"/> | Townsend <i>A.M. Wilderness Year.</i> |
| <input type="radio"/> | King <i>Nightmares and Dreamscapes</i>        | <input type="radio"/> | Townsend <i>A.M. Cappucino Years</i>  |
| <input type="radio"/> | Steel <i>Mirror Image</i>                     | <input type="radio"/> | Rice <i>The Vamp. Armand</i>          |
| <input type="radio"/> | Steel <i>The Klone and I</i>                  | <input type="radio"/> | James <i>A Certain Justice</i>        |
| <input type="radio"/> | Follett <i>The Third Twin</i>                 | <input type="radio"/> | Follett <i>The Needle</i>             |
| <input type="radio"/> | Follett <i>Night over Water</i>               | <input type="radio"/> | Follett <i>Hammer of Eden</i>         |

Feel free to add any title you've read, as long as the book was published between 1995 and 2000.

#### I) Why did you buy the book ?

- recommended by a friend
- saw the movie (if there is one)
- saw/heard an ad
  - in a newspaper
  - in a book
  - in a book shop
  - in the Internet
  - in a book club magazine
  - on TV
  - on the radio
  - -----
- saw it on a best-seller list
- saw it in a book shop
- cover appealed to me
- read books by the same author before
-

**II) What did you like best ?**

- story
- characters
- ideas/topics
- language
- landscape descriptions
- details (please add of which sort)
- 

**III) What didn't you like ?**

-----  
-----  
-----  
-----  
-----  
-----  
-----  
-----

**IV) Did you think the characters were realistic ?**

- Yes
- No
- 

- Could you identify with any of the characters ?
- Yes
  - No
  -

**V) Did you think the story was realistic ?**

- Yes
- No
- 

**VI) Why do you usually read a book ?**

- entertainment
- information
- education
- meditation
- profession
- escape into a dream world
- 
- problem solving
- to get ideas for your own life

**VII) Did the book remind you of any other book you read prior to it ?**

- Yes
- No
- 

If yes, did that disturb you ?

**VIII) What is/are your favourite topic/s in a book ?**

- love
- sex
- relationships
- crime
- courtroom/ legal stuff
- horror
- fantasy
- mystery
- science - fiction
- religion
- politics
- 

**IX) About you:**

Are you       male  
                  female

How old are you ? -----

What is your job ? -----

Thank you very much for filling in this form. All information whatsoever will be treated confidentially. Please tell friends and fellow students about this. The more information, the better.

---

## Bestseller - Questionnaire

**This questionnaire has been drawn up for a research project investigating reading and purchasing habits of readers of modern best - selling fiction.**

I would be exceptionally grateful, if you could spend some of your time, answering the following 25 questions and send the form back.

**1. Do you read bestsellers ? If NO, why not ?**

Yes

No

**2. What is your own personal definition of the term "bestseller"?**

**3. Where do you buy your bestsellers ?**

independent bookshop

discount bookshop

chain bookshop

Internet If YES, which shop ?

supermarket

bookclub If YES, do you buy the editor's choice ?

Yes  No

station bookshop

second - hand bookshop

department store

**4. How do you choose the bestsellers you buy ?**

by title

by genre

by browsing

by author recommendation by a friend

by reading the blurb

because of

by cover

by topic

because of an ad

## Bestseller-Questionnaire

5. How often do you buy bestsellers ?

6. How often do you buy other books ?

7. Where do you read bestsellers ?

8. When do you read bestsellers ?

9. Which genre, if any, do you prefer ?

10. Which topics, if any, do you prefer ?

11. Do you think the stories / plots of the book resemble each other ?

Yes  No

If YES, does it contribute to a  positive  negative reading experience ?

12. Thinking about suspense, is it more important to you  WHY

something is happening or  WHAT is going to happen next ?

13. Does it disturb if you can guess the outcome of the story / plot ?

Yes  No

14. If you can guess the outcome, is it part of a  positive  negative reading experience ?

15. Does reading bestsellers relax you ? If YES, why and how ?

Yes  No



## Bestseller-Questionnaire

16. Do you sometimes have the feeling your emotions are being manipulated ?

Yes  No

If YES, is this part of a  positive  negative reading experience ?

17. Do you think you have a preference for certain basic / underlying plots ?

Yes  No

If YES, can you say which and why ?

18. Do you experience emotions while reading bestsellers ?

- no emotions
- positive emotions
- negative emotions

19. When reading a bestseller, do you "forget the world around you" ?

Yes  No

20. Have you read "Harry Potter" ?

Yes  No

If YES, why ?

What did you like / dislike

Bestseller-Questionnaire

21. Do you watch films which are based on a bestseller ?

Yes       No

If YES, which ?

If YES, why ?

22. Do you have a favourite author ?

Yes       No

If YES, who ?

If YES, why ?

23. Is the amount of "real life" in the story / plot important to you ?

Yes       No

24. Is it part of a  positive

negative reading experience, if the plot does NOT reflect every-day reality ?

25. About you:

male     female    age     nationality

profession

Bestseller-Questionnaire

your email-adress

**Thank you very much for filling in this form. All information, whatsoever, will be treated confidentially and is only used in statistic field study.**

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**Referrals and links**

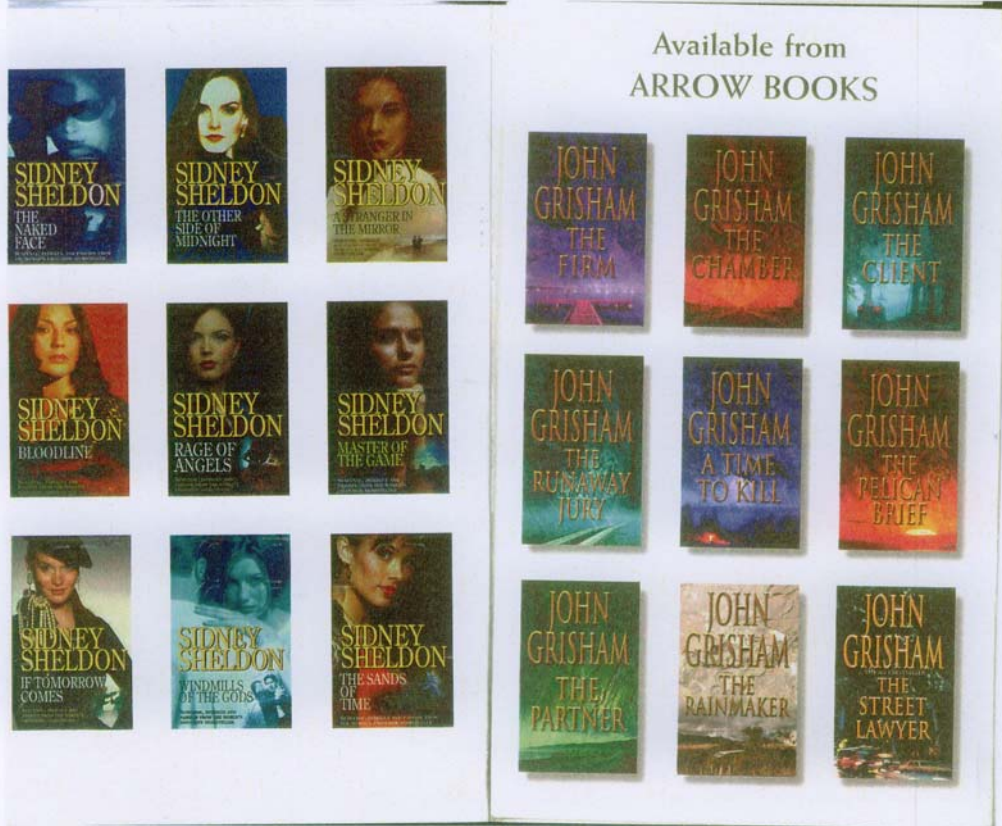
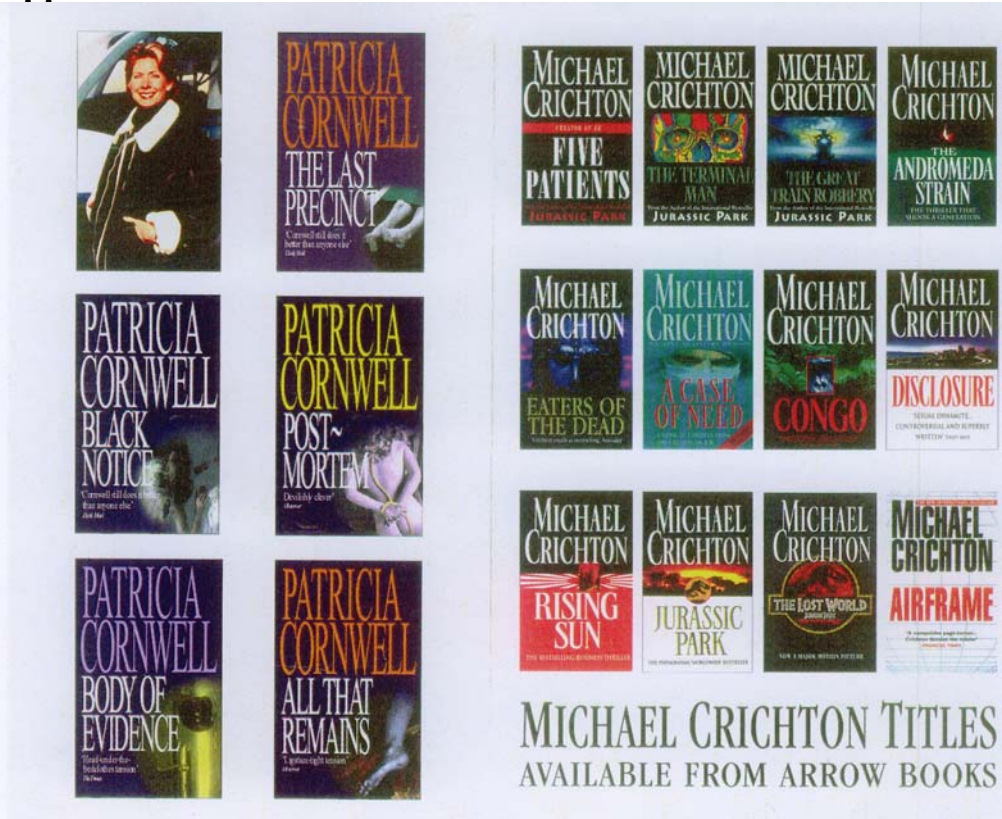
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Silvia Stolzenburg.  
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Date: 21. Mai 2003

This site has been moved to [www.bestseller-questionnaire.de](http://www.bestseller-questionnaire.de)

### Appendix D



## Appendix E



February 2001

### BookTrack TCM Factsheet

#### BookTrack now monitoring Travel, Academic and Specialist sites, Internet and other direct sales

- BookTrack is the UK book industries sales measurement service. It collects total transaction data at the point of sale directly from the tills and despatch systems of all the major book retailers. This ensures that very detailed and highly accurate information on what books are selling and at what price is available to the book trade.
- Up until now, BookTrack has been collecting sales data from the general retail market (GRM) only. This sector – the largest sales channel and worth almost £1bn in book sales annually – consisted of the main bookshop chains like WH Smith, Waterstone's, Ottakars, Hammicks, Thins etc.; the general independent bookshops; supermarkets like Tesco and Asda; and mixed multiple stores like Woolworth. This GRM panel has until now been the source for the National Bestseller Lists as well as the management information sent to retailers and publishers.
- BookTrack has now completed the electronic data links that are necessary to collect sales information from a significant number of non-traditional channels. These are principally specialist retailers like Mothercare or HMV Music Stores, where books have been added into their product mix; Airport bookshops; Direct Mail catalogues; Newspaper “off-the-page” sales of books they are reviewing; and the Internet bookshops. A significant hurdle to overcome has been the need to only “count” true sales – those passing out the door of the Internet site or direct mail house, directly to the customer just as in a shop - and not orders placed. Validation of the new data feeds is now complete and BookTrack has announced that from week ending 9<sup>th</sup> December 2000, a new expanded panel will be used which will be called the TCM – Total Consumer Market. See attached appendix for the outlets that will be contributing to this panel.
- The TCM universe will be the new basis for the National Bestseller Charts for the media from 9<sup>th</sup> December 2000. Comparisons between the GRM and TCM for the top 20 Hardback and top 20 Paperback charts show surprisingly little positional change, although clearly the volume sales have increased.
- The TCM top 5,000 all titles chart will be available to publishers and participating retailers from Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> December 2000 giving the opportunity to see sales by title and measure performance through this new panel.

- The TCM sales database will build up over time into a very valuable data source for historical comparisons and the tracking of individual titles, genre, authors and the like. However, it will be several years until this stage is reached and so the GRM universe – a database that has three years of consistent book sales history – will be retained as the main market measure (market sizes, market shares, historical trends etc) until it can be safely superseded by the TCM. Clients wishing to track the historical sales of a title or genre will be advised as to the most suitable universe to use for their purpose.
- In a typical non-Christmas week, the GRM panel would monitor about 110,000 different titles making a sales and this would account for about £15m a week of consumer sales value. The TCM universe will be monitoring about 140,000 different titles selling in a week and the consumer value will be in excess of £20m a week. As other outlets continue to be recruited into the panel, this value will increase.
- The TCM data will be covering over 80% of all book purchases from mainland GB – England, Scotland & Wales – the remaining 20% being very specialist sites like gift shops, museums, garden centres and the like.
- BookTrack is the world's only continuous book sales tracking service. It operates within the UK and will shortly also have a similar tracking service in Australia.

#### **BookTrack sales data coverage at February 2000**

<b>Existing GRM participants</b>	<b>Additional TCM participants at launch</b>	<b>TCM participants who have agreed to join shortly</b>
Asda	Alphabet Street	Asda On-line
Blackwells (High St Sites only)	Amazon.co.uk	BCA
Bookland	BOL	Blackwells Campus sites
Books Etc	Book Etc Travel Sites	Book Cellar
Hammicks	Borders	Foyles
General Independents	BVCD	Heffers
James Thin	Early Learning Centre	Politico's
Martins	HMV Music	Safeway
MVC	Internet Bookshop/WHS On-Line	Stationery Office
Ottakar's	Mothercare	Swotbooks.com
Tesco	Ottakar's On-Line	Tesco On-Line
Waterstone's	PC World, Dixons, Curry's	The Book Place
WH Smiths	Sainsbury	Thins On-Line
Woolworths	Small chain and independent academic sites	
	Sussex Stationers	
	Waterstone's Academic	
	Waterstone's Travel sites	
	Waterstone's On-Line	
	WHS Travel	

For more information on the TCM panel e-mail [BookTrack-info@teleord.co.uk](mailto:BookTrack-info@teleord.co.uk) or contact BookTrack on 01252 742555.

Source: James, Karen: "Potter Figures". E-mail to Silvia Stolzenburg. 14 March 2001

ISBN - TITLE	DOP	format	9707	9708	9709	9710	9711	9712	9713
0747532699 - Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone	30.06.97	H	-	50	12	1	5	28	80
0747532745 - Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone	30.06.97	P	397	1.494	1.229	681	702	2.534	10.275
0747542988 - Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone	01.09.98	AP	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
0747545723 - Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone	14.10.99	SE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total - Philosopher's Stone</b>									
0747538492 - Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets	02.07.98	H	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
0747538484 - Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets	21.01.99	P	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
0747544077 - Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets	01.06.99	AP	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
0747545774 - Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets	14.10.99	SE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total - Chamber of Secrets</b>									
0747542155 - Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban	08.07.99	H	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
0747546290 - Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban	01.04.00	P	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
0747546347 - Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban	01.04.00	AP	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
0747545111 - Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban	08.07.99	SE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total - Prisoner of Azkaban</b>									
074754624X - Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire	08.07.00	H	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
074754624X - Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire	TBC	P	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
074754624X - Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire	TBC	AP	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
0747549710 - Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire	01.10.00	SE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total - Goblet of Fire</b>									

key

H = Hardback

P = Paperback

AP = Adult Paperback Edition

SE = Special Edition







	3	4	5	6 wk 26	wk 27	wk 28	wk 29	wk 30	wk 31	wk 32	wk 33	wk 34	
	1.617	1.433	836	1.068	483	1.475	2.740	2.144	1.836	1.514	1.116	1.065	1.362
	39.274	48.257	28.823	27.462	12.346	30.851	60.248	39.090	36.287	27.564	22.382	21.823	23.370
	645	959	953	958	425	626	838	730	796	809	558	799	981
	385	376	322	294	209	683	947	704	629	455	304	300	327
	1.433	1.123	782	929	326	1.052	1.815	1.409	1.520	1.262	1.025	932	1.176
	35.117	42.019	26.247	25.910	9.796	19.873	39.354	31.021	29.459	23.262	19.569	18.747	18.477
	464	638	634	658	285	340	435	447	494	512	563	597	815
	316	335	259	263	166	603	789	585	494	441	295	292	313
	11.937	1.819	755	743	281	931	1.885	1.138	1.263	1.160	1.077	1.012	1.205
	43	159.951	57.318	42.616	13.630	24.701	44.156	31.209	30.073	24.026	19.391	17.653	16.579
	-	1.262	739	647	247	326	423	362	392	482	473	662	667
	338	261	211	243	155	497	631	494	423	360	222	198	273
	-	-	-	-	-	256.246	248.693	80.149	58.848	41.548	30.380	26.174	25.529

wk 35	wk 36	wk 37	wk 38	wk 39	wk 40	wk 41	wk 42	wk 43	wk 44	wk 45	wk 46	wk 47
1.108	893	798	629	684	808	647	616	658	593	649	826	1.001
18.945	16.615	13.360	13.980	12.270	12.319	10.747	11.276	11.920	10.231	11.244	11.546	13.626
848	561	448	493	564	512	456	460	486	506	463	449	610
354	200	195	184	145	178	121	147	146	134	137	172	190
1.030	709	566	675	496	573	406	516	643	450	459	561	755
17.022	13.866	11.685	11.957	10.896	10.643	9.223	9.624	10.279	9.290	9.788	9.776	11.933
583	383	354	444	370	322	323	276	311	257	294	286	456
258	184	176	171	133	151	88	98	104	114	107	100	201
1.112	769	557	298	488	526	384	426	524	407	446	500	719
15.438	13.742	10.863	11.047	10.414	9.927	9.257	9.335	10.228	8.804	9.455	9.518	11.317
638	480	317	413	377	385	274	280	301	311	231	288	451
185	178	140	223	114	126	83	92	69	108	65	130	182
21.843	16.953	13.600	13.324	12.410	11.543	10.600	10.157	11.300	10.549	11.406	12.646	14.492
					687	566	520	423	435	313	360	367

wk 48	wk 49 TCM	wk 50 TCM	wk 51 TCM	wk 52 TCM	Total	Total with GRM
1.385	1.746	2.140	3.025	1.132	68.844	68.748
18.921	26.894	30.702	42.527	14.827	1,401.906	1,394.869
629	1.351	1.657	2.435	834	42.091	42.091
186	296	343	540	191	14.754	14.754
					<i>1.527.595</i>	-
					#####	<b>1.520.462</b>
					-	-
982	1.460	1.487	2.064	791	93.832	93.832
14,586	20.713	21.818	29.357	12.597	1,067.707	1,067.707
444	879	1,098	1,488	694	25.369	25.369
145	210	230	325	143	12.113	12.113
					<i>1.199.021</i>	-
					#####	<b>1.199.021</b>
					-	-
880	1.323	1.381	1.789	724	421.197	421.197
14,634	20.711	22.144	28.851	13.009	720.041	720.041
446	711	837	1,216	539	15.177	15.177
193	162	245	298	118	12.958	12.958
					<i>1.169.373</i>	-
					#####	<b>1.169.373</b>
					-	-
17.786	22.761	24.646	33.022	11.450	1,048.055	1,048.055
					-	-
					-	-
432	705	672	932	315	6.727	6.727
					-	-
					<b>1.054.782</b>	<b>1.054.782</b>

## The top five authors

R L Stine has 197 titles selling in BookTrack's general retail market; Lucy Daniels has 130 titles selling in the grm. Only the top 100 titles for each author are listed here.

	Imprint	Volume	Value	RRP	ASP	Bind	Pub'n
<b>J K Rowling</b>							
1	Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban	Bloomsbury	343,579	£3,282,129	£10.99	£9.55	h/b Jul-99
2	Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone	Bloomsbury	503,473	£2,457,409	£4.99	£4.88	p/b Jun-97
3	Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets	Bloomsbury	417,171	£2,034,180	£4.99	£4.88	p/b Jan-99
4	Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone	Bloomsbury	24,330	£265,229	£10.99	£10.90	h/b Jun-97
5	Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets	Bloomsbury	22,937	£250,344	£10.99	£10.91	h/b Jul-98
6	Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban: Special Edition	Bloomsbury	4,979	£87,969	£18.00	£17.67	h/b Jul-99
7	Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone: Special Edition	Bloomsbury	3,930	£70,394	£18.00	£17.91	h/b Oct-99
8	Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone AND Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets	Bloomsbury	2,715	£59,106	£21.99	£21.77	h/b Nov-98
9	Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets	Bloomsbury	8,003	£55,645	£6.99	£6.95	p/b Jun-99
10	Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets: Special Edition	Bloomsbury	3,050	£54,651	£18.00	£17.92	h/b Oct-99
<b>Total J K Rowling</b>			<b>1,334,167</b>	<b>£8,617,055</b>			
<b>Jacqueline Wilson</b>							
1	Girls in Love	Corgi	64,437	£255,038	£3.99	£3.96	p/b Nov-98
2	Buried Alive!	Yearling	63,129	£248,386	£3.99	£3.93	p/b May-99
3	Girls Out Late	Doubleday	23,665	£242,029	£10.99	£10.23	h/b Nov-99
4	Lottie Project	Yearling	60,295	£237,210	£3.99	£3.93	p/b Jun-98
5	Double Act	Yearling	57,735	£226,040	£3.99	£3.92	p/b May-96
6	Illustrated Mum	Doubleday	20,371	£221,746	£10.99	£10.89	h/b May-99
7	Bad Girls	Yearling	53,097	£207,733	£3.99	£3.91	p/b May-97
8	How to Survive Summer Camp: Oxford Junior Fiction	Oxford University Press	46,138	£183,941	£3.99	£3.99	p/b Jun-99
9	Suitcase Kid	Yearling	44,432	£174,778	£3.99	£3.93	p/b Jul-93
10	Girls Under Pressure	Corgi	44,698	£172,092	£3.99	£3.85	p/b Nov-99
11	Jacqueline Wilson's Double Decker: Double Act, Bad Girls	Yearling	23,605	£164,553	£6.99	£6.97	p/b Feb-99
12	Bed and Breakfast Star	Yearling	38,994	£151,812	£3.99	£3.89	p/b Jan-95
13	Story of Tracy Beaker	Yearling	38,182	£150,585	£3.99	£3.94	p/b Jul-92
14	Glubbslyme	Yearling	35,492	£140,905	£3.99	£3.97	p/b Aug-95
15	Jacqueline Wilson Collection: Story of Tracy Beaker, Bed and Breakfast Star	Yearling	18,238	£127,151	£6.99	£6.97	p/b Mar-98

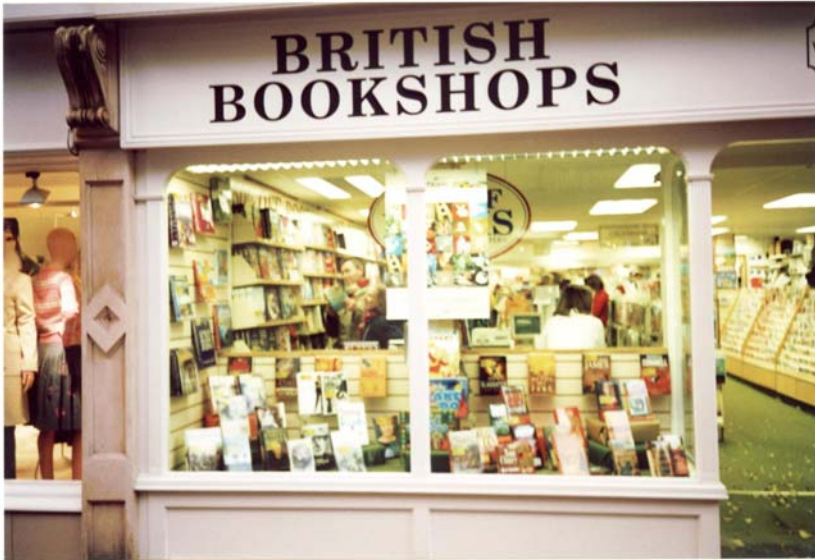
## The top five authors

Val pos'n	Imprint	Volume	Value £	RRP £	ASP £	Bind	Pub'n
<b>J K Rowling</b>							
1	Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire	Bloomsbury	1,036,494	11,773,881	14.99	11.36	h/b Jul-00
2	Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone	Bloomsbury	780,379	4,153,298	5.99	5.32	p/b Jun-97
3	Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban	Bloomsbury	716,508	3,655,064	5.99	5.10	p/b Apr-00
4	Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets	Bloomsbury	643,755	3,376,208	5.99	5.24	p/b Jan-99
7	Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban	Bloomsbury	77,370	790,213	10.99	10.21	h/b Jul-99
13	Harry Potter Box Set	Bloomsbury	27,167	487,960	18.00	17.96	p/b Oct-00
14	Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone	Bloomsbury	42,306	463,193	10.99	10.95	h/b Jun-97
17	Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets	Bloomsbury	33,546	367,089	10.99	10.94	h/b Jul-98
28	Harry Potter Box Set	Bloomsbury	5,837	278,416	48.00	47.70	h/b Oct-00
42	Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone: Special Edition	Bloomsbury	10,707	192,114	18.00	17.94	h/b Oct-99
57	Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets: Special Edition	Bloomsbury	9,039	162,476	18.00	17.98	h/b Oct-99
61	Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire: Special Edition	Bloomsbury	6,043	150,446	25.00	24.90	h/b Oct-00
66	Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban: Special Edition	Bloomsbury	7,899	141,232	18.00	17.88	h/b Jul-99
94	Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets	Bloomsbury	16,123	112,432	6.99	6.97	p/b Jun-99
9,431	Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone	Bloomsbury	68	1,486	21.99	21.86	h/b Nov-98
<b>Total</b>			<b>3,413,241</b>	<b>26,105,508</b>			

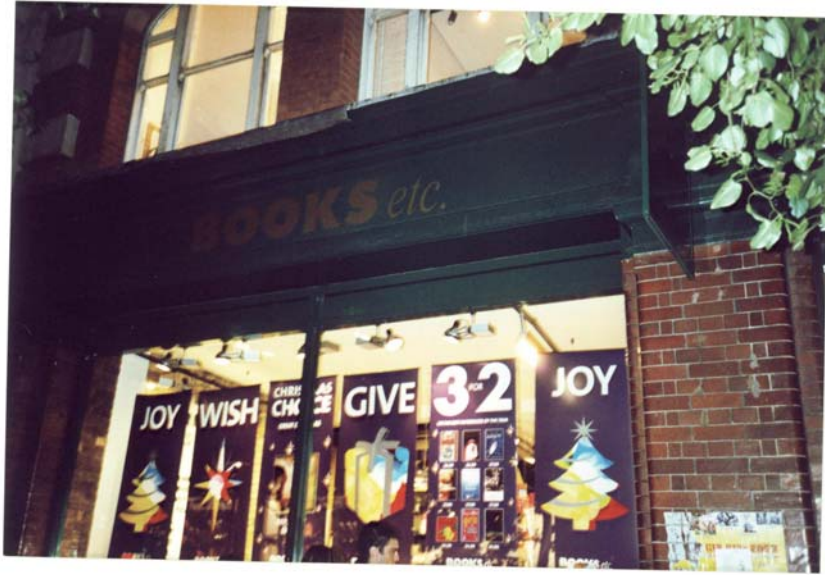
**Jacqueline Wilson**

10	Illustrated Mum	Yearling	148,955	625,359	4.99	4.20	p/b Mar-00
11	Vicky Angel	Doubleday	56,813	568,651	10.99	10.01	h/b Nov-00
15	Dare Game	Doubleday	41,692	441,499	10.99	10.59	h/b Mar-00
25	Girls Under Pressure	Corgi	75,756	300,797	3.99	3.97	p/b Nov-99
27	Girls in Love	Corgi	68,706	287,013	4.99	4.18	p/b Nov-98
29	Girls Out Late	Corgi	56,353	274,028	4.99	4.86	p/b Nov-00
34	Double Act	Yearling	60,025	234,732	3.99	3.91	p/b May-96
35	Bad Girls	Yearling	56,050	229,594	4.99	4.10	p/b May-97
36	Lottie Project	Yearling	55,998	222,440	4.99	3.97	p/b Jun-98
37	Story of Tracy Beaker	Yearling	54,837	222,047	4.99	4.05	p/b Jul-92
40	Jacqueline Wilson's Double Decker: Double Act, Bad Girls	Yearling	27,925	194,915	6.99	6.98	p/b Feb-99
44	Buried Alive!	Yearling	47,465	188,338	3.99	3.97	p/b May-99
45	Suitcase Kid	Yearling	44,463	185,820	3.99	4.18	p/b Jul-93
47	Bed and Breakfast Star	Yearling	45,104	184,038	4.99	4.08	p/b Jan-95
48	Girls Out Late	Doubleday	16,656	181,546	10.99	10.90	h/b Nov-99
51	How to Survive Summer Camp: Oxford Junior Fiction series	OUP	43,664	173,450	3.99	3.97	p/b Jun-99

**Appendix F**



Taken in November 2003: East Street, Brighton



Taken in November 2003: James Street, London





Books etc, James Street,, London



Taken in November 2003: Greenwich Church Street, London