Children's Literature at the Turn of the Century:

Toward a Political Economy of the Publishing Industry

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Drawing on a variety of sources, this essay outlines the beginnings of a political economy of the children's literature publishing industry. The rapidly changing set of institutional and socioeconomic and political circumstances known as fast capitalism provides the backdrop for a detailed discussion of the profound impact that the consolidation of the publishing industry by giant international media conglomerates is having on the kinds of books that are commissioned, written, produced, and marketed. Central to the analysis is a consideration of the continuing commodification of children's literature that is apparent in the ever expanding mass-market side of the industry, the explosive increase in the licensing and merchandizing of characters from children's books and popular films, and the proliferation of a variety of series books that have assumed the status of brand names comparable to other commercial commodities. I give particular attention to some of the debates surrounding the publication of multicultural children's literature as they are especially revealing of political and economic factors that impinge on children's literature. The importance of this analysis for literacy educators and researchers derives from the conviction that the complex processes that lead to the publication of literature for young people directly influences the kinds of books that are available to members of society and thus is crucial to the future of both education and democratic society.

English language arts curricula continue to be the subject of ongoing, often contentious debate. Whether one considers the rise and decline of the whole language philosophy of literacy instruction (e.g., Daniels, 1993; Routman, 1996; Smith, 1994, Stahl, 1999; Taylor, 1998) or various notions of cultural literacy (Hirsch, 1987), these discussions not only are concerned with substantive issues of curriculum, pedagogy, and assessment but are thoroughly enmeshed in the wider political currents of society. While debates about curriculum always have embodied the sociocultural and political tensions of the wider society (e.g., Apple, 1979, 1982; Berliner, 1997; Giroux, 1984; Kliefard, 1994) these tensions have perhaps never been more readily apparent than in the last three decades.
Likewise, tradebook literature for young people—now almost universally accepted as a fixture in K-12 classrooms—is subject to an array of forces and pressures that influence both the kinds of books that are written and the way they are received and perceived by the public. Elleman (1987), for example, pinpoints two influences that "expanded and revolutionized the field of children's books" (p. 413). The first and best known of these is the dramatic changes in the sociopolitical climate of the country. During the 1960s "upheavals in life-styles, traditions, mores, and language, as well as protests against racism and sexism, brought a new realism to children's books" (p. 416). This "new realism" contributed to the erasure of longstanding taboos as authors broke dramatically from the conventions of previous generations by exploring themes that previously were deemed unacceptable (e.g., drugs, alcoholism, sex, and violence). As Murray (1998) notes, writers also were being challenged to "produce stories that accepted the teen subculture at face value and challenged adult prohibitions and mores" (p. 184). More recently, controversies about children's literature have become entangled in the larger culture wars (e.g., Apple 1993, Gates, 1992) that have embroiled all areas of society. Attempts to censor a wide range and variety of books, including the phenomenally popular Harry Potter series, and continuing assertions that a politically correct orthodoxy is being imposed on children's literature (Taxel, 1997) are illustrative of the ways in which sociopolitical issues are manifest in debates about literature for young people.

While sociocultural and political forces have a perceptible, often public, impact on the books written and published for young people, changes in the world of children's publishing, Elleman's (1987) second influence, comprise a set of factors that plays an enormous, if less understood and recognized role in shaping children's literature. While obvious to those within the industry, the impact of the business side of children's literature has not been given the sustained and systematic scrutiny it deserves by children's literature scholars and the educational community in general. The publishing industry always has been a business designed to make a profit, a point made by editor Richard Jackson in his response to the assertion that "publishers only exist to make money." Jackson's deft reply was, "No, publishers make money to exist" (quoted by Kayden, 1993, p. 265). One popular author put it a bit more bluntly when stating, "I'm not naive enough to think that publishing houses are in the charity business or that the goal of the conglomerate is to serve the needs of children. First and foremost, they are in the business to make money" (Anonymous author #2).

In this essay I draw on a variety of sources in order to begin outlining a political economy of the children's literature publishing industry. Today's writers, illustrators, editors, publicists, etc. work in a volatile, rapidly changing socioeconomic and political environment that is a manifestation of the evolution of the economic system to
what Agger (1989) termed *fast capitalism*. The effects of this transformation extend to virtually all of society's institutions, including publishing where longstanding practices that have governed the way books are commissioned, written, produced, and marketed are being overturned. My conception of a political economy of children's literature is developed through a critical reading and review of a variety of issues that draw on a wide range of scholarship about children's literature and the publishing industry (e.g., periodicals such as *Publishers Weekly*, long considered the authoritative voice of the industry). I also have gained insight and understanding from the reflections of Jason Epstein (2001) and Andre Schiffrin (2000), both distinguished editors, who devote considerable space to the discussion of issues that are central to publishing's past, present, and future. My account is supplemented by relevant discussions from the "Children's Literature: Criticism and Theory" bulletin board on the World Wide Web, a source of lively dialogue about a range of issues related to the writing, publication, analysis, and teaching of literature for young people. Also included are data from a convenience sample (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1996) consisting of four popular, widely-known authors (three of whom have asked to remain anonymous), a distinguished publisher and editor, and one director of school and library marketing (the last two also are published writers). I have known these individuals for many years and their insider perspectives have proven invaluable in helping me to understand the internal dynamics of the industry and in the construction of my argument. While this sample does not represent the experiences and opinions of every individual who works in publishing, my informants all have many years in the industry and are discerning and knowledgeable observers of it. These comments were gathered via e-mail in response to an interview protocol (see Appendix A). The single exception was the case where the protocol was administered over the phone. I read these interviews to identify themes conforming to and inconsistent with those obtained from my other sources.

My analysis focuses on the ways that changes in the ownership and structure of the industry are altering the underlying culture of the book publishing industry and concomitantly, the ways that books are conceived, commissioned, and marketed. The framework for my analysis originates in the work of critical curriculum theorists such as Apple (1986), who long has argued that education and cultural phenomena in general must be understood "relationally," as "created out of the economic, political and cultural conflicts that have historically emerged in the United States and elsewhere" (p. 5). This view, one that draws on neo-Marxist theory and Cultural Studies (e.g., Johnson, 1983), suggests that cultural products such as literature for young people cannot be understood as "isolated entities but as 'things' that have a circuit of production, circulation, and consumption" (Apple, 1986, p. 14). I also consider more recent work...
that views children’s literature as a commodity in a global market controlled by a small number of multinational conglomerates (Sarland, 1996; Zipes, 2001). The increasing hegemony of giant corporations is an essential feature of the consumer culture that lies at the heart of fast capitalism.

This discussion provides the context needed to comprehend the dramatic transformation of the publishing industry and how it has affected the publication of children’s books. Considered, for example, is the continuing growth of the mass-market side of the industry, the explosive increase in the licensing and merchandizing of characters from children’s books and popular films, and the proliferation of a variety of series books that have assumed the status of brand names comparable to other popular commodities. I also give particular attention to some of the debates surrounding the publication of multicultural children’s literature as they are especially revealing of both political and economic factors that impinge on children’s literature. The political side of this issue involves the longstanding efforts for greater inclusion of long silenced, and often vilified, voices into the literary canon (Harris, 1993; Levine, 1997; Taxel, 1981, 1993), a struggle that is inextricably tied to the movement for social justice and equity. Multicultural literature also exemplifies the phenomenon of “niche publishing,” which is an important dimension of fast capitalism. The relevance of this analysis for literacy educators and researchers derives from the conviction that the complex processes that lead to the publication of literature for young people directly influence the kinds of books that are available to teachers in classrooms, to parents in bookstores, or from online vendors and from the conviction that these processes are beyond the purview of all except the most knowledgeable observers, most of whom are in the industry itself.

Framework

Fast Capitalism

A number of commentators (e.g., Agger, 1989; Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Gee, 2000) contend that a period of dynamic economic change has occurred across the globe involving new business and management theories. Cope and Kalantzis argue that “These theories and practices stress competition and markets centered on change, flexibility, quality, and distinctive niches—not the mass products of the ‘old’ capitalism” (p. 10; cf. Malarkey, 1999). The importance of this new form of capitalism’s emphasis on increased competition for smaller market niches—a segment of the market specializing in a particular kind of product—and the need to develop and customize new products and services quickly is especially relevant to the present discussion. This new stage in the evolution of the capitalist economic system is referred to either as postFordism or as fast capitalism. It involves a flattening in the previously hierarchical organization structure of corporations to one where members of an organization identify “with its vision, mission, and corporate values” (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000, p. 11). However, despite the discourse of cooperation, shared values,
and culture that surrounds it, fast capitalism “is also a vicious world driven by the barely restrained market” (p. 12).

According to Gee (2000), another defining characteristic in the “new high-tech-driven capitalism” is that new services and products are “created, perfected, and changed at ever faster rates.” Significantly, the distinctiveness of any new product lies less in its function or its constitutive materials than in “its novelty and the way it is designed-customized to serve the identity, lifestyle, or interests of a particular type of ‘customer,’ whether this be a person or another business” (p. 40). Reymers (2002) maintains that modern corporations contrive new and different ways (primarily through various forms of advertising) to create and market products that will assuage the perceived need for increased wealth and luxury. In so doing they satisfy the first principle of capitalism, which is untrammeled growth. Appadurai (1986) claims that modern consumers are the “victims of the velocity of fashion” in that demand for commodities is “critically regulated by a variety of taste-making mechanisms.” That is, demand is a “socially regulated and generated impulse, not an artifact of individual whim or needs” (p. 32).

Commodification
Social analysis influenced by Marxist theory sheds light on the demand for commodities in its discussions of commodification, “the subordination of both private and public realms to the logic of capitalism” (Felluga, 1998). Marx viewed commodities as products intended primarily for exchange, and he believed that such products emerge “by definition, in the institutional, psychological, and economic conditions of capitalism” (Appadurai, 1986, p. 6). More contemporary uses of the term view commodities as specialized kinds of manufactured goods (or services) associated with capitalist modes of production and/or places where capitalism has penetrated.

The process of commodification results in the transformation of all things, be they friendships, knowledge, or literature, into commodities that no longer have intrinsic worth but are valued extrinsically in terms of money. Activities such as the creation of literature once purported to be above the market because they were centrally concerned with ideas and aesthetic and affective values now are informed by the values of that market. Analysis, therefore, increasingly is concerned with questions of circulation, negotiation, profit, and exchange (Felluga, 1998). Commodification, or commoditization in Appadurai’s (1986) terms, “lies at the complex intersection of temporal, cultural, and social factors” (p. 15). It involves a process of abstraction in which objects are removed from the emotional, physical, and relational settings in which they are created and redefined in new terms. This redefinition involves the substitution of an artifact’s “use value” (i.e., literature’s aesthetic value, its role in cultural definition and transmission) for its “exchange value” that is “calculated in terms of supply and demand” (Commodification and Ideology, 2000).
The result of this process was decried by Zipes (2001), who contends that everything we do to, with, and for our children is influenced by capitalist market conditions and the hegemonic interests of corporate elites. In simple terms, we calculate what is best for our children by regarding them as investments and turning them into commodities. (p. ix)

Denby (1996) sees children “shaped by the media as consumers before they’ve had a chance to develop their souls” (p. 48) and fears that children as early as age 5 or 6 have been “pulled into the marketplace. They’re on their way to becoming not citizens but consumers” (p. 51). The validity of this assertion is clear to anyone who has observed young children adamantly indicating preferences for specific name brands.

**Individual Agency**

The pursuit of a political economy of children’s literature admittedly runs the risk of being mechanistically reductive, of falling into the trap of economic deterministic that has proven to be so problematic to analyses of this sort (see, for example, Apple, 1979, 1982a, 1982b; Barrett et al., 1979; Golding & Murdock, 1979; Wexler, 1982; Williams, 1961, 1977). Among the most persistent of these problems is that relational analysis can lose sight of human agency and especially the ways that individuals and institutions mediate and resist powerful economic forces. Speaking to this point, Apple (1986) argues that those within the publishing industry have “relative autonomy.” That is, editors and other employees are “encapsulated within a changing set of market relations that set limits on what is considered rational behavior on their part.” However, they “are at least partially free to follow the internal logic of their craft and follow the internal demands within publishing houses themselves” (p. 102). My inclusion of the insights of individuals in the publishing industry is pivotal to my effort to avoid this problem and to illustrate the ways that writers, editors, marketing directors, etc. struggle with and against the increasing commodification of publishing in the twenty-first century.

**Books: Art or Commodity?**

That books are both cultural artifacts that are “important vehicles for ideas” and commodities that have to be “peddled on the market” (Apple & Christian-Smith, 1991, p. 5) is hardly a new or startling idea. Engelhardt (1991) characterizes the claim that “children, culture, and commercialism have long been wedded” as “undeniable” (p. 58) and points to John Newbery, the eighteenth century publisher widely regarded as one of the founders of modern children’s literature, as the first to grasp the existence of a children’s book market. Zipes (2001) concurs when noting that from the very beginning of the institutional rise of children’s literature in the eighteenth century, “various books intended for children of the upper class were produced as commodities to provide pleasure and instruction” (p. 66). Despite recognizing that children’s book publishing always has been a business, Engelhardt insists that “past commercial book ventures
for children—even those of a few decades ago—seem quaint and limited, matters of momentary opportunism, when set against the ongoing rhythms of the present entertainment environment” (p. 58).

Resistance to the notion that literature is a commodity like cars and laundry detergent derives, at least in part, from the persistent belief that literature and art in general exist for their own sake. The belief that artists pursue their creative vision unhindered by social forces and constraints is traceable to the nineteenth century and the Romantic Movement (Bourdieu, 1971; Eagleton, 1983) and rests on a conception of literary works as objects occupying an ethereal realm standing outside politics, ideology, and even history (Taxel, 1991b). Literature, therefore, in this conception is to be contemplated and revered and certainly not subjected to sociopolitical forms of analysis (see Aitkin, 1988; Taxel, 1988). In their discussion of these complex issues, Barrett et al. (1979) refer to the tendency to divorce analysis of culture from its socioeconomic and political contexts as another form of reduction, one that “simply privileges the artifact itself, divorced from the conditions of its existence, and claims that it alone provides the means of its own analysis” (p. 11). This viewpoint underlies the New Criticism (e.g., Wellek, 1949; Wimsatt & Beardsley, 1949; Wimsatt & Brooks, 1964), the school of literary criticism that dominated much of the twentieth century and focuses on meticulous analysis of textual features while eschewing consideration of au-

The influence of this approach to analysis still is evident among children’s literature specialists. Reese (2000), for example, recounts her experience as a reviewer of books about Native Americans for The Horn Book Magazine, widely considered the premier children’s literature review journal in the United States. Although Reese’s role was to review books about Native Americans, one of her reviews was rejected because she objected to the book’s stereotypical representation of Native Americans. The editor-in-chief of the magazine justified his decision on the assumption that “socio-political criticism does not belong in a literary review” (p. 43). Reese was critical of the journal’s stance and spoke of the difficulty of reviewing a book “as though it exists in a vacuum, isolated from the social realities of the United States, because books do not exist in a vacuum” (p. 53).

The impact of social, political, and economic forces and factors on cultural creation has been addressed by Apple (1986), who cites the groundbreaking work of Watt (1974) and Williams (1961, 1977) that established the linkage between the growth of particular genres and styles of books and complex social and economic forces. Watt and Williams both traced the rise of the novel to changes in political economies, class structures, and the growth of the ideology of individualism. Wright (1975) studied the evolution of the narrative structure of Western films, finding a “correspondence” between the struc-
ture of the Western and the “conceptual needs of self-understanding required by the dominant social institutions” (p. 14). I (Taxel, 1984) adopted a similar approach to my study of novels about the American Revolution published between 1899 and 1976, finding striking structural similarities between children’s novels and Western films, indicating that historically rooted attitudes, social values, and ideologies manifest themselves in these imaginative works. Pointing to the problem of economic determinism and the dangers of simplistically reducing cultural phenomena to mere reflections of a given mode of production, my study argues for the need to understand how more than three-quarters of a century of growth and change within the publishing industry influenced the creation of the books I examined.

Two additional studies provide detailed discussion of developments within the publishing industry and illustrate the need to understand literary genres within their socioeconomic milieu. Radway (1984) establishes the context for her ethnography of an audience of adult romance novel readers by outlining the economics of the institutional matrix of the romance publishing industry. Her approach to the genre is to view it as she would all other commercial commodities in our culture. That is, Radway conceives of the romances as “literary texts [that are] the result of a complicated and lengthy process of production that is itself controlled by a host of material and social factors” (p. 19). Christian-Smith’s (1984, 1987, 1991) study of the teen romance series (e.g., Sweet Dreams, Wildfire, Young Love, First Love, Sweet Valley High) describes their ascent to the status of “the publishing phenomenon of the decade” (1984, p. 14) and shows how, for the first time in the history of children’s book publishing, publishers such as Scholastic Books Services, Xerox Corporation, Bantam, and Dell engaged in unprecedented marketing research and “marketing acrobatics to capture a new primary market, the teenage female reader” (p. 13). Christian-Smith sees these books less as traditional literary creations than as products of marketing research that gauged strong public reaction to the social protests and perceived license and permissiveness of the sixties and seventies. Ellemann (1998) observes that the genre relies almost entirely on stereotypical characters that reflect life in the White, middle-class suburbs and ignore the multicultural, realistic themes that emerged in the consciousness-raising sixties.

The Publication of Children’s Literature in the Twentieth Century

Although there was some publication of literature for children during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, children’s literature was not really recognized as a genre until the eighteenth century (Zipes, 2001). Most books for children published from the eighteenth through the nineteenth centuries were serious, didactic, and overtly religious (Kelly, 1970; Murray, 1998, Zipes, 2001), and the audience for these books consisted primarily of children of the aristocratic and middle classes. Not until a
system of production, distribution, and reception was in place could a broader range of books be approved and reach a larger audience of children (Zipes, 2001).

By the 1920s the juvenile market was deemed large enough to warrant special staff attention within publishing houses that previously had included a scattering of children's books within the publisher's general trade list (Epstein, 1995). During this time a "quiet revolution in children's book publishing" commenced (Turow, 1978, p. 17), and companies began appointing editors who were charged with the responsibility of developing an independent list of children's books within self-contained departments (Epstein, 1996). Beginning with the creation of a children's book department at Macmillan in 1918, this structural shift would have far-reaching effects on the business. The change was shaped by a number of crucial developments, including the trend toward separate children's rooms in public libraries presided over by a specialist in library services for children, the beginning of national book promotions such as Children's Book Week by Frederic Melcher of Publishers Weekly, and Anne Carol Moore's establishment of a book review page in the Bookman magazine (Epstein, 1996). Within the next decade eight other houses devoted to children's books were established and Melcher established the Newbery Medal (in 1922) and the Caldecott Medal (in 1938), awards that remain the most prestigious in American children's book publishing (Epstein, 1996; Turow, 1978). American children's literature had come of age.

During the 1950s children's literature publication experienced a boom decade in which juvenile publishing achieved the status of big business (Epstein, 1996). The passage of the National Defense Education Act, an outgrowth of the Soviet Union's launching of the unmanned Sputnik satellite in 1957, made federal funds available to schools for the purchase of library books in science and mathematics. The result was a dramatic surge of the school market to the forefront of children's book publication (Epstein, 1996). At this time the nascent civil rights movement was prompting a much-needed examination by publishers of their assumptions "both about the audience they served and about the portrait of American society they were presenting" (Marcus, 1997, p. 68). The movement had a tremendous impact on children's literature through the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act. This landmark component of President Lyndon Johnson's legislated vision for a Great Society provided an additional infusion of money to school and public libraries. As a result of this act of Congress, "a market was created for books about Black children" (Sims, 1982, p. 3; cf. Ford, 1994; Marcus, 1997). While Engelhardt (1991) makes the more general claim that Great Society money provided support for new children's writers and books for children of all ages, this legislation undoubtedly was instrumental in paving the way for the growth of multicultural

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children's literature. This example illustrates the way that political developments influence the publication of literature for young people.

The provision of funding for the library market had the added effect of making librarians a dominant influence on the editorial programs at major trade houses (Christian, 1984; Epstein, 1996; Turow, 1978). This relationship changed, however, when the economic downturn during the Vietnam War years led to the slashing of federal funds for libraries and the concomitant erosion of book sales. As a consequence, new markets were sought and found in special children's bookstores, chain bookstores, discount stores, supermarkets, drugstores, and school book clubs, all of which began selling books for children (Engelhardt, 1991; Epstein, 1996). This new source of demand for books created the need for new marketing strategies and even new kinds of books (Christian, 1984), books that Engelhardt (1991) refers to as books "designed for the consumer child" (p. 57). Further, the expansion of the partnership between juvenile editors and children's librarians to include the children's booksellers was, for many editors, the most significant change of the previous fifteen years (Epstein, 1996).

These developments, along with the middle-class baby boom, the dramatic increase in two-salary families (Engelhardt, 1991), the availability of "big baby boomer bucks" (Anonymous author #2), the demand for books fostered by the whole language philosophy of literacy instruction, and the "onset of the series craze" (Nodelman, 1996, p. 96) led to the unprecedented boom experienced by the industry during the 1980s and early 1990s, a period that has been characterized as a golden age of growth (Dunleavy, 1994; Synman, 1995). From 1983 to 1988, for example, total sales of all children's books increased by 121% (Milliot, 1994).

In February 1988, Publishers Weekly began the now monthly practice of publishing a national bestseller list of children's titles. The list, which includes a variety of books ranging from peekaboo books for toddlers to 250 page thrillers for adolescents, represents "an implicit celebration of the coming of adult publishing methods to the children's book world" and is an "acknowledgement that growing up, in publishing terms, is now a market-driven phenomenon, measured in dollars and corporate clout" (Engelhard, 1991, pp. 55-56). Engelhard contends that the degree of straightforward commerce now "clogging" the Publishers Weekly lists would have been "inconceivable when a librarian stood between the child and the book" (p. 58).

The loss of funding for school and public libraries in the 1970s radically diminished the influence of these markets and led to the rise in the importance of bookstores whose mass-market perspective is so very different from that of librarians (Turow, 1978). The boom years were followed by several years of decline and then by a period of slow recovery. Today, the impact of the Harry Potter series, along with increased national concern about the need for better library and school funding, has led to the improved health
of the children’s book industry (Underdown, 2000). Zipes (2001) describes the period between 1945 and 2000 as one in which the overall value of books for young readers as commodities increased in both quantitative and qualitative terms. He believes the increase in the diversity of books available to be a function of changing “institutional practices within the educational system and social practices within the family and the culture industry” (p. 67) and that more money is made on the sale of literature for children than any other category of literature. The enormously lucrative potential of books for young readers, along with the reductions in the cost of production, has led publishers to swamp bookstores, toy stores, supermarkets, department stores, malls, airports, drugstores, and newspaper stands “with a huge assortment of cheap and expensive books ranging from the ‘banal to the sublime’” (p. 67).

Additional Influences on the Publishing Industry

In addition to the impact of the international and national events and the vagaries of business cycles, other less visible factors have played important roles in the evolution of the publishing industry. For example, changes in often arcane copyright and tax laws are of profound significance to the industry. During most of the 19th century, American copyright law protected books written by American citizens and permanent residents but not foreign authors. As a consequence, the works of British and other foreign authors could be reprinted without royalties and this literary piracy (perfectly legal at the time) resulted in huge profits for publishers. Since they could obtain books written abroad for free, American publishers had little inducement to publish original works by native authors who were compelled to discover subjects and themes that had sufficient market appeal to convince publishers to produce them (Apple, 1986). The first modest step toward an International Copyright Law was passed in 1891 (Epstein, 1996).

More recently, tax laws have made it unprofitable for publishers to warehouse books, exacerbating the drive for quick production that Gee (2000) speaks of. Publishers increasingly are finding it necessary to reduce their backlist of books. Traditionally, a backlist (i.e., a compilation of a publisher’s best and most popular books)—the accumulated capital (Epstein, 2001) of the industry that historically represented “the happy marriage of Art and Commerce . . . that rare preserve where intellect and mammon were productively conjoined” (Stossel, 2001, p. 40)—was among a publisher’s major assets. Indeed, the function of new books, known as the front list, was to enhance the backlist as profits that accrued from previous lists supported future publications (Epstein, 2001). Patricia Lee Gauch, Publisher and Vice President of Philomel Books, referred to the Thor Amendment, the tax law in question, as being “unbelievably destructive” to book publishing since it has led to the practice of “remaindering,” the disposing of inventory at a discounted price. Gauch
notes that Thor was meant to tax inventories on commodities such as helicopter parts, but the language of the amendment was such that it also fell on publishers. Gauch summarizes as follows:

What has this meant? It has turned publishing into a fast-food process. Ironically, we are still encouraged to spend as much time and love as ever on our books, but since the companies can not afford inventory at the end of the year, they buy short inventories, and if a book has not caught on in 12 months, it is gone. No waiting for three years. The inventory is just too costly, so there is a quarterly look at inventory, remaining goes on not only at the end of the year but quarterly. (Gauch interview)

The reduction of backlists constitutes a change in a fundamental principle of publishing and the result is that titles that had been in print for decades no longer are available (Epstein, 2000).

Another crucial development is the replacement of the independent bookstores that once dominated the industry by chains such as Waldenbooks, Barnes and Noble, and B. Dalton. A conflict dramatized in the film, You've Got Mail (Ephron, 1998) Stossel (2001) points to 1969, the time when the "flurry of corporate acquisitions was gaining momentum," when Waldenbooks and B. Dalton became freestanding chains that were central to the transformation of the retail business. These chains began "colonizing the malls that had sprung up to serve an increasingly suburbanized culture." Because the rent in malls was high, "mall bookstores needed to generate a high sales volume and high inventory turnover in order to remain profitable" (p. 43). One industry insider noted that many managers of chains come from other fields of retailing and have no particular interest in books as such, only in the number of dollars each cubic foot of space can earn (Schifferin, 2000). Intense competition among publishers for rack space in retail outlets has led to the growing importance of item velocity, a calculation that determines the allocation of shelf space and decisions about the books that get reordered by sophisticated computer tracking systems. Items that fail to get the "requisite velocity tend to get washed out to sea in the undertow from the incessant incoming waves of new bestsellers" (Whiteside, 1980a, p. 97).

This demand for bestsellers contributed to the devastation of backlists as "publishers had fewer accounts to stock them" (Epstein, 2001, p. 105). In this environment books must sell quickly lest they be removed and returned to their publishers. The practice of permitting book sellers to return unsold copies of books for full credit against future orders was described by Epstein (2001) as a "peculiarity of the trade" established during the Depression (p. 95) and led publisher Alfred A. Kropf to comment on this "grim condition of sale" with the acerbic quip, "gone today, here tomorrow" (quoted by Epstein, 2001, p. 96). As a result, many books have a shelf life that Trillin suggested is "somewhere between milk and yogurt" (quoted by Schifferin, 2000, p. 112).

Further exacerbating the plight of independent bookstores is the extraordinary growth of on-line vendors. This
concentration of economic power in the hands of a small group of powerful vendors has led to the fear that the diversity of published material may decline as the same books appear in virtually all stores. The long-term consequence of this trend would be that only books of national, mainstream interest are likely to be available (Nodelman, 1996). An even more ominous appraisal of what might occur when “distribution lines are narrowed and the number of competitors diminishes” is offered by Bing (1999), who concludes that such constriction is bad for consumers and when books are concerned, a threat to democracy.

Stossel (2001) too, is concerned that “as market values have suffused publishing, the range of intellectual interests represented and the depth in which they are explored have declined considerably” (p. 42). Schiffrin (1999) makes a related point when lamenting the “plight of serious nonfiction” which demonstrates the “degree to which ideas have become commodities whose value can be measured by the number of potential customers.” Schiffrin believes that a form of “market censorship” has become firmly established whereby “dissenting and counter cyclical ideas” are far less likely to find a publisher (p.120).

From a somewhat different vantage point, Agger (1989) contends that one of the defining features of fast capitalism is the waning of book culture and therefore critical intelligence, a development that has led to a decline in social criticism and a tendency of writing to reflect and reproduce the given order of things. Agger notes “books do not mediate reality for people in fast capitalism; if they exist at all they exist merely to divert and entertain.” He fears that all too much writing has degraded into slogans and clichés, having been modeled on advertising, and that, as a consequence, there is far less writing that “can construct imaginatively the possibility of a very different world” (p. 19-20).

Tensions between Commerce and Culture
The disparaging of the coarser, more commercial aspects of the industry is hardly a new phenomenon. Indeed, there always has been an uneasy tension between the mass-market side of the business and the side that is the passion of educators, parents, and other avid readers who share the conviction that good books are indispensable to the cognitive, social, and emotional growth and development of young people. Many fear that the long-standing tension between “the requirements and restraints of commerce and the responsibilities and obligations that [publishing] must bear as a prime guardian of the symbolic culture of the nation” (Coser, Kadushin, & Powell, 1982, p. 7) is being destabilized by the consolidation of the industry into the larger nexus of the global economy that finds corporations spanning the globe and amassing economic power that exceeds that of many nations. In his discussion of the role of multimedia conglomerates in American trade book publishing, Moran (1997) refers to the sale of trade books as “the most publicly visible of
the industry” that brings into sharp focus “the tensions inherent in publishing’s status as part of both economic base and cultural production.” The common argument that “conglomeration leads to the commodification of culture finds excellent testing ground in trade books” (p. 441).

Developments in the past several decades make it apparent that the publishing industry is undergoing the same relentless process of integration, consolidation, and downsizing evident in other sectors of the economy as individual publishing houses are integrated into ever-larger corporate organizations such as Viacom and Rupert Murdoch’s News Corporation (Whiteside, 1980a). In the 1980s and 1990s mergers brought “all the major book publishers into the hands of large transnational communication conglomerates with holdings and interests with many other, usually more profitable, areas of mass media” (Moran, 1997, p. 441). Schifferin (2000) contends that 5 major conglomerates control 80% of American book sales and that the holdings of these giant corporations in other sectors of the information and entertainment industries give them their enormous power. Commenting on the 1997 acquisition of Random House by Bertelsmann, a giant German media conglomerate that owns Bantam, Doubleday, and Dell, Alterman (1998) stated:

This big book merger did not tell us anything we didn’t already know, except that everything is worse than we thought. The commercial foundations of American culture and its marketplace of ideas are crumbling to dust. The multinational conglomerates that hold its purse strings care for little but the bottom line. The “public trust” aspect of publishing that was once assumed has disappeared. (pp. 5–6)

Miller’s (1997) analysis of big publishing also reveals that America’s trade publishers not only own publishing houses but also television and radio stations, movie theaters, theme parks, multimedia production companies, magazines, and newspapers. Viacom, for example, owns Paramount movie studios, the MTV and VH1 cable television networks, the Blockbuster music and video rental stores, radio and television stations, and Simon and Schuster publishers. The latter is among the largest publishers of children’s books. Rupert Murdoch’s News Corporation owns the Los Angeles Dodgers, newspapers and magazines published throughout the world, television networks (including Fox), Twentieth Century Fox movie producers, and HarperCollins, another of the largest, most influential publishers of books for young people.

For much of the history of the industry, publishers, their families, and a small handful of associates owned their firms and ran them personally. As late as the 1950s, trade-book publishing was believed “to offer its practitioners a rather select and gentlemanly way of life” (Whiteside, 1998a, p. 48). Many in the industry felt that theirs was a business that was distinctly unlike other businesses. E. L. Doctorow lauded publishing as an enterprise in which individuals could “make money and be proud of their contributions to litera-
ture and ideas at the same time” (quoted by Coser, Kadushin, & Powell, 1982, p. 14). Speaking of the companies that existed prior to the takeovers, Chaikin (1982), a long-time children’s book editor at Henry Holt, argued that they were owned and run by individuals led into the field by a love of books and hired editors, designers, and publicists united by this affection. The company’s goal was to publish the best fiction and nonfiction while earning enough money to stay in business. The ideal book was both a commercial and a critical success and such a book had the additional benefit of generating revenue to subsidize more risky publishing ventures such as first novels and other innovative writing. In the days before the arrival of the “fast trackers,” Chaikin contended, “people stayed on the job, built lists, and cultivated new talent” (p. 144).

Tension between the cultural and commercial dimensions of the industry, between those who take seriously their obligation to provide “serious culture” and who must “eschew commercial gain,” and those who focus on marketplace concerns and ignore their “cultural responsibility” has intensified in recent years (Haugland, 1994, p. 49). Noting that books may have a “sacred status,” Stossel (2001) recalls Bertolt Brecht’s observation that they are, in fact, “sacred commodities” and that “to think that publishing can stand outside or above the market system that produces other commodities is naive” (p. 43). Poet Archibald McLeish also denounced the practice by which certain corporations—“corporate carnivores conceived by a new breed of corporate manipulators”—lacking any connection with knowledge of, and interest in literature, have acquired publishing houses to diversify their investments (quoted by Whiteside, 1980c, p. 57). Schifferin (2000) summarized the industry’s new equation as follows:

In Europe and in America, publishing has a long history as an intellectually and politically engaged profession. Publishers have always prided themselves on their ability to balance the imperative of making money with that of issuing worthwhile books. In recent years, as ownership of publishing has changed, the equation has been altered. It is increasingly the case that the owner’s only interest is in making money and as much of it as possible. (p. 5; emphasis in original)

Speaking specifically about the results of this transformation on children’s book publishing, Underdown (2000) stated that what once was a “genteel industry dedicated to providing good books for libraries” now is “big business, expected to contribute significantly to the bottom line of media conglomerates” (p. 1).

The comments of many who lament the passing of the time when publishing was in the hands of independent, frequently family-owned, publishing companies display a nostalgic yearning for the golden days of yore that parallels that found in the work of some critics of contemporary schooling (e.g., Ravitch, 2000). These critics also like to hearken back to a supposedly golden age of American schooling when schools were purported to be free of the conflict and turmoil that so often characterizes their contemporary counterparts. Schrag (1993) and others
have effectively demonstrated that this golden age of American schooling is a myth. While this essay makes clear my concerns about the publishing industry being controlled by a handful of multinational conglomerates, it is important not to romanticize publishing's past which for generations perpetuated on an all-White, male canon (Levine, 1997) and a selective tradition that was racist and sexist by omission and commission (Harris, 1993; Taxel, 1981). Substantive change in this tradition required the upheaval, protest, and activism of the sixties and seventies.

While there are a number of writers for young people who maintain what I have termed an oppositional voice (e.g., Taxel, 1991a)—Francesca Lia Block, Mildred Taylor, Julius Lester, and Jacqueline Woodson come to mind—it also is the case that mass market books continue to dominate shelf space in bookstores and the lists of many school book fairs and are the titles that stand atop the lists of best selling children's books. Lauren Wohl, former Director of School and Library Marketing for Hyperion Books for Children, agrees that the concentration of ownership of book publishing in the hands of a handful of giant corporations poses an ominous threat to democracy. She fears that with "fewer and fewer people making decisions, the free flow of ideas is limited or diminished and there are fewer and fewer points of view available" (Wohl interview). These and other changes comprise what has been called one of the most revolutionary times in the history of publishing (Roback & Britton, 2000).

Simon (2000) compared the pace of change in the industry to that of a "runaway train, not only with merger upon merger but with a not-so-gradual shift from editorial (with complementary sales-centered) philosophies to financial-growth and marketing-centered ones" (p. 26). He also believes that the "axis of power" in book publishing has "shifted toward devotees of a pure business model that has never been shown to apply to books, causing a new and now fundamental instability that has not been good for readers or writers." Simon concludes, "reduced to crude basics," a "world built upon respect for the written word has been replaced by one dominated by a bottom-line sensibility" (p. 25). This change is illustrated dramatically by the shifting expectations of the profits to be garnered from the sale of books.

In previous decades the profit expectation on books was about 4% after taxes. Such returns meant that many people were not in publishing for the money itself. While publishers such as Alfred Knopf were wealthy, the emphasis was less on annual profit than on the steady growth of the firm. As conglomerates took over publishing, they assumed that each of their various holdings would generate the same basic rates of profit. This emphasis on earnings meant that instead of a novel's generating 4%, it was expected to make profits anywhere from 10%-20%. Further, the companies were divided into "profit centers," a structural way devised by those running the companies to bring editors "into line with . . . bottom-line expectations" (Schiffrin, 1999, p. 116).
Pantheon's historically profitable children's line, for example, for many years had effectively subsidized "less immediately profitable" adult books. However, once the children's department had separate accounting, the practice no longer was possible. The next step was to "rationalize profits on a title-by-title-basis." In contrast to the long-time practice whereby best sellers subsidized other books, the new world of publishing under conglomerate control required that each book "pay its own way" (Schifferin, 1999, p. 116). The result was that "serious work that may take time to find its audience, whether in the classroom or in paperback, and ambitious work by new authors, become harder and harder to publish." This "logical system" gradually was imposed and accepted throughout the industry where it increasingly "became a kind of iron mask that allowed for little variation" (p. 117). The time when the realm of ideas that historically were "exempted from the usual expectations of profit" (Schifferin, 2000, p. 103) had passed. Author Jane Yolen bluntly assessed the impact of this seismic change: "a bottom-line mentality [is] running most major companies." She argues further that there is an overriding emphasis on "salable products" that are "not what literature is about" (Yolen interview).

Author Jane Kurtz (2001) echoed these concerns in the context of a discussion of today's publishing industry on the "Children's Literature: Criticism and Theory" bulletin board on the World Wide Web. Kurtz was discussing Greenwillow Books, now an imprint of HarperCollins and a part of Rupert Murdoch's conglomerate, the News Corporation. Kurtz referred to a recent description of Greenwillow as "a small, literary boutique within the large K-Mart world of HarperCollins." While allowing that this description was "vastly over-simplified," she stated that "one need only page through a HarperCollins catalog to see a good many items that are clearly 'commodity': they are being published because they will sell enough copies to quite surely make money for the company." Kurtz (2001) concludes by pointing to the growing consternation of industry observers with the ways preoccupation with the bottom line is leading publishers to emphasize mass-market books over the high-quality trade books:

The Rupert Murdochs and other money-spinners of the world own the big publishing companies, and those companies are supposed to be profitable. If your job was to buy clothes for K-Mart, you wouldn't choose to stock quirky clothes that only a few people wear—you'd stock clothes that masses of people buy. So if a money-spinner owns a publishing company and gives its employees the mandate to make money, of course the huge temptation is going to be to publish only books that masses of people buy.

The now ubiquitous obsession with the bottom line was noted repeatedly both by my informants and in the published literature reviewed in this article. While acknowledging the obvious point that publishers "are in the business to make money," one prominent author deplores the fact that every book has to be put through tedious profit and loss statements to justify its publication. However, while conceding...
that publishers have “got to be better-oiled machines than they once were,” she sorely misses the time when even small houses would “publish one or two well-written, beautiful books a year (knowing they would not make money), simply because the book was special and it deserved to be out there.” This writer wonders “where, or even if, this is happening anymore” (Anonymous author #2). Concern about the way today’s corporate power structure perceives and treats works of literary merit “which may not be readily marketable by prevailing standards” (Whiteside, 1980c, pp. 123–124) is leading to a growing apprehension both inside and outside the industry that the obsession with finding the next blockbuster is causing the artistic worth of many authors to be “slighted or ignored, and their minimum means of livelihood rendered more precarious than ever” (Whiteside 1980b, p. 126).

The Marketing of Children’s Literature
Many in the business already believe that marketing now influences publishing decisions in ways that would have been inconceivable in the past (Auletta, 1997). Zipes (2001), for example, notes that business managers increasingly are assuming the leadership of publishing houses that now are a part of huge conglomerates. One result is that “decisions to design and publish books are more often than not made by the marketing people in the firm” while editors are expected to “acquire and shape products in keeping with corporate guidelines” (p. 7). For Philomel’s Patricia Lee Gauch, an important consequence of the increased importance of marketing is that editors, such as herself, now “are deeply involved in promotion, writing letters, making sure books get to committees. Time spent on promotion, is time spent away from the creative mountaintop, which demands that the editor think.” She is “discouraged by the number of mediocre books that are allowed to be published, and the resultant squeeze that puts on the market” (Gauch, interview). While acknowledging the many editors dedicated to quality children’s books, Zipes (2001) points to the pressures that editors within the media conglomerates face to “find and produce as many marketable books for young readers as possible and meet the quotas necessary to maintain a steady flow of attractive products” (p. 51).

The Search for Synergy
Marketing’s preeminence is readily apparent in the industry’s obsessive pursuit of the blockbuster novel. Today’s blockbusters, unlike those of the past, do more than sit atop the lists of bestselling books. Rather, they are properties that command media attention and bring into synergistic interplay other sectors in the communication-entertainment complex. In today’s publishing environment “books are increasingly being regarded less as discrete properties than as one vital link in a media food chain” (Boynton, 1998, p. 48). These properties foster the process of commodification by leading to the production of movies or TV miniseries, CD soundtracks, action figures, fast-
food meals and accompanying toys and packaging, board and video games, and other ancillary products. These all are aggressively promoted by author tours in key media centers and appearances on talk shows that serve as so much additional hype in the never-ending cycle of production, promotion, and sales.

Books and films have become so interdependent that in the 1980s Richard Snyder, then head of Simon and Schuster, remarked, “the book business is the software of the movie and the television media” (quoted by Nathan, 1997, p. 102). Sometimes the reverse is true. Nilsen (1993), for example, reported that during the height of its popularity, the television series Beverly Hills 90210 begat nine books that were published by five different companies. Raugeot (1998a) stated that since 1993, the number of original book series inspired by television programming that target preteen and teenage girls had “exploded” (p. 243). Recent examples include almost three dozen books that are offshoots of the Buffy the Vampire Slayer series (e.g., Odum, 2002) and more than a dozen that capitalize on the hit series Angel (e.g., Mariotte, 2002).

Whether the book precedes the film or television program or the film or television program paves the way for the book, “the aim of such efforts is a multimedia merchandising program in which books, movies, and television programs based on a single work—and all associated promotion—are fused into a coordinated whole, as a packaged ‘property’” (Whiteside, 1980b, p. 81). Moran (1997) believes that the real significance of the new media conglomerates, in contrast to the general consolidation of the industry in the 1960s, is precisely these “increased opportunities for cross-subsidization between different strata of the same industry.” In short, “conglomeration was now seen as a way to link media holdings actively in the interest of greater profits” (Turow; quoted by Moran, 1997, p. 447).

There is no lack of well-known children’s books being turned into films. In recent years Fitzhugh’s Harriet the Spy (1964), Steig’s Shrek (1990), Van Allsburg’s Jumanji (1981), and White’s Stuart Little (1945), to name just a few, have made the transition from book to film. Except perhaps for the remarkable phenomenon that is Harry Potter, however, there are few analogues in children’s book publishing to the relentless search for the blockbusters that characterize the world of adult publishing. However, Marcus (1997) notes that by the mid-1990s, the once separate worlds of adult and children’s book publishing looked increasingly alike as added emphasis was given to “the perennial quest for blockbuster titles, star authors and media tie-ins.” Marcus insists that the majority of children’s books do not qualify in any of these categories but that “those that did received an increasingly disproportionate share of the marketing attention” (p. 70). Zipes (2001) agrees that most of the publicity money expended on children’s books is spent on those based on TV programs and movies or vice versa.

This linkage between books and the world of commodity consumption
is dramatically evident in the American Girl Series that is sold in conjunction with expensive dolls (priced at over $80) and a burgeoning set of clothing and accessories featured in the series books and catalogues. Story’s (2002) study reveals the extent and degree of the sophistication of the commodification and marketing of the American Girls phenomenon. For example, entire families can take vacations at restored homes of the doll-characters of the historical fiction series, or they can visit the American Girl Place, the Pleasant Company’s only retail store that is located on the prestigious Magnificent Mile in Chicago. After shopping, families can dine in the cafe featuring menu items, many directly from the story plots, from each of the historical periods of the girls’ books. Pleasant Company aggressively seeks to capitalize on nostalgia and sentiment in marketing products to its girl readers. Cherished objects in the series (e.g., a necklace given to commemorate a special occasion) can be purchased both for the girl reader and for her doll. Recognizing also that a girl’s wardrobe is intricately connected with her feminine identity, the Pleasant Company publishes books that highlight a girl’s clothing during significant events in her life such as birthdays and holidays. These matching girl/doll dresses are available for those who can afford them at prices typically between $70–95 for the girl and $20 for her doll. The success of this venture is evident in the bottom line. Since Pleasant Company introduced the series in 1986, it has sold more than 7 million dolls and 74 million of the various American Girl books (American girl fans await dramatic conclusion to popular kit series, 2001. Retrieved from http://www.americangirl.com/corporate/media/html/press_releases/0911_conclusion.html). Roeppe (1999) reports that prior to its 1998 sale to toy giant Mattel for $717 million, the Pleasant Company was doing approximately $300 million annual business, all of it via catalogue order.

Marketing and merchandizing on the auras (Zipes, 1979) surrounding characters from children’s books, a central component of the commodification process, goes back to at least the late 19th century and Palmer Cox’s immensely popular books about Brownies (Estes, 1985), described by Cox (1892) as “good-natured little spirits or goblins of the fairy order. They were all little men, and appeared only at night to perform good and helpful deeds or enjoy harmless pranks while weary households slept, never allowing themselves to be seen by mortals” (http://www.home.ernet.net/~pudlo/Brownies/origin/origin.htm).

As the children’s book market expanded at the close of the nineteenth century, publishers shrewdly began designing book illustrations and covers in an attempt to attract child and adult consumers to the book as an enchanted item (Zipes, 2001). A knack for capitalizing on enchantment and fantasy was a key to the success of Walt Disney, a pivotal figure in marketing and merchandizing in 20th century history who was among the first to perceive the enormous commercial potential of the youth market. Disney not only pio-
neered the marketing of the myriad toys derived from his animated features but also licensed Mickey Mouse, Snow White, and "every other character turned out by the Disney imaginer to every conceivable advertising outlet" (Giroux, 1999, p. 32). As early as the 1930s, images of Mickey Mouse appeared on clothing of all kinds, blankets, tooth brushes, lamp shades, radios, alarm clocks, breakfast bowls, and watches. Several months before the release of the animated feature film Snow White in 1937, Disney licensed Snow White dolls and issued at least 70 other corporate licenses for dozens of items carrying the Snow White stamp (Giroux, 1999). Thus, the forebears of today's action figures and similar toys have a history that goes back at least a century, indicating that the commodification process is hardly a new phenomenon.

In 1993 Western Publishing Company, best known for the Little Golden Books, reported sales of over $300 million, almost three times the profit of its closest competitor, with the overwhelming bulk of sales in mass market merchandise books (Roback & Milliot, 1994). Western publishes an array of books and cassette packages that are sold in supermarkets and thrift, drug, and toy stores, and their sales are heavily tied to licensed characters that appear in television programs and movies. Almost half of Western's sales are attributable to licensing to a handful of companies. This mass marketing effort reveals children's literature's analogue to the synergistic interlocking of various media referred to previously. Raugust (1998b) contends that the links between the entertainment industry and books for children is strengthening as publishers seek ways beyond traditional licensing agreements to increase exposure of their own products and tap into Hollywood's resources.

The filmed version of the first Harry Potter book (Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone) is a paradigmatic example of a popular and respected children's book becoming the subject of the sort of full-blown media orgy associated with the Star Wars films and with Disney's more popular animated films. The four Harry Potter books have sold in excess of 110 million copies in 200 countries and have been translated into 42 languages, from Albanian to Zulu (BBC News, 2001; Bruce, 2001). Prior to the film's release industry experts predicted that Pottermania would become the biggest-selling concept in entertainment history. Francesca Ash, a licensing and merchandising news service expert, stated that "the sheer scale of the effort behind the sales push is . . . a marketing phenomenon that dwarfs anything we have seen before" (quoted in Bruce 2001). License holder Time Warner registered over 2000 trademarks covering everything from clothing to cookware, with an estimated 500 products likely to garner sales in excess $2 billion within the next year (Bruce 2001).

However, it is not just the entertainment industry that sought to capitalize on the immense publicity generated by blockbuster books and the films derived from them. Coca-Cola, for example, the biggest global sponsor of Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's
Stone, tied Coke Classic, Minute Maid, and Hi-C to the film that became “a cornerstone” of its fall 2001 marketing plans (Atlanta Constitution, 10/8/01, E-1). On June 20, 2002, http://www.top5s.com/video.htm reported that two versions of the just-released Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone DVD (the “Pan and Scan” and the “Wide screen” versions) were numbers one and two on the national DVD best sellers list.

These trends suggest the growing importance of recognizable, media-friendly personalities that serve as a kind of trademark with which to sell the literary product attached to it (Moran, 1997). Harry Potter thus joins Bugs Bunny, Big Bird, Barney, Beavis and Butt-Head, Bart Simpson, Pocahontas, and other commodified characters in toy stores, bookstores, record stores, software stores, fast food restaurants, and theme parks. While merchandising of this sort is not new, what is new is that in today’s media environment these characters and their stories constitute what Hollywood calls “intellectual property” (Lieberman, 1998, p. 141). In many cases the release of a film occasions the publication of various kinds of books, and once again Disney stands as the trendsetter. When Disney releases a film such as The Lion King, Pocahontas, or Mulan, it is aggressively promoted on television and tied to a promotional campaign run by a fast food chain such as McDonald’s or Burger King that includes toy figures of the film’s characters with specified meals. The Disney Press simultaneously releases a series of books based on the film.

Most of these books are the inexpensive, film-based books often produced by Disney that sell in remarkable numbers. In 1994 alone, for example, Disney sold almost 10 million copies of Lion King books (Roback, 1995). In the case of Mulan, Hyperion, Disney’s imprint that publishes original tradebooks, also released a high end retelling of the Chinese folktale on which the film is based (San Souci, 1998). The Prince of Egypt (DreamWorks SKG, 1998) provides a final example of the relation between films and books. Prior to its release former Penguin Books CEO Michael Lynton described The Prince of Egypt as an “incredible work of art.” However, Boynton (1998) argues that Lynton’s “real interest in the movie was economic” as the film would “spawn” at least a dozen books. More to the point was Lynton’s keen appreciation of the fact that “media drives media, and if you have valuable property in one area, like books, you can extend your brand name into others” (p. 48). The critical point is that these all are pieces of the larger fabric in the commodification process, with each intended to heighten interest in the others with the ultimate objective being to increase sales of the property. These practices also illustrate the social creation and regulation of demand through commodity identification that Reymers (2002) argues is a characteristic of fast capitalism.

Marc Brown’s enormously popular series of books about a child-like aardvark named Arthur, which began with the publication of Arthur’s Nose (Brown, 1976), is one such property. Today, Arthur is a worldwide phenomenon and is a definitive illustration of the
commodification of a character from a popular children’s book, one that has generated more than two dozen sequels (see http://www.twbookmark.com/authors/26/224/ for a listing) and an international merchandizing campaign. As of January, 2001, Arthur books had sold more than 50 million copies in 120 countries (http://www.arthurworldwide.com/partners/newsarchive.html). Arthur currently is PBS’ number one children’s show and is both the top-rated children’s series for children aged two to eleven and the top preschool program on all of television (http://www.cinar.com/news-e/052599-e.htm). In addition to being a ratings sensation, the television series is a critical success as well, having garnered three Emmys and a Peabody Award (Blankenship, 2001). The original intent was for the licensing of Arthur products to help defray production costs incurred by Boston PBS affiliate WGBH-TV, and most of the early products were tied to Arthur’s learning-to-read theme. Increasingly, however, their proliferation has been “fueled by television’s well-documented power to help sell things to children and their parents” (Hays, 1997). As a result, Arthur also can be found on products ranging from bedroom slippers, board games, plastic figurines, plush-covered dolls, baseball caps, coffee mugs, t-shirts, sweatpants, birthday party paraphernalia, puzzles, flashlights, even underwear.

The list of companies seeking to capitalize on the appeal of Arthur to sell their wares includes The Learning Company, Listening Library, Little Brown, Random House, Sony Wonder, and the yogurt vendor TCBY. McGraw-Hill has the rights to publish an array of coloring/activity books, educational workbooks, and other products for the educational market such as flash cards, stickers, and bulletin boards (http://www.arthurworldwide.com/partners/newsarchive.html). Software giant Microsoft also is involved with a toy that Szadkowski (1998) describes as “probably the most exciting, yet eerie, toy” of the 1998 Toy Fair. Microsoft’s offering, which retails for $109.95, “has taken the concept of interactive play to the nth degree” with the characters of Arthur and his sibling D. W., who, without any computer assistance, have vocabularies of over 4,000 words, and “through sensors on their ears, hands, feet and watches, play 12 games and activities, say more than 100 phrases and questions and help children tell time” (Szadkowski, 1998). A final item from among the myriad available is a “Talking Arthur.” Retailing at about $30, this talking toy delivers “positive messages” (Decker, 2002).

Although Arthur is among the most successful properties based on a popular children’s book character, marketing and merchandizing arrangements such as those just described no longer are uncommon in the industry. As has been noted, there always has been a mass-market side of children’s book publishing. What alarms long-time observers of the field is the extent to which the rapidly expanding mass-market segment of the industry (Lodge, 1997) has overtaken the side of the children’s trade-book publishing that previously had been the place where
those books considered to be more aesthetically sophisticated and appealing were created and sold. This commercialization and commodification of children’s literature is apparent when one examines catalogues and publisher web sites and considers the kinds of books that increasingly dominate children’s book publishing. When author and editor Jane Yolen (1997) examined a catalog from Viking/Penguin/Dutton, she was appalled as I had been appalled in the previous weeks by the Harper catalog, the Knopf catalog, and all the rest, by the proliferation of pop-up/scratch-and-sniff/doll and puppet/paper engineered products that seem to be pushing out literature in the publisher’s listing. And if bad books continue to outsell good books, if litter outsells literature, publishers will eventually stop publishing the good. (p. 287)

**Series, Sequels, and Stars**
The relentless drive for books that are sure to sell has made series, sequels, and star authors ever more important. Of course, children’s book publishing does have a long and quite lucrative mass-market side that includes the dime novels of the nineteenth century and later series books such as the Hardy Boys, the Bobsey Twins, and beginning in 1930, the Nancy Drew series, which have been updated to appeal to contemporary audiences (Marcus, 1997). These series continue to sell and their ranks were swelled by teen romance series such as *Sweet Dreams, Sweet Valley High*, and the *Baby Sitters Club* books for preteens. By 1991, 65 million *Sweet Valley High* books and 43 million *Baby Sitters Club* books were in print (Engelhardt, 1991). Christian (1984) believes that the teen romances present ways of “linking young consumers to the larger world of commodities” by legitimating “a range of wants associated with the maintenance of femininity” (p. 18).

Another of today’s striking success stories is the horror series books such as R. L. Stine’s *Goosebumps* series. Ellemann (1995) reports that in the January 16, 1995 listing of children’s paperback bestsellers, nine out of the ten titles listed were horror stories written by Stine. Several years later, Yolen (1997) had a similar experience when, for several months, she tracked the books on the best seller list for children and found that nine out of the ten titles bestsellers were from the *Goosebump* series and the *Fear Street* horror series. Not surprisingly, more and more publishers are expanding their mass-market offerings to include the previously mentioned media tie-ins and celebrity biographies, a move Lodge (1998) characterizes simply as keeping “pace with our fast-moving times” (p. 26).

When one of my informants was asked to compare the books being published today to those published 10 to 15 years ago, she pointed to the “series, series, series.” She also expressed concern that “too many marketing dollars and bookshelf space were being devoted to series and other mass marketing ‘dreck’” (Anonymous author #1). Engelhardt (1991) provides this less-than-optimistic assessment of today’s series books:

It is not only the scale of their commercial success that distinguishes these series from
their predecessors. The descent of adult methods into children’s publishing has also meant the descent of junior versions of distinctly adult genres—the TV soap opera, the woman’s romance, the thriller—deeper and deeper into the world of childhood; and with them, a certain genetic sameness has blanketed bestsellerdom. (p. 60)

The ranks of successful series have swelled in recent years and their popularity is evident by the sales they generate. For example, four of the top ten best selling paperback books of 2000 (see “http://www.infoplease.com/ipea/A0880299.html”) were from Jenkins and LaHaye’s apocalyptic Christian Left Behind series (e.g., 2000). These books are the junior versions of the series that also has dominated adult bestseller lists. Three of the top five selling hardback books from 2001 (see “http://www.infoplease.com/ipea/A0901542.html”) are from Lemony Snicket’s (e.g., 2001) highly successful series titled A Series of Unfortunate Events.

Scholastic’s Dear America series, which first appeared in 1996 and focuses on important episodes in American history through the device of the diary of fictional girl characters, is one of the more unusual and successful of the new series, one that blends a number of existing and emerging practices. With over 15 million books in print and titles that make regular appearances on The New York Times bestseller lists, the Dear America series generated several companion series, including My Name is America (which is directed at boys) and the Princess Diaries which, like Dear America is created and marketed primarily for girls. HBO television has developed a series based on the Dear America books (see “http://www.writersmarket.com/content/dear_america.asp”). In contrast to the typical disdain that greets most other series, Dear America has received its share of acclaim from critics, teachers, and parents (MacPherson, 1999). An especially intriguing feature of the Dear America books is that the series brand name, rather than the name of the author, sells the books. The name of the author does not appear on the either the book cover or its spine. While this is not unusual for a book that is one of a series, what is uncommon is that such leading writers as Katherine Lasky, Karen Hesse, Joyce Hansen, Mary Pope Osborne, Pat McKissack, and Jim Murphy author the books.

Sequels, a continuation of a story begun in a previous book or film, now are an established feature of popular culture. Ritzer (2000) contends that sequels are favored by movie studios because “the same characters, actors, and basic plot lines can be used again and again and predictable products have generally attracted large audiences” (p. 97). Zipes (2001) argues that sequels are “in keeping with the tendency in Western popular culture” where “one story is never enough, especially if it sells well and sits well with audiences.” The approach is to “repeat it, tweak it, and milk it until the ratings diminish” (pp. 177–8). The sequels to blockbuster films include Lethal Weapon 4 (Donner, 1998), Mission Impossible II (Woo, 2000), Star Wars: Episode II—Attack of the Clones (Lucas, 2002), and most recently, Men in Black II (Sonenfeld, 2002), Halloween: Resurrec-
tion (Rosenthal, 2002) (the 8th entry in this series), Stuart Little 2 (Minkoff, 2002), and Austin Powers in Goldmember (Roach, 2002). Publishers have reached a similar conclusion about sequels to popular books as they now are such a regular part of quality trade publishing that authors often feel that what many publishers really want is for them to rewrite their last successful book.

It is important to note that the distinction is not always clear between a series and books that spawn sequels that grow into series. Of greater significance is that there always have been series of great literary distinction as well as popularity that are qualitatively different from the mass-market romance and horror series that are under discussion. Examples include Lewis’ (2000) Chronicles of Narnia series, Alexander’s Chronicles of Prydain series (e.g., 1999), Taylor’s series of books about the Logan family (e.g., 1976), and the enormously popular Harry Potter series (e.g., 1999).

In today’s publishing environment it increasingly is the case that the lack of a sequel to a popular book is likely to elicit surprise. Sequels, like series, certainly are not new to middle grade and adolescent novels. Today’s sequels, like series, often become enmeshed in the synergistic relation between literature and other media.

Sequels to successful high-end trade picture books now are commonplace. For example, the highly successful Caldecott Honor Book No David (Shannon, 1998) was quickly followed by David Goes to School (Shannon, 1998). Click, Clack, Moo: Cows That Type (Cronin, 2000), also a Caldecott Honor Book, was succeeded by Giggle, Giggle Quack (Cronin, 2002), a book that is remarkably similar in style, content, and format. A final example is Olivia (Falconer, 2000), yet another Caldecott Honor Book, which gave birth to Olivia Saves the Circus (Falconer, 2001). The endearing Piglet now can be found in two recently released board books, Olivia’s Opposites (Falconer, 2002b) and Olivia Counts (Falconer, 2002a). While these books are not without their charms, they reflect the fact that more and more frequently, especially in publishing houses that are a part of huge conglomerates, decisions to design and publish particular books are being made by the marketing people in the firm (Zipes, 2001). What has yet to be assessed are the long-term consequences of exerting pressure on writers, illustrators, and their editors to repeat what has been successful, often again and again, in order to satisfy publishers’ market needs and calculations. While this and related practices may be beneficial to the bottom line of publishers, one wonders about their impact on the creative processes of writers and illustrators. Ritzer (2002) questions if the large audiences attracted by predictable film products is offset “at the expense of movies based on new concepts, ideas, and characters” (p. 97). He also maintains that predictability also is “inimical to enchantment,” long a fundamental appeal of children’s literature and film. “Magical, fantastic dreamlike experiences,” notes Ritzer, “are almost by definition unpredictable. Nothing destroys an enchanted experience more easily than having it become predict-
able or having it recur in the same way time after time” (p. 137).

The attraction of known quantities and predictability also has led to an increasing emphasis on star authors. One popular author put it this way: “There seems to be a fear that large conglomerates will put most of their money into marketing authors who have already proven themselves to be profitable” (Anonymous author #2). Zipes (2001) contends that authors and illustrators themselves have become commodities. Publishers therefore seek to have the name of the author or illustrator become so recognizable that his or her work is automatically evaluated by review media, stocked in books stores, and otherwise distributed and publicized widely. In a recent discussion of the work of romantic fiction author Barbara Cartland, who has written over 600 books that have sold over 650 million copies, one participant noted that literature today is an easily produced and packaged commodity and that the author’s name increasingly is the sole prerequisite for publishing: “Once a writer has a few successful books they themselves become a commodity” (http://www.newcastle.edu.au/department/el/text&tech/students/assignt3/blycha/littoday.html).

One consequence of these practices is that “it will be harder and harder for new unproven authors to break into the business,” although this particular author is not without optimism that things may turn out well and “that at some point, higher profits will allow publishers to take more chances on new writers” (Anonymous author #2). Another consequence is that new authors who have made a name for themselves in other fields will have a decided advantage in breaking in. Author Jane Yolen also is concerned about the plethora of books by movie stars “that have no substance” (Yolen interview). Similarly, another well-known author described as “distressing” the “amount of money going to publish and then push celebrities’ books” (Anonymous author #3). Indeed, recently books by comedian Bill Cosby, singer Carley Simon, actresses Julie Andrews and Jamie Lee Curtis, and talk radio psychologist Laura Schlessinger have been published. The latest additions to this growing list are rapper-penned books for “4- to 10-year-olds” to be published by Scholastic in a series called “Hip Kid Hop.” The series includes titles by LL Cool J and Doug E. Fresh. The books come with CDs so young readers “can rhyme along with the authors and their backing tracks” (http://www.ew.com/ew/report/0,6115,344193~3~,00.html).

The Economics of Multicultural Children’s Literature
Toward a Definition

This review describes the context in which to consider the economics of multicultural children’s literature. The debates surrounding the publication of multicultural children’s literature illuminate many of the political and financial factors that impinge on children’s literature and the relations among them. The struggle for social justice and equity heightened demands for greater inclusion of voices into the literary

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canon that were long silenced and often maligned and for an end to the “all-white world of children’s books” (Larrick, 1972). The 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act that allocated funds to school and public libraries, thereby creating a market for books about Black children (Ford, 1994; Marcus, 1997; Sims, 1982), undoubtedly was an outgrowth of the demands of the civil rights movement. Since then, industry insiders have come to understand that “minorities represent a huge and growing market, waiting to be tapped” (Yeh, 1992, p. 158), and as a consequence multicultural literature has become a paradigmatic instance of niche publishing within children’s literature.

Multiculturalism is “one of the most convoluted issues facing those who produce, publish and sell children’s books today” (Ford, 1994, p. 30). The term is much discussed in editorial offices, at writers’ workshops, and at library conferences, and different people have markedly varied, frequently shifting perceptions of its meaning and implications. Author Sarah Moon, for example, reports that as a child in the sixties, multiculturalism meant “black, pure and simple.” In time, Hispanic was added to Black. Now, “it’s about Cuban-Irish-Cherokee and Norwegian-African-Japanese or any other possible mix” (quoted by Ford, 1994, p. 30). Complicating the matter is the fact that academic definitions of multiculturalism also abound.

The term multiculturalism itself generally refers to education that addresses the interests, concerns, and experiences of individuals and groups considered outside the sociopolitical and cultural mainstream of American society. In the United States the concept often is interpreted as a reference to groups such as African Americans, Native Americans, Asian Americans, and Hispanic Americans. Smith (1993) contends that multiculturalism “has assumed a broader interpretation and is inclusive of the handicapped, gay and lesbian individuals . . . any persons whose lifestyle, enforced or otherwise, distinguishes them as identifiable members of a group other than the ‘mainstream’” (p. 341). Nieto (1996) asserts that multicultural education “challenges and rejects racism and other forms of discrimination in schools and society and accepts and affirms the pluralism (ethnic, racial, linguistic, religious, economic, gender, among others) that students, their communities, and teachers represent” (p. 307).

Multiculturalism is best considered a “continuum of theories and practices” rather than a single theory of education (Vincent, 1992, p. 302). McCarthy (1991) suggests three models of multicultural education that underscore the positive qualities of minority cultural heritage. These include models that emphasize cultural understanding, cultural competence, or cultural emancipation. This last model, described by McCarthy (1991) as “somewhat more possibilitarian and social reconstructionist,” focuses on the incorporation of minority culture in the curriculum and derives from the belief that such inclusion has the potential to improve the school achievement of “minority” stu-
dents as well as their future possibilities (p. 304). Vincent (1992) concludes his review of the underlying philosophy and politics of multicultural education by noting that early multicultural approaches to inequality conceptualized the problem “as one of prejudice, misunderstanding, and ignorance,” whereas more recent variants “seek to develop cultural awareness and promote the cultural and political interests of minority groups” (p. 311).

The term multicultural literature also is used in a variety of ways. The critical factor for Cai and Sims Bishop (1994) is the relation between the literature and the broader pedagogical intentions of multicultural education. Despite general agreement that multicultural literature “is about some identifiable ‘other’—persons or groups that differ in some way . . . from the dominant white American cultural group” (pp. 57–58), problems exist because “the definition of multicultural literature is contingent not on its literary characteristics, but on the purposes it is intended to serve” (p. 59). Multicultural literature, therefore, is best considered a pedagogical construct and instead of “suggesting unifying literary characteristics, the term implies a goal: challenging the existing canon by expanding the curriculum to include literature from a variety of cultural groups” (p. 59).

Cai and Sims Bishop (1994) argue that multicultural literature actually consists of at least three distinct types and their classification scheme provides a heuristic that is helpful in clarifying some of the controversies that have beset multicultural children’s literature in recent years. The broadest of the categories is world literature, a grouping that some feel encompasses all literature. In the United States, however, world literature is meant to include the literature of “underrepresented peoples.” Cross-cultural literature refers to works about the interrelationships among peoples from different cultures, as well as books about people from specific cultural groups that are written by individuals not of that group. Parallel culture literature refers to books written by individuals from groups such as African Americans, Native Americans, Asian American, and Hispanic Americans. Their works represent the “experiences, consciousness, and self-image developed as a result of being acculturated and socialized within these groups” (Cai & Sims Bishop, 1994, pp. 65–67). Many critics look to these books as a way to compensate for the fact that “until quite recently, people of color have been either virtually excluded from literature for young people, or frequently portrayed in undesirable ways—as negative stereotypes or objects of ridicule” (Sims Bishop, 1993, p. 39).

In the industry, multicultural publishing can be as simple as publishing Spanish language editions of popular English titles, and the numbers of these titles have proliferated in the past several years. Others see it as focusing on cultures that have been most noticeably left out of the mainstream (e.g., African American, Native American, Asian American, and Hispanic American). Still others see it as putting more
characters of color in books they produce, a practice that in some cases is analogous to that of basal publishers back in the sixties who tinted a specified number of characters per page and declared their books multicultural (Ford, 1994).

Publishers confronted with a highly competitive market are faced with a number of critical questions as they seek to develop a publishing program that fits what Ford (1994) terms the "ever changing notion of multiculturalism" (p. 30). These questions include the most basic of all issues, which is: "What is multiculturalism?" Related questions include whom the books actually are for and whether or not people outside a culture can write about it effectively, an issue that has been especially contentious (e.g., Taxel, 1986, 1997; Wolf, Ballentine, & Hill, 1999). Brenda Mitchell-Powell, former editor of the Multicultural Review, argues that one of the definitions of multiculturalism often used by marketing people is that multiculturalism is "anything that works this week" (quoted by Ford, 1994, p. 30). This cynical view of what publishers do is given credence by the admission of one marketing department head who stated that since multiculturalism sells, publishers have been given a way to sell their older titles that may even have been out of print for some time. This marketing potential has led some publishers to scour their backlists "for titles that can be repackaged in some kind of multicultural way, because it takes so long to produce new titles and the demand is immediate" (Ford, 1994, pp. 30-31). While the wide array of folktales from diverse cultures published in recent years is a positive development, it is hardly a substitute for books that deal realistically with the lives of people of color in the United States either today or in the past. Elizabeth Szabla, former editor-in-chief of Lee and Low, one of the publishing houses that focuses exclusively on multicultural books, believes that a truly multicultural story must address current situations. She does not consider either folktales or animal stories to be truly multicultural (Ford, 1994).

Status in the Market

The conventional wisdom once held that books about African Americans—the focus of the overwhelming majority of the first wave of multicultural books—would not sell. However, they did sell. Dial's Phyllis Fogelman, who led "her generation of editors in advancing what would later be called the new multiculturalism in children's literature" (Marcus, 1997, p. 68) by publishing writers such as Julius Lester and Mildred Taylor, and illustrators such as Jerry Pinkney and Tom Feelings before such publication became fashionable, insists that "books by and about African Americans have become part of the mainstream" (quoted by Ford, 1994, p. 31). One of my informants, a well-known and respected author, stated that in 1993 an editor told her, "as late as the 80's, publishers assumed African Americans were not part of the reading public. Obviously, they were wrong. Books by African Americans are strong sellers" (Anonymous author #1). The fact that multicultural books were profitable
made possible the rise to prominence of a remarkable group of esteemed and popular authors and illustrators of color who heretofore were excluded from the industry. Harris (1993) argues that the 1980s and 1990s saw the dawning of a “golden age in African-American children’s literature” (p. 59). Noted author Julius Lester (2001) agrees with this characterization, stating that he worries that “people don’t recognize that we are living in what I believe will be perceived as a golden age for children’s literature, and especially black children’s literature. There are more black illustrators, artists and writers publishing now than at any time in American history and it is incredibly exciting.” There is ample evidence to support these claims and to demonstrate that there now is a market for books about other parallel culture groups.

The ranks of African American authors and illustrators also include Pat Cummings, Virginia Hamilton, Julius Lester, James Ransom, Patricia McKissick, Walter Dean Myers, Brian and Andrea Pinkney, and Mildred Taylor. Among the notable Asian American authors and illustrators are Laurence Yep, Ed Young, Sheila Hamanaka, Alan Say, and Kyoko Mori. Hispanic American authors include Gary Soto, Alma Flor Ada, Nicholas Mohr, and Pat Mora. Among today’s Native American authors are Joseph Bruchac, Shunto Begay, Louise Erdrich, and Virginia Driving Hawk Snee. Put simply, books by these diverse groups were not available in such number and quality 20 years ago.

This sort of optimism led Andrea Davis Pinkney, founding editor of Hyperion’s Jump at the Sun Books who has since become head of children’s publishing at Houghton Mifflin, to express the hope that the imprint would succeed in going “beyond the niche of black publishing” (Patrick, 1998, p. 1). The chances of Jump at the Sun Books for success in this endeavor are enhanced immeasurably by the very considerable resources at their disposal (Hyperion is owned by Disney). As Lauren Wohl noted, these resources will allow them to do for Jump at the Sun Books what Oprah Winfrey’s promotion of certain titles has done, which is to “get books to a wider audience” (Wohl interview).

Not all observers, however, are as sanguine about the future of multicultural children’s literature as are Harris and Lester. Yeh (1992), for example, applauds the fact that more multicultural books are being published than ever but bemoans the fact that “quantity does not necessarily mean quality.” She asks if publishers are genuinely trying to respond to “a desperate need for books which serve to inform and entertain from a multicultural perspective, or is everyone jumping on the bandwagon?” Yeh concludes that there is truth to both possibilities (p. 157). Sims Bishop (1991) also is cautious in her assessment of the numbers of multicultural books being published. She notes that of 5,000 books published in 1990, African Americans wrote only one percent. Even when one considers non-Black authors writing about African Americans, the number does not increase appreciably. Sims Bishop concludes that
“over the past few years, the total percentage of books published each year featuring African-Americans has been hovering somewhere between one and two percent” (p. 31). Ford (1994) reports an informal survey of multicultural catalogues designed by larger publishers that reveals that the number of titles issued in the last 5 years is considerably dwarfed by titles released 15, 20, or even 25 years ago.

More recent statistics showing the numbers of published “children’s books by and about people of color” have been compiled by the University of Wisconsin’s Cooperative Children’s Book Center (CCBC). The figures are estimates based on the numbers of new books received by CCBC and do not typically include the “mass market or gimmick/toy books created for direct to consumer sales.” Books included are the trade books typically available to public and school libraries (Cooperative Children’s Book Center [a]). They also include books by the growing cadre of independent companies that specialize in the multicultural publication, especially books written by members of the culture (see Cooperative Children’s Book Center [b] for a listing).

The figures (see Appendix B) include books written by African Americans (i.e., parallel culture books) and those written about them (i.e., cross cultural books, those by authors and illustrators who are not African American). Statistics for Asian Pacific American, Native American, and Latino Americans are not broken out in this way (i.e., books by and about are added together). Since 1990, the year cited by Sims Bishop (1991), the number of books written by African Americans consistently has ranged between one and a half (2000) and two percent (1992, 1995, 1996). In 2001, the number of books written by African Americans was just under two percent. CCBC began compiling statistics of books published about African Americans, as well as by African Americans, in 1994. The numbers of books about African Americans reveal that White authors and illustrators continue to write outside their culture in consistently greater numbers than do those from within the culture. Statistics for Asian Pacific Americans, Native Americans, and Latino Americans fluctuate a great deal over the years. Most surprising was the near doubling of books about Asian Pacific Americans in 2001 (see Appendix B).

While these figures suggest that there continues to be a steady if small number of multicultural books published each year, the fact that the statistics do not reveal fluctuations in multicultural publication in the larger publishers makes it impossible to see if the trend described by Ford (1994) has been reversed. One author stated bluntly that “multicultural is definitely out” (Anonymous author #1). Jane Yolen, among the most astute observers of the children’s literature industry, shares this view, stating that “publishers mostly feel it [multicultural children’s literature] has already been done. Certainly the word is out that folktales from other countries has run its course!” (Yolen interview). Lauren Wohl agrees, saying that “some aspects of multiculturalism
are very tired,” pointing especially to folklore (Wohl interview).

Although major publishers may be reducing the number of multicultural books released in recent years, the growth in the number of small, independent publishers (e.g., Just US Books and Lee and Low) is heartening. CCBC director Ginny Moore Kruse sees these companies as “contributors to a significant body of authentic multicultural literature for children in the United States and Canada” (Cooperative Children’s Book Center [a]). These enterprises are competing in increasingly effective ways for shelf space in book stores, in classrooms, and in libraries and are being taken more seriously by the review media that are so powerful in determining what gets into stores and gets purchased (e.g., Briley, 1993). In the catalogue marking the 10-year anniversary of Lee and Low, Philip Lee and Thomas Low (2002), publisher and president (respectively), reported with pride that they have succeeded in publishing more than 100 books and introduced more than 60 new authors. Lee and Low books also have garnered such honors as the Correta Scott King Illustrator Award and have been ALA Notable Books and American Bookseller “Pick of the Lists” selections. Their optimism is tempered by a keen appreciation of the challenges faced by independent publishers in an economic environment dominated by multimedia giants:

The economics for a small, independent publisher are daunting. We have neither the distribution muscle nor the financial resources of larger companies, so we must rely on grassroots support for promotion. The resources to inform and educate the public about multicultural books are inadequate, making it a formidable task to deliver books to the hands of our intended readers. Finally, we hope to see more flexibility in our nation’s school systems so that multicultural books are integrated into the curriculum beyond the celebration of special ethnic events. (Lee & Low, 2002, p. 1)

Questions of Audience and Authorship
Among the most significant, widely discussed issues surrounding multicultural books relates to the perceived audience of the books, whether they are for the people of the culture themselves “so they can see themselves” or whether they are for people outside the culture “so they can better understand it” (Ford, 1994, p. 32). This issue not only is of sociocultural, political, and literary importance but it relates directly to the extent to which a book is marketable, a crucial question in a world increasingly governed by the bottom line. Underdown contends that an inordinate amount of what is published “is multicultural in the sense of what we as white people think is multicultural, not what other cultures see as multicultural.” Many books marketed as multicultural have White main characters with “characters of color used only as background” (quoted by Ford, 1994, p. 32). Miller-Lachmann (1992) believes that editors are very aware of the audience for particular books and accept or reject a manuscript based on its marketability. Many editors, authors, and marketing people aspire to reach the widest possible audience since that means that more
books are being sold. However, Miller-Lachmann insists that when a multi-cultural book is written to appeal to the widest possible audience, "something gets sacrificed" (p. 163). Here the divisive issue of whether an individual can write authentically about a culture other than his or her own becomes so apparent and consequential. For Miller-Lachmann (1992), a key question, often unasked, is, "Who is the author—irrespective of his or her background—addressing?" (p. 163).

Miller-Lachmann (1992) argues that authors seeking to address a broader readership may feel compelled to homogenize language and omit crucial internal issues and conflicts. Alternate views of the world are ignored, toned down, or explained at the expense of the story: "Dirty laundry isn't hung out for outsiders (or insiders) to see." Even when stories do not reinforce the stereotypes that have plagued children's literature for much of its history, "even when they are unique three-dimensional individuals, African American, Latin, Indian and Asian American characters may act in ways consistent with the expectations of the dominant culture" and not their own (Miller-Lachmann, 1992, pp. 163-166). This fundamental concern is relatively easy to ignore in the simpler picture books and folktales that dominate so much of multicultural publication. Wohl believes that among the reasons folklore was a popular solution to the need for multicultural literature was that "it was easy to be 'authentic'" (Wohl interview). These simpler, safer books also are readily incorporated into school curricula and often are well suited to integration into the kinds of celebratory ethnic events alluded to by Lee and Low (2002). Put simply, these are the kinds of books most likely to sell to the crucial school market.

Books that Cai and Sims Bishop (1994) term cross-cultural literature are about the interrelationships among peoples from different cultures, as well as about people from specific cultural groups that are written by individuals not of that group. Cross-cultural literature tends to downplay the particulars of the culture and, in the view of many critics, simply get it wrong. Cai and Sims Bishop (1994) point to research suggesting that many works of cross-cultural literature, "instead of dispelling ignorance and prejudice . . . reinforce them" (p. 68). For this reason some of the most impassioned controversies instigated by proponents of a multicultural children's literature relate to books about the experiences of African Americans written by European American authors. Ben's Trumpet (Isadora, 1979), Jake and Honey-bunch Go to Heaven (Zemach, 1982), Sounder (Armstrong, 1969), The Cay (Taylor, 1969), The Slave Dancer (Fox, 1973), and Words by Heart (Sebestyen, 1979) all were reprinted for subtle and not-so-subtle stereotyping, racism, and questionable authenticity (e.g., Banfield & Wilson, 1985; Moore, 1885; Sims, 1980; Taxel, 1986; Trousdale, 1990). Trousdale, for example, argues that African American characters in award winning books such as Amos Fortune, Free Man (Yates, 1950), Sounder (Armstrong, 1969) and Words by Heart (Sebestyen, 1979) manifest a "submis-
sion theology” in which African American characters are “docile [and] submissive towards whites, and accepting of injustice and oppression” (p. 137). Disputes of this sort engender apprehension about the rights of the people of a culture to tell their own stories (e.g., Seto, 1995), relative to the rights of authors to write as they please (e.g., Lasky, 1996; Yolen, 1994). Despite these fractious debates, the three books just named remain popular and readily available.

Fear of controversy undoubtedly has led some cross-cultural writers and their editors to stick to safer, simpler books or to avoid writing and publishing books with complex and divisive issues and themes (e.g., racial conflict, violence, sex and sexuality, etc). Yeh (1992) believes that the unwillingness of many authors, editors, and publishers to address such subjects and themes deemed risqué, and the marketing problems that often attend to books that do so, explains the disturbing drop in the number of multicultural books for older readers.

Nevertheless, life’s often-painful complexities are central to the stories told in many parallel culture books. These are books authored by African Americans, Native Americans, Asian Americans, and Hispanic Americans themselves and represent the “experiences, consciousness, and self-image developed as a result of being acculturated and socialized within these groups” (Cai & Sims Bishop, 1994, pp. 65-67). Books about the African American experience such as Williams Garcia’s Blue Tights (1988), Yarbrough’s The Shimmershine Queens (1989), Myers’s Scorpions (1988), and Woodson’s From the Notebooks of Melanin Sun (1995), for example, deal realistically and artistically with issues of sexuality and sexual orientation, Black and White relationships, drug use, and violence. Novels such as Blue Tights, dealing with the specific details of a fifteen year old African American girl’s emerging sexuality, or From the Notebooks of Melanin Sun, which involves a young African American boy struggling to accept his mother’s love affair with a White woman, are believed by many to be suited for specialized (e.g., African American or gay and lesbian) audiences, thus further limiting the perceived marketability (Miller-Lachmann, 1992). Novels of this sort are anathema in many communities, especially in conservative times, and many teachers believe they would risk losing their jobs if they taught books that addressed issues of racial conflict and violence, sex and sexuality, etc. in their classrooms. Publishers are mindful of the way these attitudes impact sales.

These conflicting forces and pressures crystallize in fascinating ways in the books of Mildred Taylor (e.g., 1975, 1976, 1981, 1987, 2001), whose fiction exemplifies writing from a parallel culture that provides young readers, in this case, with unflinchingly authentic and realistic accounts of crucial episodes in the long struggle of African Americans for freedom and dignity in the United States. Books such as Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry (1976), Let the Circle be Unbroken (1981), and The Land (2001) offer at times painful glimpses of
aspects of the U.S. past that, even at the beginning of the 21st century, still are difficult to find in history textbooks (Loewen, 1995). Taylor’s exciting, brilliantly characterized, eminently readable narratives, based in part on the history of her family, constitute a storied tradition of resistance containing oppositional voices of those too often silenced and ignored by society’s dominant modes of cultural expression (Tasel, 1991a). By her own admission Taylor (1998) has tried to “present not only a history of my family, but the effects of racism, not only to the victims of racism but also to the racists themselves.” She admits as well that her books recount “events that were painful to write” and she allows that they are painful for many to read (Taylor, 1998).

Taylor’s efforts have garnered numerous literary awards, including the 1977 Newbery Award for Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry, and they also are commercial successes. All of her books remain in print and all (except the recently published The Land) have been issued in paperback as well as hardcover. Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry is number 80 on the list of the 150 best selling paperback books of all time (http://www.infoplace.com/ipea/A0203050.html). Nevertheless, Taylor’s heartrending, often harrowing stories and the uncompromising way that she crafts characters, dialogue, and events have led to protests against the books and point to the kinds of dilemmas faced by writers and editors and publishers as they determine what to write and to publish. For example, a Hispanic father in Texas requested that the board remove The Well (1995) from school reading lists because it included the word “nigger.” An African American parent in California objected to her son’s reading Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry in a class where he was the only African American (Taylor 1998). A number of years ago, The Friendship (1987) was among the nominees for the Georgia book Award, a state wide program in which children vote for their favorite novel from a list of 20 selected by a panel of the state’s teachers and media specialists. Several weeks after the list of nominees was made public, a media specialist mailed her school’s copy of the book to my departmental office along with a well-intended letter of protest stating that her school was trying to move beyond this sort of history portrayed in the novel. She believed that such books only served to rekindle and perpetuate ill-feeling (i.e., the best way to deal with a painful past is to ignore it). Notwithstanding these beliefs, Möller and Allen (2000) make clear the enormous potential of books such as The Friendship to foster dialogue, insight, and understanding among even young children to complex social issues.

Despite these distressing notes, the commercial success and critical acclaim of writers such as Mildred Taylor provide a measure of optimism for those who feel that works such as Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry and The Land not only are essential to the education of young readers but are financially viable in the current economic environment as well. Nevertheless, considerable backlash has faced the multicultural movement in
recent years (e.g., Bernstein, 1994; Henry, 1994; Schlesinger, 1992; Strotsky, 2002) and a fair amount of cynicism as well. Consider the words of Aronson (1995), formerly a senior editor at Henry Holt:

The multiculturalism that parades as “authenticity” and pretends that a culture has a view that belongs to a people is now something of a shibboleth in children’s books. Undoubtedly, the proliferation of authors and illustrators from a wide variety of backgrounds and heritages. But that view of cultural diversity is wrong. In editorial meetings throughout the land, proposals for books about certain groups are greeted with the ritual question: Is he black, is she Latina, are they Cherokee? Supposedly, this is an appeal for authenticity. In reality, it is an amalgam of cynicism, marketing strategy, laziness, guilt, and some real interest in new artists and authors. (163-164)

Conclusions

Consideration of sociopolitical and economic issues no longer is a novelty in discussions of children’s literature and culture (e.g., Epstein, 1996; Giroux, 1999; Nodelman, 1992; Sarland, 1996; Zipes, 2001). I am hopeful that greater awareness and understanding of the relation between economic forces and the kinds of books that are available to teachers, media specialists, and parents will heighten interest in these vital matters and ultimately facilitate greater input from these constituencies in market decisions.

Within the industry the increasing pressure to produce certain money makers—so readily visible through the proliferation of series, television and movie tie-ins, books based on characters such as Arthur, the American Girl dolls, etc.—will continue. It also seems apparent that authors and illustrators will be pressured to produce sequels to popular books that, like Arthur and The American Girls, frequently become licensed brand names that inevitably spin off into other media and a vast array of related commodities. Fears that kinds of children’s literature celebrated in university courses and textbooks and by review journals eventually will be relegated to a smaller, if still significant, niche within the larger universe of children’s literature that is dominated by books of the mass-market variety are well founded.

Zipes (2001) summarizes these conflicting tendencies when noting that

Children’s literature is seeing a flowering of innovative books and illustrations for readers from two to sixteen that are not simply economic ventures. Children’s literature needs and thrives on the work of fine writers and artists and fosters experimentation and challenges to the market. Unfortunately, the corporate structure will appropriate the new and sometimes highly unique children’s book to quantify and rationalize these works according to market needs and calculations. (p. 48)

Zipes (2001) thus pinpoints the contradictory fact that the corporate structure “thrives on homogenization and convention” but also demands “change, originality, uniqueness, and variety to keep readers and consumers interested in corporate products.” For Zipes, “the question remains open—narrowly open—as to whether some kind of quality literature will survive . . . and whether recreational reading will become more and more commercial and functional, dictated by fashions and trends in the culture industry” (p. 48).

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The domination of the industry by huge multimedia conglomerates seeking to maximize the synergistic interplay of their holdings, thereby devaluing individual works that are viewed less as discrete properties than as one of so many links in a media chain, surely will continue. However, the concept of niches, so helpful in understanding the progressive fragmentation of the market for books for young people, also provides some grounds for hope for the future. Synam (1995) sees children's literature itself as a form of niche publishing and contends that as the industry moves away from its institutional past, dedicated specialists willing to focus on its markets will be in demand. He contends that the industry is experiencing something “all multinational and national conglomerates will have to come to grips with” and that any scenario of a return to small publishing houses, and an end of “fragmenting into many distribution channels” is so much wishful thinking (pp. 18–19).

The pattern in which smaller houses coexist with giant conglomerates is evident in multicultural publishing where the relation between small publishers and the larger ones seems to have been reversed. Earlier I discussed the beginning of serious multicultural publication as an outgrowth of an act of Congress that created a market for multicultural books, especially those about the African American experience. The efforts of pioneering editors such as Phyllis Fogelman of Dial led to multicultural publishing in all major houses. Since then, the media giants have absorbed virtually all of the major independents, including Dial.

The institutionalization of the market for multicultural books and especially the need for greater opportunities for writers from parallel cultures led to the rise of the small independently owned houses such as Lee and Low that have sought to fill that niche. These houses have the unenviable task of competing with the conglomerates for shelf space in book stores and for notice by review media, award committees, and other magnets for attention. Lacking the financial resources and clout of larger companies, which are known to threaten to withhold advertising dollars from newspapers and magazines if their books are not sufficiently reviewed (Zipes, 2001)—capital that is so essential to promotion and distribution—small publishers must rely on word of mouth and grassroots support for promotion. Whether small companies can survive in the viciously competitive world of fast capitalism (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000) is a question critical to the future of the industry.

Further fragmentation of the multicultural market is visible in the ever-increasing variety of multicultural books. Not only are there growing markets for books about specific groups (e.g., African American and Native American) but within these groups there are discernable ranges of books, from simple folktales and picture books to that promising group of oppositional books, such as those of Mildred Taylor, that address potentially controversial subjects.

While it is easy to despair that the
market driven imperatives discussed in this essay threaten the existence of the kinds of literature that many educators have come to take for granted, it is crucial to keep in mind that there is a sizable group of powerful editors and writers who enjoy considerable freedom and latitude in making publishing decisions. These editors and writers produce that segment of the thousands of books published each year that many readers of RIE and similar journals cherish. Many of these are of breathtaking quality and include books of wonderfully varying styles, genres, and formats. Some address complex and controversial issues and themes with an honesty and forthrightness that would not have been possible twenty or thirty years ago. The reduction of all publishing decisions to a simple economic calculus slights the continuing efforts of the men and women, some of whom have been quoted in this essay, who work in the industry to bring the best books possible to children. Whiteside (1980b) argues that

It would be a disservice to the small number of editors and publishers within the business who have shown themselves determined to maintain their standards of excellence and their encouragement of new writing talent to imply that economics have diminished either their personal force or the value of their contributions to literature. Even within the most seemingly monolithic companies there are individual editors whose professional skill and energy and devotion to literature are such that they have been able to establish, in effect, their own imprints within theses companies. (pp. 121-22)

Coser (1984) discusses this point while alluding to the problem of economic determinism and the dangers of simplistically reducing cultural phenomena to mere reflections of a given mode of production, discussed at the outset of the essay:

Certain structuralist and neo-Marxist approaches to cultural phenomena have tended in recent years to explain them without reference to human agency. People are simply seen to speak in the language of Louis Althusser and other structural Marxists, as bearers of modes of production, rather than as living human beings. I agree with Harold Garfinkel that such an approach treats people as “cultural dopes.” Granted that people operate within the limits of a variety of constraints, the market being a major example of such constraints, there remains a domain of choices that involves the possibility, as the British sociologist Anthony Giddens has put it, of “doing otherwise.” (p. 11)

As long as the publishing industry allows some of its key members to do otherwise, at least some sectors of the industry “will be able to serve our common culture, and such fragile plants as volumes of poetry and experimental first novels will still find a fertile soil. Under such circumstances, the publishing industry will remain a hybrid in which cultural saints and sinners will coexist in precarious, though often antagonistic, cooperation” (Coser, 1984, p. 11).

While Simon (2000) worries about the fate of “authentic voices,” fearing that “too often they seem to lose their way as it becomes clear that their employers don’t necessarily place high value on what they have to offer” (p. 28), Lester (2001) acknowledges the debt of gratitude owed “to the editors who waged sometimes lonely battles—and still do—to get books published that were authored and illustrated by

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members of ethnic minorities." Rather than "decrying what needs to be done can we not also celebrate all that has been accomplished in little more than thirty years?"

Sustaining and extending the gains of the past 30 years is the issue that now must be confronted. While most observers remain confident that popular authors and illustrators will not encounter difficulty finding publishers who are receptive to their work, many worry that it will be increasingly difficult for new authors and illustrators to make a breakthrough. Harris (1996) is especially concerned about unknown talents from parallel cultures getting published and fears that changes in the ownership of publishing ultimately will result in fewer multicultural books being published. Although independents such as Lee and Low may take up some of the slack, their future is by no means certain.

There often is a gap between the kind of books more informed readers celebrate and the books that sell in the numbers demanded by the new corporate managers. Editors and writers must be able to withstand the enormous pressure to produce "little beyond the kinds of books that are most likely to achieve wide sales" (Nodelman, 1996, p. 95), and the contents of publishers' catalogues reflect this pressure. One noted author agreed with this sobering view when stating that bottom line pressures have "made it much more difficult for good editors to do their jobs because they have to keep an eye on the profit line because what concerns conglomerates is pleasing the stockholders and not contributing to art or literature" (Anonymous author, #3).

Educators who believe that the widest possible range of books is essential to the process of education and to the health of democracy must be concerned about the ability of authors, illustrators, editors, marketing directors, and other stakeholders to resist these pressures. Added apprehension relates to what will occur when these individuals, drawn to publishing at an earlier time, pass the torch to a younger generation who know only the world of balance sheets and bottom lines. Schiffin (2000) speaks to this concern when noting that in many houses the number of employees under 50 is rapidly declining. He believes that the shift to a younger workforce is largely a result of financial considerations (i.e., younger people work for less). One result of this generational shift is an "erasure of corporate memory: those who remembered the way things used to be done were eliminated and replaced with a group who automatically saw the new dictates as normal and indeed right" (p. 111).

The ability of authors and editors to resist escalating pressures to commodify children's literature further and to maintain their independence in the face of relentless bottom-line imperatives will go a long way in determining the future of children's literature and will have a momentous impact on the social, cultural, and political life of the U. S. Schiffin (2000) fears that it is increasingly difficult to "speak of open competition or a free market in ideas in American publishing today," and he
characterizes the current publishing landscape as a “classic situation of oligopoly, approaching monopoly.” The consequences that result from the surrender of “the domain of ideas” to “those who want to make the most money” is that “the debate that is so essential for a functioning democracy will not take place. To a large degree it is this silence that has overtaken much of American intellectual life” (p. 152). This point relates directly to Agger’s (1989) contention that one of the defining features of fast capitalism is a decline in social criticism and a tendency of writing to reflect and reproduce the given order of things.

Author Jane Kurtz (2001) offers some welcome words of optimism about the future when insisting, “WE HAVE (SOME) POWER because we influence book sales and book sales increasingly determine what’s published” (emphasis in original). Kurtz points to the large library and school community that buys books and continues “looking for a different kind of book than the books bought by masses of other consumers.” She points as well to the critical role played by reviewers and members of award committees such as the Caldecott and Newbery. Books that receive these awards and, I would add, books that are nominated for state-wide awards such as the Georgia Book Award and the Texas Bluebonnet Award, receive a significant boost to sales. Kurtz also mentions the organizers of conferences, “who often make a point of wanting ‘diversity’ among the speakers they invite,” and children’s literature professors, “who for the most part see it as part of their mandate to wake future teachers up to the importance of having book collections where all children can see themselves reflected.”

Readers of RTE and similar journals are surely among those Kurtz is addressing. Such educators do have the power to influence and at times determine the kinds of books that get into schools and homes. A key issue is whether they will resist the steady incursion of the mass-market books in classrooms and libraries. More and more of the books found in schoolbook fairs, for example, are the worst of the series books, those about current pop stars, and books that relate to movies and television programs and other instantiations of popular culture. Because a share of the proceeds from these fairs allows schools to supplement their meager budgets for books, it is easy to ignore the dwindling number of books of distinction being offered. It must be asked if the funds derived from these fairs are worth the tradeoff that feeds children’s tastes for the very kinds of books deplored by those consulted for this essay.

It is important that educators do more than simply lament and rail against the steady encroachment of commodified culture into all aspects of children’s lives. We need to be more aggressive in promoting the best books, especially those that will provide young people with insight and understanding into the growing diversity and complexity of our society. Children should be taught to analyze critically the wide range of books and films that dominate
popular culture (Apol, 1998; Giroux & Shannon, 1997), encourage them to read multiculturally (Hade, 1997; Möller, 2002), and to question the construction of gender in romance novels (Christian-Smith, 1991). There are doubtless other strategies that must be developed and pursued. Educators must first, however, resolve to work to refine further the issues that confront them and join with colleagues in the publishing industry to resist the imperatives of the market and preserve literature’s place in society.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

1. How would you characterize the current state of the children's literature industry?

2. How would you compare the books being published today compared to those published 10 to 15 years ago?

3. Are there specific trends, tendencies, or practices in the industry that you find especially exciting?

4. Are there specific trends, tendencies, or practices in the industry that especially concern you?

5. How is today's social and political climate affecting the publishing industry?
   a. Is this a change from the past as you know and experienced it? Please be specific.
   b. Are particular groups or individuals wielding power today that did not in the past?
   c. Please characterize this change and its consequences?

6. What actions, if any, has the government taken that have had an impact on publishing? What has been the impact of these actions?

7. In general terms, what has been the impact of the takeover of publishing houses by multinational conglomerates?
   a. How have these takeovers affected what and how you write?
   b. What do you believe will be the long-term impact or consequences of the mergers on children's literature?

8. How would you characterize publication of multicultural children's literature today?
   a. What has been the impact of multiculturalism on the industry?
   b. Do you think the infusion of multiculturalism in children's literature industry would have occurred to the degree that it has without some protest, lobbying, and expressions of anger?
   c. How have attitudes toward multicultural children's literature changed as a result of the mergers?
   d. What do you see as the future of multicultural children's literature?

9. What does the future hold for you?

10. Other comments:
**Appendix B: Publishing Statistics**

Statistics Gathered by the Cooperative Children’s Book Center  
School of Education, University of Wisconsin-Madison  
http://www.education.wisc.edu/ccbc/pctstats.htm

**Children’s Books by and about People of Color**  
**Published in the U.S. 1994–2001**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Number of Books Published</th>
<th>African / African Americans</th>
<th>Asian Pacific / Asian Pacific Americans</th>
<th>American Indian</th>
<th>Latinos</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>BY</td>
<td>ABOUT</td>
<td>BY AND ABOUT</td>
<td>BY AND ABOUT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>5,000-5,500</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>96</td>
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<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>5,000-5,500</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>5,000</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>54</td>
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<td>1997</td>
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<tr>
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<td>4,500</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>4,500</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>70</td>
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**Children’s Books by Black Authors and Illustrators**  
**Published in the U.S. 1985–1993**

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Number of Books Published</th>
<th>Total Number of Books By Black Authors and Illustrators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>1993</td>
<td>4,500</td>
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<td>4,000</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>5,000</td>
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<tr>
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