Introduction

> *A publishing house is a cultural site. It is producing beacons for the culture. If they're all pale flickering little candles they will just go out. They have to shine a light strongly and impress people with a kind of lead that they are taking.* […] *Independence of mind is vital for publishing and is something that is not a sure thing, in a sense is different from what is going on and will change it. It's like putting the mutant gene out there for the evolution* (Yowell int. 1998).

This study largely explores local independent book commissioning and acquisitions culture in Australia from 1970 to 2000. Given the centuries-old history of the book and book production, the last three decades would seem insignificant, if it weren't for fundamental shifts that have taken place in the book publishing industry over the past 30 years. Individual and collective identities, within public and publishing cultures, have shifted to reflect social, political, economic and technological change. These changes have occurred partly in response to rapid growth within a global market economy operating within a consummate acquisitions environment. Over time, powerful multinational publishers and other non-publishing corporations have systematically acquired many viable local independent publishing companies and absorbed their lists. A deregulated industry that fluctuates according to the ups and downs of global market economies, now defines the unstable environment in which all commissioning editors and publishers function. While trends in publishing have always been predominantly organised around commercial incentives and cultural principles, particular areas, such as sales and marketing, have become the driving force. The resilience and adaptability of smaller companies operating within particular economies of scale has consequently become more difficult to maintain. In a world where economic rationalism has taken hold and authors and content are commodified for a mass market, the role of editors and publishers in making ideas and issues accessible to Australians as cultural filters and agents for social change has never been more important, or more vulnerable.

The overarching aim of the research is to identify and underpin the role of those individuals who commission and acquire content. The editors and publishers who participated in my research spoke of their cultural role in various ways: to 'fight for the place of the book and to keep it central to how the company operates, maintaining quality rather than quantity' (Cunningham int. 1998); to 'make a commitment to what you do and to contribute to a certain tolerance, opening up the range of debate' (Hale int. 1998); to 'maintain the spark and to keep the cutting edge alive in defining

the culture and recording history' (Coffey int. 1998); to 'focus on the future of Indigenous people' (Bin Salleh int. 1998); to 'promote good Australian authors and to see their work travel, always working within a social context' (Weiss int. 1998); 'being out there and amongst it in whatever way you want to be' (Milner int. 1999); 'being open to new work and identifying the gaps' (Abbey int. 1999); to 'be proactive in getting the books you want and to make every book count' (Munro int. 1998). Thus my research focuses on an exploration of the ideas, attitudes, values and beliefs that editors and publishers bring to the ways in which knowledge and power are represented within the cultural field that constitutes Australian book publishing.

This study also investigates the publishing house as an institution, and editors and publishers as institutionalised bearers of culture; examines issues that relate to identity, representation and institutionalisation in Australian book publishing; assesses the contribution that independent publishers make to Australian cultural content; explores the career paths of women in publishing and the critical role of the feminist project; and investigates the social and cultural responsibilities of Indigenous editors and publishers in the production of Australian Indigenous literature. The empirical underpinnings of this industry-based study emerge from interviews with editors and publishers about their commissioning and publishing practice.

Publishing culture, *per se*, mirrors specific power struggles that take place within the wider culture over time and across race, class, gender and generation. Whether it is small independent or large multinational, publishing is a mostly white male, middle-class business and those represented in the upper and middle echelons, come from English speaking, Anglo backgrounds. While women hold a majority of editorial positions and a few younger women have joined the ranks of senior publishing executives in Australia, they are not the tradition makers — although some are tradition breakers (Cunningham int. 1998). Women remain under-represented in upper-management male publishing culture.[1] This trend is unlikely to change and is particularly prevalent in larger publishing companies where traditional, male-based executive management structures are more likely to exist.[2] Nevertheless, the women's movement and feminism have significantly influenced Australian society, and the politics of feminism continues to challenge local and global publishing culture. Similarly, the social and political struggle for self-determination by Indigenous Australians has led to the emergence of Aboriginal publishing houses and the publication of a growing body of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander literature. While there is a more general awareness of and interest in Indigenous content across a wider readership, the under-representation of Indigenous people employed in Australian publishing is problematic. Until there are more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people centrally involved in the cultural production of Indigenous Australian work, this issue will not go away.

Contents of the Study

This thesis presents an historical and cultural overview of Australian book publishing and book commissioning over the last 30 years. In so doing, it analyses the organisational structure of particular publishing cultures; examines the variables in book commissioning and/or acquisitions, including the respective roles of the editor and the publisher in generating content; and explores cultural production within feminist and Indigenous publishing communities.

In Chapter One, I discuss the relevance of Publishing Studies, and I include a selective review of literature on book publishing and book commissioning studies, as well as other related book and journal publications. I identify gaps in the literature and areas for future research and detail my methodological approach. This includes a discussion of how my experiential grounding in editing and publishing informs my perceptions of identity and representation within Australian publishing culture, and how this has assisted me in identifying appropriate participants and institutions for my study. I address the cross-cultural issues raised in this study by looking at how Indigenous peoples are represented by western researchers, and by exploring culturally appropriate research methodology for the study of Indigenous people, in particular, the importance of Indigenous and non-Indigenous self-identification, thus contextualising the discussion within appropriate cultural frameworks. I then discuss the value of qualitative interviewing and its relevance to my research and detail the rationale for framing interview questions and the methods for collecting interview data and data analysis. I define the research sample in relation to the size of the Australian book market, the geographic location of book publishers in Australia and consider the mobility of editors and publishers who were interviewed for this study.

Chapter Two contextualises book publishing and commissioning history in Australia by describing the effects of colonisation on a local book publishing industry in Australia by world market economies, in particular, Britain and the USA, and the resistance and resilience of independent publishing culture in promoting and defending local publishing territories. Within the dynamic field that constitutes Australian book publishing, editors and publishers 'with independent minds' continue to take a proactive role in commissioning ideas, authors and texts.

Chapter Three introduces a selective sample of individuals and the publishing companies they represent, by examining organisational structure and publishing culture. As one participant has commented, 'The business of commissioning depends very much on the structure of the publishing company and the people who are involved' (Sims int. 1998). Three general models and seven specific publishing models are also presented in Chapter Three. While the general models serve as a useful guide to organisational publishing structure overall, specific publishing models

show how particular companies are organised and the spatial and functional relations of individuals to established and emerging areas within the publishing house. The narratives that accompany these visual representations offer insights into a range of diverse publishing experiences. Taken together, these models offer a 'snapshot' of Australian publishing in the late 1990s.

Chapter Four, the main commissioning chapter, introduces editors and publishers as the creators and shapers of ideas, authors and books. The key roles of the editor and the publisher are examined as they underpin book commissioning and acquisition. The commissioning role is not transparent and the boundaries of editing and publishing roles are often blurred, particularly in small publishing houses. Independent publishers play a critical role in generating community debate from the ground up in Australia.

Chapters Three and Four, which constitute the central section of the research, are followed by two chapters that explore specific contexts of cultural production. Chapter Five focuses on the repositioning of feminism and feminist publishing in Australia since the 1970s within a cultural framework of 'identity' and 'difference' as these underpin book commissioning and feminist publishing practice. The focus is a study of three Melbourne-based feminist publishers: Sybylla Feminist Press (est. 1976), Spinifex Press (est. 1991) and Artemis Publishing (est. 1992), with reference to particular books and lists they have developed. Mainstream publishers and book titles are also identified as they intersect with a feminist and gay and lesbian community culture in Australia. While feminism has always operated within an international context, this chapter foregrounds local feminist publishing because so little has been written and published about the work of feminist book publishers in Australia. The potential for much further scholarly research on feminist publishing exists, especially that drawing on the rich archival holdings of, for example, Sisters Publishing, housed in the Baillieu Library, Melbourne University; Sybylla Feminist Press, housed in the State Library of Victoria and Women's Redress Press, housed in the Mitchell Library in Sydney.

Chapter Six explores recent developments in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander publishing and how these have informed the production of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander authors, editors and texts, with respect to greater community ownership and autonomy in the production and management of knowledge and content. The cultural protocols that underpin the work of Indigenous editors and publishers are examined in relation to what might constitute appropriate commissioning practice. Aspects of cross-cultural exchange between Indigenous and non-Indigenous book editors and publishers, in the production of Indigenous texts, are discussed. The focus is a study of three publishing houses: Magabala Books, IAD Press (Institute

of Aboriginal Development) and Aboriginal Studies Press. The University of Queensland Press (UQP), because of its commitment to the publication of Black Australian writers through the David Unaipon Award, since 1989, and the Marrwarnging Award for Indigenous writers, established by the University of Western Australia Press in 1999, are also included in the discussion in this chapter.

The Conclusion presents the major influences and key findings of my research. Editors and publishers and book commissioning are located within local and global book markets and cultural territories. Organisational structure and publishing culture significantly impact on the individual's ability to commission and acquire content within particular publishing houses. The shifting social, political and economic conditions in which authors and books are produced in Australia highlight the great divide between cultural interests and commercial incentives. The consequences of the systemic nature of these sea changes across independent and mainstream book publishing and commissioning environments are yet to be fully realised, including the impact of new technologies — an important emerging area for future research.

The research participants in this study for the most part did not readily identify or discuss new electronic book initiatives or developments in their publishing houses, and for most, these are still relatively new and emerging areas. As such, these developments are still viewed as an add-on value to the book, complementing or enhancing established and ongoing print publishing programs. For these reasons, new initiatives and developments in electronic and multimedia delivery platforms in Australian book publishing, and the significance of a host of related issues to do with electronic and digital copyright, were beyond the scope of this study and were therefore not included.

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1 There are no statistics in the most current Australian Bureau of Statistics data for book publishers in Australia (1999–2000) that shows a breakdown of the employment relationship between status and gender. The number of males to females who are 'working proprietors' and partners in publishing are given in Table 8 (as at the end of June 2000).

2 This claim is substantiated by using the most current data available from the Australian Publishers Association *Directory of Members, 2000–2001*. A random sample of ten publishing companies in Australia, including Random House, HarperCollins, Penguin Books, Allen & Unwin, Hodder Headline, Lonely Planet, Pan Macmillan, Oxford University Press, Scholastic Australia and Simon & Schuster, reveals that in upper management 38 company directors are male and eleven are female.

CHAPTER ONE

Perspectives on Methodology

Introduction

Books symbolise, produce and reproduce culture, and they also have a 'culture' of their own, that of writing, publishing and reading. Book culture is a comprehensive system which involves the history of books, the social, political, economic and cultural contexts of books and, with the advent of new technologies, cross-media events in a book's life cycle. This ensures that studies of book culture and book production in Australia are multidisciplinary. The discussion of the literature that follows is selective, and will focus on those works which provide insight into the development of a recent and contemporary publishing culture in Australia, from 1970 to 2000. The literature will focus on book publishing culture, the environment in which editors and publishers operate and how this informs their commissioning and publishing practice.

Publishing Studies acquired its initial institutional bases in vocational-based universities in Australia during the 1980s and 1990s. The foundation graduate editing and publishing course was established in the Department of Communication Studies, RMIT University and similar courses in other academic tertiary institutions followed in the 1990s. The RMIT course is more strongly aligned with, and vocationally tied to various sectors of the publishing industry, and this is its strength. Other editing and publishing courses offered at Monash University, Griffith University and Macquarie University also require prior industry knowledge and experience as a prerequisite (Aphrys 1997: 118–36). As a result, researchers in Publishing Studies are often grounded in the industry as 'participant observers' working alongside their subjects. Contributors to early issues of *Publishing Studies*, the first refereed journal with a focus on book publishing in Australia, were mostly people who worked in the book trade. As the journal developed and expanded, its contributors also included academics, librarians, writers and students of editing and publishing courses. *Publishing Studies* was described by its founding editor and former book publisher, John Curtain, as 'an Australian response' to the proliferation of undergraduate and postgraduate courses in other parts of the world, particularly the United Kingdom, North America and Europe (Curtain 1995: 3). The first two issues of the journal (1995, 1996) reproduced papers from a conference held in Melbourne

in 1992 on the History of Australian Publishing. In his first issue, Curtain identified a role of the journal as 'chronicling contemporary and recent publishing through profiles of people and institutions' (Curtain 1995: 4). Bennett argues that the realm of culture cannot be defined simply as the field of texts and meanings; it also includes the ways in which texts and meanings form a part of the organisation and functioning of particular institutions and debates concerning viable and appropriate ways of theorising and representing the person (1998: 81). In this study the relationship between culture and power, as they relate to commissioning practice, are explored within the context of social, political and economic change, shaping the individual and the institution over time.

The Literature

There are few in-depth studies in the cultural field of Australian book publishing. Because Australian publishing began its life as an offshoot branch of other national and imperial publishing cultures, I have looked at comparative studies by British and American researchers in the field as a way of contextualising this study and framing my methodology (Davies, 1994; Lane and Booth 1980; Coser, Kadushin and Powell, 1982).

Gill Davies's instructive 'how to' guide on book commissioning and acquisition is written by a specialist publisher who worked with authors in the British book trade for 21 years (Davies 1994). Davies's approach, from the editor's point of view, is a systematic attempt to address the main principles and practices involved in book commissioning and acquisitions (1994: 3). The central argument is that the success of any book will stand or fall on the ability of the editor, who takes the most proactive role in the genesis of the book (Davies 1994: 19). Davies discusses how editors choose books for publication; the role of the editor in following through the book's development, from the signature on the contract to the delivery date for publication; building and developing publishing lists; in-house teamwork and the importance of effective communication. The final chapter is concerned with the future of the book, in which Davies argues that editors must educate and familiarise themselves with non-book delivery platforms in 'the early cycle of electronic publishing' (1994: 167).

Michael Lane and Jeremy Booth's British study is preoccupied with commerce against culture in postwar Britain, with a primary interest in 'the events of the past generation (thirty years by a demographer's convention)' (1980: 10). This study draws on data collected in three periods of fieldwork, focusing on a case study of a single 'general' publishing house, including structured interviews with all staff from management level upwards; observation as a participant or non-participant and additional interviews

with 40 publishing managers working in other organisations to contextualise the case house (1966–67); structured interviews (no formal questionnaire) with 120 publishers in 36 different publishing houses where approximately one half were engaged in editorial activities (1971–72); and preliminary and follow-up interviews with 70 publishers and fifteen authors' agents (1974–75). Strict confidentiality and anonymity of respondents was maintained and the identity of publishing houses was not disclosed. Lane believed that the publishers' position at the node of a network isolated them so that they could be more easily studied than other cultural entrepreneurs (1980: 10). Lane diagnoses British publishing during the period under consideration as 'gravely ill' and predicts that 'the days of small to medium-sized publishers who seek to diffuse new ideas and forms is about to end' (Lane and Booth 1980: 128). Of particular relevance in Lane and Booth's study are five main chapters focusing on which books to publish and others that deal with the external constraints which impact on in-house organisation and the consequences for publishers and the culture they serve.

The impetus for Coser, Kadushin and Powell to embark on a collaborative historical survey of book publishing in America in the early 1980s was a strong conviction that the publishing industry was a 'vivid nodal point in the production and dissemination of ideas', at a time when developments in the American publishing industry that had evolved throughout the 1960s and 1970s — 'mergers, takeovers and bureaucratisation' — were being widely questioned as commercial forces that could 'endanger the key cultural functions of publishing' (1982: ix). As social scientists, the American researchers believed that a single method and approach was not appropriate. They collected both quantitative data and qualitative materials for analysis. Their data-gathering techniques consisted of interviews and observations of people in the publishing industry who explained 'the operation of their publishing houses and their places in them' (Coser *et al.* 1982: x). Coser and his colleagues found that editors were unable either to systematically describe how they acquired manuscripts or to fully account for all the factors involved in the decision-making process in interview. More was learned about the actual process of publishing in their study by observing editors at work (Coser *et al.* 1982: 124, 125). The researchers became 'participant observers' by negotiating agreements with various publishing houses to allow them to observe publishing personnel at work, to participate in their meetings and to interview them informally on site (Coser *et al.* 1982: 379). Lane and Booth also took this approach in their single case study of a general publishing house in Britain. In addition to structured interviews, Lane was a 'participant' or 'non-participant' observer over a nine-month period. Additional interviews were also conducted with participants in other publishing organisations to contextualise the experiences of the publishing staff who were interviewed and observed in the case study (Lane and Booth 1980: vii).

In the American study, 85 editors from 56 publishing houses — mainly within the New York metropolitan area but also on the West Coast — gave complete interviews. Another thirteen gave partial interviews and an additional 35 were interviewed informally. Authors also responded to questionnaires dealing with their experiences with the various houses studied. All respondents and the publishing houses they worked within were promised strict confidentiality and anonymity (Coser *et al.* 1982: x–xi). Given that the complete sample in the American study comprised familiar houses located in the New York metropolitan area, the demographic disclosure of 'who' and 'where' was regarded as an issue in obtaining uninhibited responses. Additional interviews with agents, reviewers, booksellers and specialists in the production of managed texts were undertaken. Coser *et al.* applied a formal interview schedule, sent out written questionnaires and became 'participant observers' which included informal meetings 'over lunch, in hallways, at trade booths and whenever and wherever we could' (Coser *et al.* 1982: x). The researchers decided to rule out all houses that published fewer than 20 books in 1975 in their sample, on the grounds that they 'were likely to be more idiosyncratic; were not influential in the total picture of publishing and did not have the organisational diversity to justify either observation or interview' (1982: 376). The primary source for constructing a sample of publishing houses 'of interest to the researchers' was the listing of over 1,000 publishing houses in the 1975 *Literary Market Place*. Editors' names were randomly drawn and interviews were organised through either a pre-arranged introduction or by written introduction, explaining the purpose for interview and then following up by making an appointment for interview by telephone (1982: 377). The 'anonymous' nature of the abovementioned research is problematic for those who seek a more in-depth understanding of particular individuals and publishing houses that constitute particular book publishing communities. Several chapters in Coser *et al.*, in a section entitled 'The People Who Make Books', were of particular relevance to this study. Chapter Five focused on manuscript acquisition, the decision-making process and factors in the decision to publish; Chapter Six focused on women in book publishing, divisions of labour by sex, separate and unequal career paths and industry trends; Chapter Seven focused on the internal organisation of publishing houses; and the Epilogue discusses publishers as gatekeepers of ideas. Coser *et al.* argue that because the book trade supports the production and dissemination of ideas, it is both the guardian and the constant creator of our written culture (1982: 362). While this is true, book publishing has never been a benevolent institution and even subsidised presses must sell some books at a profit. These mutual considerations of commerce and culture underpin the production and dissemination of ideas, that is, how books are produced and what ideas find their way into, and influence, the wider culture. This tension underpins the production and dissemination of ideas, that is, how books

are produced and what ideas find their way into, and influence, the wider culture. Coser *et al.* argue that the nature of the social structures and communities that comprise publishers, editors, authors and their publics have changed (1982: 363).

Other Interview-based Studies

Interviews are a valuable addition to qualitative, empirical research in publishing. The Albert Moran Collection, housed in the Australian Defence Force Academy, is an important archival resource, including an extensive range of interviews conducted with people in the book trade between 1986 and 1987. Some of this data was published in Moran's article on environments inside the publishing house (1990) and I have also drawn from Moran's interviews for this study. Lee White also recognised the intrinsic cultural worth of interviews with people in the book trade in her thesis on the role and status of book editors in Australia in the late 1980s (1986). Other, more contemporary researchers in Australian publishing studies have also included industry interviews. For example, Anne Galligan's study on authorship and publishing (1997) and Anita Heiss's doctoral thesis on the publication of Aboriginal writers (2000), contain interviews with authors, editors, designers and publishers. Regular interviews with people in the book trade appear in various issues of the *Australian Bookseller & Publisher* (*AB&P*), the *Australian Author* and the *Australian Book Review* (*ABR*). Occasional interviews have also appeared in various issues of *Publishing Studies* and other sources. An important example is Louise Poland's interview with Aboriginal editor Sandra Phillips, published in UQP's publishing history (Munro 1998), and also a range of interviews with people in the book trade included in Alison Aphrys's guide to careers in book selling and book publishing (1997).

Other Related Studies

The uncertain future of the book and book culture is reflected in the intense national and international scholarly interest in recording the development of book history and this trend accelerated in the 1990s. Curtain has referred to multi-volume book histories in various stages of development in Britain, Scotland, Canada, New Zealand and Australia (1995: 3). In Australia, work is progressing on the national *History of the Book in Australia* (*HOBA*) project, to be published in chronological volumes by the University of Queensland Press. These volumes will cover three historic periods — early origins to 1890 (Kirsop and Webby 2002), 1891–1945 (Arnold and Lyons 2001) and 1946–2000 (Munro and Sheahan-Bright forthcoming 2003). In addition to the ambitious *HOBA* project, papers from National Book Summits in Australia were published in two volumes by the National Book Council: *Planning for Action: the*

Book in an Era of Change (1993) and *The Book Idea … Imagination, Information and Access* (1995). These papers addressed the theme of the book in an era of change within an Australian literary environment. While both Summits addressed economic and technological imperatives within the industry, the National Book Council viewed the papers as 'a major contribution to Australian culture' (Shapcott 1995: 4).

Lee White's thesis on *The Role and Status of Book Editors in Australia* is a study of the role of Australian book editors and publishing conditions that affect the standards and performance of editors in Australia (White 1986: ii). When White researched and wrote her thesis she was earning a living as a freelance editor in the Australian book trade, and many of the publishers and management personnel interviewed for her study were clients. White's study examines the attitudes and perceptions of the role and status of the book editor from the viewpoint of editors, authors and publishing management (1986: vii). Her central argument is that the editing profession, by and large, is not acknowledged or supported by the publishing industry. White attributed this problem to the industry's 'confused and uneven development' and argued that a clearer understanding of the editorial function and the editor's position could improve Australian writing and publishing practices (1986: 72). The lack of sufficient and developed in-house editorial training highlighted in White's earlier study was identified as a key issue in an industry report following the first residential program for editors in Australia in 1999, a joint initiative of the Literature Board of the Australia Council and the Australian Publishers Association (APA) (Sheahan-Bright 1999). This initiative was the result of Jane Arms's recommendations in an independent report to the Australia Council in 1997. Arms emphasised the urgent need for in-house editing training to take place within Australian publishing houses[1] and referred to the fact that the Beatrice Davis Fellowship only benefitted individual 'mid-career' editors who were recipients of the fellowship (1997: 10–13). Some of the enduring issues identified in White's earlier study and the more recent Literature Board/APA findings are included in this thesis, as they relate to the status of the editor, editorial standards and book commissioning.

Valerie Haye's study of the impact of foreign ownership on Australian publishing during the 1970s reports that very little was written on the history of book publishing in Australia (1981). Haye's study chronicles a period known to those in the industry as the 'takeover era' in the boom times, sometimes identified as 'the third phase in the growth of Australian publishing' (1981: 94). British and American companies made their entry into local publishing in Australia and, at the same time, there was a significant increase in the number of Australian-owned publishers 'buoyed up by the climate of cultural nationalism and the unprecedented interest in all aspects of Australian life' (Haye 1981: 94). It is during this period of heightened nationalism in the 1970s, when 'the operations of all multinational companies were regarded

with suspicion' (Haye 1981: 95), that my commissioning study begins, also picking up from where John Curtain's survey and study of book publishing development in Australia finishes in the late 1960s (1997). Curtain identifies and positions himself as a 'participant observer' and wrote of the Australian publishing industry in 1966, 'I had no idea that it was so new. It seemed settled, established, as if it had always been so … the industry seemed to be flourishing' (1997: i). Curtain described his publishing colleagues, the men who mostly managed or worked for the local publishing operations of British firms, as 'part of the Australian scene' and 'privy to important publishing visitors from the UK who usually came during an Ashes cricket series' (1997: i). Curtain argued that Australian territory shared the interests and print runs of the Empire market because 'white Australian culture was British culture' (1997: ii).

A contemporary cluster of Australian researchers completed unpublished dissertations on aspects of book culture and book publishing in the 1990s and 2000 (McLean 1996; Galligan, 1997; Poland 1997; Heiss 2000). Kath McLean's Master of Arts study of the contemporary book as a product of its time examines the commercial and cultural conditions in which the book is produced within social, political, intellectual, economic and cultural contexts (McLean 1996). McLean's single case study of Drusilla Modjeska's *The Orchard* (1995), published by Pan Macmillan, a British company operating successfully in Australia, serves several purposes. McLean's research examines the processes and events which *The Orchard* underwent in its life cycle so far, and the context in which this occurred. The value of McLean's research 'lies in its ability to bring actual experience to bear on the general nature and conditions of Australian book culture, enhancing the understanding of the book and of book culture' (McLean 1996: 35). McLean's study employs a framework derived from two models based on the work of Thomas Adams and Nicolas Barker (1993) and Robert Darnton's 'communication circuit', a model in the tradition of *histoire du livre* (1983). From this earlier work, McLean devises a composite model to examine the book and book culture in contemporary Australia that can be applied to both general conditions of Australian book culture and to a single contemporary book (1996: 27–32). McLean's central argument is that while the book is essentially a commercial product, produced and distributed in a commercial environment for profit, it is also a significant cultural artefact. It is the conflict between commerce and culture that is a source of tension among authors, publishers and booksellers (McLean 1996).

Anne Galligan's Master of Philosophy study investigates the writing environment in Australia and in particular, the position of the Australian author — not discounting the role that social, economic and technological change play — in destabilising this cultural territory (Galligan 1997). Galligan's semi-structured interviews with selected

authors, publishers and editors contribute to an understanding of the creative and commercial working relationship between the author and the publisher. Of particular interest are Galligan's chapters detailing the literary ecosystem in Australia, especially her discussion of the economic pressures dominating the publishing industry and the role of multinational companies. Her detailed case study of the University of Queensland Press is an important resource for future publishing studies (1997: 139–68). Galligan identifies a highly relevant area for further research — the contribution that small independent publishing companies make to Australian culture (1997: 17). Aspects of the critical role of independent publishers, however, in maintaining a vibrant Australian publishing culture, are also flagged in Galligan's work. Electronic publishing is certainly at the forefront of creating new cultural territories in publishing and some of the publishers identified in Galligan's study are in the early stages of developing electronic product. This will continue to increase as electronic publishing becomes a more cost-effective and time-saving medium. Galligan dedicates a chapter in her thesis to the electronic writing environment, in which she discusses the issues for the publisher in the development and delivery of new cultural products (1997: 191). This chapter was revised and expanded for publication in the quarterly literary magazine, *Overland* (2000: 80–5). Galligan's and McLean's work have contributed to my own understanding of the way in which the editor and publisher function and adapt in an evolving book writing and publishing environment.

Louise Poland surveys Aboriginal publishing in Australia between 1988 and 1997 in her Graduate Diploma in Publishing (Arts) minor thesis. This study explores the lack of Aboriginal participation and intervention in the production and publication of Australian Indigenous content since 1988 — at a time when the emergence of Aboriginal writing was popularly perceived as an 'explosion' in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander published works (Poland 1997). Poland interviewed Sandra Phillips in 1997 — the same year in which she observed there were only seven Aboriginal people working in Australian publishing (1997). At the time of interview Phillips had been assessing and editing the work of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander writers for the University of Queensland Press, describing the process of 'acting as a mediator between a community which I'm a part of — the Indigenous community — and the wider Australian community' and taking on the 'hard developmental work' with Indigenous writers in developing a 'new canon' (1998: 156–7). Poland's later article focuses on the more recent history of Aboriginal publishing in Australia, from 1988 to 1999, and builds on her earlier work, highlighting historical developments rather than critically reviewing the literature (2001: ms. 1). Poland provides the socio-political context for this article by comparing it with a number of significant historical events in the history of Australian Aboriginal publishing — for example, the increased visibility of

Indigenous resistance in response to Bicentennial celebrations and the birth of the Indigenous publishing house, Magabala Books, enabled by a Bicentennial grant (2001: ms. 3–5).

Anita Heiss's contemporary study of Aboriginal writing and publishing in Australia makes a valuable contribution to Indigenous cultural research and Australian publishing and cultural studies (2000). Her comparative research focuses on the editing and publishing journeys of Aboriginal writers in Australia, Maori writers in Aotearoa (New Zealand) and Native American writers in Canada. Heiss interviewed writers, editors and publishers to establish what is at stake for Aboriginal writers in contemporary Australia, including their editing and publishing experiences, matters of intellectual property and copyright issues and rights and responsibilities in delivering authentic accounts of Aboriginal life and experience. Heiss discusses Aboriginal identity and its effects on and role within contemporary Aboriginal literature in Chapter One and argues that 'historically the need to define "Aboriginality" did not come from within Aboriginal communities' (2000: electronic copy, Ch. 1, 2) Heiss's focus in researching and writing the thesis, as an Aboriginal writer, was on the politics of Indigenous writers getting published in Australia. In her chapter on Aboriginal publishing, Heiss focuses on the publication of Aboriginal written work in Australia, including a brief history of print journalism. She also profiles three publishing houses that promote and publish Indigenous writers, Magabala Books, IAD Press and Aboriginal Studies Press, and she considers the ways in which mainstream publishing houses edit and publish Aboriginal writers. Issues identified in a chapter on the editing of Aboriginal writing include non-Aboriginal intervention, the need for more training of Indigenous editors and the lack of trained and employed Indigenous editors in Australia. Heiss argues that the editor of Aboriginal writing plays a larger role in its production than 'simply editing text' (2000: electronic copy, Ch. 3, 15). Other important chapters in Heiss's work focus on intellectual and cultural property rights for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, selling Black writing to the reader and support mechanisms for Aboriginal writers.

A few histories of book publishing companies in Australia have been published by the companies themselves and, as such, are self-serving in their own ways (Sayers 1988; Dutton 1996; Munro, 1998). The 60-year history of Penguin Books in Australia documents the domination by the British parent company of the Australian list and the struggle by particular individuals within Penguin to throw off the imperial shackles. What makes the book an important contribution and brings this publishing history to life are the narratives of in-house publishing staff who offer personal insights into the cultural institution in Australia known as 'Penguin' (Dutton 1996). One danger in the lack of publishing histories regarding the development of particular

companies in Australia is that a single history such as this could be mistaken for the definitive history of Australian book publishing and book culture, whereas nothing could be further from the truth. There are many other texts waiting to be written or currently in progress about particular publishing companies and their contribution to local knowledge and publishing culture in Australia. Works-in-progress include Neil James's history of Angus & Robertson (forthcoming 2003), and case studies of a range of independent and multinational publishers operating in Australia, post World War Two, to be published by the University of Queensland Press in the third volume of the *History of the Book in Australia, 1945–2000*. The 50-year history of the University of Queensland Press edited by UQP's publishing manager, Craig Munro, has been described as 'a history with multiple voices and perspectives' with a range of contributions from UQP authors, academics and in-house publishing staff. Louise Poland's aforementioned interview with former UQP editor Sandra Phillips (Phillips 1998), is of cultural significance, and Anne Galligan's final overview chapter is a useful and informative summary (Galligan 1998). A record of individuals and events is included in respective chronologies in both the Penguin and UQP publishing histories. A checklist of books published from 1948–98, included as an Appendix in the UQP history, is a rich source for more in-depth future research (Munro 1998).

Hilary McPhee's publishing memoir, *Other People's Words* (2001), is an accessible text about Australian publishing. Her style is outspoken and refreshingly honest for such a well-known public figure and publishing insider. McPhee's central narrative tracks the rise and fall of the independent trade publishing house, McPhee Gribble, and makes a critical contemporary contribution to scholarly and industry debate about control and ownership of Australian publishing (McPhee 2001). Joyce Nicholson, former owner and managing director of the reference publisher DW Thorpe and publisher of the *AB&P*, chronicles the life and times of a family company in her bookselling and publishing memoirs, *A Life Of Books* (Nicholson 2000). This is a rich and substantive contribution in detailing the history of her father's company, DW Thorpe, in Australia. It is characterised by Nicholson's sharp and insightful recall of people, events and key industry developments from 1968, when she became Managing Director of DW Thorpe, until 1987, when the business was sold. The personal and industry memoirs of McPhee and Nicholson partly redress the significant gap in publishing industry records and elucidate the contribution of two key women to the Australian book trade in the period under study in this thesis.

As a further redress of this absence two biographers have written books on Beatrice Davis, the first full-time general book editor in Australia. Davis was appointed to the publishing firm Angus & Robertson (A&R) in 1937 and remained with the company

until 1973, when she was effectively sacked by the new owner, Richard Walsh. The first slim volume, *One of the First and One of the Finest*, was commissioned and published by the Victorian branch of The Society of Editors in Australia (Barker 1991). This biographical profile is based on conversations between the author and the subject, from June 1989 to October 1990, records from personal files and personal handwritten tributes from A&R authors, presented to Davis in a bound volume in 1974 after her departure from A&R (Barker 1991: vi–vii). The more substantially researched and written biography, *A Certain Style: Beatrice Davis, a Literary Life*, was written by Jacqueline Kent, former recipient of the Beatrice Davis Fellowship for editorial excellence, who describes Davis as 'an important taste-maker' in Australian literature (Kent 2001).

Michael Denholm ups the ante in his criticism of the literary 'establishment' in an alternative historical survey of the development of Australian small press publishing over two periods, the early 1970s (vol. 1, 1979) and the late 1970s and 1980s (vol. 2, 1991). Denholm argues that the birth of the small publishers was a response to cultural and intellectual developments in Australia and the failure, on the part of large Australian publishers and overseas publishers in Australia, to understand and meet the needs of Australian writers (Denholm 1979: 1). Denholm assesses the role of the Australia Council as significant in the emergence of small publishers through direct assistance in support of Australian writing programs. He is also critical of the Australian government for not acting sufficiently 'to offset the disadvantages of the Australian publisher in terms of capital, reserves and financial resources when competing against foreign companies' (1979: 3).[2] The emergence and development of the Australian Independent Publishers Association (AIPA), established to promote the interests of Australian-owned publishers in 1975, was a defining moment for the book industry and has contributed to the evolution of a strong, independent publishing culture in Australia. Denholm argues that without the 'idealism, drive, enthusiasm and initiative' of the small publishers, many books would not have been published (1979: 15). This comment remains as relevant in Australian book publishing today as it was when Denholm wrote it.

A contemporary companion to Denholm's earlier critical work is Mark Davis's *gangland* (1999 [1997]), a critique of cultural and intellectual élites and the way in which they monopolise culture and the new generationalism in Australia, with the objective of 'opening up new ideas about spaces for public debate and policy making' (1997: xi–xii). In many ways, both Denholm and Davis are concerned with issues that have prevailed across three decades or more in Australian intellectual and cultural life. Davis, like Denholm, is critical of the cultural gatekeepers — the establishment who maintain the literary canon in Australia. In his chapter dedicated

to the Australian publishing industry, Davis explores writing as a form of cultural production and discusses the part that publishing plays in the wider cultural industry, because of its relationship to cultural élites (1997: 140–1). Of relevance to this study are Davis's comments about the tensions in Australian book publishing between 'highbrow' and 'lowbrow' culture which mirror the way the industry is structured and influence what is being published. Davis claims that 'like populist politicians, publishers are prepared to offer "what people want", but actually operate from up on high' and that one of the results is a 'dumbing-down of publishing' — an absence of content in the name of 'easy marketing' and 'instant audience appeal' (1997: 144–5). Central to Davis's chapter on book publishing is his argument that a unique and traditional strength in book publishing — that of ideas — has been sacrificed in the mainstream rush to bottom-line publishing. Davis is critical of multinational publishers who 'barely read the books they commission' and the acquisition of smaller imprints to fill creative cultural gaps in their lists (1997: 147–8). A consequence of the multinational colonisation of Australian independent lists and local imprints is in Davis's view an overall reduction in cultural diversity (1997: 147–8).

Methodology

Research Origins in Publishing

My former experience as an independent small press editor, publisher and occasional book reviewer serves as an important precursor to this study. I was a founding member of Tantrum Press, an Adelaide-based feminist collective (1986–94) that published fiction, poetry, drama and audio performance works by South Australian women writers. For two years (1996–98), I was the baby boomer member of Sybylla Feminist Press, a Melbourne-based feminist collective (1976–2001) that published fiction, non-fiction, anthologies and experimental works by Australian women writers. Both presses have published and promoted local women's writing and opened up publishing spaces for new forms of writing. I was also a member of the regional feminist collective based in Adelaide, which coordinated a national editorial group and compiled the material for publication in *Angry Women* (Couani *et al.* 1989), an anthology of Australian women's writing, published by Hale & Iremonger. I was an invited guest speaker from Australia to the annual Listener Women's Book Festival in New Zealand in 1991. I have reviewed women's fiction and non-fiction for the *Australian Women's Book Review* (*AWBR*) and the *Australian Book Review* (*ABR*). I have actively engaged with my feminist peers in a tradition of independent writing, editing, publishing and reviewing aimed at increasing the visibility of feminist writers and publishers in Australia and elsewhere. These formative experiences inform my research in this study, in particular, 'who belongs' to a literary, publishing and public

culture and, ultimately, 'why'. Such fundamental questions are raised generally, in Chapter One, as they relate to the colonisation and globalisation of a local book publishing culture, and more specifically in Chapters Five and Six, which respectively focus on contested sites of feminist and Indigenous book production. Questions of 'identity' and 'representation' in Australian book publishing have influenced my choices in selecting particular editors and publishers for interview in this study and these issues are explored in Chapters Five and Six.

Research Origins and Standpoint Theory

In the introduction to her analyses of feminist methods in social research, feminist academic researcher Shulamit Reinharz quotes American sociologist Roslyn Bologh when she writes that feminist theory about research methods involves questions of identity and of difference (Reinharz 1992: 3). Bologh argues that the question of difference is one with the question of identity, and that it has become the critical question for feminist theorising in all disciplines (Bologh 1984: 388). My concern with identity and difference, in particular, is generated by my political involvement and experience within the lesbian/feminist community in working towards change, and this approach is also embedded in my academic research. In this study, I have chosen to take up and explore these issues through a thematic approach, that informs the production and publication of feminist content in Chapter Five, and Indigenous content in Chapter Six. While I refer in general to issues of race, class, gender and sexuality, I have searched for specific feminist and Indigenous written material for this study, either published or unpublished. I have also generated new and original feminist and Indigenous dialogue that explores issues of identity and difference in Australian book publishing, through conducting interviews with feminist and Indigenous editors and publishers.

Feminist awareness and activism are instructive in my life's work and this experience informs my knowledge base and the particular biases that I bring to my research. Feminists seek to challenge themselves in the ways in which they acknowledge their own experience of oppression and the different experiences of other women who are oppressed. What naturally follows from this awareness and knowledge base, is what Hawthorne refers to as 'an essential step to feminism', that is, 'participating in creating change' in 'acting for oneself and for others'. This creates a 'critical frame of reference and turn of mind, from which one can never retreat without violence to the self' (Hawthorne 2002: 44). In acting for oneself and for others, I must also question where I am coming from, what the differences are and how to act in ways that are culturally appropriate. I have adopted a similar approach to that taken by Reinharz in not arguing for or imposing a particular definition of feminism across my research,

nor have I derived principles from that definition and then put them into operation as research practice (Reinharz 1992: 5). While feminism naturally informs my work and my voice, which is critical in framing the arguments in this thesis, I cannot speak for others. And yet feminists argue that they 'can and must speak out for others' through their writing, teaching and activism (Klein in Reinharz 1992: 16). This is something of a conundrum for feminists like myself who are working within the framework of exploring identity and difference, particularly in Chapters Five and Six. Reinharz argues that feminism is a perspective, not a research method, and that there is no single way of undertaking research as a feminist (Reinharz 1992: 240, 243). I identify throughout this study as a feminist undertaking research rather than a feminist engaged in feminist research methods (Reinharz 1992: 7). While this is the case, some aspects of my approach are also identified by Reinharz as distinctive features of feminist experiential analysis in approaching research methods. They include a focus which is broad and inclusive; data which includes feelings, thoughts, insights and experience; a topic which is socially significant; a research role that is open to the environment and shaped by it; the premise that research affects the researcher who may change during the process; that theory emerges from the research; and that the research objective is understanding and the presentation includes narrative and documentation of the discovery process (Reinharz 1983: 170–2).

While feminism thus plays a significant role in my approach to identity and difference in this research, there are additional reasons why I cannot claim that this thesis is exclusively a feminist research project. To begin with, my research subjects are not all women. Forty-five per cent of those who consented to be interviewed for this study do not self-identify as feminists in their personal or professional lives (nine research subjects). Fifty-five per cent either identify as feminists, or state that feminism has influenced their personal and professional lives (eleven research subjects). Of this total, only 25 per cent exclusively publish feminist authors and texts (five research subjects). The research sample is representative of a body of independent book publishers in Australia, with the exception of Penguin Books, constituting a diverse range of attitudes and opinions. In relation to narrative, I have adopted a similar position to Alison Bartlett, in her study of contemporary Australian women's writing (Bartlett 1998). That is, rather than 'assuming a single, linear, consistent and authoritative voice as author', my narrative resounds with the many voices in this study, in particular, the narratives of the editors and publishers who took part (Bartlett 1998: 3). The narrative sources in Chapter Five, one of two chapters with a focus on cultural production, are feminists who have engaged in the cultural production of feminist texts. Much of this original material is unpublished and/or researched from feminist archives and my own private research collection. These records are invaluable for their discussion of the social, political and economic

conditions and indicators that contextualise the feminist means of production and how Australian feminist publishing has changed over time.

Research Strategies and Indigenous Issues

My concern with issues of identity and difference over time accounts for why I also explore the under-representation of Indigenous people in Australian publishing, as well as cross-cultural issues in the development and production of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content, in Chapter Six. Linda Tuhiwai Smith, in researching Indigenous cultural theory, identifies the danger in cross-cultural research, where it is assumed that the researcher belongs to the dominant cultural group (1999: 196). Anita Heiss details a code of ethics and methodology appropriate to Indigenous research in Australia in her doctoral thesis on Aboriginal literature and publishing (2000). Heiss's methodology adopts an Aboriginal strategy of consulting the community, in this case, the community of Aboriginal writers and publishers, and her methodological approach 'counteracts and subverts assumed positions of expertise via library research in the humanities' (2000: electronic copy, Intro., 1). In the methodology section of Margaret McDonell's in-progress Master's thesis, she discusses her editing of an Aboriginal woman's life story,[3] during which she maintained a reflective journal, a 'shadow manuscript' (McDonell 2000: 8), from which she draws various issues which present themselves during the editing of the work. Because there is 'little in the literature that deals directly with the non-Indigenous editing of Indigenous writing', McDonell extracted the issues recorded in her journal and located 'areas where these issues intersected with discussions in the wider literature' (2000: 10).

Whatever approach I take as a white western researcher, I cannot discount the fact that I am located within the dominant cultural group. Wherever possible, I have attempted to seek out material for this study that is generated by Indigenous people about aspects of Australian book publishing, and to strive towards an inclusive cultural balance in my interview sample. Interviews were conducted with Indigenous editors and publishers and with non-Indigenous editors and publishers, who publish both Indigenous and non-Indigenous authors and works. I have also drawn from the interview with Sandra Phillips on publishing Indigenous writers (Munro 1998) and the substantive material in Anita Heiss's doctoral thesis on Aboriginal Publishing (2000). Indigenous authors have spoken most publicly and passionately about their experiences with both non-Indigenous editors and publishers. I have not included author narratives in this study because my research focus is not the Australian author. The inclusion of data and analysis from interviews with Australian authors would have expanded this thesis in ways that detracted from the central focus of the study, that is, the role of commissioning editors and publishers.

The study of Indigenous people by western researchers is a culturally sensitive issue. I have been guided by various Indigenous and non-Indigenous critical thinkers and writers, in locating and positioning myself within my research and seeking culturally appropriate ways of proceeding as a white, western feminist (Bell 1998; Behrendt 1993; Brady 1998; Fesl 1984; Grossman 1998b, 2001; Grossman and Rea 2000; Hawthorne 2000, 2002; Heiss 2000; Huggins 1990a, 1990b, 1994a, 1998; Klein 1991a; Larbalestier 1990, 1998; McDonell 1999, 2000; Moreton-Robinson 2000; O'Shane 1976; Pettman 1992; Ravenscroft 1997; Sykes 1975; Tuhiwai Smith 1999). In her personal and professional struggles to name herself while theorising and conceptualising the intersections of race, ethnicity, gender and class, Jan Jindy Pettman locates 'white women' within the context of colonisation 'where "white" is a political colour', just as 'black' can be used and adopted by some Aboriginal people 'as a political colour in terms of race power in Australia' (1992: ix). Aileen Moreton-Robinson adopts the protocol of introducing herself as a way of providing information about her cultural location, to enable connections to be made on political, cultural and social grounds, so that culturally appropriate relations can be established. She uses the term 'Indigenous women' to refer to Aboriginal women who identify as such and are accepted by their community as such. Moreton-Robinson does not include Torres Strait Islander women as Indigenous women, even though they are Indigenous to the Torres Straits, because this is culturally inappropriate (2000: 187). Wendy Brady identifies herself as an Aboriginal woman and refers to 'Aboriginal and Islander Australians' (1998: 373). Jackie Huggins identifies as 'Aboriginal first' and then refers to herself as a 'mother, daughter, sister, aunt, cousin, woman, historian' (1998: 120). In this study I identify as a white, western feminist researcher, drawing from the narratives of Indigenous and non-Indigenous participants interviewed. My own life experience has been central to the way in which I have proceeded. This naturally informs how I speak, write and research as a monolingual, middle-class, white woman. As a self-identified lesbian feminist, my political work is located in the margins of Australian society. In entering the realms of cross-cultural research, I have found it helpful to ask, 'Who is the knower? How do we know what we know?' (Hawthorne 2002: 45; Tuhiwai Smith 1999), in attempting to 'think through a double lens' and respectfully acknowledge 'cultural borders and boundaries' (Grossman and Rea 2000).

In her groundbreaking text, *Decolonizing Methodologies* (1999), Linda Tuhiwai Smith identifies research as a significant site of struggle between the 'interests and ways of knowing of the West and the interests and ways of resisting of the Other', namely, Indigenous peoples (1999: 2). Tuhiwai Smith identifies Western research from an Indigenous perspective as research which brings to bear, on any study of Indigenous peoples, a cultural orientation, a set of values, a different conceptualisation of such

things as time, space and subjectivity, different and competing theories of knowledge, highly specialised forms of language and structures of power, which she sees as implicated in western approaches to Indigenous peoples and cultures (1999: 42). Tuhiwai Smith problematises the universal usage of the terms 'Maori' (or *tangata whenua*) because these terms define a colonial relationship between the colonisers (non-Indigenous settler population) and the colonised (Indigenous first settlers). In positioning herself as an Indigenous Maori woman, Tuhiwai Smith claims a genealogical, cultural and political set of experiences where her descent lines (*whakapapa*) come through both of her parents (1999: 12). The term 'Indigenous' is problematic for Tuhiwai Smith, in that it appears to 'collectivize many distinct populations whose experiences under imperialism have been vastly different'. She notes that in some contexts, citing Australia and North America as examples, 'Indigenous' as a cultural naming 'is a way of including the many diverse communities, language groups and nations, each with their own identification within a single grouping'. The genesis of the term 'Indigenous peoples' emerged in the 1970s, internationalising the experiences, issues and struggles of some of the world's colonised peoples (Tuhiwai Smith 1999: 6–7). But Deborah Bird Rose has raised concerns about the cultural damage that can be done by homogenising an Indigenous world, destroying the uniqueness of its diversity (1997: 8).

Tuhiwai Smith's arguments about how the pursuit of knowledge in western research is deeply embedded in multiple layers of imperial and colonial practices puts me on notice to question my own research. The ways in which I name myself, however, 'are irrelevant to Indigenous peoples who have experienced unrelenting research of a profoundly exploitative nature' (Tuhiwai Smith 1999: 42). My preference in this research is to be consistent in the nomenclature and usage of 'Aboriginal', 'Black Australian' or 'Torres Strait Islander' and/or specific place of origin names, such as 'Murri' or 'Koori', or even more specifically location and language-based names such as 'Ngarrindjeri' or 'Warlpiri' as they appear in the literature or as they are spoken in interview. The terms 'Indigenous' or 'Islander' are only included where no other culturally appropriate or culturally specific naming or cultural context is apparent or offered.

Qualitative Interviewing

As a means of exploring how and why commissioning culture is created, how it evolves and is maintained, I have used in-depth, qualitative interviewing as a method of studying the individuals and institutions that constitute a rich and diverse publishing culture, constantly responding to social, political and economic change.

Qualitative interviews are guided by the researcher, who intentionally introduces a limited number of questions and requests the interviewee to explore these questions

in-depth. The researcher encourages the interviewees to reflect, in detail, on events they have experienced (Rubin and Rubin 1995: 2).

Rubin and Rubin characterise the theory and practice of qualitative interviewing as 'a great adventure' where the rigorous process elicits new information which can be built upon. This research tool is an intentional way of learning about respondents' feelings, thoughts and experiences (1995: 1). Rubin and Rubin's text is useful and relevant in making sense of and validating my approach to finding out what editors and publishers 'think' and 'feel' about their publishing worlds in my quest towards understanding their experiences (1995: 1). The in-depth nature of qualitative interviewing indicates how and why culture is created, evolves and is maintained (Rubin and Rubin 1995: 3). Qualitative interviewing is a powerful research tool which has the ability to extend intellectual and emotional reach across time, class, race, gender and other divisions. It does not reduce people to numbers or lose the richness of context, as do the tools of statistical analysis used in the measuring of quantitative data (Rubin and Rubin 1995: vii–viii).

Alison Bartlett argues that texts are produced through the lived practices of being socially positioned as a writer (1998: 2). Until the possibility of direct publication over the Internet was realised in the 1990s, the availability of books was only made possible through their publication, marketing and distribution, by editors and publishers. The cultural conditions in which editors and publishers live and work in Australia impact on their publishing practice, and like the publishing environments they work within, these conditions are not homogeneous.

Rubin and Rubin's interviewing techniques are strongly influenced by feminist theory and praxis. They argue that researchers conducting interviews should not dominate the interview relationship, 'cannot be completely neutral' and need to consider their own beliefs, needs and interests in formulating questions and understanding answers (1995: 38). These arguments are relevant to this study and there is no question that my own knowledge and experience of the publishing industry has been the framework for formulating interview questions and understanding responses.

The Interviews: Design and Focus

In a series of semi-structured (focused) interviews, I introduced the thesis topic and guided the discussion by asking specific questions from a selective sample of 20 editors and publishers who spoke of their commissioning and acquisition experience in 31 publishing houses. Although a total of 31 publishing houses were identified during interviews, I have only profiled organisations or companies that were central to the commissioning discussion in Appendix C. While confidentiality was maintained

throughout the interview process and during data analysis, none of the editors and publishers who took part in this study chose anonymity in relation to themselves or their publishing houses. I believe this provides the critical context for my Australian study, especially given that anonymity was adopted in the other US- and UK-based publishing studies cited (Coser *et al.* 1982; Lane and Booth 1980).

No formal questionnaire was used and all respondents were interviewed twice, in preliminary and follow-up interviews. Prior to interview, all potential interviewees were directly contacted by telephone by the researcher to introduce the research project and invite editors and publishers to participate. Editors and publishers were then presented with a research package which included a covering letter, including introductory information about the project and the interview; a set of 20 common, introductory and non-restrictive preliminary questions (see Appendix A); an information sheet describing the research project's scope, aims and methods; and an ethics-based consent form. I negotiated with each research participant to allow adequate time for them to read the research material provided. I followed this up by contacting them to seek confirmation of participation, and to answer any further questions they had about the research project. At this point an initial interview date and time was negotiated, pending the return of consent forms. As preliminary interviews progressed, further questions, topics and areas for discussion emerged around the thesis topic. These were identified and explored in follow-up interviews. The framing of interview questions emerged from discussions with my supervisors, academic peers, the reading of primary texts in my chosen field around the thesis topic, and my own background as a small press editor and publisher. The value of conducting follow-up interviews was in the building on, and extension of, preliminary questions that were framed without any pre-interview consultation with participants. An exception to this approach was the inclusion of my co-supervisor, Susan Hawthorne, in the initial framing of preliminary questions, drawing from her considerable commissioning experience across 'mainstream' and independent operations within the publishing industry and as a research participant. The preliminary or main questions create a 'scaffolding' (Rubin and Rubin 1995: 150) or framework in which to explore how participants perceived their commissioning role, to assess and evaluate their editing and publishing experience and to identify what factors and conditions determined publishing outcomes. A key question required participants to identify one to five book titles across their publishing lists as books that were seen to reflect or construct a wider culture and to explain the significance of these choices (see Appendix A, Question 9). These book titles were included for further discussion in two key questions in follow-up interviews, designed to probe more in-depth discussion about the commissioning process and the cultural production of particular books (see Appendix B, Questions 7 and 8). The purpose

of follow-up questions was to achieve in-depth responses 'by pursuing themes that are discovered, elaborating the context of answers and exploring the implications of what has been said' (Rubin and Rubin 1995: 151). In this study, follow-up interviews extended initial responses and enabled interviewees adequate time to reflect on the answers they gave in preliminary interviews. Additional questions were subsequently formulated and included with regard to distinctions between the commissioning role of the editor and publisher; the editor and publisher as cultural gatekeeper; the impact of literary agents on the in-house commissioning role; personal and professional definitions of success and the opportunity for feedback on the research project. An additional data gathering method was the inclusion of a diagrammatical model of the organisation of a publishing company (Figure 3). This general model was intended 'as a guide only' for editors/publishers to use in the preparation of their own publishing models, representing the internal organisational and operational structure of their publishing house and how they positioned themselves within that structure. These publishing models are reproduced and the data are analysed in Chapter Three.

For the purpose of this study, I was unable to actively engage with most editors and publishers on-site as a 'participant observer' (Curtain 1997; Coser *et al*. 1982; Lane and Booth 1980) and most of my interviews were not face-to-face. Prevailing personal circumstances and the geographical location of publishing houses, including their distance from each other across Australia, were significant factors that largely precluded what would have been my preferred option. I was able to engage in eleven face-to-face interviews in Melbourne with six interviewees and this mutually enhanced perceptions and observations. Over half of the editors and publishers who agreed to participate were previously known to me as the researcher. This actually served as an icebreaker and assisted me in 'visualising the interviewee' during telephone interviews. My earlier experiences in fulfilling a requirement of my graduate diploma in publishing as a 'participant observer' in the field in 1997 offered a window of opportunity. This experience provided useful in-house insight into the organisational diversity of Australian publishing and the dynamics of the individuals who work within it. This field work took the form of three publishing placements, the first, supervised by Jonathan Roper, the electronic publisher with Reed Educational (Port Melbourne), the second, supervised by Jackie Yowell, a consultant publisher with Allen & Unwin (Melbourne office) and the third, supervised by Rhonda Black, consultant publisher with Hale & Iremonger (Sydney). During these placements I took field notes and have since referred to them when thinking about the approach to my research for this thesis.

In summary, 37 interviews were completed for the present study. There was informal and occasional follow-up with some participants, where more information or further

clarification was required. The individuals who participated in my research and the publishing houses they have worked for were identified in the preliminary interview. All interviews were recorded. The duration of preliminary and follow-up interviews varied from 90 minutes to two hours. All interviews were transcribed by the researcher and data were subsequently analysed for inclusion in the thesis. Each participant received a first draft of the write-up of data analysis, where their interview material was included, for further comment. All feedback and written comments from editors and publishers who participated in my research were taken into account when writing up the final draft of the thesis.

The interviews in this study reflect the individual values, assumptions, beliefs and attitudes of editors and publishers in response to social, political, economic and technological change within the publishing industry and wider culture. Interview data were analysed to contribute to an understanding of why and how individuals go about the business of commissioning, in the negotiation and development of Australian cultural content. The intersection of editors' and publishers' voices offered a publishing industry narrative, across a diverse range of opinions and insights, into a recent and contemporary book commissioning (acquisitions) environment in Australia.

Research Sample

Australian publishing and publishing culture has mostly identified with somewhere else in the world. The publishing industry in Australia is small and regional within a world market context, constituting a few large, multinational publishing companies that, between them, dominate the market, including Random House, Penguin Books, HarperCollins and Pan Macmillan, and a far greater number of small independent publishers. This study reflects the very real difference in market size of the Australian publishing industry, significantly departing from the much larger sample sizes used in the Coser *et al.* study and Lane and Booth's study. For reasons of size and scale, it is possible to obtain a relatively accurate picture of book commissioning in Australia from a much smaller publishing sample. In this study, the criterion for selection of publishing houses was not a 'number crunching' exercise. In contrast to the studies mentioned above, I have included a much smaller number of editors and publishers who mostly commission and acquire within small publishing operations. Instead of measuring 'the big picture', that is, the size of the publishing operation, how many books are published and the annual turnover (although some quantitative data is included), this study explores the cultural contribution of independent book publishers, particularly through the books they commission. While this study is smaller, in many respects, it is more representative and inclusive. To fully understand

publishing in Australia and how it works, the researcher must cover a lot of ground, accessing publishing operations across the largest single island continent in the world. The few big publishers are clustered in the outer urban metropolitan areas of Sydney and Melbourne, while many small publishers operate from remote and regional areas, considerably distanced from the eastern seaboard. The diverse sample of publishing houses included in this study are concentrated in urban settings or scattered in regional and remote areas.

The selection of editors, publishers and publishing houses for this study are largely representative of an independent publishing culture. Given the disproportionate industry and media focus on multinational publishers in Australia, this approach was a deliberate research strategy in redressing this bias and imbalance. Other more pragmatic factors affecting selection were the availability (and willingness) of editors/publishers to participate and individual receptivity to my research project. While most editors and publishers I approached agreed to participate, some said no and others could not, for various reasons, fully participate. This was mostly to do with time constraints and their focus being elsewhere, for example, Laurin McKinnon was in the process of closing down BlackWattle Press. Laurin consented to the preliminary interview and some of this material has been included in a section that discusses the cultural production of gay and lesbian literature in Chapter Five.

The research sample in this study focuses almost exclusively on the interests of small, Australian-owned publishing companies, with the exception of Allen & Unwin, a large independent company, and Penguin Books, a large multinational conglomerate. Penguin Books has been included because four research participants commissioned a broad list of Australian content during their time with Penguin, including Bruce Sims, Jackie Yowell, Susan Hawthorne and Sophie Cunningham (McPhee Gribble/Penguin) and their combined work has significantly increased general reader awareness of Australian authors and Australian content. It is interesting to note that all of these publishers are currently working within independent companies and this has been a conscious and informed decision on their part. During the course of research and thesis production, several publishing houses were downsized during restructuring, one was sold, two started up and one went to the wall.[5] Individuals who were interviewed also embraced major changes in their publishing lives. Sally Milner sold her publishing company but continues her involvement as a company director and occasional contributor to the Sally Milner list. Jocelynne Scutt has relocated from Melbourne to a government position in Tasmania and due to her professional commitments her Artemis publishing program is currently on hold. Jackie Yowell returned to university to study anthropology and continues to commission non-fiction for Allen & Unwin. Craig Munro took a year's sabbatical leave from the University of Queensland Press to co-edit the third volume of the *History of the Book in Australia*. Hale & Iremonger

underwent a company restructure. Senior editor Heather Cam left the company and Sylvia Hale returned to work on a full-time basis with Hale & Iremonger publisher Bert Hingley. Sophie Cunningham reduced her working hours at Allen & Unwin in Sydney in order to write her first novel and relocated to Melbourne where she is currently based. She continues to commission and publish fiction and non-fiction on a part-time basis, working from Allen & Unwin's Melbourne office. Bruce Sims left Magabala Books and established his own Melbourne-based trade imprint, Bruce Sims Books. Josie Douglas completed her editorial training at IAD Press in Alice Springs and was appointed publisher. Margaret Ruhfus left Magabala Books in Broome and is now publications manager with GreenWords and Images in Canberra. Rachel Bin Salleh also left Magabala Books and the publishing house has undergone restructuring. Laurin McKinnon closed down BlackWattle Press in Sydney, after twelve years of promoting and publishing gay and lesbian writing in Australia.

Sample Design

While the systematic sample in Coser *et al.* includes only social science editors in non-trade houses and a random sample of editors in trade houses (1982: 377), my research includes a broad sample of editors and publishers, including one social sciences publisher. For reasons given in Chapters Three to Six, this study addresses the differences between independent and multinational publishing, large and small publishing operations and types of publishing, for example, the differences between academic/scholarly (non-fiction) and literary trade (fiction) publishing.

Editors and publishers who agreed to be interviewed for this study were my primary source. This was the indicator that pointed to which publishing houses and publishing lists would be included in the research sample. The other significant factor in the selective choice of editors and publishers was my own knowledge of and interest in thirteen of the 20 respondents. Through this industry knowledge I was able to access a diverse sample of individuals and publishing houses between 1998–2000. The Australian Publishing Association's (APA) annual *Directory of Members* was a useful secondary source for checking publishing company details with regard to staff positions and types of works published. Historically, many small Australian presses have not been members of the APA because of their operational size and publishing output. In the most recent issue of the *Directory* (2000–2001), all but four of the publishing houses included in this study are current APA members. Because the focus of this study is qualitative cultural research, the number of books published each year and the size of the publishing house did not significantly influence the research sample. Some quantitative statistical data is included in Chapter Three which analyses organisational structure and publishing culture and this data is also tabled in

Appendix D. While other publishing studies include additional interviews with agents, reviewers, booksellers and authors to contextualise publishing within a wider literary environment, this research sample primarily focuses on the in-house anecdotal experiences of Australian editors and publishers.

Data Collection and Analysis

Because those who commission books are not social scientists, the methodological approach adopted by other publishing researchers in the codification and analyses of interview data was not considered appropriate for this study (Coser *et al.* 1982: 128, 379). Rather than taking a reductive, 'number crunching' approach by focusing on quantifying data, a qualitative approach has been taken to both the interview process and data analysis. The interview data were collected mostly between 1998–99 with some additional interviews in 2001.

The substantive extent of qualitative interview data restricted the inclusion of verbatim transcripts in the body of the thesis or in appendices. Additional interview material extracted from this study has been included in a paper presented at the annual La Trobe University English Department postgraduate conference, 'On Solid Ground: Knowledge/Narratives/Negotiations' (Brown 1999); my essay, 'Cultural Production: Commissioning Books in Contemporary Australia' in *Australian Literary Studies in the 21st Century*, the published proceedings of the 2000 Association for the Study of Australian Literature conference (Brown 2001: 21–9); in an essay commissioned for a forthcoming collection of essays by postgraduate students and academics, *Between Commerce and Culture: Contemporary Book Publishing in Australia* (Carter and Galligan, forthcoming); and in the third volume of *A History of the Book in Australia: 1946–2000* (Munro and Sheahan-Bright, forthcoming, 2004).

Conclusion

While the literature that constitutes book history and book culture in Australia is expanding, there is still a great deal of research and writing to be undertaken on publishing history and publishing culture in Australia. Very little has been written on the cultural history of a local book publishing industry and this is still very much the case today, although some historical surveys have been written on small press publishing in Australia and the development of book publishing in Australia. What is also absent from the literature is work that provides a broad and integrated overview of recent and contemporary book publishing culture and practice in Australia. To my knowledge, a sustained and comprehensive cultural study of book commissioning

and book acquisitions in Australia has not been attempted to date. An examination of commissioning and acquisitions, as these roles relate to issues of identity, representation, institutionalisation and power in book publishing culture, is thus long overdue.

While major quantitative research has measured statistical data on economic trends in the publishing industry, there is a need for more qualitative industry and scholarly studies on cultural aspects of Australian book publishing, particularly with a focus on individuals and particular publishing companies. Historically Australian publishing has shared some commonalities with other English-language based publishing industries. These include former British colonies such as New Zealand, Canada and even South Africa and India. The US-based and UK-based studies cited in the literature are included in my study because they are useful in contextualising differences in organisational structure and publishing culture. Interview-based empirical studies recognise the value of industry narrative and interviews have also been cited in journal articles, book chapters and dissertations on aspects of book publishing culture in Australia. But book-length histories and cultural studies that focus on particular Australian publishing companies are thin on the ground, and in-depth qualitative and quantitative research, focusing on commissioning editors and publishers and their company lists is significantly lacking. It is hoped that the research undertaken in this thesis will make an original and contemporary contribution towards redressing some of these gaps.

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1 At the time that Arms's Report was completed in 1997, virtually no editing training was taking place inside Australian publishing houses with the exception of Text Publishing and Lonely Planet, and no trainee editors were being taken on, with the exception of Indigenous trainees, one placed with Magabala Books and one with IAD Press.

2 While the Australia Council has expanded its funding reach and influence into traditional in-house areas in book publishing, such as assistance to book publishers for editing writers, it continues to dole out public funds to multinational publishers with Australian publishing programs. A recent example in 2001 was an indiscriminatory sizeable grant of $20,500, under its Strategic Partnerships category, to Penguin Books towards a program of intensive editorial support to ten emerging Australian writers of literary fiction and non-fiction.

3 *Is That You, Ruthie?* by Ruth Hegarty, published by the University of Queensland Press in 1999.

4 Random House had also been aggressively acquiring other imprints and publishing houses, including Reed Books, Chatto, Bodley Head, Cape, the Hogarth Press, Hutchinson Century and Ebury Press in England as well as Knopf and Pantheon in the United States. All of these companies are now subsumed into Bertelsmann. Random House bought only part of Reed Australia's general list, not the entire company. The more prestigious children's list was sold off to Hodder Headline Australia.

5 Hale & Iremonger and Magabala Books underwent restructuring and there were staff reductions while this took place; Sally Milner sold Sally Milner Books but remained a company director; Bruce Sims started up his own independent publishing imprint, Bruce Sims Books, and Jane Covernton and Sue Williams established Working Title Press; BlackWattle Press closed down and Sybylla Feminist Press is currently under structural review.

CHAPTER TWO

Colonising Culture: Book Publishing and Commissioning History

Introduction

In this chapter, the colonisation of Australian book culture by British and North American book publishing markets, and the subsequent globalisation of the book publishing industry in Australia as elsewhere, provides an overarching framework and contextualises book publishing and book commissioning history. While commercial incentives have always driven book publishing, any examination of book commissioning must explore the cultural forces that influence and determine local book publishing programs and the critical role that individual editors and publishers play in originating and acquiring content.

Australian book publishing has historically reflected shifting patterns of colonisation, territorial and trade agreement monopolies and increasingly deregulated markets. This malleable and unpredictable publishing environment is the context in which most book commissioning takes place. The period under consideration in this study, from the 1970s to the 1990s, spans three decades of rapid social, political, economic and technological change across the dynamic field that constitutes Australian book publishing. Hilary McPhee refers to the late 1960s in Australia as a time when 'there were books waiting to be commissioned about the shift in the social and political climate' (McPhee 2001: 92). This chapter introduces some of these books and the individuals who commissioned them. Fundamental shifts across public and publishing culture reflect the personal and political interests of editors and publishers, the books they commission and the publishing companies they work for. The identity stance taken by particular individuals, in their resistance to takeover by other publishing or non-publishing cultures, has created and shaped an independent book publishing culture in Australia that continues to evolve in the face of rapid and unpredictable world change. While this is the case, Gerard Windsor argues that the acquisition of small independent companies when they become viable is a cycle and that this cycle is 'more than the pattern — it is the iron law of indigenous Australian publishing' (1997: 8).

The Struggle for Independence

In the early 1970s Gordon McCarthy issued a warning that came too late:

> If Australia is to exist within a world economy which is more and more controlled by worldwide multinational corporations producing standard international products, Australian companies must know more about the rules of multinational business. This knowledge is especially important if we wish to maintain in the long term some of our smaller traditional and socially important companies, like A&R, under Australian control (1973: 7).

The corporate battle to control Angus & Robertson throughout the 1960s symbolised a serious struggle for independence in Australian publishing. A&R, described as 'the most powerful and influential force in Australian bookselling and publishing' (Munro 1995: 21), started its life as a single Sydney bookshop in 1884 and became a seven million-dollar business organisation in Australia (McCarthy 1973: 7). The Australian-owned publishing firm, torn by a struggle for control, was partly acquired by Walter Burns and passed on to Frank Packer's Consolidated Press in 1961, then to William Collins in London in the same year, then on to Gordon Barton of Ipec Insurance (an Australian-owned group) in 1970 and eventually back to Collins, as part of the media empire of Rupert Murdoch[1] (Bolton 1995: 20). The sacking in 1973 of Beatrice Davis, A&R's general editor who had been with the firm for 36 years, further flagged a fundamental shift in Australian publishing from particular personalities who had built long-standing relationships with their authors to a more impersonal, corporate managerial style. Ironically, one of Davis's final editorial assignments for A&R was Gordon McCarthy's *The Great Big Australian Takeover Book* (Barker 1991: 2).

It is hard to imagine that the largest Australian publisher by far, with a major bookselling, printing and distribution presence, became a prime casualty of the unpredictable world of corporate mergers (Munro 1995: 21; Bolton 1995: 20). In her bookselling and publishing memoirs, Joyce Nicholson, former managing director of DW Thorpe, argues that A&R was an obvious target for takeover, 'with its superb backlist, its prosperous printing company and its valuable buildings' (2000: 207). Until its acquisition in 1969 by the IPEC Group, A&R combined publishing, bookselling and printing. Under the new corporate management of Richard Walsh, the printing works, Halstead Press, was sold off, as were Angus & Robertson's chain of bookshops and its educational backlist, the latter to McGraw-Hill. In the 1970s the traditional A&R literary list was combined with a commercial list of cookbooks, travel guides and craft books. It was during this decade that A&R was outstripped by the University of Queensland Press as a publisher of poetry, and by the British

educational and trade publishers Macmillan and Thomas Nelson as a publisher of fiction (Haye 1981: 78–9).

One way of understanding the A&R story is to explore Australian culture, its ties to Britain and how a local publishing culture responded to developments in the publishing industry and the world of big money and big business. In the early 1960s, Frank Packer's Consolidated Press bought a substantial number of A&R shares for nearly half a million pounds with a view to acquiring A&R outright. When this attempt fell through Packer indicated he was planning to sell his shares to American interests. This sparked a campaign to purchase Packer's shares by a group of British publishers led by William Collins. This group was prepared to pay above market prices for the shares to keep American publishers out of the lucrative Australian book trade. The waratah and the thistle in A&R's company logo symbolised the close relationship between Australian and British literary culture and the strong Scottish ancestry of both Collins and A&R (Munro 1995: 28).

Cultural Territories and Publishing Identities

White Australian culture was British culture; the Traditional Market Agreement between British and American publishers, dividing the English-speaking world between them, firmly placed Australia within the British market, reinforcing British hegemony (Curtain 1997: ii). The imposition and overlay of British culture and its implications for a local publishing identity are evident in Hilary McPhee's recollection of her early days at Penguin (1969):

> When I was a young woman I answered an advertisement for an Editorial Assistant at Penguin […] my very first task was to remove the boomerangs from the Penguins. These looked like 1950s tea-towel motifs. They had been put there to distinguish the local books from the superior British Penguins […] they were by definition better written, better edited, designed, jacketed than we could produce out here. This was the late '60s and to even my utterly inexperienced eye, the Penguins in their frame of crossed boomerangs were an anachronism (McPhee 1996: 18–19).

Pro-British sentiment was pervasive. Generations of Australians identified with British culture and Penguin Books. While Penguin Australia was owned by its British parent company, there was a 'sense of public ownership' of Penguin in Australia, where Australian readers felt 'they were part of Penguin, because Penguin was part of their life and their education and their parents read Penguin books' (Cosgrove 1997: 12). While social, political and cultural trends were already starting to shift at a national level in the 1970s, the decisions made about what books would be published and read

by Australians were being made by Penguin in Britain. Australia was a lucrative sales territory for imported Penguin titles from the UK and elsewhere. In Australia, local book publishing programs and book publishing culture were transplanted from somewhere else in the world. The interest in and market for 'Australiana' was exploited by overseas-owned parent companies who appointed local managers and editors to take charge of their general publishing programs, saturating the Australian market with these types of books (Haye 1981: 94–5). Susan Hawthorne positions local book publishing within other cultural and book market territories, when she argues that 'Australia started out as a colony and was primarily seen as a selling ground' (Hawthorne int. 1998). Sylvia Hale argues that 'Australian publishing always ran a very poor fourth or fifth to books being published overseas. It was far cheaper to import books and flog them here than it was to generate them' (Hale int. 1998). In the early 1970s, over 80 per cent of all books sold in Australia were imported (McCarthy 1973: 10). In early 1969, there were only 27 Australian Penguin titles. Midway through that year John Hooker, the newly appointed senior editor, was briefed to expand the Australian list by commissioning original Penguin paperbacks that reflected the shift in the social and political climate in Australia, from the mid-1960s (McPhee 2001: 94, 102). McPhee recalls that 'there was much talk about re-shaping the publishing map of the world, as if it made every sense to make Penguin Australia the hub of southern hemisphere publishing and distribution' (2001: 92). Editors and publishers were still sitting tight and waiting for ideas to come to them. McPhee argues that Hooker was 'probably the most active commissioning publisher' in the early 1970s (2001: 120).[2]

Anne Summers recalls the moment in late 1971 when Hooker, who by this time had been promoted to publishing director, commissioned *Damned Whores and God's Police* (1975). Summers writes, 'I was about to become not just an author but an author with Penguin, which for me had always represented the pinnacle of publishing' (1999: 372). While Summers was 'in awe of Penguin's list of modern Australian authors', she also noted that the list did not include any 'women social commentators' and described Penguin as 'the house that had maintained a monopoly on the dissemination of ideas and of quality fiction' (1999: 372). Summers must have been referring to Penguin's quality 'off-shore' fiction. Although Penguin was publishing some Australian fiction during this decade, those who made the decisions still believed fiction wouldn't sell. In the same year that Summers' book was published, Penguin's assumption about the viability of an Australian fiction list was about to be challenged.

Hilary McPhee had started with Penguin as an editorial assistant and within two years had become its first full-time editor, before leaving the company in 1971 (Dutton 1996: 268). McPhee edited books for Melbourne University Press, Penguin

and Heinemann before she co-founded McPhee Gribble in 1975 with Di Gribble, whose background was in printing, design and production. The two company directors began by packaging books for other publishers[3] and then set about building a strong and innovative list of Australian fiction and non-fiction and a reputation that stuck with Australian authors. In 1976 two writers offered McPhee Gribble their first novels. Glen Tomasetti had already had an offer from an established publisher for *Thoroughly Decent People* but she decided to give it to McPhee Gribble on the strength of hearing McPhee launch the Outback Press poetry anthology, *Mother I'm Rooted* (1975), because she 'liked the idea of women working together to publish books' (McPhee 2001: 139). The other writer was Helen Garner, who offered *Monkey Grip*. Within the first few weeks of its release in 1977, sales in hard cover exceeded 4,000 copies for a first work of fiction (McPhee 2001: 144). Authors and content came to McPhee Gribble in unconventional ways in the late 1970s. Kathy Lette and Gabrielle Carey, calling themselves the 'Salami Sisters', arrived at the McPhee Gribble offices with 'a handwritten scrap of manuscript', 'sang their Puberty Blues song to persuade us to take them on' and were offered 'a contract on the spot' (McPhee 2001: 152). *Puberty Blues* (1979) was a phenomenal success for the authors and their publishers with huge sales on the book and film rights. Hilary McPhee and Di Gribble took the early risks in publishing Australian fiction and innovative writing by Australian women. They built an impressive list and other publishers followed their lead in the 1980s.[4] Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, McPhee Gribble was part of the wider cultural politics of 'redefinition and inclusion' in Australia, in which local 'artists and writers were heralding the changes' (McPhee 2001: 42).[5]

National Identity and Australian Independence

Australian book publishing experienced significant growth with the consolidation of local publishing programs during the 1970s. This development was buoyed up by the climate of cultural nationalism, the unprecedented interest in all aspects of Australian life. Another significant development that boosted a local writing and publishing community in the early to mid-1970s was the support extended to the creative arts by the Whitlam Labor government, promoting a vibrant literary culture in Australia. The establishment of the Literature Board in 1973, replacing the Commonwealth Literary Fund, expanded the role of the Arts Council and a new phase of government patronage of the arts began (Shapcott 1988: 8). The Literature Board fostered Australian writing by subsidising viable local publishing programs and offering support to creative writers. Publishers were subsidised for the publication of particular books that were considered culturally significant but not commercially viable by the Literature Board, establishing 'government as cultural gatekeeper and

arbiter' through the publishing subsidy scheme. Government assistance to publishers who were registered with the Literature Board and eligible for funding involved the direct transfer of public funds, in some cases, to large and profitable multinational corporations (McLean 2000: 1). It can be argued that government intervention or support, in providing publishers with the funds to commission particular authors and content for their publishing programs, is a way of indirectly influencing publishing outcomes as to who and what gets published. This is a form of arms-length commissioning (see Table One for my interpretation of the comparative ways in which Australian book publishers and the Australia Council commission content; and Table Two for the variable commissioning fees allocated to Australian book publishers between 1996 and 2000). This injection of finance provides commercial and cultural incentive for publishers to take the risk and expand into fiction, poetry, drama and experimental writing and this is a significant strategy in growing book publishing lists with more Australian content. The foundation laid in the 1970s by the Australian Prime Minister Gough Whitlam, in his support for creative writing and publishing, encouraged independent publishers to expand their publishing programs:

> *We wanted to do books on Australian art and poetry, literature* […] *we received some block grants from Australia Council and I was happy to go along and publish as much poetry as we could* […] *we thought that if we put a lot of effort into the physical appearance and presentation of these books we would in fact create a market that attracted book collectors as well as poetry lovers* (Hale int. 1998).

This was also a period of highs and lows in Australian politics. The rise and fall of the Whitlam Labor government from 1972 to 1975 captured the imaginations and interest of Australian publishers with an eye to 'where the country had been, where it was going and the forces that had influenced the current body politic' (Hale int. 1999). Elizabeth Weiss refers to the 1970s as 'a particular moment in history' when Australian society 'looked at history more experientially' and 'there were more in-depth studies of the experiences of particular groups' that contributed to 'a kind of downplaying of big picture history' (Weiss int. 1998).

Heightened nationalism in Australia led to the exploration of national identity and social and cultural history. In the late 1960s, John Iremonger was the production manager with the Australian National University Press (ANU). He became a ministerial adviser to the Whitlam Labor government in 1973 before the political coup in 1975. Iremonger then talent scouted as 'a roving editor' (Iremonger int. 1988) for Frank Thompson at the University of Queensland Press, before working with Sylvia Hale and Roger Barnes when they established the independent Hale & Iremonger in 1976. Hale and Barnes provided the working capital for the publishing

TABLE ONE

Australian Book Publishing and the Australia Council: Book Commissioning Roles, 1996–2000[1]

AUSTRALIAN PUBLISHING	AUSTRALIA COUNCIL
Publishing House	**Literature Board/Fund** 7 members + peer advisors (Board/Fund membership comprises individuals from the publishing industry and often someone with business experience.)
Publishing Committee In-house representatives from: • Publishing/Editorial • Sales • Marketing • Finance • Other.	**Process** Applications from Australian book publishers are received and tabled at Literature Board/Fund meetings for discussion and assessment. Applications are pooled and graded against the selection criteria: • literary merit • new resources, opportunities and benefits for Australian writers • evidence that the project is achievable and of a high production standard • appropriate level of commission fees must be paid to writers. The Literature Board/Fund assumes there is a pre-existing contract with the author before a grant is approved. Often this is a publishing contract subject to funding (Nicola Evans pers. comm. 2001).
Process Publishing proposals are tabled and discussed at the publishing committee meeting by representatives from different in-house areas who argue the cultural and commercial merits of the proposal. The final decision is weighed up against editorial, marketing, sales and finance considerations within the publishing house. A simpler process can be one or more individuals deciding to publish, weighing up the same considerations and by-passing any committees. Publisher offers an up-front fee or advance to the writer and a contract is signed.	

1 1996–2000 covers the period in which the Australia Council offered a commissioning fee to Australian book publishers.

TABLE TWO

Literature Board/Fund Commissions, 1996–2000[1]

Period	Publisher	Amount ($)	Purpose
1996–97	Hyland House	11,500	1 work of poetry
	Text Publishing	40,000	4 works of fiction and non-fiction
	UQP	5,000	1 work of biography
	Wakefield Press	15,000	1 work of non-fiction
1997–98	Hodder Headline	45,000	2 works of non-fiction
	UQP	13,800	1 non-fiction picture book
1998–99	Penguin Books	18,000	1 work of Australian art
	Wakefield Press	17,000	1 work of non-fiction
1999–2000	UNSW Press	14,000	New series, non-fiction reportage

Source: the Australia Council, Literature Fund Assessment Reports, 1996–2000.

1 These figures show the variable commissioning fees allocated by the Australia Council to Australian book publishers between 1996–2000. In particular, note the amount granted to the multinational, Hodder Headline, for only two works of Australian non-fiction in 1997–98 and also the large amount granted to the independent, Hyland House, for a single work of poetry.

program from their printing business, Southwood Press, and Iremonger set about commissioning an original Australian list. When Iremonger left the company in 1979 to build an Australian list for Allen & Unwin's Patrick Gallagher, Sylvia Hale embarked on 'a publishing career that was thrust upon me rather than one of my own making' (Hale int. 1998). Hale broadened Iremonger's focus on Australian history and politics to include books on Australian literature, art, poetry, labor history, urban studies and women's studies. The company 'operated out of a corner' at Southwood Press and was later relocated to separate business premises (Hale int. 1998). Southwood Press printed Hale & Iremonger's list as well as other publishers' titles, including Allen & Unwin, Sydney University Press, ANU Press and the University of Queensland Press (Hale int. 1998). Hale and Barnes's mutual interest in contemporary politics and their involvement with the Australian Labor Party had been the incentive to set up Southwood Press, in 1966. With the Labor History Society, Hale & Iremonger jointly published many out-of-print labor histories. An 'important financial mainstay' was the acquisition of sponsored books, whereby part of the publishing costs were underwritten by the other party who effectively subsidised Hale & Iremonger's publishing program. Books sponsored in this way were steady sellers and led to the publication of a range of valuable urban and social histories, documenting a lively and robust social, political and cultural urban history in Sydney. Government grants and sponsored books helped to subsidise the more risky books in Hale & Iremonger's publishing program (Hale int. 1998).

Australian Feminism and Women in Publishing

Women were on the social, political and publishing agenda by 1975, the year designated by the United Nations as International Women's Year. Many women editors with publishing flair either left multinational companies with branches in Australia or established their own companies, amongst them, Hilary McPhee with Di Gribble (McPhee Gribble 1975), Sally Milner (Greenhouse 1975, Sally Milner Publishing 1989), Anne O'Donovan (Anne O'Donovan 1978) and Sylvia Hale (Hale & Iremonger 1976). The publication of a body of emerging Australian feminist literature by mainstream and independent publishers coincided with International Women's Year. Some of these texts were Penguin's *Damned Whores and God's Police* (1975), the classic study of women in Australian society; *The Other Half* (1975), a Penguin anthology on the theme of women in Australian society; the pseudonymous *All That False Instruction* (1975), arguably the first lesbian feminist novel in Australia, published by Angus & Robertson[6] and the Outback Press poetry anthology, *Mother I'm Rooted* (1975). A significant first in reference texts, the *Who's Who of Australian Women* (1982) was made possible with the assistance of

a grant from a special fund established by the Whitlam Labor government in 1975 to support women's projects in International Women's Year (Lofthouse 1982: 12). The compilation of the *Who's Who of Australian Women* was in response to a perceived gap in this range of reference books in Australia. The 1974 edition of the *Who's Who in Australia*, for example, included data on approximately 430 women out of a total of 10,000 entries. The political activism of the Women's Liberation Movement in Australia led to the development of reading lists for colleges of advanced education and universities. The first Women's Studies course appeared in 1973 and by the 1980s the construction and commodification of women's writing as a genre and women's studies as a discipline, ensured an increased representation of women writers in mainstream publishing markets (Sybylla 1982: ix; Brown and Hawthorne 2001). By the early 1980s publishers were establishing Women's Studies lists. John Iremonger was establishing a formidable Women's Studies list for Allen & Unwin 'supported by a strong women's movement network with initial and subsequent sales' (Moran int. with Iremonger 1988). The first feminist texts to be published in Australia in the 1970s were 'new' social and political histories, including Beverly Kingston's *My Wife, My Daughter and Poor Mary Ann* (1975), Miriam Dixon's *The Real Matilda* (1976), Edna Ryan's *Gentle Invaders* (1975) and Anne Summer's *Damned Whores and God's Police* (1975). These were followed by published collections resulting from the bringing together of academics and labour movement women at the first Women and Labour Conference held in 1978, such as Elizabeth Windschuttle *et al. Women, Class and History* (1980) and Margaret Bevedge *et al. Worth Her Salt* (1982) (Lake 1999: 251). Literary anthologies complemented these texts including the Victorian Women 150 anthology *Difference: Writings by Women* (1985), the *Penguin Anthology of Australian Women Poets* (1986), the Women's Redress Press anthology of Australian women poets, *Up From Below* (1987) and the *Penguin Anthology of Australian Women's Writing* (1988).

Sisters Publishing was an enterprising mail-order feminist book club and book publisher established in 1979. Sisters negotiated a sales and distribution arrangement with other book publishers, promoting and selling their titles to finance Sister's own list. Five company directors, Hilary McPhee, Diana Gribble, Sally Milner, Joyce Nicholson and Anne O'Donovan, appointed an advisory editorial board of 35 women to read manuscripts and assess a wide range of particular publishing projects. Between 1979 and 1983, Sisters originated an Australian list of poetry, fiction, non-fiction, biography and short stories. The Sisters' directors established a publishing program of particular interest to Australian feminists to redress 'areas badly served by current Australian publishing' (*Sisters News 1* 1979). Sally Milner observes, 'Sisters was really an attempt to catch those books which were not going to be published by larger houses and interestingly, not even by us, in our own

publishing companies. We saw the need to have another list altogether' (Milner int. 1999). While women's fiction and poetry were considered to be risky and unviable projects, Sisters commissioned and acquired an eclectic range of women poets, supplementing their original fiction and non-fiction titles with buy-ins. Between 1979 and 1983 in Australia, mainstream publishers had sufficiently closed the market gap for feminist books:

> *After a few years we could see that it would no longer work because the culture had changed. Other publishers had decided that those sorts of books were viable for them and were publishing them into their normal distribution networks. I think this was catching up with something. The reality is that larger publishers are often slower to respond to trends. The nature of the beast is that it's bigger and slower* (Milner int. 1999).

The Sisters' directors continued to commission and acquire broad lists within their own publishing companies. In 1978, Anne O'Donovan, who had worked for Jacaranda Press in Australia and the UK, was a managing editor with Penguin in Australia and left to establish her own independent publishing house, which she describes as 'the antithesis of corporate publishing' (O'Donovan 1997: 14). O'Donovan's list represented the quality end of the mass market and a steady seller was *The Age Good Food Guide*, first published in 1980. O'Donovan's personal interest in women's health led to the commissioning of *The Billings Method*, the bestselling self-help guide to natural fertility control. *The Billings Method*, which has never gone out of print, was auctioned in 1980 by a New York agent acting on O'Donovan's behalf and the title was acquired by Random House. O'Donovan has successfully identified niches in the market and handed over her distribution to Penguin in the early 1980s. O'Donovan remarked of her arrangement with Penguin that her books 'slot very comfortably into the Penguin list and complement some of their Australian publications' (1997: 17).

Sally Milner was the managing editor with Lansdowne in the early 1970s. Lansdowne, owned by the Paul Hamlyn group, published a 'very mass market non-fiction trade list' including 'bird books by world-renowned experts now and dollar flat books sold in newsagents' (Milner int. 1999). During a time of multinational upheaval within the company, Milner jettisoned her job with Lansdowne and freelanced before selling her home to establish her own independent, Greenhouse Publishing, in 1975. Milner accepted commissions as a book packager for other publishers to raise sufficient working capital to finance her own publishing program (Moran int. with Milner 1988). Her first two books were published out of her interests in alternative education for children and community childcare. An early acquisition for Greenhouse (in association with marketing consultants and publicists Peter Steer and Lynn Thorburn), was an unsolicited manuscript offered by an unknown author that became *Mastering*

Rubik's Cube (1980) at the height of the Australian craze for this puzzle game. The book was republished overseas and became a bestseller in the UK and the USA. Julie Stafford's *Taste of Life for Children* (1986) was Milner's first cookbook and became a steady seller for Greenhouse.

Milner discussed the social and political issues that were the source for book ideas from the 1970s to the 1980s:

> *Australian publishing was very small in those days. It wasn't that hard to come up with interesting ideas. The ideas were coming from both authors and publishers. There was also a whole political reform going on — the era of Gough Whitlam, the end of the Vietnam War and the Women's Movement — they were really interesting issue-driven times and a lot of wonderful publishing was associated with that. The Sisters list was interesting because we were all involved in the Women's Movement and I also published women's writing at Greenhouse which was directly related to that Movement. Publishing ideas come from your own environment, from the way you live your own life* (Milner int. 1999).

Milner took publishing risks with the Greenhouse list, commissioning the first book on *Australian Women Artists, 1840–1940* (Burke 1980) and *Australian Women Photographers, 1840–1960* (Hall and Mather 1986). Milner also commissioned the fascinating record of independent women's filmmaking in Australia, *Don't Shoot Darling!* (1987), published with the assistance of the Women's Film Fund of the Australian Film Commission. Permission was granted for the publisher to borrow the title for this book from an exhibition featuring popular female culture of the 1950s, organised as part of the Melbourne Women 150 New Moods Festival in 1985:

> *I remember* Don't Shoot Darling! *We had some real problems in trying to get this book to look anywhere near financially viable. It's an internal process in a small company. You weigh it up and make judgements based on a whole lot of reasons — perhaps just because you like a book and think it's worth publishing.* […] *I suppose we have had to fight for these books. I always thought there was a market there. You know it's there because the people are there. It may not be a market that has been tapped before or published to. It's a very personal thing and publishers work in a certain way to make books happen* (Milner int. 1999).

Greenhouse became an imprint of Australian Consolidated Press in 1987. Milner stayed on and expanded the list for Greenhouse while also publishing books for ACP's home library list. This arrangement didn't suit Milner, who remarked, 'Having been independent for so long I just found it very difficult to work for a very large corporation … I wasn't right in the centre of things. Also the way I work

you shape the books a lot and I couldn't do any of that. I was just signing contracts basically. Shaping a list is terribly important' (Milner int. 1999). The Greenhouse list was acquired by Penguin in 1988. Milner regained her independence in 1989, when she established Sally Milner Publishing, specialising in craft, self-help and lifestyle books.

The book trade was dominated by male publishing executives, who had mostly managed or worked for British firms. It wasn't until the late 1970s, when Brian Johns succeeded John Hooker as publishing director, that the Penguin list was broadened to include quality Australian fiction. The early to late 1970s was a good time for women editors to leave Penguin and some of the best did. Anne O'Donovan was encouraged by Hooker to leave Jacaranda and join the publishing team at Penguin as an editor and later, as managing editor. It was O'Donovan who edited *Damned Whores and God's Police* (Summers 1996: 106). She described the masculine culture at Penguin at that time as 'very much a male, macho environment. All of the directors, all of the bosses, were men and there was a very clubby sort of atmosphere' (1997: 13–14). Hilary McPhee recalls that Brian Johns 'called women "boilers" and somehow got away with it' (McPhee 2001: 165). While women's employment share constituted two-thirds of the publishing industry's workforce, by the late 1970s and early 1980s in the United States, men continued to dominate management and marketing positions, the highest paid areas in the industry (Reskin and Roos 1990: 93, 95; Caplette 1982: 157), and this was also the case in Australia.

Publishing Takeovers and Local Lists

Although books that originated in Australia increased their market share in the 1980s, they were less likely to have been produced by independent Australian publishers than they would have been 20 years earlier (Brett 1988: 461). This was largely due to the fact that many commercially viable Australian independents had been acquired by off-shore interests. These developments must be understood within the context of a worldwide phenomenon in the concentration of ownership and market economies that also ensured the disappearance of many British and American independent houses (Brett 1988: 461–3). The British or American colonisation of local publishing programs significantly impacted on the quantity, quality and types of books published in Australia. Many American-owned companies published almost exclusively for the educational market in Australia while British-owned companies exploited both the general and educational book markets (Haye 1981: 33–4). Jackie Yowell recalled her early publishing experiences in the early 1970s in Australia with the British educational publisher, Longman, describing the company's capacity to 'expand as

the Empire expanded with offices in all the colonies that spoke English', publishing for 'the biggest market, the educational market' (Yowell int. 1998).

Active lobbying of the Australian Book Publishers Association by independent Australian-owned publishers led to the formation of the first Australian Independent Publishers Association in 1975. Initial controversy over the inclusion of two of the biggest Australian publishers, Angus & Robertson and Rigby, was resolved when a compromise was reached that AIPA membership should be open to all Australian-owned publishers whose head offices were located in Australia (Denholm 1979: 4). British and American publishing houses historically dominated the membership of the Australian Book Publishers Association. Australian-owned, independent publishers wanted a different voice from multinational members (Curtain 1993a: 112; Haye 1981: 50). Sally Milner, a founding member of the working committee who chaired the inaugural independent publisher's meeting, remarked that 'there was a genuine sense of publishing with small publishers, setting some sort of scene, doing something exciting and thumbing your nose at the establishment' (Sally Milner int. 1999). For the first time, small publishers were represented on Australian stands at international book fairs. In 1976 the Association changed its name to the Independent Publishers of Australia. The IPA was involved in the international Sydney Small Press Book Fair in 1976 and had nearly 100 members by 1979 (Denholm 1991: 3). While independent publishers continue to lobby the Australian Book Publishers Association, Milner doesn't believe that small publishers have ever been adequately represented as members:

> *Having been the President of the ABPA and having been on the board for a long time, I know exactly how they work.* […] *What I thought was important was that small publishers should have a voice within the industry at large. As a group I thought we could make them listen but I don't feel that small publishers really ever had a voice within the ABPA* (Milner int. 1999).

The most prolific publishers were mostly Australian-owned. The combined publishing in the 1970s of the three largest Australian-owned publishers — Rigby, the Horwitz Group and Angus & Robertson — represented more than half of the combined output of the top ten publishing companies. This trend was reversed in the next group of much smaller publishers, where only one out of ten companies was Australian-owned. Nevertheless, Australian-owned publishers still had the edge across the top 20 publishers operating throughout the 1970s, producing just over half of the total output of books (Haye 1981: 45). These statistics would seem to counteract the Australian publishing narratives of the day, which portrayed publishing as dominated by overseas-owned companies with local publishing programs.

When the British-owned publisher Octopus tried to gain control of Rigby in 1977, spirited lobbying by the IPA resulted in the federal government's Foreign Investment

Review Board blocking the takeover bid (Haye 1981: 36; Denholm 1991: 3). A foreign takeover of Rigby, the largest Australian publishing house, would have threatened the output of Australian books (over 420 titles by 1977), the livelihood of authors, editors, designers and other staff (Rigby was the largest employer of editorial staff in the Australian book industry) and the livelihood of other smaller publishers who packaged Australian books for the company. Until 1978, Rigby had also distributed the trade backlist of Angus & Robertson and distributed Octopus Books. Its large trade stocklist included numerous picture books on Australia's scenic wonders, outback-type books, regional titles such as its historical sketchbooks, popular titles on cooking, fishing and sport, field guides and popular art books. Fifty-five per cent of Rigby's list was devoted to hardcover Australiana. Its educational list was fed by Lloyd O'Neil and its art book publishing by Currey, O'Neil (Haye 1981: 76–7). While all of the arguments to retain Rigby as a wholly Australian-owned company were well founded, Rigby was taken over by James Hardie Industries in 1979 (Denholm 1991: 4).[7]

After 1977, DW Thorpe's publishing statistics showed the growth of publishers' lists, including not only all books published by Australian publishers in Australia but in addition a considerable number of books appearing under Australian imprints that were not originated in Australia (Haye 1981: 46). This was a consequence of the termination of the British Traditional Market Agreement and the signing of the Consent Decree in 1976. This came about through a suit filed by the US Justice Department which stipulated that traditional 'Commonwealth' rights could no longer be licensed automatically, which resulted in a separate Australian and New Zealand territorial rights agreement (Haye 1981: 46; Randall 1998: 117). These changes freed Australian publishers (including the local branch offices of British publishers), to negotiate independently for Australian rights as a separate package (Haye 1981: 47). American publishers were also able to sell Australian rights independently of Commonwealth rights, which the British Traditional Market Agreement had previously prevented them from doing. The advantages were that many publishers were able to boost their local lists by producing special Australian editions of overseas-originated titles under their own imprints and to enter co-publishing arrangements with overseas publishers. Australian editions were added to the print run of the overseas publishing purchaser and both editions were published simultaneously (Nicholson 1979: 26–8). Former UQP fiction editor D'Arcy Randall argues that the real opportunity offered by the Consent Decree was that local literary publishers could publish Australian writers in Australia. This meant that bestselling Australian fiction writers like Peter Carey, who were represented in other territories by other publishers, could be exclusively published in Australia by the University of Queensland Press (1998: 118). This breaking away from British Commonwealth

control led to the consolidation and expansion of local publishing programs by Australian and American book publishers across educational, children's, fiction and general book lists in the late 1970s (Haye 1981: 48).

British-owned publishers also continued to publish local lists. Judith Brett argues that the most dramatic example of an overseas-owned company's commitment to a local publishing program was the expansion of Penguin's Australian list from 1979 to 1987 (1988: 462).

Mapping the Culture and Children's Publishing

The appointment of Brian Johns as publishing director of Penguin in 1979 was an unconventional one. Johns had no book publishing experience and had worked as a political journalist with *The Australian* and the *Sydney Morning Herald* and in the Prime Minister's Department under Whitlam and Malcolm Fraser (Johns 1996: 144–6). Johns's interest in Australian nationalism and cultural life and his involvement in a range of social issues, gave him insight into social policy as a former 'career public servant' (Johns 1996: 146) and this served him well at Penguin. Johns's 'publishing agenda' was to 'map the culture and experience of working class Australians' (Yowell int. 1999) through the commissioning and reissuing of working-class fiction and non-fiction for Penguin, such as John Morrison's *Stories of the Waterfront* (1984), Wendy Lowenstein's *Weevils in the Flour*[8] (1978), Janet McCalman's *Struggletown* (1984) and Criena Rohan's *The Delinquents* (1986) and *Down by the Dockside*[9] (1984). Yowell spoke of 'a very conscious publishing policy' under Johns at Penguin that recognised and attempted to redress 'one big gap' by building a list that 'put up a picture of Australia to Australians — a picture of themselves' (Yowell int. 1999).

Jackie Yowell, who had worked as an editor with the British educational publisher Longman in Kenya in 1968, continued with Longman in Australia in the early 1970s. She then worked for different companies including Cheshire, Wren and finally with the Australian-owned publisher, Lansdowne. When Lansdowne became an imprint of the Paul Hamlyn/Rigby group in 1978, Yowell remarked, 'I got tired of being bought up with the company so I freelanced and studied for a few years' (Yowell int. 1998). In 1979, Yowell was appointed to Penguin as a senior editor and describes this publishing period, from the late 1970s to the late 1980s, as 'the most exciting times' (Yowell int. 1998). Yowell's first editing assignment was Gough Whitlam's *The Truth of the Matter*, commissioned by Penguin's managing director, Trevor Glover. *The Truth of the Matter* (1979) was Whitlam's riposte to Sir John Kerr's *Matters for Judgement*, published a few months earlier, and the book was given absolute priority by Penguin. With a production team working around the clock,

the manuscript was typeset as it was being written and published in three weeks (1996: 140). Because of their immediacy, topical value and commercial edge, were issue-based books were fast-tracked and at Penguin 'resources were pulled off everything else in order to rush them out' (Yowell int. 1998). Yowell describes her experiences of editing Whitlam's book as 'unforgettable for a young lefty editor who had idolised this great if suddenly fallen hero, particularly for the breakthrough he'd achieved in Australia's cultural consciousness' (1996: 140).

Johns and Yowell broadened the Penguin Australian list, covering 'a lot of books about social, political and economic issues that built a strong list that went into schools' (Yowell int. 1998). This publishing combination worked because Johns had a journalistic publishing style which 'seized upon ideas and issues that were newspaper stories writ large' and Yowell had 'a publishing sense of what would make a book work' (Yowell int. 1998). The Penguin adult fiction and non-fiction list were issue-based books that were snapshots of the times. While Johns formally commissioned the books, Yowell often convinced Johns and other publishing colleagues to take them on.[10] Yowell and Sims discussed particular titles that were published by Penguin in the late 1970s and 1980s:

> *Brian commissioned this book and I took it through. The idea behind* The Boat People *(1979) was to show these people as more than just people flooding our shores. To try and get a sense of the story behind what had happened to them. Then it was more complex than we could capture. The term 'boat people' got a kind of metaphorical meaning — in a way this was against the spirit of the book. The 'boat people' now has a connotation of loads of people washed up on our shores that we have to do something with. This is unfortunate because the whole idea then was to try and give a sense of where those people were coming from* (Yowell int. 1998).
>
> Annie's Coming Out *(1980) was about a girl with cerebral palsy who was institutionalised. Brian Johns originally commissioned it. Although I was initially against the idea I became very committed to the project. It became one of my books and I saw it through. There was a huge range of issues involved, including the criteria for institutionalisation, the responsibility of parents versus the responsibility of the state, expert opinion versus people on the ground in hands-on situations and the whole issue of the author's credibility. There was a court case at the time and there were claims that the author was a complete fraud. All this was going on as the book was being developed.* […] *If I had had enough doubt I could have flattened it. It was my publisher's sense that the issues were worth airing and it was the time to do it* (Yowell int. 1998).

> *The third book in Elizabeth Jolley's trilogy* [The George's Wife (1993)] *was one that needed a lot of encouragement to get it written. There were some tough negotiations through her agent to acquire them. Elizabeth's agent didn't always give her books to Penguin. Some went to UQP. The question was whether the third book in the trilogy would be completed. Helen Daniel played a part in this encouragement also. We believed the trilogy should be finished. There was another book there clearly. She says she wouldn't have gone on if it hadn't been for our encouragement. I suspect she would have anyway* (Sims int. 1999).
>
> *At the time, the whole Chamberlain business was certainly on. Brian Johns took the view that it didn't have to be a quickie book like a few others that were around at that time. The theory was that the Penguin book would be the best take on the Chamberlain case and, as it turned out, it was.* Evil Angels *(1985) was commissioned in 1980 and was published five years later. The editor on that book was Jane Arms. In an editorial sense I came into it quite late in the piece and this was more to do with libel than anything else. There were ongoing discussions throughout the book's development and I was a part of those discussions* (Sims int. 1999).

The expansion of the Penguin children's list in the early 1980s through the commissioning by Kay Ronai of a wide range of Australian writers and artists was due to Brian Johns and Jackie Yowell's interest and encouragement (Ronai 1996: 210). This expansion was riding high on the huge sales success of the Practical Puffin series, authored and packaged by McPhee Gribble for Penguin, selling over a million copies by 1980 (Haye 1981: 39). Other children's publishers and lists were taking off around this time. Jane Covernton and Sue Williams had worked for Rigby during the 1970s 'in the days when four hundred people worked there' (Williams 1999: 14). They both left Rigby in 1980 after its takeover and co-founded the independent children's publisher, Omnibus, in the following year. Covernton and Williams built an award-winning original children's list, starting with their first picture book, *One Woolly Wombat* (1982). In the early 1980s Covernton notes that 'there were early signs of an Australian picture book industry' but it wasn't until the late 1980s 'that the bigger publishing companies swung in and got behind children's books because it was the last outpost' (Covernton int. 1999). Covernton identified and isolated children's publishing as 'the last area to be expanded in a big way. There was in fact a market for a purely Australian book but they also had to be able to sell in England and America — it had to be a worldwide book and I think this was very difficult' (Covernton int. 1999). Both Covernton and Williams started out, like Hilary McPhee and Diane Gribble and many other publishers before them, as book packagers for other companies. This created the cash flow to create their own picture books that led the field in contemporary Australian children's literature. Omnibus

took the risk and made the commitment to Australian content from the outset. The original manuscript for the phenomenal success story, *Possum Magic* (1983), first came to Omnibus as *Hush the Invisible Mouse* who travelled the world. This plot was developed by Covernton and Williams so that Hush became a possum that travelled Australia and the book became an outstanding local and international bestseller. The Omnibus directors built a solid reputation throughout the 1980s as publishers of quality Australian children's picture books.

UQP began publishing young adult fiction under the guidance of Barbara Ker Wilson from 1986 (Munro 1998: 24) and enjoyed successful sales from James Moloney's award-winning teenage novels. In 1993, UQP also established a new children's list, the Storybridge series, bridging the gap between books for younger children and teenage fiction; in 1994, they combined forces with the regional Queensland children's picture-book publisher, Jam Roll Press. Children's books constituted almost half of UQP's publishing output (Munro 1998: 30). Other long term independent players, like Fremantle Arts Centre Press, also began publishing for children in the 1990s. In 1991 FACP established the Sandcastle picture book imprint for early readers and in 1994 developed a fiction list aimed at middle to upper primary school readers (Coffey pers. comm. 2001). Allen & Unwin's successful children's imprint, Little Ark, was established in 1986 and had expanded by 1997 to include board books for babies, hardback picture books, paperbacks called 'paperarks', fiction for young adults and the true stories series.[11]

Social Histories and Identity Shifts

In his social and historical survey of small press publishing in Australia covering two publishing periods (the early and late 1970s to late 1980s), Michael Denholm argues that independent publishers made a significant contribution to the diversification of Australian publishing programs by 'encouraging the revival of the short story, stimulating the publishing of new writing, disseminating the works of Australian playwrights, publishing local histories, advancing the publication of poetry and publishing finely produced works of literature and history' (1979: 15). Taking the early risks with Australian children's picture books should be added to Denholm's list of independent publishing credits.

Like Hale & Iremonger, other independent publishers in Australia demonstrated an early commitment to social histories. Fremantle Arts Centre Press was established in 1976. Two years later, Ray Coffey joined the organisation as managing editor and publisher. The press was interested in regional social histories in Western Australia and Coffey referred to 'the snowballing effects' of two events that boosted

the publishing program. The state's Sesquicentenary in 1979 and the Australian Bicentenary in 1988 created a 'period of real growth in the market for books on the experience of ordinary people' (Coffey int. 1998). Through Sesquicentenary funds, Fremantle Arts Centre Press was able to establish a community publishing project, modelled on a similar project in Hackney in London, publishing the experiences of ordinary working people. This enabled Coffey to work with people who weren't professional writers but had a story to tell, 'to develop their texts and teach them how to write and to work with them editorially into publication' (Coffey int.1998). Through the community publishing project, Fremantle Arts Centre Press provided 'sensitivity and strong editing' in working with 'second and third generation Italian, Greek and Portuguese Australians who were validating their parents' stories' (Coffey int. 1998).

During this time Fremantle Arts Centre Press acquired 'lots of manuscripts about ordinary people who were starting to tell their lives for their families' (Coffey int. 1998). This is how Albert Facey's *A Fortunate Life* came to be published in 1980. The 'partly handwritten and typed manuscript' was dropped in to the publisher 'accompanied by a note from Facey's daughter saying that the family had found it and wanted a few copies for the grandchildren' (Coffey int. 1999). The manuscript was assessed for publication and Coffey contracted the work on the understanding that it would require substantive editing (Coffey int. 1999). In 1979, Wendy Jenkins, poet-in-residence with the Fremantle Arts Centre, began working with Coffey as a reader and editor and, in the same year, the Press published a volume of Jenkin's poetry (Coffey pers. comm. 2001). Jenkins worked with Coffey on the substantive editing and copy editing of *A Fortunate Life*. The initial print run of Facey's book sold out within days of its release and Fremantle Arts Centre Press could not keep up with the demand for reprints. Brian Johns offered to buy the rights but instead the publisher leased them to Penguin (Coffey int. 1999). The paperback rights and subsequent volume rights were licensed to Penguin and arguably, *A Fortunate Life*, adapted for film, television and stage, became 'Penguin's best-selling Australian title' (Brett 1988: 462). Coffey attributes the wide interest in *A Fortunate Life* to a period in Australian history in which 'the cultural and historical icons like Gallipoli were being revisited' (Coffey int. 1998). Fremantle Arts Centre Press had 'a particular view' and approach in identifying possible books and ideas for books that also fitted the 'political, social and cultural agenda in particular areas' (Coffey int. 1999). Coffey's early interest and concerns related to voices on the margins and aspects of Australian culture that were underrepresented and this led to 'seeking out authors who might be able to represent those ideas' (Coffey int. 1999). Independent publishers were discovering and developing writers from the margins and 'moving that kind of text and experience into the mainstream' (Coffey int. 1998). Fremantle Arts Centre Press published its first collaborative work, *Gularabulu*, by Aboriginal

author Paddy Roe with academic editor Stephen Muecke in 1983, followed by Paddy Roe, Kim Benterrak and Stephen Muecke's collaborative work, *Reading the Country*, published in the following year. In the same year that *Gularabulu* was published, McPhee Gribble acquired a 'part autobiography, part testament and part philosophical statement' (McPhee 2001: 215), which became Elsie Roughsey Labumore's[12] *An Aboriginal Mother Tells of the Old and the New*, published in 1984. The handwritten manuscript, brought to the publisher by two researchers from the Aboriginal Data Archive at the University of Queensland, had survived a cyclone on Mornington Island, passing through the hands of several custodians until it reached the Archive (McPhee 2001: 215). McPhee Gribble then acquired *Daughters of the Dreaming* (1983), Diane Bell's ethnographic study of Warlpiri women's lives.[13] In 1985, Penguin published Hyllus Maris and Sonia Borg's *Women of the Sun*, an Indigenous novel based on the Australian Broadcasting Corporation's four-part television series of the same name, and in 1987 Fremantle Arts Centre Press commissioned and published Sally Morgan's autobiographical *My Place*. The publisher, Ray Coffey, attributed the success of *My Place* at this time to 'a growing interest in women's experience, migrant experience and Aboriginal experience' (Coffey int. 1998).

Before Yowell left Penguin in 1987 she worked with commissioning editor Susan Hawthorne, who describes the publishing period in the late 1980s as 'a time when there was a huge interest in what was going on in Australian writing, in feminist writing, in migrant and multicultural writing, the beginning of an interest in Aboriginal writing and a general upsurge of trying to do things that were a bit different in publishing' (Hawthorne int. 1998). *Difference* (1985), compiled and edited by Hawthorne, was one of the earliest collections of writing focusing on class, migration from Europe and Asia, Aboriginal writing and storytelling, lesbian writing and writing about disability. Hawthorne also commissioned new writers and voices from the margins in a strong fiction and non-fiction list while she was at Penguin. Hawthorne became the editor entrusted with the development of the Penguin Australian Women's Library with the PAWL series editor, Dale Spender, from 1988. Over four years, this series published four original titles and reissued eight volumes, including literary criticism, novels, essays and history. Hawthorne shared the Barbara Ramsden award for editorial excellence in Australian publishing with Yowell in 1987. Hawthorne attributed the ease with which she moved into the commissioning role during her first year at Penguin to Jackie Yowell and Brian Johns' encouragement 'because they recognised that this was something I could do' (Hawthorne int. 1998).

Judith Rodriguez was appointed Penguin's poetry editor in 1990 and a significant number of feminist poets were published, continuing Susan Hawthorne's initiatives with the poetry list. Hawthorne left Penguin in 1991 to establish the independent feminist press, Spinifex, with her publishing partner, Renate Klein. The name

'Spinifex' was part of a successful marketing campaign on the part of the publishers to promote the company as 'drought and recession resistant' (Hawthorne int. 1998). While resisting the push to grow too fast in the early to mid-1990s, Hawthorne and Klein built an impressive list of fiction, non-fiction and poetry, with a focus on local and export markets for their books, entering into co-publishing negotiations with other international feminist publishers.

One of the first national anthologies of multicultural writing, *Joseph's Coat*, was acquired and published by Hale & Iremonger in the early 1980s. In the mid- to late 1980s, Sylvia Hale commissioned and published two early coming out anthologies of gay and lesbian writing, *Being Different* (1986) and *Words from the Same Heart* (1988). Attitudes were starting to change with regard to homosexual law reform. The state laws in New South Wales changed in 1984, with agitation and lobbying by gay community activists and the introduction of a private member's bill by Neville Wran (Willett 2000: 164). While Hale refers to 'publishing opportunism' in the identification of an emerging gay and lesbian market, she also spoke of the cultural significance in 'reflecting and affirming the increasing legitimacy of different lifestyles and different experiences' (Hale int. 1999) through the identification and publication of gay and lesbian writers in Australia in the 1980s. Hale's interest and concern with local politics and issues of social justice were reflected in Hale & Iremonger's list through books that 'contributed to a certain tolerance, an opening up of a broader range of debate' (Iremonger int. 1998). Sylvia Hale acquired and published *Angry Women*, an anthology of Australian women's writing, including fiction, diaries, letters, biography, drama, poetry, views/perspectives and songs and lyrics, in 1989. Aspects of multiculturalism in Australia were being taken up and expanded by other publishers throughout this decade and this included the experience of migrant women, embodied in important collections of multicultural women's writing, including UQP's *Beyond the Echo* (Gunew and Mayhuddin 1988) and the Women's Redress Press bilingual collection, *Give Me Strength: Forza e coraggio* (Kahan-Guidi and Weiss 1989), reaching 'a new audience of women readers and generating much debate about issues like domestic violence in the Italian community' (Weiss int. 1998). The University of Queensland Press published Rosa Cappiello's *Oh Lucky Country* (1984), a favourite Women's Studies text, Angelika Fremd's *Heartland* (1989) and three anthologies of multicultural writing (Randall 1998: 124–5).

Bicentennial Texts and Aboriginal Publishing

The late 1980s was the social, political and historic occasion of the Australian Bicentenary (1988). Renamed 'Invasion Day' by Indigenous activists, the Bicentenary provided the national backdrop for a push to mainstream Aboriginal and Torres Strait

Islander writing. This is evident across large and small publishers' lists, including Penguin, Allen & Unwin, Fremantle Arts Centre Press and the University of Queensland Press — a social and market trend that continues. The 1980s are generally seen as the decade of Aboriginal autobiography and biography (Phillips 1997: 40). The experience of Aboriginal women was also validated and mainstreamed through the commissioning of autobiographical narratives that spoke powerfully and directly about their lives and histories (Grossman 1998a: 171). In 1987, the first independent Aboriginal Australian publishing house, Magabala Books, was established through a grant from the Australian Bicentennial Authority's National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Program, with a further grant from the Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Cultural Centre. In the same year Magabala published Glenyse Ward's autobiographical novel, *Wandering Girl* (1987) — one of the first stolen generation texts — and the British feminist publisher, Virago, subsequently acquired the rights to Ward's book in the United Kingdom. In 1987, Fremantle Arts Centre Press acquired Sally Morgan's *My Place*, a text published to controversial and critical acclaim that was listed by schools, guaranteeing its educational sales success and a wide readership. Since its original launch in July 1987, *My Place* has passed the half-million milestone in sales. To celebrate this success Fremantle Arts Centre Press released a special hard-case gift edition in November 1999 (Laurie 1999: 20). Australian publishers were also commissioned to produce 'Landmark' publications in 1987 for the Australian Bicentenary (McPhee 2001: 231). Ruby Langford's *Don't Take Your Love To Town* (1988), articulating an Aboriginal politics of identity, was commissioned by Susan Hawthorne and published by Penguin. Many publishers were able to produce Bicentennial texts through direct assistance. For example, Penguin published the paperback edition of Elizabeth Jolley's *Sugar Mother* (1988) and Fremantle Arts Centre Press published the hardback edition (Sims int. 1999). McPhee Gribble received two Bicentennial commissions and published Diane Bell's *Generations: Grandmothers, Mothers and Daughters* (1987), a social history and photographic record with an analysis of how stories and objects are passed between generations of women and the *Australopedia*, a historical and geographical encyclopaedia with projects for children (McPhee 2001: 231). Other Bicentennial texts included the Penguin anthology *Inside Black Australia* (1988), edited by Kevin Gilbert, and the UQP monograph, *Black Words, White Page* (1989), Adam Shoemaker's analysis of Aboriginal literature from 1929–88, followed by *Paperbark*, a UQP collection of black Australian writings, edited by Jack Davis *et al.* (1990). In 1989, UQP initiated the annual David Unaipon Award[14] for unpublished Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander writers and launched the new Black Australian writers series, supervised by UQP senior editor Sue Abbey. Unaipon entries were externally assessed by three Aboriginal judges and the winner was guaranteed publication in the following year. Other highly commended entries and additional works were

also recommended for publication by Sue Abbey and Sandra Phillips. The $5,000 Queensland government prize purse for the winner provided 'an incentive to pursue publication among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities' (Galligan 1998: 224). Many Indigenous writers were first introduced to UQP through the Unaipon award and were subsequently commissioned for future works of fiction and non-fiction (Munro int. 1999). The Australian writer Bruce Pascoe began to publish emerging Aboriginal writers in the 1990s under his imprint, Pascoe Publishing, and dedicated some issues of *Australian Short Stories* to Aboriginal writing. Other publishers also acquired Aboriginal writers through different influences. Children's publisher Jane Covernton enrolled in Aboriginal Studies in 1987 in South Australia, and then 'made a very conscious effort to find Aboriginal stories and poems' (Covernton int. 1999). This led to the publication of *Spirit Song* (1993), a collection of contemporary poems by 35 Aboriginal poets, and Ian Abdulla's first collection of autobiographical paintings, *As I Grew Older* (1993), followed by a second autobiographical work *Tucker* (1994), Abdulla's childhood stories of growing up along the Murray River in the 1950s. Allen & Unwin began to build an Aboriginal Studies list for a local and international market. Other mainstream publishing houses, such as Penguin Books, Hyland House, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, UQP and Currency Press, were occasionally publishing Indigenous works. Magabala Books published autobiography, oral and community social history, poetry, drama, fiction and traditional illustrated stories for children. Aboriginal Studies Press's publishing program contributed to the definition and recognition of Aboriginal Studies as an academic discipline, and significantly made Aboriginal Studies more accessible to a wider, general market (Poland 2001: ms. 8).[15] IAD Press dedicate their list to the maintenance of language and culture of Central Australian Aboriginal communities.

Popular Bestsellers and Commissioning from the Margins

In the mid- to late 1980s, Craig Munro commissioned two memoirs by Hugh Lunn. *Vietnam: A Reporter's War* (1985) was Lunn's journalistic memoirs of a year spent as a Reuters correspondent in Vietnam, and *Over the Top with Jim* (1989) was a popular childhood memoir, serialised by ABC radio. UQP rode on the crest of a publishing wave with phenomenal sales from *Over the Top with Jim* and Peter Carey's *Oscar and Lucinda* (1988), selling around half a million copies between them (Munro int. 1999). In expansive mode, UQP employed extra staff and doubled their publishing output, although this euphoria didn't last (Munro int. 1999). The 1980s was the decade of commissioning writing from the margins. Women's writing, feminist writing, Aboriginal writing and multicultural women's writing were mainstreamed. Gay and lesbian writers were anthologised, in response to mainstream publishers identifying

a market and recognising a readership for gay and lesbian writing (Jones 1998: 7). Early gay and lesbian fiction was first published in Australia by Angus & Robertson, Hale & Iremonger, Penguin and the University of Queensland Press. The building of a long, slow mainstream publishing wave followed.[16] The first collection of Australian gay and lesbian writing, *Edge City on Two Different Plans*, was independently published in 1983 by inVersions, a Sydney-based collective of lesbian and gay writers (Hurley 1997: 9). Before multinational publishers shifted to publishing substantially more local gay and lesbian fiction, mainstream independents were publishing early fiction and non-fiction (Hurley 1997: 9).[17]

Laurin McKinnon and Jill Jones co-founded the Sydney-based gay and lesbian BlackWattle Press in 1988, which began with a literary magazine, *cargo*, published in alternate gay male and lesbian editions. Jill Jones remarks that this was 'indicative of how carefully at times the new late 1980s coalitionism had to tread' (1998: 6). When Jones ceased her formal involvement with BlackWattle to focus on her own writing, it was the entrepreneurial activity and teamwork of McKinnon and Gary Dunne that was 'testimony to hard work and commitment to a community rather than primarily focusing on the bottom line' in building a strong, local gay and lesbian list of contemporary gay fiction (Jones 1998: 7). BlackWattle took the independent risk in publishing gay and lesbian fiction in Australia before other mainstream publishing houses showed an increased interest in the 1990s, in particular, Random House. Others were Allen & Unwin, Currency Press, HarperCollins, Hyland House, Pan Macmillan, Melbourne University Press, Penguin, Reed and Transworld (Hurley 1997: 8). Perhaps BlackWattle is best known for anthologising contemporary gay male and lesbian fiction in collections like *Fruit* (1994), edited by Gary Dunne and *Falling for Grace* (1993), edited by Roberta Snow and Jill Taylor, and the satirical fiction in Phillip Scott's *One Dead Diva* (1995). Sophie Cunningham was instrumental in publishing gay and lesbian fiction at McPhee Gribble in the 1980s, such as Tim Conigrave's *Holding the Man* (1985) and Fiona McGregor's *Au Pair* (1993) and also played a central role in commissioning Tony Ayres' edited collection, *A String of Pearls: Stories about Cross Dressing* (1996), published by Allen & Unwin. At Penguin, Bruce Sims, Susan Hawthorne and Jackie Yowell published a diverse range of gay and lesbian writers in the 1980s. In 1986, the feminist publishing collective Sybylla Press acquired 'a bulky bundle wrapped in brown paper' which was 'delivered like a baby left on a doorstep' (Ravenscroft 2001: 74), which became Mary Fallon's award-winning *Working Hot*, published in 1989. This work of fiction was written in verse narrative and monologue, playscript and opera libretto, and self-consciously engaged with newly emerging feminist discourses that were 'in tension with British and US feminisms that had so profoundly shaped Australian feminisms to this point' (Ravenscroft 2001: 75). Just over a decade after its publication, the rights to republish *Working Hot* were acquired

by Random House under its Vintage imprint. Gay and lesbian writing appeared across independent and mainstream publishing lists in the 1990s, including Harper Collins, Spinifex,[18] Pan Macmillan, Allen & Unwin, Random House, Reed, Penguin and Transworld. The independent Australian drama publisher, Currency Press, published the collection *Australian Gay and Lesbian Plays* (1996) and posthumously published Tim Conigrave's play, *Thieving Boy/Like Stars in My Hands* (1997). Spinifex Press has anthologised Indigenous women writers from Australia and New Zealand in collections including *Australia for Women: Travel and Culture* (1994) and *Car Maintenance, Explosives and Love and Other Contemporary Lesbian Writings* (1996). Indigenous women from across the Pacific have a voice in Zohl dé Ishtar's *Daughters of the Pacific* (1994), and more recently, Hawthorne and Klein published *Kick the Tin* (2001), Doris Kartinyeri's important memoir of the Stolen Generation.

The 1990s and the New World Order

Government funding was reduced and publishers' lists became selectively market-driven or were significantly culled during the world recession in the early 1990s. Covernton and Williams had built a solid reputation as publishers of quality, Australian children's books, publishing a lot of early poetry anthologies for children. When the demand for poetry dropped off in the late 1980s, the Omnibus list was broadened to include the short novel series, the Shorts, 'aimed at eleven to fourteen-year-old reluctant readers' and the Solos, 'which began as a fiction series for six-year-olds who were just starting to read' (Covernton int. 1999).[19] In the 1990s Covernton and Williams 'were trying to drive the list and come up with different niches and formats' (Covernton int. 1999) and their highly coveted list was finally acquired by the American mass market children's publisher, Ashton Scholastic (now Scholastic Australia). Covernton and Williams stayed on as publishers with the Omnibus imprint until the end of 1996. A non-competition clause in their contract with Scholastic prevented them from publishing any new books between 1997–98 so they packaged picture books for Omnibus before branching out on their own again. In 1999, under their new publishing imprint Working Title Press, specialising in publishing picture books for the 0–7 age group, Covernton and Williams published *Little Bat, Whose Tail Is That?* and the *ABC of Australian Animals*, negotiating a distribution agreement for their new list with Scholastic Australia.

When the independent McPhee Gribble was absorbed in 1989, publisher Hilary McPhee and editor Sophie Cunningham went with the imprint to Penguin Books. McPhee left Penguin in 1992 and Cunningham was appointed McPhee Gribble publisher, at a time when 'the recession publishers were only publishing standard authors and no one was taking any risks' (Cunningham int. 1998). In taking an

oppositional stance to 'safe, boring and predictable publishing', which ran counter to her own publishing agenda of 'trying to build writers from the ground up', Cunningham commissioned an original list of McPhee Gribble/Penguin writers from her own generation (Cunningham int. 1998) and continued to publish new writers across fiction and non-fiction lists when she became a trade publisher with Allen & Unwin in 1994. Bruce Sims, who was responsible for Penguin's adult fiction and non-fiction lists after Jackie Yowell's departure in 1987, took on the responsibility for the McPhee Gribble imprint in 1994. In the following year, after thirteen years with Penguin, Sims took up a new and challenging position as publications manager with Magabala Books. Cunningham made a choice to leave Penguin for Allen & Unwin because of the latter company's strong commitment to Australian content. This was a conscious move on Cunningham's part 'to avoid issues of colonisation and globalisation' and to 'continue to focus on local content' (Cunningham int. 1998). Four years before Cunningham made her move, the local branch of Allen & Unwin organised a management buy-out from its UK parent company and became Australian-owned. In the same year that Allen & Unwin gained its independence in 1990, following the acquisition of Allen & Unwin in Britain by HarperCollins, Elizabeth Weiss was appointed academic commissioning editor.

Weiss was also a member of the Sydney-based women's publishing co-operative Redress Press from 1988. The co-operative published a broad list of Australian women's writing, including works of fiction, anthologies of poetry and short fiction and non-fiction. Redress also published bilingual collections reflecting European migration and migrant women's experience in Australia. These included *Give Me Strength: Forza e coraggio* (1989) and *Who Do You Think You Are? Second Generation Immigration Women in Australia* (1992). Women's Redress Press also published Faith Bandler's *Welou, My Brother* (1984).[20] Tantrum Press, a regional South Australian feminist publishing collective, solicited and acquired short fiction, poetry and drama anthologies, producing early feminist multimedia performance works from 1987 to 1994. In the early 1990s, the press commissioned *Around the Edge*, a bi-cultural collection of original plays by South Australian women playwrights, published in 1992. Two of the plays — *Ricordi* and *The Olive Tree* — were published in multiple Italian dialects with English translation by Diana Cavuoto and Elizabeth Mansutti (Cavuoto 1992: 61–62). Tantrum Press and Women's Redress Press both ceased operation in 1994. Jocelynne Scutt's Melbourne-based imprint, Artemis Publishing, acquired and distributed Redress Press non-fiction titles (Scutt 1998: 479) and Vitalstatistix, the Australian feminist theatre company based in South Australia, acquired and took over the promotion and distribution of Tantrum Press drama works. Through social and political commitment and publishing innovation, in crossing over and sometimes working between mainstream and non-mainstream publishing structures,

various individuals such as Sims, Hawthorne, Cunningham and Weiss acquired content that broke new ground in Australian publishing.

The cultural imperialism of the 1980s reflected multinational takeovers of local publishing companies in Australia, compounding the problem of too many imported books in a small local marketplace. This was followed in the 1990s by the arrival of what Laurie Muller refers to as the 'New World' order (1993: 12), that is, the globalisation of publishing and distribution structures. Laurie Muller, UQP's general manager, warned that the multinational mindset that regarded Australia as a book export destination, rather than a source, would not be broken naturally (1993: 13). In the early to mid-1990s, the National Book Council was instrumental in organising two national book summits to enable those in the book industry to come together to discuss the status of the book, authors and the publishing industry in the new world of interactive and multimedia technologies (Shapcott and Kirby 1993, 1995). In a keynote address to the first summit, former Penguin publishing director Brian Johns identified globalisation as 'the current password of trade policy and market analysis' and forecast that 'satellites and attendant technological changes were ushering in an era of borderless markets' (Johns 1993: 3–4). He referred to the ease with which authors were moving 'through branches of the media' in Britain and the US, 'supplementing their incomes by working in film, television and print' (Johns 1993: 3–5). Johns argued that publishers would have to adapt to new markets and cultural challenges and that if publishing was to be a stakeholder in the global race and set the pace then it would have to move into wider branches of the media. The Australian Book Publishers Association (ABPA) put its weight behind these ideas, promoting investment possibilities and the new market potential of multimedia publishing platforms (Blackwell 1993: 40). This market opportunism was reflected in 1995, when the ABPA executive reached a decision on behalf of its members, to drop 'Book' from its name.

In 1995–96, the Australia Council underwent a major structural reorganisation with Hilary McPhee as Council Chair. As part of the Council's reorganisation, a new Commissions category was introduced. The purpose of this category was to create new resources for Australian writing by encouraging public and private sector organisations to commission creative writers to create new work (Australia Council 2000: 67). Australian book publishers were eligible to apply 'to commission creative writers to produce new work, particularly in CD-ROM, multimedia and other digital and electronic delivery systems' (Stevens forthcoming: 23–4). All applicants were required to contribute at least 30 per cent of the cost of commissioning the project from sources other than the Australia Council (Australia Council 2000: 67). For the funding period 1996–2000, the Australian book publishers registered with the Literature Board/Fund (including multinational book publishers with Australian

publishing programs) could apply for annual commissioning fees for new Australian writing and annual book publishing grants, with some publishers receiving sizeable amounts in both categories. While it has been mostly Australian-owned publishers who have received Australia Council funding, many small, local presses in Australia have largely been unsuccessful in applying for conservative grants to build their publishing programs, while some large multinationals, including Hodder Headline, Penguin Books and HarperCollins, consistently apply for and receive substantial public funding through the Australia Council (see Tables Two and Three for variations in funding allocated to Australian independent and multinational book publishers).

While the focus of the first national book summit was the imminence of new book technologies and how the industry would adapt, Laurie Muller delivered a thoughtful publishing obituary on the demise of Australian independents, including McPhee Gribble, Omnibus, Greenhouse and the O'Neil group (1993: 13). Muller's analysis of the key elements of ownership of Australian book publishing in the early 1990s identified authors as 'all Australian and many in number' and publishers as 'virtually all foreign-owned and few in number' (1993: 12–13). Muller forecast an Australian publishing territory by the year 2000, in which multimedia publishing would be a key feature and the main players would be multinational, global publishers. Popular culture would be imported, particularly from America, and the market share for Australian-originated books would be powerfully disadvantaged by global market forces opposing local production. Australian readers would be reading more imported books because of the limited choice of Australian titles. There would be further casualties amongst independent Australian publishers and, finally, Australia would be a cultural colony of the USA and the UK (Muller 1993: 13). Many of Muller's forecasts for the year 2000 were already dated by 1993. Other publishers were following these trends: for example, the publishing programs of Spinifex Publishing and Sally Milner Publishing focused from the outset in the early 1990s on the export market (Hawthorne int. 1998; Milner int. 1999). Hilary McPhee sounded a warning in the late 1990s about the identity and direction of Australian book publishing, cautioning that 'more than anything else, the globalisation of culture means Americanization' (McPhee 1999: 21).

Local Innovation: Adapting and Resisting

While many are concerned about the globalisation of Australian publishing, Jackie Yowell is more optimistic about swings and roundabouts in publishing. She believes that local publishing is an industry asset because of the strong markets in Australia for specialised local product:

TABLE THREE

Literature Board/Fund Book Publishing Grants (Presentation and/or Promotion), 1996–1999[1]

Publisher	Amount ($)			Purpose		
	1996–97	1997–98	1998–99	1996–97	1997–98	1998–99
Allen & Unwin	21,350	23,650	20,000	8 works	9 works	7 works
BlackWattle Press	9,720	3,000	nil	2 works	1 work	nil
Brandl & Schlesinger	4,278	3,000	12,000	2 works	7 works	5 works
Currency Press	25,344	13,566	23,434	14 works	10 works	11 works
Fremantle Arts Centre Press	11,784	22,500	19,500	6 works	10 works	6 works
Hale & Iremonger	4,508	10,500	16,500	2 works	6 works	6 works
HarperCollins	14,688	11,088	nil	8 works	2 works	nil
Magabala Books	13,960	4,540	3,000	3 works	2 works	1 work
Penguin Books	5,930	27,288	2,500	3 works	8 works	1 work
Random House	30,000	24,000	nil	6 works	5 works	nil
Reed Books	9,780	nil	nil	3 works	nil	nil
Spinifex Press	3,000	3,000	4,500	1 work	2 works	2 works

TABLE THREE CONTINUED

Publisher	Amount ($)			Purpose		
	1996–97	1997–98	1998–99	1996–97	1997–98	1998–99
Sybylla Press	2,000	nil	nil	1 work	nil	nil
Text Publishing	5,436	nil	17,035	1 work	nil	4 works + author tour
University of Queensland Press	23,046	13,500	49,000	7 works	10 works	13 works + 50th birthday
Wakefield Press	1,584	20,000	6,000	1 work	7 works	2 works

Source: the Australia Council, Literature Fund Assessment Reports, 1996–2000.

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1 These figures show a selective sample of Australian book publishers (not all who received funding are listed) and funding allocated by the Australia Council between 1996–2000. Note the variables in funding amounts granted to multinational and independent book publishers. For example, funding allocated to multinationals, Random House in 1996–97 and Penguin Books in 1997–98; and to independents, Text Publishing in 1998–99 and UQP, in each of the three funding periods.

Note: nil indicates that publishers either didn't apply for funding or were not funded in particular grant periods.

> *It will happen again with books I'm sure, that you'll get the mass marketing of global product and alongside that, there will be a new interest in regional and local publishing, which will always have a market in its own place* (Yowell int. 1998).

Because colonisation and competition are systemic across book publishing markets, Craig Munro argues that publishers like UQP 'have to make every book count so publishers are far more proactive in making sure that they get the sorts of books they want' and predicted that UQP would be commissioning more non-fiction in the future (Munro int. 1998). Ray Coffey believes that the current market trend towards non-fiction is 'basically reflecting what is happening elsewhere' in the world, at the expense of Australian poetry and literary fiction, genres that are positioned at 'the cutting edge of determining what's happening within the culture, reflecting it back to Australians' (Coffey int. 1998). Both Munro and Coffey are advocates for a role in which editors and publishers are consciously proactive in commissioning content that is in touch with newly evolving cultural trends. Within the context of global markets, Coffey has tended to concentrate on other cultural media, such as film and television, constructing a list that appeals to popular culture, while continuing to identify the cultural gaps that the large mainstream publishers neglect. He identifies, for example, emerging non-fiction markets in contemporary juvenile justice and crime and publishes books that offer 'an intelligent and alternative counter view to knee-jerk media responses' such as Quentin Beresford and Paula Omaji's *Rights of Passage* (1996) (Coffey int. 1998). Susan Hawthorne and Renate Klein expanded their export reach in the mid-1990s, developing and exploiting web-based marketing interfaces. With the support and assistance of Publish Australia, a network of independent Australian publishers formed in 1994 to implement innovative marketing and distribution strategies, services and products for their members, Spinifex developed a web-site. Hawthorne and Klein specialised in feminist cyberculture from the mid-1990s, beginning with Dale Spender's groundbreaking work on the development of print and electronic culture, *Nattering on the Net: Women, Power and Cyberspace* (1995). Like Spinifex, Elizabeth Weiss discussed her influence in developing a more international focus for academic writing in the humanities and social sciences in Australia by 'working with authors to help them to find a way of writing which will appeal to international readers but also be relevant and appeal to a local readership' (Weiss int. 1998). Weiss argues that in the past, Australian academic presses have mostly focused on an Australian market 'because the Australian arms of overseas presses weren't particularly trying to export Australian books overseas, whereas I've been actively doing just that' (Weiss int. 1998). Weiss has exploited the global market by identifying not only authors and texts but also suitable overseas publishers who have entered into co-publication arrangements with Allen & Unwin, sharing joint

print runs and selling books in overseas territories. At the local level, Weiss argues that book publishers 'need to know about the world and we need to know about ourselves in the context of the world' while continuing to make a commitment to publishing Australian material through 'repositioning the role of the academic publisher as part of the intellectual culture of this country' (Weiss int. 1998).

Co-publication arrangements have worked successfully with other publishers in Australia. Spinifex Press has built an impressive list of co-publications with other progressive mainstream, independent and feminist publishers around the world, as well as successfully selling translation rights on numerous titles. The Aboriginal publishing house, IAD Press, co-published *Skins*, a contemporary anthology of short stories by Indigenous writers and artists from First Nation territories, including Australia, in 2000. This is a joint publishing and distribution initiative between two Indigenous publishers, Kegedonce Press in Canada and Jukurrpa Books/IAD Press in Australia. This is the first Indigenous global publishing project undertaken by IAD Press. The publication is an attempt to 'introduce Aboriginal writers to the writing of others outside their own nations as well as bringing them to the attention of a more general readership' (Douglas 2000: ix).

Conclusion

This chapter offers a selective overview of book publishing and commissioning history over the past 30 years in Australia. It is not possible within the parameters of this study to offer a more comprehensive commissioning history. A powerful combination of social, political, economic and technological events has played a fundamental role in shaping Australian publishing programs over time. So too, have individuals and publishing partners, in acquiring and commissioning particular authors and texts and building strong and innovative cultural lists. The pattern of colonisation that begins in this chapter, with the takeover of Angus & Robertson and Halstead Press in the early 1970s, followed by Rigby in the late 1970s, continues with more of the same throughout the 1980s into the 1990s. The British and American colonisation and subsequent globalisation of local book publishing, combined with the reactive and responsive push by independent publishers in their resistance to takeover and definition, represents the dynamic and unstable field that constitutes Australian publishing. The rise of multinational conglomerates changed the nature of local publishing in Australia, with an increasing emphasis towards non-fiction, mass market and predictable publishing, reducing the amount of creative, high-risk taking publishing ventures (Korporaal 1990: 41). Moran argues that the role of the smaller, independent presses was to conduct a kind of cultural research and development for larger publishing companies (1990: 131). This role continues today and is demonstrated

in the ways in which proactive individuals in publishing inhabit and cross over real or imagined boundaries, discovering new commissioning fields and publishing territories.

Without state and federal government assistance, many independent publishers would probably not have taken so many risks, although it would seem that Australia Council funding has made very little difference to the bottom line in most publishing companies. Certainly they would not have acquired or commissioned content and/or built their Australian publishing programs in quite the same way, for example, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, the University of Queensland Press, Allen & Unwin, Magabala Books, Hale & Iremonger, Currency Press and Wakefield Press. Annual grants from the Literature Board/Fund of the Australia Council and, more importantly, the various state government arts funding bodies, have enabled the role of independent publishers, in discovering new writers and taking the publishing risks in developing and publishing first works by Australian authors, to continue. Many writers and publishers, however, criticise the lack of government funding support in Australia. More recently, prominent writers like Peter Carey have made public statements about the significant decline in Australian government support for the arts since the Whitlam era (Carey 2001: 1). The arm's-length role of the federal government in assisting particular Australian book publishers through annual book publishing grants and commissioning fees not only effectively commissions new Australian cultural content but also plays a hand in shaping Australian publishing programs (see Tables One and Two).

The aforementioned individuals and successful partnerships in publishing also carry out groundbreaking cultural innovation in Australia, in originating independent lists that lead the way in the development and publication of new literary works and ideas. The publishing teams referred to in this chapter are Hilary McPhee and Di Gribble, Brian Johns and Jackie Yowell, Laurin McKinnon and Gary Dunne, Susan Hawthorne and Renate Klein, Ray Coffey and Wendy Jenkins, and Jane Covernton and Sue Williams. Given the frequent and often irreversible shifts in Australian publishing, it is quite remarkable that the latter three partnerships continue to successfully commission innovative Australian works.

The forces of multinational conglomerate publishing have changed the nature of local book publishing culture in significant ways. A serious consequence of the establishment of multinational publishing companies in Australia was to flood the local market with imported titles from other cultural territories, and this trend continues. This makes it more difficult for independent publishers to compete in what has always been a comparatively small book market in Australia. Craig Munro estimated the finite amount of shelf space allocated to the independent publishing sector as no more than ten to twelve per cent and maybe less (Munro int. 1998). In a show of local resistance to British and American colonisation of the Australian book trade, at a time of heightened

nationalism with the Labor government's cultural policies and the establishment of a federal arts funding body in the early 1970s, many small independent publishing companies flourished within particular economies of scale. When they reached commercial viability, however, their lists were taken over by multinational publishers for the purposes of filling the gaps in their own lists and expanding their publishing programs. The entrenched pattern is that if independent publishers' lists cannot be acquired outright, multinationals move in to control independent distribution and take a generous percentage for doing so. This pattern will not be broken unless independent publishers take a stand and refuse to enter into negotiating distribution deals with multinationals. While there are so few viable alternatives for the effective distribution of small press books this seems highly unlikely.

It would seem that no single company has been more consistently competitive in its colonisation of a local book publishing industry in Australia over the past 30 years than Penguin Books. Looking back over book publishing and acquisitions history, it can be argued that in one way or another, most roads enter and exit Penguin. In acquiring and absorbing or distributing independent publishers' lists Penguin continues to assert its strength and dominance in the marketplace. It can also be argued that by taking over various independent imprints and/or distributing independent publishers' lists, Penguin makes these books accessible to a much wider readership, while they remain in print.

In the 1990s, Penguin's position in the Australian marketplace was tested by other multinationals publishing for a general adult and young adult, fiction and non-fiction mass market, including Random House, Pan Macmillan and HarperCollins. In this highly competitive industry environment, including the more successful Australian-owned literary mainstays, such as Fremantle Arts Centre Press, the University of Queensland Press, Omnibus Books (before it was acquired by Scholastic) and more recently, independents such as Text Publishing have, in fact, served to expand Penguin's market reach, by handing over the sales and distribution of their Australian lists. John Curtain argues that publishers such as McPhee Gribble 'benefitted from distribution by the efficient Penguin sales and marketing organisation' (1993b: 44). While publishers do benefit from this arrangement, the promotion and distribution of small publishers' lists has always been problematic in Australia, and multinational publishers have continually exploited this weakness and cashed in. In the 1990s independent publishers strengthened and consolidated their position by co-operating and collaborating in national marketing and distribution strategies through Publish Australia.[21] Also, the establishment of the national independent distribution agency, the Australian Book Group (ABG), was a proactive move by independent publishers in the right direction. It is also important to reflect in hindsight that innovative and proactive distribution strategies by independent publishers have been tried before and

have come unstuck. While publishers like Spinifex Press (a more recent example) and Sally Milner Publishing (an earlier example) have resisted the urge to grow beyond their company capabilities, some of the best Australian independents have been too successful in building viable lists and have become multinational imprints and/or disappeared altogether.

The acquisition of independent publishing companies has been a prevailing feature of the Australian publishing landscape. Karen Morrison remarks that 'the history of publishing is strewn with extinct small publishing houses' in which a few companies including 'Hyland House, Hale & Iremonger, Hill of Content and Currency Press are amongst the survivors'[22] (1999:14). While Brian John's visionary and expansive publishing program at Penguin was laudable, some of the ways in which he went about broadening the list did not advance the cause of independent publishing in Australia. He offered publishing, marketing and distribution clout to independents in return for their books that would fill the gaps in his Penguin Australian list. McPhee Gribble is the classic example of what can go wrong. The negotiated co-publication arrangement between Brian Johns and Hilary McPhee and Di Gribble that began in 1983, even with the best of intentions and good will, killed off an innovative independent Australian publisher within six years, when McPhee Gribble was sold outright to Penguin in 1989. While this was an unfortunate outcome, some have questioned whether McPhee Gribble could have continued to publish in its own right for much longer without the existing co-publishing arrangement with Penguin[23] (Sims pers. comm. 2001).

Craig Munro, nevertheless, refers to the historic acquisition of companies like McPhee Gribble and Greenhouse as a tragedy. Munro regards the innovative lists of Australian independents 'as a resource in a similar kind of category to the rainforests of the Amazon. If a resource like McPhee Gribble disappears then it may take 100 years to grow a similar company, if ever' (Munro int. 1998). When I asked Munro what he thought the effects would be of no independent Australian publishing, he remarked, 'The immediate affect would not be particularly discernible. That's the real tragedy and that's why the loss of McPhee Gribble, or Greenhouse, is like losing another 10,000 acres of rainforest' (Munro int. 1998). In a more contemporary publishing context, the establishment of small, market niche publishing houses with lists dedicated to quality Australian literary works of fiction, poetry and non-fiction; regional, community-driven publishing houses with a commitment to the maintenance and survival of Aboriginal language and culture; and the continuation of independent literary mainstays in Australian publishing, continue to evolve and adapt.

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1 Angus & Robertson ultimately became an imprint of Rupert Murdoch's HarperCollins.

2 It was also Hooker who commissioned one of the first anthologies by Aboriginal writers, *Living Black*, edited by Kevin Gilbert, which won the Banjo Award for Australian Literature in 1978 (Dutton 1996: 106).

3 McPhee Gribble, who were publishing unknown Australian fiction writers from the mid-1970s, diversified by authoring and packaging children's books. Both trade publisher Sally Milner and children's book publisher Jane Covernton also packaged books to raise the sufficient working capital they needed to finance their publishing programs (Moran int. with Milner 1988; Covernton int. 1999).

4 D'Arcy Randall took over from Craig Munro as UQP's fiction editor in 1980. The McPhee Gribble list drew Randall's attention to 'an evident bias at UQP: its overwhelming emphasis at that time on male writers' (Randall 1998: 119). Randall set about redressing the gender imbalance by acquiring many new works of fiction, including Kate Grenville's collection of short fiction, *Bearded Ladies*, Marian Eldridge's *Walking the Dog*, Elizabeth Jolley's *Miss Peabody's Inheritance* and, through her publishing colleague Craig Munro, acquired Olga Masters' *The Home Girls* (Randall 1998: 119–20).

5 The evolution of McPhee Gribble, from essentially a book packager to a publisher of quality Australian fiction, would not have happened in the same way if John Hooker hadn't commissioned the Penguin Practical Puffins series of handbooks for young children. The series targeted 'independent-minded children' from seven to twelve and the first titles were published in association with McPhee Gribble in 1976 (Dutton 1996: 271). The books sold successfully into the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States and were translated for European and South American markets (McPhee 2001: 132, 134). Over one million copies eventually sold worldwide, achieving record sales for Penguin. The flow of royalties from the sales of Practical Puffins provided the start up capital for the independent, McPhee Gribble, to begin publishing (McPhee 2001: 138–9).

6 *All That False Instruction* was republished under the author's name, Kerryn Higgs, by Spinifex Press in 2001.

7 Laurie Muller joined the Adelaide-based Rigby in the early 1970s. Over the next eight years he became general manager of Rigby from Brisbane and fought two takeovers by British companies during that period. When Rigby was finally acquired by James Hardie Industries in 1979 (Denholm 1991: 4), Muller transferred to Lansdowne, an Australian independent, as chief executive for five years before replacing Frank Thompson, as general manager at the University of Queensland Press in 1983 (Moran int. with Muller 1988).

8 First published by the Melbourne-based independent, Scribe Publications, in 1978.

9 Rohan's books were first published by the London publisher, Victor Gollancz, and reissued for the Penguin Australian Selection.

10 Trevor Glover was managing director of Penguin Books, Bruce Sims was responsible for the adult fiction list and John Curtain was appointed senior editor of the Penguin non-fiction list in 1984.

11 Allen & Unwin published some of Jackie Yowell's books for children under her Silver Gum Press imprint. With the expansion of Allen & Unwin's children's list, the name 'Little Ark' was discontinued in the late 1990s.

12 Elsie Roughsey was a member of the Lardil tribe from Mornington Island, or Goonana, in the southern Gulf of Carpentaria. Her parents called her Labumore after the fruit of a native plant (McPhee 2001: 216).

13 Spinifex Press republished *Daughters of the Dreaming* in 2002.

14 In the 1920s, David Unaipon was commissioned under contract to the University of Adelaide to collect traditional Aboriginal stories from around South Australia. Many

of these stories came from his own Ngarrindjeri people but some stories were also from other Aboriginal people in South Australia. These were published in 1930 as *Myths and Legends of the Australian Aboriginals* and the author of the work was given as W. Ramsay Smith, FRS, anthropologist and Chief Medical Officer of South Australia. Unaipon's name does not appear anywhere in the book, except where he is mentioned as a 'narrator'. Diane Bell discusses many aspects of Unaipon in detail in *Ngarrindjeri Wurruwarrin*, in particular, see pp. 126–9. In 2001, Melbourne University Press published *Legendary Tales of the Australian Aborigines*. In this collection the editors, Adam Shoemaker and Stephen Muecke, restore Unaipon's text to its original form.

15 Aboriginal Studies Press published *The Encyclopaedia of Aboriginal Australia: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander History, Society and Culture* in 1994 — the only single comprehensive book and CD-ROM reference work in two volumes to cover all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies disciplines.

16 Penguin published Sasha Soldatow's *Private — Do Not Open* (1987), Helen Hodgman's *Broken Words* (1988) and Bron Nicholl's *Reasons of the Heart* (1993). Primavera Press first published Finola Moorhead's *Remember the Tarantella* (1987) and Penguin published Moorhead's *Still Murder* (1991). Spinifex Press began publishing lesbian writers in 1992: Gillian Hanscombe's *Sybil: The Glide of Her Tongue*, Susan Hawthorne's *The Falling Woman* and Lariane Fonseca's *If Passion Were A Flower*. The wave starts to build with the publication of Dorothy Porter's two verse novels, *Akhenaten* (UQP, 1992) and *The Monkey's Mask* (Hyland House 1994) and Fiona McGregor's *Suck My Toes* (McPhee Gribble, 1994), followed by the anthology *Love Cries* (A&R/HarperCollins, 1995) and Christos Tsiolkas's *Loaded* (Vintage/Random House, 1995).

17 Angus & Robertson published *The Americans, Baby* (1978), *The Young Desire It: A Novel* (1963) and *All That False Instruction* (1975); UQP first published *Johnno: A Novel* (1975); Penguin published *The Twyborn Affair* (1981), *Kenzo, a Tokyo Story* (1984) and *Mullaway* (1986) and UQP published *The Frangipani Gardens* (1980) and *The Pink Triangle* (1981).

18 Spinifex Press is the largest publisher of lesbian writers in Australia.

19 The Shorts and the Solos were initiated by Dyan Blacklock who further developed these ideas as publisher with Omnibus Books when the list was acquired by Ashton Scholastic.

20 Faith Bandler's book is one of the earliest Indigenous novels to be published in Australia. Bandler is Kanak by heritage and was instrumental in successfully lobbying with other Black activists, through the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines (renamed the Federal Council for the Advancement of Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders in 1964), to conduct the 27 May, 1967 referendum to change the Constitution, to give the federal government power to override state governments and legislate on behalf of Aborigines, to include them in the Census.

21 Publish Australia ceased to exist in 2001. Once again independent publishers in Australia are relegated to the membership of the Small Publishers committee, lobbying for adequate and fair representation under the rubric of the Australian Publishers Association.

22 Scribe Publications, a Melbourne-based independent publisher of serious non-fiction and literary fiction, is also a survivor.

23 While the margin offered to McPhee Gribble under the co-publishing arrangement with Penguin was minimal, Penguin nevertheless offered upfront payment for every print of a McPhee Gribble/Penguin book. That is, if only 1000 of a 4000 print run were sold, McPhee Gribble were still paid for 4000. The size of each McPhee Gribble print run was an agreement between Brian Johns, Hilary McPhee and Di Gribble which was then adopted without question by Penguin.

CHAPTER THREE

Organisational Structure and Publishing Culture

Introduction

This chapter examines organisational structure and publishing culture, in particular, the ways in which they influence editors and publishers across large and small publishing operations. A sample of general and specific publishing models shows the organisation of particular areas inside the publishing house and how these areas function individually and relate to each other. In examining a field as diverse and complex as Australian book publishing, it is necessary to arrive at an informed industry understanding of what internal and external forces determine organisational structure and shape publishing culture. This chapter takes a direct and inclusive approach, by engaging with editors and publishers who took part in this study, in an 'industry narrative'. These narratives identify the unique and diverse organisational features of particular publishing companies and publishing cultures that editors and publishers contribute to and work within. Not all the editors and publishers who participated in this study provided publishing models. However, their selective comments are included, where relevant, and where they serve to broaden the discussion. The purpose of this chapter is to present an overview of Australian organisational structure, through the cultural and commercial lens of editors and publishers who occupy, and are positioned within, specific publishing sites.

Individual Vision and Institutional Voice

Coser, Kadushin and Powell (1982) argue that any organisation's structure is its skeleton, its basic building block. In book publishing, organisational structure coordinates individuals and departments to fulfil the needs of a particular house and to allow it to adapt to changing circumstances. In a business sense, these operations are designed to achieve or maximise efficient co-operation and coordination among departments to turn out a specific number of titles on a regular basis (1982: 185, 194). While this explanation of how the machinery functions provides a useful framework, it overlooks some fundamental principles in book publishing. These are the attitudes, values, beliefs and personal styles of the individuals who contribute to a dynamic publishing culture and the fact that publishing is not a homogeneous grouping of

parts or people. There is no doubt, however, that organisational structure impacts in various and significant ways on the individuals who work in the publishing house and the way in which they go about their work (Lane 1980; Coser *et al*. 1982; Davies, 1994). This argument, substantiated by the editors and publishers who took part in this study, is summarised by trade publisher Bruce Sims, in a commissioning context: 'I think the business of commissioning depends very much on the structure of the publishing company and the people who are involved' (Sims int. 1998).

In most industries the 'cottage', 'modern bureaucratic' and 'corporate' features of any business belong to distinctly different historical periods, while in book publishing 'cottage' and 'corporate' features tend to co-exist. Small publishing companies with only a few key staff exist alongside huge conglomerate enterprises with many subsidiaries in books, newspapers, film and cable television (Coser *et al.* 1982: 175) with digital arms. What fundamentally underlies the transition from craft [cottage] to corporation [bureaucratic] in modern times, are the 'changes to the structure of publishing organisations' and 'the philosophy of publishing practices' (Coser *et al.* 1982: 176). Large and small publishing companies do co-exist in Australia, but there is a tension between the two that has historically been highly charged. The smaller to medium-sized organisation has attempted to grow and remain independent or has become viable enough to be a takeover prospect for a larger corporation with a wider sales and distribution infrastructure. Without good distribution reach, the continued existence of small publishers is questionable. Some argue that the gap between small and large has widened to the point where 'medium-sized publishing houses have been replaced and no longer exist' (Munro int. 1999; Lane and Booth 1980: 126). An interesting angle on this claim is Sally Milner's view that 'agents have carved out a middle market for themselves' (Milner int. 1999).

In Australia, as elsewhere, publishers have been implicated in the creation of a new and different kind of publishing culture, where mergers and takeovers have enhanced larger conglomerate organisational structures. This phenomenon has been described as the 'transformation of individual vision into institutional voice' (Lane and Booth 1980: 104). While the organisation and culture of most contemporary publishing structures are viewed as modern and increasingly bureaucratic, smaller, independent publishers tend to incorporate cottage features. Within an Australian context, Craig Munro maintains that 'book publishing is a cottage industry even among the multinationals' (Munro int. 1999). A key stage in the transformation of publishing from a cottage business or occupation to a corporate enterprise has been identified as the shift from a traditional simple organised house, publishing for one market, to a more complex structure publishing for several markets, encountering a variety of environmental demands (Coser *et al.* 1982: 176). With the changes that have come with technological shifts and globalisation in publishing there is a blurring of

distinctions not only between, but within, particular publishing houses. For example, Spinifex Press is, in some ways, a 'cottage' style publishing house in its size, structure and philosophies.Yet Hawthorne and Klein also publish for five English-language markets (as well as the prospect of foreign-language markets) and regularly negotiate across territories for rights sales, co-editions and translations.

Publishing Hierarchies and Management Bureaucracies

Lane and Booth argue that hierarchical structure is almost bound to be involved in the expansion and rationalisation of any organisation, where workers enjoy less of a measure of control, initiation and peer involvement in larger, more unwieldy structures that cannot function without a wider skill-base of administrative and managerial expertise (1980: 69, 73). The danger of bureaucratic structures operating within publishing cultures is that the departmentalisation that has come with rationalisation has meant that more formal communication channels 'have been set up to deal with interdepartmental contacts once made informally' (Lane and Booth 1980: 81). In the cultural ambit of book publishing, Davies argues that nothing is more dangerous to successful in-house teamwork than departmentalism (Davies 1994: 150). These corporate-run organisational structures impose more rigorous and painstaking divisions of labour in rationalisation and departmentalisation, which has in turn forced a decline in editorial hegemony (Lane and Booth 1980: 73).

In an earlier Australian study of the role of book editors undertaken in the mid-1980s, White argued that many editors experienced difficulty in reporting to, or being responsible to, a management which had little or no real understanding of the editorial role (1986: 62). The management attitude to editing work was to push it through with unrealistic expectations of editing time and little recognition that good editors could increase the sales potential of particular books, where ordinary books could become bestsellers (McDonald in White 1986: 63). These same sentiments were reflected in the late 1990s, in wider cultural debates about editing (Modjeska 1999; Wood 1999). Editors' issues were also the focus of a residential editorial program in Australia, sponsored by the Literature Fund of the Australia Council and coordinated by the Australian Publishers Association. Thirteen 'mid-career' editors received training from three mentor editors, Bruce Sims, Jacqueline Kent and Meredith Rose (Sheahan-Bright 1999: 3; Birrell 1999a: 8–9). In the summary program report, a key training need identified was the need 'for other departments within publishing companies to gain an understanding of the fact that good editing adds value to the product' and to 'realise that the editing process is necessarily a time-consuming one' where 'publishing schedules cannot be continually collapsed and editing squeezed in order to rush books out' (Rose 1999: 37).

It is widely understood by those who work inside the publishing industry that non-publishing executives do not understand what publishers do, particularly when company management and administrators do not come from publishing backgrounds. This is relevant in the Australian book publishing context, where the book is treated as an 'add-on' value, is tied to other product or content, and becomes part of a much wider media information, communications and entertainment culture. An example is ABC Books, operating as the publishing arm of ABC Enterprises, where books are valued as a unit or item of merchandise across a range of content-driven, non-book products. In a marketing and sales publishing environment, individuals also become commodified, with the 'performance' of an author, editor and publisher being measured against the financial success of the book. This fundamental shift in the traditional structure of the publishing organisation and in the philosophy of editing and publishing practice impacts on the commissioning role. It is argued that 'there's probably more pressure on senior editors and publishers than there ever was in the past to produce books that don't underperform' (Munro int. 1998).

The way in which individuals go about their business, both within publishing and also within the wider culture, has various and significant consequences for commissioning and acquisition. These roles vary considerably between different publishing personalities and styles of publishing across different types of publishing. Critical factors to do with types of publishing are the size of the organisation; the types of books published (the perceived market) and features of house style; that is, whether the house is a large multinational or a small to medium-sized independent organisation; whether books are published for academic, trade/general, reference or specialist audiences; and whether the publishing house is editorial-driven or market-driven.

Size of the Publishing House

Definitions of size in publishing are measured by the number of staff, the number of books published each year and the annual turnover (see Appendix D). Types of publishing, types of books published and the size of print runs are all indicative of company size. In Australia, the majority of member publishers of the Australian Publishers' Association (APA) are classified as small publishers, that is, their annual turnover does not exceed $2 million, although most small publishers are not APA members (Windsor 1997: 8) have annual turnovers vastly lower than this benchmark, and work within smaller economies of scale. The annual turnover of the top 20 APA member publishers significantly exceeds this amount and varies considerably from company to company. Penguin Books, for example, a mass-market fiction and non-fiction publisher of adult and children's books, has an annual turnover of

$100 million (Penguin Books website, 2000); Allen & Unwin, a general fiction and non-fiction, academic, social sciences and children's book publisher, has an annual turnover of $33 million (Allen & Unwin website, 2000); and Lonely Planet, a publisher with a specialist list in travel guides and narratives, has an annual turnover of $25 million (Windsor 1997: 8). Penguin and Allen & Unwin are large publishing companies and Lonely Planet is also comparatively large for an Australian market. There is a considerable drop in the annual turnover of smaller member publishers who struggle to grow their business to reach the $2 million figure that would then take them into the next size classification, that of small- to medium-sized companies.

Other significant factors to do with size are about whether the company is wholly independent, is dictated to by a publishing parent or non-publishing group located elsewhere in the world or is a subsidiary of another organisation. If the company is operating within the infrastructure of a much larger organisational ownership, its annual turnover in Australia will not be an accurate measure of its local publishing program and will include the sales of imported books. Distribution is a key factor when considering annual turnover, other than originating sales. The largest and most profitable companies in Australian publishing, with the strongest market and sales reach, distribute other Australian publishers' lists for considerable returns. In some cases, the returns from distributing other publishers' books constitute more than half of the distributing publisher's annual turnover. Allen & Unwin and Lothian Books are two such benefactors in Australia (Windsor 1997: 8). Allen & Unwin also entered a unique joint distribution warehouse venture in Australia with Hodder Headline in early 1999. The formation of Alliance Distribution Services (ADS), a '6,000 square-metre, custom-built operation', provides centralised services for distribution, customer service and credit control for Allen & Unwin and Hodder Headline (Birrell 1999b: 32). With state-of-the-art equipment the aim is to overcome many of the turnaround problems that both publishers were experiencing in competing with the computer, video and music industries. This will centralise and consolidate distribution strengths for both companies. This is an unusual move between Allen & Unwin, a medium-sized Australian independent company and Hodder Headline, a rival Australian subsidiary of a UK-owned multinational. The co-operation is about medium-sized publishers and economies of scale, in competing in a small market against large publishers, through cost-saving measures that maximise distribution power and customer service (*AB&P* 1999: 32). To protect the privacy of respective publishing operations, firewalls were created in the custom-built system so that 'everyone is able to see what is going on in the warehouse, but not the publishing house' (*AB&P* 1999: 33). A longer-term aim of ADS is to expand into third-party distribution with other medium-sized publishing companies to provide consistency of publishing service. Penguin Books represents

the lists of small to medium size Australian independent companies, including the University of Queensland Press, Fremantle Arts Centre Press (excluding WA), Anne O'Donovan and Text Publishing. Penguin, amongst a handful of multinational publishers operating in Australia, including Random House, Pan Macmillan, HarperCollins and Hodder Headline, dominate Australian sales and distribution. Penguin also represents the lists of small to medium size Australian independent companies, including the University of Queensland Press, Fremantle Arts Centre Press (excluding WA), Anne O'Donovan and Text Publishing. The downside for the originating publisher is that they only recover approximately 35 per cent of the recommended retail price (rrp) on every title sold, after the bookshop has taken its discount and Penguin has taken its distribution fee (Windsor 1997: 8). If first print runs are conservative, as they are with smaller publishing companies, generally between 2,000 to 5,000 copies for a general trade title (and this range is decreasing), it is difficult for the originating publisher to maximise profit. Because ineffective distribution has plagued the small publisher in Australia, the decision to hand over distribution to a middle dealer, although this partly relieves the small publisher of the responsibility, is always going to compromise the originating publisher, working within smaller economies of scale. With the increase of large bookshop chains, supermarket and department store retail outlets, the nature of book distribution is expanding and changing in Australia.

Number of staff, print runs, types of books published and number of books published each year are all tied to annual turnover. If the publishing house has a run of less than average years, the organisation will make adjustments or restructure to counteract the downturn in profits. These changes will affect the number of staff employed, the size of the print run, what areas of the list will be sacrificed and how many books will be published. These decisions are usually made by powerful individuals at senior management level. A large multinational publishing company, for example, may rationalise an entire imprint or drastically cull titles across their lists, where local publishing programs and individual publishing staff are subsequently reduced. In smaller, wholly independent publishing structures, decisions to do with restructuring can be more significant because there may be no parent body or subsidiary organisation to absorb the losses and carry the company through difficult publishing periods.

Types of Publishing

Other than the few large multinational publishing corporations that mostly represent off-shore market interests, there is a diverse range of Australian-owned publishers operating in Australia. Allen & Unwin celebrated its tenth birthday as an independent

publisher in 2000. The company's Australian directors effected a management buy-out, following the purchase in 1990 of the UK parent company by HarperCollins. Other than the travel publisher Lonely Planet, the global Australian independent success story, Allen & Unwin is the largest and most successful of the Australian-owned publishing companies. It must be taken into account however that Allen & Unwin once belonged to a large UK-owned and based publishing conglomerate and the carry over of its success in Australia was built on the strength of phenomenal company bestsellers, such as *The Lord of the Rings*, first published in 1974.[1] The former independent publisher of Australian children's classics, Omnibus Books, was acquired by Ashton Scholastic and the imprint has remained with Scholastic Australia. The original Omnibus publishers regained independence by establishing the brand new picture book imprint, Working Title Press, in 1999. Working Title Press continues to function as a wholly independent children's publisher of quality Australian content. Spinifex Press celebrated ten years of independent local and global feminist trade publishing in 2001 and receives occasional book publishing grants from the Literature Board/Fund of the Australia Council. Sybylla Feminist Press operated as a commercial printery and publishing co-operative, receiving some State government funding to assist with operational costs until the late 1980s, when it evolved into an independent, not-for-profit, feminist publishing collective of voluntary workers. Hale & Iremonger was initially capitalised through Southwood Press and has remained an independent publisher of quality Australian non-fiction and poetry. Some publishers in this study continue to function through other independent bodies or government institutions. The University of Queensland Press, for example, functions as a separate department of the University of Queensland, under a Board of Management appointed by the Senate (Galligan 1997: 139). Fremantle Arts Centre Press is classified as an arts agency and receives an annual General Purpose Grant through ArtsWA, in association with the Lotteries Commission. Magabala Books is an Aboriginal Corporation, established with a grant from the Australian Bicentennial Authority's National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Program (NATSIAP), with further establishment grant monies from the Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Culture Centre in Western Australia (KALACC). Both Magabala Books and the KALACC received Program Grants and ongoing Triennial Grants[2] from the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Board of the Australia Council. ABC Books is a division of ABC Enterprises, operating from within the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, with a list that is tied to ABC programming, as well as publishing stand-alone general books.[3] Aboriginal Studies Press and IAD Press constitute the respective publishing arms of parent educational institutions, the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) and the Institute for Aboriginal Development (IAD).[4] While the aforementioned controlling bodies are variously committed to literary and cultural excellence they are also driven by the bottom line. Publishing companies,

large and small, also receive substantial and less substantial federal government grants, to subsidise their annual Australian book publishing programs from the Literature Board/Fund of the Australia Council (see Table Three). While it is becoming increasingly difficult for all Australian publishers to maintain their publishing output, many small independents continue to rely on state regional and cultural-based funding in order to survive and to grow their lists. McLean argues that while one of the aims of government intervention is to ensure the publication of commercially risky but culturally significant works, subsidies result in government-approved publishing. This can be interpreted as government intervening in matters of taste or as cultural manipulation (1996: 75–6).

Publishers' Lists and Types of Works

Publishers' lists indicate the types of books published, that is, whether the list is broad (general adult fiction or non-fiction) or aimed at specialist niches, such as Indigenous, feminist, children's, gay and lesbian, academic and professional, educational, reference, or emerging electronic publishing platforms and future markets. Many publishers maximise market potential and sales reach, across general adult and children's lists, while others diversify and specialise across a range of categories, for example, religious, travel, poetry, feminist, health, Indigenous, literary fiction, self-help, art and craft lists. The publishers' lists included in this study offer a broad range of works across general trade, academic, educational and specialist publishing (see Appendix D).

Most general publishers publish children's books because they are profitable across general classifications such as fiction, non-fiction and picture books, while children's publishers exclusively publish a range of books for different age groups, for example, 0–7 year olds, pre-school and early primary, young adult, middle readers, adolescent, teenage fiction and different types of books, for example, information books, illustrative texts, poetry and novel. Vast structural changes took place in Australian children's publishing at a time when there was also a general dip in children's book sales from the mid-1990s. In the late 1990s, Working Title Press was established and entered into a distribution agreement with Scholastic (Kaye 2000: 50). The acquisition of Random House by Bertelsmann resulted in Random's prestige children's imprint being dropped with the departure of the children's publishing director. HarperCollins dispensed with a commissioning editor for children's books and then appointed a new commissioning editor for children's and young adult books. The adult and children's marketing departments were merged at Penguin Books. Penguin's associate publisher for children and young adult titles left to establish a new children's and young adult list at Duffy and Snellgrove which was later discontinued. Allen & Unwin decided to

phase out the Little Ark children's list (Kaye 2000: 32). Hodder Headline Australia expanded its children's list with the acquisition of the Mark Macleod Books imprint and the Reed Australia list (Morrow 1999: 2).

Publishers of non-Indigenous and Indigenous works, such as Aboriginal Studies Press, specialise in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, while general publishers like Allen & Unwin, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, University of Queensland Press and Melbourne University Press, for example, publish occasional Aboriginal Studies titles and feminist trade publishers, like Spinifex Press, publish a range of Australian and regional Indigenous fiction, non-fiction and poetry. Magabala Books exclusively publish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander literature and culture, with a focus on the Kimberley region of Western Australia, while the publishing focus at IAD Press is the maintenance of Aboriginal language and culture from the communities of Central Australia. Poetry has always been regarded by most publishers and funding bodies as a risky genre to publish. Consequently poetry has been dropped from publishers' lists, most recently, Penguin Books and the University of Queensland Press.[5] While a cluster of smaller poetry publishers dedicate their lists to poetry, some Australian independents have continued the tradition of supporting Australian poets, including Fremantle Arts Centre Press, Spinifex Press, Hale & Iremonger, Magabala Books and IAD Press. While autobiography and biography are included in many publishers' lists, Indigenous publishers specialise in lifestory, autobiography and biography and are also experimenting with fiction. The University of Queensland Press, through its Black Australian Writers series, publishes Indigenous autobiography, biography, lifestory, memoir, poetry, novel and stories.

Independent Minds and Individual Lists

It is evident that publishing size and types of books predetermine markets and publishing house style, dictating how the internal organisation of any publishing company operates. These factors in turn shape the individual's approach in the way they go about commissioning or acquiring authors and texts. Some publishers argue that it does not matter whether editors and publishers are working across large or small organisational structures — that it is 'independent minds that make a difference' in decisions to do with what books are taken on (Hawthorne, Yowell, Sims, Milner, Hale ints. 1998). Feminist publisher Susan Hawthorne, for example, believes that the real distinction between large and small publishing operations is in relation to the individual's power, where 'probably the thing that independent publishers have over the mainstream is that you don't have anybody standing over you. What you do have are your own financial or imaginative limitations' (Hawthorne int. 1998).

In a range of publishing cultures to be found across large, medium and smaller organisational structures, it is widely argued that 'the best lists are shaped by an individual' (Hale, Milner, Yowell, Brett, Cunningham, Cosgrove, Hawthorne, Scutt ints. 1998). While the data in this study convincingly support this claim, it is also apparent that individual publishing decisions are more often than not made after consultation with other members of the publishing team and this is particularly true of smaller houses. Sylvia Hale, for example, discussed both the influence of the individual over the list and the consultative publishing process within Hale & Iremonger, referring to the 'prevailing moods and interests in ideas coming from all members of staff' who provide valuable input into publishing decisions. I took up a publishing placement with Hale & Iremonger as a graduate publishing student in 1997, working with senior editor Heather Cam and in-house consultant publisher Rhonda Black. As a 'participant observer', I was given the opportunity to become involved in the day-to-day publishing tasks as part of a small publishing team, and I was encouraged to make suggestions and contribute to the Hale & Iremonger publishing and promotions program. In describing the publishing culture in smaller companies, Hale believes that 'there is certainly a big impression made by the personalities or the interests of the people who are intimately involved' (Hale int. 1998). This comment is largely about 'owner' investors who are the financial and legal stakeholders and 'take the publishing risks and make the sacrifices which are often considerable' (Hale int. 1998). While the commercial decisions are vital in publishing, it is the independent thinkers who monitor and 'read' cultural shifts, commissioning and acquiring content that forecasts and reflects emerging issues.

Publishing Culture

While the relative importance of various individuals and publishing areas in organisational structures has changed over time, many traditions in and across publishing culture mirror particular power struggles that take place within the wider culture. It is argued that publishing is traditionally a white, middle-class business in Australia, reflecting its colonial background. This is reflected in the boardroom, at upper and middle management levels and in most areas within organisational structure and this pattern only starts to change in the warehouse (Davis 1999: 149). In 1997, I observed the division of labour between the white-collar publishing staff, who occupied the upstairs publishing, editing and production areas in the Reed Books/ DW Thorpe complex and the blue-collar migrant workers, packaging and despatching books in the distribution warehouse at Port Melbourne.

While women represent the majority in publishing, across marketing, publicity, production and editorial, a male management culture is in place at boardroom,

senior executive and management levels. This imbalance in power only starts to shift where women own and manage their own companies. Where younger women do hold senior positions in publishing and have more opportunity to make decisions about the direction of their lists and the publishing program, they are seldom given the opportunity to change the corporate culture. Instead, they are tested by upper management, to see how they adapt to it. Appointing younger women executives amongst the more traditional male publishing hierarchy within larger organisational structures reflects a trend in Australian publishing to create new lists and appeal to more popular culture audiences (Davis 1999: 144, 151). This strategy, which can also be interpreted as 'opportunistic' publishing, is most evident across the adult fiction mass market lists of publishers with a multinational presence in Australia, including Random House, Penguin/Viking, HarperCollins, Hodder Headline and Pan Macmillan and the trade lists of large independents with an Australian and international audience, such as Allen & Unwin.

Sally Milner comments on various shifts within an Australian publishing culture since the 1970s, driven mostly by business and market trends. These shifts are to do with structural and organisational size, adaptability and flexibility, the recognition in a literary and wider arts environment of publishing as an industry and the commodification of authors and books. Milner refers to the notion of authorship in Australia as 'a business rather than a genuine sense of publishing', the 'whole new culture of literary agents and the advance' and the 'larger publishing organisation's inability to catch up and respond to trends because the nature of the beast is that it's bigger and slower' (Milner int. 1999). While larger organisational structures may be beasts of burden, Milner says of smaller organisational cultures in Australian publishing that 'we don't have a strong independent publishing culture' because 'none of those publishers have ever grown — they've never hung in there' (Milner int. 1999). Others also support this argument, when it is said of the local experience that 'the life expectancy of an independent publisher is less than a generation' (Windsor 1997: 8).

Behind the resilience of independents, in their ability to adapt and survive in a small competitive marketplace, are remarkable individuals. This can be seen from the publishing trajectories of independent stayers in Australian publishing. Some editors and publishers have moved between independent publishing culture and mainstream organisational structure, for example, Sophie Cunningham, Bruce Sims, Jackie Yowell, Susan Hawthorne, Elizabeth Weiss, Sally Milner, Jane Covernton and Sue Williams. This is sometimes due to the fact that certain individuals and publishing companies have been acquired by larger publishing interests. Others have reinvented themselves and revived their independent publishing interests, for example, Sally Milner, Bruce Sims, Susan Hawthorne and Jane Covernton and Sue Williams. Others have worked in Australian-owned organisational structures and publishing cultures from the outset,

for example, Sylvia Hale, Craig Munro, Sue Abbey, Ray Coffey, Rachel Bin Salleh, Josie Douglas and Laurin McKinnon.

It is evident from the Australian experience of swings and roundabouts that large organisational structures can, and do, eventually colonise and impose their management systems on smaller publishing structures, while individuals operating within these structures retain particular publishing identities. This is a recurring pattern in the life cycle of Australian publishing, where editors and publishers either compromise and kowtow to the values and practices expected of them, or part company with the new owners and the lists they originated.

Sophie Cunningham, former editor and publisher with McPhee Gribble, described her experiences of moving with the McPhee Gribble imprint when it was absorbed into the Penguin publishing culture in 1990 and her reasons for making a decision to move to Allen & Unwin in 1994:

> *I felt under siege, which didn't lead to a particularly productive working relationship.* […] *I had a very 'us and them' mentality when I was at Penguin.* […] *It was partly not really knowing how to keep an imprint going within a larger company because while my books were different they weren't so different and it became a bit of a false distinction. I felt marketing wasn't supporting McPhee Gribble books because they were in competition with Penguin books. I was 27 when I got the job. I was on an enormous learning curve. Each year I was told 'you've done great, now do better' and I thought I'm never going to get off this treadmill* (Cunningham int. 1998).

Jane Covernton also discussed the absorption of the children's publishing imprint Omnibus Books into Ashton Scholastic and how the new accountability to a much larger publishing organisation affected her publishing decisions in originating new and innovative concepts:

> *When you work for a much larger company and even with the best will in the world, you are very definitely conscious that you have to produce so many books a year that make such and such a turnover. There are certainly times when you take on books that you might not necessarily be passionate about but they are there. The thing that worried me about myself towards the end, was that I started to think yes, this will work or this is a commercial idea. OK it's been done before but I haven't done it so I'll do it* (Covernton int. 1999).

A smaller, independent publishing culture has the capacity to break up the homogeneity that larger publishing groups and organisational structures impose by carving out various cultural identities within an Australian book publishing environment. The data collected for this study, representative of mostly smaller,

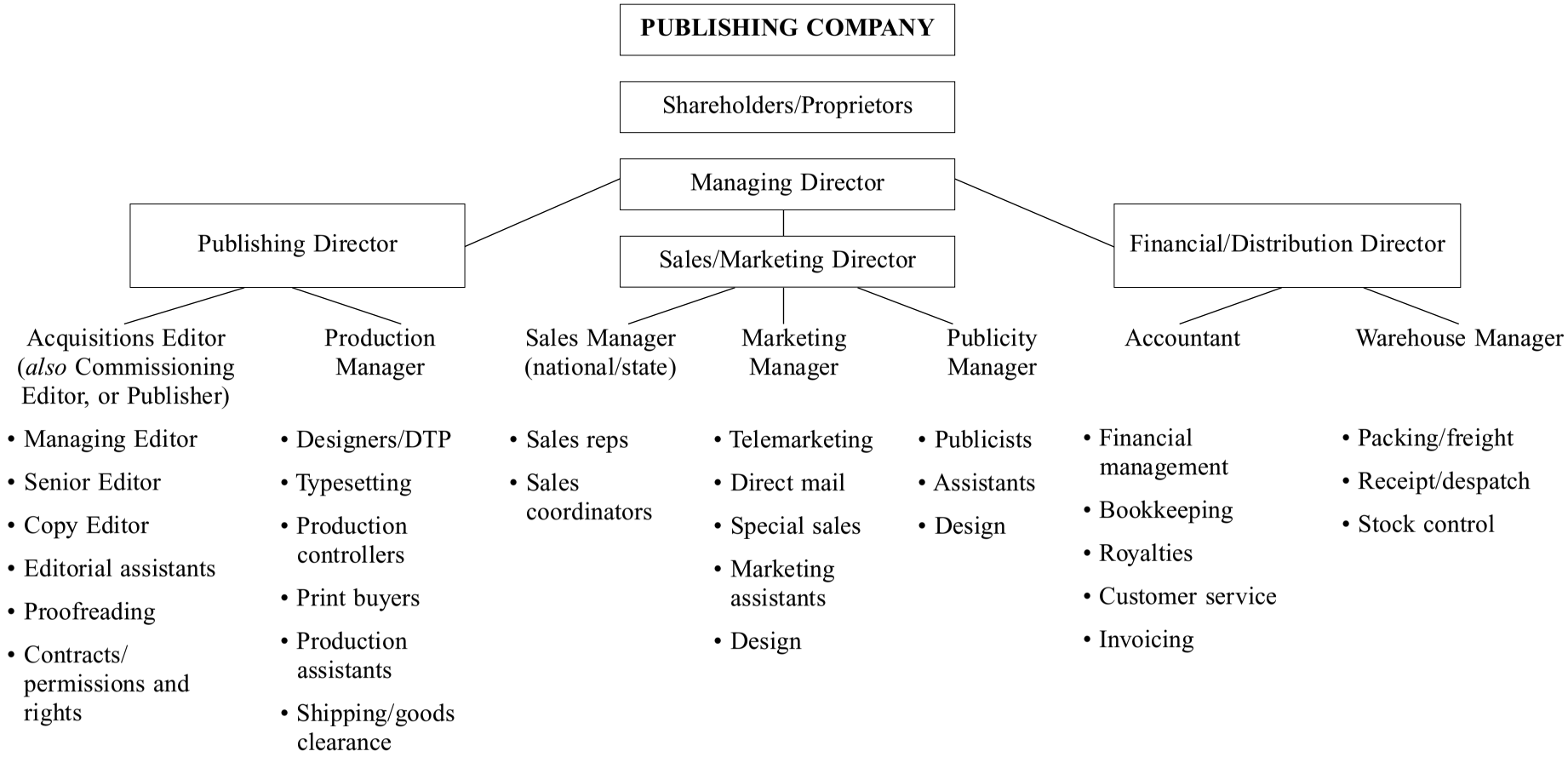
independent publishing structures, bear this out. The quite distinct cultural identities of independent publishers and their lists demonstrate a growing awareness and resistance to publishing agglomeratisation, mass market reading audiences and media-driven content. Galligan argues that the operative phases and values adopted centre on quality, creativity, innovation, controversy and providing a voice. It is within this high risk, pioneering realm of originating publishing that the smaller independent publishers play such a crucial role (Galligan 2000: 105).

Publishing Models (General and Specific)

To investigate certain claims about organisational structure and publishing culture, it is useful to look at both general publishing models cited in the wider literature and more specific publishing models and publishing narratives. The general publishing models and their creators each tell their own story in the way they represent organisational structure and the individuals that operate within a book 'industry' environment (Aphrys 1997: 8; Schwarz 1995: 102; Flann and Hill 1994: 2).

Alison Aphrys's model of a large, pyramidal publishing organisation shows a top-down hierarchical management grouping (Figure 1). Shareholders/Proprietors are positioned at the apex of the pyramid, representing the injection of capital funds and ownership. The Managing Director is positioned directly underneath and is not connected to Shareholders or Proprietors. In a horizontal grouping at the same level are the Publishing Director, Sales/Marketing Director and Financial/Distribution Director. Positioned under the company directors who constitute the top one-third of Aphrys's model, is a management spread including Publishing/Editorial, Production, Sales, Marketing, Publicity, Accountant and Warehouse Managers. Under this management level support staff are listed for each department. In this model, representative of a large publishing company, the Acquisitions Editor/Commissioning Editor/Publisher are positioned under and accountable to the Publishing Director, who is accountable to the Managing Director and oversees other personnel who make up the publishing/ editorial department, including the Managing Editor, Senior Editor, Copy Editor (with editorial assistance), proofreading, contracts/permissions and rights. Aphrys recognises the role of the acquisitions editor as acquiring manuscripts by commissioning authors, through literary agents or unsolicited manuscripts, who may also be responsible for contracts/rights negotiations (1997: 9).

An industry model of a typical publishing company (Schwarz 1995: 102) positions the publishing company and the distributor in the centre, with a direct vertical line linking the author/illustrator, positioned at the top of the diagram, to the publishing company and distributor (Figure 2). Another direct vertical line links the distributor



This is a sample of what a large publishing organisation might look like, though all companies may vary. Recruitment for positions within departments would normally be undertaken by the department manager, or, if a more senior role, the director, or managing director. In a smaller company one person would undertake several roles at once.

FIGURE 1 A Large Publishing Organisation

Source: Aphrys, Alison. *Careers in Bookselling and Publishing*. Erskineville: Hale & Iremonger, 1997.

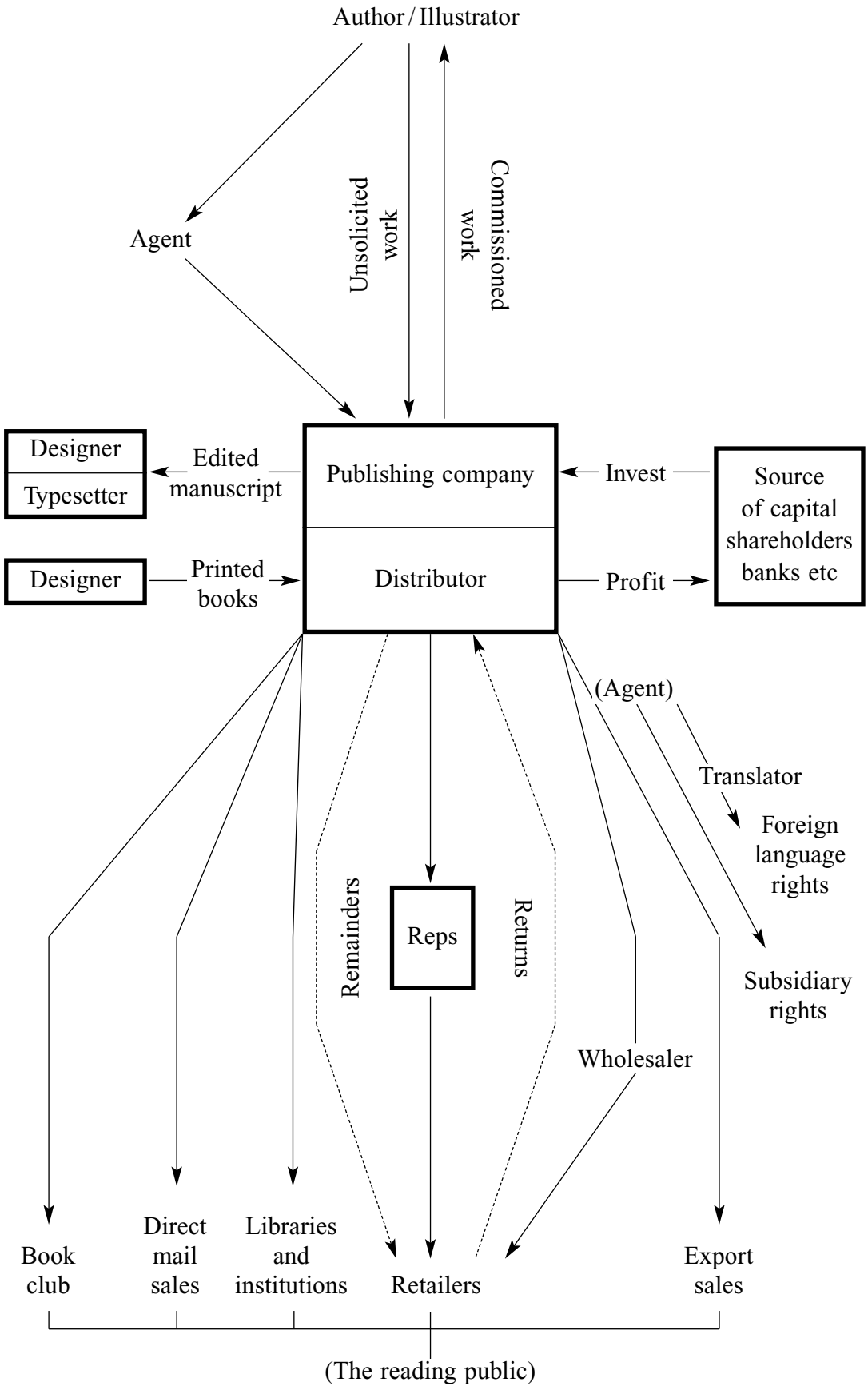


FIGURE 2 A Typical Publishing Company Structure

Source: Schwarz, Samantha. *Australian Guide to Getting Published*. Erskineville: Hale & Iremonger, 1995.

to the sales representatives and booksellers (retailers) who are linked to the reading public at the base of the diagram. Individual positions within the publishing company are not detailed. A horizontal grouping in the middle of the diagram indicates a one way directional flow from the source of capital — shareholders/banks, flowing into the publishing company and out through production — the editor, designer and typesetter to the printer. Printed books are received by the publisher's distributor and the stock is directly received by booksellers through the publisher's sales representatives. Book stock is also distributed to various points of sale including bookclubs, libraries and other institutions and through direct mail sales to the reading public. The most direct way of selling is indicated by a vertical line linking the distributor to the publisher's sales representatives to book retailers. Stock is also shifted through wholesalers to retail outlets and through export sales. In this model a direct, one-way link between the author/illustrator and the publishing company is indicated and also a less direct link between the author/illustrator and the publishing company, through the author's literary agent. A one-way direct link, originating from the publishing company to the author/illustrator, indicates work commissioned by the editor/publisher. Likewise, a one-way direct link, originating from the author/illustrator to the publishing company, indicates unsolicited work, commonly referred to in publishing circles as the 'slush pile'.

Elizabeth Flann and Beryl Hill's simple model of the 'organisation of a publishing company' (1994: 2) horizontally groups and links the author, the publisher and the publisher's reader at the top of the diagram (Figure 3). A two-way link is established between the publisher, editor, designer and typesetter. A two way link is also evident between the designer–illustrator–paste-up artist. The designer is linked to production control. The typesetter and printer are independently linked to the editor and the typesetter is linked to the designer. Another grouping in Flann and Hill's model is the two-way linked accounts–orders–warehouse, where accounts and warehouse are linked to production control and also linked to the editor and publicity/sales. In this publishing model, publicity and sales are grouped together with no marketing presence.

These diagrammatic models provide general insights into organisational structure. They are not very useful in providing any in-depth analysis of the organisation of particular publishing structures, the personnel involved and the publishing culture in which they operate. All models cited and included are contemporary, although the model found in Schwarz's *Guide* was reproduced with the permission of the Australian Book Publishers Association. Aphrys's model represents a large American-style management-driven publishing structure with a strong sales, marketing, publicity and finance presence and reflects Aphrys's own marketing, sales and human resources role as a consultant to the publishing industry. Flann and Hill's model represents a more traditional British-style publishing structure, where the editor is centrally

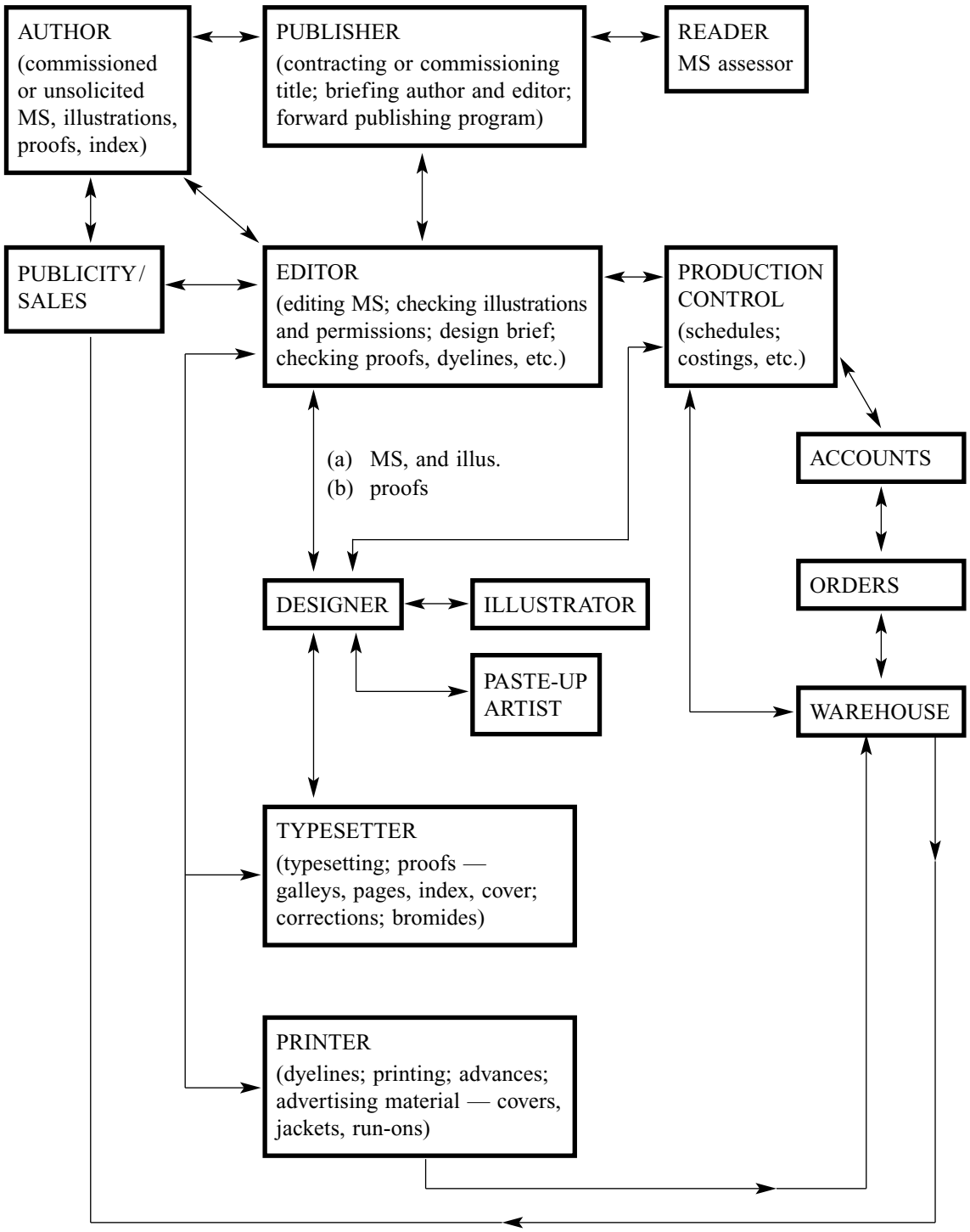


FIGURE 3 Organisation of a Publishing Company

Source: Flann, Elizabeth and Beryl Hill. *The Australian Editing Handbook*. Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1994.

positioned, towards the top of the diagram, reflecting the authors' backgrounds in editing and production. Flann and Hill attribute the principal commissioning of new books and the acquisition of other suitable projects to the publisher and the overseeing of commissioning to the managing or senior editor (Flann and Hill 1994: 3, 6). The publishing model cited in Schwarz represents a wider distribution and sales network around the publishing house with a focus on capital flow and shareholder accountability. Schwarz attributes the commissioning of an author and/or illustrator for a particular project, or the acceptance of a book from a packager or an unsolicited manuscript, to the publisher, commissioning editor or acquisitions editor (1995: 103).

Given the general nature of these models, which are all removed from a site-specific and identifiable organisational structure, editors and publishers were invited to construct their own publishing models. This was a difficult task for some who have worked within and across several publishing structures during their professional careers. For others it was easier because they have only worked for one company throughout their publishing life. Although he has worked within very different publishing structures, Bruce Sims constructed a universal model of organisational structure and publishing culture. The narratives that accompany the publishing models offer a diverse range of publishing experiences.

Bruce Sims

> *Working for myself is a mixed blessing but I am more free to control my own working destiny with my own imprint* (Sims int. 2000).

Bruce Sims has edited and published fiction and non-fiction within and across a broad range of large and smaller organisational structures and publishing cultures since 1982. Sims was an editor, production manager and publisher of adult books with Penguin Books (1982–95), and resigned in mid-1995 to take up a position as publishing manager with Magabala Books (1995–99) (*AB&P* July 1996: 100). In 1999 he was appointed to a temporary publishing position with the publishing arm of ABC Enterprises, ABC Books in the Melbourne office (1999) and then established his own independent trade imprint, Bruce Sims Books, in 2000 (*AB&P* July 2001: 59).

Sims's publishing model represents a universal view of organisational structure (Figure 4). The author, editor and publisher enter the publishing house from the wider culture. The author's publishing proposal or manuscript is received into the publishing house through the editor or the publisher and proceeds through various in-house gates. The first gate is at the point where a decision is made as to whether the publishing proposal or manuscript is taken on. This decision is informed by discussions with representatives from sales, marketing and finance. It is at this point that the

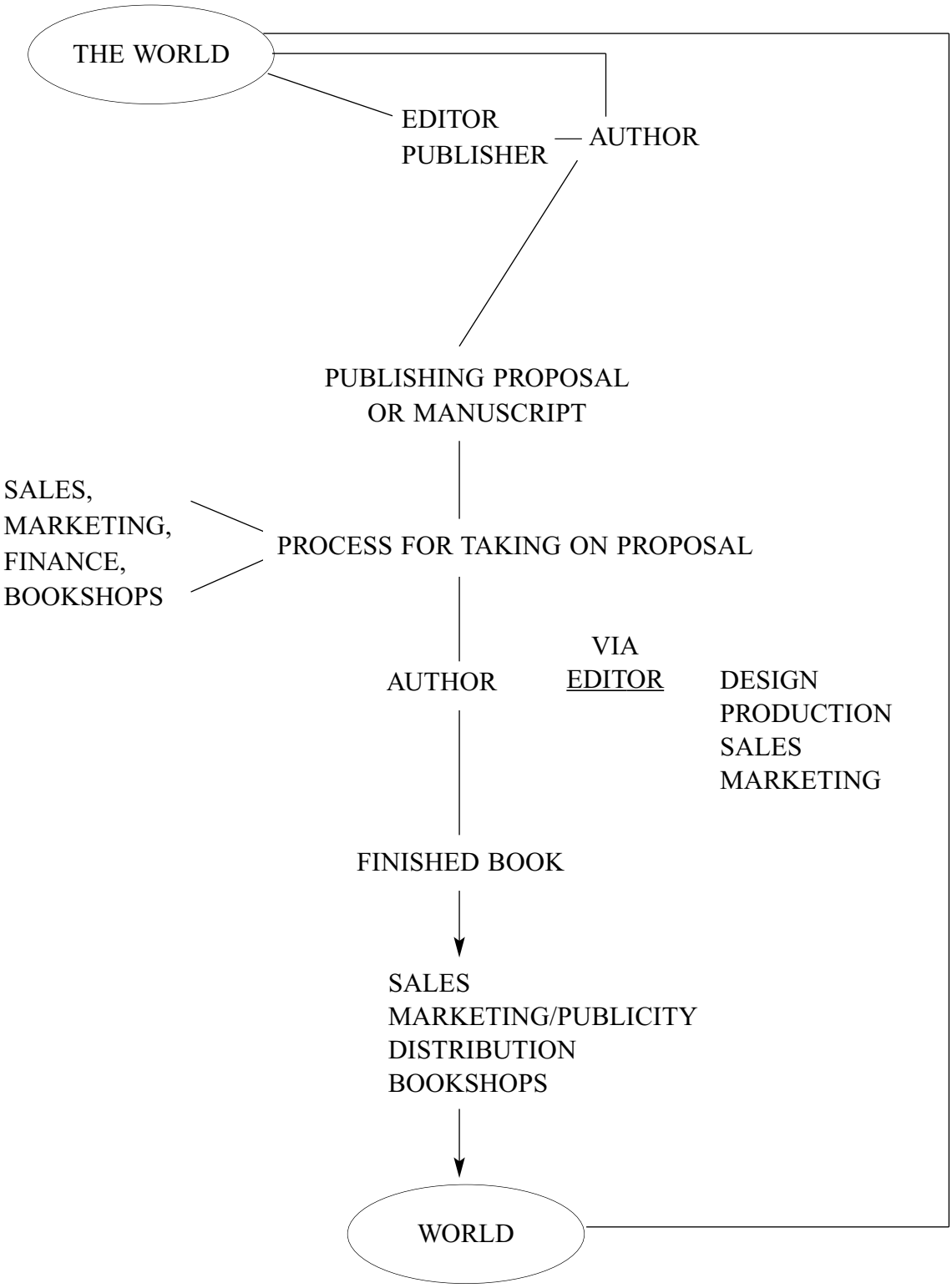


FIGURE 4 Bruce Sims: Author-centred Publishing

publishing proposal may not proceed on this advice. If the author's proposal is approved it reaches a central gate opened by the editor, providing author access to design, production, sales and marketing expertise. Sims makes it clear that it is the editor who plays a central role in facilitating the journey of the author and the book from pre-print to finished product for world distribution. It is also evident that sales and marketing are key gatekeepers at various stages in the book's life cycle through the publishing house. Given the increasing intervention of the literary agent in Australian publishing as cultural gatekeeper, it is interesting that the agent was not included in a model that largely represents an in-house gatekeeping culture. While Sims does not underestimate the role of literary agents, he claims 'there is often very good material that gets bypassed by literary agents. I'm still a great believer in bypassing them' (Sims int. 1999). Sims believes that literary agents mostly work by themselves and are fairly commercially tough-minded because they have to make their money, identifying Peg McColl's contracts department inside Penguin Books, as 'the largest literary agency in the country' (Sims int. 1999). While this may be the case, Sims estimates that 'at least 50 per cent' of Penguin authors are represented by literary agents, only '25 per cent' of authors published by ABC Books are agented 'because so much content is generated through ABC programming', and Magabala does not deal with agents 'because Indigenous writers are not represented by literary agents on the whole, nor are literary agents generally interested in first authors' (Sims int. 1999).

Sims believes 'there are quite marked differences between publishing companies in the ways that books are taken on', arguing that the real distinction between large and small is 'the culture of the organisation' (Sims int. 1998). Sims recalls the 'how many and how much' question, always asked by former Penguin publisher, Brian Johns, when a publishing project was being talked up at Penguin (Sims int. 1998). Sims believes an editor must know what the market is and 'this isn't separate from commissioning — they are all tied in together' because the market is where the book is going (Sims int. 1998). While it is clear that each of the editorial staff at Penguin were expected to have a commissioning role for the adult and children's list and this included assistant editors, these decisions were clearly tied to the 'how many, how much' principle. Sims argues that this notion should be 'within every editor's ambit, whether they are freelance or in-house, and it's very important to focus on' (Sims int. 1998). These comments also reflect the publishing culture of Penguin Books, where publishing decisions have been inextricably tied to budget, sales and marketing priorities.

Other editors and publishers expressed excitement and frustration about the way in which the publishing culture shifted inside Penguin during the 1980s, emphasising a resurgence in sales and marketing forces (Yowell, Hawthorne ints. 1998). Sims

discussed editorial freedom within the context of the internal structure of the house as 'weighed up against budgetary considerations which will shape your ability to do things' (Sims int. 1998). Sims spoke of the excellent financial reporting at Penguin Books and his own keen interest in the monthly sales figures 'which not only showed how you were going but what you could get away with'. Within the constraints of the publishing budget, for example, Sims could argue for new titles in the Penguin poetry series, that were 'offset by and riding on the back of a quite healthy fiction and non-fiction program' (Sims int. 1998).

Sims describes the organisational structure and publishing culture during his time at Magabala Books (1995–99) as 'entirely responsive' where book proposals were considered by an Aboriginal management committee representative of the Aboriginal community. While Magabala staff also make recommendations about which books will be taken on and developed for publication, 'ultimately it's a decision made by the management committee' (Sims int. 1998). Sims refutes a common misconception about his role as publisher at Magabala because 'the publisher is technically the committee' (Sims int. 2000). As publishing manager, Sims was able to 'initiate to some extent and carry through the decisions made by the committee who are the final arbiter' (Sims int. 2000). When Sims took up his appointment in late 1995 he was committed to a backlog of books approved by the management committee 'well into the next century, so it was an entirely different problem from having 20 to 30 spots to fill in the list for the next year' (Sims int. 1998). Sims also spoke of the differences in the publishing culture between Penguin Books and Magabala Books, referring to 'an enormous opportunity gap between the two publishing structures because the promotion possibilities for the book are so vastly different' (Sims int. 1998). Sims spoke of Magabala's responsibility to the Indigenous community as the 'upper criterion for publishing' whereas in larger, profit driven publishing structures such as Penguin Books, 'the question of cultural importance wouldn't stand up if the book wasn't also saleable' (Sims int. 1998). While it is the Indigenous management committee who make the decisions about what to publish, Sims also spoke of the critical link between the publisher's own set of values and beliefs, in shaping particular titles and developing the list. He offered the example of Alexis Wright's *Grog War* (1997a), a book that 'had an accelerated process through Magabala, partly through my own conviction and partly the committee's conviction because of the community alcohol problem in Tennant Creek' (Sims int. 1998).

When Sims left Magabala Books in 1999, he returned to Melbourne and took up a temporary position with ABC Books, the publishing arm of the national broadcaster. During his time with ABC Books (February–November 1999), Sims worked on the editorial development of six or seven books, producing an index for one and briefing the designer on all titles. Editors are usually sub-contracted for ABC Books and the

worked is freelanced out. Sims made the decision to work in a more 'hands-on' way and spoke of the 'craft element' of publishing as a 'cottage industry', describing his approach as 'a bit old-fashioned' (Sims int. 2000). He raised communication and distance problems that he experienced between the Sydney head office and the smaller office of ABC Books, based in Melbourne. Sims spoke about the business of publishing books for the ABC within the context of 'a very large, incredibly bureaucratic organisation', where 'the publishing arm is small and constitutes only five or six people' (Sims int. 2000). While Sims regards the publishing culture in most commercial publishing houses as 'self-policing', he described the ABC organisational structure and culture that 'presided over the publishing area' as 'the thought police' (Sims int. 2000). As in most top heavy bureaucratic structures, the politics and policies of senior ABC management trickle down and filter through the organisation. According to Sims, this impacts on the business of publishing where there is always the potential for 'conflict of interest across a range of issues' (Sims int. 2000). While this somewhat governs the content of the publishing list which is tied to ABC programming, Sims also talks about the liberal nature of programming across the ABC, describing Radio National as 'a very broad church' (Sims int. 1999). During his first year as publisher of his own imprint, Sims produced five books. Amongst these was a book that resulted from a 'long standing connection' with a Penguin author and a submission that ABC Books had rejected. To generate some working capital and to offset a shortage of in-house staff at Magabala Books, Sims also took on some freelance editing assignments (Sims int. 2000).

JACKIE YOWELL

> *Independence of mind is vital for publishing, something that is not a sure thing, in a sense, is different from what is going on and will change it. It's like putting the mutant gene out there for the evolution* (Yowell int. 1998).

Jackie Yowell has worked in trade and educational publishing in Australia for almost 30 years, across various independent and multinational organisational structures and publishing cultures, including Longman, Cheshire, Wren, Lansdowne, Penguin Books, Five Mile Press, Aird Books and her own company, Silver Gum Press. Silver Gum merged with Allen & Unwin in mid-1996 and Yowell was appointed as adult books trade publisher (*AB&P* 1996: 110). Her own definition of her role with Allen & Unwin is 'consultant publisher' (Yowell int. 1999).

Yowell's model of Allen & Unwin represents a trend that began in the 1980s (White 1986) with the escalation of the outsourcing of in-house editorial and design responsibilities to freelancers working outside of the publishing house (Figure 5). Yowell is based in Melbourne and contracted to Allen & Unwin's Sydney office as

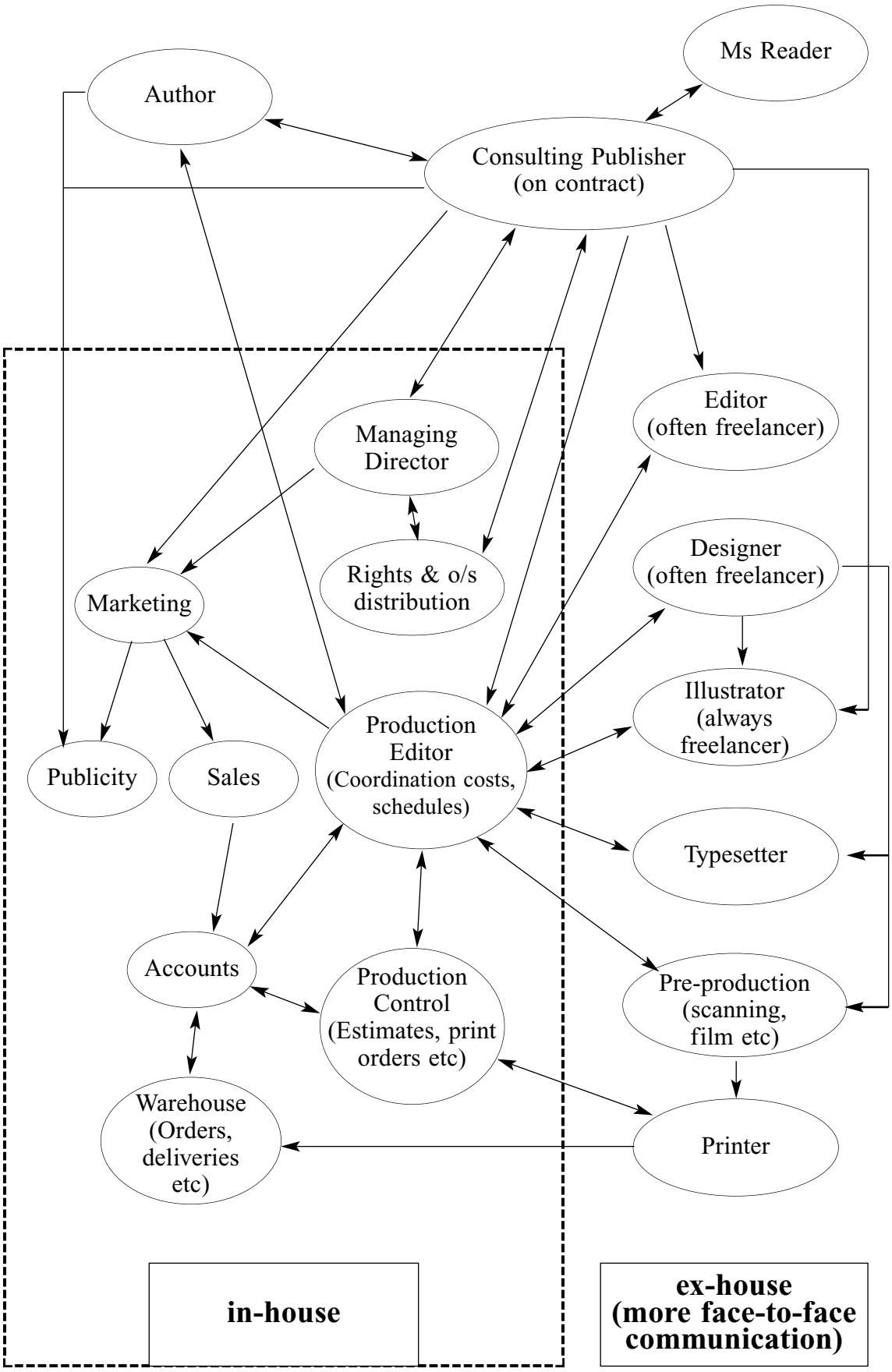


FIGURE 5 Jackie Yowell: Consultant Publisher, Allen & Unwin, 1999

a publishing consultant. She commissions and/or acquires authors and projects externally and 'feeds them into central publishing systems based in Sydney', through the production editor who coordinates all publishing projects and publication schedules (Yowell int. 1999). There are many inter-linking points in Yowell's model, with the frame representing a physical (human resources) and virtual (new publishing technologies) intersection between in-house and external production. The production area is the hub of activity at Allen & Unwin in the way that various individuals/teams/departments revolve around the production editor who oversees project costs and schedules. The author, consulting publisher, editor, designer, illustrator, typesetter and pre-production staff are positioned outside the organisation and connected to the in-house production editor. The author is linked to the consulting publisher, the production editor and publicity department. The consulting publisher is linked to the author, the manuscript reader, the managing director, rights and overseas distribution, the production editor, and freelance editors, designers and illustrators. The link between the consulting publisher to the production editor, marketing and publicity is one-way, as is the link between the production editor and the managing director to marketing. Yowell comments that the 'organisation is complicated, especially with one-way, sometimes two-way traffic, indicating the strategic role of the publisher in delegating the coordination details to the production editor' (Yowell pers. comm. 2000). Despite the obvious one-way directional power of the production editor at Allen & Unwin, directing the coordination, costs and production scheduling to the marketing department, Yowell still feels personally responsible for how well her books are marketed. This response is coming from her hands-on experience in her own publishing company, Silver Gum, working across all areas of production. Yowell has worked exclusively in editorial in her publishing life and has always negotiated and worked with marketing staff on the marketing of her titles. Yowell believes that no matter how well a manuscript has been developed editorially 'if a book isn't marketed well it won't succeed' (Yowell int. 1998). Yowell discusses the significance of a close and informed author–editor–publisher relationship where 'you know the author's intentions well … because others have not even met or spoken to the author and they don't know the author's idiosyncracies and so suggesting ways of marketing, you are thinking about the person as well as the book' (Yowell int. 1998). This also applies to her work relations with publishing colleagues. She describes her former experience as an associate publisher with Penguin Books as 'an enthusiasm between myself and Brian Johns. It was either his book or it was mine' (Yowell int. 1998).

This is also a comment that speaks volumes about the nature of the publishing culture at Penguin from early to late 1980s and the successful teamwork between a publisher and an editor, when a lot of issue books were commissioned because Johns was 'an issue-based newspaper man with a nose for a good story' and Yowell 'had a publishing

sense of what would make a book' (Yowell int. 1998). Yowell spoke of the external communication within a contemporary book publishing environment which is 'increasingly electronic and distanced, rather than taking place in-house and face-to-face' (Yowell pers. comm. 2000). She remarks, 'on the one hand I miss that closeness to the hub of what's going on and on the other, there's more detachment and I can be more independent in my thinking. I take on a project and I hand it over within the pipeline of a professional publishing house and they do the rest' (Yowell int. 1998). A disadvantage for Yowell working externally is not being in the right place to access 'the stream of offers that come through from agents, authors, previous authors, authors passed on from other publishing houses and advisers to the publishing house', where she describes her role and position as 'a kind of scout out on the frontier' (Yowell int. 1999). Yowell is responsible for individual titles only, describing this as partly 'a conflict of interest with the way a publisher would think in-house', where publishing decisions are tied to 'the entire list and the entire health of the publishing house … where you can't be a cherry-picking publisher, you have to be a crop publisher' (Yowell int. 1998).

Yowell attributes the termination of book projects inside large publishing houses to 'relentless attrition' and other cost-effective and time-efficient measures. There is a growing reluctance by many publishers to take on or endure books that take longer than usual to develop (Yowell int. 1999). Also, when a commissioning editor or publisher moves to another publishing house, publishing projects in progress are no longer supported in the same way, and 'are quite likely to be flattened or dropped off' the list (Yowell int. 1999). In Yowell's case, she is not physically located inside the publishing house to 'talk to the reps in the corridors' or 'to be present at marketing meetings'. Yowell believes she has to be 'much more tenacious and work more effectively in the whole process to make sure the book doesn't get ignored because being there is 80 per cent of getting there' (Yowell int. 1999). She describes the difficulties with the hand-over process at 'the Sydney end', in 'separating the end product from the vision that you have for the book'. This is where the Allen & Unwin production editor in Sydney allocates an in-house editor, designer, proofreader, and copy editor for the book, and 'what you get back doesn't look like the book you imagined and may not succeed in the same way you anticipated' (Yowell int. 1999). Yowell also talks about the power of accountants, marketing managers and cost effective stock control measures in the book publishing equation, where these people 'would just say to the publishing director, you've got 25 projects that haven't happened for three years and you've got to get rid of 50 per cent of them. They wouldn't do it on an individual basis but they'd do it in a more systematic way'. Another example is where the warehouse manager will issue an ultimatum to the publisher: 'Right, you've got to pulp 50 per cent of your stock by the end of this year. Which ones are you going

to pulp?' (Yowell int. 1999). Yowell's comments are intended to be general, in describing the process within larger publishing operations, rather than referring to particular publishing companies with regard to cash flow and stock control of the backlist.

Yowell refers to the differences between educational and academic publishing in how books are marketed and their audience appeal. She mentions Moira Rayner's *Rooting Democracy* (1997), which 'began its life as a Silver Gum book' and 'didn't make it onto school reading lists or into the tertiary market when it should have, because it was an accessible and important way to bring those ideas to the next generation' (Yowell int. 1999). While recognising Allen & Unwin's strength as tertiary publishers, Yowell believes that the company has not chosen 'the right people to get books into the educational market at both a marketing and publishing level', at the same time conceding that the educational market has changed significantly and is now 'broken up into very disparate, small markets' (Yowell int. 1998). While Yowell discussed the difficulties of 'being out of the circle' of Sydney-based publishers and their networks, she also spoke of the danger in 'predictable publishing with the same players in the same place', pointing out the importance of having 'people out there, fishing in different pools with different ideas' (Yowell int. 1998). While Allen & Unwin's success in Australia has largely been dependent on the distribution of other publisher's titles, underpinning its commercial success, this has allowed the company to take more risks with its local publishing program.

Yowell was not directly affected by a publishing recession in the book trade in the early 1980s, cushioned by the infrastructure at Penguin. During this period she commissioned 'a lot of books on the environment, confronting the future, poison rain, nuclear tests in the Pacific and recycling'. When Yowell established Silver Gum Press she became an 'owner-publisher' and experienced financial difficulties, which resulted in Allen & Unwin taking over the imprint and distributing its backlist. This arrangement enabled Yowell to refocus on editing, rather than running the business in which 'you sacrifice so much of your energy, when you could be spending it on the list' (Yowell int. 1998). Yowell believes that independence of mind is vital for the health of any publishing organisation, describing her decision to be in editorial from the outset of her publishing career as 'a completely natural choice' (Yowell int. 1998). Yowell's model reflects her external positioning as a consultant to Allen & Unwin, representing a contrasting and alternative view of how in-house staff would perceive the organisational structure and publishing culture. Although in-house publishers Elizabeth Weiss and Sophie Cunningham did not offer diagrammatic models, their comments that relate to organisational structure and publishing culture within Allen & Unwin are included.

ELIZABETH WEISS

> *I have a lot of freedom but then that's the organisational culture of Allen & Unwin and I wouldn't have that freedom if my list wasn't also financially viable. I think that Allen & Unwin and other independent presses are very active in literary culture in Australia and see that Australian identity as an important part of the company's identity, culture and profile* (Weiss int. 1998).

In 1990, Weiss was appointed to Allen & Unwin in the same year that the company became fully independent, owning the Allen & Unwin imprint throughout the world. Australian directors initiated a management buy-out from the UK parent company before it was sold off to HarperCollins. Since the Australian management acquired Allen & Unwin it has independently published fiction and general non-fiction, academic (specialising in the social sciences and health) and children's books. Weiss's position was upgraded in 1999 from social sciences publisher to academic publisher, specialising in social sciences and health. In addition to her commissioning role and publishing responsibilities, Weiss's expanded role reflects more involvement at senior managerial level, participating in company meetings and company training (Weiss int. 1999). Weiss has commissioned with Allen & Unwin since 1990, publishing 35 to 40 titles a year across sociology, health, education, social work, gender studies, cultural studies, media studies and electronic publishing. The list is entirely non-fiction and mostly targeted to an academic readership with occasional books intended for the trade or general market.

As much as one-third of Allen & Unwin's academic and general list are international co-editions with other publishing companies. This is indicative in Australia of a local academic market that is shrinking. Weiss discussed other constraints with print runs for academic titles where 'it is becoming more difficult to justify a minimum run of 2,000 copies for anything other than introductory textbooks' (Weiss pers. comm. 2001). The print runs for academic books at Allen & Unwin are usually a minimum of 2,000 for a monograph topic book, edited collection or professional reference title. Weiss developed a very active co-edition, co-publishing program, sharing joint print runs with other academic publishers to counteract the problem of smaller print runs in a cost-effective way, achieving a more competitive, international reach for her books. The Australian component of a print run may be reduced if Allen & Unwin find a co-publisher but the overall print run will increase. Weiss discussed the size of the print run in relation to economy of scale, identifying several factors that might influence a print run reduction, such as availability of the author for the book's promotion, other competing books on a similar topic or a decline in tertiary courses for the text.

Weiss revised and adapted the Flann and Hill model and provided some written notes. Marketing was not included in Flann and Hill's model and perhaps this reflects the

authors' bias as book editors in organisational structures that value editorial input (1994: 2). Weiss includes marketing in her revised model, clearly separating this function from publicity and sales. Although Weiss rarely deals with literary agents as an academic publisher, she includes and positions the agent between the author and publisher. She also notes that the 'publisher' may be called an 'editor' or 'acquisitions editor' in the US or 'commissioning editor' in the UK. Weiss has added direct links between production control and the typesetter and printer and deleted Hill and Flann's link between designer and typesetter, in relation to Allen & Unwin's structure, where 'the designer reports to the editor, not to the production manager and does not deal directly with the typesetter' (Weiss int. 1999). The production manager initially negotiates the production terms with the typesetter and editors then deal directly with the typesetter at Allen & Unwin. After the production manager places a book with a printer, the editor then deals directly with that printer. Weiss connects in-house publishers much more to other internal company areas such as publicity, sales, marketing and individual members of the production team such as the designer and freelance illustrators. She also comments on the editorial function at Allen & Unwin, where 'the managing editor coordinates freelance editors, proofreaders and designers and, increasingly, line editing is delegated to freelancers' (Weiss int. 1999).

Weiss believes that Allen & Unwin remains 'a fairly editorially driven company in the way it publishes, as opposed to other houses, where I hear that the role of the marketing people is much stronger' (Weiss int. 1998). In-house marketing and production meetings take place on a weekly basis at Allen & Unwin, with quite different publishing agendas. While the production meetings 'are fairly proforma, updating everyone else on the stages of various projects', those who attend the marketing meetings 'discuss new titles and the ways in which current titles are published'. The difference in input to decision-making is that 'the marketing meetings are attended by all the publishers and key marketing personnel across academic and trade lists' (Weiss int. 1998). If there is disagreement between publishers and marketing representatives, either the project doesn't go ahead or there are modifications. These compromises might mean 'a smaller advance to the author', the author may have 'to pitch the project differently' or, if the project is regarded as financially risky, the book may have to 'be published in a less lavish way' (Weiss int. 1998).

While the finance section within the company influences the overall Allen & Unwin publishing program, Weiss is responsible for the profitability of the academic list, initiating a project costing and a budget for individual projects and 'keeping an eye on costings right through a book's life' where the project must 'make a certain amount of dollar and percentage' (Weiss int. 1998). Format and production standards influence these decisions and editors have the day-to-day responsibility of maintaining the

original budget and liaising with Weiss if there are any changes. Cost effective decisions are usually made in consultation with marketing staff and Weiss always signs off on reprints.

It is evident that all of the editors and publishers who took part in this study are constrained in different ways by financial and accounting decisions that are made within their companies. The larger company infrastructure at Allen & Unwin provides a safety net for Weiss if she decides to publish the occasional book that isn't viable. This is because these losses can be absorbed and carried (Weiss int. 1998). Weiss believes that Allen & Unwin actively participates in a literary culture in Australia and that other independent presses also 'have a steadier awareness of the significance of what they are doing locally, because they are not doing it anywhere else' (Weiss int. 1998). Having said this, she also argues for a broader definition of Australian publishers and publishing, when she remarks, 'We've moved on from that sort of '70s or '80s thing of anything about Australia by definition was important and good. We need to know about the world and we need to know about ourselves in the context of the world' (Weiss int. 1998).

There are approximately 80 to 90 staff employed with Allen & Unwin (Weiss and Cunningham pers. comm. 2001). The following areas were identified within the company: publishing, editorial, production, marketing, sales, publicity, rights and export, accounts and information technology. An off-site distribution centre is also shared with another publishing company, Hodder Headline (Cunningham pers. comm. 2001). Allen & Unwin's list increased from 150 new titles in 1990 when Weiss was first appointed, to 250 in 1998. Allen & Unwin published around 230 titles in the 2000–01 publishing year (Cunningham pers. comm. 2000) and continues to receive an annual subsidy through the Literature Fund's annual presentation and promotion program. In the book publishing grant period 2000–01, this subsidy was $21,000 (Australia Council 2000: 1).

Sophie Cunningham

> *I get the buzz from publishing books that I think have really impacted on the culture. I'm not interested in the notion of books as products or units. I get very connected to the content of the book* (Cunningham int. 1998).

Sophie Cunningham was an outside reader for publishers Hilary McPhee and Di Gribble in 1988. The following year Cunningham joined the independent McPhee Gribble, as a trainee editor, proofreading and copy editing. When McPhee Gribble was acquired by Penguin Books in 1991, Cunningham moved with Hilary McPhee to Penguin. As McPhee's administrative duties broadened within a larger, more

bureaucratic structure, Cunningham took on more editorial responsibility. Following the departure of McPhee to Pan Macmillan in 1992, Cunningham became the imprint publisher, commissioning authors and titles for the Penguin/McPhee Gribble list, before taking up a new appointment with Allen & Unwin in 1994 as trade publisher (*AB&P* 1995: 73). Cunningham published between 25 to 30 titles a year with McPhee Gribble and this increased to 40 at Allen & Unwin.

Cunningham was considered to be part of a new and younger generation of women publishers, described by the Australian media as 'café frequenting, leather jacket-wearing thirtysomethings', dubbed as 'the black pack' (Griffin 1998: 6; Smee 1998: 3). This media creation also included Penguin's Julie Gibbs, Random House's Jane Palfreyman and Pan Picador's Nikki Christer. Cunningham mentions 'a whole lot of boys who published in New York in the 1980s, known as "the rat pack" '. She attributes much of the Australian media hype and opportunism to an attempt to recreate a contemporary Australian female equivalent. The Australian media's phrase, flagging a group of younger women who rocketed through the ranks of Australian book publishing in the 1990s, 'kind of stuck' (Cunningham int. 1998). Cunningham initiated a shift to part-time publishing at Allen & Unwin in late 1999, to take time out from a profession that 'just takes up all your space — you don't have any time to do anything else' and write her first novel (Cunningham int. 1999). The following year Cunningham relocated to the Melbourne office of Allen & Unwin, where she maintains a two-and-a-half-day a week commitment to publishing, while continuing to work on her novel (Cunningham pers. comm. 2001).

While Cunningham believes in the value of good editing she also comments on the prominence and rise of marketing within Allen & Unwin, observing that she has 'seen the wisdom of taking those [marketing] concerns really seriously because if the book doesn't sell well it's harder for the author to get their next book published' (Cunningham int. 1998). She described her publishing experience with the McPhee Gribble/Penguin imprint, where she was given the editorial freedom to commission authors and titles, as a reflection of her own generation and interests. While Cunningham was able to initiate a new McPhee Gribble list within Penguin, she did not have the backing of the whole company with marketing and promotions.

Cunningham talks about how her publishing maturity has developed over thirteen years in the industry. She has had to learn on the job about her own capabilities and those of other individuals across very different organisational structures in publishing. She tells a story about rejecting a book with a lot of commercial potential because Allen & Unwin does not publish for a mass market readership:

> *I didn't think we were the best company for this title. You have to recognise your company and know your own strengths and weaknesses … if anything my*

> *internal sensor has become stronger … I've become more aware of what we do well as a company so I tend to kind of filter things out* (Cunningham int. 1998).

Cunningham describes a 'self-regulating way of working' in publishing books out of her own experience where she is more open to particular styles of books and tends to approach particular kinds of writers. As Cunningham has taken on more publishing responsibilities and circulated less in the wider culture this approach has changed, so that 'a lot of it now depends on those people finding me' (Cunningham int. 1998). While some things have shifted in Cunningham's awareness, she remains 'connected to book content' and is not influenced by, or interested in, 'the notion of products or units that I don't think are going to have an impact on the culture'. She believes the commissioning publisher should 'fight for the place of the book, keeping it central to how the companies operate, rather than allowing it to become product-oriented or market-driven' (Cunningham int. 1998). Cunningham believes that her fiction list had more impact at McPhee Gribble and her non-fiction list is more interesting at Allen & Unwin.

She makes the distinction between 'safe and boring publishing', in bidding for and winning a big name at a buyer's auction and the more personally satisfying and risk-taking venture of 'trying to build someone from the ground up'. She also identifies strong, professional author–publisher relations as the reason why many authors follow their editors or publishers elsewhere. Cunningham spoke of the literary agent's role in persuading particular authors to shift to other publishing companies. She referred to her own long-term dealings with particular Sydney-based agents who circulate and network within an urban literary environment and described the 'intermediary role of the literary agent as a cultural filter' (Cunningham int. 1998).

A common issue amongst the editors and publishers in this study is the conflict and pressures of time in restricting a commissioning reach. It is clear that there has been a critical shift for Cunningham in this respect. She no longer has as much time to circulate within a wider literary culture, meet with new writers or discuss potential ideas for publishing projects. Her experience at Allen & Unwin is that she has become less proactive in originating new authors and titles because of her ongoing in-house commitments to existing author relationships, dealing with annual Vogel Award entries for younger writers and considering publishing proposals from literary agents. Cunningham estimates that 50 per cent of her authors are agented and that this percentage can sometimes increase, in relation to the pressures of other in-house responsibilities.

Ray Coffey

> *I oversee the whole operation. We do about 35 books a year and there is not a book that I haven't read and been involved in the decision-making about what to publish. I still oversee production. I'm still a hands-on person* (Coffey int. 1998).

Fremantle Arts Centre Press was established in 1976 and incorporated as an autonomous unit within the Fremantle Arts Centre. The press, now operating as a separate entity, is a regional, independent trade publisher, publishing authors from Western Australia, across literary fiction, poetry, children's picture books and a range of non-fiction titles. Ray Coffey's publishing career spans 23 years and is circumscribed by a unique set of in-house experiences within a single publishing organisation. Coffey has been the publishing manager with Fremantle Arts Centre Press since 1978, when he was appointed as the only full-time member of staff, working with freelance designers and paste-up artists (Coffey int. 1998). As a small press publisher he was also responsible for administration, marketing and distribution. Fremantle Arts Centre Press was established as a separate organisation from Fremantle Arts Centre. The Centre offered in-kind accounting and additional labour support to the press. This led to Wendy Jenkins' editorial involvement, through her association as poet-in-residence with Fremantle Arts Centre, working closely with Coffey on Albert Facey's manuscript, *A Fortunate Life* (1980).

An inevitable change for Coffey, as the publishing organisation has grown and the list has expanded, is that he is less hands-on in the editing process, identifying this as a problem for commissioning editors 'where you get further away from the coalface of actually working with authors and texts'. With this growth, Coffey has moved into more of a management role, 'losing touch to some extent with primary sources for stimulation and ideas and that's been a big change for me' (Coffey int. 1998). Coffey refers to his role as publisher and chief executive officer as 'more of an integrated approach in consultation with others, including Boards', describing the publishing organisation as 'a small company with no more than ten staff' (Coffey int. 1998). Coffey still 'oversees the whole operation', publishing approximately 35 titles each year, reading all manuscripts for publication and making decisions about what to publish. In a senior management position Coffey is a full member of the Fremantle Arts Centre Board who 'have the final decision-making powers' although 'the Board do not concern themselves with the publisher's list'. Instead, they 'keep an eye on the bottom line' and only make decisions and implement change 'if the press is going off the rails' (Coffey int. 1998). Finance, marketing and sales also inform and influence final publishing decisions made in consultation with individuals across these areas. Coffey remarks, 'I get upset about the fact that I can't take some books and ideas further … not at anybody in particular but at the circumstances' (Coffey int. 1998).

It is evident that Coffey is interested, first and foremost, in the 'creative and imaginative side' of book development in the early stages of publishing projects, rather than budgetary or market concerns. Although as publishing manager he has a lot of influence and say within the organisation, finance, sales and marketing gates can, and do, prevent particular publishing initiatives from going ahead.

Coffey's model of Fremantle Arts Centre Press firmly establishes the author at the centre of the publishing organisation (Figure 6). One half of the diagram represents editorial and production areas. The editor is linked to the author and other members of the production team as well as the production manager, while publicity and marketing are more closely linked to the business manager and sales, accounts/orders and warehouse. Marketing and publicity is also linked to the production and publication manager and the publisher/CEO/commissioning editor but this area is positioned within the cluster that is closely linked to the business manager. Most of Coffey's links are two way, with an exception, the publication and production manager who report to the publisher. The combined roles of publisher, chief executive officer and commissioning editor indicate the size of the organisation, as a small to medium independent publisher as well as the wide scope of Coffey's publishing powers.

Coffey believes that 'if you let cost and marketability get in the way initially, your research and development of ideas get stymied', identifying the production meetings where a book's costing and rough specifications are submitted for consideration, as the place where 'the number crunching through sales and marketing' comes into play. Like other publishers in this study, Coffey also discusses the cultural and economic factors that come into play in weighing up the importance of individual titles against the character of the overall list and finding ways of 'accommodating titles' through the cross subsidy of poetry with titles that guarantee more sales (Coffey int. 1998).

While Coffey is frank about his managerial workload interfering with his ability to work more closely with ideas, authors and texts within a contemporary publishing environment, he is reluctant to use literary agents 'as a cultural filter'. Although Fremantle Arts Centre Press receives manuscripts from a few agents on a regular basis, Coffey believes that 'literary agents don't make the kinds of judgements that we make' (Coffey int. 1998). While agents and publishers both deal with authors, the agent is more interested in doing business with established authors where there is a guaranteed return on sales of their next book. Coffey is making the point that the role of the independent publisher is to broker contracts and relations with new writers where the sales success of their first book is an unknown.

Coffey details the in-house consultative process that takes place at pre-production stage, early in the editing of the manuscript, where a draft copy is circulated amongst individual members of staff to allow wider input and then tabled for more formal

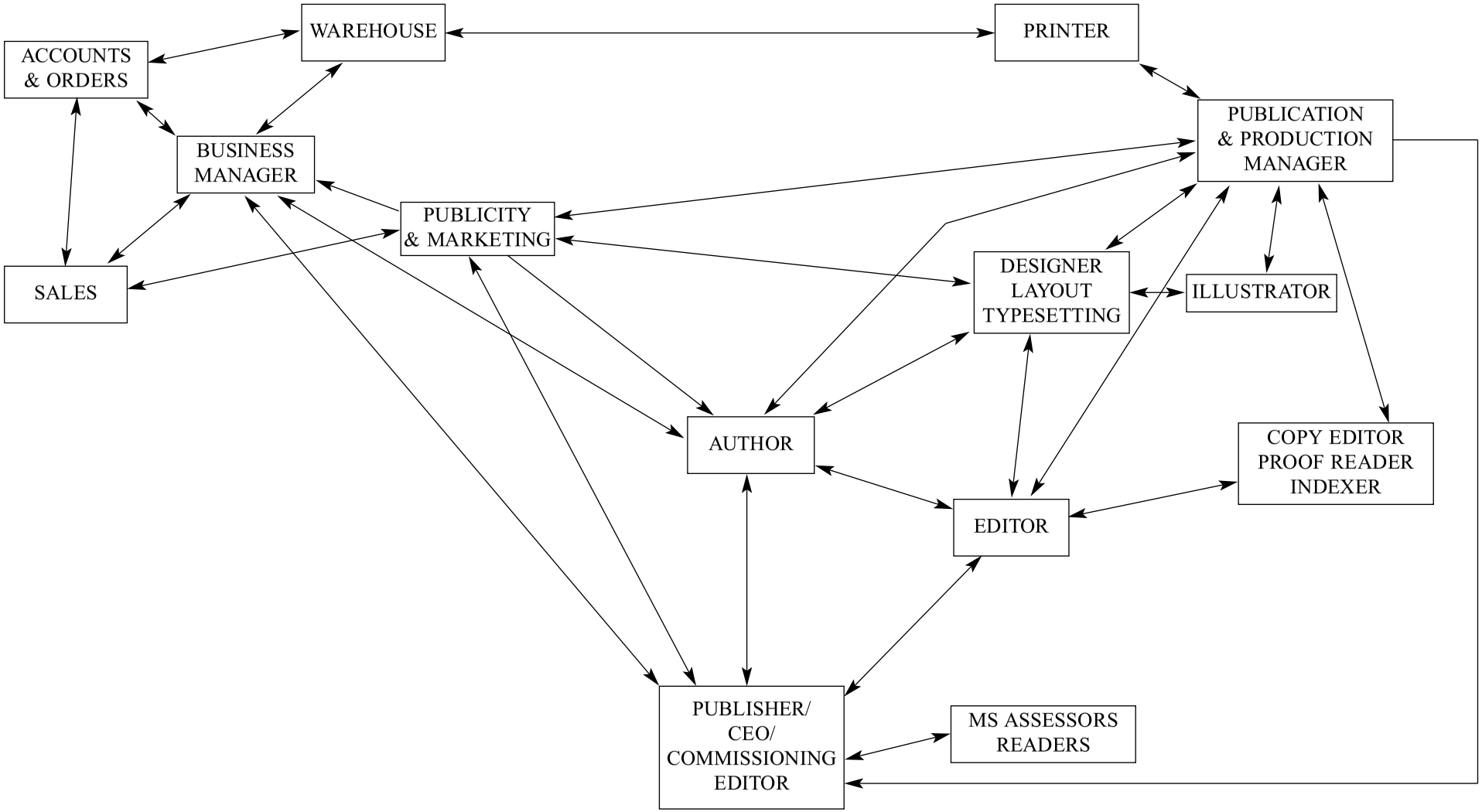


FIGURE 6 Ray Coffey: Publisher and Chief Executive Officer, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 1999

discussion at the staff meeting. This communication is 'a kind of dialogue and discussion among everybody about books and the way they are developing' at Fremantle Arts Centre Press. This includes input also from those who are not located in the editorial area, such as the business manager and the production manager, who 'come up with a whole range of ideas' for publishing projects that 'have also come from networking and circulating within the wider culture' (Coffey int. 1999).

Coffey attributes the organisation's survival to the fact that Fremantle Arts Centre Press has managed to remain independent by exploiting opportunities in identifying market niches in publishing 'that have been vacated to some extent by the economic rationalist end of publishing' (Coffey int. 1998). A strength of Fremantle Arts Centre Press is in 'maximising returns within economies of scale that are realistic for the size of the organisation, allowing the publisher to 'identify ways of working against the grain or in the gaps, maintaining a kind of creative edge' (Coffey int. 1998). Fremantle Arts Centre Press has restructured since I first interviewed Coffey in 1998. Two full-time positions were sacrificed, the adult non-fiction editor and in-house designer. The children's editor, employed on a half-time basis, is also a casualty. Currently, there are six full-time in-house members of staff, including the publisher/editor/managing director, marketing/promotions coordinator, production coordinator, accounts officer, sales representative and receptionist. The business manager is now employed on a three-quarter time basis, the warehouse coordinator is employed on a half-time basis and an editor and finance clerk are quarter-time positions. Additional design and editing support is spread across two to three freelance positions. The in-house organisational areas remain editorial, production, marketing, sales and finance. Fremantle Arts Centre Press published 34 titles in the 2000–01 publishing year and continues to receive an annual subsidy from the Australia Council, through the Literature Fund's annual presentation and promotion program. Fremantle Arts Centre Press received $25,000 in the book publishing grant period for 2000–01 (Australia Council 2000: 1).

Craig Munro

> *The autonomy and freedom in any publishing house is determined by traditions and by the procedures of that company. So I've been very lucky because I have been in an extremely ground-breaking publishing house. The tradition of UQP is to push the boundaries in all sorts of exciting directions to take risks with the list. Risk taking, to my mind, means constantly moving into new territory or further into territory that's very unfamiliar* (Munro int. 1998).

The University of Queensland Press functioned as the publications arm of the University until the 1960s. The primary focus continued to be scholarly publications

by UQP's own academics, and official university documents, until the appointment of Frank Thompson, as Manager of UQP and the university bookshop and Ann Lahey as the first editor in 1961 (Munro 1998: 14–15). Thompson advocated an expanding role for UQP in 1973, the year in which the Whitlam government increased funding to the arts and established the Literature Board, broadening the role of the Arts Council, subsidising individual authors to write and UQP for specific publishing projects. The Paperback Poets and Portable Australian Authors series introduced influential new directions in the 1970s. The 1980s publishing program was narrowed to an Australian Studies focus with more popular culture titles and Penguin became UQP's national distributor in 1984 (Galligan 1997: 140–2). UQP published *The Literature Board: a Brief History* in 1988. Since the 1970s the list has broadened to include literary fiction and non-fiction, poetry, popular memoir, history and biography, children's books (including young adult fiction) and Indigenous writing.

Craig Munro has worked for UQP since 1971, apart from occasional freelance work. He was appointed as a trainee editor and is currently publishing manager. Munro solicited the first collection of Peter Carey's short stories, *The Fat Man in History* (1974) and was UQP's first fiction editor from 1973 to 1980. In the boom years from the late 1980s into the early 1990s, UQP was publishing up to 80 titles a year, riding on the success of Peter Carey's *Oscar and Lucinda* (1988) and Hugh Lunn's *Over the Top with Jim* (1989) that sold around half a million copies between them. This was a time of expansion with extra staff employed and the publishing output increased by 50 per cent, a never-to-be-repeated phenomenon in UQP's publishing history (Munro int. 1998). A 40 per cent reduction occurred in the number of books published on a yearly basis 'to around 40 or 50 titles' from '60 or 70 books' in the late 1990s (Munro int. 1998). Munro estimates that the percentage of book titles imported into Australia is 'between 70 to 85 per cent', where the 'fifteen to 20 per cent of Australian titles published by independent companies' compete with the huge majority of imported stock on the book shelves. While the number of off-shore books into the Australian market is on the increase, UQP is going the other way, publishing 'about 90 per cent Australian authors' (Munro int. 1998). Munro laments 'the lack of any mid-list', the steady sellers or what he describes as 'library fiction' (books that cover the publisher's costs) where the gap between UQP's award-winning 'high flyers' and the 'low performers' is evident (Munro int. 1998). The extent of any print run is decided by UQP's general manager Laurie Muller, in consultation with the sales manager and sales personnel (Munro int. 1998). While UQP regards literary agents as useful and acquire some authors and manuscripts in this way, Munro comments that 'like authors and editors, they are only as good as their experience and ability', estimating that somewhere 'between 20 to 25 per cent of manuscript proposals' come to UQP through literary agents (Munro int. 1999).

Munro's publishing model of UQP is a top down organisational structure with the general manager clearly positioned at the top, with two-way links to and from management level within the publishing house, positioned directly underneath and answerable to the general manager (Figure 7). The management spread oversees the university bookshop, electronic product, finance and administration, publishing and production. At management level, the bookshop manager, electronic business manager and finance and administration manager are linked to the bookshop staff who are linked to book buying customers. The electronic business manager is more closely linked with the bookshop manager and the publishing manager is more closely linked with the production manager who is also linked to finance and administration. There is a direct link between the accounts staff and bookshop staff and a royalties link between the accounts staff and UQP authors. The publishing manager is linked to and from editorial and sales and publicity and the Penguin warehouse is also linked to sales and publicity in-house. The production manager is linked to layout and typesetting. UQP's stock is located in the Victorian warehouse at Penguin Books and distributed directly from the warehouse to bookshops and libraries. UQP printers are also based in Victoria and linked to the production manager in-house. Munro describes authors and readers as 'the floors and the walls' of the whole structure (Munro pers. comm. 2000). A two-way track between editors and authors is indicated and there is also a two-way link between sales and publicity and UQP authors. A continuous link runs right through the publishing house from the general manager to UQP authors, through the finance and administration manager and accounts staff. Freelance cover designers are outsourced by UQP and are linked to in-house senior editorial staff. Although UQP employed in-house book designers from the late 1960s to the early 1970s and again in the late 1980s, Munro estimates that '95 per cent of UQP's book design has been executed by mostly Brisbane-based freelancers' (Munro int. 1999).

It is evident that the general manager has great influence and decision-making powers within the UQP organisational structure. There have only been two general managers at UQP since the early 1960s — Frank Thompson (1961–83) and Laurie Muller (1983–). Munro spoke about Thompson's influence in growing and broadening UQP's list to reflect 'a more international or world view' with an emphasis on other regional cultures. Like Thompson, Muller is directly involved in the shaping of UQP's list. Munro discussed 'a whole of company involvement' with established UQP authors such as Peter Carey, when Carey's books are in production. Munro believes that UQP editors have a good working relationship with all of their authors, discussing examples of author–editor–publisher relations that 'started out as close and have become family' (Munro int. 1999).

The tradition at UQP is one of 'pushing the boundaries in all sorts of exciting directions to take risks with the list'. Munro believes that 'the autonomy and

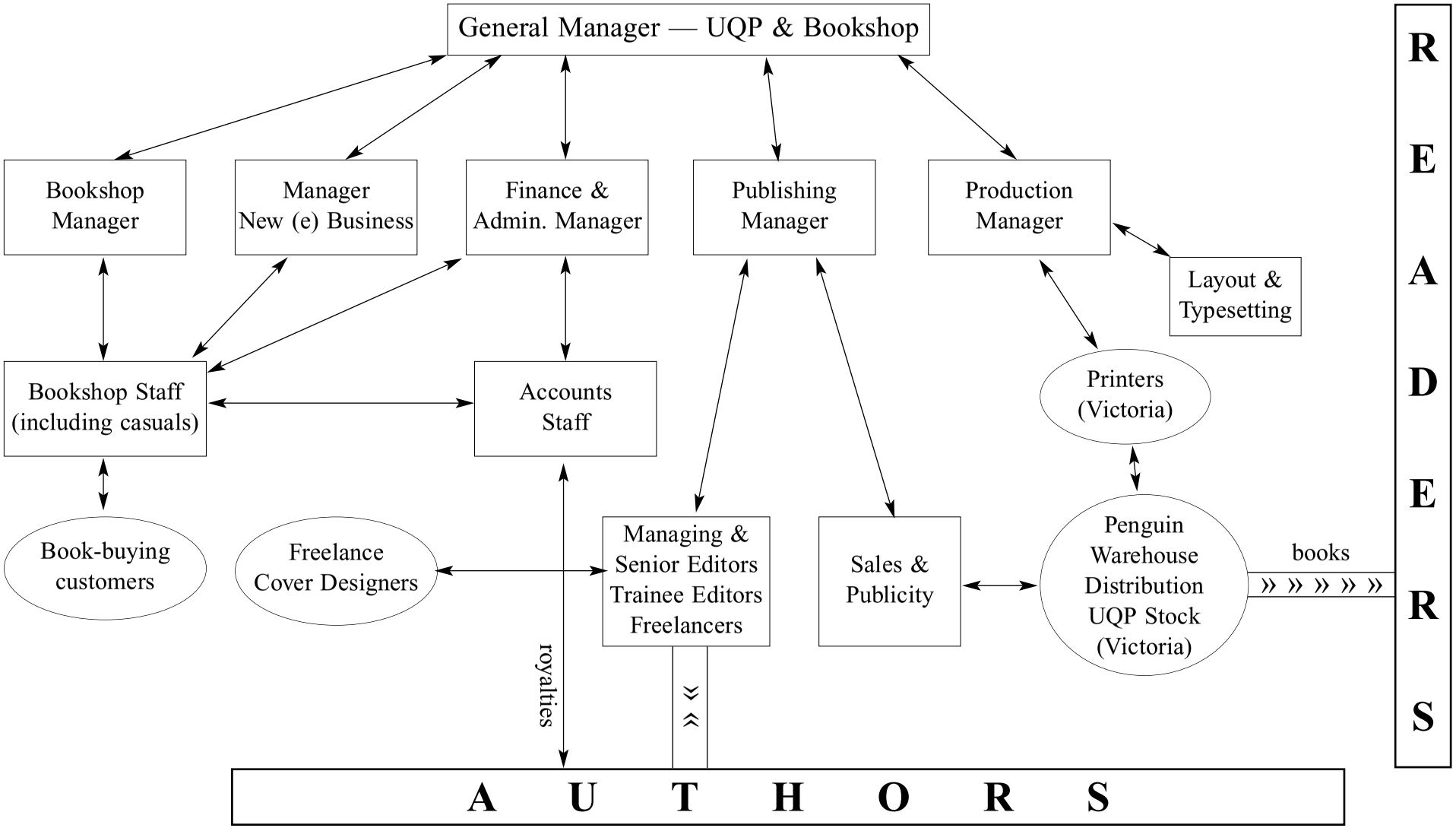


FIGURE 7 Craig Munro: Publishing Manager, University of Queensland Press, 2000

freedom in any publishing house is determined by the traditions and procedures of the company'. Munro referred to an independent body of Australian literature that reflects the spirit of independent publishing at a local level, constantly at risk from financial collapse or takeover by larger publishing organisations. The contribution that independent publishers make to a vibrant publishing culture in Australia is evident in Munro's description of independent companies as 'a resource in a similar kind of category to the rainforests of the Amazon' (Munro int. 1998).

Munro is positioned within a university press at management level as the publishing manager. An additional responsibility is in commissioning new works, working with editorial colleagues who have different subject responsibilities (Munro int. 1999). The UQP monthly publishing committee meeting is where all publishing decisions are tabled for consideration 'irrespective of who commissions or proposes a project' and the decision is 'reached by consensus based on project familiarity' where in some cases 'casting votes are taken where there is a fairly equal for and against' (Munro int. 1999). The general manager chairs the meeting which is attended by all senior editors and other editorial staff, the sales manager and production manager and a representative from finance. When Munro was interviewed in 1999 a marketing position, for the publishing house and the university bookshop, was in the process of being filled.

UQP publishes around 50 books a year and continues to receive an annual subsidy through the Literature Fund's annual presentation and promotion program. In the book publishing grant period 2000–01, UQP received $24,000 (Australia Council 2000: 1). Munro took leave of all publishing responsibilities at UQP in 2001 to concentrate on the editing of the third volume of the *History of the Book in Australia: 1945 to the Present*, to be published by UQP in 2002.

Sue Abbey

> *I think it's taken me quite some time to develop my own perceptions and to understand these and to allow others' perceptions and to be able to measure both, that is, the authors and Indigenous networks which I work with* (Abbey int. 1999).

Sue Abbey began her editorial training with UQP in 1981 as an editorial assistant and was formally appointed to the position of senior editor in 1987. In the Australian Bicentennial Year (1988), UQP initiated the David Unaipon Award for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander writers and Abbey became the supervising/managing editor of the Black Australian Writers series the following year. While Abbey does not regard Unaipon award winners as commissioned, she does take on memoir, biography, issue books and contemporary Australian poetry, contributing around 20 titles a year to UQP's publishing program.

Abbey discusses her 'satisfaction as an editor with a small house' in having the opportunity to be able to take a book through most stages in production, from the ideas or concept stage through to the finished book, consulting widely with other members of the production team. She also discussed her editorial role in arguing for a place for particular books at the monthly publishing meetings. While Abbey identifies a recent trend towards marketing within the organisation, she also believes that decisions about what books to publish are significantly influenced by her editorial recommendations 'that are then taken up by the rest of the publishing committee' (Abbey int. 1999). Abbey's influence in maximising the publication of Indigenous writing at UQP, by producing in-house reader's reports that contain senior editorial comment, judge's comments, occasional freelance reader's comments and her own final recommendations, are evident in the reader's reports that Abbey made available for *Steam Pigs* (1995), *Talking About Celia* (1994) and *Is That You, Ruthie?* (1998).

An interesting point Abbey raises is in relation to Indigenous and general publishing policy at UQP. The Unaipon Award initiative and the building of the Black Australian Writers series list since 1989 has created an opportunity for cross-cultural exchange between Indigenous and non-Indigenous editors in the production of works by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander writers. Abbey refers, in particular, to the valuable editorial and cross-cultural input from former UQP in-house editor Sandra Phillips in shaping the Black Australian Writers list from 1995–97. Significantly, the direction of UQP's general publishing policy across the wider publishing list has been informed through this process. The application of culturally appropriate criteria in the publication of Indigenous work and cross cultural exchange between Indigenous and non-Indigenous editors is more fully discussed in Chapter Six.

Susan Hawthorne

> Our focus on export is what distinguishes us from most presses of comparable size. This includes other Australian presses as well as feminist presses in other countries. One of the battles we are constantly fighting with ourselves is the push to grow. We have grown, but resisting it is a full-time job (Hawthorne and Klein 1995).

Susan Hawthorne was appointed as editor with Penguin Books from 1987 to 1991. She began commissioning trade titles in her first year and was formally appointed as commissioning editor in 1990. She co-founded the independent feminist publishing company, Spinifex Press, with her partner, Renate Klein, in 1991. Klein is employed as a full-time senior academic at Deakin University and Hawthorne is an associate academic at Victoria University. Hawthorne is primarily responsible for book contracts, editorial, marketing, finance and production and both publishers are

centrally involved in the Spinifex publishing program. The Spinifex Press list aims to represent diversity within the feminist movement and to balance local and overseas authors, especially with the inclusion of 'book authors from every continent (except Antarctica)' across the list, including a broad representation of authors in Spinifex anthologies that 'have helped to increase the exposure of local authors in the international market' (Hawthorne pers. comm. 2001). The Spinifex list 'represents a kind of flashpoint' of the latest developments in international feminism and books that are directly linked to local issues and community concerns. The list represents cultural diversity across race/ethnicity, class and gender, primarily reflecting Indigenous experience and issues in Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific (Hawthorne pers. comm. 2001).

Hawthorne and Klein's model of Spinifex Press charts the author's journey through the publishing house, including domestic and global destination markets for books (Figure 8). The use of a strong, unbroken line by the publishers indicates direct contact between the author and other in-house personnel. Broken or dotted lines imply less direct contact between the author and other points throughout the author's journey. Production, publicity, finance, export rights/web-site and database areas revolve around the publishers who are centrally positioned. The authors are directly linked to the publishers who are usually the first contact, linking the author to freelance editors, designers and the typesetter through in-house production control. Authors also enjoy the benefit of direct contact with individual personnel in publicity, production, editorial, finance, media and export rights. Like most publishing companies, Hawthorne and Klein employ a staff that shrinks and grows with the business. One staff member can constitute an entire department, such as editorial or production, and staff also take on more than their designated role. Publishing, export/rights, editorial, production and web-site management have always been in-house areas. Book design, copy editing, publishers' readers, typesetting and publicity are usually contracted out to freelancers. In 2000, Spinifex employed five in-house staff who worked in production, publicity, database, export/rights and web-site management and finance and inventory (Hawthorne pers. comm. 2000). This is the only personalised model of a publishing organisation where in-house staff have been identified by their first names as well as their respective roles within the publishing house. It is evident from this model that the area of export rights is a conduit for the author's book to publication, sales and distribution in other countries. The distinction between domestic sub-rights and international sub-rights is clearly indicated. This is indicative of the strength of Spinifex Press's export reach into world feminist markets in the United States of America, Canada, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Europe and other translation markets.

Hawthorne, like most small press publishers, has taken on 'just about everything' to do with publishing at Spinifex. The range of in-house tasks that Hawthorne carries

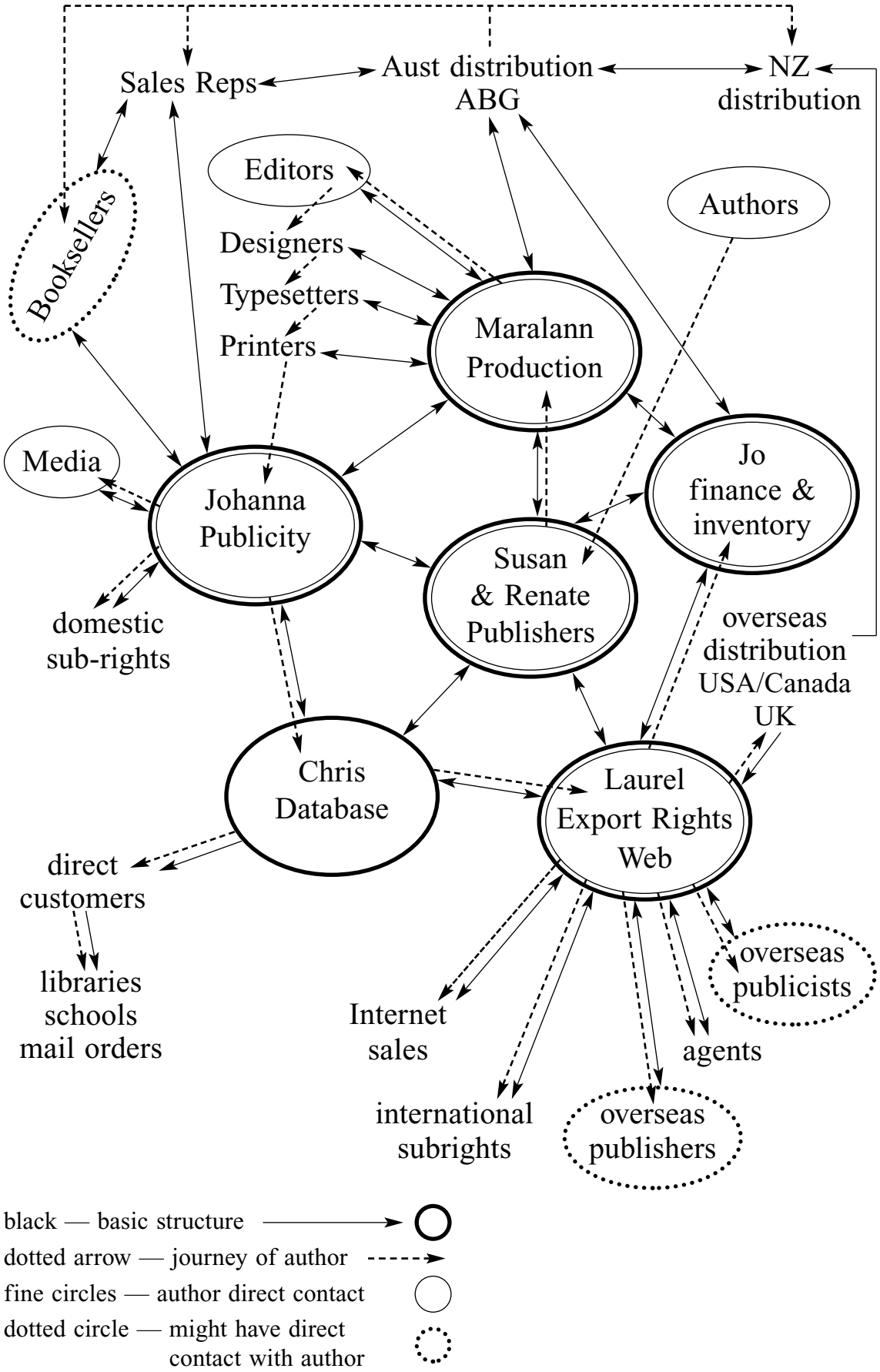


FIGURE 8 Susan Hawthorne and Renate Klein: Company Directors and Publishers, Spinifex Press, 2000

out at any one time is governed by the number of publishing staff, which is governed in turn by sales turnover and financial success. While Hawthorne has always controlled the finances she has become 'more proactively involved with finance' since the company was restructured in late 1997 (Hawthorne int. 1999). The major changes indicated by Hawthorne are to do with editorial involvement, where much more copy editing is outsourced to freelance editors than in the past. While Hawthorne takes on the structural editing in the early stages of manuscript development, she is more likely to hand over to 'editors who are specialised in particular areas' to follow the project through (Hawthorne int. 1999). The exception for Hawthorne is to do with her own desire to be more closely involved with particular publishing projects across all stages of production. Hawthorne and Klein are the 'first readers' of manuscripts and engage freelance readers on an occasional basis, when knowledge and expertise in specialised subject areas are required. Hawthorne will also seek out second opinions from 'somebody I really respect' if she is unsure about 'politically sensitive issues' or authors who are not personally or professionally known to either publisher (Hawthorne int. 1998).

Klein and Hawthorne are in a unique position. As authors themselves they have experienced the author's journey first-hand and it is this journey that informs their publishing process at Spinifex Press. Hawthorne has discussed the publishing freedom in being able to shape the Spinifex list where 'the only thing that would stop me from publishing particular books would be my own decision not to do it' (Hawthorne int. 1998). Hawthorne has described the process where either publisher will take on books independently of each other, as 'a spoken arrangement not to make too many wild promises before we have talked with each other', arguing that 'there is not a lot of room for wild promises but on the occasion when one or the other has made wild promises we've stuck to them' (Hawthorne int. 1998). Within the context of large or smaller publishing companies Hawthorne remarks that 'sometimes it only takes one person in a critical position to make a difference' regardless of the size of the publishing operation, its organisational structure and publishing culture (Hawthorne int. 1998). This is evident in Hawthorne's in-house approach to process and risk-taking with the publishing program inside Penguin in the late 1980s and in Spinifex Press's success, from the early 1990s, in subverting conventional publishing culture and organisational structure.

Hawthorne also discusses the cross-over or movement of publishing staff, describing this industry pattern as the flow between independent and multinational publishing companies, as independent companies are taken over by multinational structures impacting on the individuals who work within and across these cultural publishing ambits (Hawthorne int. 1998). Hawthorne and Klein successfully exploit a feminist export market and this has enabled the list to expand. Distribution arrangements are

in place in Australia and New Zealand through the Australian Book Group (ABG) with a strong publishing, publicity and distribution presence in the United States and Canada. The Spinifex export area is a hub of activity with a well established publicity, distribution and rights infrastructure, indicating a strong global reach, particularly in the United States and Canada, publishing to a market demand for feminist books. This is reflected in their publishing model where, it is evident that Spinifex also successfully exploit co-publishing agreements indicated by the link between export and overseas publishers in the publishing model. This publishing house has entered cost effective co-publishing and translation agreements with numerous overseas publishers, enabling Spinifex to originate titles they otherwise would not have been able to publish, where various aspects of book design, production and print runs are shared. Spinifex has attempted to strengthen distribution of small, independent Asian and Australian publishers by promoting links between them. Spinifex was represented at the Tokyo International Book Fair in 1996/1997 and Hawthorne and Klein have entered into co-production with publishers from Bangladesh, India and the Philippines, also publishing authors from these regions, including Japan and various works have been translated. The establishment of the Feminist Publishing in Asia and the Pacific web-site in 1996 linked feminist publishers in the region (Hawthorne pers. comm. 2001).

In the mid-1990s, Spinifex embraced new technologies in book publishing which have impacted on the company in ways that have advantaged Spinifex's position in a global marketplace. A company web-site was constructed in late 1995 and Spinifex also published the first book on women and cyberspace and internet culture in the same year. Through an industry alliance with a group of independent publishers, Publish Australia, Spinifex developed its home page on the worldwide web. One of the pressing infrastructural problems for Spinifex and other feminist publishers has been in keeping up with the pace of new electronic developments in book publishing throughout the 1990s and beyond. Hawthorne claims that Spinifex has contributed 'probably more than any other feminist publisher in the world to internet publishing', establishing and exploiting its presence in electronic territories as a feminist publisher of cyberculture (Hawthorne int. 1999).

Spinifex Press publishes around ten books a year and receives an annual subsidy through the Literature Fund's presentation and promotion program. In the book publishing grant period 2000–01, Spinifex Press received $6,000 (Australia Council 2000: 1).

VERN FIELD AND KIRSTIN SCHNEIDER

> *Sybylla is still relevant and it doesn't matter what other publishing companies are publishing.* […] *It's about the process of operating as*

> *a non-profit, non-hierarchical collective and existing in that form is just another element of the continuing role* (Field and Schneider int. 1999).

Sybylla Co-operative Press Limited began its political life as a trading society in 1976, operating as a feminist printing and publishing collective. The reasons for establishing a women's printery, other than the upheavals in Australian mainstream politics in late 1975, was that feminist ideas were being met with widespread resistance. Commercial printers' costs were extremely high for the relatively small volume of work women required, and they were often reluctant to give technical advice. Between 1976 and 1984, the co-operative 'developed from a small offset printery, sustained by non-paid labour', to a printing and publishing business 'close to economic viability, supporting four full-time paid positions' (Funder 1984).

In a case study of Sybylla, 'prepared and written in close collaboration with co-operative members', the terms 'co-operative' and 'collective' were used interchangeably (Funder 1984). The co-operative circumvented the 'management structure and decision-making processes required of legal co-operatives', by amending the Model Rules to allow seven, instead of five directors, effectively 'democratising the structure' (Funder 1984: 8). The fundamental principles of collectivity relied on a non-hierarchical structure and within this organisational model, 'power and responsibility were structured in a parallel, rather than pyramidal fashion'. To maximise 'participatory democracy' no leaders or office bearers were elected and decisions were 'reached by consensus rather than by voting, decree, delegated authority or non-decision' (Funder 1984: 6). 'Collectivity' was viewed by co-operative members as a dynamic process, allowing discussion and debate to develop. This was regarded as 'a crucial aspect of the group's growth and of members' actual participation' (Funder 1984: 8).

In realising 'a long-delayed and preciously-held' co-operative aim in 1981, collective members 'approached two feminist editors', Alison Tilson and Anna Gibbs, who agreed to edit an anthology of women's prose fiction' (Funder 1984: 16). A change of name was registered to 'Sybylla Co-operative Press and Publications Limited' in 1982 and Sybylla's first anthology *Frictions* (1982) was published. Alison Ravenscroft was employed as book editor in 1985. A substantial grant from the Victorian Women's Trust (1986), on-going 'co-operative development' funding from the Ministry of Employment and Training and the turnover from Sybylla's printery, enabled Ravenscroft to continue. In the late 1980s, competitive printing chains, such as Snap and Pink Panther, undercut smaller print businesses. Changes in print technology also enabled 'people to put a manuscript into a photocopier and produce twenty copies, sorted and collated', creating further redundancies in the printing trade (Ravenscroft pers. comm. 1997). Co-operative members discussed diversifying the print business with more 'state-of-the-art' equipment and a desktop publishing service. This wasn't a viable

option for a feminist collective who were ‘endlessly strapped for cash and never had enough capital to fund itself to its full potential’ (Ravenscroft pers. comm. 1997). The business shopfront premises were lost when the commercial printing operation closed in 1988, and the collective ‘reverted to its backyard origins’ in a ‘year of radical change’, described by Ravenscroft as the ‘end of an era within the life of a small feminist co-operative’ (1988: 6; 1989: 5). The commercial printery heavily subsidised the publishing program and by removing this capital base, the collective considerably weakened the viability of its publishing operations (Brown 1997a: 18). The shifts in Sybylla were symptomatic of ‘a long struggle in which the collective tried to balance the political objectives of the press with the commercial constraints of a small business’ (Ravenscroft 1988: 6). Former Sybylla member Wendy Larcombe articulated a political position when she wrote, ‘If a feminist press cannot operate for profit, it is generally reliant on an institution or government body for funding or, in Sybylla’s case, the unpaid work of members … none of these alternatives are entirely satisfactory, as they all reproduce a dependence on sites that feminism elsewhere deconstructs: institutional practices, the state, patterns of women’s work’ (Larcombe 1990: 14).

Larcombe argued that ‘the social, community-based movements’ in which feminist presses were ‘located in the late 1970s and early 1980s (necessarily) dispersed and diversified’. The ‘constant repositioning by feminists’ in the 1990s, was in response to ‘shifts in power relations and historical circumstance’ (1990: 14). Despite these fundamental changes, the original aims of the collective have remained consistent since Sybylla established itself 25 years ago. These aims are to provide an inexpensive printing and publishing facility for the women’s movement; to teach women all the skills involved in the production of written materials and to encourage the sharing of these skills with other women; to offer opportunities for information sharing for women; to promote the publication of feminist writings, by supporting women in their self-publishing efforts and by taking publishing initiatives within the group by fostering a culture of feminist reading, writing and debate; to achieve improved access to publication for women and to develop women’s interest in printing, publishing, writing and a feminist exchange of ideas (Luker 1998: 138).

Vern Field and Kirstin Schneider are contemporaries of their feminist predecessors who were activists in an organised international social and political movement in Australia, from the late 1960s, that of women’s liberation. Schneider joined Sybylla in 1996 and Field became a member in the following year. Prior to working with Sybylla on a voluntary basis, Schneider was involved in the editorial production of the magazines, *World Art* and *21C*. Field worked in reference and educational publishing and then edited learning resource materials and occasional books for Deakin University Press (Field and Schneider int. 1999).

Vern Field presented the Sybylla organisational model to an editing and publishing workshop in 1999 (Figure 9). Workshops are a built-in feature of Sybylla's organisational structure, in keeping with the collective's original aims. The workshops are a basis for skill sharing in offering training on all aspects of feminist publishing. In Field's model, the general collective is positioned in the centre. From this centre, through consensus decision-making, all associated day-to-day operations are carried out, including administration, marketing, finance, funding/sponsors and distribution. The publishing arm of Sybylla is focused on the current book publishing project (the novella series), the development of the web-site and Sybylla's evolving on-line history project. The combination of print and on-line publication is a strategy to ensure that women's history in the making 'can be picked up by another generation, in this country and other countries and cultures, and is not just a discussion that can be forgotten and the history is lost' (Schneider int. 1999). Sybylla has always been active in organising community-based activities such as forums, fundraising events and training workshops, and this feminist tradition continues.

Sybylla's non-hierarchical structure embodies a general collective who meet on a monthly basis. Smaller working groups are delegated particular projects and report back to the monthly meetings. New members work with more experienced members. There is often an overlapping of tasks across feminist production, publication and organisation, so that members have the opportunity to work across all areas of interest. Sybylla is in a constant process of revisioning how the collective operates and is often in the position of prioritising activities, 'having to make ends meet where we don't have the human or financial resources to publish' (Field int. 1999). While undercapitalisation has always been problematic (Funder 1984: 19) within the scope of the feminist project, publication has never been off Sybylla's agenda. Field believes that publishing is 'the unifying feature' and 'the tangible result of public interaction' with the wider feminist community (Field int. 1999).

Sybylla continues to operate as a voluntary, non-profit organisation. The returns from book sales and other fundraising events are directed back into the business, so that 'each project fuels the next — it's not fuelling the salaries of the chief executive officer of a company or the shareholders, so the decision-making is not compromised by money' (Schneider int. 1999). Field describes the current collective as honouring an historical process that is 'outside of the women who are immediately involved and yet somehow seeing yourself as fitting into some sort of feminist trajectory — seeing yourself as part of feminist publishing history' (Field int. 1999).

Publishing decisions are still reached by consensus where 'ultimately the decision is a collective one with a lot of ability to make decisions and an enormous possibility for presenting publishing ideas for acceptance' (Field int. 1999). Manuscripts are

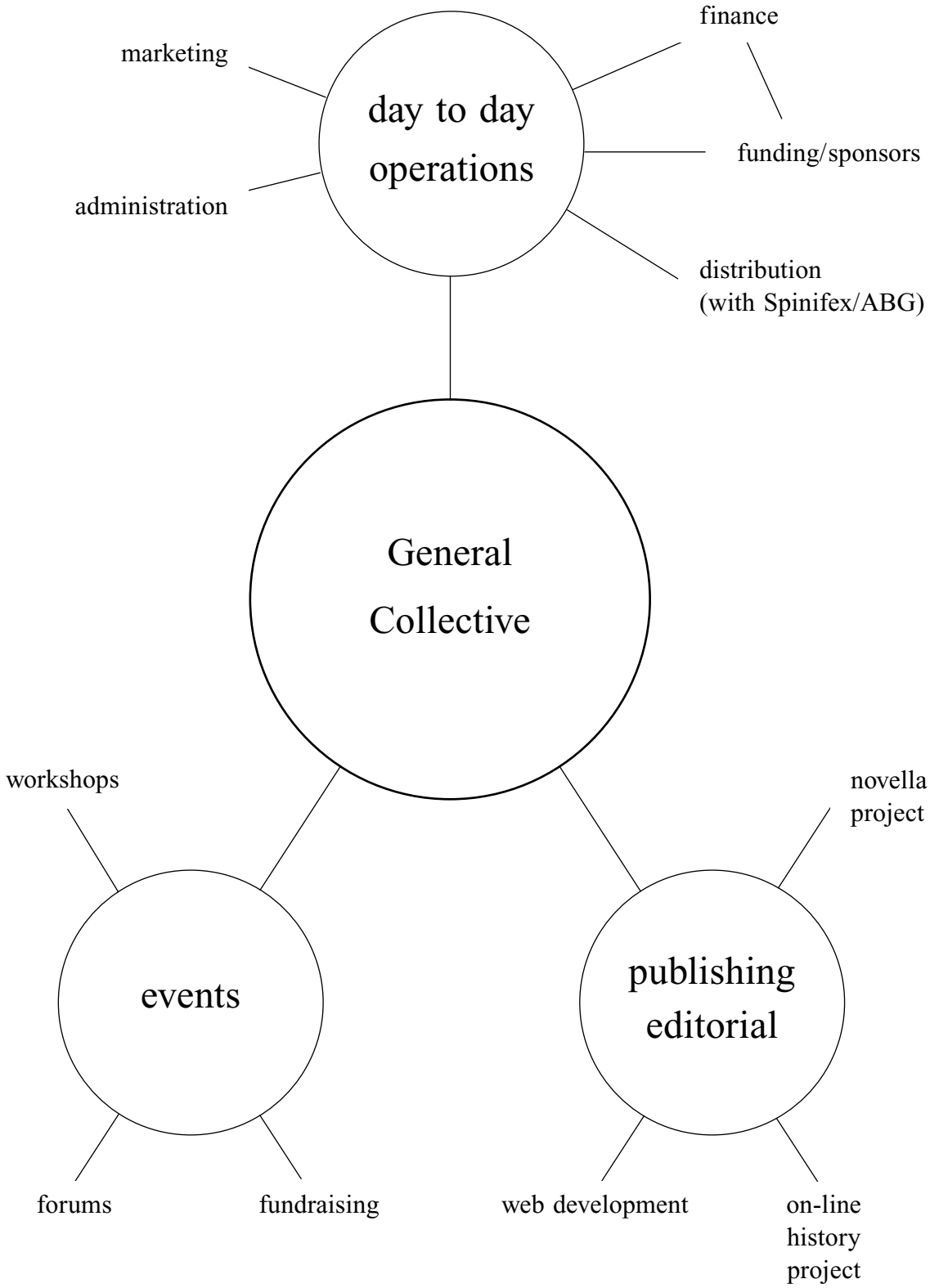


FIGURE 9 Vern Field and Kirstin Schneider: Collective Members, Sybylla Feminist Press, 1999

read and assessed by no less than two collective members and, where there is 'an an element of doubt', manuscripts are more widely read (Schneider int. 1999). Sybylla embodies a dynamic and shifting structure, where outgoing and newly evolving collectives represent 'a constantly moving stream of energy and ideas, so we are constantly responding differently to the environment' (Field int. 1999). Field discussed the possibilities of such a liberating concept working with a feminist publishing collective:

> *Something that is very exciting about Sybylla and why I really enjoy my involvement with the collective is that in my commercial work, my day to day paid work, I cannot participate in making decisions because the possibility of being able to do so is very limited. I would have to work so hard, to climb so many ladders to reach a position where I could make those decisions and even then, they would be incredibly constrained by the bottom line and directed by marketing and finance. In some ways that is what is so radical about Sybylla — that you can choose to have that power, whereas in the rest of the world you just can't have it* (Field int. 1999).

There was an increasing flow of young women into Sybylla in the 1990s 'because they see that in their projected career paths, they might not be able to get the decision-making powers they want and that Sybylla could be a forum for them to be able to do it' (Schneider int. 1999). Schneider referred to her previous editorial experience where there wasn't much room for individual influence in the shaping and final selection of magazine copy (Schneider int. 1999). Field and Schneider argue that while 'internal politics certainly exist', the way in which the Sybylla collective operates as a group ensures that members 'don't have to shout their opinions out — it's not the last voice' (Field and Schneider int. 1999). The more personalised and intimate structures of the smaller working groups serve as 'a forum for everyone to find their own levels of leadership, as much or as little influence as the individual chooses in the decision-making process … the hope is that there will be a shuffle of process so that everyone finds their own ground' (Schneider int. 1999). Field identified individual mentoring and networking within Sybylla as a strength, where group members 'encourage, inspire, teach, support, offer information and share knowledge' (Field int. 1999). While the public face of Sybylla is more visible at community events and other activities, the social, political and cultural contribution of Sybylla's publishing program cannot be underestimated. Schneider was introduced to Sybylla's backlist through particular texts placed on university reading courses. This was an introduction for many women readers to the cultural space that Sybylla creates and maintains, by 'legitimising and politicising new expressions and experimental forms of writing' (Field int. 1999).

Arising out of a political movement, strongly based on non-hierarchical structure, the principles of collectivity and consensus decision-making remain central to the way Sybylla operates within a contemporary feminist context (Funder 1984; Brown 1997a: 8; Field and Schneider int. 1999; Holt int. 1999). The press has received occasional funding from the Victorian Women's Trust (VWT) and the Literature Fund of the Australia Council and the Australia Foundation for Culture and the Humanities. Sybylla's titles are distributed through an arrangement with Spinifex Press and the Australian Book Group (ABG), a promotion and distribution organisation representing the interests of Australian-owned, independent publishing companies.

Josie Douglas and Mandy Brett

> *IAD is an independent education provider so the history of the press is about Aboriginal people standing up and saying, this is what we want. We want to be able to provide education to town camp, we want to provide educational programs and let people speak English as a fourth or fifth language.* […] *We bring our Aboriginality to the workplace each day which impacts markedly on the editorial process, the production process, the whole publishing process* (Douglas int. 1999).

The Institute of Aboriginal Development Press, established in 1972, is the independent publishing bureau of the educational college, the Institute for Aboriginal Development (IAD), an Aboriginal-controlled language resource centre and adult education centre for the Aboriginal community of Central Australia, based in Alice Springs. The Institute's Language and Culture Centre specialises in language, cross-culture and cultural maintenance programs, also offering distance education to Aboriginal students through the Distance Education Centre. Josie Douglas remarks that she 'kind of fell into publishing' when she applied for a position with IAD Press in 1993 in sales and promotions, which also involved book packing and deliveries (Douglas int. 1999). While gaining in-house experience with IAD Press, Douglas took the opportunity, through the Distance Education Centre, to continue her tertiary studies towards a Bachelor of Arts through the University of South Australia. When I interviewed Douglas in 1999, she was completing a two-year assistant editor traineeship, working under the supervision of senior editor and publishing mentor, Marg Bowman.

While her in-house training has diversified during the eight years she has been with the publishing organisation, Douglas believes that what hasn't changed is 'the input I've had as an Aboriginal person into the publishing decisions' where 'the decision making powers aren't just with one person … it's a team decision and then it goes to the Board for approval by Aboriginal people' (Douglas int. 1999). Members of IAD's publishing staff make publishing recommendations to the Institute's Board

of Management, comprising senior office bearers who are Aboriginal people representative of local and regional organisations in Central Australia and senior IAD publishing staff, who make the final decisions in relation to the publishing program.

Douglas describes the cross-cultural facilitation role of all Aboriginal staff at IAD who 'offer information and continuous consultation about what's appropriate', to enable an 'exchange of industry expertise and cultural information' (Douglas int. 1999). Of the publishing culture within IAD, Douglas remarks, 'We bring our Aboriginality to the workplace every day, which impacts markedly on the editorial process, the production process, the whole publishing process' (Douglas int. 1999). Mandy Brett refers to the significance of 'cultural consensus around a particular issue' within the publishing house, where the appropriate non-Indigenous practice is to hand over to an Aboriginal member of staff to follow through and consult with the Aboriginal community (Brett int. 2001). IAD publishing policy is that all material in production 'must be community-based and have majority community control and input' so that 'the publishing agenda is the community of Central Australia because it's there on our doorstep' (Douglas int. 1999).

Both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people are employed within IAD Press. Since Douglas completed her editorial training, she has moved into the publishing position and Mandy Brett has reverted to an editorial role. Currently there are seven in-house publishing staff. Four are employed on a full-time basis, another 'more than half-time' and a part-time editor, working one and a half days a week (Brett int. 2001). The ratio of Aboriginal to non-Aboriginal workers is currently 3 : 4 (2001). Brett discussed the lack of adequate physical space within the publishing area, also identifying the need for more training improvisation, where there is a 'crossover between design, production and management' (Brett int. 2001).

IAD Press is an independent education provider and is closely affiliated with the Institute for Aboriginal Development, operating separately and independently from the Northern Territory government. Douglas remarks that the history of IAD is 'about Aboriginal people standing up and saying this is what we want. We want to be able to provide education to town camp, we want to provide educational programs and let people speak English as a fourth or fifth language' (Douglas int. 1999). The in-house progression, from sales and promotion to editorial, was a natural choice for Douglas who has 'always loved reading, writing and language'. Through working in Aboriginal publishing, Douglas developed a passion and personal interest in producing bilingual text-based books in languages other than English. She describes her immediate and surrounding environment within the Aboriginal community, where 'many Aboriginal languages are spoken down the street, down the mall, you can hear it, it's not something that's completely foreign to IAD Press because we have

a language centre and access to language speakers working here' (Douglas int. 1999). It is evident that the links to the Institute are historical and financial, in that IAD's publishing program is partly subsidised by the Institute, which generates and feeds particular projects to IAD Press for publication, including reports, curriculum documents and language/learning materials.

With the establishment of the new imprint, Jukurrpa Books, in the year that IAD Press also celebrated its 25th publishing anniversary (1997), IAD made a 'a conscious decision to move into the trade area' as a way of subsidising the language and learning list, 'because our language materials need funding — they don't pay for themselves' (Douglas int. 1999). The motivation and publishing strategy behind the new imprint was to generate enough profit from the trade list to strengthen and build the language list, honouring IAD's policy commitment to the maintenance of language and culture, through the publishing delivery of language texts, dictionaries and learner's guides. Another publishing agenda for Jukurrpa Books is to give the work of Aboriginal story-tellers more prominence through the publication of children's stories and novels (Heiss 2000: electronic copy, Intro., 428). While it is evident that IAD Press/Jukurrpa Books is not primarily driven by commercial publishing concerns, there is conflict between cultural and commercial imperatives. Douglas remarked, 'As publishers we are continually between publishing works that we know are important for the community, an important archival resource and historical document and making commercial publishing decisions' (Douglas int. 1999).

Mandy Brett was appointed to IAD Press in 1998 as editor and publisher. She was formerly employed with Penguin Books in the information technology (IT) section (1988–92) and then worked as production editor on *Arena* magazine for two years (Brett int. 2001). Brett comments that 'moving into independent publishing was somewhere where I was always going to feel more comfortable' and that she made a career choice 'to move into editorial and publishing and away from IT' (Brett int. 2001). She contextualised her work within the publishing environment and culture at IAD Press as 'reminiscent of former politicised working environments' where 'everyone who has an opinion expresses it and everyone gets an equal say' (Brett int. 2001).

Brett also discussed the historical links between IAD Press, as a language and learning publisher and the role of IAD's language centre, as a content driver, in providing 'a fairly steady stream of dictionaries, learner's guides and oral histories' for publication. Within the organisation, book publishing 'just took off and rolled on and the idea of trade publishing was pretty much the next thing to do' (Brett int. 2001). Both Douglas and Brett describe this progression of the publishing list, as a broadening and enhancing of the original aims of IAD Press, contributing to the

maintenance of Aboriginal language and culture. She describes the publishing list as 'community driven within the Aboriginal community', where 'authorship is by the person who goes out there and does the research and writes the book'. Historically, this has mostly been non-Aboriginal linguists, often but not always working for the Institute (Brett int. 2001).

In IAD Press's publishing model (Figure 10), the editorial area is positioned in the centre, connected to a circular and consultative 'opinion loop' linking the publisher and editors, the production manager and designer (production) and the publishing manager and publishing assistant (administration/sales). Projects underway in various stages of development and completion, move in a circular 'production loop' between editorial and production. Staff workloads and responsibilities often overlap in small publishing houses because of staff shortages and limited resources but also as a way of multi-skilling existing staff so that they have experience in all areas of book production. At IAD the editors undertake occasional desktop publishing and design work and the production manager will occasionally proofread manuscripts. The broken lines indicate incoming projects, such as the Annual Report and other departmental curriculum documents issued by the Institute Directorate and a range of language materials issued by the IAD Language Centre (including the Central Australian Dictionaries Program). Most trade titles are generated from material received into the publishing house from language workers, writers, artists and other organisations representative of the Aboriginal community. The 'approval loop' indicates the flow of decision-making. Publishing recommendations that originate from the publishing staff are presented to the IAD Board of Management through the IAD Publishing Manager, Simon McDonald. The IAD Board considers and approves publishing projects and may also query particular projects or issue publishing directives.

While IAD Press receives in-kind support from the Institute and financial assistance for Institute projects, the book publishing program operates independently, without core funding, raising its own production and promotion capital. Brett described the associated difficulties in demonstrating initiative with the publishing program, 'to be able to think and plan ahead', when there was an ongoing problem with cash flow and 'hand to mouth' financial dependency from other funding bodies (Brett int. 2001). Brett spoke of the regional location of IAD Press in central Australia and the handicap shared by small press publishers 'where we have all the kind of time-honoured problems of Australian publishing writ large, the whole distribution thing and the difficulty of promoting widely' (Brett int. 2001). At the time of interview Brett mentioned occasional funding from the Australia Council and additional language access program funding 'that came out of the Stolen Generation Report', to be administered by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC)

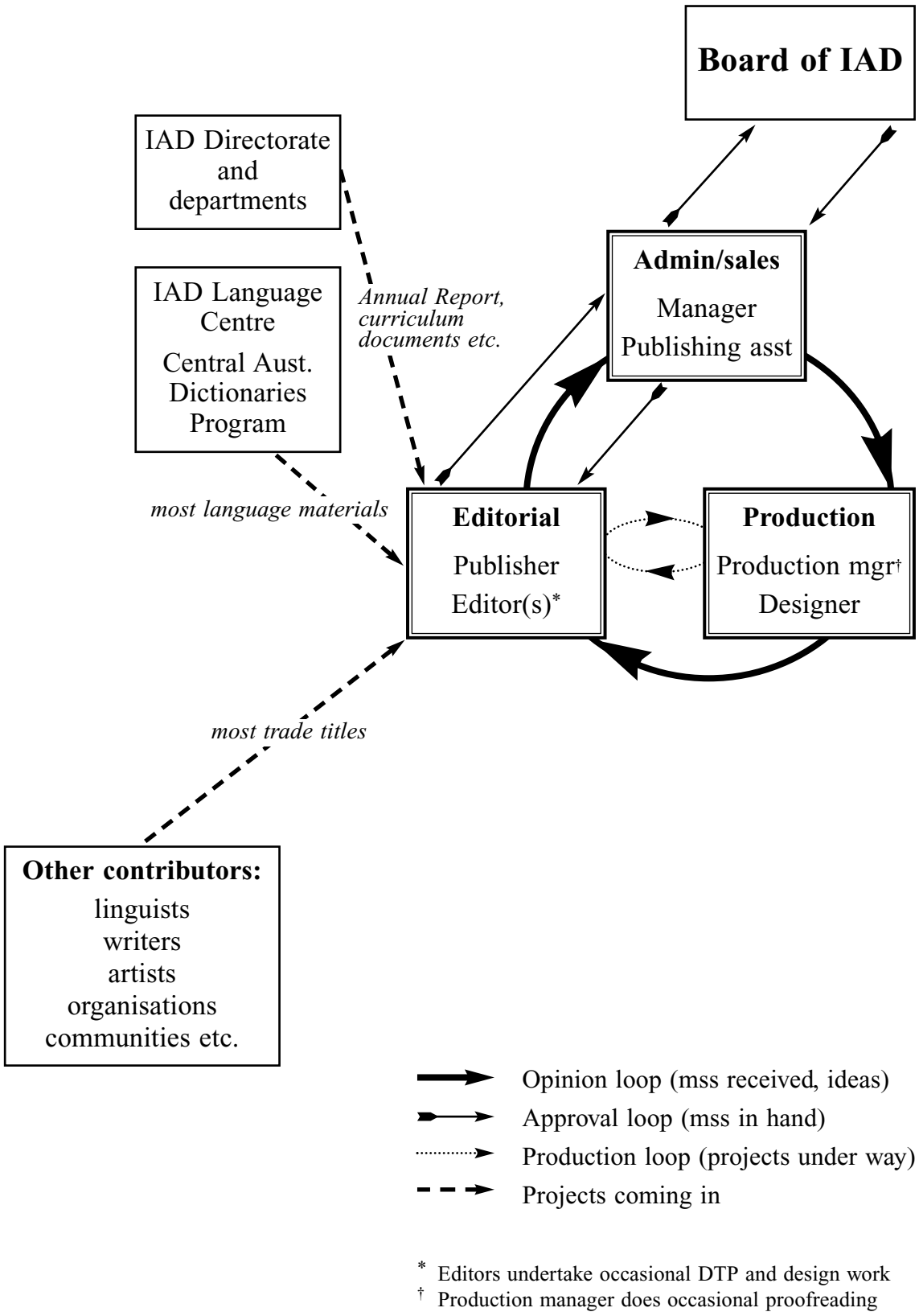


Figure 10 Josie Douglas (Publisher) and Mandy Brett (Editor): IAD Press, 2000

over three years (Brett int. 2001). IAD Press/Jukurrpa Books receives between 20 to 30 unsolicited manuscripts from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander writers each year on a regional and national basis, publishing eight to ten books annually of which three to five are trade titles (Brett int. 2001).

Conclusion

The intention of this chapter has been to examine organisational structure and publishing culture through the inclusion and analysis of general and specific publishing models, accompanied by publishers' narratives. While standard publishing conventions facilitate the journey of authors and books through the publishing house, distinctions and differences in ways of working can be found within organisational structure and publishing culture. The more specific publishing models in this chapter offer similarities and unique differences in organisational culture within Australian publishing. The narratives reflect the attitudes, beliefs, values, personal tastes and professional styles of a diverse sample of individuals who contribute to the dynamic field that constitutes Australian book publishing.

The size of the publishing house, types of publishing and types of books published have a bearing on organisational structure and publishing culture, shaping individual commissioning/acquisitions practice, and, ultimately, book publishing programs. Book publishing has shifted from publishing for a single market (general) to publishing for a range of narrow niche markets, operating within a much broader media, information, entertainment and communications context. Diversification across independent publishers' lists represents a show of local strength, competition and resistance to the agglomeratisation of Australian book publishing.

In-house areas that are common to most small and large publishing structures include publishing, editorial, production, sales, marketing, publicity, finance and distribution. Newly emerging areas include web-site and database development and also electronic business management. These areas are indicative of an increasing emerging interest by book publishers in internet and electronic publishing presence.[6] Most areas of in-house book production were revolutionised in the mid-1990s with the advent of new publishing technologies. This is most visible in cover design and the overall look of the book. The increased outsourcing of traditional in-house editorial and design functions has divided in-house and freelance publishing staff. New publishing technologies link publishing staff through electronic networks and this has transformed the way in which individuals interact and communicate. The inevitable result is personal and professional distance. The publishing culture in a contemporary publishing world constitutes a highly mobilised and adaptable in-house and freelance community.

In large corporate publishing companies, top-heavy, top-down management structures impose on publishing traditions and publishing cultures, largely because bureaucratic management styles do not compliment book publishing. Consequently, the trickle-down effect is felt in various ways throughout the entire publishing organisation. Individual performance goals are measured by financial accountability and sales success, working against considerations of cultural worth. The larger the publishing organisation, the more cumbersome its operational procedures and bureaucratic machinery is — it is 'slower in catching up with wider trends in Australian society and being culturally relevant' (Milner int. 1998). The relative importance of various departments within publishing companies has shifted over time, with much more emphasis on market- and sales-driven imperatives than editorial-driven structures. This is symptomatic of a significant shift in the book trade towards the commodification of authors, editors, publishers and 'units' (books).

Cultural and commercial tensions co-exist in all publishing structures, influenced by internal and external factors. While the editors and publishers in this study all agree that they play a gatekeeping role in what books do or don't get published, Coser *et al.* argue that cultural gatekeeping is also an organisational necessity (1982: 366). For example, the decisions made by boards of management, publishing committees or individuals. These decisions, in response to external economic trends, impact on organisational structure. This, in turn, informs decisions to do with the life of particular projects and the content and context of publishing programs. Out of necessity there is a focus on the bottom line. Yet there are exceptions, for example, cultural and commercial tensions exist side by side in all publishing structures, they are influenced by particular internal and external powers. While commissioning editors and publishers in this study unanimously agree that they are cultural gatekeepers in what books do or don't get published, Coser *et al.* argue that cultural gatekeeping is also an organisational necessity (1982: 366). It is brought about by the decisions made by boards of management, publishing committees or individuals, in response to external economic trends and internal organisational demands. It is evident that in-house publishing committees and out-of-house boards of management inform decisions about particular publishing projects and direct publishing programs. These powerful and influential bodies are mostly focused on bottom-line publishing. Yet there are exceptions, for example, the Aboriginal-controlled management of Magabala Books and IAD Press. Such organisational structures are more democratic in the way they operate, in that many more voices and perspectives are involved in the cultural development and publication of community content. Some publishing houses, such as Fremantle Arts Centre Press and Magabala Books, rely on annual state and federal government funding to subsidise their publishing programs and support their operational costs, while the University of Queensland Press is an economic unit of the university

and must pay its way. Without this infrastructural support these publishers could not survive. Ultimately, this regulatory economic control directs the scope and vision of the publishing program, and the overall direction that the company or organisation will take.

While it is argued that company directors who own the publishing company exercise autonomy and power, in developing the direction of their publishing program, they are also constrained by legal and financial liabilities (Hale, Milner, Hawthorne, Scutt, Covernton, Yowell, Sims ints. 1999). Others who are not major financial stakeholders in the company can still influence publishing decisions and enjoy a measure of publishing autonomy (Weiss, Yowell, Cunningham, Munro, Abbey, Sims, Coffey ints. 1999). Others are accountable to the communities they serve and to which they belong and these communities, in turn, inform publishing policies and drive publishing programs (Field and Schneider, Holt, Hawthorne, Brett, Douglas, Bin Salleh, Ruhfus, McKinnon ints. 1999).

While all publishing companies or organisations are subject to restructuring, the difference is to do with size. While large companies have the infrastructure to support expansion, small companies do not, and are often forced to reduce staff numbers and cull their lists in order to ride out the difficult times. Expansion and contraction in company size and publishing programs, often in response to external trends, is a perennial pattern in Australian book publishing. Those who have been in the business for 25 years or more can recognise and forecast these various trends and patterns (Milner, Hale, Coffey, Munro, Sims, Covernton, Yowell ints. 1998 and 1999).

Just as important are the power relations that operate between particular areas within the publishing house, particularly editorial and marketing. The editors and publishers in this study have demonstrated extraordinary resilience and adaptability in responding to local change in a global marketplace by working within economies of scale that match the operational size of their publishing organisations, while continuing to act as cultural filters and agents for social change through the books they publish.

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1 *The Lord of the Rings* was reissued by HarperCollins in 1991, 1994 and 1999 after it acquired the UK-based Allen & Unwin.

2 Triennial Grants administered through the national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Arts Board (NATSIAB) assist the development and advancement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander arts on a regional, state or multi-state basis, to a limited number of outstanding organisations.

3 Many Australians would argue that the ABC is no longer independent in its thinking and its program content and if this is the case, given that much of what ABC Books publish is tied to ABC programming, this represents a problem for independent Australian content.

4 The Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies was established as a corporate body by a Commonwealth Act in 1964. In 1989, a new Act established the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS). Under the Act, the functions of AIATSIS are to promote and publish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies. The Institute for Aboriginal Development was established in 1969 by the Uniting Church to assist community development for Aboriginal people and to provide cross-cultural education between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. The Institute is now an Aboriginal-controlled language resource centre and adult education centre serving the Aboriginal community of Central Australia. IAD Press is committed to publishing Aboriginal language, art, history and culture through the Institute of Aboriginal Development.

5 There was a one-year hiatus in publishing poetry at UQP in 2000 and UQP has resumed publishing contemporary Australia poetry since. With the withdrawal of major poetry publishers UQP is one of the few left standing and winning awards.

6 This is also reflected in a new section that appeared for the first time in the *Australian Bookseller & Publisher*'s 80th anniversary issue, detailing monthly developments in electronic publishing and bookselling for the publishing year, 2000–01 (*AB&P* July 2001: 66–7). Some book publishers were quick off the mark in listing their electronic titles on e-Books.com, the site of the Australian based on-line electronic bookshop, including Penguin Books, Fremantle Arts Centre Press and Allen & Unwin (*AB&P* July 2001: 66).

CHAPTER FOUR

Commissioning Culture: Creators and Shapers

Introduction

This chapter will introduce and explore what underpins book commissioning by focusing on the editor and publisher in an Australian acquisitions environment. This work draws from the narratives of commissioning editors and publishers who are the creators and shapers of content in the dynamic cultural field that constitutes Australian book publishing. These narratives intersect with my own understanding of commissioning practice, in the configuration of a cultural and commercial book production space, where knowledge is received, interpreted, shaped and commodified. If commissioning began and ended with the formal signing of the publishing contract it would have a limited life. The commissioning environment is located between the author and the reader across all stages in the book's life cycle, encompassing a raft of wide-ranging and overlapping activities that involve key people at various stages in book production.

The commissioning and acquisitions environment is also adapting to rapid social, political, economic and — more recently — technological change over the past 30 years. In her 1990s study of social movements for change in Australian society, Verity Burgmann identifies the 'new' western social movements for change that began with the Black rights movement in the United States in the early 1960s, the 'second-wave' feminist movement in many countries and the anti-war movement that opposed the western world's interference in Vietnam (1993: 1–2). Burgmann argues that what set these 'new' social movements apart from their antecedents was their emphasis on social divisions, based on gender, sexuality, race and ethnicity (1993: 2). My concerns with these movements are not about analysing new social movement theorists and theories. Rather, they are about exploring how the new social, political or cultural movements that emerged in the late 1960s/early 1970s influenced what authors or books have been commissioned. Many of these movements were interest-based or issue-based protest movements in Australian society (Burgmann 1993: 17). Likewise, many of the editors and publishers in this study identify interest-based or issue-based books they commissioned that reflect changes in Australian society over time.

Burgmann chose six movements that represent 'the political expressions of tensions within Australian society', that have imprinted most clearly on 'our collective social awareness' over the past two to three decades (1993: 17). These include the Black movement and the oppression of Black people by white people; the women's movement and the domination of male over female; the lesbian and gay movements and the intolerance expressed by heterosexual society; the peace movement and the antagonism between the militarist nation-state and its citizens; and the green movement and the alienation of humankind from the natural environment (1993: 17). In the following two chapters I will focus on the 'second-wave' women's movement and the Black movement in Australia and how each distinctively intersects with the commissioning environment and the production of Australian content. In this study, editors and publishers identified particular social movements and the impact they have had on their personal and professional lives over time. A common and ongoing concern amongst those I interviewed is to do with the issue of minority or marginalised voices within Australian culture. This common and in some ways unifying theme has informed the decisions many editors and publishers in this study have made about what to publish. This is not surprising, given that most have either consciously chosen to work within independent publishing structures that seek out and give voice to new writers and voices and alternative ideas, or have worked with other independent thinkers within multinational publishing companies.

Before Ray Coffey began with Fremantle Arts Centre Press, for example, his 'political interests were on the left with the Communist Party' and class politics (Coffey int. 1998). Coffey referred to the establishment families like the Duracks in Western Australia as 'the big families, the pioneers that had gone on and made names for themselves, the literary canons' (Coffey int. 1998). Coffey was more interested in the lesser-known social histories of ordinary working people and the telling of their lives. These concerns were shared with his publishing colleagues, and this led to the acquisition of many titles published by Fremantle Arts Centre Press from the late 1970s, to do with Australian family history, migrant history and Indigenous community history. Craig Munro referred to UQP's former General Manager, Frank Thompson — his interests in, and recognition of, 'the significance of cultural regions and Asian Pacific cultures for Australia', reflected in UQP's Asian and Pacific writing list, which began in the early 1970s. Munro edited the first few volumes of fiction from the Asia and Pacific region including writers from Indonesia, the Phillipines, Korea, Japan and Bangladesh (Munro int. 1998). From 1968 until 1972, UQP's poetry list reflected 'the volatile political interests across university campuses, caught up in the turbulence in south-east Asia and the Vietnam War' (Munro int. 1998). UQP's wider list also reflected migrant experience and Indigenous history and culture from the 1980s.

Sylvia Hale republished books that were out of print because of her 'profound interest in Australian labour history' and also commissioned an early collection that focused on the early days of the Australian Communist Party and its international relations. Hale & Iremonger's fiction and poetry list 'reflected the growing renaissance in Australian literature' (Hale int. 1998). Jackie Yowell worked with Susan Hawthorne at Penguin Books and encouraged Hawthorne to commission new voices for publication and to initiate, with Dale Spender, the Penguin Australian Women's Library. Sally Milner's Greenhouse list reflected her interests in the women's movement, producing 'large-format coffee table books on women's art, photography and filmmaking' (Milner int. 1998). Brian Johns's Penguin list reflected many interests and issues in Australian society, including Bruce Grant's early investigation for *The Age* newspaper on the influx of boat people into Australian waters, published in 1979.[1] These are just some of the interests and issues in Australian society identified during interview that were, and continue to be reflected in Australian publishing.

Publishing is a diverse and complex business. No two book publishers are the same and neither are their lists or individual publishing projects. Likewise, Coser and his research colleagues found that they 'could not talk reliably about the book publishing industry as an entity'; that it was 'composed of a great variety of entities, each having particular characteristics'; that these houses operated 'in sharply divergent social atmospheres and in separate economic markets'; and that 'publishing is a highly segmented industry' (1982: 364). Since the early 1980s, when the findings of Coser *et al.*'s study were published, book publishing has become a much more mass-market industry. Nevertheless, diversity of style and content and the disparities of the economic market in Australia means that book publishing is not formulaic or homogeneous, and 'often serendipity can play a role' (Poland 2000: 114) in acquiring authors and content. To explore the cultural forces at work, inside and outside Australian book publishing, it is necessary to understand the nature and complexity of how editors and publishers approach and go about the business of commissioning.

Jackie Yowell argues that it is difficult to 'pinpoint or single out in-house commissioning responsibility' because the process 'is collaborative and staff are always coming and going' (Yowell int. 1998). While book publishing relies absolutely on teamwork within the publishing house, it is also a highly individualistic profession. Particular personalities and reputations give the publishing house and its list a distinctive cultural identity, character and competitive edge. The commissioning or acquiring power of any individual depends on the organisational structure and publishing culture of the publishing house, because editors and publishers work in the context of particular publishing lists and publishing houses. Their knowledge and judgement about 'which books' are learned over years of experience, usually working across

a range of different publishing companies. Given that those who work in book publishing come from a highly mobile community and most have worked for several companies, it is remarkable that some editors and publishers have continued with the same publishing company they started with.

It would seem that commissioning is not formally documented until the point of signing the publishing contract, where the financial and legal terms are outlined in the author–publisher agreement, brokering creative relations and business partnerships. The commissioning role has been described as 'a more informal and undocumented practice' (Munro int. 1998). Another study found that editors were largely unable to systematically describe how they acquired manuscripts or to fully account for all of the factors involved in the decision making process (Coser *et al.* 1982: 124). Because of different levels of seniority in publishing, especially within hierarchical publishing structures, editors do not necessarily take part in all stages of the decision-making. Official job descriptions do not accurately detail the work carried out by editors and publishers on a daily basis either. When the editors and publishers who took part in this study were asked what their understanding of the term 'commissioning' was, their individual responses were tempered by intuitive practice, based on personal experience and knowledge associated with particular publishing companies and a wider knowledge-base of the Australian publishing industry.

Although it is in the professional interests of stakeholders who commission ideas, authors and texts to represent the philosophies and policies of their workplace, the personal beliefs, values and assumptions of editors and publishers overlay the template of the publishing house. This also includes the biases, tastes and preconceptions that editors and publishers bring to their work. These values derive from and circulate within the wider culture at the time the manuscript is edited, therefore the editing process must be understood in the context of issues that are not value-free (McDonell 1999: 1). Value-laden publishing cultures and public cultures are located in an increasingly transnational cultural space, where there is pressure for authors, editors, publishers and books to perform in territories that are not as easily identifiable within a highly competitive global marketplace.

Commissioning and acquisitions need to be considered in a broad context. The private and public networks in which editors and publishers circulate represent in-house publishing cultures and ever-widening literary communities. Coser *et al.* argue that publishing cultures are 'linked to the nature of the social structures and communities that comprise publishers, editors, authors and their publics (Coser *et al.* 1982: 363) and Reynolds argues that 'a book's production cannot be seen as somehow separate from other social, economic and political struggles at both individual and institutional levels' (1997: 1). This combination of internal (in-house) and external (out-of-house)

conditions influences and informs the dynamics of acquiring authors and content. Jackie Yowell believes that publishing and public culture 'feed off each other … it's absolutely two way traffic all the time … if you have a publishing culture that is full of books about celebrities you are going to have a culture that is full of talk and media hype about celebrities … if you have a publishing culture that is full of issue books you will have a lot more talk and debate about issues' (Yowell int. 1998). Susan Hawthorne refers to a 'confused movement of ideas' from the margins to the mainstream, 'constantly going backwards and forwards between the bits on the edge and the bits in the centre' (Hawthorne int. 1998).

Most editors and publishers agree that 'the starting point for commissioning is usually an author and an author's idea' (Sims, Coffey, Weiss, Cunningham, Hale, Yowell, Munro, Abbey ints. 1998 and 1999). Ray Coffey thinks 'it may even be debatable at the end of the day whether or not you commissioned it or the author started to develop the idea independent of you, so it is a working kind of collaborative process' (Coffey int. 1998). Craig Munro adds that 'very often an author will come in with a project that isn't suitable, and in discussion, a completely different idea will be developed' (Munro int. 1998). Sometimes it is the ideas or concepts for a book, rather than the words, that are commissioned in the first instance. It would seem that this hybrid discussion between the author and the editor or publisher, where extra bits are grafted on to the original idea and further developed, is the context in which most commissioning takes place. While the events of authorship and publication are interdependent and of equal importance and the vast majority of books produced in Australia are created by authors, it is the *agency* of publication that enables the process of the creation of text into book form (McLean 1996: 38).

Jackie Yowell describes the world of publishing and the visionary role of the publisher:

> *A book can't be published without imagining its route all the way through the process and out into the world and beyond. Its whole lifespan must be angled in the right direction. The art of publishing is to make a doorway that people will come through, to show them something in this room* (Yowell int. 1998).

Commissioning and Acquisitions

Publishing houses use their own particular terminology for the person behind book commissioning, and this differs between companies and countries (Davies 1994: 10). In the United Kingdom, the term 'commissioning editor' applies. In North America, 'acquisitions editor' is preferred and in some companies this person can also be the 'publisher'. In Australia, these terms are more loosely applied because company roles and company divisions are more relaxed. In Australia, the term 'publisher' is

sometimes used in lieu of 'commissioning editor'. While the Australian Journalists' Association (AJA) has specific grades, such as 'senior editor' or 'acquisitions editor', Yowell argues that 'in-house it just tends to be editor, senior editor or publisher' (Yowell int. 1998). There are some industry variables: for example, in the most current Australian Publishers Association *Directory of Members* (2000–2001), 'senior editor' was listed for some companies, 'managing editor' was occasionally listed and 'editor' was infrequently listed and mostly listed under small company entries. The term 'commissioning editor' was listed only once (APA 2000–2001: 44). The most frequently listed terms were either 'publisher' or 'publishing director', the latter defined by company size and organisational culture.

In the wider literature, the terms 'acquisition', 'commissioning', 'publisher' and 'commissioning editor' are not necessarily fixed (Aphrys 1997: 30; Flann and Hill 1994: 3). A blurring of roles and overlapping of tasks were identified, where the 'commissioning editor', 'acquisitions editor' and 'publisher' can all be doing the same thing (Weiss, Milner, Coffey, Munro, Hawthorne ints. 1998 and 1999).

Craig Munro and Ray Coffey have managerial and editorial roles at UQP and Fremantle Arts Centre Press:

> *We don't make a commissioning distinction between the editor and the publisher. I don't believe there is a difference in my situation. I'm the publishing manager and I'm also a commissioning editor, along with my colleagues, who have different subject responsibilities. When I'm commissioning a book I'm working on the same approach as my editorial colleagues. Anything where the editor or publisher has a significant role in the shape of the final publication comes under the rubric of commissioning* (Munro int. 1999).

> *My title is publisher and chief executive. Not only do I have a management role but obviously a hands-on editing role and that's my background. Right from the beginning my essential role was in putting together a publishing program each year* (Coffey int. 1999).

Vern Field and Kirstin Schneider identify all members of the Sybylla publishing collective as active commissioning agents. Sybylla's public events are also fertile ground for originating ideas and themes which are taken up for future publishing projects. Field and Schneider remarked 'we think about Sybylla as the commissioning publisher because it's the whole group who take on the commissioning role' (Field and Schneider int. 1999). Stephanie Holt's experience of working within small publishing groups makes it 'difficult to even envisage a difference between the ethos of the individuals working together and the collective culture of the publisher' (Holt int. 1998).

It is important to explore the differences between commissioning and acquisition in the way that books are taken on. Commissioning an idea, author or manuscript suggests a more proactive role, where an editor or publisher initiates the concept. Sue Abbey identifies commissioning as 'a very proactive role and specific assignment' where a project which will become a book 'is either initiated by the editor or by the publishing manager in which the editor is asked to acquire a particular title or to approach a particular author' (Abbey int. 1999). Acquiring authors and projects suggests a more passive and responsive role, where the editor or publisher receives projects into the publishing house. A commissioning editor or publisher will shape an initial idea or discuss an idea for a book with the writer, instead of suggesting an idea for a book and finding somebody to write it. An editor or publisher can acquire projects by assessing a publishing proposal that either an author or an agent has submitted and will then make a formal recommendation for publication. Manuscripts can be acquired by 'commissioning authors' through literary agents or acquired by receiving unsolicited manuscripts (Aphrys 1997: 9). Craig Munro views commissioning 'as part of the overall responsibility of acquiring titles' and also makes the point that smaller companies, like UQP, 'have to acquire and build every title we publish' (Munro int. 1998). Munro believes that 'the days when publishers just waited for manuscripts to come in and decided which ones they'd publish have come and gone. Publishers are far more proactive in making sure they get the sorts of books they want and, in a company like ours, to produce books that don't underperform is very important' (Munro int. 1998).

Often it is the ideas or concepts, rather than the words, that are commissioned in the first instance. The industry has been accused of sacrificing ideas in its rush to bottom-line publishing and with a few honourable exceptions, local publishers aren't very original (Davis 1999: 145). Davis argues that publishers are also losing interest in protecting the 'added value' of their writers, imprints and products 'as a set of ideas' (Davis 1999: 146). Jackie Yowell wants her books 'to be noticed and to become part of the stream of culture … to be taken up as a set of ideas' and argues that 'the more marketing dominates the culture the more publishers have to find something new' (Yowell int. 1998). Ray Coffey believes that some of the larger publishers in Australia 'have vacated an area of creativity and imagination … rather than be proactive they are responsive, as has happened in many mainstream artforms' (Coffey int. 1998). Many editors and publishers no longer have the time to search for ideas and authors to develop. It would seem that it is easier and more efficient to let others come up with the content or publish name authors with guaranteed sales. Coser *et al.* argue that if the principle of the bottom line ruled there would be no poetry lists or first works of fiction published (1982: 15). Although editors and publishers have always functioned within finance- and market-led economies, they have continued to take on

risky publishing projects, although the risks have become more calculated, as editors and publishers have become more accountable to the bottom line. Sophie Cunningham 'still takes risks and publishes unknowns' but smaller numbers over time because 'the emotional strain of publishing 20 people that haven't been published before is unspeakable. The whole process is new and intense and requires a lot of publicity and it's harder to place reviews these days' (Cunningham int. 1998). Ray Coffey believes that independent publishers work 'in the gaps vacated by the economic rationalist end of publishing and maximise more modest returns within economies of scale' (Coffey int. 1998).

While market-driven books are a 'quick fix method of adding value to an imprint' (Davis 1999: 144) most editors and some publishers believe their books need more production time to adequately develop ideas. Jackie Yowell remarks 'ideas are not around to be chewed over and analysed deeply … this doesn't happen any more and maybe our world's going too fast to do it. The scant time that a book now has to propagate ideas and analysis and a critique of those ideas is a bit of a worry. How good can ideas be, and how well honed if they don't really have time to stew in the culture for a bit and pick up weight? (Yowell int. 1998). If market-led values drive culture, the publishing focus will always be on the front list with a surfeit of ideas and books that keep coming and going. Books that aren't best sellers are subjected to a short shelf life and are often remaindered or pulped. Yowell describes market-driven publishing as 'a process where everything affects everything else and it becomes a spiral going in a certain direction' (Yowell int. 1998). Bruce Sims takes another line of argument, maintaining that 'the whole way in which you approach the book will be affected by what you see as the market. I don't think you can see a book in the absence of an audience and this isn't separate from commissioning — they are tied in together' (Sims int. 1998). Many of the editors and publishers in this study confirmed that marketing and finance are driving their publishing programs and this is a constant source of frustration. Ray Coffey approaches manuscripts from the 'creative and imaginative side' without initially allowing 'budget or market considerations' to take over because 'if you let cost and market initially get in the way of your research and development of ideas they get stymied' (Coffey int. 1998).

Where do ideas come from and how have ideas been taken up and shaken up within Australian publishing culture? Susan Hawthorne spoke of 'breaking the silence and raising awareness by commissioning works by feminist, Indigenous, migrant, lesbian and disability writers' (Hawthorne int. 1998). Josie Douglas receives manuscripts that are 'community-based and community-driven' (Douglas int. 1999). Sophie Cunningham publishes 'out of a generational experience, a self-regulating way of working that attracts certain kinds of writers' (Cunningham int. 1998). Jackie Yowell employs 'formal editorial meetings' and 'informal lunches with authors where ideas get tossed

around' (Yowell int. 1998). Bruce Sims argues that 'very few ideas come to fruition unless you can find an author' (Sims int. 1998). Craig Munro identified 'experience, publishing logic and instinct' in matching an author to a topic (Munro int. 1998). Sue Abbey remarked that she is 'always open to new work' and has 'a good idea about what the gaps are' in her lists (Abbey int. 1998). Sylvia Hale points out that 'ideas have to change to meet the changing interests of the marketplace' and that her publishing team have always been 'influenced by changes and prevailing moods and interests in ideas' (Hale int. 1998). Sally Milner believes that ideas 'come from your own environment, from the way you live your own life, from where you are placed at any given time' (Milner int. 1999). Jackie Yowell spoke of publishing challenges in 'not just finding fresh and original ideas but ideas that engage an audience and move them along from where they were' (Yowell int. 1998). Laurin McKinnon identified his publishing role as 'fostering gay and lesbian writing in Australia' and 'creating a diverse list that would hopefully change some perspectives within the community' (McKinnon int. 1999). Hawthorne is critical of the ways in which mainstream publishing takes up independent publishers' ideas but she also believes that 'this shows the strength and currency of those ideas in the marketplace' and for social change to occur across the broader culture 'it's essential for ideas to move into the mainstream' (Hawthorne int. 1998).

Many editors and publishers referred to their holistic, 'hands-on' commissioning and acquisitions role. Elizabeth Weiss 'brings projects to the publishing house, works on developing projects with authors and keeps an overview of books which are being written, are in production or have been published, basically all through their lives' (Weiss int. 1998). Bruce Sims has 'enormous input into shaping books which can include the writing and the way in which the book is structured, packaged and presented' (Sims int. 1998). Margaret Ruhfus was 'starting to identify prospective authors and working out some possible subjects or themes and tie-ins for publication' (Ruhfus int. 1999). Ruhfus referred to 'the creative process and creative scope in developing, creating and shaping something into a publication that can be stunning and really rewarding for the different contributors … working on that sort of material in collaboration' (Ruhfus int. 1999).

Some publishers are very definite about their role in creating and shaping content. Jocelynne Scutt networks widely within the women's community and identifies her publishing role as 'an agent for social change with an eye to the future'. She refers to the commissioning function 'as absolutely central to the production of the Artemis Women's Voices/Women's Lives biography/autobiography series' and remarks 'I'm just an autocrat in relation to those books because I know what I want to do and the information I want to have out there that I think is important to women' (Scutt int. 1999).

Sophie Cunningham believes that her role is to 'make decisions about what authors and books the company is going to publish, reading a manuscript and saying, "I think we should publish this" and then pushing it through the system, inside the company, or coming up with ideas off your own bat' (Cunningham int. 1998).

Jane Covernton believes that the reputation of the publisher and the profile of the list is the source for publishable ideas.

> *Strictly speaking, the role of the commissioning editor is to actually come up with an idea or a concept and then approach an author or an illustrator. In fact, most publishing isn't like that. For a start, you receive an enormous number of unsolicited manuscripts. Once you've established a reputation, you are approached by established authors who come to you with a complete idea or manuscript which you either take on or you don't* (Covernton int. 1999).

The reputation of the individual and the publishing house are important factors in attracting authors, agents and content. Craig Munro spoke of the longevity of UQP's reputation 'operating across all literary genres for 30 years or more' and how 'that sort of continuity means that people tend to think of us. We've always had a higher profile than probably our turnover ever justified' (Munro int. 1999). The importance of being around long enough to establish such a reputation is of real concern to independent publishers in Australia. Only a few have managed to build mainstream and alternative reputations as Australian independent publishers of literary fiction, non-fiction, children's literature, language and culture, feminist fiction and non-fiction, poetry and drama over the last 25 to 30 years, such as Fremantle Arts Centre Press, Hale & Iremonger, Aboriginal Studies Press, IAD Press, Currency Press, Sybylla Feminist Press, Hyland House and UQP. Several independent publishers are building on more recent literary reputations. Magabala Books are known for publishing quality Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content, including language and culture, fiction, poetry and children's titles. Spinifex Press is recognised as a trade feminist publisher of groundbreaking Australian and international feminist non-fiction, fiction and poetry. Text Publishing and Duffy and Snellgrove are publishing literary fiction and non-fiction and Brandl and Schlesinger are publishing poetry and literary fiction. Many more publishers are publishing quality works of fiction, following on from the literary reputation that McPhee Gribble built in leading the way and taking some of the early risks with Australian literary fiction.

Laurin McKinnon referred to a collaborative process in bringing ideas and authors to BlackWattle Press, relying on a group of voluntary gay and lesbian readers who regularly assessed manuscripts for publication and his own judgement:

> *Broadly, they would read manuscripts and return them to me with comments, at which stage I would reject the bulk of them. I had my own internal reject system for manuscripts which were unsuitable for BlackWattle because I didn't want to send these out and waste the voluntary time of our readers. If we were interested in publishing I would approach the author directly with feedback and invite them to suggest an editor they would like to work with. Once we were committed to an editor we were committed to publication and a contract was signed on that basis* (McKinnon int. 1999).

Ray Coffey detailed the publisher's role at Fremantle Arts Centre Press in framing publishing policy that informs the commissioning of particular authors and content across a broad list:

> *A designated publisher has roles in relation to commissioning works and setting programs and determining to some extent the parameters and basic policies in consultation with others including boards.* […] *someone whose role is to be involved in determining policy, either solely, or with others for the organisation. Then, within that kind of policy, to determine what kind of texts the organisation is seeking to publish, and thinking up particular authors and texts for particular lists or genres, that the publishing house is interested in* (Coffey int. 1998).

Editors and publishers work within the context of their lists where knowledge and judgement are built up over years of publishing experience. It is this combination of knowledge and judgement that informs their decisions about what authors and projects they will publish.

The Editor, the Publisher, and Power

To explore and underpin 'commissioning' and 'acquisitions' and the power invested in the individual, it is necessary to explore the role of two key stakeholders: the editor and the publisher. Flann and Hill describe 'the publisher (or commissioning editor)' as the person who holds a senior position; has autonomy in decision-making; commissions new books from authors or acquires other books, for example, by taking over another publisher's imprint or negotiating with literary agents; develops new areas of publishing, identifying gaps in lists or newly emerging subjects; may be approached directly by authors. They argue that the principal role of the publisher is viewed as being concerned with planning and carrying through a successful and innovative publishing program, with a forward list to cover the next two to three years, looking for quality and originality of writing and ideas or topics of historical, social, cultural or educational value, innovatively presented. The publisher can also

be a ‘cultural arbiter’ between the author and members of the publishing staff at any stage of negotiation or book production (Flann and Hill 1994: 3–4).

The Australian Publishers Association (APA) describes ‘the publisher (sometimes known as the “commissioning editor” or “managing editor”) as an entrepreneur, risk-taker and visionary’ (Highton 1997: 5). Susan Hawthorne questions the visionary role of the managing editor ‘who oversees projects that are already acquired’ (Hawthorne pers. comm. 2001), while Bruce Sims asks, ‘Whatever happened to the managing editor in the effective mentoring, supervision and instructive training of less experienced editors?’ (Sims int. 1999). As the front person for the company, the publisher is responsible for finding and commissioning new titles and negotiating contracts and advances. Publishers are also responsible for overseeing editorial and production. They are also involved in research and development, fulfilling the needs and interests of particular markets ‘which the publisher has elected to serve’ (Highton 1997: 5–6). A particular ‘market’ identified by the APA is ‘the investor’s need for accurate financial information’, ahead of ‘educational or general, recreational markets’ (Highton 1997: 6). This reflects the APA’s long-term view of publishing as no exception to the principal objectives of any business, that is ‘to make a profit and so provide an adequate return on the investment of the company’s owners or shareholders’ (Highton 1997: 31). Most publishers believe it is their job to protect the investment of the company they work for, whereas the editor, while protecting the interests of the house, is also an advocate for the book and the author within the publishing house (Hines 1997: 185).

While it can be either the commissioning editor or publisher who is the first to identify and contract likely authors, it is the editor who is assigned to a particular project, working with the author and keeping the publisher informed of the book’s progress (Flann and Hill 1994: 4–6). The editor may, or may not, have senior status and supervise a team of editors; will argue a case for a book but won’t have the final say; is involved in the copy, structural or substantive editing of the book; informs the publisher of the book’s progress; oversees commissions to freelance editors; contracts an author’s work and briefs and works with an author in creatively developing content. It is the editor who oversees the evolution of a publishing project, working closely with the production manager and other members of the production team, through most stages of book production to publication. The editor is also responsible for advice on the book’s format, that is the shape, the organisation and the packaging (Flann and Hill 1994: 6). Aphrys identifies a range of tasks taken on by the commissioning editor, including maintaining a good understanding of the market, monitoring particular markets and observing market trends; identifying new opportunities and keeping up to date with the international and national publishing scene; negotiating contracts, assessing potential for new titles and reprints, managing

multiple author projects and budgets and supervising a range of in-house and freelance editorial staff. The direction of the design brief and layout and production input also comes from the commissioning editor (1997: 30). In smaller publishing houses, the commissioning/acquisitions editor may also take on the publisher's role or, in much larger houses, that person is part of a team of commissioning editors who report to the publisher and commission books for a specific area (Aphrys 1997: 30). Smaller publishing companies may consist entirely of an editorial and production department while in larger companies publishing takes place across many departments (Highton 1997: 10). In very small publishing companies, a department may consist of one person. The editor and publisher liaise with many people including the author, the production manager, the designer/illustrator, the typesetter, the printer and people from sales, marketing and publicity. In larger companies, a managing or senior editor will supervise an editorial team and oversee commissions to freelance editors (Flann and Hill 1994: 6). The 'commissioning editor' is generally the person who is responsible for evaluating typescripts, proposals and projects, creating ideas for new books and developing them, contracting and liaising with authors and taking books through the publication process (Davies 1994: 10). The 'commissioning publisher' has more seniority, occupies a more powerful management position and carries more responsibility, dealing with policy, legal, financial and contractual matters. Again, levels of seniority and responsibility differ from company to company, across large and small publishing operations, forming the nexus of culture and power.

Jackie Yowell described the differences in editing and publishing authority and commissioning responsibilities:

> *As an editor you comment on books that are offered. You do books that are plonked on your desk that you have no interest in, or feeling for, and you still have to edit them with as much professionalism. Gradually you begin to work on books that you like working on and eventually you get those books given to you and you become the person who says 'yes'. By your backing of a book you are commissioning it. You accept the responsibility for taking it on and from there you move into the full blown commissioning role.* […] *When you become a commissioning publisher you are actually responsible for all contractual matters and production management, the costs and so on. If you are a publishing director you have a further responsibility which is the entire list and the entire health of the publishing house* (Yowell int. 1998).

Sylvia Hale and Sally Milner spoke of the personal pressures and responsibilities as publishers and company owners:

> *I felt that because ultimately I was the one who was going to say 'yes' or 'no' to most books that I was also subject to a lot of pressure from people to publish.*

It's often easier to say 'no' if it's the anonymous 'them' who are making the decisions (Hale int. 1998).

In my experience the publisher makes the decisions. That's because I have an independent publishing house that I own. I've found that running a small company, which is very tight financially, makes other people a bit frightened to make decisions because they know that it's a very personal responsibility of mine. They know I'm the one who takes the financial risks (Milner int. 1999).

Elizabeth Weiss detailed her senior publishing role in supervising other staff and overseeing the direction of the publishing program:

At the moment editors are not able to sign off on a project — they need my approval and they also need the approval of the managing director and the marketing director. I still need a sign off from the managing and marketing director but they are less likely to query a project that I bring into the house. There are differences of seniority, not really of role, other than editors who work directly with their authors. They draw up the contract in the same way that I do and I oversee this work. I have more responsibility for the direction of our academic publishing program as a whole (Weiss int. 1999).

In the following comments, various power distinctions are made between the editor and the publisher in relation to status and commissioning clout:

I think there are problems with the term 'commissioning publisher' because this reflects that you are not wholly responsible as an editor for commissioning. You commission more independently the more formally your role is recognised as an in-house 'acquisitions' or 'commissioning' editor (Yowell int. 1998).

For me commissioning brings together two things. One is a slightly less powerful role which is the 'commissioning editor' who has some say in what books are taken on but not usually the final say. In the case of the 'commissioning publisher' that person would always have the final say in the taking on of books (Hawthorne int. 1998).

Hawthorne also describes the power variables between the publishing director, the publisher and the commissioning editor:

While it is the publishing director or the publisher who have the final say on a book and sign off on the contract, commissioning editors do have a say in what books are taken on, are closely involved with authors in contract negotiations and often commission works from authors (Hawthorne int. 1998).

While those who hold senior management positions play powerful roles in what does and doesn't get published, the very nature of publishing warrants that editors and publishers work within a team environment, across all stages of book production. This doesn't mean that there aren't internal power struggles. Individuals that represent different areas within the company, for example, editorial and marketing, have different agendas to push at publishing meetings. Many editors and publishers spoke of the competitive rivalry at publishing meetings where publishing projects are tabled and discussed by representatives from editorial, marketing, sales and finance. With an increasing focus on market- and profit-driven product, editors are having to fight harder for their books in these meetings. This is especially the case, if particular projects are not guaranteed publishing formulas that have worked for the company in the past. Jackie Yowell made general comments about the way marketing departments operate, Sue Abbey offered editorial insights into the intervention of marketing and finance at UQP, and Ray Coffey spoke about being hamstrung at Fremantle Arts Centre Press:

> *Every person knows that the way to get the marketing department to take your book on is to say it's like some other book that was successful. It doesn't matter how close it is, as long as you get something vaguely like it, the marketing department's eyes ping open as soon as you mention it* (Yowell int. 1998).

> *You'll always find a marketing manager saying, "What I need is editorial to go out and get me another Peter Carey" and yes, that's true, because it makes their life easier. They like anything that is predictable and has been proven in the market.* […] *It's only been recent changes in this house that see it go heading towards a marketing outlook. Publishers do have to look at their money, for example, we're not publishing poetry this year and we've had 30 years of publishing poetry.* […] *An editor would say we've been done down by accounting. But there's always been the accountants' shadow cast ever since I've been here and we've been through phases where it's really been a dark shadow* (Abbey int. 1998).

> *There are books which I would have liked to do or would have liked to have taken further but because of financial or marketing advice decisions were made that it was inappropriate to proceed. I've taken that advice and this happens all the time. You open up the possibility of taking up an author and an idea, you do all the preliminary work and you reach a certain point and a decision is reached in consultation not to take it any further* (Coffey int. 1998).

Many argue that the editor's role and opinion remain central in Australian publishing although finance, marketing and sales opinions regularly determine publishing outcomes (Hill and Flann 1994: 1; Davies 1994: 1; Yowell, Weiss, Coffey, Cunningham, Milner, Hale, Abbey, Munro ints. 1998 and 1999). Elizabeth Weiss identifies the publisher's role at Allen & Unwin as central to the way in which the

company operates. The publisher ‘liaises with other people — more finance than marketing’ and the company is ‘fairly editorially driven in the way it publishes’ (Weiss int. 1998). Sophie Cunningham, another Allen & Unwin publisher, discussed her role in ‘fighting for the place of the book and keeping it central to how the company operates, rather than it becoming product orientated or marketing driven’ (Cunningham int. 1998). Sally Milner also discussed ‘fighting for books that were worth publishing […] it’s a very personal thing’ (Milner int. 1999). Rachel Bin Salleh spoke of her editorial role at Magabala Books in maintaining integrity of Indigenous content and process, ‘finalising all the details in terms of community and copyright, liaising with the authors, the cultural authenticity and cultural protocols and getting that right’ (Bin Salleh int. 1999).

Publishers’ Readers and the Literary Agent

Apart from in-house commissioning staff, other external agents are influential in the journeying of authors and projects through the publishing house. Publishers approach outside readers with specialised knowledge and expertise in particular subject areas to assess the suitability of non-fiction. The reader advises the editor or the publisher on how much work may be required, on the part of the author or the publishing house, to develop a work for publication. They also provide external reader’s reports which lend weight to publishing proposals tabled at publishing meetings. Literary agents represent authors and approach publishers on their behalf and have become a significant filtering device in the screening of mainstream authors and texts. The publisher’s reader and the literary agent as ‘first reader’ play an increasing preview role in identifying authors and manuscripts. It would seem that the literary agent can also act as the publisher’s reader. Christine Nagel believes that in some cases, agents are taking the place of the publisher’s reader, and explained, ‘As more publishers refuse to accept unsolicited manuscripts, writers are forced to seek the services of an agent, who won’t take them on unless they perceive a market for that writer. This prevents many of the unpublishable manuscripts from ever reaching the publishers. Before this happened the publishers’ readers had to do that work’ (Nagel email corr. 2001).

Another role is the editing of author’s work by literary agents. Debbie Golvan finds she is assisting clients with editing and that publishers ‘set aside very little money for the editing of manuscripts and that most editing is done by freelancers and even less of that is happening than in the past’ (Golvan email corr. 2001). Freelance editor Bryony Cosgrove says that much of the work offered to her ‘has come directly from authors or their literary agents who are prepared to pay for the structural editing they don’t believe they’re going to get from publishers’ (Cosgrove 1999: 12). Freelance

editor Lee White argues that freelance editors are contracted by publishing houses 'for almost all their projects while their in-house editors adopt the role of liaison officers or act in a supervisory or scheduling capacity' (1997: 3). A trend over the last 20 years in publishing has been a move away from employing in-house publishing staff to contracting freelancers. White estimates that the number of freelance book editors employed in the publishing industry in the 1990s increased by ten- or even fifteen-fold (1997: 3). While there were four in-house editors at UQP in 1999, Craig Munro remarked that '95 per cent of our book design is contracted out to mostly Brisbane-based freelancers' (Munro int. 1999). Hilary McPhee blames 'the climate of publishing with fewer staff, more books and more money diverted into marketing' (McPhee 1999b: 10). Editors have been described as the expendable item in publishing 'sacrificed in the scramble of tighter budgets, frantic production schedules and gorgeously designed, expensively printed and relentlessly marketed book covers' (Wood 1999: 10). Sophie Cunningham referred to the slippage in editorial mentoring and in-house training by senior publishing staff, adding that she didn't have the time to work with editors in this way and there was 'no longer the company structure to provide that support' (Cunningham int. 1999).

The notion of the advance and bidding for an author has been introduced with the swing to the marketing and promotion of authors and content. Sylvia Hale notes that 'the publisher now comes from a culture of paying advances […] that's one of the things that has changed' (Hale int. 1999). Established literary agents usually pass over smaller publishers because they cannot pay up-front advances to agented authors and cannot compete with larger publishers in bidding for the author's next book (Scutt, Hawthorne, Hale, Ruhfus, Bin Salleh, Sims, Milner, ints. 1998). Publishers have been known to make exceptions if it is in their interest. Craig Munro remarked that UQP was 'prepared to pay fairly big advances' for an author like Peter Carey 'who is crucial to our list' (Munro int. 1998). While UQP is prepared to pay in order to keep bestselling authors like Carey with UQP, Munro is critical of the era of 'cheque book publishing' that creates a highly competitive commissioning environment and 'raises false expectations in authors' (Munro int. 1998). Munro also believes that agents are capable of 'driving a wedge between the author and the publisher, even experienced agents. They are quite likely to withhold the project from the editor until they have performed a quasi-commissioning role' (Munro int. 1998).

The belief that agents can be intrusive and interventionist in their dealings with editors and publishers is a common one (Abbey, Munro, Cunningham, Coffey, Sims ints. 1998). Cunningham finds that she relies much more on literary agents when she's under pressure to maintain contracted authors and books and has no time to look for and commission new projects, admitting that 'once you're reliant on them you

give them more power' (Cunningham int. 1998). She also believes that editors and publishers tend to 'choose like-minded agents' who have similar selection criteria in their choice of authors and projects 'so those agents won't send you stuff you're not interested in' (Cunningham int. 1998). Ray Coffey claims that 'agents do not make the kinds of judgements we make, so we've learned, if anything, that we've got to be more careful and we've always dealt more directly with the author' (Coffey int. 1998). Susan Hawthorne couldn't recall an occasion at Spinifex where the publishers had 'first heard about or run with something from an agent' and yet during her time with Penguin, 'a book that came through an agent always had a much better chance' (Hawthorne int. 1999).

An increasing trend across large and small publishing houses is that more authors, editors and publishers are working with literary agents. It is also evident that their external role overlaps with the in-house commissioning role: in initially taking on authors and their work; in the discussion and development of ideas and manuscripts with the author; as a 'first reader' of an author's work in providing editorial and publishing advice; and offering encouragement and support to the author. In the past all of these tasks were carried out exclusively by the editor or the publisher in-house. With a few exceptions, the editors and publishers in this study mostly relied on their own judgements in assessing authors and projects for publication.

The Publishing Committee

The publishing committee, as an in-house decision-making body, plays an instrumental role in what books are taken on. While committees can provide a more democratic platform for debating the pros and cons of accepting or rejecting publishing projects, not all editors and publishers think they are a good idea. Sally Milner believes that 'the best lists are shaped by individuals who work at the centre of things' and 'internal bureaucratic publishing committees only create camels' (Milner int. 1999). Many editors and publishers in this study referred to various in-house committees and external decision-making bodies and their influential role in shaping the list (Sims, Abbey, Milner, Douglas, Bin Salleh, Yowell, Coffey ints. 1998 and 1999).

Craig Munro and Sue Abbey discussed the role of the publishing committee at UQP, which not only endorses publishing proposals but also acts as an in-house publishing gate. It is also the regular meeting place where members of staff come together, listen to each other's arguments and push their own publishing agendas:

> *At UQP we have a small staff of editors, all senior editors. I'm the publishing manager which means I run the editorial department. We all commission*

projects and we all acquire projects. Irrespective of who commissions or proposes a project it has to be confirmed by our monthly publishing committee which tends to ratify decisions. Formally speaking, all projects before being contracted, have to be run past the publishing committee. In urgent cases this can be short circuited by the general manager and myself getting together (Munro int. 1998).

As senior editor I manage and supervise the Black Australian Writers series list. The winner of the Unaipon Award is guaranteed publication. Other manuscripts will often be commended. I don't read the entries at all until after the judging. I might pick up something that I'm keen for us to publish and table that at the monthly publishing meeting. It's never a question, if a proposal comes with a strong recommendation and I've never had any turned down that I've recommended. The publishing committee is a forum where book publishing proposals are passionately pushed by commissioning editors or publishers, where arguments come from intuition or from the heart, and a place where a book's publishing life will begin, in the tabling of the proposal (Abbey int. 1999).

There are several stages in the research and decision-making process at IAD Press involving extensive in-house consultation amongst all publishing staff before publishing proposals are ready for submission to the IAD Board for a final decision:

Decisions about what we publish are made by the team at IAD Press — but it is certainly investigated and researched by the publisher, and then the staff look at it and make a decision and then that goes to the IAD Board, made up of Aboriginal people only. These are senior office bearers from other Aboriginal organisations in Central Australia (Douglas int. 1999).

The process at Magabala Books is similar to IAD Press. In both cases Aboriginal people, who represent Aboriginal communities, receive in-house recommendations from the publishing staff and their final decisions are ultimately based on the strength of these recommendations:

No one makes the decision in-house at Magabala about what gets published and what doesn't. The staff read manuscripts and make recommendations to a sub-committee of the management committee, comprised of about eight to twelve Aboriginal community members, who assess the manuscript and take on board what we have to recommend (Bin Salleh int. 1998).

Aboriginal Studies Press accepts unsolicited manuscripts that are refereed and submitted to the Publications and Products Advisory Committee for consideration for publication. The Committee is made up of non-Aboriginal and Aboriginal members of the elected Council, including the Principal (Executive Officer), Deputy Principal and senior

members of the publishing staff, who have considerable individual influence in decision-making outcomes:

> *At Aboriginal Studies Press the committee made the publishing decisions and I had quite a degree of influence. I was the managing editor and then the title changed to publishing director and the two jobs were combined. This combination didn't make that much difference in the degree of decision-making* (Ruhfus int. 1999).

Fremantle Arts Centre Press is an incorporated association that is governed by a Board of Management. Two senior members of the publishing staff, the Business Manager and the Publisher and Managing Director, are also members of the Board of Management. While both represent the interests of FACP at Board level and their votes are counted, it is also evident that the Board is a powerful decision-making body at executive level and it is the Board that controls the direction that the organisation and the publishing program will take:

> *There has to be some sort of co-operative process for me as publisher within an organisation like Fremantle Arts Centre Press. Our board has the final decision-making powers and I am a full member of the board so I have voting rights. The bottom line is that the board keep an eye on publishing policy and they make changes and decisions if we are going off the rails* (Coffey int. 1998).

Positioning Commissioning

While levels of experience and seniority undoubtedly influence how much editorial freedom and commissioning autonomy any individual has, Coser *et al.* argue that the decision about what to publish will always be an organisational one (1982: 135). The editors who participated in this study are proponents of this view — that once an editor has found a manuscript that they think is worth publishing, an organisational decision must then be made as to whether to publish; and few editors have sufficient power and independence to be able to publish what they like. In some instances this is also the case with publishers. The publishers who took part in this study, however, are more likely to be able to make a decision about what to publish, although the decision-making process is usually part of the organisational culture of the particular publishing house. The authority and status of editors and publishers depends on company philosophy, publishing tradition and organisational culture. Craig Munro believes that 'the autonomy and freedom in any publishing house is determined by company tradition and by company procedures' and referred to the benefits of working within a house like UQP, where 'there is a tradition of great experimentation and risk taking' (Munro int. 1990).

A commissioning editor, having consulted with others informally, may make a decision and go through a formal process of securing a contract, while other editors may be required to get sales or marketing input before a decision is approved (Coser *et al.* 1982: 136). When considering the strengths and weaknesses of any publishing project many factors come into play, including competition, the budget, the market, subsidiary rights potential, the size of the advance if an advance is involved, and how the books fit the overall list. The larger the company, the more accountable editors are to management bureaucracies in publishing, finance, marketing and sales. If the publisher is accountable to an external parent body or large amounts of money are involved with particular projects, then company decisions will be made at an executive level.

Bruce Sims discussed the hierarchy and bureaucracy at Penguin:

> *Books have to be signed off by possibly the sales director and in other publishing companies that decision is taken entirely by the publishing department or the equivalent of which might be one person called the publisher or the managing editor and that person has the ok to commit to a book which the rest of the company has to run with. The whole time I was at Penguin that was the case. The publishing department informed the publishing director who was responsible for commissioning for the strict signing off. The publishing director or the responsible commissioning editor would confer with the marketing, sales and possibly even the managing director, even the company secretary if you were talking large sums of money, for committing to a particular book. If you were talking very large advances you might even have to go to the board of directors for consideration.* […] *I've never been the person where the buck stops and never will be, which is the publishing director* (Sims int. 1999).

The buck also stops with publishers who wholly own the company and carry more personal responsibility and liability, as the key stakeholders in the company's success or failure (Milner, Hawthorne, Yowell, Hale, Scutt ints. 1999). Susan Hawthorne believes that 'if you don't have freedom you can't shape the list. […] When I was at Penguin I had some ideas about what I might do but I couldn't do them. If something got past the editorial meetings at Penguin it normally made it all the way through. The great boon about starting up Spinifex was that the only thing that stopped me from publishing was my own decision not to do it' (Hawthorne int. 1998). At Allen & Unwin, Sophie Cunningham makes the publishing decisions, having run those decisions 'past the managing director who okays my decisions every time — it's verbal and he signs off on the contracts' (Cunningham int. 1998). Jackie Yowell observes that 'the higher one is positioned in a publishing hierarchy the more power that person has to publish what they think is worth publishing. The further down the tree, or out-of-house, the harder it is (Yowell int. 1998).

Conclusion

In broad terms, commissioning is about acquiring authors and content through a diverse range of activities in order to develop publishing programs and build distinctive publishing lists. The emphasis is very much on the front list, with a strong and active backlist of steady selling titles that remain in print and provide the necessary capital flow to enable editors and publishers to continue commissioning and acquiring new titles. Many project proposals are researched and developed in-house, and potential authors are then approached and commissioned by editors and publishers who have assessed the market and weighed up cultural and commercial considerations. Authors and content are also acquired through literary agents, from authors who approach the publishing house with an idea or project or from unsolicited manuscripts received into the publishing house. Many publishers expand their lists by acquiring books from book packagers or buying the rights to other publishers' titles or selling the rights to their own titles to other interested publishers. Many publishers also enter into co-publication arrangements with overseas publishers, sharing the cost of print runs, dividing up the territorial rights, distribution and sales for their own markets. Publishers build close personal and professional relationships with authors who have more than one good book in them, and see this as a long-term investment for the company.

Despite the growing emphasis on front list titles, many publishers aim for a broad and balanced front list, mid-list and backlist. This market spread is competitive and gives the publishing house its distinctive profile and reputation in particular areas. For example, Penguin is a general consumer publisher of books for adults and children; ABC books are tied to ABC broadcasting content and subject areas; Aboriginal Studies Press publishes authors in all fields of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies; Allen & Unwin is strong in academic and general trade publish, and has an award-winning children's imprint, Little Ark; Fremantle Arts Centre Press has a strong regional focus and a reputation as a publisher of quality literary fiction and non-fiction; Hale & Iremonger is recognised for its commitment to publishing books about Australian life and culture and has steadily built a dedicated poetry list; IAD Press has built a reputation as an educational publisher committed to the maintenance of Aboriginal language and culture and has also expanded its list to include trade titles under the Jukurrpa imprint that explore cross-cultural and contemporary Aboriginal issues; Magabala Books has a regional and national reputation for publishing creative first works by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander authors with a focus on autobiographical life story and children's books, diversifying its list to include community histories and cultural studies; Spinifex Press is an award-winning national and international feminist publisher of fiction, non-fiction and poetry with a global vision; UQP has a strong scholarly poetry and literary list,

publishing Indigenous writers through its Black Australian Writers series, with an award-winning teenage fiction list; Working Title Press, founded by the innovative and award-winning children's picture book publishing team that created Omnibus Books, specialises in children's pictures books for the 0–7 age group, working with new and established Australian authors. Brand names, company logos/colophons and innovative elements of easily identifiable book design are clever marketing strategies that reinforce particular company profiles and publishing lists. Penguin Books, with its orange spine and Penguin logo; Fremantle Arts Centre Press's facade of the Arts Centre building offers a sense of history and location; Spinifex Press's eye-catching colophon and the more recent bright pink book spines[2] and are coupled with its social and political message that 'just as Spinifex is a grass that holds the earth together, so too, these books should take root everywhere'; Magabala's bush banana which disperses its seeds over the landscape characterises its Indigenous list; and Hale & Iremonger's new logo, with the company name over a gum leaf, strengthens the market perception of this publisher's continued commitment to Australian content.

While all content reflects a market audience, some publishers represent particular communities and cultures, while also aiming to educate a wider readership through the titles they acquire. For example, UQP, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, Magabala Books and IAD Press have a regional base with particular authors and readers in mind. Sybylla Press and Artemis Publishing network and generate content from and to a local and national feminist community. Spinifex Press networks and generates content from and to a local, regional and global feminist community. ABC Books publishes content which is tied to ABC radio and television and particular ABC personalities, selling its products to an audience of ABC listeners and viewers. Working Title Press is targeting the parents', teachers' and children's educational market, specialising in Australian picture books for the 0–7 age group.

While the focus of this study is in-house commissioning and acquisition, there are also a number of external commissioning and acquisitions agents. For example, the publisher's reader is contracted by the publisher to read manuscripts and produce reader's reports about suitability of content for publication to the publisher. Literary agents represent and negotiate projects on behalf of their authors and broker publishing deals between the author and the publisher. It is evident that more authors are represented by literary agents in Australian publishing and the literary agent's role has expanded considerably. Agents now take on what was once exclusively the in-house editor's role, in reading and assessing manuscripts for publication and substantively editing manuscripts prior to submission to publishers. Whether it is the ideas or the words that are first acquired, editors and publishers are working harder to ensure that their books work for them and succeed in a relatively small and highly competitive Australian marketplace. This reduces the amount of time that editors and

publishers have to actively search for new authors and fully participate in the creative development of their work.

Decisions made about what books and lists will be developed, are significantly influenced by the personal position and power of individuals inside the company, such as the publishing director, the managing director, the general manager, the publishing manager, the publisher or the publisher's accountant. Those who may be in senior company positions but not necessarily hold managerial positions, for example, the commissioning editor, can have a great deal of influence but do not necessarily have the final say. Other individuals who represent different publishing areas have considerable input at publishing meetings, and all have different cultural and commercial agendas, for example, editorial, marketing, sales and finance. Outside governing bodies such as boards of management and advisory committees, operating at arm's length from the publishing house, have the power to make final decisions, over and above the heads of senior publishing personnel, about publishing programs, company policy and direction. Another emerging area where editors and publishers can influence the decision-making, is in the area of publishing consultancies. Examples are Rhonda Black's former position as publishing consultant to Hale & Iremonger (in-house), Jackie Yowell's ongoing position as publishing consultant to Allen & Unwin (out-of-house), and Sandra Phillips' role as an independent freelance editorial consultant to the Australian publishing industry.

The advent of new electronic publishing platforms and digital technologies since the mid-1990s in Australia has expanded publishing formats and publishing platforms beyond the printed book, redefining the cultural and commercial territories and borders of copyright and content, once the exclusive domain of the publishing house. If the book is embedded in complex social and political conditions that shape publishing culture the same must be said of their cultural producers. Although it is in the professional interests of the stakeholders who commission ideas, authors and texts to represent the philosophies and policies of their publishing house, the personal beliefs, values and assumptions of editors and publishers overlay the publishing template. Value-laden public and publishing cultures are located within an increasingly transnational cultural space where there is pressure to 'perform' as authors, editors and publishers, and books are commodified in an unstable and less recognisable marketplace. These cultural and commercial trends continue to impact on commissioning and acquisitions practice and the critical ways in which cultural production takes place within a recent and contemporary publishing environment.

In Chapters Five and Six, I pick up on the earlier introductory discussion in this chapter about social movements and their ability to inform and influence what authors, issues and books are published, by examining the political impact of the

women's movement on Australian book publishing and publishing culture since the 1970s; and the emergence of a developing body of of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander literature, which reflects the advances made by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in working towards cultural empowerment and autonomy. While I continue to discuss the individual contributions made by individual editors and publishers towards social change, I also shift my focus to the acquisitions and cultural environments in which these individuals operate. I offer case studies of particular feminist and Indigenous publishing houses and identify specific publishing projects as a means to exploring the ways in which the cultural production of feminist and Indigenous content is driven by the respective communities they serve. These unique publishing environments offer an alternative to the organisational culture of mainstream publishing houses because they challenge the *status quo* of mainstream commercial publishing. In doing so, they exercise a disproportionate influence on national culture and cultural change because their lists are not geared to a mainstream, mass market audience. Feminist and Indigenous publishing, albeit in different ways and from different histories, represent the extreme end of what is possible in the different ways they position themselves, and are in turn positioned by the dominant culture, in terms of the relationship between the dynamic of commissioning texts and the forces that drive cultural change.

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1 The Boat People have not gone away and this was a key issue at the centre of the 2001 federal election which swept John Howard's Liberal Party back into power.

2 Spinifex introduced their successful pink cover spines in 2000.

CHAPTER FIVE

Liberating Culture: Feminist Production

Introduction

Having examined organisational structure and publishing culture within particular publishing companies in Chapter Three and then explored the diverse ways in which individuals go about the business of acquiring and commissioning content in Chapter Four, the focus shifts in Chapters Five and Six, by incorporating and linking these arguments to a more in-depth discussion of particular modes of cultural production. In many respects, the aforementioned chapters provide a framework for entering cultural territories that represent unique and different approaches to acquiring and commissioning content. Chapters Five and Six signal a departure from mainstream Australian book publishing, through an exploration of publishing culture within feminist and Indigenous communities. These communities inform the social, political and cultural production of feminist and Indigenous content. As such, feminist and Indigenous cultural production are proactive, in resisting and subverting traditional and conventional ways of working in publishing. Both have contributed to a strong tradition of independent publishing in Australia. While Chapter Five is grounded in the feminist struggle for liberation, Chapter Six is grounded in the Indigenous struggle for self-determination. Both chapters address these respective struggles through an exploration of identity and difference.

Three decades of Australian feminism have impacted in significant ways on local writing and publishing culture. This intervention is reflected across independent and mainstream publishing markets and wider social and cultural borders in Australian society. Feminism in Australia has been powerfully shaped by historical contexts, political circumstance and personal position, and all women's publishing has been linked to worldwide women's movements providing the impetus for publication (Butalia and Menon 1995: 2). While the international feminist context has contributed to the shaping of Australian feminism and feminist book markets in Australia, Australian feminist publishing has enjoyed less impact on international feminist book culture and feminist book publishing.[1] It is also true that London-based Australian and New Zealand expatriates, such as Carmen Callil, Carol Spedding, Gillian Hanscombe, Dale Spender and Stephanie Dowrick,[2] have made

significant contributions to the publication and promotion of worldwide feminist content.[3]

Hilary McPhee has been provocative in arguing whether Australian cultural production matters (McPhee 1999b: 21). While I refer to and acknowledge mostly the influence and contribution of British and American feminist book markets, I am not preoccupied with feminist publishing outside Australia. The primary focus of this chapter is feminist production within the context of 'second-wave' feminism in Australia, articulated by feminist activist and artist, Sue Bellamy as 'Liberation On Our Own Terms' (Bellamy 1970). The Women's Liberation Movement (WLM) informed and inspired the cultural production of feminist publishing programs in Australia from the late 1960s and the political activism and social change that followed in the 1970s and 1980s provides the background with a focus in this chapter on a more recent and contemporary period in Australian feminism, from the 1990s. In this decade the debates within feminism shifted in response to social, political and economic change within the wider culture. Taking up the issues of identity and difference, this chapter thematically explores some of the ways in which the feminist project and the publication of feminist texts responded to these issues and the conditions in which they were produced. The main focus is a study of three feminist publishers — Sybylla Feminist Press, Spinifex Press and Artemis Publishing — and particular publishing projects identified for discussion. The commodification of 'women's writing' and 'feminist writing' in Australia, and the co-option of gay and lesbian literature by mainstream markets, are also discussed.

Identity and Difference

During the closing decade of the 20th century, 'identity' and 'difference' have been even more passionately articulated and debated in Australia. A raft of writing emerging from these debates has been published by both feminist and mainstream publishers and talked up within contemporary Australian culture. Feminist academic Jan Larbalestier argued in the late 1990s that contrary to much interpretation there has never been one single 'Australian feminism', and that issues of identity and difference highlight the lack of consensus about what constitutes the field of Australian feminisms, where women are positioned within feminist narratives from the past and also within the more contemporary framing of debates on racism, ethnicity, sexuality and representation (1998: 148–9). In 1982, the editors of *Frictions*, one of the first Australian anthologies of women's short fiction, discussed the elusiveness of feminism as a singular category in their introduction to the collection (Gibbs and Tilson 1982). In 1985, a collection of essays, *Sister Outsider*, written by the black American lesbian feminist Audre Lorde, was the source of inspiration for the theme

and the title of an Australian anthology of women's writing, *Difference*. In her introduction to the anthology, compiling editor, Susan Hawthorne, expressed the view that its purpose was to reflect the diversity of women's backgrounds and women's interests and to 'create a community of women to speak across the differences' (Hawthorne 1985). In 1998, the six editors who commissioned and compiled the material for the Oxford *Australian Feminism: A Companion*, refer to the immense diversity of Australian feminism and the difficulties encountered in defining its field. While acknowledging the complexities of compiling such a reference work, the *Companion* editors expressed the collective view that they were also dealing with definitions of feminism that 'defied categorisation at every entry' (Caine *et al.* 1998: ix–x). Just as the trajectory of feminism is neither linear nor predictable, the *Companion*'s multiple authorship encompasses 'a large and contradictory arena without the obligation to present one smooth narrative' (Caine *et al.* 1998: xiii). The debate within the feminist community around the issues of diversity and difference continues. The 'tensions between women's viewpoints' (Schneider and Naughton 1997) and the 'contradictions making up present-day Western feminism/s' (Lynch 1998: 41) continue to be widely discussed in contemporary feminist circles. Jan Pettman argues that identity/difference boundaries mark power relations in which all women are unequally located and that a contemporary issue for feminists is recognising identity and difference while working across identity border lines (1998: 330).

Second-wave Feminism in Australia

Ursula Owen contextualises feminist publishing in the 1970s by arguing that in this decade feminism within national and international contexts recognised private and public silences, the invisibility of women and the denial of women's experience in a male-dominated culture, where the received view of cultural history had marginalised women (1988: 88). Second-wave feminism focused on liberation struggles, claiming sexual freedom for women as a right. This approach represented 'a self-conscious break with the past' and it was a reaction against the 1950s' emphasis on motherhood and family (Lake 1998: 134, 141). These early liberation struggles in Australia were embedded in fields of inequality shaped by the intersections of gender, race and class (Larbalestier 1998: 152–3; Curthoys and McDonald 1996; Kingston 1975; Sawer and Simms 1984; Windschuttle 1980). The 'new' modern western feminism was shaped and informed by an international politicised movement, known as the Women's Liberation Movement (WLM). In Australia, the WLM was 'self-consciously disruptive and subversive, preferring noisy demonstrations in the streets to polite deputations to parliament' (Lake 1998: 141). In 1973 Elizabeth Reid was appointed as the first

Women's Adviser to an Australian Prime Minister. As she later remarked, 'For the first time in our history we were being offered the opportunity to implement what for years we had been writing, yelling, marching and working towards' (1994: 13). Never before had women and women's issues featured so prominently in Australian politics, and women were finally on the mainstream political agenda with a newly-elected Whitlam Labor government.

Australian feminism in the 1970s styled itself on the WLM with a renewed focus on the 'personal as political' (Lake 1998: 134–5). The movement was both collectivist and individualist, celebrating the power of sisterhood and resisting traditional hierarchies and organisational structures (Lake 1998: 141). Feminist politics naturally informed feminist writing, publishing and reading communities. Australian and British feminist publishers worked toward a common aim of wanting 'to see women's culture available everywhere, changing accepted ways of working, refusing traditional employer/employee relations and divisions of labour and breaking hierarchical relationships' (Cadman *et al.* 1981: 28–9).

A distinguishing feature of the WLM in Britain and North America was that it was characterised from the beginning as 'a writer's movement'. Many political activists were writers who first reached public attention through their books (Owen 1988: 7). Modern feminist texts that 'bound the women's movement together, across Australia and around the world' (Lake 1999: 233), provided women writers and readers with their own language in which to articulate and frame social and political theory and analysis. Emerging texts that went on to become feminist classics included *The Female Eunuch* (Greer 1970), *Against Our Will* (Brownmiller 1976), *Sexual Politics* (Millett 1970), *Sisterhood is Powerful* (Morgan 1970), *Our Bodies, Ourselves* (Boston Women's Health Collective 1971), *Women and Madness* (Chesler 1972) and *The Women's Room* (French 1977). While mostly British and American feminist classics were written and published, the local production of Australian feminist literature in the early 1970s was largely printed ephemera in the form of pamphlets, newsletters, magazines and newspapers including *Mejane*, *Sibyl*, *Hecate*, *Refractory Girl*, *Womanspeak*, *Vashti's Voice*, *Liberation* and other publications. The dissemination of ideas through feminist print gave rise to radical political views that had not been widely discussed or previously accessible.

The publication of a body of emerging Australian feminist literature coincided with International Women's Year (1975), including *The Other Half*, a Penguin anthology on the theme of women in Australian society, *Mother I'm Rooted*, 'the poetry event of the 1970s' (Hawthorne 1995) published by Outback Press, the pseudonymous *All That False Instruction*, 'the first second-wave lesbian feminist novel in Australia' (Levy 1995: 2), published by Angus & Robertson (re-issued by Spinifex Press in

2001) and *Damned Whores and God's Police*, the classic study of women in Australian society, published by Penguin. In her introduction to *Mother I'm Rooted*, editor Kate Jennings thanked Outback Press for supporting the project and lamented that women still didn't have their own presses in Australia (Jennings 1975). The following year a private donation was made for the specific purpose of setting up a women's press which became Sybylla Co-operative Press (Brown 1997a: 14).

Other Australian feminist texts in the category of 'women's novel' included *Thoroughly Decent People* (1976) and *Monkey Grip* (1977), both published by the independent, McPhee Gribble. Only a few women writers were being published into the early to mid-1980s. An early Angus & Robertson anthology, *Growing Up Feminist* (1985), explored the impact of the women's movement on the lives of ten young women, aged 25 years and under. This collection of young women's narratives, edited by Jocelynne Scutt, was the forerunner to a highly organised editorial program and feminist commissioning strategy. In 1992, Scutt established her own imprint, Artemis Publishing, to promote and publish women's writing, and generated the Women's Voices, Women's Lives Series which comprised various volumes of collected autobiographical stories and interviews (Scutt Papers: 2000).

Until the 1970s the writing of Australian history was marked by the absence of women; Crowley's *A New History of Australia* (1974) was the first national history to be published acknowledging the existence of women in the past, with a short index entry on women between 'wombats' and 'wool' (Lake 1999: 6). The first national histories that focused on 'women as subject' emerged from the WLM in Australia from the mid-1970s, exploring issues relating to how women were represented in Australian society. Classic 'identity' texts were published during this time, among them, *Damned Whores and God's Police* (1975) in which the author documented the social forces and ideas that determined women's lives in Australia (Summers 1994: 60) and *The Real Matilda* (1976), in which the author proposed that Australian women came close to top rating as the 'Doormats of the Western World' describing Matilda as 'a thing, an item of property of a male who rejects women' (Dixson 1994: 11). Summers wrote that the new feminism emerging in Australia in the 1970s gave rise to a preoccupation with women's experiential writing that warranted a re-analysis of Australian society and history (1994: 61). While some women writers focused on women's experience and identity, others challenged possible identity hierarchies amongst women. An example is to be found in the editor's note to another collection on women in Australian society *The Other Half* (1975). In this collection, the contributing editor, Jan Mercer, chose not to list the names of the contributors on the contents page or link their names to the contributions in the body of the book, arguing that 'it is the ideas themselves, rather than who presented them, that is crucial' (Mercer 1975: 5). A list of contributors' names were, however, included in the end matter.

Women and Labour conferences began in Australia in 1978 and by the 1980s the fruitful alliance of feminist academics and labour movement women resulted in publications which served as both academic texts and general readers, amongst them, *Women, Class and History* (1980), *Worth Her Salt* (1982) and *The Half-Open Door* (1982) (Lake 1999: 251). The analysis by feminists of a growing body of feminist literature brought about the construction of the discipline of Women's Studies from 1973. This political strategy ensured an increased representation of women writers within 'mainstream' tertiary publishing markets. Women's Studies was established as a discipline by the mid-1980s across most Australian institutions of higher education. This opened up new publishing opportunities across independent and mainstream book markets with the creation of Women's Studies lists.

What was evident by the late 1970s was the political mobilisation of women writers and publishing groups in Australia. Sydney writer and small press publisher, Anna Couani, gave an account of an early women's reading attended by 20 women writers at the Bondi Pavilion in 1978:

> There was an open invitation to all women writers to read; there was no MC at the reading; someone put us into alphabetical order and we each in turn walked onto the stage, introduced ourselves by our first name only and read our work. […] The atmosphere in the theatre was electric and different from most readings because it was 'unframed' by an MC and non-hierarchical; there was no public distinction made between audience and writer, woman and writer, woman and feminist, social realist and stylist, professional and amateur, traditionalist and experimenter, Australian and foreigner, old and young (Couani 1990: 13).

From this single literary event, the Sydney-based No Regrets publishing co-operative was formed in 1979 to publish and promote the group's writing by organising and maintaining control of performance and print production. Many more women writers came into print in the 1980s in Australia, published by mainstream companies that commodified women's writing and targeted a burgeoning market of women book buyers and readers. The irony was that while greater numbers of women writers were published, women had less control over the cultural production of their work. Couani observed how shifting commercial publishing markets 'sorted, ranked, categorised, classified and excluded women' in new ways. This led to feminists questioning identities and asking 'are we women writers or feminist writers, women publishers or feminist publishers?' (Couani 1990: 13). While feminism was 'unmarketable' in the early 1970s (Owen 1988: 86), by the early 1980s women writers were promoted and published to mainstream audiences. This came as no surprise to feminists because historically the suppression of feminist ideas in western capitalist patriarchies, had always been achieved and maintained through control of

the market (Kappeler 1992: 39). Although the boundaries in publishing had shifted, feminists cautioned against the assumption that women writers were being published as a matter of course. By the late 1980s, for example, the representation of Penguin women authors 'did not even account for fifty per cent of the list' even with the Penguin Australian Women's Library as a mini series (Hawthorne pers. comm. 2001).

Mainstream publishers favour particular books over others because they are commercially viable. Independent publishers' lists reflect commercial risks and alternative views. Women's visibility as writers has historically always moved with the marketing shifts in the publishing industry that intersect with feminism and public awareness of the politics of gender (Modjeska 1988: 361). Modjeska argues that there are 'no clear boundaries' between mainstream publishers and small presses in the types of books they decide to publish and that boundaries in publishing become blurred so that it gets 'harder and harder to talk about women's writing as a category' (1988: 363). The commercial hijacking of women's writing and the co-opting of feminism for a mass market audience is a vexed question for feminist writers and publishers who are critical of the dominant publishing culture.

Undoubtedly the success and growth of British, North American, Australian and New Zealand feminist publishers have influenced 'mainstream' and independent feminist publishing markets. The commercial success of Virago, The Women's Press, The Feminist Press, Firebrand, Seal, Naiad, Spinifex Press and New Women's Press has strongly influenced the competitiveness between mainstream publishers worldwide in their efforts to compete in the women's market and expand their lists. Commercial feminist publishing companies have been described as running the risk of being 'perilously positioned on the fringe with their foot in the centre, ideologically committed in a capitalist marketplace' (Gerrard 1989: 30–1). Feminist publishing was informed by the WLM and coincided with the growth of mainstream publishing in Australia (Hawthorne and Klein 1995). Shifts in power relations and historical circumstance over time required feminists to reposition themselves in private and public cultures. Wendy Larcombe argues that the 'feminist presses located within social, community-based movements in the late '70s and early '80s had (necessarily) dispersed and diversified by the '90s' (1990: 14).

There is no doubt that feminist activism has ensured the increased publication and wider distribution of feminist and 'mainstream' women's writing in Australia. In this study, publishers clearly identify the women's movement as a significant influence in their private and public lives. Feminism has been and continues to be a driving force behind the commissioning and acquisition of individual titles and the building of publishers' lists. The following commentaries acknowledge and relate to the way in which the Women's Liberation Movement and Australian feminism impacted on

women's lives and publishing lists. Sally Milner referred to the political environment that informed her ideas and choices about what to publish, in particular, as a Sisters' director and in shaping the Greenhouse list:

> *There was a whole political reform going on, the end of the Vietnam War, the era of Gough Whitlam and the Women's Movement — they were really interesting issue-driven times. A lot of publishing was associated with that which was wonderful.* […] *Publishing ideas come from your own environment, from the way you live your own life.* […] *The Sisters' list was interesting because we [Sisters' Directors] were all involved in the Women's Movement. I also published women's writing at Greenhouse which was directly related to that movement. We [Greenhouse] published the first books on Australian women artists, photographers and independent filmmakers* (Milner int. 1999).

Sylvia Hale discussed early feminist publications which led to other publications generated by feminist contacts and networks associated with these projects:

> *I suppose the Women's Movement had the biggest impact. We* [Hale & Iremonger] *started off doing a women's calendar and a bibliography with Anne Summers called* Herstory. *That led into a whole range of publishing associated with the Women's Liberation Movement.* […] *One book we did in the early 1980s was* The Half Open Door *which was a collection of women academics from the University of Melbourne talking about their experiences. It was really one of my favourite books in many ways. The essays were just so perceptive and interesting and that book sold very well* (Hale int. 1998).

Elizabeth Weiss referred to how a general readership engaged with academic feminist texts which generated wider debate and discussion about a range of issues:

> *In the late 1970s and 1980s academic books were bought very widely by general readers — in particular women's books — a lot of the ideas in the Women's Movement were initiated and developed by academics, not all, but a lot of them. There are a whole string of books that we published in the 1980s, on women in the law or women in politics or social issues, which were read far outside the academy* (Weiss int. 1998).

Sophie Cunningham was grounded in the issues she studied at university and it is Cunningham's political awareness that continues to inform the authors and books she commissions:

> *I'm a feminist. I am very interested in issues about racism and that's what I studied at university. I'm left wing and my books pretty well reflect this — in a sense those movements kind of affect what I take on* (Cunningham int. 1998).

Jackie Yowell played a proactive role in ensuring that women writers had a voice and were published by Penguin:

> *I was particularly supportive of a better gender balance in the list [Penguin]. I was conscious that women's writing always fell to the bottom of the heap.* […] *If there's a movement going there's usually plenty being published and I think we were more interested in debates that were just breaking.* […] *I was very deeply and personally engaged in the feminist movement. I was consciously aware of making sure that women were well represented in everything we published at Penguin.* […] *It was hard because there were fewer of them and they had less time to write and often less space to produce. So, in a way, you had to positively discriminate in favour of them!* (Yowell int. 1998)

Jocelynne Scutt's broad social and political interests have enabled her to represent a wide range of feminist issues and women in Australian society, across her Artemis list:

> *Well, my list* [Artemis] *is the Women's Movement really.* […] *Take the volume on women and politics in society. What I saw there was that there were a number of larger political issues for women: like equal pay, the environment, violence against women and getting women into politics, women and local government. I made sure that all were represented because it seemed to me that they were all political movements that were strands of the Women's Movement* (Scutt int. 1998).

Susan Hawthorne and Renate Klein are engaged in international and local feminist issues and the Spinifex list reflects their broad political interests:

> Both of us have a long history of activism in the Women's Liberation Movement and considerable experience in writing, editing and publishing. It was our activism that led us into publishing (Hawthorne and Klein 1995: 5).

An awareness of gender and equity issues for girls ensured that Jane Covernton and Sue Williams commissioned authors and content that reflected and promoted their interests for the Omnibus list:

> *Well, I suppose Sue and I — both being feminists — we [Omnibus] probably quite consciously wanted to have books that showed young female protagonists being independent, assertive, confident. So there have been real attempts to find those sorts of female protagonists* (Covernton int. 1999).

The Politics of Feminist Cultural Production

Feminism at work in publishing is a different kind of engagement with texts and the politics of cultural production, where the agency of feminism exposes and contests

power relations through the development of risky publishing lists. The universal conflict that all feminist publishers share across past and present book production histories, repeatedly compromising feminist ideology and practice, is the paradigm of reconciling feminist-based modes of cultural production with running a business geared to capital and commodity. In whatever ways working capital is found and with few exceptions, feminist publishing initiatives have been implicated in raising the capital themselves, producing fewer books and operating on a precarious personal and professional financial basis. The individual choices that each publishing house makes reflect differences in approach to the dissemination of feminist ideas and this is amplified in the ways in which feminist publishing groups have printed and published their work (Cadman *et al.* 1981: 29–30). In Australia and elsewhere, feminist publishers faced problems in taking their printing to commercial printers because of the widespread resistance to feminist ideas. Printers either refused to print feminist copy or destroyed feminist layout and copy (Cadman *et al.* 1981: 65; Funder 1984: 1). To counteract this resistance feminist publishing collectives set up their own printing presses to offset daily running costs and to capitalise their book publishing programs. Two such presses were Sybylla Co-operative Press in Australia and Onlywomen Press in Britain. A common feature of both presses was the offset printing training offered to collective members. Onlywomen and Sybylla offered their printing services to the women's community and commercial businesses. Both later made a decision to relinquish printing and concentrate exclusively on book publishing, effectively eliminating the certainty of a printer for radical feminist work. The activities of Sybylla and Onlywomen were informed from an individual and collective belief that women needed more control over their lives (Cadman *et al.* 1982: 29; Funder 1984: 1–2).

Levy has referred to the growth in Australia of feminism (or feminisms) since the 1970s and the subsequent differences in contextualising feminism and feminist texts (Levy 1995: 5). The cultural contexts in which women's writing is currently produced, published and read, include more recent debates about identity and difference. Feminist critiques of the book within western book culture are framed around the social conditions in which the book is produced and the cultural space of its production (Ravenscroft 1997: 262). Feminist publishers have historically created a space for thought and discussion, enabling feminist critique and exploration, where strategic and political intervention force the renegotiation of the terms and relations in cultural production (Larcombe 1990: 14). The construction of gender and genre is critical in the shaping of feminist publishing identities. These slippery identities are largely dependent on the cultural meanings which position and enable women to make sense of themselves and their worlds. What drives the political motivation for exploring 'discovered, experienced, articulated and redefined identities' is 'not only an attempt

to understand women's lives but a feminist desire to change them' (Sybylla 1992: viii). Feminist politics and feminist views of personal, cultural and national identity have become more complex in Australia as they have developed. In response, feminist publishers have renegotiated the terms and relations of cultural production as they position women (Sybylla 1992: x). In the early 1990s, Larcombe argued that feminist cultural production was not just about publication but 'a different kind of engagement with texts and the politics of cultural production' where feminism in publishing 'exposed and contested power relations' (1990: 14).

Women made progressive entry into mainstream publishing by the 1980s, either by working for other companies or establishing their own publishing ventures. Women editors were in the majority, to the point where there was widespread speculation that editing was becoming a 'women's ghetto' (Reskin and Roos 1990: 93). In America, Caplette estimates that women constituted one half to two thirds of the publishing industry in the early 1980s (1982: 148). The increased visibility and influence of a few women in executive decision-making positions, coupled with the sheer numbers of women in publishing, caused many to observe the industry as 'women's business' (1982: 148). In Britain, although many women were located at the base of publishing pyramids and the middle echelons, very few were employed in management and finance, although more women occupied marketing, publicity and sales areas and there were more commissioning editors (Cadman *et al.* 1981: 19). In Australia, women represented two thirds or more of the publishing workforce in the editorial area and also in publicity. Over time, the division between male and female in sales and marketing has become more equitable. The universal story across all book publishing cultures around the world is that because the roles of women in publishing were either informal or invisible, their contribution often exceeded their recognition (Caplette 1982: 149). The first Women in Publishing (WiP) meeting was held in central London in 1979 and an international committee was established in 1988 to support women working in the book trade. In Australia, WiP was founded in Sydney in 1988 and, by 1994, its membership was 300. WiP (NSW) provided a structured training program to its members and in 1994, organised seminars on multimedia, self-publishing, management skills and a three-part series on career development, networking and mentoring (Weiss 1994: 8). Long standing WiP member, Sally Milner, acknowledged the value of peer support provided by the organisation when she was establishing her own publishing company, Sally Milner Publishing (Milner 1994: 8). This peer support was, and still is important, for women in publishing.

At a national seminar on Australian women's writing to honour the 20th anniversary of International Women's Year, Sophie Cunningham spoke about her experiences as a woman and a publisher, as 'not so much a battle between the sexes where the sides are clearly delineated, so much as a minefield, through which all women have to walk'.

Cunningham identified ‘generation, sexual orientation, the genre one writes in, class and race’ as contemporary mines (1995: 1). In interview, Cunningham referred to the sexual divisions of labour and power imbalances in Australian publishing:

> *It’s about the way men manage women. They don’t recognise women’s potential and power. They make judgements about the fact that women are more emotional and handle workloads in different ways and they perceive this as a weakness when it’s not.* […] *Men have a vested interest in keeping the lid on women — not all men* (Cunningham int. 1998).

Susan Hawthorne also discussed the masculine culture at Penguin Books and how this culture railed against women’s editing and publishing initiatives:

> *What I could see when I was at Penguin was that all of the really good women who had previously worked there, and there were heaps of them, had in many instances left. Some set up their own companies. That said something very loud — that there wasn’t a place for them to do what they wanted to do in a place like Penguin. Jackie Yowell and Hilary McPhee and Jane Arms. Then there were others who went off and worked for other big companies or freelanced — one was Teresa Pitt. There were just so many of them with incredible flair* (Hawthorne int. 1998).

A founding member of Sybylla Co-operative Press, Glenda Ballantyne, refers to the political ideologies of skill-sharing in the restructuring of the workforce:

> Restructuring the sex-segregated workforce was a central feminist objective and a feminist press was also seen as a way of women developing technical skills involved in what was then a male-dominated industry and creating a work place where these skills could be passed on. This was a time when not only were structural barriers still in place (ceilings were not glass) but so too were ideological ones (Ballantyne 1997: ms. 2).

Jocelynne Scutt has always been vocal about women in the workforce. It was by choice, rather than by accident, that the first title Scutt commissioned, edited and published under the Artemis imprint was *Breaking Through: Women, Work and Careers* (1992). This was the first work of non-fiction in the Artemis Women’s Voices, Women’s Lives series.

In Australia, a few exceptional women have established their own commercial publishing companies, among them, Hilary McPhee and Diana Gribble (McPhee Gribble, 1975–89), Sally Milner (Greenhouse, 1975–87), Anne O’Donovan (Anne O’Donovan Publishing, 1978–), Susan Hawthorne and Renate Klein (Spinifex Press, 1991–) and Jocelynne Scutt (Artemis 1992–). Joyce Nicholson became the Managing Director of her father’s

company, DW Thorpe, from 1968 until 1987 (DW Thorpe, 1921–). McPhee, Gribble, Milner, O'Donovan and Nicholson were the five founding directors of Sisters Publishing (1979–83), a feminist publishing initiative with a national bookclub/mail order business. They offered titles from their own company lists, the Sisters' list and selected buy-ins from other feminist and mainstream publishers including Virago, The Women's Press, Angus & Robertson, Sybylla and Penguin to Sisters' subscribers (Brown 1997b: 24–5). The editorial advisory board of 37 women located and assessed material for publication, providing an Australia-wide network of readers and researchers (*Sisters News 1* 1979). Like Onlywomen Press, which published papers from three radical conferences on sexual violence in the early 1980s (Duncker 1992: 39), Sisters published 36 discussion papers from the Working Women's Centre in Melbourne in their first publishing year (Brown 1997a: 26). The *Working Women's Papers* (1980) were a militant collection with Australia-wide conditions in mind, offering background information and vital statistics on industrial issues for women, as well as suggesting possible union action. Joyce Nicholson recalls that 'the *Working Women's Papers* were a great success for Sisters' (Nicholson int. 1997).

Feminist Acquisition and Commissioning

Decisions about taking on particular book publishing projects are central to feminist and mainstream book publishing practice. The most obvious difference between the feminist and the mainstream project is the way in which decisions are articulated and reached across all production stages in a book's life cycle. To further explore aspects of feminist commissioning, particular publishing projects are included in this chapter, that represent different approaches to the politics and practice of cultural production. The women's movement has been the political force that has driven the feminist publishing project in Australia. Spinifex is more trade-focused on export markets for a local and international feminist audience, while Sybylla has exclusively published for a local feminist community. Both presses have inspired and stimulated feminist debate and discussion and have contributed to challenging and expanding a feminist reading culture. Field and Schneider, acknowledge that 'publishing is always going to be a slow and difficult process for a non-hierarchical collective with no funds' (Field and Schneider int. 1999). Hawthorne and Klein argue that 'it is no accident that commercial viability has become an important hallmark of presses established in the 1990s — it has become something of a cultural imperative' (1995: 5).

Vern Field and Kirstin Schneider, members of the Sybylla general collective, conceptualise commissioning as 'the whole collective where the whole group really take on that commissioning role' (Field and Schneider int. 1999). Sybylla members originate the concepts for publishing projects and follow through to publication.

Because book publishing is viewed as an occasional contributor to Sybylla's cultural program, the collective's vision of commissioning is much wider in scope, including public events engaging the wider feminist community. These events have generated ideas and material for anthologies, so that 'publication is the tangible result of that public interaction — it is the unifying feature, the overarching umbrella of our work' (Field and Schneider int. 1999).

Susan Hawthorne and Renate Klein are generally the first readers of manuscripts at Spinifex and make the publishing decisions:

> *We have a sort of unwritten agreement that if one or other of us is passionate about a book we'll do it. We don't stop each other if there's enough enthusiasm because that's what makes a book work. Independently of each other we can go off and take on books. We have a spoken arrangement not to make too many promises at that point before we've talked* […] *There's not a lot of room for wild promises but on the occasion when one or the other has made them we've stuck to them* (Hawthorne int. 1998).

Many projects are initiated by Hawthorne and Klein, with Klein mostly taking responsibility for international non-fiction and Hawthorne mostly Australian fiction and poetry, a 'combination that covers the ground well' (Hawthorne int. 1998). Both women initiate projects for publication by Spinifex, coming up with the ideas that they want to work on and occasionally edit thematic collections they have commissioned, either together or with a guest editor, such as *Angels of Power and Other Reproductive Creations* (1991), *Australia for Women: Travel and Culture* (1994), *Radically Speaking: Feminism Reclaimed* (1996), *Car Maintenance, Explosives and Love* (1997) and *CyberFeminism: Connectivity, Critique and Creativity* (1999). Other concepts or ideas are talked up by the publishers, and authors are found to develop and write the books. An example is *Chinese Medicine for Women* (1997) which originated from Hawthorne and Klein's desire to produce 'alternative health books rather than just critiques of the medical profession' (Hawthorne int. 1998). Other ways of commissioning have been 'ear to the ground books', where Hawthorne or Klein have heard about particular projects or had a conversation with a writer and encouraged them to send material to Spinifex. The other way of bringing in projects to the publishing house is through feminist networks, 'close friends, contacts and acquaintances' (Hawthorne int. 1998). The publishers are often approached by others with ideas and also receive and read unsolicited manuscripts, publishing on average around one unsolicited book a year 'which is pretty good when you consider we are only doing between twelve to fifteen books a year' (Hawthorne int. 1998). There have been times when Spinifex has decided not to accept unsolicited manuscripts because of the sheer volume. Hawthorne and Klein were receiving between 800–1,000 manuscripts

a year and prefer to limit this intake to 500. Hawthorne observes overseas trends, particularly the North American market, because she believes that this predetermines what will happen in Australian publishing, including the look of the book and cover design (Hawthorne int. 1998).

From the outset, Sybylla's publishing policy has ensured the production of content which does not look to commercial markets for ideas or follow mainstream market trends in Australia or elsewhere, instead drawing from a feminist community of writers and readers. The acquisition and commissioning of ideas and books have originated from the local feminist community and are published for and distributed to an Australian feminist readership. In 1999, Field and Schneider described Sybylla as a 'dynamic structure', where the nature of the collective is that it 'constantly changes, it's not people in positions, it's a constantly moving stream of people, so new energy and ideas come in and we are constantly responding differently to a changing environment' (Field and Schneider int. 1999). The decision-making is not based on commercial incentives, where there is a pressure to satisfy shareholders or satisfy levels of return on sales or identifiable markets. Sybylla operates within a structure where the collective is 'answerable entirely to ourselves' (Field and Schneider int. 1999).

Sybylla Co-operative Press (1976–1994)
Sybylla Feminist Press (1994–2003)

In her introduction to the groundbreaking Australian poetry anthology, *Mother I'm Rooted* (1975), published during International Women's Year, the editor Kate Jennings thanked Outback Press for their support and lamented the absence of a women's press in Australia. Open meetings were held in late 1975 to discuss the feasibility of setting up a women's printery in Melbourne. Katrina Alford donated her share of the inheritance from her great aunt Elsie's estate to setting up a women's press. Discussions had already taken place within the women's movement and the impetus came from a climate of political fear and unrest after the sacking of the Whitlam government. A Sybylla founding member warned, 'if that can happen to a labour [sic] government, what's going to happen to something as radical as the women's movement?' (Funder 1984: 1). Fears centred on the consequences for anyone involved in radical political activity. There were reasons for establishing a women's printery other than the upheavals in Australian mainstream politics. Feminist ideas were being met with widespread resistance and this was reflected in the difficulties women's groups were having in taking their printing to commercial printers (Funder 1984: 1–2).

Sue Funder's unpublished case study documents the history of Sybylla from 1976 to 1984. It is a fascinating record of the political ideals and organisational culture of a

feminist printing and publishing collective in Australia. The idea of a travelling press appealed — one that could be disassembled by press workers and relocated, come the revolution. The first premises were shared with the Rape Crisis Centre and the saga of moving the offset press up a narrow concrete flight of stairs is reported verbatim:

> One of the women in the group had some friends who were engineers on the Polly Woodside and they could do anything […] they had all this rope and tackle and they could get the press up those stairs, no worries. So there we were, an army of people with all their friends helping and the press had lots of ropes attached to it, and all these people below holding it and pushing it and suddenly one of the ropes moved and it ended up being wedged on an angle in the narrow stairway. We then rang up a removalist in the hope that they had sophisticated means of moving things. They sent four very big men who each picked up one corner of the press and walked it up the stairs. From thereon in Tony (the mechanic) moved the press and took it apart before he did it (Funder 1984: 5).

Some founding members were employed by more established printers to learn the trade and also worked with Walker Press, which offered Sybylla access to their larger offset presses for jobs like poster runs (Sybylla Archives, Minutes 15 June, 1976). Glenda Ballantyne took a job in a factory to learn the printing trade, operating a row of ten Multilith printers, 'working opposite a row of bigger presses, operated by men on higher wages' (McCormack 1996: 4). In April 1976 the print group held a meeting to discuss aims and objectives, premises and incorporation (Sybylla Archives, Minutes 27 April, 1976). In early June, the group discussed Sybylla's printing policy and the general consensus was that no material would be printed that was 'sexist, racist or anti-working class'. More specific policy guidelines were 'no commercial advertising of commodities. Restaurants accepted. No real estate agents. No church groups with some exceptions. Brotherhood of St Laurence and left wing groups. No Spartacists. Anarchists accepted. La Trobe Maoists out' (Sybylla Archives, Minutes 1 June, 1976). If there were any doubts about particular print jobs all members would discuss clients before a decision was reached. Sybylla developed from a small offset printery sustained by voluntary labour to a printing and publishing business that was close to economic viability, supporting four full-time waged positions by 1984 (Funder 1984: 18). The book publishing program began in 1982 with the commissioning of *Frictions*, an anthology of women's short fiction, launched at the third national Women and Labour conference in the same year. Sybylla relinquished the commercial arm of the business when it ceased off-set printing to focus on book publishing in 1988 and, like other feminist presses that lost control of their own printing press, missed the certainty of a politicised printer for future lesbian and radical feminist work (Brown 1997a: 5).

Democratising the Structure

Democracy is appallingly time-consuming, often gory, and incredibly frustrating, as every feminist who has ever worked in a collective well knows. But the refusal to separate the process and the product is a wise one (Duncker 1992: 41–2).

The principles of working collectively were detailed in Sybylla's case study:

> Collectivity involves, among other things, a non-hierarchical structure, and is particularly suitable for relatively small groups. Within the organizational model of collectivity, power and responsibility are structured in a parallel rather than pyramidal fashion. To maximize participatory democracy no leaders or office bearers are elected. Allied to this non-hierarchical structure, the process of decision-making in a collective is one of consensus, rather than by voting, decree, delegated authority or non-decision. This consensus decision-making process is a method in which all members take an equal part, and no decision is final until everyone in the group feels comfortable with the decision. Consensus relies on negotiation when there is disagreement. It's a process during which people discuss a proposal and keep changing it to take into account different ideas or disagreements. The entire group seeks out the best decision to which all can agree. Consensus decision-making may be seen as an inefficient method of working, which risks irresolvable stale-mates and/or lowest common-denominator outcomes. Whilst not denying these possibilities, they arise from viewing collectivity as a static, rather than a dynamic process. Discussion and debate are crucial aspects of a group's growth and of members' actual participation. Collectivity encourages, rather than stifles debate and difference and increases the likelihood that decisions are well-informed and that the group is cohesive. Sybylla has employed the principles of collectivity/consensus decision-making in the context of a shared political commitment (Funder 1984: 6–7).

This way of working has been built into Sybylla's printing and publishing practice since it began. As a registered co-operative, Sybylla was required to view its structure in ways that conflicted with its political ideals. The Victorian Co-operation Act legally required co-operatives to elect a Board of Directors. To break this hierarchical structure all members of Sybylla became Directors. As membership increased the principle of collective decision-making was maintained within these restrictive legal requirements. Directors' meetings were open to all members and consensus was reached by a show of hands (Funder 1984: 9).

Taking this notion of individual and collective power further, within a contemporary context, recent collective members have discussed the fact that many younger women

were joining Sybylla because in their projected career paths 'they might not be able to get the decision-making powers they want and Sybylla might offer a decision-making forum for them to be able to do it' (Field and Schneider int. 1999). The idea of hands-on involvement, across all stages of the publishing process, is an exciting prospect because it is often not possible in other workplaces. Gaining self-confidence inside Sybylla, through a collective mentoring role of 'encouragement, self-focus and skill-sharing' also enables young women to develop their full potential and apply for salaried positions in publishing. Field and Schneider comment that 'the media perception of young women is that they know what they want' but, perhaps closer to the truth, 'young women have more of an idea of what they want and perhaps less of an idea of how to get it' (Field and Schneider int. 1999).

> There were five titles with the Sybylla crimson spine sitting in the office. Was this Sybylla? Feminist endeavours, like many small-scale outfits, are notoriously bad at 'keeping history' and, as already indicated, the titles were in some ways all we had to hang on to in our remaking of Sybylla. That and the goodwill that Sybylla had in feminist and related circles. But our own experience showed us how much more there was to the life of the Press than the production of a book (Lynch 1998: 43)

Three publishing projects are detailed in this section on Sybylla because they occurred during a time of fundamental change within the feminist structure that was Sybylla. In 1988 the collective relinquished its commercial printery and lost its shopfront premises. Sybylla's full-time editor, Alison Ravenscroft, described this period as 'the end of an era within the life of this small feminist co-operative, in which we tried to balance the political objectives of the press with the commercial constraints of a small business' (1988: 6). Unlike other commercial enterprises, Sybylla did not employ casual workers or lay off workers in quiet times. Australia was moving into a recession which affected the book printing and book publishing industry. Competitive printing chains like Snap and Pink Panther were undercutting smaller printers, changes in technology created redundancies in the trade and 'people could put a manuscript into a photocopier and produce twenty copies, sorted and collated' (Ravenscroft pers.comm.1997). In the same year that Sybylla closed its printery, the collective published its fifth title, *Between the Lines* (1988), Bernice Morris's autobiography of Australia in the 1950s, under the influence of the Cold War and McCarthyism.

Working Hot

When the Sybylla publishing collective received Mary Fallon's manuscript in 1986, 'a bulky bundle wrapped in brown paper', it was read 'within a heady mix of materialist, poststructuralist, psychoanalytic and "postmodern" feminisms' by the

Sybylla collective (Ravenscroft 2001: 74–5). The editor of *Working Hot*, Alison Ravenscroft, described the context in which Fallon's book was produced. In the early 1980s 'the body of theory loosely known as French feminism' began to circulate in Australia at a time 'when the translations of Cixous, Irigaray and Kristeva became more readily available' and *Working Hot* 'self-consciously and intelligently' engaged with these new theories of language, power and desire (Ravenscroft 2001: 75). Ravenscroft read the manuscript in 1986, as an 'anti-authoritarian' text that spoke of the 'fascism of desire', 'the erotics of power', 'the problematics of reading and writing practices' and the 'politics of representation' (Ravenscroft 2001: 76). Ravenscroft worked with the author on the text and another collective member, Sue Miller, designed the stunning cover image chosen by Fallon. The cover was a reproduction of a detail from Cernak's original thirteen-panelled oil painting on linen depicting the fall from grace of western civilisation. Black-and-white design features taken from the cover painting introduce each chapter in the body of the text and these deliberate design features were intended 'to problematise conventional reading practices and support these same impulses in the text' (Ravenscroft 2001: 79). *Working Hot*, a work of fiction and experimental genre in verse narrative and monologue, play script and opera libretto, was in production for three years and was published when feminist theory in Australia was broadening in the 1980s:

> Feminism had in significant ways constituted the discursive conditions in which *Working Hot* was written, and then edited in the context of Sybylla Press, and it constituted the conditions in which the text circulated among its community of readers. It was from this feminist communal context that the text took on much of its significance as a critical cultural work […] *Working Hot* was passed from hand to hand among a community of readers for whom this book was part of an ongoing exchange of ideas. This book, then, not only carried ideas but enabled and furthered a conversation between feminists in Australia at the time (Ravenscroft 2001: 81).

While *Working Hot* was a bestseller for Sybylla and was placed on academic reading lists, former collective member, Stephanie Holt, remarked that as long as she was with Sybylla 'we wished we could find another single book like *Working Hot* to promote' (Holt int. 1999). Holt also described *Working Hot* as 'the book that dogged Sybylla because it was just such an utter one-off' (Holt int. 1999). Twelve years after *Working Hot* was published, Vintage/Random House acquired the rights to republish the book after negotiations took place between Fallon's literary agent and the Sybylla publishing collective in 2001. The uneven treatment by Vintage of the new *Working Hot* is critiqued by Ravenscroft, who questions the conditions under which the text now generates its meanings:

> It seems to me that in the eyes of *Working Hot*'s new publishers, this text is best read as a naughty novel about sex. It has been sent into the world wrapped in a cover blurb of banal sexual innuendo. (Was the joke about the cunning linguist the only one the marketing department understood?) On the back cover, two soft-pink nipples nudge at the edges of the page, and the blurb talks the text into the pliant shape of porn: 'these women find white hot ways to work', 'they lay claim to their own desires and maintain their love and lust'. 'Are they strong-willed and foul-tongued enough', the blurb asks, 'to maintain this erection into language (Pardon?)' (2001: 77).

The re-packaging of *Working Hot* does away with any suggestion of lesbianism or queer on the cover and censors the original Cernak cover image by using the author's name to cover up or hide the figure's hairless genitals, concealing 'some of the meanings available to the image and, by extension, the text' (Ravenscroft 2001: 78).

Ravenscroft argues that feminism constituted the conditions in which *Working Hot* was written and edited in the context of Sybylla Press, and then circulated amongst its community of readers. It was within this communal context that the text took on much of its significance as a critical cultural work (2001: 81). Arguably, the new version of *Working Hot* represents new and different meanings, when exposed to a contemporary mass market audience. Nevertheless, Random House's marketing makeover and appropriation of textual and visual content is problematic and has broader implications for feminist publishing. The new treatment by Random House publisher, Jane Palfreyman, renders the author's original work and Sybylla's original production meaningless, given the context and conditions in which *Working Hot* was produced and the audience it was written for.

After Sybylla published *Working Hot* in 1989, a letter was sent out to a number of Melbourne women from the publishing collective, outlining a new publishing project and inviting women to attend a meeting with the aim of becoming part of a new Sybylla collective (Lynch 1998: 41). The new collective formed at the invitation of the existing one, comprising three continuing members, who had overseen the transition from a business to a collective of voluntary members and new members, bridging the gap and the experiences between the old and the new (Holt and Lynch 1997: 2). Feminists 'were living in the time of time of Cain and Kirner' and could 'feel the pincers of economic rationalism, not to mention the claws of mainhouse marketing of "women's writing"' and 'the complexities of feminisms plural' (Lynch 1998: 41). The new collective was formed at the end of a lengthy recruitment process and its first task was to establish itself as a group. In the late 1980s Sybylla was in transitional mode, from a commercial printing business employing staff on regular wages, to a collective of voluntary members.

Maryanne Lynch articulates Sybylla's regrouping and re-evaluation at this time and raises some searching questions:

> Was it enough to achieve an even-handed approach to gender-, race- and class-related texts? How radical was this? What purpose was being served if similar work was being published by Penguin Books or Random House? Was the alternative a funkier layout? Hardly. More experimental texts and what did 'experimental' mean, anyway? Or, did we need to do something altogether different? (Lynch 1998: 42).

second degree tampering and Motherlode

second degree tampering was already in existence as an idea and the new collective assembled itself around the idea's development. From 1991, until the publication of *second degree tampering* in 1992, a 'closed' collective of seven women managed Sybylla's administration and effectively defined Sybylla. The shared objective was to produce a book through group consensus. All decisions — from design, title and cover image, to the drafting of the introduction and the running order, to the selection and editing of writings — were arrived at through consensus. At least, that was the theory, and generally it worked in practice! (Holt and Lynch 1997: 4). The development of the publication took place in stages, with each stage requiring agreement on aims and outcomes. Several members read each submitted piece, advising a full collective meeting in determining the initial shortlist. Two members were subsequently assigned as co-editors to each piece of shortlisted writing, with the collective as a whole providing a forum for feedback and ideas, ultimately arriving at the final selection. This constant negotiation of working methods and relations was based on the assumption that different stages required different processes (Holt and Lynch 1997: 2–4).

In their introduction to *second degree tampering*, the seven women who comprised the publishing collective wrote:

> In many ways *second degree tampering* is a text of and for the '90s. It is created from a contemporary feminist politics which recognises and seeks out difference; not in an attempt to manufacture some infinite diversity between women, but in order to counteract the homogenising and exclusionary practices of modern society. We are interested in creating and maintaining a particular cultural space; one in which questions of importance to feminists can continue to be investigated and the validity of writing by and for women is affirmed. Acknowledging and exploring the differences between women focuses attention on the historical, social and cultural contexts in which all identifications take place (Sybylla Co-operative Press 1992: vii).

The publishing collective detailed the soliciting of contributions and the subsequent development of *second degree tampering*, an anthology of short fiction, performance works, poetry and essays:

> Sybylla began work on *second degree tampering* in September 1990, publicising the project and requesting submissions through book clubs, regional writing groups, educational institutions, literary magazines and community radio. The editorial process involved reading more than three hundred and fifty manuscripts, gradually narrowing down the selection until the final shape of the collection emerged. Readings of manuscripts were not shaped in isolation, but with re-reading, discussion and insights gained by considering each piece alongside others. Our discussions continually returned to questions about the exploration of identity, the politics of feminism, and the self-consciousness of writing. Individually and as a collective, pieces were selected which spoke to us and in some way met with our beliefs about the politics of women's writing. Selection was often difficult as each of us responded to, enthused over, and advocated for those pieces we thought should be included. Apart from selecting manuscripts, our role has included working with writers and editing individual pieces; shaping the collection through ordering of texts; framing them for the reader through their physical presentation as a book, the look on the page, the design of the cover, the choice of title. In making these editorial decisions we have tried to indicate particular readings of the text, but not determine a singular one. *second degree tampering* was made possible by women working together from a shared commitment to feminist politics and an understanding that our collective process would strengthen rather than diminish the text. This is a collection which is more than the sum of its constituent parts. […] We understand our role as feminist publishers to be the renegotiation of the terms and relations of cultural production as they position women. The production of *second degree tampering* is an assertion of the continued importance of publishing women's writing from an avowedly feminist position with a wilful disrespect for the values of commercial publishing (Sybylla Press 1992: x–xi).

The feminist impetus behind *Motherlode* was that 'there was a sense that motherhood and maternity and ideas of the mother were almost suppressed themes of feminist discussion because it loomed so large' (Holt int. 1999). *Motherlode* was in production for over four years and during that time Random House released *Motherlove*, the first in a series of mainstream anthologies that published a generation of well-educated, high achieving young mothers. Holt describes the Random House collection as 'maternal journalism — often quite moving stories but in their own way, terribly familiar and uncritical of what the mother might mean' (Holt int. 1998).

Stephanie Holt was a member of the *second degree tampering* collective and co-edited *Motherlode* with Maryanne Lynch. Holt describes the commissioning and acquisitions process and how the ideas/themes were developed for both books:

> *The commissioning was really quite similar for* second degree tampering *and* Motherlode. *An idea for a broad theme and approach was developed collectively. This was articulated and put into a project description/proposal which was reproduced in an appropriate form to show prospective contributors and writers and circulated widely. As material came in, it was read and assessed and opinions recorded. In both cases there were a number of readers, not necessarily involving everyone, two or three from the group systematically. With the soliciting of writers for* Motherlode *it was still broad but the process was a little more selective than with* second degree tampering. *This is effectively commissioning, but it's very hard to solicit and not have the project be passed on and out through writers' networks and reach all sorts of places and people you hadn't expected. So the project also developed a momentum of its own* (Holt int. 1999).
>
> *The whole collective worked on* second degree tampering *and basically that book project was the collective. Everyone put in a lot of time but time was limited. If we felt a piece needed more editing we would have to make a decision whether to include that piece or not and allow time for proper consultation on all aspects of production. That happened more with* second degree tampering *because that was more of a collective project. There was a lot of consultation and very intense editorial work on individual pieces. Works were divided up once we had collectively shortlisted. Two women worked with each author on every piece and were chosen on the basis of who was most enthusiastic and had the strongest commitment towards particular pieces.*
>
> *There were about 35 contributors to* second degree tampering. *The theme of identity had a great deal of currency within theoretical feminist discussions at the time. Our interest was to broaden it out and open it up to experimental writing and poetry forms. Identity was coming out of Cultural Studies and Women's Studies and it really was a cliché of theoretical thought at the time. We wanted to look at identity in relation to the acts of reading and writing and there was a collective self-consciousness about that. With* Motherlode *it was an issue that had had a moment of intense discussion by feminist theorists and some feminist psychoanalysts at an earlier point — Nancy Chodorow and Adrienne Rich. Issues around the meaning of the mother were starting to resurface in the 1980s and early 1990s and it was a generational thing and women were personally confronting these issues for the first time. Were they going to embark on motherhood or not?*

> *With* Motherlode *it was a new and much bigger collective. There were sixteen women involved in discussions. It was also about group process and group dynamics — to set up a structure for decision-making. It was about keeping everyone interested and involved. We did a series of readings on four topics that had attracted a reasonable amount of interest when they had been floated as possible book projects. Two of those four topics went on to become* Motherlode *and* She's Fantastical. *That proved to be a good group building strategy. Once we decided to go ahead the work was delegated to a group of six for* Motherlode. *Another group formed to work on* She's Fantastical *and the two groups worked side by side for quite a long time* (Holt int. 1999).

The commissioning and acquiring of content, the editorial development of individual pieces and the collection as a whole, including text and cover design, involved all members of the Sybylla collective in the decision-making for *second degree tampering*. *Motherlode* involved a smaller production group and a different editorial arrangement:

> *With* Motherlode *there was no assumption that the collective working group who were driving the project would also edit the book. In the end Sybylla looked for outside editors and a former collective member and myself put our names forward for the job. That's a bit more of an industry model, where you pass the next stage of the work along to someone else. While the women in the working group were committed to the project they didn't want to edit the collection. They felt more comfortable with appointing editors that the group felt were appropriate, briefing them and overseeing what they were doing. With Maryanne based interstate time and distance were problematic. Because there was some urgency to get it finished and partly because of funding timeframes we made quite pragmatic decisions. Maryanne edited the poetry and the fiction and I edited the non-fiction. There was variance, here and there, where perhaps we might have had an established relationship with a writer. We were both working elsewhere and a reasonable amount of that full-time work was as professional editors. This wasn't the case when we were involved in* second degree tampering. *Stepping into professional editorial roles outside Sybylla happened after we worked on that book* (Holt int. 1999).

The dynamics of the Sybylla publishing collective shifted in response to individual interest and commitment, the single life of particular publishing projects through all stages of cultural production and the ways in which feminism has evolved within particular contexts over time. Fundraisers became an important element of Sybylla's community activities and also served to promote and publicise the work of the press. Various collectives organised different events to capitalise Sybylla's publishing program, including dances, balls, talent shows, film and theatre nights, forums and readings.

In the first year of operation, weekly pledges of between $2 and $5 from women's movement members were received. A sponsorship scheme was introduced for a few years in the early to mid-1980s. For an annual contribution of $100, sponsors received a newsletter, signed copies of Sybylla books at wholesale prices and invitations to book launches. These initiatives, including some government funding, enabled Sybylla to continue operating (McCormack 1997: 19). Because Sybylla is a non-profit enterprise, the collective has relied on government funding, the support and generosity of the women's community and the unpaid work of collective members. *Working Hot* and *second degree tampering* received no funding from outside bodies, while *Motherlode* was successful in receiving federal and state assistance from the Australia Council and the Australia Foundation for Culture and the Humanities. While occasional grants have been received for particular publishing projects, there is no recurrent funding from any other sources other than what the collective generates itself. This self-funding has continued to finance Sybylla's operations and its occasional publishing program since 1989, when the collective agreed to continue its activities as a group of unpaid workers. By the late 1990s this *modus operandi* was applying internal pressure on Sybylla in ways that were difficult for the collective to resolve. Sybylla looked to its history as a way of moving forward. An historic 21st birthday dinner was attended by many past Sybylla members and friends and a planned series of community forums were underway. A history project group formed in 1997 to undertake the task of researching Sybylla's printing and publishing history. The collective had not published since 1996. Although plans were underway in 1998 to publish a series of novellas this project was on hold by 2000 and Sybylla's future was uncertain.[4]

Spinifex Press (1991–)

Susan Hawthorne and Renate Klein co-founded Spinifex Press in 1991 after attempting, with some success, to subvert a mainstream publishing market that 'had gone postmodern, liberal and backlash with few innovative works by feminist writers' (Hawthorne and Klein 1995: 7). Spinifex was established during a recession which widely affected the growth of the publishing industry. Larger publishers like Penguin Books were culling their lists and 'knocking back books on risk alone' (Hawthorne int. 1998). Spinifex is a native grass that is drought resistant and holds the earth together. In central Australia, spinifex grass is traditionally burnt by Aboriginal people to regenerate the land. Hawthorne and Klein's marketing campaign launched their company Spinifex as 'drought and recession resistant' and this worked to their benefit with the recession on its way out. In its first year, Spinifex was awarded the international Pandora New Venture Award and its first title, *Angels of Power* (1991), an anthology of fiction, drama and poetry, was listed in the

Top Twenty Australian Feminist Book Fortnight favourites in 1991. Early feminist titles, including *Angels of Power* (1991), the award-winning and controversial *RU 486: Misconceptions, Myths and Morals* (co-published in 1991 with the Institute on Women and Technology, Cambridge, MA, USA) (Klein *et al*. 1991b) and *The Spinifex Book of Women's Answers*[5] (1991), a feminist quiz book, were translated and published in German and Spanish. Material for publication is not accepted if it is 'racist, sexist, demeaning of disabilities, homophobic, pornographic or exoticising of other cultures' and this is articulated in Spinifex's publishing policy on manuscript assessment and acceptance.

It was Hawthorne and Klein's political activism that led them into book publishing. Feminist ideas and commitment drive the publishing program and feminism is embedded in the company philosophy (Hawthorne and Klein 1995: 5). Both women have contributed to shaping feminist theory and feminist politics through their multiple roles as publishers, editors, writers and academics. The publishers' aim is to radicalise readers by 'challenging readers' assumptions, increasing readers' knowledge of history; opening readers' eyes to another way of existence' (Hawthorne and Klein 1995: 7). In discussing radical feminism, Hawthorne has spoken of the parallel experience in coming out as a woman with epilepsy and as a lesbian, of private and public silences in some contexts and her search, through reading hundreds of books by women, for stories that 'empower me as a woman, as a lesbian and as someone who has epilepsy' (Hawthorne 1996: 494). As feminist publishers, Hawthorne and Klein have attempted to radicalise and challenge readers' assumptions in areas of prejudice around race, disability, class and sexuality (Hawthorne and Klein 1995: 7).

In its early books the publishers defined Spinifex as an independent feminist press, publishing innovative and controversial fiction and non-fiction by Australian and international authors. While this has remained a relevant summary of company philosophy and policy, the economic and new technologies push in the 1990s widened this vision to include a global reach with expanding international markets, customised products for a niche market, developing and exploiting interactive multimedia markets, providing training support for staff and encouraging innovation in every area (Hawthorne and Klein 1995: 6). A feature of Spinifex operations is its publishing and promotions web-site, which includes the development of a number of subsites, for example, the Feminist Publishers in Asia web-site which gives information on regional feminist publishing, while the interactive Babel Building site was one of the first to invite creative input from readers responding to the poetics of Spinifex author Suniti Namjoshi. Other sites relate to particular titles such as *CyberFeminism*. There are also discussion sites linked to particular Spinifex titles. One raises appropriate and relevant issues on the rights of Indigenous peoples and native title, linked to *Ngarrindjeri Wurruwarrin: A World that Is, Was, and Will Be* (1998) and another is

an information site on female genital mutilation, linked to *The Day Kadi Lost Part of Her Life* (1999). Spinifex published fifteen titles over its first two years, steadily expanding to eight to ten titles a year and currently publishes fifteen titles a year. Hawthorne remarks 'one of the constant battles we are fighting with ourselves is the push to grow. We have grown, but resisting it is a full-time job' (Hawthorne int. 1998). Spinifex publishes for a local and export market operating with a publishing staff that shrinks or grows in response to market forces.

Hawthorne views Spinifex Press as a 'southern hemisphere publisher' with an aim to extend the local publishing reach 'so that the voices of radical feminists, Indigenous women, lesbians and disabled women get a hearing internationally' (1995: 36). Before Spinifex was established Hawthorne was an editor with Penguin Books. During the four years at Penguin she managed to recommend and commission many previously unpublished writers and their works for publication. Hawthorne discussed the notion of publisher as 'first reader' and her excitement at reading new material for the first time and wanting to share her enthusiasm with others. If a subject area requires specialist knowledge or the publisher has doubts, a second opinion is always sought by Hawthorne or Klein. Outside readers provide occasional reader's reports and Spinifex staff also offer feedback as readers. Sometimes particular authors, such as Dale Spender, provide the impetus for the creation of new lists at Spinifex. It was Spender's enthusiasm about the development of computer culture in the early 1990s that led to the commissioning of *Nattering on the Net* (1995). This was followed by the first national cyberculture conference for women, organised by Spinifex Press in 1996, and the subsequent successful creation and expansion of a feminist cyberculture list.

Hawthorne and Klein describe the Spinifex list as 'broad-based politically and commercially', working with writers from every continent. Their list includes single-authored books and small anthologies, first collections of poetry and literary fiction as well as crime and romance, academic titles and books on Asian and Pacific issues. The aim of the list is to expand the diversity of form and content as a feminist strategy in setting trends and testing the market (Hawthorne and Klein 1995: 7). As a commercial publisher, Spinifex searches out potential book markets and has exploited the increasing demand for feminist books in the Asia and Pacific region:

> *Books that have had an effect on me include* Daughters of the Pacific. *I suddenly became aware of the names of all these islands around the country and it made me look at maps of the Pacific differently. There is some really interesting work being done. Merlinda Bobis is from the Philippines and lives in Australia. Some of her work deals with the rewriting and revision of the physical heritage of the Philippines which I am interested in — what it's like to be a migrant in Australia.*

> *These are issues we need to be talking about.* Women in the New Asia *is a co-production with Zed Books and White Lotus. This book is about the effects of the Asian crisis on the level of poverty of women in Asia, which I think is really important for us to understand here. Given that Australia is leaning towards Asia, in spite of John Howard, in the long run we are moving in that direction* (Hawthorne int. 1999).

Ngarrindjeri Wurruwarrin

In the 1980s and 1990s, earlier political discussions that had focused on sex and class in Australia, shifted to cultural debates about race, identity politics and representation. In 1996, when Susan Hawthorne and Renate Klein commissioned Diane Bell to continue the research she had begun on the litigious issue of Hindmarsh Island, they were aware of the controversies surrounding the feminist anthropologist (Hawthorne int. 1999).[6] Bell's subsequent ethnographic research in *Ngarrindjeri Wurruwarrin* (1998) explores the distinctive and dynamic nature of Ngarrindjeri culture, the politics of knowledge and representation, and the centrality of religion for a colonised people.

In 1994 the Ngarrindjeri people of Hindmarsh Island (*Kumarangk*) lodged an application to stop the development and building of a bridge between the island and the Australian mainland. This claim was based on the cultural and spiritual significance of the area to the Ngarrindjeri people. The application was centred around a set of sacred beliefs that were to become known as 'women's business'. A Royal Commission into the matter in South Australia came to the conclusion that the 'women's business' was fabricated to prevent work on the bridge from going ahead. The Federal ban on building the bridge was overturned in 1995 and the issue grew into a controversy that would further divide the community and the nation.

Hawthorne spoke of the issues involved and her commitment to publication:

> *As feminist publishers we thought this was a pretty central book in terms of what happens to Aboriginal women's land rights issues in Australia. The cases that get the media attention focus on men's sacred places and obviously that's important. The women's sacred places seem to be underrepresented in publishing and also the knowledge of what's really behind it all. If people understood the issues involved in this particular case, and specific to that location, there would be a whole range of different ways in which they would be able to draw on that in other cases as they came up. This was very important. The fact that we were prepared to commit to that book at a really early stage was unusual. We had even gone as far as putting in grant applications to the Australia Council for commissioning.*[7] *Renate and I both believed that the Hindmarsh* [*Kumarangk*]

issue is a really important issue for Aboriginal women, for white women, for the culture as a whole, for issues around Native Title, about our whole relationship to the country (Hawthorne int. 1999).

Hawthorne also discussed the collaborative relationship between Diane Bell, an Australian who has lived and worked in the United States since 1989, and the Ngarrindjeri people, and the inherent issues of the politics of knowledge, consultation and representation[8] in developing the content for the book:

I respect Di Bell as a thorough researcher with a strong sense of ethics. I had absolutely no doubt that she would be talking very closely with her research subjects. If I had any doubts about that I would not have published a book by a white woman on Aboriginal issues. Those things all came together. Di had gone back to all of the people, re-interviewed them, written their stories and then once the stories were written, took the manuscript back to them and showed them what she had written and ticked off 'yes', they had approved. Sometimes what that meant was that they would tell her something else. That's why the book started out as 300 to 400 pages and extended to 700. New stories got added at the time of consultation so the book was almost collectively written, even though Di was pulling the material together and interpreting what she knew. The legal issues kept coming up and the legal landscape kept changing as the book was being written (Hawthorne int. 1999).

The author and the publishers wanted to ensure the authenticity and correct meaning of the Ngarrindjeri voice and language. Hawthorne describes the informed decisions that were made about textual style and visual material:

The Ngarrindjeri people have been living with colonisation since the 1840s so English in most instances is their first language. There are a lot of Ngarrindjeri words in the text and they are explained through a glossary and, in their first use, by the people who are using them. We also made a decision to vary the typeface for direct quotes by Ngarrindjeri people. Where there is a story being told the typeface is slightly different from the typeface we used for the general narrative in the book. This was to highlight that these were direct quotes and the voices of those people. When I first read the early chapters I couldn't keep track of the names of people and the ways in which they were related to one another. I asked Di for some photographs so that I could see who these people were and how they related to one another. The photos of the families and the the lines of women going back through the generations actually came out of that. The way in which the photos related to the text throughout the book was very important. Those visual clues helped me take in and remember experiences that are very different from our own white anglo Australian experiences (Hawthorne int. 1999).

Diane Bell approached Ngarrindjeri and Kaurna artist Muriel Van Der Byl, who was commissioned for the cover artwork. Van Der Byl produced two hand-painted silk images which were reproduced as transparencies of the original artwork for the front and back cover. Van Der Byl briefed the publishers on her concept of how the artwork would be conceptualised and produced a cover rough, which was then sub-contracted to a freelance designer, who produced the final camera-ready artwork (Hawthorne int. 1999).

In the case of *Ngarrindjeri Wurruwarrin*, the collaboration was a consultative process between Bell and Hawthorne and between Bell and the Ngarrindjeri community. Hawthorne identified particular areas of concern and issues that arise in publishing Indigenous content, including the risks of cultural appropriation, if certain restricted knowledge is made transparent; misinterpretation, deliberate or otherwise, of the material published; and the ethics of publishing (Hawthorne 1999: 1). On the question of ethics, Hawthorne raised several key points: the knowledge of the author's processes of research and documentation; the support of, and communication with, knowledgeable people in the Ngarrindjeri community; and permission by the Ngarrindjeri to reproduce photographs not previously published (Hawthorne 1999: 5). In a proactive publishing move to disseminate ideas and knowledge about the Hindmarsh Island case and the issues it presents and to more widely promote the book, Hawthorne chronicled the media debates and book reviews generated by *Ngarrindjeri Wurruwarrin* on the Spinifex Press web-site.

Darkness More Visible

The readership for Spinifex Press titles represent a women's studies, cultural studies and lesbian culture audience as well as general readers. Throughout the 1990s, many lesbian writers were commissioned and published by Spinifex across the genres of fiction, duo/auto/biography, anthology, crime and poetry. A recent lesbian novel commissioned by Hawthorne is Finola Moorhead's *Darkness More Visible* (2000), marketed as an 'epic narrative, a detective story and a cyberconspiracy' (Spinifex Press catalogue: 2000–2001).

In late 1997, having discussed the possibilities of a new book in broad terms, Hawthorne received 'a rough outline' of Moorhead's ideas and some 'samples of how the characters might be written' (Hawthorne pers. comm. 2000). Over the following two years Hawthorne read drafts of the author's work, responding to the ideas, the writing and the structure of the novel. Moorhead stayed with Hawthorne and Klein in 1999 and continued to write. During that time the publishers offered feedback on the writing and also met with a freelance reader who was familiar with Moorhead's writing and the author, to discuss the novel. In early 2000, Hawthorne travelled to Wauchope to

work with the author on character development, narrative and the structure of the novel, including the ending which was unsatisfactory for the author and the publisher. Matters of in-house style consistency were also discussed, including structural editing and the 'finer details of copy editing' (Hawthorne pers. comm. 2000). From the first discussion between the author and the publisher through all stages of development to publication took three years. While this was the first of Moorhead's books to be published by Spinifex, Hawthorne had previously commissioned the author's award-winning *Still Murder*, published by Penguin in 1991.[9]

Susan Hawthorne and Renate Klein have built an impressive list of innovative Australian and international feminist titles, successfully exploiting feminist export markets for their books, entering into co-publishing, translation and distribution negotiations with other progressive independent publishers. Spinifex Press books are available throughout the world in English and translation. By selling rights internationally and co-producing foreign titles locally, Spinifex is able to introduce new readers to innovative feminist fiction and non-fiction. In 2000, Spinifex published auto/biography and duobiography, books on the body and health, Asian and Pacific literature and issue books on development and globalisation in the subject category of politics/economics. Spinifex Press won awards from its first year of publishing and this has progressively continued. Spinifex was established in the decade of local and global change in the world of publishing. Hawthorne and Klein saw the changes coming, in the early to mid-1990s, and exploited them in ways that advanced feminism and feminist publishing, while also asking important questions about issues of power, the social consequences of new technologies and what they mean for women. In response they set about publishing new titles with global vision that addressed these questions and empowered women who were entering into new cyber realms and cultural territories. The publishers continue to ask new questions in response to issues of western development, globalised economies and women in a changing environment and their list evolves and expands accordingly.

Queering the Culture: Coalitionist Production

Like the body of feminist writing published in Australia, a body of local gay and lesbian writing is contextualised within a gay and lesbian community and the conditions in which gay and lesbian literature is produced. Feminist and gay and lesbian writing share a history of contested identities and differences, with tensions in the writing that speak of both the personal and the political. While 'second-wave' feminism focused on sexual politics for women, the gay and lesbian or queer community has placed sexuality at the centre of definitions of self. As such, both are grounded in the

politics of identity. In the Introduction to the 1998 free 'sampler' of lesbian and gay writing in Australia, Jill Jones wrote, 'This year the books sampled are as diverse as last year […] it is this very diversity that raises the issues of "identity" — always a tricky topic […] Why are we all "represented" here? Because someone — ourselves, our publishers, agents, the editors of *20 & lit*, our readers — "identify" something in what we write or who we are as gay or lesbian or queer if you will' (Jones 1998: 1–2).

Historically, coalitionist publications were born out of a coalitionist politics within the gay and lesbian community. An early example was *inVersions*, a magazine of gay and lesbian prose and poetry produced from the activity of the late 1970s. In the late 1980s, Laurin McKinnon and Jill Jones co-founded the Sydney-based literary magazine *cargo* (1987–93) and the book publisher, BlackWattle Press (1987–99). Both were dedicated to publishing writing from the gay and lesbian community (Jones 1998: 4–5). A significant part of a shared feminist and gay and lesbian print history has been the commodification of feminist and gay and lesbian literature by multinational and mainstream independent publishers, including Allen & Unwin, Penguin, Random House, Hodder Headline, Pan Macmillan, Text Publishing and Hale & Iremonger — the former, establishing and maintaining a strong Women's Studies list and the latter, publishing important early anthologies of gay and lesbian writing in Australia, *Being Different* (1986) and *Words from the Same Heart* (1988). The commercial incentives for multinational publishers, in publishing the work of lesbian, gay or queer writers, was to exploit a new 'pink dollar' market. This was mirrored in the commercial mainstreaming of the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras in the 1990s when the organisers secured major government funding and private corporate sponsorship. A promotional exercise by the Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras, in showcasing the work of gay and lesbian writers in Australia, was the publication of two give-away samplers published in 1997 and 1998 and distributed nationally by Random House. The samplers included excerpts or teasers from books already published by independent and mainstream publishers in Australia. Ten years before, BlackWattle Press published four 'chat books' that contained an excerpt or a chapter of author's material which were distributed 'around the local markets' (McKinnon int. 1999). In his introduction to the first Australian sampler of gay and lesbian writing, *Fruit Salad* (1996), Michael Hurley stated the need for a 'much more detailed consideration of how gay and lesbian writing, imagery, poetics, politics and community are being produced in relation to commercial forces' (1996: 12). The exploitation of markets by mainstream commercial publishers has offered gay and lesbian writers bigger advances and better promotion and distribution deals. This does not detract from the individual efforts of writers and publishers such as Jill Jones, Gary Dunne and Laurin McKinnon and the independent cultural contribution that BlackWattle Press has made to the publication of gay and lesbian writing in Australia (1987–99). BlackWattle co-founder Jill Jones believes

that this is a 'testimony to hard work and commitment to a community rather than a primary focus on the bottom line' (Jones 1998: 7). McKinnon has been critical of mainstream opportunism. He identified 'marketing issues' as problematic, in timing a new BlackWattle release at the Darlinghurst book shop with the Mardi Gras 'because mainstream presses try to do their marketing at the same time' (McKinnon int. 1999). This impacts on BlackWattle titles when they have to compete with mainstream gay and lesbian literature in independent and mainstream bookshops. The samplers, with Mardi Gras branding, were 'free product' and directly competed with BlackWattle titles. Given the relatively small market share in Australia for gay and lesbian literature and the fact that BlackWattle only published three to four books a year, McKinnon argued that the promotional display and sales of their latest book was 'always critical to financing the next' (McKinnon int. 1999). At the time of interview, BlackWattle Press was 'on hold' and McKinnon was seriously questioning 'the viability of publishing projects'. He described the competition with Sydney's Mardi Gras as 'a juggernaut and we have to be extremely careful in trying to compete with it' (McKinnon int. 1999).

Other mainstream gay and lesbian publishing projects were identified and discussed in interview and I will mention two projects in this chapter for the following reasons: Michael Hurley's *A Guide to Gay and Lesbian Writing in Australia* (1996), for its significant alternative biographical and bibliographical contribution to identity and culture, gay and lesbian writing and literary criticism and Tim Conigrave's *Holding the Man* (1985), because of the profound impact this book had on the Australian gay and lesbian community. The *Guide* was co-published under a joint Allen & Unwin and Australian Lesbian and Gay Archives imprint, maximising its sales and distribution reach. Allen & Unwin's academic publisher, Elizabeth Weiss, worked with the author in departing from the convention of standard reference works to produce a rich research source for gay and lesbian and general readers. The author wanted to redress the biases of mainstream editors in other reference works, such as *The Oxford Companion to Australian Literature*, that do not include a separate entry on lesbian and gay writing (1996: viii). As publisher, Weiss made editorial suggestions and advised Hurley in defining and broadening the concept for a more gender-balanced approach to a range of diverse subject entries that came about through mutual discussions about 'different constituencies within the gay and lesbian/bisexual/transgender communities' (Weiss int. 1999).

McPhee Gribble publisher Sophie Cunningham met Tim Conigrave at a New Year's Eve party just after his partner had died of AIDS. In listening to and discussing Conigrave's ideas for a book, Cunningham commissioned what became *Holding the Man*, a novel documenting the social shifts within the gay community over 30 years, on the strength of Conigrave's ideas. Conigrave requested that he work with a gay man and fellow playwright, Nick Enright, on further developing the ideas for the

book and his publisher agreed. Cunningham also met with Conigrave regularly, read material for the book and offered structural feedback. Cunningham's 'political motivation' in commissioning *Holding the Man* was 'hearing too many stories about gay men losing their partners and not being treated as an equal spouse … hearing about people dying and the wills not being respected and having no *de facto* rights' (Cunningham int. 1999). Both the author and the publisher wanted 'to challenge reader's notions that gay men were not in long term relationships' (Cunningham int. 1999). This was a book that captured a range of experiences in Melbourne and Sydney and the explosion of the gay scene in the 1980s. Cunningham described the novel as a story about 'two young men who had had AIDS since they were 20 — so their whole adult lives they were HIV positive … it was about how people love each other over a period of time and accommodate each other's change' (Cunningham int. 1999).

Artemis Publishing (1992–)

Jocelynne Scutt began writing women's crime fiction in 1991 under the pseudonym of Melissa Chan and her early feminist detective novels were published by Spinifex Press. When Scutt established Artemis Publishing in 1992 she built a women's crime fiction list, editing and publishing a series of crime anthologies while continuing to publish her own feminist detective novels, featuring the independent feminist detective, Francesca Miles. The Sydney-based feminist publishing co-operative, Women's Redress Press, ceased publishing in 1994 and Scutt took their non-fiction backlist titles, including *Up From Below* (1987); *200 Australian Women*, a collection of 200 biographies of Australian women (1988); *Women Engineers*, life stories of women working in a non-traditional occupation (1989); *Jessie Street*, a selection of writing and twelve essays by the feminist lobbyist, activist and campaigner (1990); *Who Do You Think You Are?*, an anthology of second generation immigrant women in Australia (1992); and *Spectrum*, a bibliography of Australian women's writing (1995). Scutt also began to build the Artemis Women's Voices, Women's Lives series. These anthologies were collections of autobiographical essays grouped around a particular theme, written by Australian women, representing a range of ages and diverse backgrounds. Scutt's intention was to introduce the reader to accessible feminist ideas and feminist writing from a non-theoretical perspective through the everyday lives and experiences of ordinary women. The Women's Voices, Women's Lives series, compiled and edited by Scutt, is designed for general adult readers and for use as reference texts for students to promote classroom and tutorial discussion in schools, universities and TAFE colleges. A range of themes includes women, work and careers, mentoring and leadership, the women's movement and feminist history, women in politics, personal relationships and different lifestyles, ageing, life focus

and direction, city and country women and living in different communities. In 1997 Artemis launched a contemporary Women's Studies list in two volumes of essays written by Scutt, *The Incredible Woman: Power and Sexual Politics* (1997a), the first *Law and Medicine* and the second *Money, Power and Sexual Politics* (1997b), addressing legal, medical, financial and power issues for women. Scutt believes that these books will fill a gap in Australian literature and texts, covering a range of subjects including national rape law reform, confronting adult sexual violence, child sexual abuse and neglect, unlawful killings and gun control, women and imprisonment laws, the privatisation of justice, women's bodies and the law, pay equity and the gender gap, enterprise bargaining, credentials, skills and merit, women and housing, paid work and unpaid work, domestic violence, women in migration, sex, race and power, pornography, free speech and censorship, remaking a democratic future and the constitutional debate and women and the Australian republic. Scutt identifies all of the subjects included in these volumes as 'political movements that are strands of the women's movement' (Scutt int. 1999). The Artemis list includes women's detective fiction, non-fiction, biography and autobiography and selected Artemis titles have been produced by the Braille and Talking Book Library for the visually impaired. Between three and five books with print runs of 2,000 to 3,000 copies are published each year and this output varies according to Scutt's other writing and public commitments as a feminist lawyer. Scutt identifies the conflicts in 'crossing back and forth between being a writer, an author, an editor and a publisher' (Scutt int. 1999). Artemis titles are outsourced for comment and copy editing to freelance readers and editors. At the time of interview, eight titles had been published in the crime fiction list and ten titles had been published in the Women's Voices, Women's Lives series. Five anthologies were waiting in the publishing queue and three more were in the planning stages (Scutt int. 1999).

Scutt regards her commissioning role as central to the production of the Women's Voices, Women's Lives series and also commissions for her women's crime fiction series. As compiler, editor and publisher she seeks out her contributors by networking amongst the women's community. She provides an outline of the publishing project and invites women to write for a particular theme. If the writing is not publishable Scutt will then interview women and invite them to rewrite from the interview. She also described her role as first reader and 'encouraging women to bring out what is really interesting about themselves' through their writing (Scutt int. 1999). Scutt's first book, *Even in the Best of Homes: Violence in the Family* (1983) was taken on by Brian Johns at Penguin after Scutt had written to Penguin with her proposal for the book. Scutt spoke of a good working relationship with Penguin editor, Carla Taines, and described Johns as 'a person with an open mind' (Scutt int. 1999). Penguin also published an anthology edited by Scutt, *Different Lives: Reflections*

on the Women's Movement (1987) and reissued *The Baby Machine: Commercialisation of Motherhood*, first published by the Melbourne-based independent publisher, Susan McCulloch, in 1988. At the same time that Penguin published *Different Lives* they also released *Tall Poppies* (1984), Susan Mitchell's first collection of interviews with women. The two books received very different marketing and promotion treatment. On reflection, Scutt believes that Penguin 'lost their nerve' with *Different Lives* because Scutt addressed difference in women's lives and Mitchell's interviews with influential women were on safer, more identifiable ground (Scutt int. 1999). Scutt identifies her role as an agent for social change and is prepared 'to go with women who aren't acceptable to mainstream and aren't tall poppies' (Scutt int. 1999). The Artemis list is driven by Scutt's political agendas concerning 'class, race, ethnicity and sexuality' and her own personal belief that 'by improving the chances of disadvantaged people you can actually change power relations' (Scutt int. 1999). The rights to *Different Lives* reverted to Scutt because Penguin let it go out-of-print and plans are underway to reissue a contemporary companion volume under the Artemis imprint with 'a cover that promotes interesting content' for the Women's Voices, Women's Lives series (Scutt int. 1999). Scutt's list focuses on Australian content and she makes no apologies for this decision 'even if I'm cutting my books out of a broader, global market because we've got to celebrate and recognise the distinctive Australian voice' (Scutt int. 1999). While her own imprint does not have the desired global marketing and distribution reach, some of Scutt's own writing does. Probably the best known example is *Women and the Law*, published in 1990 by the Law Book Company, which is widely recognised as an important legal text. Scutt is critical of 'the accepted wisdom within the industry that anthologies don't sell' and her list actively promotes women's writing in this way even if they don't sell as well as individual author's works (Scutt int. 1999). Scutt was the only publisher in interview who continually raised class issues and the class divide within feminism. She was critical of corporate feminist culture and identified her own role as a feminist publisher in 'resisting the establishment and trying to get through to people on the ground who want to have a voice' (Scutt int. 1999). Scutt was a visible and active feminist during the Republic debate and offered the following observations about class: 'The Australian Republican Movement and Australians for a Constitutional Monarchy are really on the same side but they actually don't know it. They're both on about the establishment. They're fighting against each other and yet they really support each other. In the end what they want is the same thing' (Scutt int. 1999). Under the Artemis imprint, Jocelynne Scutt has built an impressive commissioned list of serious and accessible feminist texts 'with an eye to the future' while balancing other political commitments and professional careers as a feminist writer and lawyer (Scutt int. 1999).

Conclusion

Feminism at work in publishing is a different kind of engagement with texts and the politics of cultural production, where feminism exposes and contests power relations through the development of risky publishing lists. Feminism created new lists and genres that were in turn, taken up and exploited by mainstream publishing culture, successfully commodifying women's writing, capitalising on the fact that the majority of book buyers and book readers in Australia are women (ABS 1995; AC Nielsen 2001).[10] The wider acceptance of women's writing, and the advent of Women's Studies in Australian universities, took hold with the broadening of feminist theory during the 1980s and the new disciplines that emerged in the 1990s, including Gender Studies, Cultural Studies and Queer Studies. These evolving disciplines also created new book markets. The publishing industry reflects the gains that women have made through feminism, with a steady increase in women's participation. While women were employed mostly in editorial areas in publishing, a more recent trend has been the promotion of younger women to senior management positions. While this is the case, a corporate masculine culture continues to dominate organisational publishing culture at managerial and boardroom levels and as key industry talking heads.

The establishment and maintenance of commercial feminist publishing operations is a cultural imperative, if feminists want to successfully publish and promote feminist content to the world. The visibility and viability of feminist presses that 'exist in every continent', and feminist writing that 'is being produced everywhere' (Hawthorne 1994: v), were showcased in Australia in 1994 at the 6th International Feminist Book Fair, with a focus on Indigenous, Asian and Pacific writing and publishing. Many multinational publishers participated, including Penguin, Random House, Reed Books and Transworld. This is indicative of the currency of feminist ideas and markets in a global commercial publishing world. While feminist publishers are aware of their 'paradoxical role in resisting globalisation while also wanting to be beneficiaries' (Brown and Hawthorne 2002), they have also cautioned against how capitalism 'influences the forms feminism takes, in its resistance to features of capitalism, but also in its partial incorporation into it' (Ballantyne 1994: 4).

The 'commodification of sexuality and sexualization of everyday life' (Ballantyne 1994: 5) is reflected in mainstream publishers' lists in the different ways they have appropriated and marketed feminist and gay and lesbian literature. Examples discussed in this chapter are the collaboration between Random House and the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras, in mainstreaming gay and lesbian literature to a national and international audience; and the marketing department's treatment by Vintage/Random House of the new edition of *Working Hot*, in which the repackaging and marketing of the text is symptomatic of the 'transcendence in Australia of the

economies of the market and their new reach into intellectual and cultural life' (Ravenscroft 2001: 82). The ways in which mainstream publishers choose to publicise and promote feminist texts to a general audience are a vexed issue. Examples offered in this chapter include the uneven treatment of *Different Lives* and *Tall Poppies* by Penguin's marketing department in the late 1980s, and the rush by mainstream publishers from the mid-1990s to produce anthologised works around the theme of motherhood. While Australian women's writing has been successfully marketed as a genre since the 1980s, feminist writing representing issues of race, class, sexuality and disability is still marginalised. This is why the contemporary role of feminist publishing must continue in order to create a space that acts as a subversive site for wider debate and discussion, particularly in the revisioning of the terms and relations of cultural production as they position women. While notions of identity and difference are still framed within an increasingly Australian and international context, Pettman argues that feminists are living out their political existence in a world that is becoming 'post-national' in terms of global power, through market domination that has restructured national economies and globalised the international division of labour (1998: 336).

The debates driven by the media in the 1990s — that women were living in post-feminist times, and the discussions within feminist communities about the backlash towards feminism — continue in Australia and around the world.[11] In the 21st century, new forms of capitalism and the commodification of feminism are social, political and economic realities. The notion of publishing women's work and widely disseminating feminist ideas is no longer viewed as the urgent objective that it was in the 1970s in Australia. The explosion of women's writing and publishing that has taken place since the early 1980s, raises new questions about the relevance and meaning of feminist publishing within a contemporary context. The feminist publishers discussed in this chapter have continued to publish to diverse feminist communities, taking risks and breaking new ground.[12] Although their markets overlap to some degree they are not, and never have been, in direct competition with each other. Spinifex was quick off the mark to embrace new technologies in the mid-1990s, to enter into co-publishing deals with international feminist publishers and to exploit an export market for its books. Sybylla continued to publish local feminist content as an unpaid collective of voluntary workers until its demise. The Artemis list has captured the women's movement in Australia through the narratives of women's stories and women's lives. Feminist publishing, not unlike Indigenous publishing in Australia, challenges mainstream publishing conventions, largely in response to western publishing structures and western modes of production. The different ways in which feminist and Indigenous publishers acquire and produce content, is primarily in response to and engagement with the communities they serve. For example, Sybylla challenged

a male-dominated unionised printing culture and was part of a left-wing socialist alliance in Australia, producing radical feminist content; Artemis has published the stories of ordinary women, countering the publication and promotion of the 'star' phenomenon in mainstream publishing and marketing culture. Spinifex Press has shown that it is possible to successfully market Australian feminist books internationally, to English language and translation markets, and that feminists can develop their own models for using new information technologies in publishing. Feminism(s) and feminist publishing has *re*positioned and continues to inform debate and deconstruct mainstream definitions of Australian literature. The cultural production of feminist authors and texts, push at artificial boundaries and conventions of genre and form, in response to the material conditions of global publishing economies.

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1 In the 1990s this finally shifted with the establishment and growth of Spinifex Press in Australia, with its successful export publishing program, which includes co-productions with overseas publishers, rights sales and translations.

2 Stephanie Dowrick and Dale Spender returned to live and work in Australia.

3 Carmen Callil was one of the co-founders of Virago (UK), Stephanie Dowrick, originally a New Zealander, was one of the founders of The Women's Press (UK) and Carol Spedding was an original collective member of Sheba Feminist Press and later publisher of The Women's Press Live Wire series. Spedding organised the first International Feminist Book Fair in London in 1984 which was subsequently held in Oslo (1986), Montreal (1988), Barcelona (1990), Amsterdam (1992) and Melbourne (1994). Carol Spedding also originated the Feminist Book Fortnight in Britain, variations of which were then held in Australia, USA and New Zealand, where it still continues as the Listener Book Festival. Spender was one of the key figures in starting Pandora Press which became the third largest feminist press in London. The UK-based feminist author Gillian Hanscombe edited for The Women's Press and was involved in the short-lived Open Letters, established in 1992.

4 At the Sybylla Annual General Meeting in 2002 a motion was carried to change Sybylla's status to a 'non-trading cooperative'. It was agreed that Sybylla's website, www.vicnet.net.au/~sybylla/, would be updated to reflect the change in status and to include details of the new distribution arrangement with Spinifex Press (Minutes, Sybylla AGM, 16 April 2002). At a final gathering on the occasion of the Sybylla AGM, 1 March 2003, a motion was carried to cease all operations as a non-trading cooperative and to wind down all activities as a physical collective in the 21st century (Minutes, Sybylla AGM, 1 March 2003).

5 In 1993 it was reprinted with an index and retitled *The Spinifex Quiz Book*.

6 The contentious publication of an article in *Women's Studies International Forum* in 1989 on the subject of rape within Aboriginal communities (Bell and Napurrula Nelson 1989), elicited a right of reply from twelve Aboriginal women who disputed Diane Bell's central proposition that rape is everyone's business. They were also critical of what they considered to be white feminist intervention in matters of Indigenous knowledge and questioned the ethics of authorship (Huggins *et al.* 1991). This reply, published as a 'Letter to the Editor', elicited individual responses from both collaborators of the original article (Napurrula Nelson 1990; Bell 1991). What is referred to as the 'Bell–Huggins debate' is documented in the following articles: Bell, 1990, 1991, 1994; Huggins, 1990, 1990a, 1991, 1992, 1994a; Larbalestier 1990; Klein, 1991;

Yeatman, 1993). The 'Bell–Huggins debate' was also revisited in Aileen Moreton-Robinson's contemporary critical analysis of feminism in representation and practice and its effect on Indigenous women (Moreton-Robinson 2000).

7 The Spinifex application to the Australia Council for a commissioning fee for *Ngarrindjeri Wurruwarrin* was unsuccessful.

8 In *Ngarrindjeri Wurruwarrin* copyright is held by Diane Bell. The individual Ngarrindjeri stories contained in the work remain the property of the tellers of the stories, and the copyright and moral right are owned by the these individuals. Spinifex Press holds the copyright on layout and copyright on all photographs, maps and illustrations remain with the creators.

9 Sybylla also published *Quilt*, a collection of Moorhead's short stories, poetry and non-fiction in 1985.

10 The Australian Bureau of Statistics survey findings of 1995 are probably the most relevant statistics on the number of women who are reading and buying books. The more recent national survey published in 2001 focused on reading, buying and borrowing books for pleasure rather than reading for information. This survey was part of a national campaign, Books Alive, coordinated by the Australia Council for the Arts and supported by the Federal Government through the Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts. The campaign was the result of a $280 million GST compensation package to the book trade to be spent over four years. AC Nielsen conducted the market research and the findings were published in 'Reading, Buying and Borrowing Books for Pleasure'. One of the findings was that females over the age of 65, with higher levels of education, income and socioeconomic status, were identified as the majority group of readers who read for pleasure.

11 An interesting collection, *Who's Afraid of Feminism? Seeing Through the Backlash* was edited by Ann Oakley and Juliet Mitchell and was published in 1997. This collection focuses on the struggles of feminism during a period of backlash. The first in a series of Sybylla community forums, 'Who's Afraid of Feminism', was organised by the collective in late 1997, focusing on aspects of the feminist backlash in Australia in the 1990s.

12 This statement is now in doubt. At an historic meeting that took place on 20 October 2001, a collective decision was made to find a way of keeping Sybylla's books in print, and to cease trading as a profitable organisation. Although still solvent, the caretaker collective decided to change the structure to that of a non-trading co-operative and relinquish the office space at Ross House. There was a discussion about Sybylla's future as a virtual press and the possibilities of completing Sybylla's history as an on-line project and/or print publication.

CHAPTER SIX

Cross-currents in Culture: Indigenous Production

Introduction

This chapter has several purposes. First, it explores how Indigenous social, political and cultural activism has led to the emergence and development of an Australian Aboriginal publishing movement. Second, it attempts to document how publication has assisted Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in working towards cultural empowerment and cultural autonomy within an historical context. Third, it investigates the social responsibilities and cultural protocols that underpin the work of Indigenous editors and publishers and how thess intersect with the commercial constraints of book publishing. Finally, it explores what might constitute 'appropriate' commissioning practice within the cultural ambit of Indigenous book publishing. The main focus is a study of three publishing houses and their various commitments to the publication of Indigenous authors and texts: Magabala Books in Broome, IAD Press in Alice Springs and Aboriginal Studies Press in Canberra. The ongoing commitment by the University of Queensland Press (UQP) to the publication of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders through the David Unaipon Award and the Black Australian Writers series is discussed and the more recent establishment of the Marrwarnging Award for Indigenous writers, an initiative of the University of Western Australia Press (UWAP). Occasional publishers of Indigenous authors and texts are included because of their mainstream contribution to a growing body of Australian Indigenous literature and the subsequent promotion of wider cultural debate.

The Emergence of an Aboriginal Publishing Movement in Australia

The rise of an Aboriginal publishing movement reflects the growth of an independent, Indigenous writing and publishing culture in Australia, in particular, the advances made by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people towards self-determination. The growth of Aboriginal-controlled organisations, demands for a greater say and the linking of worldwide freedom movements representing the interests and identities of Indigenous peoples resulted in the growth and production of early Aboriginal print publications in Australia in the late 1960s, including *Smoke Signals*, *Aboriginal*

Quarterly, *National Koorier* and *Origin* (Burgmann 1993: 34). Michael Rose recorded 160 years of Aboriginal print journalism in his important 1996 collection of 'Indigenous Australian chronicle, reportage, editorial opinion and analysis that was published between 1837 and 1995, in both mainstream and Aboriginal-based publications' (Grossman 2002: ms. 5). The necessity of political activism to counter the censure of Aboriginal culture, language and artistic practices was the source of early Aboriginal writing and its evolution in challenging mainstream perceptions (Douglas 2000: ix–x).

The emergence of the Black movement, as an autonomous political force in Australia, is evident in particular social and political events, such as the Freedom Rides of 1965 and the Aboriginal Tent Embassy in 1972 and is symbolised by the growth of Aboriginal Land Councils since the late 1970s (Burgmann 1993: 33–7). Black activism is also evident in various government reforms and legislation, including the amendment to the Constitution and the granting of citizenship rights to Aboriginal people through the 1967 referendum; the development and implementation by the newly-elected Labor government in 1972 of a self-determination policy for Indigenous Australians and the subsequent repealing of racial discriminatory legislation in 1973; and the initiation of government-funded Indigenous community-controlled organisations established to deliver services to Indigenous people. While governments have provided funding and services for Indigenous Australians since the 1970s, the instigation of these resources has always been at the initiative of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (Huggins 1998: 40). Aboriginal political organisation and public protest has become increasingly visible, challenging dominant representations of Aboriginal history and Australian society. Murri historian and writer, Jackie Huggins, argues that 'Aboriginal history differs from white history in its concerns and perspectives' and that 'Aboriginal writers have a sense of purpose, an urgent task on behalf of their community' (Huggins 1998: 1, 3). The scope of this task can be seen across a body of emerging Aboriginal and Islander literature in Australia. Aboriginal publishing houses have been at the forefront of documenting modern Australian history and culture, in the production of a body of material presenting alternative social, political and cultural views.

Important works of non-fiction, for example, document the history of the land rights movement in Australia. On the occasion of the Central Land Council's 20th birthday in 1998, with a political backdrop of Mabo, Wik, the Howard government's Ten Point Plan and Pauline Hanson's One Nation, the publishing arm of the Institute of Aboriginal Development, IAD Press, commissioned *Take Power, Like This Old Man Here* (1998), an historical collection of writings outlining the fight for Aboriginal land rights in Central Australia and the rise of the Central Land Council.[1] IAD Press also distributes for other Aboriginal organisations who publish their own historical material, including the Central and Northern Land Councils. The publishing arm of

the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Aboriginal Studies Press, also published *Buying Back the Land* (1988), documenting organisational struggle and the work of the Aboriginal Land Fund Commission, from the late 1960s; *No Ordinary Judgment* (1996), detailing the inside story of the Mabo case and the recognition by the High Court of the law, the culture and the land and sea rights of the Meriam people in passing down the Mabo Judgment; and *A Sea Change in Land Rights Law* (1996), outlining the extension of Native Title to include Australia's off-shore areas and the role of native title in re-shaping Australian identity. Indigenous narratives are also to be found in government reports, including the national inquiry into the separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families, 'Bringing Them Home' (HREOC 1997) and the *Recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody* (ATSIC 1991).

The poems and essays of Aboriginal writer Oodgeroo Noonuccal[2] (formerly known as Kath Walker), were published from 1964 and different forms of Indigenous women's life-writing (lifestory) and personal narrative began to be published from 1978[3] (Grossman 1998b: 170). Other Black writers were published in the mid-1960s, including Mudrooroo (formerly known as Colin Johnson) and, from the 1970s, the activist and educator, Roberta Sykes. In 1977, Kevin Gilbert collected and edited an early collection of Aboriginal stories, *Living Black*. Aboriginal autobiography and biography emerged in the 1980s. An early lifestory by Elsie Roughsey Labumore, *An Aboriginal Mother Tells of the Old and the New*, was published in 1983 and this was followed by an increasing interest in Aboriginal women's life-writing towards the end of the decade.[4] Aboriginal Studies Press began publishing the work of mostly non-Indigenous anthropologists and academics from 1964, followed by the establishment of Indigenous publishing houses IAD Press in 1972 and Magabala Books in 1987. The accelerated publication of Indigenous lifestory, testimonies and poetry throughout the 1980s intersected with the Australian Bicentenary in 1988, and coincided with cultural shifts in national consciousness signalled by their publication (Grossman 1998b: 171–2).

Aboriginal editor Sandra Phillips argues that 'the best understanding of Aboriginal lifestory is within the context of being prepared to believe people's own interpretations of their lives — it is, after all, their experiences, their understandings and their tellings' (1997: 41). A growing body of Aboriginal lifestory or life-writing not only tells stories about their lives and their families but also reflects changes in government policy (Moreton-Robinson 2000: 14). Michele Grossman argues that many 'life-writing texts are poised between historical recall and evocation of the impact of successive government policies on the one hand, and the current cultural and policy contexts in which they have been written on the other' (1998: 173). Links have been made between lifestory and government policy, for example, in relation

to Sally Morgan's *My Place* (1987), released in the same year that the federal government established the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. The findings from the Royal Commission revealed that over half of the prisoners who had died in Western Australia were raised on white missions. The overlap between childhood removal and deaths in custody led to the Stolen Generation Inquiry in 1997 (Laurie 1999: 22).

Non-Indigenous editor of UQP's Black Australian writers series Sue Abbey is an advocate of lifestory and remarks 'it's the way we are leaning with our European sensibilities about literature and disregarding what is really important. Lifestory is very strongly history and it's history being written from the perspective of those who have experienced it. I think lifestory is probably one of the greatest tools we have for expanding the dialogue about racial issues' (Abbey int. 1999). Aboriginal writing concerns itself with representations of a 'lived history' where the preservation and maintenance of language and culture inform Aboriginal publishing policy and protocol. Abbey believes that the process of developing and publishing Black Australian writers at UQP has more widely informed UQP's general publishing policies (Abbey int. 1999). Representations of a lived history through lifestory, by those who have experienced it, are more fully discussed by Abbey in the context of Doris Pilkington's (Nugi Garimara's) work of autobiography and fiction, *Caprice: A Stockman's Daughter* (1991), winner of the 1990 David Unaipon Award:

> *To my mind this book is written by someone who has experienced Australian history, rather than Australian history that is researched and written by people who have not experienced it. I find a book like Doris's extraordinary, because she is actually filling in a blank that has been there and all the misunderstanding and ignorance that we've had by our own history, that is being filled in by Indigenous writers, who are first-hand witnesses to events in Australian history* (Abbey int. 1999).

Aboriginal Publishing and Cultural Production

Aboriginal publishing belongs to a tradition of independent publishing in Australia that has always taken the risks in identifying new writers and new writing forms. Indigenous writers, illustrators, designers, editors and publishers have historically pushed at the boundaries of conventional publishing, to produce an emerging body of alternative textual and visual material, representative of particular family and social histories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Their work is most evident through the proactive establishment of publishing houses specialising in the Indigenous production of Indigenous content.

In the previous chapter, I argue that the Australian publishing industry discriminates against women on the basis of gender in senior management roles, and does not have a fair and equal representation of male to female peers in positions of power, where the publishing decisions are made. Through an entrenched history of white colonial dominance, the publishing industry also discriminates against Aboriginal people on the basis of race, in particular, a fair and equal representation of Indigenous to non-Indigenous peers. Michele Grossman refers to the 'vexed politics of "Aboriginality"' and is critical of Australian publishers in their 'selective and often exclusionary practices' (Grossman 1998b: 170). This is manifested and demonstrated inside the publishing houses by non-Indigenous editors and publishers in their disproportionate selection of non-Indigenous to Indigenous content and the ways in which this content is developed and produced for publication. Maintaining the integrity of community-owned Indigenous knowledge and content is problematic, given the under-representation of Indigenous editors and publishers in the development and production of Aboriginal and Islander literature in Australia. Sandra Phillips argues that 'Aboriginal people need to be centrally involved in the publishing process' and non-Indigenous editors and publishers 'need to be sensitised to the relevant issues' when developing and publishing Indigenous content (Phillips 1998: 149). Huggins argues that the process of 'transforming an oral literature into a written literature without destroying its original form' (Huggins 1998: 40), requires specialised cultural knowledge as well as industry experience. This social responsibility is undertaken by Indigenous writers and Indigenous and non-Indigenous editors and publishers, across all production stages in a book's life cycle.

The dominant English-language literature documents a white, western history of book publishing. In Australia, the 'whiteness of local publishing' (Davis 1999: 149) is attributed to the publishing industry's colonial history, in which 'white Australian culture was British culture' (Curtain 1997: 1). The pervasive effects of such whitewashing are endemic and systemic in Australian book publishing. There is no reference to Aboriginal editors or publishers until the 1990s. As part of the history of the University of Queensland Press, Louise Poland interviews Sandra Phillips (Phillips 1998). In this interview, Phillips describes a mainstream publishing culture laden with 'a lot of value judgements about content, material, style, process, outcome and targets'. Phillips refers to the pivotal role of in-house Indigenous editors in appraising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander manuscripts for publication (1998: 149). 'Aboriginal publishing' says Phillips, considers 'culturally appropriate criteria as well as industry expectations'. Some of these criteria include being a good communicator, having a good understanding of language, not applying formula to process, working as part of a team, acting as a mediator between the Indigenous community and the wider Australian community and providing 'support and encouragement to engage and communicate regularly about the process, so

Aboriginal people don't feel disempowered' (Phillips 1998: 156). Aboriginal writer Anita Heiss identifies some of the issues implicated in the editing of Aboriginal writers, including non-Aboriginal editors either altering or 'gubbarising' Aboriginal content, not understanding the context of some Aboriginal writing and the lack of trained Aboriginal editors employed in-house (2000: electronic copy, Ch. 3, 1).

Non-Indigenous editor and indexer Margaret McDonell works out-of-house as a freelance editor. McDonell was commissioned to edit Ruth Hegarty's *Is That You, Ruthie?* (1999), the 1998 David Unaipon award winner, under the guidance of Sue Abbey. In examining the interracial work of editing, McDonell remarks 'editing is a value-laden process and the editor can be seen as a cultural gatekeeper. At a time of profound technological, cultural and social change, the issue of cross-cultural editing is important and ongoing. It is crucial that the role of the editor — and her assumptions — are made transparent' (McDonell 2000: 3). McDonell positions the editor at an interface, as a mediator between author and publisher. She signals a power imbalance between the author and the publisher, when she argues that 'in the editing of Indigenous writing, the editorial contact becomes a point where two cultures intersect. It is a point where the Indigenous author's work begins to be mediated, and perhaps subsumed, by the non-Indigenous publishing industry' (McDonell 2000: 3). In her analysis of the process of editing Hegarty's work, McDonell identifies and explores the issues surrounding the collaboration of Indigenous writers and non-Indigenous editors. These include cultural insensitivity, appropriation, the effects of cultural difference and accusations of disempowerment and the silencing of Indigenous Australians (2000: 3). Heiss identifies the editorial issue as 'the difference between the editor and the author, where the editor may see the process as one of negotiation and the author may see the process as one of compromise' (2000: electronic copy, Ch. 3, 1).

Phillips identifies some of the cultural issues and commercial constraints in working within a 'medium-size press' such as UQP. These include an in-house bureaucracy that highlights the 'rigidity of the overall publishing program and schedule', in which 'Indigenous titles are scheduled alongside every other title with the same time frames attached to them' (1998: 149). Phillips argues that it is necessary in the development of creative work to establish trust and dialogue with Aboriginal authors working on first titles and that a small Indigenous press could better shape its processes to suit those needs (1998: 149).

Aboriginalisation in Australian Publishing

Phillips argues that 'there are no all-Black publishing houses in Australia', although there is Aboriginal representation among publishing staff and on management boards

(Heiss 2000: electronic copy, Ch. 2, 3). As recently as 1998, only six Indigenous staff were employed in the publishing industry in a full-time capacity — three were employed with Magabala Books, two with IAD Press and one with Aboriginal Studies Press (Poland 1998). The only Aboriginal editor to be employed in mainstream book publishing in Australia in the mid-1990s, by the University of Queensland Press, was Sandra Phillips (Munro 2001: ms. 6). Phillips has spoken of the struggle inherent in journeying Indigenous writing through established publishing structures in order for a work to reach the public domain (Phillips 1996: 6). Her in-house editorial experience is within two very different organisational structures — as a trainee editor with Magabala Books and working with senior UQP editor, Sue Abbey, on the supervision and editing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander manuscripts for the Black Australian Writers series. Phillips argues that Indigenous cultural agency and intervention in the editing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander texts is central to Indigenous ownership of Indigenous content.

Magabala's failure to pursue its policy objective of Aboriginalisation at staffing levels, a specific requirement of Magabala's constitution, resulted in the resignation of in-house book designer Samantha Cook in 2000 (Heiss 2000: electronic copy, Ch. 2, 7). While Magabala from the outset has adopted firm policy objectives with regard to Aboriginal self-determination, Aboriginal Studies Press, the publications unit of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS), has never had a clear policy directive on Aboriginalisation. Instead, the Institute's aims and objectives are primarily the promotion and publication of works on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies. IAD Press, the publishing arm of the Institute for Aboriginal Development (IAD), is closer to achieving its constitutional aims through education and community development for Aboriginal people, the provision of cross-cultural education between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities and the maintenance and preservation of Aboriginal language and culture. This is also evident in the ratio of Indigenous to non-Indigenous staff (although this is always in the balance) and the in-house organisational culture at IAD Press.

Aboriginal people are employed as trainees in various in-house production areas in Aboriginal publishing, ultimately working towards wholly Aboriginal-owned and managed publishing operations. In 2000, seven Aboriginal people were employed in Australian publishing — all of them in Aboriginal publishing houses. Four Aboriginal staff were working in-house at Magabala Books, including senior editor Rachel Bin Salleh; editor Ruth Gilbert; designer Samantha Cook; and publishing assistant/receptionist Kandese Garstone. In the same year Magabala lost Cook and Bin Salleh. The in-house design position at Magabala remained vacant for the rest of 2000.[5] While the positions of chief executive officer and publications manager were in the process of being filled, Peter Bibby carried out the duties of both positions,

working with in-house production staff and outsourcing freelance editorial and design work (Peter Bibby pers. comm. 2001). A structural review of Magabala was also carried out by the Aboriginal management committee in 2000. The administration and finance position occupied by Shelley North was reclassified to that of financial controller (Peter Bibby pers. comm. 2001).[6] To compensate for in-house staff shortages, Magabala's editorial and design work were outsourced. This strategy enabled the publishing house to remain on track with its publishing program, publishing twelve books in 2000 (Peter Bibby pers. comm. 2001). Three Aboriginal staff members were working in-house at IAD Press in 2000, including assistant editor Josie Douglas,[7] book designer Louise Wellington and Denella Hampton, reception and sales. There were four in-house positions[8] at Aboriginal Studies Press in 2000, including the publications manager, deputy manager (publishing and editing), publications coordinator and desktop designer. All positions were occupied by non-Indigenous staff (Penelope Lee pers. comm. 2001).

An emerging and developing body of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander literature reflects the advances made by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The rise of Indigenous publishing has come about through much wider social, political and cultural activism and consultation within Aboriginal and Islander communities in working towards cultural empowerment and autonomy. The production of Indigenous works is part of an independent book publishing tradition and a local publishing culture in Australia. Indigenous membership of Publish Australia, a network of independent publishers formed in 1994 to co-operate and collaborate in marketing and distribution strategies for its members, is evidence of Indigenous industry alliance with other independent publishers in Australia. The collaborative publication of an Australian Indigenous Catalogue (1997), produced with the assistance of Publish Australia and the arts federal funding government body, the Australia Council, promotes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander works that are published by Australian-owned publishers. Selected titles from the lists of three publishers of Indigenous authors are featured in the catalogue: Aboriginal Studies Press (est. 1964), IAD Press (est. 1972) and Magabala Books (est. 1987). The catalogue also lists a range of titles published by other independent Australian publishers who are members of Publish Australia.

Margaret Ruhfus, former publishing director and managing editor with Aboriginal Studies Press and then publishing manager with Magabala Books, referred to a proactive Indigenous movement in the production and publication of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content. She spoke of the formation of 'a body of material that pushes at the boundaries of some editorial conventions, setting new boundaries and new standards' (Ruhfus int. 1999). It is evident that Magabala Books, IAD Press and Aboriginal Studies Press are widely recognised by varying audiences for their individual

and collective contribution to publishing a growing body of Australian Indigenous writing. For example, the source of much, though not all, research and authorship in works published by Aboriginal Studies Press is often non-Indigenous academics and anthropologists, whereas Magabala Books and IAD Press focus on working with knowledge and content that is initiated and generated by Aboriginal communities and individuals.

Magabala Books (1987–)

The concept for Magabala Books began in September 1984. A traditional song and dance festival was held at Ngumpan near Fitzroy Crossing in the far west of Western Australia. Representatives from Kimberley communities voted to formally establish a Kimberley cultural group — the Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Culture Centre. An Aboriginal Corporation was established in 1987 in Broome, known as Magabala Books, publishing and promoting the works of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. The publishing house takes its name from the Yawuru word for the bush banana, dispersing its seeds over the landscape. Magabala Books was established with a grant from the Australian Bicentennial Authority (National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Program) with an additional grant from the Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Cultural Centre (KALACC). Magabala Books became an independent Aboriginal corporation in March 1990. The objectives of this Aboriginal-controlled organisation are to restore, preserve and maintain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures through the publication aims of assisting and encouraging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to pass on their history; to make the wider community aware of the wealth of this tradition and culture; to protect and educate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander groups and individuals in matters pertaining to copyright; to record, promote and publish a body of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures; to promote the acknowledgement of and respect for these cultures, through the use of various printed and electronic media and through published works; and to provide employment and training for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. An initiative of Magabala Books is to provide protection to traditional storytellers and artists in matters of copyright and publication, to be discussed in more detail in this chapter. The integrity of book production evolves out of a synergy between the traditional custodians of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and the publishing team at Magabala Books. The result is a dynamic fusion of the elements of traditional and cultural values and beliefs with a commercial resolution. Magabala Books former senior editor Rachel Bin Salleh spoke of the individual consensus of the publishing staff at Magabala ‘who want to remain faithful to culture, to language, to land and to the people in getting their stories out […] in the mainstream their god is their dollar’ (Bin Salleh int. 1999). Bin Salleh pointed out that Indigenous people have survived for

so long because they are a culture that has been able to constantly adapt. This ability to adapt carries over into book publishing, reinforcing 'the fact that we are here and we are here to stay' (Bin Salleh int. 1999). Magabala Books currently publish books in the categories of autobiography, biography, history (oral, community and natural), contemporary issues, fiction, language, philosophy, children's (traditional), drama, poetry and other products including cards and posters. The Uupababa series, a Karajarri language word meaning 'little kid', is a contemporary series of books for children.

IAD Press (1972–)

IAD Press is the publishing arm of the Institute for Aboriginal Development (IAD), an Aboriginal research and adult-education centre, located in Alice Springs. The list includes books by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, covering all aspects of Aboriginal language, art, history and culture. On the occasion of the 25th anniversary of publishing in 1997, IAD Press launched its trade imprint, Jukurrpa Books, publishing children's stories and novels by Indigenous authors.[9] The first trade title under the new imprint was *Going for Kalta* (1997), with key words in Pitjantjatjara. In-house designer Louise Wellington won a national award for excellence in educational publishing for her book design. The IAD Press language list includes dictionaries, learning guides and tape courses for Central Australian languages and titles which are distributed in Australia, New Zealand and Europe. The most impressive language title published by the Press is the *Eastern and Central Arrernte to English Dictionary*[10] (1994), described by Douglas as 'the biggest dictionary ever produced of a single Aboriginal Language' which has made a significant contribution to the maintenance of language and culture (Douglas int. 1999). IAD Press's publishing philosophy is a commitment to the maintenance of language and culture in the Aboriginal communities of Central Australia. This philosophy challenges the global acceptance of English as the universal, dominant language. Josie Douglas refers to the regional and cultural location of IAD Press:

> *Working at IAD Press you certainly become a lot more passionate about bilingual text-based books and publishing works in a language other than English. In Alice Springs it's all around you. There's that many Aboriginal languages spoken down the street and down the mall and you can hear it. We have a language centre here and access to IAD language speakers* (Douglas int. 1999).

Douglas spoke of the cultural research that is carried out within IAD Press in gathering content for publication that is often in language other than English, 'because our elders are our experts and, in a lot of cases, don't speak standard English so the way they are presented on the page makes a lot of sense to me and other Aboriginal people […] For a mainstream reading audience that language needs to be reinterpreted into standard

English that can be understood, without the meaning being lost or new meanings put into the words' (Douglas int. 1999). The importance of IAD Press as an education provider, operating independently of the Northern Territory government and education systems, is significant in enabling 'the people to speak English as a fourth or fifth language' (Douglas int. 1999).

Douglas described an 'exchange of industry expertise and cultural information going on within IAD Press on a daily basis' (Douglas int. 1999). The publishing staff are committed to a policy of Aboriginalisation, in the seeking out and training of Aboriginal people. The balance of Aboriginal to non-Aboriginal staff is described by Mandy Brett as 'razor's edge' (Brett int. 2001) and always contingent on funding to enable the training of Aboriginal staff to 'cross over between design, production and management' (Brett int. 2001). IAD Press currently employs two full-time Aboriginal staff members and one more than half-time. Two full-time non-Aboriginal staff members, another at more than half-time and another at one-and-a-half days a week were employed, totalling seven staff members (Brett int. 2001). IAD Press publishes between ten to twelve books a year. Book sales constitute half of IAD's income and this pays staff wages. Production money is sought from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) and the Australia Council. The Institute for Aboriginal Development (IAD) supports the Press in-kind to the value of $60,000 per year (McDonald in Heiss 2000: electronic copy, Ch. 2, 4).

IAD Press is governed by an Aboriginal Board of Management, comprising senior IAD staff, senior office bearers from other Aboriginal organisations in Alice Springs, such as the Central Land Council or the Aboriginal Medical Service (Douglas int. 1999), an IAD publishing staff representative and a Language Centre student representative (Brett int. 2001). Potential publishing projects are initially investigated and researched by the publisher. The project is then more widely considered and discussed amongst members of the publishing team who make a recommendation to the IAD Board for a final decision (Douglas int. 1999; Brett int. 2001). Douglas describes it as a 'team process' with a lot of personal 'input as an Aboriginal person into the publishing decisions' so that 'everyone has a voice within the Press' (Douglas int. 1999).

Aboriginal Studies Press (1964–)

The Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies (AIAS) was established as a corporate body by a Commonwealth Act passed in 1964. In 1989, a new Act established the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) in Canberra. Aboriginal Studies Press (ASP), the publishing arm of AIATSIS, publishes books in all fields of Aboriginal Studies, including art, biography/family history, contemporary issues, education, pre-history, history, health, native title and land

rights, food, language, psychology, women's studies, physical anthropology and social anthropology. Recent publishing initiatives are fiction, poetry, plays and children's literature. The Institute also produces a Report series and *Australian Aboriginal Studies*, a twice-yearly, multi-disciplinary journal first published in 1983, containing articles, research notes and reviews on all aspects of Australian Aboriginal Studies; educational videos aimed at primary, secondary and tertiary markets; and cassettes and CD-ROMs of traditional and modern Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander music.

Under the Commonwealth Act, the functions of AIATSIS are: to promote and publish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, in research and study related to aspects of the culture, history and society of Aboriginal persons or Torres Strait Islanders; to assist in publishing the results of these studies; to conduct research in fields relevant to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies and encourage further research in related fields; to assist in training research workers, particularly Aboriginal persons and Torres Strait Islanders in relevant fields of study; to establish and maintain a cultural resource collection, consisting of materials relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander studies; and to encourage understanding in the general community of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander societies. AIATSIS carries out its functions by awarding research grants and fellowships, engaging staff in research, maintaining a library and archives and producing a range of publications and multimedia products. Products and publications of AIATSIS are distributed under the brand name Aboriginal Studies Press (AIATSIS 2000). A set of corporate objectives governs Aboriginal Studies Press and its parent organisation, in the cross-promotion of both the Press and the Institute, through a wide range of publications and related materials. Probably the most successful publishing project to date for Aboriginal Studies Press has been the development and production of *The Encyclopaedia of Aboriginal Australia*, in two volumes and two CD-ROMs, which constituted 'years of research and refining, many Indigenous contributors, only one Indigenous staff member in the project team and a large commitment of resources' (Ruhfus pers. comm. 2001).[11]

The Press accepts unsolicited manuscripts that are refereed and considered for publication by the Publications and Products Advisory Committee. In her doctoral thesis on Aboriginal publishing, Anita Heiss argues that Aboriginal Studies Press was 'originally established to publish the work of anthropologists, historians and academics' (Heiss, 2000: electronic copy, Ch. 2, 8). An attempt was made in the late 1990s to change the direction of the list, from the publication of mostly academic work to the introduction of more creative writing, including poetry and plays. Aboriginal Studies Press published twelve academic and general books in 1999. Changes were also recommended and plans made in relation to increasing the number of Aboriginal authors and in-house staff (Ruhfus pers. comm. 2002). Aboriginal Studies Press has since scaled down its operations to a publications unit, publishing six titles in

the 2000–01 publishing year, with a balance of 50:50 Indigenous to non-Indigenous authors. Currently there are no Indigenous staff employed in the publications unit (Penelope Lee pers. comm. 2001). It remains to be seen whether the consistent imbalance of non-Indigenous to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander authors published by Aboriginal Studies Press and the absence of Indigenous publishing staff will be redressed.

Cross-currents in Indigenous Production

Sandra Phillips argues that across the lists of Magabala Books, IAD Press and Aboriginal Studies Press, many collaborative works in the form of 'oral stories recorded, transcribed, edited and published' are produced 'with non-Indigenous writers holding the pen' (1997: 150). In discussing Aboriginal writing and western book culture, Alison Ravenscroft asks 'what might happen to some dominant western ideas about the book and the relations it carries when the book is in the hands of Aboriginal writers?' (1997: 262). This question is important in framing a similar question that relates to the empowerment of Aboriginal editors and publishers. Unless the book is in Aboriginal hands, across all areas of production within the book's life cycle, dominant western concepts and assumptions about the book and the relations it carries, will mostly go unchallenged. Ravenscroft argues that 'dominant western conceptions of the written text tend to assume that the book carries the same relations across cultures' and that 'this assumption commonly shapes the encounter between western publishing structures and Aboriginal writers' (1997: 261). This argument can also be extended to include the role that Aboriginal editors and publishers play in facilitating a cross-cultural exchange between non-Indigenous and Indigenous peoples, in the production and publication of Indigenous works. Ravenscroft interrogates the actions of white editors and publishers in their 'apprehension of Black writers' texts', in according a singular notion of the book and its powers when 'the book is circulating within a space produced by white and Black Australia' (1997: 261–2). Ravenscroft describes Jackie and Rita Huggins's book *Auntie Rita* (1994b) as a text which mixes memory and history. She writes not only of the space of the book's production, in terms of ideas held about the book in its materiality, but the social conditions in which a book is produced and through which meanings come to be attached to it (1997: 262). Ravenscroft worked with the two Murri women in the editing and collaborative production of *Auntie Rita*, published by Aboriginal Studies Press. Ravenscroft was invited to stay with and was inserted into the family before the work could begin. The editorial work took place around family meals, family visits and family gatherings. Ravenscroft was invited 'to call Rita "Auntie", the customary term of respect for Aboriginal women elders: the nomenclature of respect and honour, unlike western

ones, taken from familial relations'. Without family acceptance by Rita Huggins, in which the editor was 'made into kin' as Huggins's 'white gunduburrie' (baby, small child), the 'editorial work would not have been done' (Ravenscroft 1997: 265). Jackie Huggins writes of 'mutual Aboriginality' in writing *Auntie Rita* with her mother, Rita, and of her cynicism about white editorial intervention. She describes the process of working with Ravenscroft as a 'productive collaboration' in which the 'editing was unimposing and enabling' (Huggins 1994b: 4).

McDonell argues that 'white editors must remove their eurocentric lenses' before undertaking the reading of Indigenous texts (McDonell 1999: 2) and emphasises the 'importance of face-to-face meetings' with Indigenous authors 'to establish some rapport and hopefully a sense of trust' (McDonell 2000: 8). Working on Indigenous material is a steep learning curve for all white editors, in balancing standard editorial conventions with culturally appropriate ways of working with Indigenous writers, in the development of oral and written works. Josie Douglas argues that a non-Indigenous culture has historically defined why Aboriginal people write but the writing itself 'defies imposed literary constructs and mainstream perceptions of Aboriginal literature' (Douglas 2000: ix).

When thinking about Indigenous and non-Indigenous publishing processes, a useful approach is to overlay the meanings attached to, and representative of, best publishing practice. The approaches taken by Aboriginal people in maintaining the integrity of cultural production of Indigenous community knowledge and content significantly departing from that of mainstream book publishing and book culture. Cultural sensitivities, in building personal and professional trust and in nurturing and fostering creative talent in the development of emerging Aboriginal writers, are by-passed or short circuited within profit-driven, bureaucratic publishing structures. Margaret Ruhfus spoke of 'degrees of support across different publishing structures' and identified the need for in-house publishing staff to 'make professional judgements', to 'identify potential authors/artists/subjects' and to be able to 'develop and plan ahead over a few years rather than on a project by project basis' (Ruhfus int. 1999). In the context of Aboriginal Studies Press, Ruhfus spoke of power relations at 'the higher end of the organisation' and the difficulties 'for a number of these people in relinquishing power' (Ruhfus int. 1999). The appropriate training of Indigenous staff at different levels and the retention of Indigenous staff are identified by several editors and publishers as problematic (Douglas, Bin Salleh, Ruhfus ints. 1999; Brett int. 2000).

Mandy Brett remarks:

> *Every time we lose an Aboriginal staff member we're right back behind the eight ball in terms of our progress and we feel a sense of urgency to get somebody.*

> *But we need to do this in a way where they are getting proper benefit and proper training and mentorship and are not being set up to fail dismally. This is absolutely central to our publishing policy, and very much on our minds, but difficult to achieve* (Brett int. 2001).

Examples of Indigenous training were identified, in particular, the earlier supervision and mentoring of Josie Douglas as a trainee editor (Douglas int. 1999). Douglas discussed her mentoring and training program with non-Indigenous senior editor Marg Bowman at IAD Press:

> *In the first year of my training, I think Marg was working 11.5 hours per week. That was a day and a half at the press. In my second year of training it has been reduced to 7.5 hours and this is spread over a morning and afternoon session, at the beginning and the end of each week. We are maybe looking at specific editorial and production publishing issues and we may look at punctuation or grammar, or the production process or financial considerations or contracts and negotiations. This is the first half of my training and this is quite separate from what I am working on at the press. The second half is actually looking at a manuscript I'm working on and Marg mentoring me with that manuscript. That doesn't mean that Marg is doing the work for me. She will provide me with information and knowledge about how to approach a manuscript from start to finish, how to schedule a manuscript and different aspects of project management. We may work on aspects of my copy editing or parts of the book and what it will look like. Once we go through that kind of briefing, I will then do the structural and copy edit and basically project manage. Marg will come back at the end of the week and look at the work I've done and give me feedback and answer any questions or assist with any problems that might be there* […] *I'm feeling more confident and it was a mutual decision to cut back Marg's hours. I have the support of the rest of the staff at IAD and also our publisher, Mandy Brett. I feel like I want to spread my wings and go for it* (Douglas int. 1999).

Douglas and Bin Salleh also referred to external industry training. A mutual experience for Douglas and Bin Salleh was a residential editorial program in New South Wales that they both attended, jointly sponsored and coordinated by the Literature Board/Fund of the Australia Council and the Australian Publishers Association (APA) in March 1999. The program acted on recommendations made in a report commissioned by the Australia Council two years before, on a proposed scheme for the training of Indigenous editors in Australia (Arms 1997). The report identified the need for adequate training for Indigenous editors in the production of Indigenous works and in the light of an increasing number of mainstream publishing companies establishing Indigenous publishing lists. In summary, Arms's report recommended that all trainee

Indigenous editors be automatically offered places in a proposed residential course; undergo supplementary training and a basic skills course in copy editing; participate in a structured industry placement; receive computer skills training and finally attend two weekend residential courses in editing before participating in an industry-based residential program (Arms 1997). Over 100 Australian book publishers were invited to submit proposals for individual training programs for editors in early 1998, and only five proposals were received. Either a lack of interest and commitment on the part of large Australian publishers, in offering in-house training to editors who don't have much industry experience, or a lack of staff and time resources, on the part of small independent publishers to put into trainee editors, is of real concern. Four of the five publishers who applied were allocated Australia Council funding to provide editorial training to Indigenous editors in 1999–2000. They were IAD Press ($19,523) for Josie Douglas to receive intensive editorial mentoring and to visit larger publishers in Sydney; Magabala Books ($12,351), for Rachel Bin Salleh, Aaron Penny and Ruth Gilbert to receive intensive editorial training working with mentors and attending an editing course in Melbourne;[12] Pascoe Publishing ($8,140) for four Indigenous freelance editors to receive mentoring and production training, working with Bruce Pascoe on the literary journal, *Australian Short Stories*; and the University of Western Australia Press ($5,745) for professional development and cross-cultural training for editor Anthea Wu (Nicola Evans pers. comm. 2001).

Douglas and Bin Salleh received scholarship places to attend the residential program for thirteen 'mid-career' editors in 1999 and received mentoring and industry training during the program from three senior book editors, Jacqueline Kent, Bruce Sims and Meredith Rose. Findings from the residential program were that the smallest presses are those committed to training Indigenous editors; many publishing projects do not receive the benefit of expert Indigenous assessment and consultation before being accepted for publication; participants benefited from Indigenous input and felt that more Indigenous consultants needed to be engaged when projects were being assessed for publication (APA Report 1999: 14). These findings are fundamentally important if the industry is to avoid assimilationist policies in Australian publishing by attempting to integrate Indigenous people into non-Indigenous publishing structures. Two key program findings, with regard to Aboriginal publishing, were also identified: the need for a wider industry understanding of the cultural issues being addressed by Indigenous publishing projects and that the Australian Publishers Association (APA), and its member publishers, should be encouraged to develop a list of consultants appropriate to the needs of emerging Indigenous publishing lists (APA Report 1999: 14). A key training need identified was that 'good editing skills add value to the product and that the editing process is necessarily a time-consuming one' and that these measures of the editor's worth should to be taken into consideration (Rose 1999: 37).

Anita Heiss identifies the industry need for cross-cultural training for non-Indigenous people working in publishing because 'too many people are treating Indigenous secret/sacred material as a marketable product' (Heiss 2000: electronic copy, Ch. 2, 15). In 1998, the publishing arm of the University of Western Australia, the University of Western Australia Press, received funding from the Australia Council to enable editorial and production manager Anthea Wu to undergo professional development and cross-cultural training (Nicola Evans pers. comm. 2001). Wu participated in a cross-cultural awareness workshop at the Centre for Staff Development, University of Western Australia; Kimberley cross-cultural training with Olive Knight of the Kimberley Land Council in Broome, Derby and Fitzroy Crossing and was placed for work experience with Magabala Books in Broome (Heiss 2000: electronic copy, Ch. 2, 14). Wu's experiences at Magabala increased her understanding of the opportunities and challenges in working with Indigenous and non-Indigenous publishing staff (Wu in Heiss 2000: electronic copy, Ch. 2, 436; Gregory pers. comm. 2001). Wu was trained in structural editing to enable UWAP to work more effectively on the development of Indigenous manuscripts. This decision was based on Wu's observations at Magabala Books, with regard to how deeply Magabala is involved in the pre-production of manuscripts and the time allocated to manuscripts in production (Heiss 2000: electronic copy, Ch. 2, 14). In 1999, the University of Western Australia, with the Centre for Indigenous History and the Arts and the University of Western Australia Press (UWAP), jointly established and funded the Marrwarnging Award, for an initial period of three years, to publish a series of books by new and previously published Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander writers. In 1999, *Corroboree*, a children's book based on the childhood memories of Nyungar storyteller Angus Wallam, as told to Nyungar scribe Suzanne Kelly, won the inaugural Marrwarnging Award. The winning entry was selected by a panel of three Indigenous judges from 52 entries in the first year of the new award. Just as UQP's Black Australian Writers series determines its audience through the Indigenous authors published in the series, the UWAP Indigenous series will 'take its direction from entries received for the Marrwarnging Award' (Wu in Heiss 2000: electronic copy, Ch. 2, 14). The Marrwarnging Award is not currently funded by state or federal governments and receives support from the University of Western Australia.

Aboriginal editor Rachel Bin Salleh, discussed maintaining cultural integrity when working with Aboriginal authors and designers 'so that their work is not compromised' at Magabala Books (Bin Salleh int. 1999). Bin Salleh discussed the difficulties inherent in scheduling book projects to meet production deadlines, that were in conflict with Aboriginal time. Bin Salleh says, 'I can't rush my authors through these processes even though I will constantly make them aware that there are deadlines. A lot of our authors — their sense of time is probably not as linear as ours is' (Bin

Salleh int. 1999). While Phillips takes the view that there is a good understanding at UQP about cultural processes in the production of Aboriginal writers, she believes that 'a small Indigenous press could shape its processes to suit those needs better' (Phillips 1998: 149). There are differences in the way that publishers of Indigenous works, such as UQP and Magabala, go about their business. While both acquire cultural content through contacts and networks within the Indigenous community and both are responsive to in-coming publishing projects, the publishing staff at Magabala are more likely, within the constraints of limited resources, to facilitate and negotiate the production of Indigenous knowledge by travelling to, and working more closely with, regional and local Aboriginal representatives and communities. A far greater proportion of the negotiation and shaping of Indigenous content by mainstream publishing houses, does not take place in-house. There is less face-to-face consultation with Indigenous and indeed non-Indigenous authors, and this is an increasing general trend in Australian publishing.

Sue Abbey refers to the David Unaipon Award, established in 1989,[13] as 'an award for a nation, so you've got winners that can be very far afield. More often than not, I am dealing with them by phone or letter' (Abbey int. 1999). Abbey refers to commissioning as technically 'soliciting work for publication', applying this concept to her own experience, of initiating an approach through networks and contacts within 'the scholarly area and also in the Indigenous community' (Abbey int. 1999). She emphasises that this is not the way that entries for the Unaipon award come to be published by UQP, discussing her involvement in processing applicants, through all stages that Unaipon entries go through. The winning entry is selected by Indigenous judges who are recognised Indigenous authors. Abbey's initial role is to process entries and send them on to the judges for assessment. When the judges have reached a decision, all entries are received back into the publishing house. Abbey then makes further recommendations on highly commended entries for publication and explains, 'I'm the one who brings those books to the monthly publishing meetings and I'm given full control of the list [Black Australian Writers series] in that sense — and out of those we've published Melissa Lucashenko's *Steam Pigs* (1997), Jeanie Bell's *Talking About Celia* (1997) and Alexis Wright's *Plains of Promise* (1997b)' (Abbey int. 1999). Sandra Phillips was instrumental in working with Lucashenko, Bell and Wright in supervising these projects through all stages of production to publication at UQP. Abbey's early involvement took the form of discussions with Phillips about 'the initial direction the books would take' (Abbey int. 1999). Seven Indigenous writers were published in 1997 and 1998 for the Black Australian Writers series. Abbey produces an in-house reader's report on particular Unaipon entries and then writes a description of particular projects. It is through these in-house descriptions that 'the publishing committee is first made aware of the books. I don't know

whether that's a commissioning point or not' (Abbey int. 1999). Abbey makes the distinction in her report writing between winning entries and highly recommended entries, where the former is 'only to officially acknowledge, register and describe the winning manuscript in general' and the latter 'is significantly different as they are actual recommendations that I make as publisher of the Black Australian Writing list'. These reports are 'written in persuasive detail', including marketing suggestions, individual judges' comments or comments from an outside reader. In writing such detailed and informative reports, Abbey's intention is to 'enthuse the committee, describe the manuscript category and explain its cultural value' (Abbey pers. comm. 2000).

In producing alternative views to white Australian history, Abbey discussed the reasons for the origins of the David Unaipon Award:

> *The Unaipon Award was established to counter the Australia Day Celebrations — the Bicentenary. I think that it's definitely worked because what it's done is that it has put in place history that has not been addressed or previously been written about. With autobiography and memoir that is included in the Black Australian Writers series as a political counter it has achieved what it set out to do* (Abbey int. 1999).

Phillips discusses the significance of the Unaipon Award for emerging Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander writers, estimating that between 1989 and 1997 more than 160 manuscripts have been entered 'that may never have seen the inside of a publishing house otherwise' (Phillips 1998: 150). The Black Australian Writers series guarantees publication by the University of Queensland Press (UQP) to the annual winner. Phillips and Abbey have also assessed other highly commended Unaipon entries, short listed by Indigenous judges for publication. McDonell, who continues to work on a contract basis as a freelance editor on Unaipon titles, argues that UQP's guarantee of publication provides 'editorial challenges' because they are not assessed through conventional channels. Generally speaking, most manuscripts are assessed and selected by 'in house' editors or publishers for publication. Manuscripts received for the Unaipon are often 'at an early stage of development' and would not be readily accepted by most publishing houses for substantive editing and subsequent publication (McDonell 2000: 2). It is also highly questionable as to whether 'most publishing houses' in Australia would undertake the substantive editing and copy editing that is required of any manuscript in its early stages of development. This is more likely to be the case with larger publishing houses. Making the time and the commitment to working closely with authors in the early stages of manuscript development is more common with smaller, editorially-driven publishing houses. Abbey believes that the intrinsic value of accepting manuscripts in such a raw form is in 'the substantial nurturing of

a new author whose skills may develop and grow in the writing of subsequent books' (Abbey int. 1998). This is certainly the case where Unaipon authors have gone on to publish second and third books with UQP.

While Phillips estimates that 'between twenty and 30 manuscripts are entered every year' for the Unaipon award, ranging across poetry, novel, memoir, fiction, 'genre blending history styles' and 'voices of community and family' (1998: 151–2), only the winner is guaranteed publication. Highly commended titles are usually published each year in addition to the winning entry. Since 1990, when the first Unaipon winner was published and the first books appeared in the Black Australian Writers series, 40 books by Indigenous authors have been published by UQP to date (Abbey pers. comm. 2001). Given that UQP has published approximately 40 to 70 titles each year from 1990 to 1998,[14] this does not amount to many titles by Indigenous authors. There are other critical factors, however, that come into play in publishing the first works of Australian Indigenous writers. These include physical distance between the authors and the publisher, time delays in relaying author–editor–publisher communication, the number of Indigenous people involved in Indigenous publishing projects and the cross-cultural issues that arise, with regard to appropriate community consultation and negotiation in the development and production of Indigenous material. Given that there is a one year turnaround between the announcement of the Unaipon winner and the UQP launch of the book, time is a precious commodity to allow for adequate cultural consultation with Indigenous writers of first works and subsequent and detailed editorial shaping and in-house development of their manuscripts.

While most of the Indigenous content for the Black Australian Writers series comes in through the Unaipon award, some books reach the publishing house in other ways. Abbey discusses a more proactive acquisitions role through her own 'associations made in the scholarly area' and also 'connections with the Indigenous community', where she becomes aware of writing projects and makes an approach in the first instance (Abbey int. 1999). Some of these projects have come to publishing fruition, including Lisa Bellear's poetry collection *Dreaming in Urban Areas* (1996) and Aileen Moreton-Robinson's book based on her doctoral thesis, *Talkin' Up To The White Woman* (2000). Abbey makes the distinction between 'acquisitions', whereby 'the idea and the author exist and are already out there' and 'commissioning', whereby 'a UQP author such as Herb Wharton is approached by UQP to write his fourth book' (Abbey int. 1999).

Phillips describes proactive ways of working towards self-determination and cultural autonomy for Aboriginal people in 'the writing, the initiation of concept, the execution, the refinement, the development and taking the books through the whole maze of the publishing process' (Phillips 1998: 150). She questions the ability of non-Aboriginal

editors to effectively edit and maintain the integrity of Aboriginal works (Phillips in Heiss 2000: electronic copy, Ch. 3, 1).

Phillips's in-house editing trajectory began with Magabala Books before she took up an editorial position with UQP and, in 2000, she was teaching and freelancing as a consultant editor (Heiss 2000: electronic copy, Ch. 3, 1). At UQP, Phillips worked on the development of Aboriginal manuscripts for publication in the Black Australian Writers series and also made in-house recommendations on other manuscripts. In her editorial role, Phillips was assigned the unconventional role of working within all genres, including poetry, fiction, non-fiction, short story and the novel (Phillips in Heiss 2000: electronic copy, Ch. 2, 1).

Indigenous Acquisition and Commissioning

Just as standard notions of commissioning are difficult to underpin, the approaches to acquisition and commissioning within Aboriginal publishing structures are not conventional or transparent (Sims, Ruhfus, Bin Salleh, Douglas ints. 1999). A mainstream publishing convention is the commissioning of established authors with a proven track record in publishing, who are then taken up for their next book(s). Alternatively, the role of independent publishing is to discover and develop works by new writers. Many continue their commitment to discovering new writers, as well as continuing to publish second and third books by newly established authors. Aboriginal publishing houses take this one step further by dedicating their lists to previously unpublished Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander writers. Magabala Books' policy is to publish works which have major Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander involvement, with an input of at least 51 per cent by an Indigenous author or editor (Bin Salleh in Heiss 2000: electronic copy, Ch. 2, 6). IAD Press policy is to publish for the maintenance of language and culture from Aboriginal communities in Central Australia. The publication split represents Aboriginal authors only and/or at least a 50 per cent collaboration between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal writers on IAD Press books (McDonald in Heiss 2000: electronic copy, Ch. 3, 4). Mandy Brett estimates a ratio of 50 : 50 Aboriginal to non-Aboriginal unsolicited manuscripts are received on a yearly basis (Brett int. 2001). While Aboriginal Studies Press promotes and publishes in the subject area or field of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, most of the research and writing is not undertaken by Indigenous authors. In 1999–2000, there were over 100 titles in print and six new titles were published each year. While a directive was issued to Aboriginal Studies Press in 1996 to publish more Aboriginal writers, Jackie Huggins (who sat on the Products and Publications Advisory committee in 1997) estimated that 80 per cent of works published in 1997 were by white academics (Huggins in Heiss, 2000: electronic copy, Ch. 2, 9).

While non-Indigenous publishers are publishing to shifting market perceptions of what constitutes audience, Indigenous publishers are publishing, first and foremost, for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, in the preservation and maintenance of language and culture, while also aiming to educate a wider general readership. Bruce Sims, who was Publishing Manager with Magabala Books for three and a half years, argues that in most commercial publishing houses, 'the question of cultural importance wouldn't stand up if the book wasn't also saleable' (Sims int. 1998). While Indigenous publishing programs must strive towards economic viability, commercial aims are not necessarily cultural imperatives. This represents a fundamental difference between market- and budget-driven publishing houses and the too few community-based publishing houses in Australia. Indigenous publishing houses, like all small independent publishing ventures, struggle to reach and maintain economic viability throughout their production lifetimes. They are disadvantaged with staff shortages and the necessary capital flow and other resources to be able to fully commit to their publishing programs (Ruhfus, Bin Salleh, Sims, Douglas, Brett ints. 1999 and 2000). While these circumstances would preclude Indigenous editors or publishers from commissioning authors and texts, Indigenous publishing policy, in its responsive commitment to the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, goes against the grain of commercial commissioning practice. For example, IAD Press 'publish for language and cultural maintenance' (Douglas int. 1999). This reflects the nature of how decisions are made about what to publish, where it is never an individual within an Aboriginal organisation but always a group, representative of Indigenous community. This is also the case with how decisions are made about who owns copyright of Indigenous content in the publishing contract. Margaret Ruhfus referred to the complexities of contractual arrangements where 'copyright of material, information and illustrations can reflect up to or more than 20 people who have that claim of joint ownership … there are some standard contracts but others can be very different — there might be a single author of that work but everything else contractually can often be assigned to completely different people' (Ruhfus int. 1999). At Magabala Books, publishing proposals are received into the publishing house from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, for consideration by an Aboriginal management committee, comprising local and regional community representatives, including Indigenous artists (Ruhfus, Bin Salleh, Sims ints. 1999). While the publishing manager at Magabala Books negotiates the terms of the publishing contract, the chair of the management committee is the signatory on all Magabala publishing contracts (Ruhfus, Bin Salleh, Sims ints. 1999). At IAD Press, the publisher consults with other members of the publishing team and recommendations for publication are then made to the IAD Board for a final decision. The Institute Board is representative of the Aboriginal community in Alice Springs. Through the cultural agency of publication, specific Aboriginal and Islander knowledge, in the form of oral and written narrative, is received

from and given back to the Aboriginal communities who offer it. This is fundamentally different from non-Indigenous publishing structures, where those who sit on publication committees and participate in the decision-making process about what to publish comprise in-house staff from across editorial, marketing, sales and finance areas who are accountable to the publishing house. This organisational culture applies to non-Indigenous general publishing houses that occasionally publish works by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander writers, including Fremantle Arts Centre Press, Allen & Unwin, Hyland House, Penguin and other specialist publishers, such as Craftsman House.

Grog War

An example of Aboriginal agency at work in ways that relate significantly to the survival and maintenance of culture and community was the acquisition of a community issue book, *Grog War* (1997a), by Alexis Wright. This project 'had an accelerated process through Magabala' because of the strong convictions and consensus of the author, the publishing manager and the management committee, that this book 'might save lives and some of the ideas in the book might be taken up in other places' (Sims int. 1998). The issue is systemic alcohol use and abuse within the Aboriginal community in Tennant Creek, and *Grog War* is the story of how the Warumungu people are dealing with the use and abuse of alcohol on their traditional lands. The book is a blending of fact and fiction, relating the true account of controlling the availability of alcohol in Tennant Creek through the story of a fictional Aboriginal family whose lives are affected by grog (Wright 1997a: ix). The Aboriginal people who disclosed their stories did not wish to be identified and this is how the stylistic balance of non-fiction and fiction came about in a book that was commissioned, in the first instance, by community elders and then acquired by the publishing house (Sims int. 1999).

Members of the Julalikari Council, Warumungu people and owners of community copyright, commissioned Aboriginal writer Alexis Wright to write the story. The author acknowledges the patience of the traditional elders of Tennant Creek and the management and staff of the Julalikari Council in advising her with the cultural shaping of the story and encouraging project development. These aspects of the commissioning role in a book's production, that is, advice, guidance and encouragement in the developmental stages, are usually attributed to the editor or publisher inside the conventional publishing house. In the case of *Grog War*, this role was community-based, initiated and followed through by Julalikari Council members, an Aboriginal umbrella organisation representing the interests of sixteen language groups in the area, including the Warumungu people whose traditional lands include Tennant Creek (Grossman 1999: 8). Projects originating from within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities are offered to Indigenous publishing houses to develop for publication

and much of the early project development does not necessarily take place inside the publishing house. This is the case with many community-based projects that travel to Magabala, where extensive out-of-house face-to-face local and regional consultation and negotiation take place throughout various stages of project development (Bin Salleh int. 1999).

Miles of Post and Wire and *Moola Bulla*

Rachel Bin Salleh discussed several projects in relation to time and distance factors and the extensive consultation involved, including *Miles of Post and Wire* (1998) and *Moola Bulla* (1996). *Miles of Post and Wire* falls into the category of an 'as told to' book. Loreen Brehaut obtained funding for travel and oral transcribing to work with the self-taught Aboriginal writer, Florence Corrigan, as first editor. Corrigan and Brehaut met through the librarian at Karratha who knew that Florence wanted to tell her story. When the unsolicited manuscript was received at Magabala, Bin Salleh began working with Brehaut on structural and copy editing in consultation with the author. Bin Salleh mostly worked directly with Brehaut but also travelled to Roebourne to meet Florence, more than an eight-hour drive from Broome (Bin Salleh int. 1999). The cover design was conceived and produced by Magabala designer Samantha Cook in discussion with Bin Salleh and other in-house staff and Florence made the final suggestion for the book's title. The in-house consultation at Magabala takes place in an open production area shared by publishing staff, in which 'information is relayed and feedback is constant with lots of informal meetings and spontaneous discussion' (Bin Salleh int. 1999). Bin Salleh begins working editorially on the development of a complete manuscript when it has been accepted for publication by the Magabala manuscript assessment committee and management committee. At this point there is early consultation with others who may be involved in the book's development about the in-house process. Bin Salleh spoke of her initial discussion with the author at this point about 'what I perceive the book to be and where I'll be taking it as an editor, so that authors are clear at the outset and and are never in any doubt about where their book will be going' (Bin Salleh int. 1999). The relevance of Magabala's charter, in producing 'works with integrity that have cultural value', informs Bin Salleh's editorial process in the way she works with in-house staff and negotiates community content. She raised the issue of content and copyright in 'recognising the individual or the community' and entering into appropriate community consultation in seeking lawful permission and cultural recognition of an individual 'as the person who is actually allowed to tell a particular story' (Bin Salleh int. 1999). Bin Salleh's intuition and Aboriginality alert her to what she describes as 'the nitty-gritty of what should and shouldn't be in there' (Bin Salleh int. 1999). This knowledge is combined with editorial discussions with publishing staff at Magabala and out-of-house consultation

'with a neutral party from the community' and these processes guide and inform decisions about final content for publication (Bin Salleh int. 1999). Bin Salleh also discussed the ten-year evolution of *Moola Bulla*, a compilation of stories about the native welfare settlement by the same name, commissioned by the Kimberley Language Resource Centre (KLRC). An extensive amount of project work was completed on *Moola Bulla* before the manuscript came to Magabala, where it underwent further in-house development over two to three years (Bin Salleh int. 1999). Negotiations took place between a representative from the KLRC, various language workers employed by the KLRC to work on the project before it came to Magabala, and Bin Salleh, who was responsible for negotiating in-house content, structural editing and copy editing of the manuscript (Bin Salleh int. 1999):

> Moola Bulla *was the first major publication for the Kimberley Language Resource Centre and the authors were mostly first time authors. The text accommodated four languages, Kija, Jaru, Kriol and English, complete with translations, traditional stories, dreaming, modern-day stories and future stories. When you edit there are all these cultural factors and contexts you have to deal with. A lot of the authors look to you as the editor because you are the one who can read and write. When you say to them can you develop this, they'll give you a sentence and you're expected to rewrite it for them. It's huge.* Moola Bulla *practically burnt me out as an editor* (Bin Salleh int. 1999).

Bin Salleh spoke of her editing role at Magabala in educating the reader and making sure that Indigenous content was accessible as a learning tool for Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. In particular, she referred to 'the illiterate elders' in the Kimberley communities who 'know the importance of the written word in their language as well as English' and that 'their young people need to read to survive' (Bin Salleh int. 1999). Bin Salleh speaks Aboriginal English and Kriol from the Broome region and relied heavily on the expertise of language workers for the translations in the final developmental stages of *Moola Bulla*.

Bin Salleh is critical of 'the obvious knowledge gaps' in mainstream Australian publishing, the 'lack of cultural awareness and ignorance of basic issues' in working with Aboriginal people in the shaping of Indigenous content (Bin Salleh int. 1999). Phillips makes the point that because some of the bigger publishers only take on manuscripts through agents, they 'minimise their overall contact with the writing community and wider access to publishing projects' (1998: 154–5). While the use of literary agents within the writing and publishing community is another increasing trend, literary agents do not usually represent writers who are not established authors and rarely do business with first time writers and Aboriginal publishing houses. This is largely due to the fact that literary agents usually circulate within a vastly different

community of non-Indigenous writers and commercial markets and, as Bin Salleh puts it, are 'only after the big fry' (Bin Salleh int. 1999). The policy of Aboriginal publishing houses is to locate and develop previously unpublished writers within the community. Indigenous editors and publishers do their own talent scouting through their own cultural networks. Josie Douglas and Bin Salleh spoke of the contradiction in publishing books firstly for Aboriginal people that are mostly bought and read by a non-Aboriginal readership. Douglas puts this down to 'the culture of reading and the culture of literacy and the economics of having disposable income and what you spend it on' (Douglas int. 1999).

Margaret Ruhfus describes her commissioning experience with Aboriginal Studies Press and Magabala Books as 'borderline' (Ruhfus int. 1999). Like Phillips, Ruhfus identifies 'commissioning elements' within the context of her publishing experiences, particularly with Aboriginal Studies Press, that include 'identifying prospective authors — people who had already been published or had other work produced in the performing arts: theatre for instance — and starting to work out some possible authors/subjects for publication' (Ruhfus int. 1999). Ruhfus worked on identifying possible themes and tie-ins built on individual titles that were released with 'a fair amount of certainty that they would then have some impact and a degree of success after publication'. After these initial titles were tested in the marketplace, Ruhfus would then 'develop and shape a list along similar lines to strengthen those particular themes' (Ruhfus int. 1999). During her time as publishing manager with Magabala Books, Ruhfus also referred to commissioning elements such as 'identification of potential material coming in', the 'assessment of material suitable for publication' and the 'collecting and gathering of other material as it comes in that might link up' (Ruhfus int. 1999). An example of what Ruhfus is describing could be the collection of nine lifestories, *Holding Up the Sky: Aboriginal Women Speak* (1999), a publishing project that Ruhfus took responsibility for, during the latter stages of production, from outgoing Magabala senior editor Meredith Rose. The selection for this publication included lifestories written in shorter form, covering a range of ages, different locations and experiences. Ruhfus mentioned a representative balance between selected stories 'from older women's voices to younger, contemporary voices', discussing a growing trend in generational, creative cross-currents in which 'a continuous stream of autobiographies are coming in, covering a longer and significant period of great social change and upheaval and also more contemporary autobiographies' (Ruhfus int. 1999).

Two Aboriginal Studies Press projects were discussed by Margaret Ruhfus, involving the intervention of non-Indigenous scribes working with different Aboriginal communities in the gathering, transcribing and writing of community content. Ruhfus advocates

'retaining the authentic voice of the authors or contributors in oral history' and describes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander works as a 'significant body of knowledge' where 'we are getting multiple historical accounts that are coming together to create a very diverse sort of picture … a very useful social record of the changing times — an historical record' (Ruhfus int. 1999).

Torres Strait Islander Women and the Pacific War

Ruhfus worked with non-Indigenous writer Elizabeth Osborne on the production and publication by Aboriginal Studies Press of Osborne's doctoral thesis, *Torres Strait Islander Women and the Pacific War* (1997). Osborne describes herself as an 'outsider' who lived on Thursday Island for five years amongst the community and was able to transcribe the Islander narratives through the willingness of over 150 older Torres Strait Islanders to share their stories with her (1997: ix). This historiography is a compilation of nearly 200 oral testimonies by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander witnesses who document the evacuation and dislocation of Torres Strait Islander women to mainland Australia during the Second World War. Ruhfus describes Osborne's research as 'unusual in some ways from other academic theses […] even though it still needed reworking it also had definite possibilities and was a subject area that hadn't been covered at all. So there it was. Something offering to match a gap in Australia's published history' (Ruhfus int. 1999).

Ruhfus discussed how the material for *Torres Strait Islander Women and the Pacific War* was commissioned, for development and publication by Aboriginal Studies Press, and Osborne's role in representing Islander voices:

> *The subject was a collection, based on oral history recording and gathering among a large and disparate group of Torres Strait Islander older women* […] *some of the accounts that the author had gathered were really quite extraordinary* […] *Elizabeth approached Aboriginal Studies Press herself and, in seeing that material, we asked her if she could do a little bit of further work on it and resubmit the manuscript, which she willingly did. She had already spent a lot of time and had put a lot of work into her research and gathering the accounts of these women. When the revised manuscript was received, it came with a request from her that all of those accounts be treated in a respectful way and they were to be prominent throughout the text. She wanted to present the voices of the women and made it clear that she was only playing an intermediary role in bringing these accounts to publication. Because the author had lived on Thursday Island for several years, she was well aware of, and very sensitive to, the issues* (Ruhfus int. 1999).

Ruhfus also spoke about the cultural significance of 'place' and 'belonging' for Torres Strait Islander women:

> *For the people who were evacuated their displacement experiences were very strongly felt because they were island and water people. Initially they were evacuated to Townsville but then from there those who didn't have family members or other people to help them who were living on the mainland were transported inland again to missions like Cherbourg in southern Queensland* […] *Torres Strait Islanders are tied to place, to country, to land and sea* […] *they have a very strong obligation to be there protecting their environment* (Ruhfus int.1999).

Yarrtji: Six Women's Stories from the Great Sandy Desert

The other collaborative project identified by Ruhfus was the large-format illustrated pictorial book, *Yarrtji* (1997), also published by Aboriginal Studies Press. This is a collection of six life stories by women 'artists, performers and elders' from the Great Sandy Desert, interwoven with over 750 photographs and reproductions. The life stories of Tjama Freda Napanangka, Payi Payi Napangarti, Martingale Mudgedel Napanangka, Kuninyi Rita Nampitjin, Nanyuma Rosie Napurrula and Millie Skeen Nampitjin 'are produced in a completely different form, textually and visually, from that of autobiography'. Standard English, Aboriginal English and two Aboriginal languages, Kukatja and Ngarti, are embedded in the collection, throwing up challenges to the editor and the publishing house about how to present the material typographically on the page so that it is accessible to a wider audience (Ruhfus int. 1999). Ruhfus described the reproduction of the stories on the page as 'different because the text isn't straight narrative prose […] on the page it looks like a more poetic form, because it's line by line, and the two Aboriginal languages that are used present a lot of very different editorial challenges — how to edit and present that material typographically, but somehow still having it accessible in some sort of way to a wider audience' (Ruhfus int. 1999).

Sonya Peter and Pam Lofts, non-Indigenous artists with backgrounds in design, approached Aboriginal Studies Press and received a research grant from the parent body AIATSIS to work on the project. This is a project which Ruhfus refers to as 'the equivalent of commissioning' (Ruhfus int. 1999). The cover design, 'a representation of what the authors wanted in depicting their country and their connection to their country' was presented by the artists. A selection of original cover photographs was also incorporated into the body of the text. Ruhfus worked with Peter and Lofts on the cover work, illustrations and placement of the text, in close consultation with the storytellers, whose stories had been recorded and transcribed. According to Ruhfus,

the only linguist in Australia who specialised in Kukatja and Ngarti language at the time that *Yarrtji* was in production, was contracted to work on the book. The linguist's specialised knowledge was in demand and her expertise and time were at a premium. This presented further challenges with the project budget and production schedule. During the five year period that *Yarrtji* was in development and production, one of the contributing elders passed away. After consultation with the other contributors no individual or group photographs were removed from the collection. Margaret Ruhfus remarked that 'there were a lot of photos of these women together and also individual photos. It was certainly something that was a major consideration that we had to work out. By the time the book was published it was a special and important event for her family' (Ruhfus int. 1999). Ruhfus spoke of the difficulties involved in finalising a major production like *Yarrtji* with 'complex elements in design and editorial treatments' and working towards 'completion within budget and as close as possible to production schedule', at a time when in-house resources were also reduced because of funding cuts to AIATSIS. This resulted in rationalisation of in-house production and content for books already under contract and an overall reduction in the number of titles to be published (Ruhfus int. 1999). This is the irony of commissioned projects like *Yarrtji*, in that they start with institutional research funding and in-house production resources and support. When finance and other resources are no longer guaranteed, the project is in jeopardy. This is an inherent problem with all small press publishers who are tied to other institutions and funding bodies.

If, as Jackie Huggins argues, 'we are all products of history and, as a consequence, occupy positions of privilege or disadvantage', where 'white norms and values are enshrined in our institutions' (1998: 1–2), how do institutionalised scribes, editors and publishers, in the 'taking up' of Aboriginal writers and their work, proceed in a way that does not represent cultural theft, in the production of knowledge, language and representation of community ownership of content? Both Phillips and Bin Salleh argue that the process of editing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander authors 'requires the editor to disseminate all aspects of Indigenous life' (Phillips and Bin Salleh in Heiss 2000: electronic copy, Ch. 3, 5). Margaret McDonell argues that in dealing with the editorial process and with indigeneity, issues of identity and power must be addressed and that a book is not edited in isolation; the process like the editor and the author, exists within a wider context (2000: 2).[15] This argument also holds for any individual who is working with Indigenous knowledge and content.

Cultural Imperatives, Publishing Resources, and Commissioning

Josie Douglas, former IAD Press editor who was appointed IAD Press publisher in 2000, understands the commissioning role within the context of 'commercial

decisions about what the publishing house will publish' and will then 'commission those ideas or a manuscript or an author who will produce a manuscript based on those commercial ideas that will succeed in the marketplace' (Douglas int. 1999). Douglas also spoke of 'an author commissioning a publisher to produce their work' (Douglas int. 1999). She raised an important point that relates directly to the scope of commissioning in smaller publishing houses like IAD Press, which publish for a 'non-commercial niche market', the Aboriginal community. The financial resources of the publishing house are always stretched and IAD Press books are necessarily subsidised. This ultimately limits the amount of commissioning that might be possible under different circumstances. Publishing projects are researched and investigated by the publisher, in consultation with other members of the publishing staff. Douglas identified critical roles played by Aboriginal publishing staff at IAD, including the provision of cultural information to non-Aboriginal publishing staff; the facilitation of cross-cultural exchange between authors who have come in from a community and speak English as a second language and non-Aboriginal publishing staff; the provision of information to Aboriginal people and the assessment of appropriate content for publication (Douglas int. 1999). Douglas, and other Aboriginal staff at IAD, provide a filtering system and vet content for publication through continuous consultation about appropriate ways of proceeding. It would seem that decisions about what and how to publish do not lie with an individual or senior member of the publishing staff, management committee or board of management. Rather, the process is about in-house team work and extensive consultation. Former publisher, Mandy Brett, referred to the constructive dialogue between members of the IAD Press editorial and publishing staff who demonstrate 'quite an unusual willingness to listen to each other and to attribute motives of good will towards each other' (Brett int. 2001). Like Magabala, most of the publishing ideas for IAD books are community-based and community-driven, generated from outside the publishing house. The Institute for Aboriginal Development (IAD) also generates content through ideas conceived by the language centre, from linguists working on various projects contracted by the Institute or from materials commissioned by the Institute for publication. The decision to establish the trade imprint, Jukurrpa Books, in 1997 was a strategy to generate profit from the sale of trade books to subsidise and further grow the IAD Press language list (Douglas int. 1999). A new Jukurrpa initiative and recent Indigenous co-publishing arrangement between IAD Press in Australia and Kegedonce Press in Canada, resulted in the publication of *Skins* (2000), an anthology of contemporary Indigenous writing from Australia, Canada, North America and New Zealand. The idea for *Skins* was conceived in discussion by the two commissioning editors, Josie Douglas of IAD Press and Katerie Akiwenzie-Damm of Kegedonce Press, during a long bus ride from Alice Springs, to the Aboriginal community of Yuendumu in 1997 (Douglas and Akiwenzie-Damm 2000: iv; Brett int. 2001).

The Editor as Cultural Gatekeeper

Although IAD Press publishes works with non-Indigenous content the standard rule is that 'the manuscript must be community based and have majority community control and input' (Douglas int. 1999). The 'publishing agendas' of Indigenous people are 'linked to their communities and are usually very regionally based', taking into account cultural factors such as 'sorry business' and 'ceremonial business'. Publishing deadlines are adjusted 'if somebody unexpectedly passes away' so that the publishing program operates within 'Aboriginal culture' and 'Aboriginal cultural constraints' (Douglas int. 1999). Douglas states 'we bring our Aboriginality to the workplace each day which impacts markedly on the editorial process, the production process, the whole publishing process' (Douglas int. 1999). The role of 'cultural gatekeeper' or 'cultural filter' is also evident in the day to day editorial process in Indigenous publishing at both Magabala and IAD Press. Douglas takes on both roles, in vetting manuscripts for publication, when non-Aboriginal staff at IAD ask her opinion on what is, and isn't appropriate. This advice enables decisions to be made about what projects are appropriate for publication and what material can be included. With regard to inclusion, Douglas discussed her advisory role in substantive editing, offering knowledge and guidance to non-Aboriginal publishing staff at IAD:

> *If something needs to be cut and they want my opinion on it, I'll say 'well you can't cut those because they're dreamtime stories or instead of cutting the whole 20, why don't you try and keep as much as you can, or weave it into the text a bit more, or keep it as a feature of your design elements'* (Douglas int. 1999).

An example of Douglas's approach is in *Keringke: Contemporary Eastern Arrernte Art* (1999), where 'dreamtime stories were used as a feature of each chapter and a design element was incorporated so that the visual elements stood apart from the body of the text' (Douglas int. 1999). The elements of cover design are significant because 'many people from the community can decide on the cover and we have to take into account cultural considerations and cultural restrictions and it differs from community to community' (Douglas int. 1999).

The Aboriginal word that is recognised by many language groups in Central Australia for an Aboriginal person passing away is 'kwementyaye'. If that person is included in a cover photograph, 'the cover then becomes taboo to that community because you're not allowed to say their name again or show their image […] and if an image appears in the text inside the book and that person then passes away, we then have to place a sticker over that person's photo' (Douglas int. 1999). Douglas gave the example of the IAD collection *Warlpiri Women's Voices: Our Lives, Our History*[16] (1995), where images of an arm with a hand painting or a design in the sand were used in preference

to faces on the cover, respecting the wishes of the Warlpiri women. When the book was reprinted, a photograph which appeared in the first release showing a person who had passed away, was removed and replaced with another image. Douglas spoke of the process, as an Aboriginal editor, 'in making decisions about what's going on, if it's an oral history for example and it's about the culture of the Garama people, making decisions about what stays in and what comes out and feeling like a gatekeeper' and 'working out ways of articulating the reasons for why and how you can keep it in' (Douglas int. 1999). Douglas also advises non-Aboriginal staff on how to give feedback to authors if their work is to be rejected, that is, 'what they can say and how they can say it […] with Aboriginal writers its very personal — there's a lot of pain there' (Douglas int. 1999). A great deal of checking and cross checking and consultation with authors in Indigenous publishing must take place before final decisions are made about content. The considerations to do with shaping and developing illustrative and written content are decisions made by editors and publishers in commissioning and acquiring texts for publication. What is restrictive for small non-commercial publishing houses like Magabala Books and IAD Press in what is possible, with regard to commissioning, is what IAD editor Mandy Brett calls 'the chicken and egg problem with funding' and the fact that production takes longer in Indigenous publishing (Brett int. 2001). Issues of production scheduling, that is being able to plan ahead and adequately finance book publishing programs, are problematic and can get in the way of commissioning. Brett says that while 'editorial is quite strong in coming up with ideas for books, we mainly act on things that come through the door', rather than being more proactive in conceptualising projects. This is indicative, according to Brett, of 'the lack of staff resources and adequate finance' to confidently proceed. Brett has spoken of continuing the commitment to non-fiction language publishing, essentially 'community approved and community driven' books written by non-Aboriginal linguists and expanding the trade list, publishing books written exclusively by Aboriginal authors. Three to five trade books out of a total of eight to ten new books are published each year (Brett int. 2001).

Maintaining Language and Culture: Language Texts and Learner's Guides

IAD Press plays a critical role in identifying and filling gaps in the publication of language texts, driven by the urgency of particular languages and speakers dying out in Aboriginal communities in Central Australia. Such an urgent request came from the Kaytetye people located around the Barrow Creek area. The author, a linguist employed by the IAD Language Centre, worked with speakers of Kaytetye 'to compile a text for their kids and other people to learn the language. This included eliciting lots and lots of information and sample phrases and sentences from the

Kaytetye people and writing it up in a how to speak Kaytetye form'. Pictures were also commissioned 'to illustrate dialogues that help people learn' (Brett int. 2001). Brett discussed the close team work involved and her absolute dependency in drawing on the expertise of linguists in working on 'serious side by side, two column format language and translation, for adult texts' (Brett int. 2001). English is the instructive language tool used in the guides for learning phrases and Aboriginal language is included to explain usage, that is, 'how to talk Kaytetye' (Brett int. 2001). Brett does not speak a second language and her focus, in working on IAD Press language texts, is the structural and copy editing of English and English expression. She identified other critical steps involved in the development and production of language texts, including travelling to communities to gather examples of language and phrases, taping and transcribing, checking back with the community, translation and cross-referencing. Brett spoke of the complexities of such huge tasks and mentioned the forthcoming *Warlpiri Dictionary* as an example of a work-in-progress over fifteen years — a manuscript that will eventually come to IAD Press for up to three to four years of in-house production (Brett int. 2001).

Margaret Ruhfus spoke of the educative role in the publication of bilingual books for children to make them more aware 'that there is something else in this country other than standard English' (Ruhfus int. 1999). These books provide an opportunity for 'exposure to some language words at a simple level and to non-standard English, often done with a sense of fun and learning' for Aboriginal people and communities and for the general market. Ruhfus maintains that what is important for Aboriginal children is 'to see their own cultures reflected in these books … that sort of recognition … using a scattering of language words' (Ruhfus int. 1999).

Ruhfus was publishing director and managing editor with Aboriginal Studies Press from 1995–99 before she took up the publishing manager's position with Magabala Books. Ruhfus believes that she was 'just at the starting point with commissioning' at Aboriginal Studies Press in 'assessing the potential for publication for some material that was being submitted' (Ruhfus int. 1999). She spoke of the delays of bureaucratic decision-making and the lack of resources and financial constraints that inhibited the acquisitions process. Budgetary control limited how many books were published at Aboriginal Studies Press and these organisational issues resulted in 'missed opportunities in securing authors and titles' at Aboriginal Studies Press (Ruhfus int. 1999). The importance of being able to 'identify and plan ahead to allow sufficient production lead times' so that publication could 'coincide with other key events that have successful impact on book promotion and sales' were identified (Ruhfus int. 1999). Ruhfus was critical of 'the structure and resources' at Aboriginal Studies Press, which did not allow for sufficient planning. In relation to planning Ruhfus remarked, 'there was no associated awareness, on the part of committee

members, of what was involved in securing something in advance and making those financial and contractual commitments, in order to then have material researched, prepared and delivered, in time for production and publication release' (Ruhfus int. 1999). Ruhfus also made the point that these problems are endemic to all small independent publishers with staffing shortages and limited finances.

These problems are often incurred by publishing houses that do not conform to conventional, commercial publishing practice. Ruhfus's understanding of Magabala Books is quite different to that of Aboriginal Studies Press. She identified ideas received by Magabala, in the form of short pieces or samples of work across the range of 'children's to adult literature, some non-fiction and some autobiography' (Ruhfus int. 1999). These pieces are then gathered and selected for inclusion in anthologies of short life stories, poetry and children's stories. Styles of community artists and community artwork 'that might then be engaged to illustrate children's stories' are also taken into consideration by the publishing house (Ruhfus int. 1999).[17] According to Ruhfus, Magabala receives 'a fairly continuous stream of autobiographies by relatively older people, covering a longer and significant period of great social change and upheaval and, to a lesser extent, a few more contemporary autobiographies' (Ruhfus int. 1999). Bruce Sims spoke of 'a substantial number of manuscripts waiting in the publishing queue, until such time as the Magabala publishing staff are able to see their way clear to start working on them' (Sims int. 1999). Ruhfus's and Sims's comments would suggest that intellectual property, in the form of written and illustrative material that has been gathered and held at Magabala Books over time, is an extensive Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander archive, constituting a rich community cultural resource for future publication, when the staff and resources are available. It is clearly evident that Magabala Books, IAD Press and Aboriginal Studies Press, are each limited in their own different ways, in their ability to consolidate and expand their publishing programs.

Other Publishing Houses

While mainstream publishing houses like UQP and Fremantle Arts Centre Press have made a more long-term commitment to the publication of Indigenous writers, other mainstream publishers are occasional contributors to a growing body of Indigenous written and illustrative content in book form — among them, Hyland House, Allen & Unwin, Penguin Books, Currency Press, Wakefield Press and Spinifex Press. Fremantle Arts Centre Press is best known and popularly recognised for publishing Sally Morgan's *My Place* in 1987, which paved the way for other Indigenous authors and titles to be published, from the late 1980s. Fremantle Arts Centre Press is less known in wider reading circles, for its earlier experimental Indigenous texts, including Paddy

Roe's stories from the West Kimberley[18] in *Gularabulu*,[19] edited by Stephen Muecke, published in 1983 and the co-authored *Reading the Country*, published in 1984.

Ray Coffey, Fremantle Arts Centre Press's publisher, discussed all of these texts. He detailed how *My Place* was commissioned, through critical discussion between the writer and the publisher, and his recognition of 'a groundbreaking narrative of collective identity' (Coffey int. 1999) in the late 1980s:

> *Sally had an idea to write her book and approached us with an idea. I met with her and we had a long conversation about how the book might be written and the kind of book it might be. She wanted to tell the story of her parents. During the initial conversation it was decided that the book should be constructed around her own story of discovering her Aboriginality* […] *We basically decided together through in-depth discussion on the outline of the book, the shape, the way in which her mother and her uncle and her grandmother's stories might be incorporated.* […] *I felt straight away that if this book was written well, if it was constructed and developed in the right way, it would actually be the next big thing.* […] *To be in that commissioning role as a publisher is to get excited about possibilities* (Coffey int. 1999).

Coffey refers to a 'publishing instinct' in 'forecasting readerships' that 'could cope with texts that were not in a traditional western form'. The publishing staff felt that 'the expectations were broader than that and the interest was wider' (Coffey int. 1999). Coffey identified an early discussion that took place at Fremantle Arts Centre Press about the importance of the editing role in the representation of stories from other cultures. He referred to the annotation of story with footnotes as a way of 'letting the reader in' (Coffey int. 1999). Coffey discussed the commissioning and subsequent project development of *Gularabulu*, intuitively interpreting the collaborative process between the book's non-Indigenous academic editor, Stephen Muecke, and Indigenous storyteller Paddy Roe, in transcribing and editing stories that enabled the shaping and development of a theoretical text:

> Gularabulu *grew out of Stephen Muecke's doctoral thesis about Aboriginal storytelling and language and the way in which oral narrative would be best represented in print form* […] *One of Stephen's informants was Paddy Roe. An appendix to the thesis was a series of narratives that he had recorded with Paddy and they were clearly interesting. I talked with Stephen about them and he sent them all — about fifteen to 20 different narratives. I had seen one or two initially and out of that we talked about turning them into a book. Previous to that Aboriginal stories in oral form had found publication — usually a white scribe — as told to somebody else. In the process of rewriting these narratives many of the cultural cues and concepts that came from the European tradition were being*

> *imposed on the Aboriginal narrative. I saw that this was not happening in what Stephen was doing and talking about in his thesis. I thought that it was important that this kind of political and cultural approach and argument be brought into a more accessible literary readership* (Coffey int. 1999).

In his introduction to *Gularabulu*, Stephen Muecke explains how the book was made possible through his research on story-telling in Aboriginal English in the Kimberleys. Muecke discusses the caution that should always be exercised in assessing the production of material for publication, that is, to maintain the integrity of content and to appropriately acknowledge and recognise the people who worked to produce the material, in this case, the Aboriginal storyteller Paddy Roe and the stories from the West Kimberley area (1983: ii–iii). Muecke identifies various aspects of *Gularabulu*'s production: in particular, transcribing the oral stories from tape recordings as close as possible to the way in which they were told;[20] representing the storytelling event in the written form; the organisation of the book as object (editing which unifies stories and gives them titles, notes, introductions) and the modes of publishing and distribution. Muecke also makes an important link between the broader social arena in which the book is operating, which includes work on Aboriginal issues (land rights, medical and legal) and the conditions in which the book was produced within a western culture (1983: iii–iv). Translations of Aboriginal language play an integral role in bridging European and Aboriginal cultures and Aboriginal English is 'a vital communicative link between Aboriginal speakers of different language backgrounds' (Muecke 1983: iv). The point that Muecke is making is that sensitive and accurate translations play a dual role in maintaining the integrity of Aboriginal language and culture while also making it more accessible to a white, western readership.[21]

Coffey described the way in which he worked with Muecke, effectively reproducing the oral tradition as if the storyteller were present:

> *We talked about the ways in which stories might be represented on the page and we developed those up and they became basically a transcription of the stories that Paddy told. Stephen developed a way of transcribing which looked more like poetry on the page with pauses and line breaks representing natural pauses in the narrative form. What we tried to reproduce was a situation where Stephen and other people were sitting down and listening to Paddy tell the stories verbally. So when he was making boomerangs, or whatever he was doing physically, this was represented on the page* (Coffey int. 1999).

Language, place names and annotations were included in *Gularabulu* to 'render the text' and enable the general reader to better understand various meanings and concepts embedded in the narrative. Coffey remarks that until the early 1980s 'there was a hesitancy about rendering texts in ways other than proper English' (Coffey int. 1999).

In thinking about representation, Coffey and his publishing peers at Fremantle Arts Centre Press discovered the 'discrepancy between the requirements of editing and the actual ways in which the stories were being told' (Coffey int. 1999).

Reading the Country (1984) grew out of discussions about representations of Aboriginal storytelling and Aboriginal experience on the page. These discussions were between the editor, the storyteller and the artist who had previously worked on *Gularabulu* with Coffey:

> *Stephen [Muecke] had lived, worked and spent time up in Broome. The cover artist lived up there with Paddy and we started to talk about ways in which Aboriginal notions of place — because place is central to Aboriginal culture — and experience — might be readily rendered as a debate on the page between different art forms, different practice and different points of view. It was that time of working on* Gularabulu *to my mind that started the idea for another book which was* Reading the Country*, that is, you should read culture in the way you read place* (Coffey int. 1999).

The approaches taken in working with texts like *Gularabulu* and *Reading the Country* informed the subsequent production of other Fremantle Arts Centre Press publications, such as *My Place* (1987). Coffey spoke of 'rendering a text that is not only true to the way in which it is told, but true to the informant's expectations … of how their text will be read' (Coffey int. 1999).

Fremantle Arts Centre Press receives 500 manuscripts every year and publishes around 30 books or six per cent of what they receive. The Press receives an average of one manuscript a year from Aboriginal writers and publishes one Aboriginal writer every three years (Heiss 2000: electronic copy, Ch. 2, 13). While there is a commitment by independent mainstream publishers, like Fremantle Arts Centre Press and UQP, to develop and publish Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content, and this commitment is ongoing, it is not reflected in the publication balance of Indigenous to non-Indigenous authors. And yet single one-off titles can also make an important contribution.

Other publishers have captured the market and drawn attention to issues of Aboriginal identity and authenticity with occasional texts. Allen & Unwin trade publisher, Sophie Cunningham, discussed the bidding process for Roberta Syke's *Snake Cradle* (1997) and stated her own position in relation to identity and respect for the author:

> *This book came through an agent — Hickson and Associates. I thought it was fantastic and I liked it very much. I was aware that several other publishers were nervous about Roberta because of identity issues. I didn't have the same concerns* […] *even if her identity is not clear I didn't devalue the fact that she had a set of experiences and had identified as Aboriginal.* […] *I was interested by the fact*

> *that I think her identity wasn't clear to her or anyone else, because she didn't know who her father was. She was trying to create an identity for herself in that state of not knowing. That to me made the book more interesting, rather than less valid, to be honest. It didn't make me nervous, as long as she wasn't lying or pretending to be something she wasn't.* […] *She had worked for the Aboriginal movement for 20 years and that was good enough for me.* […] *Not all publishers had a problem with it. I was competing with another publishing house who was very keen to take it on. Roberta basically interviewed us and then decided who she would publish with.* […] *She didn't want to work with somebody who was intimidated by her and I think that's why I got the book* (Cunningham int. 1999).

Cunningham spoke about author autonomy in the textual development of *Snake Cradle* and how the cover design elements were finalised:

> *The cover was very much Roberta's idea. I was nervous about traditional Aboriginal iconography. I didn't want the book to look like a clichéd political book* […] *I didn't want it to look too colloquial or too Indigenous. I wanted it to have a particular look so, in a way, it's a mixture of how Roberta saw it and how I saw it and that look will carry on through the series.* […] *The ideas for the book weren't developed — Roberta doesn't negotiate on these things and she is very clear about this. She felt that white editors in the past had tried to shift her voice. I read the manuscript before I bid for the book and while I needed certain things clarified, like certain relationships, I was comfortable with not being intrusive* (Cunningham int. 1999).

Bin Salleh argues that the voices of particular writers whose Indigenous identity is under question, 'don't need to be silenced but put into context' and that this is 'a more constructive path to take if we debate and educate rather than shoot down' (Bin Salleh in Heiss 2000: electronic copy, Intro., 13). Earlier debates around the authenticity of assumed Indigenous identities focused on writers such as Archie Weller, Roberta Sykes and Mudrooroo Narogin (Colin Johnson). Heiss argues that the more contemporary debates discussing authenticity and Aboriginal voice came to a head when white male taxi driver, Leon Carmen, outed himself as Wanda Koolmatrie, descendant of the Pitjantjatjara people in South Australia and author of the assumed Aboriginal autobiography, *In My Own Sweet Time*, published by Magabala Books in 1994 (2000: electronic copy, Ch. 1, 4). Australian Vogel Award-winning novelist Stephen Gray believes that Australian authors face a new and scarcely discussed contemporary challenge which is how to write about Aboriginal people without being accused of theft?' (2000: 8). The problem of 'assumed' identities and literary fraud has led to the increased surveillance of Aboriginality in the publishing industry and the introduction of Proof of Aboriginality forms for authors to sign

with publishing agreements. Heiss believes that the fraud only serves to reinforce the need for Indigenous publishing houses to be adequately staffed by Indigenous people. She argues that if this had been the case, during the time that *In My Own Sweet Time* was in production at Magabala, the fraud might not have remained undetected for so long (2000: electronic copy, Ch. 1, 539). Gray argues that to stop all representations of Indigenous people by non-Indigenous writers is undesirable; that the power of non-Indigenous writers, in moving the understanding of Indigenous issues forward, should not be underestimated, and that the solution should be to find more resources for the publication of Indigenous writing (2000: 9). The solution is not just a matter of resources and this is evident in the problems that arise in the production of texts that are well resourced but not culturally informed. A recent example is the publication, by Penguin Books, of *Jackson's Track: A Memoir of a Dreamtime Place* (1999). Alison Ravenscroft takes issue with 'assisted autobiography' in relation to ethical questions to do with the ambiguity of authorship. In this case, Carolyn Landon, an American living in Australia, is 'the hand that writes Daryl Tonkin's story', a 'predominantly white-centred history' which is 'inevitably and inextricably 'the story of his Aboriginal wife, Euphemia Mullett, and the nine children they raised, and the Aboriginal community that grew up around the timber mill at Jackson's Track' (Ravenscroft 2000: 31).

The increased cultural debates in the 1990s, on issues of non-Indigenous writers appropriating Aboriginal society and culture and Aboriginal identity and its effect on and role within Aboriginal literature, reinforces the need to define authenticity in Aboriginal writing. This is why the particular attributes that Aboriginal people bring to the publishing house, in acting as cultural gatekeepers and cultural filters of Indigenous community knowledge and content, advocating on behalf of their Indigenous authors and as cross-cultural advisers and educators to non-Indigenous peers, is critical in contributing to a balanced view and a balanced list in Australian publishing culture.

Conclusion

The cultural production and publication of a growing body of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander literature represents the struggle to preserve, maintain and promote Indigenous language, knowledge and culture for the future of Indigenous communities and to more widely educate a western, non-Indigenous audience. Importantly, Indigenous publishing is a means to educate and transmit knowledge, including cultural knowledge, to succeeding generations of Indigenous young people, as well as to older readers who have been dissociated or disconnected from aspects of their own culture because of successive policies of assimilation, enforced removal from country, family and community, and the uneven acquisition of textual literacy. The

recording and publication of cultural knowledge in book form is an important vehicle of social cohesion, cultural solidarity and knowledge transmission within and across Indigenous communities (Grossman pers. comm. 2001).

Given the urgency of the task within Aboriginal communities, the under-representation of Indigenous people in working towards cultural empowerment in Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal publishing houses is problematic. While the need for a more structured approach in addressing the industry training needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people has been identified, there is little convincing evidence to suggest that key publishing industry bodies are working together to provide coordinated and strategic planning for the future of Aboriginal publishing. This affords little security to the few Aboriginal people who are employed in publishing and little incentive for others who might be encouraged to have a go, if more guaranteed employment and training opportunities were available. The placement of Aboriginal trainees into non-Indigenous publishing houses, even with the best of intentions, can be interpreted as yet another form of assimilation. It is critical that Aboriginal people receive adequate and appropriate industry training that will enhance and strengthen their Aboriginality. It is evident that in-house editors do not have the time to set up formal training programs for trainee editors or follow through with adequate mentoring in most publishing houses. Cross-subsidised, industry-driven training and mentoring programs, set up in consultation with Indigenous people, could offer structured training packages as an incentive for Australian publishing houses to undertake Indigenous traineeships. Aboriginal people acting as consultants to the publishing industry is another important way of drawing on freelance Indigenous expertise. Consultants can be contracted to work with Aboriginal authors, and advise non-Indigenous editors and other in-house publishing staff on all aspects of the cultural development, production and publication of Indigenous content. This is particularly important in an industry where culturally appropriate criteria and protocols for Indigenous people are often in conflict with standard conventions of how publishing houses should operate commercially. Cross-cultural training for non-Indigenous staff is another identified area for future funding assistance and training development. This is already occurring within Aboriginal publishing houses such as Magabala Books and IAD Press, and to a lesser extent at UQP, where Indigenous publishing staff advise non-Indigenous staff on matters of cultural protocol; the ‘gubbarising’ of Aboriginal text; the appropriate use of language other than English; other matters of style and the usage of illustrative content; and how to contextualise Aboriginal editing and writing. It is evident that Sandra Phillips made a difference while working at UQP, not only by the number of Indigenous titles she developed, as a full-time Indigenous editor with UQP, but also the way in which she worked collaboratively with Indigenous authors and advised senior non-Indigenous editor, Sue Abbey. UQP has not employed

another trainee Indigenous editor since Phillips left the publishing house.[22] Given UQP's ongoing commitment to its Black Australian Writers series, and the crucial cultural role the publishing house has played in giving voice to emerging Australian writers (Muller 1998: ix), this oversight shows lack of in-house vision and planning. Anthea Wu's cross-cultural training in the Kimberleys and her in-house placement with Magabala Books are an example of a co-operative and collaborative move in the right direction, but Wu is no longer with the University of Western Australia Press. The cross-cultural knowledge and training undertaken by Wu was consequently lost when she left the publishing house and there are no Indigenous staff employed by the Press. The inaugural winner of the 1999 UWAP Marrwarning Award, planned for publication in the following year, is currently still in production. The lack of any continuity, in the ongoing personal development and cross-cultural training of non-Indigenous publishing staff, and the absence of in-house Indigenous publishing staff in the editorial and production of Indigenous works, is problematic in the short and long term.

Given the various constraints that I have already referred to in this chapter it is evident that Aboriginal publishing houses are not wholly self-determined, nor do they publish exclusively for Indigenous communities. Indigenous material is produced by, and subject to, the scrutiny of white scribes, editors and publishers, who are guided by the various policies and constraints of the publishing house concerned. As such, the oral and written knowledge representative of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities is subject to the process of in-house 'normalisation'. This process tailors and shapes the work so that it has wider appeal and is more accessible to a non-Indigenous book-buying public. Indigenous editors and publishers often feel caught between their cultural responsibilities and respect for their communities and the commercial constraints of book publishing. They feel mutually obligated to honour Indigenous content and to ensure successful sales and marketing outcomes for their books and these issues often position Aboriginal people somewhere between the two. Aboriginal publishing houses demonstrate a social responsibility to the Indigenous communities they serve. No one is more aware of what is at stake than Aboriginal in-house publishing staff who are also located within these communities.

Other than supporting the research, promotion and publication of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, Aboriginal Studies Press falls significantly short of an identifiable commitment through its publishing policy to the publication of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content. Magabala and IAD Press have both demonstrated a more direct commitment to the Indigenous production of Indigenous content, also working within the parameters of staff shortages and limited resources. The retention of experienced in-house Indigenous staff and the ongoing intensive training of less experienced Indigenous trainees are critical in maintaining a policy of Aboriginalisation.

This policy should not only be maintained but strengthened in order to consolidate and expand existing publishing programs, instead of focusing on individual titles that are published on a project-by-project basis. A serious consequence of the failure to achieve Aboriginal self-determination has resulted in the loss of experienced Indigenous production staff. Magabala Books, IAD Press and Aboriginal Studies Press are all dependent on, and accountable to, funding bodies that ultimately control their publishing programs. If they receive more or less financial support, their lists accordingly expand or contract and this is problematic in being able to adequately and realistically plan for the future (Bin Salleh int. 1998; Ruhfus, Sims, Douglas ints. 1999; Brett int. 2001).

Staffing shortages, lack of in-house resources and steady capital flow all restrict the potential of the publishing house in confidently proceeding in acquiring or commissioning authors and texts. While this is a problem with all smaller, independent publishing houses it is particularly so in Aboriginal publishing. The imperatives that drive the acquisition of authors and texts and shape the overall direction of publishing lists in Aboriginal publishing are not the same as those in other non-Indigenous houses, which are more market driven and bottom-line in their approach. While Aboriginal publishing houses do have to operate as a business and make their books work commercially, they are publishing first and foremost for Aboriginal and Islander people. A key difference between Indigenous and non-Indigenous publishing culture, and one that sets them apart in originating authors and texts, is that the former publishes to a community that existed before the book was conceived, while the latter publishes to an audience that is often imagined and constructed by in-house marketing departments. Another difference is the fact that while literary agents are increasingly used by editors and publishers in acquiring authors and manuscripts, they rarely do business with Aboriginal publishing houses. Literary agents are mostly concerned with representing established writers and engaging in the practice of cheque-book publishing. Aboriginal publishing policy is concerned with locating and developing new Aboriginal writers and writing and the survival of their community culture. The urban literary scene in which literary agents circulate and do business is vastly different to the regional cultural networks which constitute the territory in which most Aboriginal editors and publishers live and work.

It is evident that mainstream trade and academic non-Indigenous publishing houses have made a significant commitment to establishing substantial Aboriginal lists such as Aboriginal Studies Press, Fremantle Arts Centre Press and UQP. Others are in the process of developing and building Aboriginal lists, amongst them, Penguin Books, Allen & Unwin, Hyland House, Spinifex Press, the University of Western Australia Press and Wakefield Press. Other than UQP and UWAP, in acquiring Aboriginal authors and texts through the David Unaipon and Marrwarnging Awards for Indigenous writers, few mainstream or independent publishers have any built-in formal publishing policy

directed to acquiring or commissioning Indigenous authors and texts. It is evident that Indigenous literature is still emerging in Australia. While the interest in fiction and non-fiction by Aboriginal writers is growing steadily, like many other important and groundbreaking cultural works, they do not comfortably fit into a readily identifiable commercial market. What is increasingly evident is that Indigenous editing and publishing perspectives and practices pose a challenge to mainstream publishing structures and will not go away.

Commissioning is less identifiable in Aboriginal publishing because by and large, this role is not carried out by individuals. Instead, elements of commissioning have been identified as they relate to the acquisition of Indigenous material, through Indigenous communities. What constitutes best publishing practice for Aboriginal people is community-driven, taking into account matters of cultural protocol and community ownership of Indigenous content. The publishing contract and ownership of Indigenous copyright is complex and requires extensive consultation between appropriate individuals and/or community groups and the publishing house. If there are sticking points, which there often are in the business of establishing who owns copyright in Indigenous communities, neutral parties may also be consulted in reaching and finalising an agreement that satisfies all parties concerned. The ways in which Indigenous knowledge and content are received and travel through an Indigenous publishing house depart significantly from the ways in which work is acquired and produced in non-Indigenous publishing houses. A number of commentators in this area have pointed to the holistic approach taken in the journeying of Aboriginal authors and texts, and this includes different perceptions of time, distance, communication and negotiation (Phillips 1998; Bin Salleh int. 1998; Heiss 2000; Ruhfus int. 1999; Lucashenko and Graham 1999). These factors have been raised as important and fundamental issues in honouring the integrity of Indigenous content and achieving best possible publishing practice and publication outcomes for the advancement of Aboriginal people.

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1 *Take Power* is an historical landmark publication indicative of the strength of ties to country as well as language for Aboriginal people.

2 Noonuccal refers to Oodgeroo's tribe.

3 Two such publications are Monica Clare's *Karobran: The Story of an Aboriginal Girl* and Ella Simon's *Through My Eyes*.

4 The transition of Labumore's material from manuscript to published work raised a number of questions and important production issues for the publishers McPhee Gribble and the academic editors. These concerned preserving the authenticity of the work and retaining the strong links with oral story-telling, while not compromising typesetting and design consistency, to both attract readers and encourage them to read on.

5 In the following year Rosemary van den Berg replaced Bin Salleh as Magabala's senior editor. Narelle Jones was employed as in-house book designer in January 2001. Both are Aboriginal women.

6 Both Peter Bibby and Shelley North are non-Indigenous staff members at Magabala Books.

7 Douglas was later appointed as publisher, and non-Indigenous publisher Mandy Brett reverted to editor when Douglas was appointed.

8 The director of archives and production is not listed as an in-house position because this is not a publishing position or a Press position. The nature of this position changed after Margaret Ruhfus left Aboriginal Studies Press.

9 'Jukurrpa' is the Warlpiri spelling of the word which means 'Law' or 'Dreaming'.

10 This landmark publication is part of the Central Australian Dictionaries program. The dictionaries are also companion volumes to other important illustrative works such as *Keringke: Contemporary Eastern Arrernte Art* (1999).

11 David Horton, editor of *The Encyclopaedia of Aboriginal Australia*, raised most of the project funding because this assistance was not forthcoming from AIATSIS. The Encyclopaedia project received minimal support from AIATSIS until it was published and was a success for Aboriginal Studies Press.

12 Ruth Gilbert also worked in-house with Susan Hawthorne at Spinifex Press during this period.

13 UQP committed to the sponsorship of the David Unaipon award in 1988, as a counter to the Bicentennial celebration of a white Australia, but it did not get underway until judging in 1989. The first winner, Graeme Dixon, had his manuscript *Holocaust Island* published in 1990.

14 See Checklist of Books in *UQP: The Writer's Press, 1948–1998*, published by UQP in 1998.

15 McDonell also makes the point that context is also different as each case is different and examined this question through looking at three case studies of editing three different Indigenous texts — first her own work as the editor of *Is That You, Ruthie?* second, the editing of *An Aboriginal Mother Tells of the Old and the New*, edited by Paul Memmott and Robin Horsman, and the editing of *Auntie Rita* by Alison Ravenscroft. These case studies are contained in McDonell's PhD Thesis, currently in progress.

16 This important collection of stories in Aboriginal language and English is part of the IAD Press Oral History series.

17 Bin Salleh also discussed the importance of design work for other Magabala Books, referring to the artistic development of children's traditional stories in Daphne Punytjina Burton's *Kupi Kupi and The Girl* (2000), a traditional bilingual story from Areyonga in the Northern Territory, illustrated by Carolyn Windy and *Tjarany Roughtail: The Dreaming of the Roughtail Lizard and Other Stories* (1999) by Gracie Greene and Joe Tramacchi and illustrated by Lucille Gill. The stories are told in English and Kukatja, a language spoken in the East Kimberley region (Bin Salleh int. 1999).

18 The stories in *Gularabulu* belong to Paddy Roe and the Aboriginal people from the traditional tribal groupings of the Garadjeri, Nyigina, Yaour, Nyul-nyul and Djaber-djaber communities.

19 The title, *Gularabulu*, 'the coast where the sun goes down', belongs to the coastal country of the West Kimberley area. Paddy Roe's traditional tribe is the Nyigina community.

20 The stories were represented on the page in the form of word for word transcriptions from the original tape recordings.

21 Muecke and Roe worked with English as a means of communication because Muecke could not speak the traditional languages in which Roe was fluent. The success of the performance of the narratives in *Gularabulu* were dependent on Muecke's ability to listen and understand Roe's telling of the stories and, as an editor, to transmit their message to the reader.

22 UQP employed their first Aboriginal editor, Jacqui Katona, from January 1985 until she left in mid-1986. UQP has been successful in receiving funding in 2002 through the Queensland Arts Office, for an Indigenous person to market UQP's Black Australian Writers series list on a commission basis.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Conclusion: Publishing Culture

Book commissioning and publishing culture since the 1970s in Australia, reveals a complex and dynamic fusion of people, events, processes and outcomes. The approach taken by editors and publishers in commissioning authors and acquiring content varies from project to project. It also differs considerably between publishing houses and publishing cultures, reflecting the diversity of Australian book publishing practice. The commissioning and acquisition of authors and content, therefore, is not transparent or conventional and, like most publishing practices, is also not widely understood by those who live and work outside publishing circles. In-house, editors and publishers also struggle to explain exactly how they go about commissioning and acquiring authors and content and researchers in other studies have discovered that more was learned about the actual publishing process by observing editors and publishers in-house (Coser et al. 1982; Lane and Booth, 1980). To analyse and define the praxis of commissioning is a difficult task because the boundaries between ideas and the individuals who originate and drive them, inside the publishing house and outside in the broader culture, both intersect and overlap in different ways. Thus commissioning can be located between the author and the reader at various stages in the book's life cycle and these stages involve key people at different times in the book's production. The dynamics that come into play in the circulation of ideas, authors, editors and publishers are also often blurred. Ray Coffey's notion of a 'hybrid discussion' between authors, editors and publishers (in which 'extra bits are grafted on to the original idea and further developed') could be as close as one gets to pinning down commissioning. Because the process in many ways defies definition, this is why anything can happen and often does.

The acquisition of local content is critical to the development of original ideas and published works by Australian authors that promote reader awareness and generate cultural debate. Because of the size of the Australian market book publishing has always been competitive, in fact increasingly so, and this is why editors and publishers are more focused on content that sells well. More than ever before independent publishers, out of necessity, have allowed marketing and finance to intervene in the commissioning and acquisitions of authors and content. Undoubtedly, there is more pressure on editors and publishers to perform and notch up successful sales records. The long-term consequences of sales, marketing and finance imperatives, could be the

slow and subtle demise of independent minds that create and shape groundbreaking cultural content. These same individuals are only too aware of the pitfalls of blindly following sales and marketing trends at the expense of commissioning content that fires the creativity and imagination of authors, editors, publishers and readers alike. While smaller independents constitute the majority of book publishers, the reality is that a few large multinational companies continue to be the powerful players, monopolising book publishing, selling and distribution in Australia.

All book publishing serves the interests of particular individuals, the communities they identify with and network within and this will always be the case, whether the publishing house is large or small, multinational or Australian-owned. The difference, however, lies in the process of how individuals and communities are perceived and represented by the publishing house. The issues and interests of marginalised groups in Australian society, for example, have been and continue to be represented in the lists of smaller independent publishers. Multinational publishers — for very different reasons to do with money and markets — have colonised and commodified women's writing, multicultural writing, feminist writing, gay and lesbian writing and, to a certain extent Indigenous writing, after the ground has already been broken by independent publishers.

The social, political and economic conditions in which communities of authors, editors and publishers create and produce content is the context in which all commissioning and acquisition takes place. A contemporary example is the production and publication of Indigenous works by Indigenous editors, designers and publishers. This represents the emergence of an Aboriginal book publishing movement and the subsequent growth of an independent Indigenous writing and publishing culture in Australia. This innovative response suggests new ways of working and new approaches in conceptualising the role and impact of individuals and communities who initiate and develop content, thus promoting and advancing progressive change in Australian public and publishing culture. As others have so convincingly argued, book production is caught up in wider social, economic and political struggles and unstable networks in Australia (Reynolds 1997) and the act of editing a book is never undertaken in isolation because the process always exists within a wider context (McDonell 2000). In Aboriginal publishing, for example, it is often, though not always, Aboriginal people who are the cultural filters and vet content for publication through ongoing consultation with Aboriginal communities about appropriate ways of proceeding. Australian Indigenous editors and publishers, not unlike many of their peers in independent publishing, are caught between the communities they serve and the commercial constraints of book publishing. This conflict underlies the cultural clash between the central ideology of western publishing and the social and cultural responsibilities of community publishing.

The intersections of public and publishing culture shift and constantly shape the acquisitions environment, and the individuals who commission books in Australia increasingly operate within cultural and commercial territories defined by global economies. The territory that constitute Australian book publishing markets, has evolved over the last thirty years from the local, to the regional, to the global. It is in this domain that the power of economic forces presiding over cultural determinants cannot be overlooked or disregarded. Independent publishers, however, continue to take the risks, demonstrating resistance and resilience against increasingly difficult odds. The ways in which independent editors and publishers act as agents of cultural challenge and change offsets and even contradicts the increasing perception of publishing as a nameless, faceless, anonymous identity. This is even more crucial in a world where publishing represents a cultural and commercial force that, in its multinational, globalised and commodified forms, appears beyond the limits of knowability or analysis. This is why particular individuals make a difference in identifying and recognising different audiences and shaping publishing culture. For example, Sophie Cunningham circulated in and published a raft of younger generation writers with ideas that challenged the literary establishment and middle Australia; Josie Douglas, Rachel Bin Salleh and Sandra Phillips publish Indigenous knowledge and culture for Indigenous communities and by doing so, also educate and inform a non-Indigenous readership; Jane Covernton and Sue Williams fostered original and innovative Australian content in children's picture books; Ray Coffey, through the discovery and subsequent publication of regional writers from Western Australia, has attracted attention to the Fremantle Arts Centre Press list; and Susan Hawthorne has opened up the feminist market to a much wider readership in Australia and overseas.

Major Influences and Key Findings

A local book publishing tradition and culture in Australia has been historically filtered by the British and US book trade through control of the market and the subsequent colonisation of local publishing programs. As a consequence, Australian books have been doubly disadvantaged. While local independent publishing has evolved and broadened, encompassing a range of new and diverse works by Australian writers, so too have the local publishing programs of multinational publishers, with a far more powerful global import and export reach.

While some traditional areas or departments within the publishing house remain, newly emerging web-site, database and electronic areas are in constant development — indicating the increasing trend toward different delivery platforms in publishing. An evolving and escalating trend is the outsourcing of traditional in-house production roles. As more books are produced, in-house and freelance publishing staff are expected

to meet unrealistic production schedules and this is where slippage occurs. There is less time and, as a consequence, less commitment by editors and publishers to quality editing and production control across all stages of the book's life cycle, as authors, editors, designers and content are viewed as commodities. Some editors and publishers also freelance as consultants to the publishing industry. This relatively recent trend represents a significant departure from traditional publishing practice. Literary agents have also carved out their own commissioning territories in representing authors, developing content and brokering author-publisher agreements. This has subsequently given them more bargaining power and more influence over what will be published. Literary agents have increasingly taken on editing roles that were in the past exclusively carried out in-house. The era of 'cheque book publishing', the up-front advance and the notion of editors or publishers bidding for an agented author became an industry reality in the 1980s in Australian publishing. These ways of doing business are here to stay unless an economic downturn adversely affects the publishing industry. This only serves to reinforce and strengthen economic rationalism in its many insidious forms, where publishing is now regarded as an 'industry', authors as 'products' and books as 'units'. The cultural response by independent publishing communities to profit-driven unstable economies, constitutes more self-regulating ways of working and surviving. This can be seen in the ways in which independent publishing culture is always with us. Other trends in book publishing are towards general consumer, mass market publishing or more specialised, market-niche publishing that better suits the ways in which smaller companies operate. The latter are more likely to shrink or grow in response to market forces and publishing risks become more calculated, while large multinational publishers have the company infrastructure and ever ready resources to expand their lists and their market reach. Many independent publishers occupying the middle ground in Australian publishing are acquired once they reach a certain size and this is reflected in the company's annual turnover. This is a sensitive and confidential issue in the industry and many publishers who took part in this study were unwilling to provide their annual turnover figures (see Appendix D).

While Schwartz's and Aphrys's general publishing models — cited in Australian publications — are meant to represent organisational publishing structure, only a few publishing companies operating in Australia are big enough to relate to them. Flann and Hill's model typifies an earlier in-house organisational publishing culture that has since undergone rapid and fundamental change with increased and ongoing outsourcing of production work to freelancers in the 1980s. This was followed by new publishing technologies that revolutionised ways in which books were designed, typeset and printed from the early to mid-1990s. Within organisational culture, large publishing companies represent a more hierarchical, bureaucratic management spread across various areas within the publishing house. This departs significantly from

smaller ‘home-grown’ companies, in which a few individuals are involved in most or all areas inside the publishing house. It is evident that the size of the publishing house and the type of publishing have a significant bearing on organisational structure and publishing culture, which in turn governs the individual’s commissioning and acquisitions power, shaping the process of how editors and publishers go about their business of commissioning and acquiring authors and content.

The selective sample of specific publishing models in Chapter Three more accurately details the organisational and operational structures of particular publishing houses and publishing cultures in Australia and, indeed, brings them to life. The models range from large, management-owned and funded companies like Allen & Unwin; to smaller, university-owned and funded companies like the University of Queensland Press; to publishers with a regional focus, whose general operating costs are funded by state arts agencies like Fremantle Arts Centre Press and Magabala Books; to incorporated, not-for-profit community cooperatives like Sybylla Feminist Press; to the publishing arm of Aboriginal educational and language institutions, such as IAD Press.

I would argue that only a very few publishing houses discussed in this study are wholly independent. The truly independent houses usually involve working proprietors who may be individuals, as is the case with Hale & Iremonger, Bruce Sims Books and Artemis Publishing, or accommodate publishing partners who are also company directors, such as Spinifex Press and Working Title Press. In both examples the individuals concerned are the key financial stakeholders who run the business and make the publishing decisions, often but not always, in consultation with others. Although many publishing houses in this study enjoy a measure of independence, they are still governed by and accountable to outside controlling bodies. These management committees and boards of management can and do shape publishing policy, influence commissioning and acquisitions practice and ultimately determine the direction the publishing program and the publishing house will take. If social, political and economic conditions are the context in which authors, editors, publishers and books are produced, then commissioning and acquisitions practice is located where culture and power intersect and change occurs. Without the creative freedom, scope and editorial independence to initiate and develop original and innovative Australian content, those who commission and acquire books will always fall short of publishing culture’s potential for inspiration, challenge and change in ways that expand and advance, rather than limit and constrain, its social and cultural reach. This will require key shifts in the way in which books and the people who create, publish, sell and read them are configured within a global cultural marketplace that primarily values books, authors, readers and the industries that support them as agents in the commodification of culture.

APPENDIX A

Preliminary Interview Questions

Q1 What is your understanding of the term 'commissioning' from your own book publishing experience?

Q2 How long have you worked in the book publishing industry and which companies have you worked for?

Q3 When did you start commissioning books and why?

Q4 What other areas of publishing have you worked in?

Q5 Has the relative importance of various departments in publishing houses changed over time? If so, do you think that the commissioning role remains central to the cultural production of books?

Q6 Can you describe your role and how this role has changed over time?

Q7 Who makes most of the publishing decisions? How much influence do you have in this decision-making?

Q8 Where do most of the publishing ideas for books come from in your experience?

Q9 Can you choose one to five titles from your list that you identify as books that reflect or construct a wider culture?

Q10 How have social, political or cultural movements influenced what authors/books you commission?

Q11 In your opinion what is a book's value? It is a product, a cultural artefact or something else?

Q12 How important is it for those who commission books to be able to exercise autonomy and freedom over what they publish?

Q13 How does this editorial/publishing freedom shape your list?

Q14 Do you believe that independent book publishers make an important contribution to what books get published? If so, please explain.

Q15 How important it it for those who commission books to have budgetary control in building their own lists?

Q16 What factors and conditions influence your choice of author or manuscript?

Q17 If writers, publishers, books and readers take part in a cultural exchange, can you comment on trends or shifts in cultural exchange since the 1970s?

Q18 How has your list contributed to and/or influenced the marketplace?

Q19 How has a history of colonisation/globalisation of book publishing in Australia shaped the way in which you see the world and the books you publish?

Q20 What is the future role of those who commission books in Australia?

APPENDIX B

Follow-up Interview Questions

Q1 Has your position/title changed since our first interview? If so, does this position reflect a working definition of a commissioning role?

Q2 Does the work of a commissioning 'editor' differ from that of a commissioning 'publisher'? If so, what are the key differences?

Q3 Are those who commission books cultural gatekeepers? If so, what examples can you provide from your own experience?

Q4 What impact do literary agents have on your commissioning role?

Q5 Of the total number of books you publish each year, what percentage are offered to you through literary agents?

Q6 Are literary agents cultural gatekeepers and if so, in what way?

Q7 In your first interview you identified the following books in your list that are significant in reflecting or constructing a wider culture:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Q8 I would like to discuss some or all of these books in more detail in relation to:

a) How the text for each book was commissioned

b) How the cover for each book was commissioned

c) How the idea(s) for each book were developed

d) How you worked with the author(s) on each book

e) How each book was edited

f) How each book reflects or constructs a wider culture

g) How political and/or social movements have informed book content

Q9 Enclosed is a diagrammatical model of the organisation of a publishing company (Source: Hill, B. and Flann, E. *The Australian Editing Handbook*, 1994: 2). Using this publishing diagram as a guide only, reconstruct a model of how your publishing house currently operates.

Q10 Is your publishing house Australian-owned? If so, how do you define Australian-owned?

Q11 How do you define 'success' in your publishing career?

Q12 Any other final comments about this project?

APPENDIX C

Australian Publishing Profiles

Sue Abbey

1981–2000 Began as an editorial assistant and for two decades has served as Senior Editor, University of Queensland Press, specialising in memoir, Indigenous issues and languages, contemporary poetry and Black Australian writing.

UQP was established in 1948 as a department of the university, publishing university materials. The first literary title was published in 1959. UQP publishes a broad range of general interest and literary titles, including contemporary Australian fiction and poetry, memoir, biography, history, literary criticism and screenplays. The expanded children's list features Jam Roll Press picture books, Storybridge titles for younger readers and an award-winning list of teenage fiction. Abbey is the Supervising Editor of the Black Australian writers series, which includes titles originating from entries judged for the annual David Unaipon Award for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander writers.

Rachel Bin Salleh

1991–2000 Began as a project officer and then started editing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander works for Magabala Books and progressed to Senior Editor. Magabala Books was established in 1987 with a grant from the Australian Bicentennial Authority's National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Program, with a further grant from the Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Cultural Centre (KALACC). Magabala Books is Australia's only independently operated indigenous publisher. Magabala Books publishes a broad range of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander titles, including fiction, social history, autobiography, drama, poetry and award-winning children's books.

Mandy Brett

1988–92 Started in Information Technology (IT) at Penguin Books.

1992–94	Production Editor, *Arena* magazine.
1998–2000	Editor and Publisher, IAD Press. IAD Press was established in 1972 and is the publishing arm of the educational college, the Institute of Aboriginal Development (IAD). IAD Press specialises in language dictionaries, teacher's guides, Aboriginal art and children's books. IAD Press has built upon its strong base as an education publisher to produce a list of popular trade titles. In 1997 IAD Press launched its trade imprint, Jukurrpa Books, publishing poetry, fiction, children's books and a range of titles exploring cross-cultural and contemporary Aboriginal issues.

Ray Coffey

1978–2000	Started as Managing Editor with Fremantle Arts Centre Press and since 1989, has been Publisher and CEO. FACP was established in 1976 and receives annual funding from Arts WA and the Australia Council. FACP publishes works by Western Australian writers and in the case of non-fiction, works with a strong WA focus. The broad list includes fiction, poetry, biography and autobiography, history, fiction for young adults and children's picture books.

Jane Covernton

1974–75	Picture Research and Editorial, Barkly Publishers (UK).
1975–80	Editor, General Books and Educational Books, Rigby.
1981–96	Publishing Director, Omnibus Books.
1997–98	Packaged Omnibus Books for Scholastic Australia.
1999–2000	Publishing Director with Working Title Press.
	Omnibus Books was established in 1981 as an innovative independent publisher of Australian children's picture books and was later sold to the American multinational, Ashton Scholastic. The broad list includes non-fiction, short fiction and poetry. Working Title Press, an Australian-owned company, was established in 1999 by Jane Covernton and Sue Williams, specialising in children's picture books for the 0–7 age group and a small range of non-fiction titles.

Sophie Cunningham

1988	Started reading manuscripts, then began reading for McPhee Gribble the following year.
1989	Trained as a junior editor, proofreading and copy editing for McPhee Gribble.
1989	Moves with McPhee Gribble publisher, Hilary McPhee, when the company becomes an imprint of Penguin Books.
1992	Appointed McPhee Gribble/Penguin publisher imprint when Hilary McPhee leaves Penguin for Pan Macmillan.
1994	Appointed trade publisher with Allen & Unwin Australia in the Sydney head office.
1999–2000	Continues to publish with Allen & Unwin on a part-time basis, before relocating to Allen & Unwin's Melbourne office.
	See entry on Elizabeth Weiss for Allen & Unwin.

Josie Douglas

1993–2000	Started with IAD Press, working in sales and promotions and then as an assistant trainee editor, supervised by mentor and Senior Editor, Margaret Bowman. Completed in-house training and appointed IAD Press Publisher in 2000, replacing Mandy Brett who is currently an Editor with IAD Press.
	See entry on Mandy Brett for IAD Press.

Vern Field

1997–2000	Editor, Learning Resources Services, Deakin University. Also editing books for Deakin University Press and joined the Sybylla publishing collective in 1997. Sybylla was established in 1976 as a voluntary, not-for-profit, feminist printing and publishing co-operative. Sybylla published its first book in 1982, an anthology of Australian women's writing, *Frictions*. The Press later changed its name to Sybylla Feminist Press. Sybylla's independent feminist list includes anthologies, fiction, non-fiction, novels, autobiography, social and cultural history and poetry.

Susan Hawthorne

1987–90	Began as an Editor, then Commissioning Editor with Penguin Books Australia.
	See entry on Bruce Sims for Penguin Books Australia.
1991–2000	Founded Spinifex Press with Renate Klein in 1991. A Publisher and Company Director. Spinifex Press is an independent feminist trade publishing company, publishing innovative and controversial books. Publishing areas include children's books, young adult fiction, health, self-help, memoir, travel, Indigenous issues, Internet, lesbian, social and political issues, feminism, crime fiction, classic fiction, poetry and drama. Spinifex has an extensive web-site, including interactive fiction and women's resources.

Sylvia Hale

1966	Established Southwood Press with Roger Barnes.
1976	Established Hale & Iremonger with Roger Barnes and John Iremonger appointed as Publisher.
1979	Sylvia Hale becomes Hale & Iremonger's Publisher.
1994–2000	Scales down her publishing involvement but remains a stakeholder in the company as Principal Shareholder and Chair of Hale & Iremonger and Southwood Press. Hale & Iremonger is an independent Australian publisher and makes a significant contribution to general, non-fiction publishing. The areas in which Hale & Iremonger publish are Australian history, society and culture, health/self-help, biography, the arts, practical and business books. The company has a reputation as a fine publisher of contemporary Australian poets.

Stephanie Holt

1991–96	A voluntary member of Sybylla Feminist Press. Previously employed as a magazine editor with Fine Arts Press in Melbourne.
1997–2000	Appointed Commissioning Editor, *Meanjin*.
	See entry on Vern Field for Sybylla Feminist Press.

Laurin McKinnon

1988–2000	Founded BlackWattle Press with Jill Jones.
	Publisher, working with an editorial advisory group.
	BlackWattle was established in 1988 to promote gay and lesbian writing in Australia by publishing books and magazines. An independent publisher of contemporary fiction and anthologies of gay and lesbian writing.

Sally Milner

1972–75	Editor with Lansdowne Press.
1975–87	Founded Greenhouse Publications. Company owner and Publisher.
1987–89	Managing Director and Publisher, Greenhouse and associate Publisher, Australian Consolidated Press.
1989–2000	Founded Sally Milner Publishing. Company owner and Publisher until the company was sold in 1999.
	Remains an occasional contributor to the Sally Milner list. Under Milner, Greenhouse published a broad list of non-fiction titles. Sally Milner Publishing specialises in art and craft, healthy living and other general non-fiction titles.

Craig Munro

1971–2000	Started as a trainee editor with the University of Queensland Press. UQP's Fiction Editor from 1983 until 1980 and then appointed Publishing Manager.
	See entry on Sue Abbey for University of Queensland Press.

Margaret Ruhfus

	Prior to working with Aboriginal Studies Press, worked for Australian National University Press, the Australian War Memorial, The National Gallery and The National Library.
1995	Publishing Director, then Managing Editor with Aboriginal Studies Press.

1998–99 Publications Manager, Magabala Books.

Aboriginal Studies Press was established in 1964 and is the publishing arm of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS). The Press publishes work by non-Indigenous and Indigenous authors in all fields of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, including art, biography, education, history, health, housing, land rights, language, physical and social anthropology, prehistory and women's studies. It also publishes fiction, poetry, drama and children's literature.

2000 Appointed Manager, GreenWords & Images.

See entry on Rachel Bin Salleh for Magabala Books.

Kirstin Schneider

1996–2000 A voluntary member of Sybylla Feminist Press. Previously edited two magazines, *World Art* and *21C* for Fine Arts Press.

See entry on Vern Field for Sybylla Feminist Press.

Jocelynne Scutt

1992–2000 Founded Artemis Publishing in 1992. Scutt publishes a broad list of titles including crime and detective fiction and non-fiction, including autobiographical essays in the Women's Voices, Women's Lives series and a collection of essays based on legal, medical, financial and power issues and how they affect women, in the Artemis Women's Studies list.

Bruce Sims

1971 Editor, Publications Office, University of Melbourne.

1979–82 Typesetting, layout and editing, Correct Line Graphics co-operative.

1983–95 Editor, Production Manager, Publisher of adult books, Penguin Books.

1995–99 Publishing Manager, Magabala Books.

1999 Relieving Senior Commissioning Editor, ABC Books.

2000 Founding Publisher, Bruce Sims Books and freelance editor.

Penguin Books was established in Australia in 1946, acting as a distribution branch of Penguin UK. In 1963 Penguin published its first Australian titles. Penguin Books Australia is part of the Penguin Group of companies which is part of the international media group, Pearson. Penguin publishes a range of literary and mass market fiction to children's picture books.

See entry on Rachel Bin Salleh for Magabala Books.

ABC Books is a division of ABC Enterprises, publishing a range of books for adults and children. The list includes books associated with and tied to ABC programming as well as stand-alone general books.

Bruce Sims Books was established in 2000 and is a small independent publisher of adult fiction and non-fiction.

Elizabeth Weiss

1988–93 A member of the Women's Redress Press voluntary publishing committee, assessing projects for publication and working with other members of the Redress Press collective on book production.

1990–2000 Started as Academic Commissioning Editor with Allen & Unwin and progressed to Academic Publisher. Publishes mainly in the subject areas of sociology, health, education, social work, gender studies, cultural studies and media studies. Allen & Unwin started publishing in Australia in 1976 as a branch of the UK-based parent company. In 1990, following the purchase of the UK company, Allen & Unwin's Australian directors effected a management buy-out. The company is now independent and owns the Allen & Unwin imprint worldwide. The company is one of the four largest publishers in Australia.

Allen & Unwin publishes a broad list, ranging from fiction through general non-fiction (biography, business, humour, popular science, history), children's books and academic (primarily in the social sciences and health) for local and international markets.

Women's Redress Press was established in 1983 in Sydney as a women's publishing collective. The Press published a broad list of fiction, non-fiction, poetry and anthologies of Australian women's writing before it ceased operating in 1994.

Jackie Yowell

1972–78	Worked for several publishing companies in-house and also freelanced.
1979–87	Started as an Editor and progressed to Associate Publisher with Penguin Books Australia.
1991–95	Worked with Aird Books and established her own imprint, Silver Gum Press.
1995–98	Editor, Commissioning Editor, Managing Editor, then Publisher with Allen & Unwin, which acquired Silver Gum Press.
2000	Consultant Publisher with Allen & Unwin.
	See entry on Elizabeth Weiss for Allen & Unwin.

APPENDIX D

Australian Publishing Statistics, 2000[1]

Publisher	Types of Books	No. of Staff	No. of Books Published	Size	Annual Turnover
ABC Books	Non-fiction, fiction, children's	6	106	S	n/a
Aboriginal Studies Press[2]	Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Studies, fiction, poetry, children's	5	12	S	n/a
Artemis Publising	Feminist, non-fiction, crime-fiction, trade	1+	0	S	n/a
Allen & Unwin	Fiction, non-fiction, children's, academic (Social Sciences and Health)	80–90	250	L	$33 million[3]
Bruce Sims Books	Adult fiction and non-fiction	1	5	S	n/a
Fremantle Arts Centre Press	Fiction, poetry, art and social histroy, children's picture books, young adult fiction	10	30	S–M	n/a
Hale & Iremonger	Australia History, Society and Culture, self-help and practical guides, poetry, biography	4–5	20+	S	n/a
IAD Press	Central Australian Aboriginal, dictionaries, language guides, art, oral history, poetry, autobiography, fiction, children's	7	8–10	S	n/a
Magabala Books	Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander literature – lifestyle, history, fiction, poetry, children's language	6	12	S	n/a

Publisher	Types of Books	No. of Staff	No. of Books Published	Size	Annual Turnover
Sally Milner Books	Craft, healthy living	n/a	30	S	n/a
Penguin Books	Adult fiction, non-fiction, children's	300	200	L	>$100 million[4]
Spinifex Press	Feminist, fiction, non-fiction, Women's Studies, poetry, health, humour, Asia/Pacific, lesbian, children's, internet	7	15	S	n/a
Univeristy of Queensland Press	Scholarly, fiction, non-fiction, poetry, Indigenous, teenage	17	40–70	S–M	n/a
Working Title Press	Children's picture books (0–7), board books, photographic	2	10	S	n/a

1 Statistical data was made available by editors and publishers who took part in this study, unless otherwise indicated.

2 Aboriginal Studies Press's statistical data was provided by the Publications Manager, Penelope Lee.

3 The annual turnover for Allen & Unwin was sourced from Dun & Bradstreet. *Allen & Unwin Pty Ltd — Brief Financial*. 1999.

4 The annual turnover for Penguin Books was sourced from the publisher's web-site.

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