

# BEST AND WORST OF TIMES

THE CHANGING BUSINESS OF TRADE BOOKS, 1975-2002

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# CONTENTS

<b>1 SUMMARY FINDINGS</b> .....	4
<b>2 THE CHANGING BUSINESS: A BIRD’S-EYE VIEW</b> .....	8
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	8
<b>ON THE ORIGINS AND HISTORY OF THE BESTSELLER SPECIES</b> .....	12
<b>THE SEA CHANGE OF THE ’70S</b> .....	16
<b>A FLY ON THE WALL</b> .....	18
<b>THE NATURE OF THE BEST-SELLING BEAST</b> .....	19
<b>THE CULTURE OF CELEBRITY</b> .....	20
<b>ECONOMICS OF CONSOLIDATION 101</b> .....	22
<b>BRAVE NEW TECHNOLOGICAL WORLD</b> .....	25
<b>3 BESTSELLERS AND BEST BOOKS</b> .....	27
<b>A NOTE ABOUT STATISTICS</b> .....	27
<b>BESTSELLERS OF 1975</b> .....	27
One-Day Laydowns	
Longer-Lasting Fiction	
Antique Bookends and Their Prices	
Making or Burying a Book	
Self-Publishing Circa 1975	
The Brit List of the ’70s	
<b>BEST BOOKS OF 1975</b> .....	34
Quality and/or Longevity	
<b>BESTSELLERS OF 1980</b> .....	38
A Dominating Handful	
Vertical Integration	
Self-Publishing Circa 1980	
<b>BEST BOOKS OF 1980</b> .....	41
<i>Dunces, Hours, and the Prize Effect</i>	
<b>BESTSELLERS OF 1985</b> .....	46
Packaging Counts	
<b>BEST BOOKS OF 1985</b> .....	48
<b>BESTSELLERS OF 1990</b> .....	52
Fiction Brands	
The Price the Market Will Pay	
Serious Nonfiction Makes the List	
<b>BEST BOOKS OF 1990</b> .....	55
<b>BESTSELLERS OF 1995</b> .....	59
The Real Estate Business	
Self-Publishing Circa 1995	
Big Books, Few Houses	
<b>BEST BOOKS OF 1995</b> .....	62
<b>BESTSELLERS OF 2000</b> .....	66
Family Reading with Harry	
Oprah and her Predecessors	
Spirituality Answers Prayers	
<b>BEST BOOKS OF 2000</b> .....	69
<b>4 AFTERWORD</b> .....	74
<b>5 NOTES</b> .....	76
<b>6 APPENDICES</b> .....	78
<b>7 ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</b> .....	90

# 1. SUMMARY FINDINGS

During the past quarter century, change in the American book business has been driven primarily by three factors: consolidation (in publishing, retail, distribution, and library purchasing); new technology; and a general cultural shift in favor of celebrity and mass entertainment. Some of the challenges and difficulties we see in the business today were already predicted more than a half-century ago. Some of what we regard as “change” is not change at all.

Although the past twenty-five years have brought serious distortion and increased pressures to the book business, they have also brought previously unimagined levels of opportunity. By studying books that were judged to be best-sellers or best books from six representative years during this period, one can analyze these changes and gauge how they have manifested themselves for good and ill.

## STATISTICS

- The number of new books being published each year increased more than 300 percent, from 39,000 in 1975 to 122,000 in 2000.
- The number of copies the top annual fiction title on the bestseller list sold increased more than 1,000 percent, from 230,000 for E. L. Doctorow’s *Ragtime* in 1975, to 2,875,000 for John Grisham’s *The Brethren* in 2000.\*
- Compare the sales of a 1975 “literary” novel, Doctorow’s *Ragtime*, with a 2001 “literary” novel, Jonathan Franzen’s *The Corrections*. The former sold 230,000 hardcover copies in its publication year; the latter 720,000 copies in its publication year, an increase of more than 300 percent.
- Prior to 1985, only two novels (and no nonfiction book) had ever sold more than one million copies during its publication year; in 1985, three novels and two nonfiction titles did so. Today,

million-copy sellers the first year out are taken as a given.

## TRENDS AND OBSERVATIONS

- Beginning in the 1970s, the marketing function, as opposed to the editorial function, became the driving force in book publishing as the potential for mass sales grew.
- The huge increase in the number of books being published has created a cacophony that makes it more difficult for most books to receive attention. A stagnating market cannot adequately support the number of books being published each year.
- Books with a limited potential readership (5,000-7,000 copies and under) have increasingly been dwarfed and ghettoized in a market that can sell huge quantities of select titles. They are increasingly being abandoned by the conglomerate houses and published instead by university and independent literary presses.
- Books with print runs of 5,000 to 15,000 copies—so-called “midlist” books—continue to be published by conglomerate houses, but they often are not published well. In the past, almost every book on a publisher’s list received some sort of publicity or marketing effort; now, most of the marketing budget is reserved for relatively few titles. A dichotomy exists between the haves and the have-nots in terms of money spent to publish a book well.
- Book prices have risen during the past twenty-five years in every format. In some cases the price rises in hardcovers have been offset by discounting practices. The price differential between mass market paperbacks and trade paperbacks has eroded, to the detriment of the former. Mass market prices have quadrupled since 1975.

\* NB: Throughout this report, figures given for the numbers of copies sold were provided by publishers to *Publishers Weekly*, and do not necessarily reflect returns or absolute final sales.

- Book publishing has increasingly become part of the entertainment business, with a concomitant change in the role of the author, who has had to learn to cultivate celebrity.
- The influence of the entertainment business is also seen in the building of “brand-name” franchises and in the practice of the “one-day lay-down,” akin to a major Hollywood movie release.

#### CONSOLIDATION

- Consolidation has occurred in every sector or role of the book business: retail, wholesale, distribution, publishing and libraries (e.g., the budgetary emphasis on aggregated databases as opposed to individual book purchases). The only exception is in the role of the author.
- Consolidation in the publishing function is visible in the bestseller list. In 2000, 83.5 percent of the best-selling titles on the weekly lists of *Publishers Weekly* were from only five companies.
- Within the publishing conglomerates, there is a disconnect between the desire to operate divisions independently and the desire to take advantage of the size of the corporation.
- Publishing entities that are part of multimedia corporations have come under extraordinary pressure to increase their profit margins, given the higher margins that normally characterize the music, movie and television entities within those corporations. The comparison is between a return of 10 to 12 percent for the typical book publisher and 20 percent for the other sectors.
- As publishers have become part of conglomerates that place an increasing emphasis on the bottom line, the method of calculating profit-and-loss estimates has changed. Now far more overhead costs are being put on to each book than was the case in the past. It is therefore increasingly difficult for one house to

allow authors the time to grow over three or four books if those books do not make money.

#### FORMATS

- During the past twenty-five years, mass market paperbacks have become far less profitable as trade paperbacks have become more profitable. Trade paperback divisions are often the most profitable divisions in publishing companies.
- The sales techniques associated with mass market paperbacks in 1975 are now associated with hardcover books.
- Starting in the early 1980s, mass market paperback houses expanded to create their own hardcover publishing operations. Today, publishers often attempt to control publication of the book in every format.
- In 1975, trade paperback was mainly a nonfiction format. In 2000, it is the most successful backlist format for literary fiction.

#### TECHNOLOGY

- Technological innovation has created a blurring of boundaries between sectors (i.e. retail, publishing, distribution) and between roles (i.e. author, publisher, retailer).
- Technological innovation has made it possible to do more things, but has created time pressure to an extent that was previously unknown in the book business.

#### CHAIN BOOKSELLING

- The rise of chain booksellers, beginning in the 1970s, enabled more copies of particular titles to be sold than ever before, and brought books to large areas of the country that had been underserved or totally neglected in the past.
- Beginning in the early 1980s, pressure exerted by chain booksellers on book publishers caused publishing schedules to be shortened. By the

beginning of the 1990s, many publishers had moved from two seasons to three seasons per year. Books are scheduled to comply with the chains' timeframe, which is not always the best timeframe for the books themselves.

- Real estate has become increasingly important in the bookselling business, in terms both of targeting sites for chain superstores and dividing up the internal space of a bookstore to obtain fees from publishers for promotional purposes.

#### BESTSELLERS

- The bestseller, as a self-conscious phenomenon, has existed only for about one hundred years.
- There is no single bestseller public.
- Bestseller types, particularly in nonfiction, remain constant over the years, although subject to trends and fads in the culture at large. Any list will typically contain: self-help in the widest sense; history; pop culture, including celebrity biographies or memoirs; and religion or spirituality. In the past twenty-five years, religion has increasingly been mainstreamed.
- Large cumulative sales of a classic do not make for a bestseller. Bestsellers measure sales rapidity, not sales longevity.
- The overwhelming majority of spaces on the annual fiction bestseller list are taken up by brand names. The phenomenon has become much more pronounced during the last two decades.
- In 1975, novels had long stays on the bestseller list; in 2000, more novels made the list but generally enjoyed far shorter stays, with a few exceptions.
- Nonfiction bestsellers today remain on the list much longer than was the case in 1975.
- In 1975, publishers chose to "anoint" certain titles to be "made"; the same pertains today.
- Publishers began to put a much more sustained marketing effort into serious narrative nonfiction in the early 1990s, with a concomitant result: far more of these books now make the weekly bestseller list.
- Most nonfiction bestsellers do not stand the test of time. Ideas on health, fitness, beauty, diet and money change very quickly and do not make for longevity in print.
- In general, best-selling fiction remains in print longer than best-selling nonfiction.
- Self-publishing success, contrary to popular belief, is not a new phenomenon. In 1975 and 1980 there were huge bestsellers that were self-published. However, in the past, self-published successes were nonfiction; today, they tend to be fiction or niche publications.
- Reading clubs, the Oprah phenomenon and other television book clubs, and attendance at readings are some of the manifestations of an upward spiral of aspiration in terms of reading matter among a substantial segment of the reading public. That aspiration, however, sometimes exceeds readers' grasp of the material.
- The Harry Potter phenomenon is a throwback to an earlier era, of Dickens and Walter Scott and the family reading book.

#### BEST BOOKS

- There is surprisingly little intersection between best-books choices on different lists, and when it does occur, it usually involves fiction titles.
- A surprising number of books of real literary merit appear on the weekly bestseller lists throughout the year. This was the case in 1975 and remains the case today.
- Winning a prize in the U.S. generally does not convey the same sales boost as in the U.K.,

although prizes have been increasingly effective in helping sales for many books during the last twenty-five years. They are more effective for unknown authors.

- Most prize-winning books come from commercial publishers.
- Biographies, even prize-winning biographies, tend not to last. Readers seem to want biographies written not necessarily about their own time, but written in their own time.
- Unanimity is extremely rare among best books lists, and when it does occur, it often has no correlation with sales.

## 2. THE CHANGING BUSINESS: A BIRD'S-EYE VIEW

### INTRODUCTION

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“Some editors and publishers are worried in the midst of this greatest boom in books the country has ever known and feel that we are building up to a great let down,” explained the editor of *Publishers Weekly*.

“They see American literature processed, stylized, syndicated, serialized, Hollywoodized, networked, televised, merged and high-pressured,”<sup>1</sup> commented the publisher of Simon & Schuster.

The words could have been written yesterday, but date back to December 15, 1945. The distinguished editor presiding over *PW* was Frederic Melcher. The S&S publisher he quoted was legendary co-founder Max Schuster.

It's helpful when considering the last twenty-five years of the adult trade book business in America to remember that the tension between boom and bust mentalities has lurked at the back of the publishing mind in every era. The challenges and problems that change is provoking in the industry today are real enough. But profound though these pressures and dislocations are, they are not all there is.

On the one hand, ever since the wave of mergers in the mid-1980s, headlines have periodically told us that this is among the worst of times in the book business. The reasons are various: consolidation and conglomeration in publishing and retailing and the concomitant supremacy of the short-term bottom line; technological changes that have so speeded things up that a certain kind of human scale and quality frequently get lost in the rush; a culture more and more obsessed with celebrity and surface, stunned by the white noise of media overload, that too often forgets the past while pursuing the golden ring of tomorrow's uncertain fad.

On the other hand, talk of a boom is also justifiable. The statistics speak for themselves. More new titles are being published than ever before: in 2000, 122,108 new books were released.<sup>2</sup> Compare that to the 39,372 titles published in 1975, and the astonishing scale of the change is immediately apparent. (See Tables 1, 2, 3)

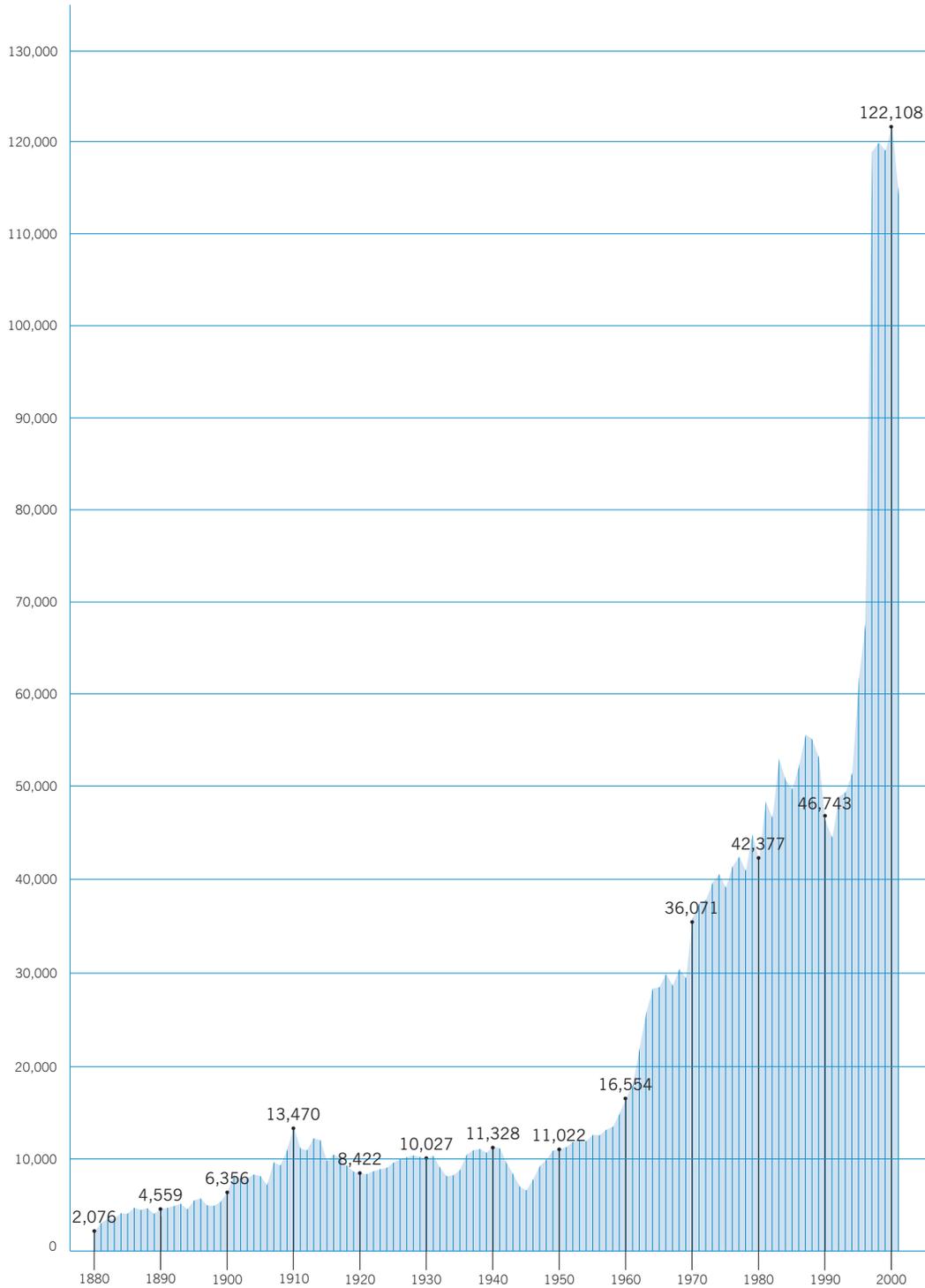
To be sure, some regard this enormous increase as a glut weighing heavily on the industry and contributing significantly to its problems. After all, despite this 300 percent growth in titles, total unit sales only increased 150 percent, from 955 million in 1975 to almost 2.5 billion in 2000. The overall title/unit sales ratio, therefore, effectively shows a decrease in sales.

Others view the title increase as a triumph of technology and free expression.

Meanwhile, consider that some of these books are selling in quantities and with a velocity that was unthinkable even a quarter century ago. The number-one best-selling hardcover novel in 1975 was E. L. Doctorow's *Ragtime*. It sold 232,340 copies and was also judged to be one of the best books of the year by the editors of *The New York Times Book Review*.<sup>3</sup> The number-one best-selling nonfiction hardcover that year was evangelist Billy Graham's *Angels: God's Secret Agents*, which sold 810,000 copies.<sup>4</sup>

Compare the number-one fiction bestseller of 2000, John Grisham's *The Brethren*, with its 2,875,000-copy sale,<sup>5</sup> or Billy Graham's book with Bruce Wilkinson's *The Prayer of Jabez*, which sold 8,439,540 copies in 2001.<sup>6</sup> Compare the sales of *Ragtime* with those of a 2001 *Times* best book, Jonathan Franzen's *The Corrections*, which sold 720,000 hardcover copies and won the National Book Award as well.<sup>7</sup> Compare it to Alice Sebold's *The Lovely Bones*, which had 1.9 million hardcover copies in print in December 2002, six months after publication.<sup>8</sup>

Table 1 AMERICAN BOOK TITLE OUTPUT, 1880–2001



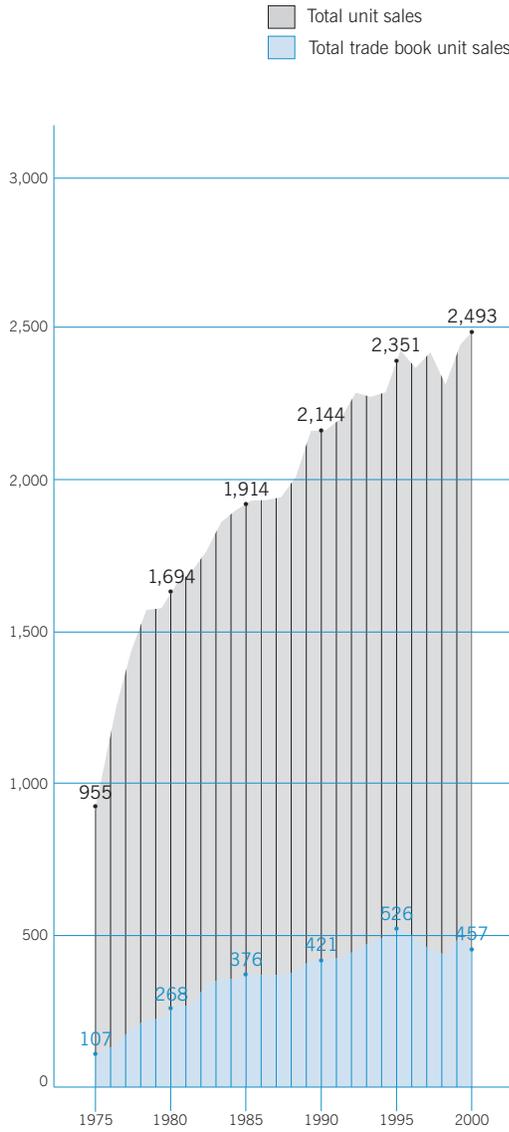
NB: Readers will note the large jump in title output between 1996 and 1997. An explanation is in order. According to *Publishers Weekly* librarian Gary Ink, prior to 1998, Bowker used the American Book Publishing Record database, a record of titles catalogued by the Library of Congress, to determine American book title output. However, beginning in the early 1980s, the Library of Congress staff were unable to keep up with the number of books needing to be catalogued. Some titles went unrecorded as a result. In 1998, Bowker switched to using the Books in Print database, which was far more comprehensive. It also recalculated title output for 1997 using BIP. According to Mr. Ink, the statistics prior to the early 1980s are regarded as accurate. Therefore, a valid comparison can be made, for example, between output for 1975 and 2000. In any case, what can be gleaned here is the huge growth in output within the last twenty-five years.

Preliminary figure for 2001: 114,487.

Source: *Bowker Annuals*

**Table 2 BOOK INDUSTRY SALES IN UNITS, 1975–2000**

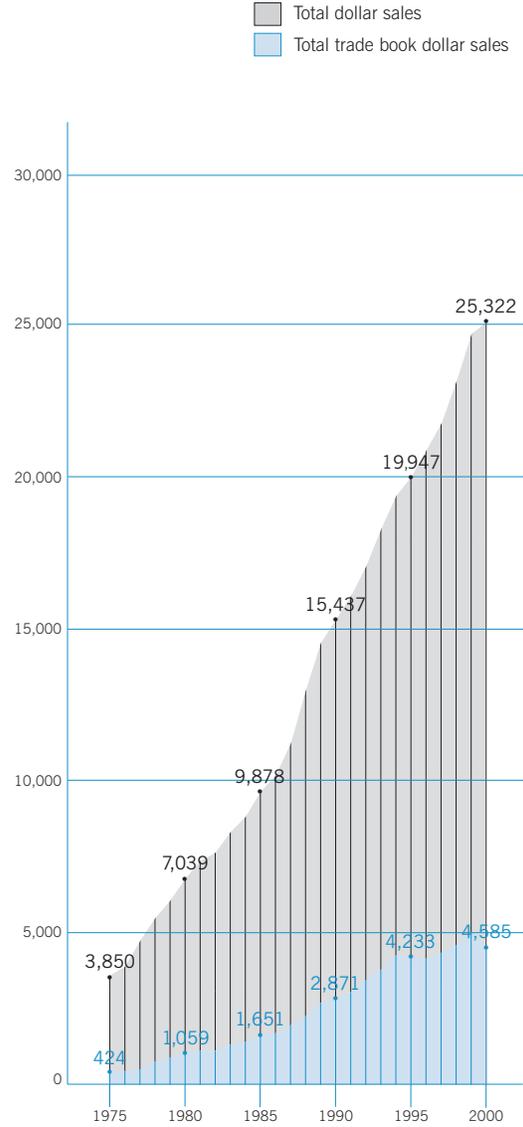
UNITS IN MILLIONS



Source: Book Industry Study Group  
(annual *Book Industry Trends*)

**Table 3 BOOK INDUSTRY SALES IN DOLLARS, 1975–2000**

DOLLARS IN MILLIONS



Source: Association of American Publishers  
(annual estimated book sales)

Or just think Harry. The four Potter books have sold approximately 79 million copies in the United States.<sup>9</sup> (See Table 4) After the first book achieved its remarkable readership, the subsequent novels, particularly the third and fourth, sold faster than any other titles—ever—and that includes all the usual suspects, *Gone With the Wind*, *Scarlett* and *The Bridges of Madison County*.<sup>10</sup>

In addition, the superstores, warehouse clubs, discount merchandisers and online retailers have allowed books to occupy more linear feet of selling space, real and virtual, than could ever have been foreseen even fifteen years ago. Reading clubs are burgeoning. And writers and publishers are able to reach readers—and readers are able to reach writers and publishers—in ways nobody could have dreamt of before the Internet.

How to find a way through this maze of contradictory elements? In the late 1950s, John Farrar, the publisher whose name lives on in Farrar, Straus & Giroux, told a young editor who is still active in the book business today (but who prefers anonymity) that “the most important

thing in publishing is your memory.”<sup>11</sup>

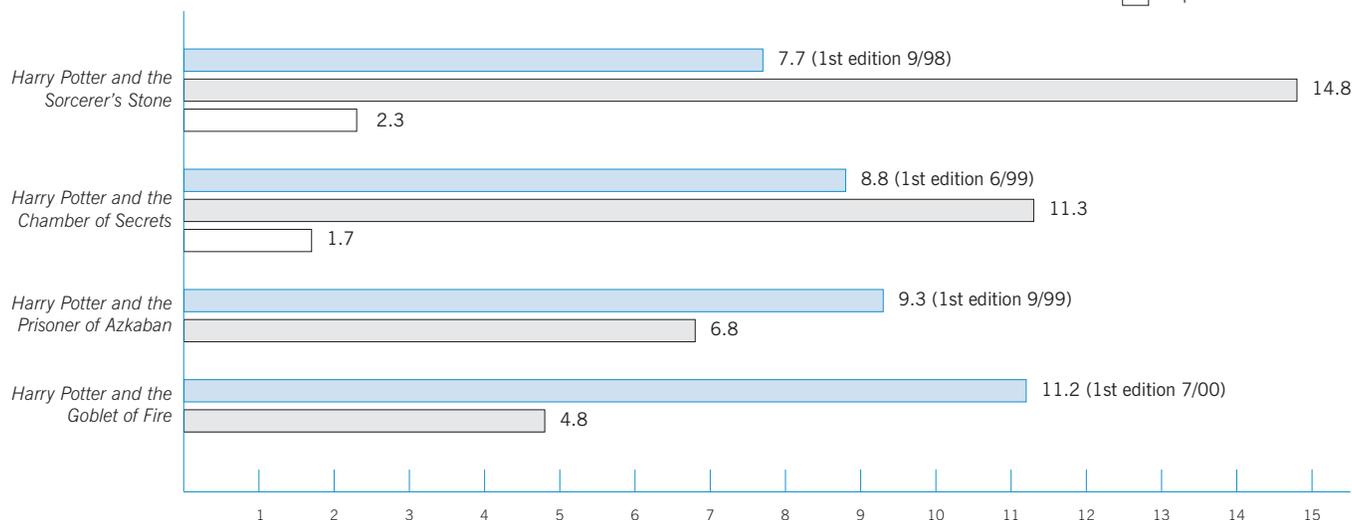
Memory tells you a great deal—for example, why books have failed or succeeded in the past, so you can make intelligent publishing decisions for the future. But extrapolate beyond any one title, any one list or house. To understand the way the business works now, you have to give memory and history their due.

That is the purpose of this research, undertaken in 2001-2002 during a fellowship year in the National Arts Journalism Program at Columbia University, and continued through December 2002. Every effort has been made to ensure that the information in the text and tables is accurate through that date.

The work encompasses several elements. First, selected readings from publishing histories, newspapers, magazines and archives dating from the early decades of the twentieth century to the present. Second, thirty interviews with publishing executives, editors, librarians, writers, journalists and booksellers. Third, observational sessions at editorial and marketing meetings in publishing houses.

**Table 4 SALES OF HARRY POTTER SERIES IN THE U.S.**  
COPIES IN MILLIONS

■ Hardcover First Edition  
■ Paperback Digest  
■ Paperback Mass Market



Source: Scholastic, Inc.

And then there's the matter of the books themselves. How better to appreciate change in the business and the culture than to scrutinize what happened to a group of books judged, notionally at least, to be quantitatively or qualitatively the best books of the era?

The greater part of this report is given over to a study of twenty-five years of bestsellers versus best books. Only adult trade books have been studied, the exception being the Harry Potter series for obvious reasons. Only every fifth year has been considered in depth: that is, 1975, 1980, 1985, 1990, 1995 and 2000.

The bestsellers have come from the *Publishers Weekly* lists of annual fiction and nonfiction hardcover bestsellers—thirty titles per year.<sup>12</sup> The weekly lists for those years have also been considered. They include many more books and provide additional, sometimes surprising, information. *PW's* list has traditionally been judged by industry professionals to be the most representative, and it remains so among the growing crowd of lists now being produced by magazines, newspapers and the bookstores themselves—a phenomenon in itself interesting to consider. *PW's* is also the longest-running list, far predating that of *The New York Times*.

Any choice of best books is by nature arbitrary. For this study, I've used three sources: *The New York Times Book Review* annual editors' choices (which began in 1973, serendipitously coinciding with the study's timeframe), the Pulitzer Prizes, and the National Book Awards. I chose not to use *PW's* annual best books list because it didn't start until the 1980s, and its variation in numbers of titles is too great. The longest-running list, published by the American Library Association, also has too much variation and too many titles.

Bear with a few more words about selection criteria. First, although poetry may provide some of our greatest literature, I have excluded it as a

category. It's so rare for it to land on a bestseller list that no useful comparison could be made. Best-selling exceptions to the rule (and in anything as individual as books, how could there not be?) have been duly noted.

For purposes of comparison, the Pulitzer categories (general nonfiction, biography, history, fiction) have been subsumed into the two categories used by the bestseller list, fiction and nonfiction. Pulitzer winners as well as finalists from 1980 on, when finalists first started being made public, have been included. Because the Pulitzers are announced in the spring for books published the previous year, the awards from 1976, 1981, 1986, 1991, 1996 and 2001 correspond with the years being studied.

The history of the National Book Awards presents its own challenges. Through the early 1980s, the NBAs were announced in the spring for books published the previous year; thereafter, a December 1 to November 30 system was instituted. The years 1976, 1981, 1985, 1990, 1995 and 2000 have been used accordingly. The awards were highly politicized in the 1980s, when they temporarily became the American Book Awards. Until 1990, they also varied wildly in numbers and types of categories. Winners and nominees have been studied and categories subsumed into fiction and nonfiction, and certain categories disallowed altogether: paperbacks, first novels, science, translations.

## ON THE ORIGINS AND HISTORY OF THE BESTSELLER SPECIES

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Bestseller: we may see it as a universal shorthand transcending languages and boundaries, but the concept as a self-conscious cultural phenomenon doesn't transcend time, being strictly modern. Dickens and Twain may have produced some of the greatest, farthest-reaching and

longest-lasting among them, but the term best-seller didn't exist in their day. It began to be associated with books around 1910, a reflection of a society that was speeding up. Its history is extremely short.

According to *Golden Multitudes*, Frank Mott's 1947 book devoted to a history that was even shorter back then, lists of "books in demand" in various American cities only began to be printed in 1895 in *The Bookman*. The lists were later subsumed into *PW*.<sup>13</sup> Astonishingly, no really authoritative bestseller list existed in Britain until 1974.<sup>14</sup>

Much of what Mott says is worth recalling. To begin with, "Professional literary critics...have had a difficult time with bestsellers."<sup>15</sup> Clearly some things never change.

There isn't, at a given time, only one bestseller public, he reminds us—a point too easily forgotten today. Nor is there such a thing as a typical bestseller: "There may be a typical 'low-brow' bestseller for a given period, or a typical fictional bestseller for another period; but the idea of a general type for the popular book is clearly a fallacy."<sup>16</sup>

Bestsellers reflect historical incidents and social developments, as well as "such unifying elements as religion, sensation, self-help, good narration, and so on," Mott says.<sup>17</sup> But "the tendency of the literary critic to lump all books that seem to him beneath notice, except for the odd phenomenon of their popularity, into one group and label them 'the bestsellers' is statistically a mistake."<sup>18</sup>

Some great books, and far more than a few good books, do make the list, Mott asserted back in 1947. He went on to compare bestsellers with lists of best books, relying heavily on compilations from A. D. Dickinson's *One Thousand Best Books: The Household Guide to a Lifetime's*

*Reading and Clue to the Literary Labyrinth*.<sup>19</sup> Dickinson's big book of lists culled from retailers, editors, librarians, etc., is, as its wonderful title implies, more historical curiosity than statistical science. The mind boggles at the notion that a single tome could purport to name all the best books a person need ever read. The idea seems quaint until one thinks of Dickinson's latter-day descendants, Allan Bloom, William Bennett and the like.

Some of Dickinson's titles speak volumes about how our reading lives have changed. Walter Scott's novels surpass all others in the number of mentions on the various lists, but how many read him now? Joseph Hergesheimer, long faded into the past, is described as "indubitably one of our most important American writers."<sup>20</sup> And forget about that whale: Melville's masterpiece, according to Dickinson's experts, is *Typee*.<sup>21</sup>

Mott defended the often-denigrated quality of bestsellers and taste of *vox populi* by calculating that 55 percent of the top bestsellers he studied could be found on Dickinson's lists.<sup>22</sup> His observation is rather less than authoritative, given the highly idiosyncratic nature of Dickinson's collection methods. But even more important, many of the books he included would not, by our definition, be regarded as bestsellers at all. They were books that sold extremely large quantities, but over a long time. The huge cumulative sales of a classic do not necessarily a bestseller make.

Indeed, bestseller lists exist to measure rapidity, not longevity. John Sutherland, in his recent book *Reading the Decades*, a history of a half-century of British bestsellers, says it would be better to call them "fastsellers" or use the old-fashioned term "books of the day."<sup>23</sup> Daisy Maryles, who has compiled the *Publishers Weekly* list for many years, says quite simply, "The list measures the sales volume or velocity of a book for one week against other books selling that particular week."<sup>24</sup>

Table 5 TOP TWENTY-FIVE NONFICTION BESTSELLERS OF THE 1990s

#	TITLE	AUTHOR	YEAR	ORIGINAL HARDCOVER PUBLISHER	UNIT SALES
1	<i>Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus</i>	Gray	1993	HarperCollins	6,804,915
2	<i>In the Kitchen with Rosie</i>	Daley	1994	Knopf	5,979,701
3	<i>The Way Things Ought to Be</i>	Limbaugh	1992	Pocket	4,780,000
4	<i>It Was on Fire When I Lay Down on It</i>	Fulghum	1990	Villard	4,247,000
5	<i>See, I Told You So</i>	Limbaugh	1993	Pocket	4,165,900
6	<i>Diana: Her True Story</i>	Morton	1992	Simon & Schuster	3,887,939
7	<i>Angela's Ashes</i>	McCourt	1996	Scribner	3,863,821
8	<i>Tuesdays with Morrie</i>	Albom	1998	Doubleday	3,650,000
9	<i>All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten</i>	Fulghum	1990	Villard	3,620,000
10	<i>SeinLanguage</i>	Seinfeld	1993	Bantam	3,606,000
11	<i>The Greatest Generation</i>	Brokaw	1998	Random House	3,392,460
12	<i>Chicken Soup for the Woman's Soul</i>	Canfield et al	1996	Health Communications	3,297,402
13	<i>Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil</i>	Berendt	1994	Random House	2,956,287
14	<i>Megatrends</i>	Naisbitt	1991	Warner	2,878,000
15	<i>Chicken Soup for the Mother's Soul</i>	Canfield et al	1997	Health Communications	2,617,687
16	<i>Chicken Soup for the Teenage Soul II</i>	Canfield et al	1998	Health Communications	2,587,173
17	<i>My American Journey</i>	Powell	1995	Random House	2,579,363
18	<i>Simple Abundance</i>	Breathnach	1996	Warner Books	2,549,812
19	<i>Into Thin Air</i>	Krakauer	1997	Villard	2,544,946
20	<i>The Book of Virtues</i>	Bennett	1993	Simon & Schuster	2,358,153
21	<i>It Doesn't Take a Hero</i>	Schwarzkopf	1992	Bantam	2,258,000
22	<i>Make the Connection</i>	Winfrey	1996	Hyperion	2,303,697
23	<i>Embraced by the Light</i>	Eadie	1993	Gold Leaf	2,180,196
24	<i>Stop the Insanity</i>	Powter	1993	Simon & Schuster	2,113,816
25	<i>Every Living Thing</i>	Herriott	1992	St. Martin's	2,051,182

Sales include all formats and are cumulative through the 1990s as reported to PW. Source: Gary Ink, *Publishers Weekly*

We see new books being published every year that sell a million copies in hardcover alone and many millions across all formats. (See Tables 5, 6) But when Mott was writing that was not the case. In his day, a cumulative two-million-copy sale across all years and all formats was stratospheric.

It's worth looking at Mott's two-million-seller list. Most of its titles are familiar even to jaded twenty-first century eyes: *Alice in Wonderland*,

*A Christmas Carol*, *Gone With the Wind*, *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, *Ivanhoe*, *The Last of the Mohicans*, *Ben-Hur*, *Little Women*, *Mother Goose*, *Robinson Crusoe*, *Tom Sawyer*, *Treasure Island*, *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Shakespeare's plays. Some are still widely read; others we know mainly from their movie versions; some are familiar names but their pages are rarely turned. Many, of course, are classics.\*

\* NB: Not surprisingly, the same kinds of classics dominate e-book reading, such as it is. When the University of Virginia's e-book library for the Microsoft Reader listed its top twenty bestsellers for the first quarter of 2002, they were: *Alice in Wonderland* (in two editions, illustrated and text-only); Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; *Aesop's Fables*; *The War of the Worlds*; *Around the World in Eighty Days*; *Huckleberry Finn*; *The Origin of Species*; *Beowulf*; *Moby Dick*; *The Hound of the Baskervilles*; *The Jungle Book*; *The Marvelous Land of Oz*; *Little Women*; *Jefferson's Quotations on Politics and Government*; Franklin's *Autobiography*; and *The Book of Genesis* from the King James Bible. Courtesy of the University of Virginia Electronic Text Center, April 2002.

Table 6 TOP TWENTY-FIVE FICTION BESTSELLERS OF THE 1990S

#	TITLE	AUTHOR	YEAR	ORIGINAL HARDCOVER PUBLISHER	UNIT SALES
1	<i>The Green Mile</i>	King	1996	Signet	22,551,698
2	<i>The Firm</i>	Grisham	1991	Doubleday	12,719,879
3	<i>The Pelican Brief</i>	Grisham	1992	Doubleday	12,545,917
4	<i>The Silence of the Lambs</i>	Harris	1990	St. Martin's	12,000,000
5	<i>The Client</i>	Grisham	1993	Doubleday	11,027,376
6	<i>Jurassic Park</i>	Crichton	1990	Knopf	10,531,604
7	<i>Presumed Innocent</i>	Turow	1989	Farrar, Straus	8,938,000
8	<i>Clear and Present Danger</i>	Clancy	1989	Putnam	8,762,000
9	<i>A Time to Kill</i>	Grisham	1992	Doubleday	8,350,000
10	<i>The Chamber</i>	Grisham	1994	Doubleday	8,189,893
11	<i>Scarlett</i>	Ripley	1991	Warner	8,163,290
12	<i>The Runaway Jury</i>	Grisham	1996	Doubleday	7,770,438
13	<i>Star</i>	Steel	1989	Delacorte	7,710,000
14	<i>Daddy</i>	Steel	1989	Delacorte	7,540,000
15	<i>Message from Nam</i>	Steel	1990	Delacorte	7,512,006
16	<i>The Partner</i>	Grisham	1997	Doubleday	7,487,401
17	<i>The Rainmaker</i>	Grisham	1995	Doubleday	7,485,613
18	<i>The Stand</i>	King	1990	Doubleday	6,719,959
19	<i>The Street Lawyer</i>	Grisham	1998	Doubleday	6,650,000
20	<i>The Testament</i>	Grisham	1999	Doubleday	6,350,000
21	<i>The Dark Half</i>	King	1990	Viking	6,294,000
22	<i>The Lost World</i>	Crichton	1995	Knopf	6,158,365
23	<i>Web of Dreams</i>	Andrews	1990	Pocket	6,150,000
24	<i>Rising Sun</i>	Crichton	1992	Knopf	5,928,680
25	<i>Dawn</i>	Andrews	1990	Pocket	5,850,000

Sales include all formats and are cumulative through the 1990s as reported to PW. Source: Gary Ink, *Publishers Weekly*

Other titles on Mott's list have been pretty much forgotten, books like Emma Southworth's *Ishmael*, Wendell Willkie's *One World*, Lloyd Douglas's *The Robe*, and the eponymous wartime success, *See Here, Private Hargrove*, by Marion Hargrove. Interestingly, a couple of titles mentioned by Mott have reappeared in print in new editions during the past decade: Charles M. Sheldon's *In His Steps*, and Jesse Hurlbut's *Story of the Bible*, attesting to the staying power of religious books.

What surprises a contemporary reader is Mott's comment, writing in the late 1940s, that "one is forced to be more dubious about the [best-selling] books of the last twenty years."<sup>25</sup> Toward the end of *Golden Multitudes* he sounds the alarm again, stating that "there is a real danger to proper book publishing in the emphasis on mass distribution. Only a small proportion of new books are potential bestsellers. The thousands of valuable works that ought to be published but which cannot be depended upon for more than a very modest return on the

investment must not be forgotten in the scramble for mass markets.”<sup>26</sup>

His fears were echoed by William Miller in *The Book Industry: A Report of the Public Library Inquiry*.<sup>27</sup> Two years after Mott, Miller warned of “the growing importance of the mass market, with its concentration upon bestsellers, and its close affiliation with book clubs, cheap reprints, and the movies.”

The same kinds of sentiments, expressed fifty years later, may be louder now but they are not new. It’s important to bear that in mind. If the evidence of this study is anything to go by, the distortions in the business have become even more extreme and the dangers Mott spoke of haven’t gone away. But then, neither have all the good books disappeared from the shelves.

The changes that Mott and Miller were worrying about had a great deal to do with the Second World War and the paperback revolution it set into motion, with publishers’ discovery of the earning potential of mass editions sold in drugstores and newsagents rather than cloth editions sold in bookstores and department stores.

Mott rang the alarm at a time when the opportunities for increased readership were about to explode with the GI Bill and the postwar education boom. All the factors that Max Schuster listed as being worrying to some members of the bookish community (he was not among them, S&S’s foundations having been laid on the profits of crossword puzzle books) were of course the very things that would spur mass market growth. They would make it possible to sell millions of copies of schlock, but also undreamt-of numbers of some seriously literary books.

It was in the 1970s that change really began to accelerate. Elements from the postwar

years converged and conspired with new developments to move us from the two-hundred-thousand-plus of *Ragtime* to the two-million-plus of Grisham.

## THE SEA CHANGE OF THE '70S

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“I never heard the word ‘marketing’ mentioned in the house until around 1970,” one senior editor in a large house recalls.<sup>28</sup> “It seems unbelievable today, but that’s when we got our first marketing director, a person who’d been a sales rep—a particularly well-read one. He became a gray eminence and had the ear of the president and was a font of wisdom and memory.” Book marketing as we know it was about to come of age.

What went on at old-line houses like Houghton, Scribner and Harper was different from the atmosphere prevailing at some of the Jewish firms that had been founded by “modern” young twentieth-century upstarts like Alfred Knopf and Bennett Cerf. The upstarts had embraced marketing and introduced a new kind of flair into the business in the 1920s. Knopf’s father, who helped him start his firm, was in advertising, and schooled his son in the art of image-making, both in his own persona and in the books he published.

Cerf, the publisher of O’Neill, Joyce, Faulkner and the Modern Library, knew better than just about anyone how to use radio, the popular press and eventually television to sell books and cultivate celebrity at the same time. He put the name Random House before American TV viewers every Sunday night on *What’s My Line*. Indeed, toward the end of his career he was accused of valuing celebrity rather too much. On various occasions, the critics protested—it wasn’t the “done thing.”<sup>29</sup>

But it was the advent of chain booksellers in shopping malls, and their ability to sell huge quantities nationwide, especially millions of copies of mass market paperbacks, that put marketing institutionally in the front seat of the publishing machine. Carol Schneider, who has directed the publicity effort at Random House for many years, recalls that when she first arrived in 1978, “there was a sort of marketing meeting in a room with floral chintz that we called the boudoir. And even that was a big departure.”<sup>30</sup> Expectations about the kinds of sales books were capable of achieving changed.

Of course some books by their very nature have a limited readership; only five or seven thousand people would buy them, whether the year was 1945, 1975 or 2000. What changed was that such books now found themselves dwarfed in a market that could suddenly sell many other books in exponentially greater quantities. Large conglomerates could provide the capital for gambling on big book advances for future mass market successes, but the quarter-on-quarter demands of bottom-line profits, maximizing shareholder value, and relentless growth are not ideally suited to the quirkier, individual nature of most book publishing.

By the 1990s, many books with a sales potential of five or seven thousand hardcover copies would be abandoned by the large houses, which, given the scale of their operations and the percentage of overhead costs applied to each title, could not publish them except at a loss. Those “smaller” books that still found their way onto the big houses’ lists were too often published without even the modest publicity or advertising help they once would have received. Some of them would find homes among the university or independent literary presses. However, many smaller presses have found that adequately supporting “trade” titles can be a financial strain rather than a panacea to their operations.

Waldenbooks and B. Dalton and the smaller, more local chains that sprang up in the 1970s did not in any way bring to bookselling the depth of knowledge or commitment to literature that characterizes the better independent stores. What they did accomplish was to bring books to large swathes of America—both geographic and socioeconomic—that had been underserved or completely ignored before.

The distinguished editor Sam Vaughan, whose publishing career started in 1952, underlined that achievement in an interview he gave in the late 1980s: “There were vast stretches of the country which simply weren’t part of our working consciousness.... Mass retailers give us six to ten thousand more places to sell books than we had before.”<sup>31</sup>

Other forces of change also came into play. The television talk show became the vehicle for moving large quantities of these books from the mall stores into readers’ hands. The new generation of baby boomers, whose parents’ reading habits had been fostered by the war, grew up amid unprecedented educational investment. Carolyn Reidy, a boomer herself and the current president of the S&S adult publishing group, says that “literature and reading became part of the boomer self-definition.”<sup>32</sup> And in the 1980s and ’90s, the newly moneyed adult boomers were willing to pay not just for paperbacks but for hardcovers to refine that self-definition, even if the books often did not move from the coffee table to catch the glow of the bedside reading light.

Prices began to rise in the 1970s and ’80s, reflecting manufacturing increases, to be sure, but also reflecting the amount publishers thought readers were willing to pay. The amount that publishers were willing to pay to acquire books also changed beginning in the 1970s. The big-money auction began to be used to secure paperback reprint rights. Eventually the auction

became commonplace for hardcovers, too, upping the ante of the publishing gamble and the need to sell vastly more copies of a particular title to recoup a vastly larger investment.

Agents became increasingly important to the process, and some of them became very powerful. And acquiring big books became the badge of the successful editor. Farrar, Straus's Elisabeth Sifton says that by the 1990s, it was clear that "editors were valued for the deals they could do, not for work well done or talent nurtured."<sup>33</sup> Perhaps that was not entirely true: talent nurtured that produced successful sales was certainly valued. But quickly enough, editors learned they had to think like marketers if they were to survive.

## A FLY ON THE WALL

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The current publishing dynamic is clear to anyone who observes editorial and marketing meetings inside the larger houses. The energy is in the marketing meeting. The sheer number of players involved conveys the emphasis placed on the marketing agenda: in a major house, there may be fifty or sixty people seated in tiers around the table. The power level is higher, too, with the presence of more executives from the very top of the company. And marketing meetings usually begin in only one way: with the latest bestseller list.

"Well, it was number six last week, and now it's seven," is how the publisher at one major house starts the discussion of the first title on the agenda, at a meeting in the fall of 2001.<sup>34</sup> The book in question is nonfiction, its author a public figure. "It's moving to eleven on Book Sense [the independent bookstore sales and marketing program, which has its own bestseller list]. Sales were 17,000 this week, against 20,000 the first week out," the associate publisher adds.

"It's still strong, the dailies [sales reports] are strong," chimes in one of the staff, without seeming to be defensive.

"But it would be nice to see Amazon stronger. Although they did just do a past-buyer mailing. And at least they told us that. We don't always get information about what they've done. They also offered it at 30 percent off, which is good news," the publisher adds.

"We should know what Amazon's comparing it to," comments another powerful executive. "The really good news is we didn't pay for the mailing. We can tell Amazon we want the information in order to tell the author."

Those responsible for selling to the national accounts join in. "Costco's down. Wal-Mart and Target are up. B&N and Borders are steady."

"We do have a reprint for 10,000 in process, and yesterday had 17,000 in stock. We're being very careful about the stock," another adds.

"What are the store signings like?" someone on the other side of the table asks.

As the discussion continues, suggestions are put forward to position the title as a holiday gift book to try to keep it on the list; to get the publicity department to try to place a short piece in a daily tabloid to boost the sales velocity; to encourage the author to get a lecture agent and do more on the road; to do a targeted mailing.

The younger staffers, who are seated at the outer edges of the room, away from the ring of executives at the table, strain to catch every word.

## THE NATURE OF THE BEST-SELLING BEAST

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The book being discussed at the marketing meeting had been positioned to be a bestseller from the very beginning. It had been bought for a large advance, given a big first printing, and backed with a large marketing budget for publicity, promotion and advertising. It had been pushed hard to the national accounts and, in turn, discounted and pushed by them. It was a candidate for big sales at the warehouse clubs.

When *The New York Times* compiles its best-seller chart, it sends out a list of books including titles like the one we've just been discussing, often before they ever make the list. Buzz and print runs and promotion money can put a book on its tracking list. *Times* respondents—now reportedly representing about 4,000 booksellers and some wholesalers—can additionally write in fast-sellers they have noticed that are not on the watch list.<sup>35</sup> *Publishers Weekly*, on the other hand, does not furnish a list, but depends on its respondents to provide the titles themselves.<sup>36</sup>

Computerization has enabled most booksellers to scrutinize groups of titles on a regular basis anyway, including books that the program selects for sales velocity. The national chains, with their own bestseller lists and discounting systems based on them, and the independents' Book Sense program are only the most public manifestations of the kind of tracking that goes on at retailers and wholesalers every day.

The effects of the computer's memory on the publishing process are far more dramatic than those of the human memory John Farrar once talked about. A human memory can make allowances for a good book whose sales don't meet expectations. Maybe the timing was off; maybe the marketing plan could have been different; maybe it will take an investment in

several books and the incremental building of a readership before that author's sales take off.

The computer remembers numbers, and numbers can exert an overwhelming influence on the human brain, crowding out whatever else the memory has stored. The computer tells booksellers to remove books from the shelves that are not moving after six weeks or three months, even if a book is about to get a late publicity fillip. The computer tells a publisher that an author's first book hasn't sold in the requisite numbers, so a contract for a second book will not be forthcoming. It speeds everything up, increases efficiency, but makes no allowances.

When booksellers are gathering their information for the *PW* list, "they are prone to look only at new book activity, or to take into account something happening that week—think Oprah, *The Today Show*, 9/11, a movie tie-in," Daisy Maryles says.<sup>37</sup> "A major revision of a big backlist seller can also put it on the list—a new edition of *The Joy of Cooking* or something like that.

"The list only reflects sales at the retail level," the *PW* executive editor continues. "It doesn't take into account book clubs or direct mail. The weekly lists don't include books sold in the discount clubs, either. But the annual lists, which we compile from numbers supplied by the publishers, do factor in those sales."

Sometimes a book may be selling in big numbers through direct mail or in the warehouse market, but not so much in regular stores. In such situations, it doesn't stay on the list for long, or make the list at all, or go as high on the list as it would if the sales were through traditional channels. "When the movie *Forrest Gump* came out, the *Bubba Gump* cookbook performed in that way. In the past, there were similar problems with religious books because they sold mainly into the

Christian Booksellers Association marketplace. That's a lot less likely to happen now, given the whole change in the way religion books are sold," Maryles adds.

The last quarter century has seen a blurring of the distinction between the Christian and mainstream markets. When Billy Graham's exceptionally fast-selling *Angels* was published in 1975, *PW* noted that the book's 800,000-plus sale did not include the substantial numbers of copies Graham sold through the mail or via his own organization.<sup>38</sup> If Graham were publishing his book today, even more copies would be sold through regular outlets.

The velocity and bestseller ranking of the latest titles in the Christian apocalyptic fantasy *Left Behind* series by Jerry B. Jenkins and Tom LaHaye are a case in point for this mainstreaming of the religious book business in America. The numbers are impressive—millions in the series shipped and sold to consumers every month. These books, *The Prayer of Jabez*—which Maryles identifies as one of the fastest-selling nonfiction titles ever—and others often account for the biggest, fastest-moving piles at the Wal-Marts and discount clubs and national chains.<sup>39</sup>

## THE CULTURE OF CELEBRITY

One of the major forces impacting trade book publishing is our culture of celebrity. In America, mongrel country open to all comers, some of the traditional internal glue of more homogeneous societies has been replaced by powerful cultural brands and manufactures. Mass entertainment and celebrity are two of the threads weaving together our disparate pieces of ethnic, economic, racial, geographic and religious patchwork into a national fabric. Huge monies are made and lost along the way.

Social definitions and distortions become embedded in the process. And books are surely a part of it.

In every period, one of the functions of literature has been as "entertainment." There have always been writers who, like Dickens 150 years ago or Frank McCourt today, have been exceedingly persuasive "entertainers." But in our contemporary culture, books and authors have to a considerable degree been co-opted into the entertainment *business*. "The book industry decided it was going to be Hollywood, although it's a different animal and it can't be Hollywood," the writer and Columbia University writing professor Maureen Howard said forcefully in an interview.<sup>40</sup> Nevertheless, the role and the work of the writer have changed as Hollywood has indeed entered the equation.

The publisher Clarkson Potter put it this way: "The question, of course, is whether the writer should make an effort to...try to achieve celebrity status.... The answer, sadly, is yes. If...a writer can and should make efforts to promote his book, then it is only a small extension of the same principle that he can and should promote himself as himself...."

"We are forced to admit that by making himself a celebrity, the writer increases his worth to his publishers, sells more of his books, and generally enhances his position in the literary world.... If people feel that they somehow 'know' a writer, they are more willing, even eager, to read what he has to say."<sup>41</sup>

Someone like Anne Tyler, who refuses to go on tour, is an anomaly. Most writers seem to have accepted the changing mores of the job and the opportunities and pressures they present. Some have resorted to hiring their own publicists or media coaches; others, when not actually writing their books, make a full-time career out of marketing them on the Web and on the road,

whether they have been published by a commercial house or published the books themselves.

The ambivalence so publicly displayed by Jonathan Franzen when Oprah Winfrey selected *The Corrections* as her book-club choice and wanted to put her brand on his work is unusual; most authors, particularly younger authors, are happy enough to buy into the system so long as they are courted by it. Franzen appears now to be participating rather more fully in the celebrity game. For his part, Dave Eggers, the author of *A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius*, may be attempting to circumvent the traditional route by launching *McSweeney's* and his own publishing operation, but he is far from eschewing publicity or personal celebrity, especially via his generation's mode of choice, the Web.

Jane Friedman, the CEO of HarperCollins, was as a young publicist at Knopf involved in grafting modern promotion onto the book business. She was an early practitioner and perfecter of the author tour, the behind-the-scenes person in the kitchen with Julia Child when Child took her cookery books on the publicity road. The "cult of personality and notion of personal publicity," though, could only extend so far back then, Friedman recalled in an interview. For example, "In those days, an editor would never have published a cookbook based on a restaurant. People would have thought you were loony if you tried."<sup>42</sup> Now "branding" is a supremely important activity at HarperCollins and every other major publisher, and almost anything goes.

Former Random House publisher Ann Godoff recalls that when Harry Evans, her predecessor, arrived on the scene, "the company was not as much in the forefront as it should have been. Harry did something really crucial. He brought an awareness of the importance of publicity, both for the titles and for himself as a player on the public stage."<sup>43</sup> In one sense, Evans followed

the example set by Bennett Cerf in making himself into a celebrity. Beyond the personal satisfactions it provided to him, it also garnered more attention for Random House books.

It is no accident that it was Evans who decided to relaunch the Modern Library, which had been in decline since at least the 1960s, when paperbacks were stealing its thunder. By the time Evans arrived at Random House, the series was languishing; there hadn't been any new printings for years. He relaunched it with full publicity fanfare. The much-debated Modern Library lists of the century's "hundred best" fiction and nonfiction were one of the most obvious, and most effective, publicity ploys.

According to Godoff, "Harry saw the book as a viable commercial property, and would go around asking how we'd use the author, how we'd use publicity. He'd go around saying, 'Show me the bookings.'"<sup>44</sup> Whether publishers like to admit it or not, an author's telegenicity, promotability and age enter increasingly into the acquisition equation, particularly for new authors whose careers need to be "made." At the same time, many older, mid-list authors find themselves watching their books sink into the backwaters of the major houses' lists.

As David Kirkpatrick concluded in the report he wrote for the Authors Guild in 2000, mid-list books are being published, probably in greater numbers than ever before. The problem is that they are not being published well.<sup>45</sup> They are unequal citizens, not being marketed in a place and time where marketing is everything.

Maureen Howard, who says she hates being described as "a literary writer," feeling that it is code for "mid-list," remembers what it was like to have been a "hot young thing," and recognizes the value of publicity. She's as glad to gain it as anyone. But "it's not good for the writer always to be following the news of the

Rialto,” i.e., the day-to-day business goings-on of the publishing industry, she says. “Yet that’s what the younger ones do.”<sup>46</sup>

The book-business-as-Hollywood model’s apotheosis can be seen courtesy of another Harry. In an interview, Scholastic’s vice-president for trade, Michael Jacobs, described how the first Harry Potter book was unusually and deliberately treated like an adult trade title, and not a children’s book, in the company’s marketing plan.<sup>47</sup> The concept of branding looms particularly large at a house like Scholastic, where book clubs and home sales make vertical integration even more lucrative than at an ordinary trade house.

Indeed, Barbara Marcus, the Scholastic executive vice president, emphasized in an interview that “creating publishing franchises” is her major strategic thrust.<sup>48</sup>

J. K. Rowling had the possibility of creating such a franchise; she was set on producing seven novels, not one, and the novels, if they worked, could be leveraged in many ways. Her welfare-mother-to-first-time-author story was perfectly suited to promotion. Pre-publication dinners were held in key markets across the country to introduce the first book in the series and its charming young author in order to build buzz.

Fast-forward a couple of years. By the time the publication of the fourth Potter book was about to take place, it was, in Michael Jacobs’s words, “a cultural event not unlike a major movie release.”<sup>49</sup> And that was even before the movie.

## ECONOMICS OF CONSOLIDATION 101

The book business today is highly consolidated on every front, save that of the author and the book itself—just recall the 122,108 individual titles published in 2000.<sup>50</sup> Thousands of small publishers and self-publishers are responsible for producing many of them, but the titles populating the bestseller lists tell a very different story. Of the books appearing on *PW*’s weekly bestseller lists during the year 2000, 83.5 percent were published by only five companies—Random House, PenguinPutnam, HarperCollins, Simon & Schuster, AOL Time Warner.<sup>51</sup>

As anybody visiting a main street or a mall in America knows, the retailers selling those books have consolidated as well. (See Table 7)

Wholesalers, distributors and library suppliers have also been merged or acquired into fewer and larger entities. Many of the small regional companies are no longer in business. The mass market paperback sector has witnessed tremendous consolidation during the last decade in

Table 7 2001 ADULT BOOK SALES MARKET SHARE ANALYSIS

SELLER TYPE	MARKET SHARE
Independent stores/small chains	14.80%
Large chain bookstores	23.40%
Mass merchandisers	5.60%
Discount stores	2.60%
Food/drug stores	3.30%
Price clubs	6.60%
Multimedia	0.07%
Used bookstores	3.30%
Book clubs	19.90%
Mail order/catalogue	3.10%
E-commerce/Internet	7.50%
Other	9.20%

Source: IPSOS/NPD *Booktrends* <sup>52</sup>

independent distributor channels, and consequently the disappearance of much traditional rack space.

Within libraries, too, a kind of information consolidation has been taking place. During the last twenty years a larger and larger proportion of the acquisitions budget has shifted, first from individual books to high-priced serials, and more recently to expensive aggregated databases.

The changes in the retail, library and distribution sectors of the business each merit full-scale reports of their own. It is the finances of consolidation within the publishing houses themselves that will be considered here.

Clarkson Potter put it well some years ago when he wrote, “The trouble is that normal business practices both can and cannot be applied to a publisher, and the long-range success of the operation will depend upon someone knowing just when to be strictly business-like and when not to be.”<sup>53</sup>

Unfortunately, large conglomerate structures are bureaucracies. Many are also oligarchies. They are not well suited to letting the executives in charge of their individual publishing units operate along anything other than strictly company lines on every decision. It takes a very strong person to swim against the stream, and sometimes that proves to be impossible.

As the publisher of one major imprint in a large multimedia conglomerate said in an interview, “The corporation puts ridiculous profit expectations on us. It’s very hard to make the case to grow a writer if you have a master above you saying if somebody’s not making money you can’t publish that person. Some publishers respond by bringing out a lot of titles that they acquire for relatively little money—the throw-it-on-the-wall-and-see-if-it-sticks approach. But there’s a big dichotomy between that philosophy

and paying as much attention as possible to each book to break through the noise.”<sup>54</sup>

Corporations mandate growth targets, which is partly why more and more books are being published each year. Divisions do periodically decide to cut titles, but almost inevitably their numbers start creeping up again within a few years. The throw-it-on-the-wall approach is one reason. Another is the need for young editors to prove themselves by acquiring new authors and building a list quickly. They often spend large sums to do so on the basis of a proposal in a competitive auction, but many of the finished books disappoint qualitatively as well as financially. Then there is the matter of internal competition among the various imprints within a conglomerate for the same big-money, high-profile books. Finally, growth is also fuelled through the acquisition of smaller companies or niche lists.

“There’s a kind of disconnect between the desire to operate divisions independently and the desire to take advantage of a corporation’s size,” concluded a senior executive in one large publishing division. The problem both inside and outside the corporation, he continued, is that “everybody is squeezing everybody else. If you try to have increased sales and profit margins on a continuous basis, you’ll ruin the company.”<sup>55</sup>

The executive went on to explain the basic economics of the business this way: “Normally, media corporations look for profit levels of 12 to 14 percent. A trade publishing company looks for 8 to 12 percent, or perhaps 8 to 10 percent. But much of the profit is generated not by the frontlist, but from the backlist, especially the trade paperback imprints. In reality, 75 to 80 percent of the books being published don’t earn out the advances to their authors. The money is where the paperback is, but the whole industry is confused as to what is the right

barometer to use in measuring how much to pay when acquiring a new book.... Sometimes we have an editor do a P&L [profit and loss estimation, which is used in acquisitions decisions] six times. The question is whether or not it's true. It's very easy to lie to yourself."

Part of the profit-and-loss calculation involves the matter of returns, the unsold books that retailers remove from the shelves and return to the publisher for full credit. Twenty-five years ago, a book's shelf life was far longer. Today, many new books only stay on the shelf for three months—in some cases, even less. According to the same executive, "Thirty-five percent is a good average figure for normal hardcover front-list returns. On a trade paperback, you might have 25 percent returns the first year of publication and 20 percent as you go forward. On a mass market, you assume returns of 40 to 50 percent, but you can still make money because the relative price to produce the book is so small compared to the hardcover."

A third publisher, under yet another conglomerate roof, has to contend with other media divisions that bring in profits of 20 percent per year. "It would be nice to be wanted for what you are, rather than what they want to turn you into," the executive said, agreeing that "you can't have better margins than 10 to 12 percent in trade book publishing on a regular basis. Fifty percent of all our books don't make a contribution to our overheads—on a P&L that means they are losing money. If you only operated on the actual costs, we couldn't publish 90 percent of the books we publish."<sup>56</sup> Part of the reason is that as publishers farm out more and more of the traditional in-house functions—copy editing, cover and inside design, promotion, copywriting, etc.—these costs are put onto the book itself, whereas they used to be part of general overheads.

When talking about money matters, most publishers insist on anonymity. But Carolyn

Reidy, the S&S adult publishing group president, was willing to venture where others feared to tread: "It's still true that a few big books end up supporting the publishing program year to year. If we calculate that David McCullough's *John Adams* will sell half a million copies, and it sells way over a million, that is a huge boost [to the bottom line]."<sup>57</sup>

Indeed, Reidy sees the changing economics this way: "In the past, we'd sell ten mass market paperbacks for every hardcover. Today we sell two mass markets for every hardcover. We sell one trade paperback for every hardcover, except for the exceptions of course! That's a huge shift in formats and in what people are willing to pay.

"As companies get bigger, you need a bigger level of sales volume to break even every year. There are more titles that have more money at risk than there used to be. The hard, cold reality that this is a business, not a cultural enterprise, finds its mirror in the rise of the literary agent and the kind of money that's at stake.

"The biggest advances almost never earn out, but the advance doesn't have to earn out for the publisher to make money. When the advance is in the millions, there is less risk than people on the outside would think, particularly in fiction, because the calculations are made on the basis of solid information, on past performance of a brand name.

"Of the smaller advances, say under \$300,000, half of those don't earn out. The real risk is in the \$200,000 to \$1 million advance. Passion gets people to pay a lot of money for a writer who is not a brand name. The book has to be made. That's where you have the worst write-offs, in books that are bought at auctions at that level and that don't work, even if you have published them well."

On the one hand, consolidation has meant deeper pockets to fund certain projects. It has meant, on the bookselling side of the business, that it can be easier to get attention for a particular book. If, for example, a publisher manages to gain the ear of the fiction buyer at B&N for a promising new novel, that book will be promoted in B&N's hundreds of stores across America, as opposed to having to deal with somebody making individual stocking decisions in each of those stores.

On the other hand, if the B&N buyer takes a pass on the book, hundreds of stores will not stock it. And the deep pockets for certain projects, whether publishers like it or not, deprive others of attention inside the house. Reidy admits, "There are a lot of books for which there's no marketing other than trying to get reviews."

## BRAVE NEW TECHNOLOGICAL WORLD

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In 1975, there was no Amazon. There was no print on demand. There were no author Web sites. There were no e-books and no PDAs on which to download them. Ordering, inventory and marketing information were not communicated between publishers and retailers on a daily basis over the Internet. The audio book business did not exist. Books were written on legal pads or bashed out on typewriters, so fewer pages were written, fewer people fancied themselves writers, and far fewer fancied themselves self-publishers. Inventories were checked physically, not virtually. Hot metal type reigned supreme.

The technological changes in the book business during the last quarter century have been staggering. They have resulted in greater specialization, but also in the blurring of bound-

aries, making it possible, as one division head put it, "for everybody to do everybody else's job"—or at least to think they can. "People have to be very conscious of what they bring to any role they claim they're performing," she continued. "Corporations are doing less and less of their own services for themselves, farming more and more out to freelancers."<sup>58</sup>

The e-book bubble burst as people realized that the electronic medium, in the near term at least, is far more suited to academic, professional, and educational publishing than to the trade. Nevertheless, the large publishing companies are all investing time, thought and money into the uses of technology, and technology is transforming production, warehousing, accounting, marketing and sales.

HarperCollins provides as good a base as any to consider some of the changes. CEO Jane Friedman says that becoming a more efficient global publishing operation is one of the goals, but that in technology, as in anything else, a company must think both globally and locally.

In marketing, Harper is working to reach readers directly via its own Web site, its authors' sites and niche sites. On the bookselling front, it has developed a password-protected extranet site accessible only to retailers, who can check order status, invoice archives, download jacket pictures, and obtain customer support. In 2002, all pre-publication catalogues became available to booksellers via the Net.

Another initiative is the company's "author tracker," aimed at devotees of genre fiction, most notably romance novels. A fan is notified by e-mail when an author is about to publish a new book and is given interviews, tour information, etc. Thus fan, author and publisher "interact." To a certain extent, the initiative mimics Amazon's past-buyer mailings. It could eventually be extended to non-genre authors if their

readership base is large enough.<sup>59</sup> Community is the key to online marketing, just as a yearning for community is the key to the success of Oprah et al.

But one of the challenges facing every publisher is ensuring that employees integrate new technology into their work. Laurie Rippon functions as one of the bridges between the publishing side and the technology side of HarperCollins. One of her first jobs, after arriving in December 1998, was to get the company “not to re-create things over and over again. I found that different departments were scanning and re-scanning the same material for different purposes, when it should only have to be put in once.”<sup>60</sup>

“In publishing, as in other businesses, many people who aren’t fresh out of college are freaked out by new technology. They don’t want to change the way they work. They’re having to learn things they were not originally hired to do, things they feel they’re not good at doing. New technology should be part and parcel of what everybody does, since it’s the same job, the same skills, the same knowledge set, working in a different medium. Until people think of it as just another way of doing business, it will be hard to integrate it fully.

“But for the kind of effect the Web can have, just look at an author like Neil Gaiman.

He had a loyal following in the fantasy and comic book worlds, so we decided the Web would be a good place to get the energy going for his book *American Gods*. We put up a Web site where he wrote a daily journal about the publication process. More and more people visited the site. When the book was published, it went on the *Times* bestseller list, and he’d never been there before.”

Technology allows everything to speed up, but it costs more in terms of people’s time. Allocating time has become a far more complicated matter, and authors and publishers both feel the pressure. How much time should an author devote to promoting his or her book on the Web? How can a marketing department keep up with which sites are hot, with what is new, and do everything else they’re supposed to do?

“Twenty-five years ago,” Rippon says, “you used to be able to say that something was not possible, that a book had gone to press and nothing more could be changed. But now, you can’t say no anymore; things can be ‘fixed’ indefinitely, decisions reconsidered. For example, a cover image or jacket copy can be tinkered with until the last possible minute. There’s a lot of cacophony. It’s a wonderful time to be a creative thinker in book publishing, but it becomes harder to see clearly. There’s a lot less time to do so.”

### 3. BESTSELLERS AND BEST BOOKS

#### A NOTE ABOUT STATISTICS

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Before turning to the bestsellers and best books of 1975, a quick word about statistics. In every sector of book publishing they are universally acknowledged to be inadequate and idiosyncratic. The computer has improved things, but not all that much, from the days when the Book Industry Committee of the Book Manufacturers Institute commissioned a study of buying habits. Their 1948 report lamented, “No one in the book business had any authentic information as to what was actually happening.... Who buys books? What kind of books? Where do they buy them?”<sup>61</sup>

Statistics for the world of the bestseller are no exception, but BookScan, Nielsen’s nascent electronic book tracking system set up to measure numbers at the point of sale and communicate them to their publishers, may eventually change the situation.

Nielsen only inaugurated the BookScan program in the U.S. in 2001 (they already operate the SoundScan system that measures American recording industry sales, and the BookScan system in the U.K.). If the vast majority of significant book publishers and retailers sign on in the U.S., as they have done during the last decade in the U.K., it will change the nature of the bestseller list. The top books will still be there, but in different configurations. No doubt there will be many backlist surprises. And finally, we’ll be dealing with actual numbers rather than percentages or estimates.

#### BESTSELLERS OF 1975

TABLE 8

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“At a time when publishers are again pondering the future of the hardcover novel, the Annual Best Seller list seems to support the contention

that aside from well-known writers with proven track records, fiction does not sell well.” Thus intoned *Publishers Weekly* in February 1976 in its annual analysis of the trends and patterns of the previous year’s biggest sellers. Daisy Maryles, who presided over that analysis (as she continues to do now), went on to note ominously that not one first novel was on the top ten fiction list, or even in the top ten runners-up.<sup>62</sup>

We know with hindsight that Nikita Khrushchev did not succeed in burying America; nor did the mass market paperback bury the hardcover novel, as many feared it would. Quite the contrary. Cloth has survived and in some cases sells in quantities only mass market paperbacks could have achieved in the 1970s.

#### ONE-DAY LAYDOWNS

The latter-day “well-known writers with proven track records” have become even more powerfully entrenched. Authors like Grisham, Crichton, Clancy, Steel and King are brand names deeply engraved into the popular consciousness via books, movies and TV. Their publishers resort to one-day national laydowns, so that the books arrive in every store all over the country (and in some cases, on both sides of the Atlantic) on exactly the same day, creating a pent-up demand and a sales velocity that almost guarantees the title will become the number-one fiction bestseller its first week out.

It is not by accident that each brand-name novelist tends to be published rather predictably at the same time every year, and manages to have his or her two-week window in first place before the next candidate shows up in the stores. No imprint wants to find its biggest seller scrambling for first place its first week out with another just-launched brand name. Thus, an informal system among publishers has evolved to accommodate this, the book industry equivalent of staggered take-offs and no-fly zones at airports during peak season.

Table 8 1975 BESTSELLERS

TITLE	AUTHOR	AWARDS			ANNUAL RANK	TOTAL WEEKS	ORIGINAL HARDCOVER PUBLISHER	OUT OF PRINT
		NYT	NBA	PUL				
<i>Ragtime</i>	Doctorow	★			1	38	Random House	
<i>The Moneychangers</i>	Hailey				2	34	Doubleday	
<i>Curtain</i>	Christie				3	31	Dodd, Mead	
<i>Looking for Mr. Goodbar</i>	Rossner				4	35	Simon & Schuster	
<i>The Choirboys</i>	Wambaugh				5	26	Delacorte	
<i>The Eagle Has Landed</i>	Higgins				6	32	Holt, Rinehart	
<i>The Greek Treasure</i>	Stone				7	22	Doubleday	●
<i>The Great Train Robbery</i>	Crichton				8	24	Knopf	
<i>Shogun</i>	Clavell				9	33	Atheneum	
<i>Humboldt's Gift</i>	Bellow	★	☆	★	10	21	Viking	
<hr/>								
<i>Angels: God's Secret Agents</i>	Graham				1	30	Doubleday	
<i>Winning Through Intimidation</i>	Ringer				2	21	Funk & Wagnalls	
<i>TM: Discovering Inner Energy and Overcoming Stress</i>	Bloomfield				3	25	Delacorte	●
<i>The Ascent of Man</i>	Bronowski				4	38	Little, Brown	●
<i>Sylvia Porter's Money Book</i>	Porter				5	25	Doubleday	●
<i>Total Fitness in 30 Minutes a Week</i>	Morehouse et al				6	33	Simon & Schuster	●
<i>The Bermuda Triangle</i>	Berlitz et al				7	34	Doubleday	●
<i>The Save-Your-Life Diet</i>	Reuben				8	19	Random House	●
<i>Bring on the Empty Horses</i>	Niven				9	28	Putnam	●
<i>Breach of Faith: The Fall of Richard Nixon</i>	White				10	24	Atheneum / RDP	●

**KEY**

All bestsellers are from *Publishers Weekly (PW)*

NYT *New York Times Book Review* Editors' Choice (an honor awarded to a small number of books each year)

NBA National Book Awards

PUL Pulitzer Prizes

ANNUAL RANK Ranking on the *PW* annual (as opposed to weekly) bestseller list

TOTAL WEEKS Total number of weeks a book appears on the *PW* weekly bestseller list

☆ Nominated but did not win

★ Awarded

● Out of Print

○ Available via print-on-demand

==== Double lines separate fiction from nonfiction in the bestseller tables; double lines separate different award categories (e.g., fiction, biography, history, arts and letters) in the best books tables throughout.

We also know that first novelists, sometimes even literary first novelists like Alice Sebold, Charles Frazier, or Arthur Golden, can occasionally break through in astonishing numbers. Reports of fiction's—and especially first fiction's—hardcover demise were thus greatly exaggerated, although new problems have come to replace the old.

#### LONGER-LASTING FICTION

In 1975, when a novel reached the bestseller list, it tended to remain there for rather a long time, often extending into part of a second year's run. Look at the numbers of weeks each book stayed on the 1975 hardcover list: E. L. Doctorow's *Ragtime*, 38 weeks; Arthur Hailey's *The Moneychangers*, 34; Agatha Christie's *Curtain*, 31; Judith Rossner's *Looking for Mr. Goodbar*, 35; Joseph Wambaugh's *The Choirboys*, 26; Jack Higgins's *The Eagle Has Landed*, 32; Irving Stone's *The Greek Treasure*, 22; Michael Crichton's *The Great Train Robbery*, 24; James Clavell's *Shogun*, 33; Saul Bellow's *Humboldt's Gift*, 21 weeks. A novel's tenure in 2000 is generally far shorter (see Table 9), even if more titles make it to the list for a fleeting week or two.

Suspense, mystery, war, adventure, the lure of another time and place—what characterized 1975's best-selling fiction isn't so different from what characterizes the novels of today, although much contemporary fiction, influenced perhaps by the vogue for memoir, certainly seems more self-absorbed. Best-selling novels in 1975 also seemed to be less time-crunched, stretching over lots of pages as they sat on the list for their long, comfortable stays.

Only one of 1975's crop of best-selling novelists, Michael Crichton, went on to become a brand name for today. Agatha Christie doesn't count—she was a brand name long before 1975, and *Curtain* had actually been written back in the 1940s.

#### ANTIQUÉ BOOKENDS AND THEIR PRICES

The novels bookending the 1975 fiction list, *Ragtime* and *Humboldt's Gift*, were both highly literary. Such bookends have become antiques; they have not recurred since, and it is highly unlikely that they will anytime soon. Of course literary fiction still makes the weekly hardcover lists, but it is a rarity for it to make the annuals. If it does so, it will be singly rather than in pairs. Instead, the best-selling life of much serious fiction is now primarily in trade paperback, a format that in 1975 was overwhelmingly devoted to nonfiction.

As for the money changing hands, a quarter century ago, the hardcover novels on the list ranged in price from \$6.95 to \$12.50. Nonfiction cost a little more. Today it would be hard to buy most undiscounted trade paperbacks within such a price range.

According to Amazon and Bowker's *Books in Print*, nine of the ten 1975 best-selling novels are still in print in mass market editions, and *Ragtime* is available in mass market and as a Modern Library hardcover. Ironically, only Irving Stone's biographical novel about the Schliemanns has bitten the dust. It awaits excavation by some latter-day editorial version of the famous archaeologist, who will no doubt digitize it for printing on demand.

#### MAKING OR BURYING A BOOK

In 1975, as in 2002, if a publishing house got behind a book and anointed it as one of the titles the house would "make" that season, the book was far more equal than others on that particular list, and far more likely to succeed. It happened in 2002 with Alice Sebold's *The Lovely Bones*. It happened a quarter century ago with *Looking for Mr. Goodbar*, Judith Rossner's fictionalized account of a New York City murder. *Goodbar* went on to become a paperback bestseller in spring 1976, when more than two million copies were printed. It went

Table 9 1975 v 2000 COMPARISON FICTION BESTSELLERS

TITLES 1975	AUTHOR	AWARDS			ANNUAL RANK	TOTAL WEEKS	ORIGINAL HARDCOVER PUBLISHER	OUT OF PRINT
		NYT	NBA	PUL				
<i>Ragtime</i>	Doctorow	★			1	38	Random House	
<i>The Moneychangers</i>	Hailey				2	34	Doubleday	
<i>Curtain</i>	Christie				3	31	Dodd, Mead	
<i>Looking for Mr. Goodbar</i>	Rossner				4	35	Simon & Schuster	
<i>The Choirboys</i>	Wambaugh				5	26	Delacorte	
<i>The Eagle Has Landed</i>	Higgins				6	32	Holt, Rinehart	
<i>The Greek Treasure</i>	Stone				7	22	Doubleday	●
<i>The Great Train Robbery</i>	Crichton				8	24	Knopf	
<i>Shogun</i>	Clavell				9	33	Atheneum	
<i>Humboldt's Gift</i>	Bellow	★	☆	★	10	21	Viking Penguin	
TITLES 2000								
<i>The Brethren</i>	Grisham				1	30	Doubleday	
<i>The Mark: The Beast Rules the World</i>	Jenkins				2	9	Tyndale House	
<i>The Bear and the Dragon</i>	Clancy				3	20	Putnam	
<i>The Indwelling: The Beast Takes Possession</i>	Jenkins				4	14	Tyndale House	
<i>The Last Precinct</i>	Cornwell				5	13	Putnam	
<i>Journey</i>	Steel				6	8	Delacorte	
<i>The Rescue</i>	Sparks				7	12	Warner	
<i>Roses Are Red</i>	Patterson				8	12	Little, Brown	
<i>Cradle and All</i>	Patterson				9	10	Little, Brown	
<i>The House on Hope Street</i>	Steel				10	10	Delacorte	
<i>The Wedding</i>	Steel				11	7	Delacorte	
<i>Drowning Ruth</i>	Schwarz				12	12	Doubleday	
<i>Before I Say Good-bye</i>	Clark				13	14	Simon & Schuster	
<i>Deck the Halls</i>	Clark				14	9	Simon & Schuster	
<i>Gap Creek</i>	Morgan				15	14	Algonquin	

☆ Nominated but did not win   ★ Awarded   ● Out of Print   ○ Available via print-on-demand

back on the paperback list in November 1977 when the movie was released with an 875,000 copy tie-in edition.

In the old days, the in-house enthusiasm that turned *Goodbar* into a bestseller came from the editor and was enough to get everyone else on board. Now it generally has to come from the very top, namely the publisher, in concert with the marketing staff. *Goodbar* was Judith Rossner's fourth novel. Very few writers would be given such support today on a fourth book, if they hadn't already achieved substantial sales with their previous titles. Indeed, it would be highly unusual today for one house to continue to publish a writer through that many books without having seen some real bottom-line success.

One editor, who prefers to remain anonymous, put it this way: "At a launch meeting, which happens about a year before a book is published, an editor gives his or her pitch, and I mean pitch, as inventive and rousing and persuasive as you can make it. You'd better make it clear why that book is going to work. The marketing and sales people have their own meetings later on, and I'm convinced they then decide that either the book gets pushed or it gets minimal treatment. That decision gets set in stone and it takes a heroic act to change it.

"The way I could tell nothing was going to happen on a particular book I was publishing was when I got the proposal for a new book from the same author and couldn't get anybody interested in it at all. When the marketing and publishing people don't really want something, it's evident, and nothing will happen for it. You have to know enough as an editor to know when there is nothing you can do. In another era, that second book would have been signed up. Today, the author has to go somewhere else."<sup>63</sup>

Sessalee Hensley, the buyer who determines what new fiction will go on Barnes & Noble's shelves all across the country, echoed the editor's point about the haves and have-nots in a recent article. She estimated that only 10 percent of books get any serious marketing or PR support from their publishers.<sup>64</sup> On the other hand, our anonymous editor says, "If the buyer at B&N or Borders doesn't like a book, you might as well forget about it." The blade is sharp, and it is double-edged.

The "heroic act" the editor talked about can come from a powerful chain-store buyer like Hensley, who takes a gamble on a dark horse. More often it comes from the buyers at the large independents. The heroic act can also come from the sales force itself. The reps can still take a position on a book and change its fate in a way the editor now rarely can.

When one turns to the nonfiction bestsellers on 1975's annual list, the mix of titles is very familiar. Religion, business, and various forms of self-help promising beautiful bodies, stress-free health, personal success, not to mention wealth—they are all there, as are a celebrity autobiography by the movie star David Niven; Jacob Bronowski's *Ascent of Man*, a TV-blockbuster tie-in imported from Britain; and Charles Berlitz's sleeper about the Bermuda Triangle, which succeeded in catching the public's sensationalistic fancy. Contemporary affairs and politics were represented by Theodore White's treatment of Nixon's then-recent disgrace.

All these categories were already well established when Mott was writing *Golden Multitudes* in the 1940s. Human nature does not change, after all.

#### SELF-PUBLISHING CIRCA 1975

Anybody who thinks that the huge self-publishing success of a *Celestine Prophecy* or *Christmas Box* represents some kind of recent develop-

ment should also think again. Robert Ringer spent \$100,000 to advertise his book *Winning Through Intimidation* after he published it himself in 1974 and sold it by mail. The book found a readership, its distribution was taken over by Funk & Wagnalls, and it went on to sell 265,000 copies in 1975, making it the second-largest nonfiction book that year. When it was reprinted the following May, it went on the paperback bestseller list, and by July had 1.3 million paperback copies in print.

Ringer, Berlitz and Bronowski were all published in 1974 and took some time to reach the list, a pattern that is less common today, given shorter shelf life in the stores. Once the nonfiction bestsellers of 1975 made it, though, they enjoyed long tenures on the list: Graham's *Angels*, 30 weeks; Ringer's *Winning Through Intimidation*, 21; Harold Bloomfield's *TM: Discovering Inner Energy and Overcoming Stress*, 25; Bronowski's *Ascent of Man*, 38; Sylvia Porter's *Money Book*, 25; Lawrence Morehouse's *Total Fitness*, 33; Berlitz's *Bermuda Triangle*, 34; David Reuben's *Save-Your-Life Diet*, 19; Niven's *Bring on the Empty Horses*, 28; and White's *Breach of Faith*, 24 weeks. Today's nonfiction bestsellers, thanks to the mass-marketing and discounting of top hardcover titles, often stay much longer. (See Table 10)

Only two of the annual nonfiction bestsellers from 1975 are still with us. Given religion's staying power and its ascendancy in the mainstream book business, it's not surprising that Billy Graham's *Angels* was reprinted as a mass market paperback by Word Publishing in 1995. Ringer's *Intimidation*, reprinted by Fawcett in 1993, is also still in print. But ideas on health, fitness, beauty and money change with the times and do not make for longevity in print.

Turning away from the annual list, one finds an unexpectedly healthy cluster of seriously good fiction and nonfiction on the weekly hardcover lists for briefish stints, bearing in mind that some of the books in the early part of the year were carryovers from 1974. Weekly bestsellers included Joseph Heller's *Something Happened*, John Updike's *A Month of Sundays*, Brendan Gill's *Here at The New Yorker* and Jimmy Breslin's *How the Good Guys Finally Won*. Thomas Harris was there with *Black Sunday*; so was John D. MacDonald with *The Dreadful Lemon Sky*.

#### THE BRIT LIST OF THE '70S

John le Carré's *Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy*, Alistair Maclean's *Circus* and James Herriot's *All Things Bright and Beautiful* were keeping the transatlantic special relationship humming (Herriot's success was based yet again on a TV series tie-in). Another Brit, Richard Adams, had a long spell on the list with *Shardik*. Indeed, the British book historian John Sutherland says that in reviewing American bestseller lists from the 1970s, he was "struck by the prominence of British authors—and, chauvinistically, by the high quality of their product."<sup>65</sup>

The French, not to be outdone, were represented by their own transatlantic phenomenon, Frederic Leboyer, whose *Birth Without Violence* was a nonfiction success for Knopf. The late Chaim Potok was a big homegrown author for Knopf, with *The Promise of Joy*. Like Adams, MacDonald and Maclean, he was a runner-up for the annual list.

Meanwhile Norton's anthologies and textbooks found themselves unexpectedly keeping company with the likes of *You Can Get There from Here* by Shirley MacLaine, Charles Higham's celebrity biography of Katherine Hepburn and Vincent Bugliosi's *Helter Skelter*, a runner-up on the annual nonfiction list.

Table 10 1975 v 2000 COMPARISON NONFICTION BESTSELLERS

TITLES 1975	AUTHOR	AWARDS			ANNUAL RANK	TOTAL WEEKS	ORIGINAL HARDCOVER PUBLISHER	OUT OF PRINT
		NYT	NBA	PUL				
<i>Angels: God's Secret Agents</i>	Graham				1	30	Doubleday	
<i>Winning Through Intimidation</i>	Ringer				2	21	Funk & Wagnalls	
<i>TM: Discovering Inner Energy and Overcoming Stress</i>	Bloomfield				3	25	Delacorte	●
<i>The Ascent of Man</i>	Bronowski				4	38	Little, Brown	●
<i>Sylvia Porter's Money Book</i>	Porter				5	25	Doubleday	●
<i>Total Fitness in 30 Minutes a Week</i>	Morehouse et al				6	33	Simon & Schuster	●
<i>The Bermuda Triangle</i>	Berlitz et al				7	34	Doubleday	●
<i>The Save-Your-Life Diet</i>	Reuben				8	19	Random House	●
<i>Bring on the Empty Horses</i>	Niven				9	28	Putnam	●
<i>Breach of Faith: The Fall of Richard Nixon</i>	White				10	24	Atheneum / RDP	●
TITLES 2000								
<i>Who Moved My Cheese?</i>	Johnson				1	103+	Putnam	
<i>Guinness World Records 2001</i>	Footman				2	20	Guinness	
<i>Tuesdays with Morrie</i>	Albom				4	183	Doubleday	
<i>Body for Life</i>	Phillips				4	122	HarperCollins	
<i>The Beatles Anthology</i>	Beatles				5	14	Chronicle	
<i>The O'Reilly Factor</i>	O'Reilly				6	30	Broadway	
<i>Relationship Rescue: A Seven Step Strategy</i>	McGraw				7	33	Hyperion	
<i>The Millionaire Mind</i>	Stanley				8	15	Andrews McMeel	
<i>Ten Things I Wish I'd Known</i>	Shriver				9	21	Warner	
<i>Eating Well for Optimum Health</i>	Weil				10	17	Knopf	
<i>The Prayer of Jabez</i>	Wilkinson				11	44+	Multnomah	
<i>Flags of Our Fathers</i>	Bradley				12	29	Bantam	
<i>A Short Guide to a Happy Life</i>	Quindlen				13	27	Random House	
<i>On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft</i>	King				14	12	Scribner	
<i>Nothing Like It in the World: The Men Who Built the Transcontinental Railroad 1863–1869</i>	Ambrose				15	20	Simon & Schuster	

☆ Nominated but did not win ★ Awarded ● Out of Print ○ Available via print-on-demand

James Michener was represented on the '75 list by *Centennial*, a number-one success carried over from the previous year. But Robert Caro's now-classic *The Power Broker*, which was published at the end of 1974, never made a hardcover list.

## BEST BOOKS OF 1975

TABLES 11, 12, 13, 14, 15

What of the prizewinners and editors' picks? Did they intersect at all with the bestsellers? Was there critical agreement about what was best? Has the past quarter century been kind or cruel?

Saul Bellow's *Humboldt's Gift* won the Pulitzer, was a *Times* choice, was shortlisted for the NBA and was the tenth-biggest bestseller on the annual fiction list—an extraordinary achievement by any measure, and an endorsement of Frank Mott's faith in vox pop's occasional ability to recognize and reward an extraordinary book.

The same holds true for E. L. Doctorow's *Ragtime*, the biggest fiction bestseller of the year. It didn't make the NBA shortlist but was a *Times* choice and the recipient of the first National Book Critics Circle award for fiction. *Ragtime* also broke the record of the day for reprint rights when Bantam paid \$1.85 million to publish the novel in paperback.

There was some overlap among several of the other best books in terms of multiple honors. Paul Horgan's *Lamy of Santa Fe* won the history Pulitzer and was shortlisted for the NBA. The Pulitzer for biography went to *Edith Wharton* by R. W. B. Lewis, and the book was shortlisted for the NBA and judged the best literary biography of the year by the *Times*. David Brion Davis's *The Problem of Slavery in*

*the Age of Revolution* won the NBA for history and was a *Times* selection. None of these titles ever even appeared on a weekly bestseller list.

The other best books intersected far less even in terms of endorsements. Robert N. Butler's *Why Survive? Being Old in America* won the Pulitzer for general nonfiction but nothing else. Michael J. Arlen's *Passage to Ararat*, Paul Fussell's *The Great War and Modern Memory* and William Gaddis's *JR* won their NBA categories but nothing else.

However, a number of *Times* choices and NBA runners-up were weekly bestsellers at some point during the course of 1975: Tom Wicker's *A Time to Die* and John Kenneth Galbraith's *Money* (both NBA nominees), and Susan Brownmiller's feminist analysis of rape, *Against Our Will*, and Paul Theroux's *The Great Railway Bazaar* (both *Times* choices). V. S. Naipaul's *Guerrillas*, published in November 1975, was a candidate for one week in 1976, although it never actually made a list.

### QUALITY AND/OR LONGEVITY

Quality does not guarantee longevity. Lewis's prizewinning biography of Edith Wharton is now out of print, as is Leonard Michaels's memoir about his life in New York. Perhaps it isn't mere coincidence that they are in the biographical or autobiographical mode. As the memoir craze of the '90s was to show, we are interested in the lives of others, but we want them written in our own time.

On the other hand, many publishers are trawling their own or other publishers' backlists in search of forgotten classics that might still have sales potential. Technological advances that facilitate small printings help make this possible. Thus Peter Handke's memoir about his mother and her suicide was reissued in October 2002 by New York Review Books.

As for other disappearances, one need only ponder the names of some of the writers on the weekly (as opposed to annual) bestseller lists. Allen Drury, Jessamyn West, Phyllis Whitney, Catherine Marshall, and Victoria Holt produced multiple bestsellers, but their books gather dust on library shelves today. Look, too, at the

names of some of the publishers of bestsellers and best books alike: Weybright & Talley; Dodd, Mead; Lippincott; Atheneum; Funk & Wagnalls. At best, the names live on as imprints of huge corporations. “Where are the snows of yesteryear?” famously lamented the medieval French poet François Villon. Where indeed.

Table 11 1975 NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW EDITORS’ CHOICE

TITLE	AUTHOR	AWARDS			ANNUAL RANK	TOTAL WEEKS	ORIGINAL HARDCOVER PUBLISHER	OUT OF PRINT
		NYT	NBA	PUL				
<i>Humboldt’s Gift</i>	Bellow	★	☆	★	10	21	Viking	
<i>The Dead Father</i>	Barthelme	★					Farrar, Straus	
<i>Ragtime</i>	Doctorow	★			1	38	Random House	
<i>A Sorrow Beyond Dreams: A Life Story</i>	Handke	★					Farrar, Straus	
<i>Far Tortuga</i>	Matthiessen	★				2	Random House	
<i>I Would Have Saved Them If I Could</i>	Michaels	★					Farrar, Straus	●
<i>Guerrillas</i>	Naipaul	★					Knopf	
<i>Edith Wharton: A Biography</i>	Lewis	★	☆	★			Harper	●
<i>The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, 1770–1823</i>	Davis	★	★				Cornell	
<i>Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape</i>	Brownmiller	★				5	Simon & Schuster	
<i>The War Against the Jews, 1933–1945</i>	Dawidowicz	★					Henry Holt	
<i>The Gulag Archipelago, Vol. II</i>	Solzhenitsyn	★				15	Harper	
<i>The Great Railway Bazaar: By Train Through Asia</i>	Theroux	★				6	Houghton Mifflin	

Table 12 1975 PULITZERS (Categories: Fiction, History, General Nonfiction, Biography)

TITLE	AUTHOR	AWARDS			ANNUAL RANK	TOTAL WEEKS	ORIGINAL HARDCOVER PUBLISHER	OUT OF PRINT
		NYT	NBA	PUL				
<i>Humboldt’s Gift</i>	Bellow	★	☆	★	10	21	Viking	
<i>Lamy of Santa Fe</i>	Horgan		☆	★			Farrar, Straus	
<i>Why Survive? Being Old in America</i>	Butler			★			Harper	●
<i>Edith Wharton: A Biography</i>	Lewis	★	☆	★			Harper	●

☆ Nominated but did not win   ★ Awarded   ● Out of Print   ○ Available via print-on-demand

Table 13 1975 NATIONAL BOOK AWARDS (Categories: Fiction, History & Biography, Contemporary Affairs, Arts & Letters)

TITLE	AUTHOR	AWARDS			ANNUAL RANK	TOTAL WEEKS	ORIGINAL HARDCOVER PUBLISHER	OUT OF PRINT
		NYT	NBA	PUL				
<i>JR</i>	Gaddis		★				Knopf	
<i>Humboldt's Gift</i>	Bellow	★	☆	★	10	21	Viking	
<i>The Collected Stories of Hortense Calisher</i>	Calisher		☆				Morrow	●
<i>Other People's Lives</i>	Kaplan		☆				Knopf	○
<i>Tyrants Destroyed and Other Stories</i>	Nabokov		☆				McGraw-Hill	●
<i>Beyond the Bedroom Wall</i>	Woiwode		☆				Farrar, Straus	
<i>The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, 1770–1823</i>	Davis	★	★				Cornell	
<i>Edith Wharton: A Biography</i>	Lewis	★	☆	★			Harper	●
<i>Lamy of Santa Fe</i>	Horgan		☆	★			Farrar, Straus	
<i>Recasting Bourgeois Europe</i>	Maier		☆				Princeton	
<i>American Slavery - American Freedom</i>	Morgan		☆				Norton	
<i>Russia Under the Old Regime</i>	Pipes		☆				Scribner	
<i>Charles Ives and His America</i>	Rossiter		☆				Liveright	●
<i>A World Destroyed: Hiroshima and Its Legacies</i>	Sherwin		☆				Knopf	
<i>Passage to Ararat</i>	Arlen		★				Farrar, Straus	
<i>Global Reach: The Power of the Multinational Corporations</i>	Barnet, Muller		☆				Simon & Schuster	●
<i>Pyramids of Sacrifice: Political Ethics and Social Change</i>	Berger		☆				Basic	●
<i>Money: Whence It Came, Where It Went</i>	Galbraith		☆			6	Houghton Mifflin	●
<i>A Time to Die</i>	Wicker		☆			4	Quadrangle / Times	○
<i>The Great War and Modern Memory</i>	Fussell		★				Oxford	
<i>Nijinsky Dancing</i>	Kirstein		☆				Knopf	●
<i>The Holocaust and the Literary Imagination</i>	Langer		☆				Yale	
<i>Modern Painting and the Northern Romantic Tradition</i>	Rosenblum		☆				Harper	●
<i>The Female Imagination</i>	Spacks		☆				Knopf	●
<i>Michelangelo's Last Paintings</i>	Steinberg		☆				Oxford	●

Table 14 1975 BEST BOOKS INTERSECTIONS

TITLE	AUTHOR	AWARDS			ANNUAL RANK	TOTAL WEEKS	ORIGINAL HARDCOVER PUBLISHER	OUT OF PRINT
		NYT	NBA	PUL				
<i>Humboldt's Gift</i>	Bellow	★	☆	★	10	21	Viking	
<i>The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, 1770–1823</i>	Davis	★	★				Cornell	
<i>Edith Wharton: A Biography</i>	Lewis	★	☆	★			Harper	●
<i>Lamy of Santa Fe</i>	Horgan		☆	★			Farrar, Straus	

Table 15 1975 BESTSELLERS/BEST BOOKS INTERSECTIONS

TITLE	AUTHOR	AWARDS			ANNUAL RANK	TOTAL WEEKS	ORIGINAL HARDCOVER PUBLISHER	OUT OF PRINT
		NYT	NBA	PUL				
<i>Humboldt's Gift</i>	Bellow	★	☆	★	10	21	Viking	
<i>Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape</i>	Brownmiller	★				5	Simon & Schuster	
<i>Ragtime</i>	Doctrow	★			1	38	Random House	
<i>Far Tortuga</i>	Matthiessen	★				2	Random House	
<i>The Gulag Archipelago, Vol. II</i>	Solzhenitsyn	★				15	Harper	
<i>The Great Railway Bazaar: By Train Through Asia</i>	Theroux	★				6	Houghton Mifflin	
<i>Money: Whence It Came, Where It Went</i>	Galbraith		☆			6	Houghton Mifflin	●
<i>A Time to Die</i>	Wicker		☆			4	Quadrangle / Times	○

☆ Nominated but did not win   ★ Awarded   ● Out of Print   ○ Available via print-on-demand

## BESTSELLERS OF 1980

TABLE 16

The gloom about the future of hardcover fiction that dogged the bestsellers of 1975 gave way in 1980 to rosy “higher unit sales for a wider spread of fiction titles than ever before,”<sup>66</sup> a fine example of the book business’s psychic predilection for moving from one extreme to the other. The rollout of chain stores was increasing, the pace of publishing picking up.

As a division head in a major corporate house put it, “In the early 1980s, certain opportunities were created, but certain pressures were created, too, to do things in a hurry.”<sup>67</sup> Books had traditionally been published on two lists, or seasons, each year. Publishers would begin to speed up the process in response to the rhythms of the chains, and by the 1990s, three seasons were the norm.

Fast forward to 2001. The same publisher continued, “Forty percent of our business is with two accounts.... Since B&N and Borders are on a seven-month schedule, we have to present a book to them seven months before it will actually be in the stores. We have to pretend our schedule is in kilter with them while knowing it never will be.”

What the chains could accomplish was already manifest in 1980. Consider James Michener’s *The Covenant*, the number-one fiction bestseller that year, which managed to sell 553,000 copies between its Thanksgiving publication and New Year’s Day. It more than doubled the sales figure of its 1975 equivalent, *Ragtime*, which had been published in July and therefore had a lot more time in the stores. Michener’s two previous novels, published in 1974 and 1978, had also led the list. Although most of Michener’s books did not reach the big screen, he was the closest to being the Grisham of his day.

Judith Krantz had made her spectacular sex-and-shopping entrance on the scene with her first novel and first bestseller, *Scruples*, in 1978, and in 1980 was in her prime with *Princess Daisy*. Belva Plain was following the same trajectory, with a best-selling first novel in 1978 followed by a second on the 1980 list.

### A DOMINATING HANDFUL

In one sense, however, some of the foreboding expressed in 1975 was completely justified. Hardcover fiction was selling well, but most of the novelists on the annual list were veterans with proven track records, not new and fresh names. Taylor Caldwell had made her first appearance on an annual list an astonishing thirty-four years earlier, in 1946. *The Fifth Horseman* was a first novel for Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre, but they had already produced two nonfiction bestsellers. Robert Ludlum had become a fixture and would continue to churn out Bourne books. (And *The Bourne Identity* would be given a new lease on life with a mass market movie tie-in edition twenty-two years later.)

Sidney Sheldon, Ken Follett, Belva Plain, Frederick Forsyth and Lawrence Sanders were repeat authors who would continue to produce variations on the romance and thriller themes for years to come. Some new names would arrive to displace the Taylor Caldwell vintage: Jean Auel, a runner-up on the 1980 fiction list (i.e., she was close to, but did not make the top fifteen) with her first novel, *The Clan of the Cave Bear*, would be one of them. But the pattern was set: a handful of fiction writers would reappear on the list year after year and dominate it. Stephen King’s longevity and productivity from the 1970s up to the present would give him a unique place among them on the annual lists.

Not a single prizewinner was an annual fiction bestseller, although *Loon Lake*, the sole “literary” novel on the annual list, was a *Times* best

Table 16 1980 BESTSELLERS

TITLE	AUTHOR	AWARDS			ANNUAL RANK	TOTAL WEEKS	ORIGINAL HARDCOVER PUBLISHER	OUT OF PRINT
		NYT	NBA	PUL				
<i>The Covenant</i>	Michener				1	42	Random House	
<i>The Bourne Identity</i>	Ludlum				2	33	Richard Marek	
<i>Rage of Angels</i>	Sheldon				3	42	Morrow	
<i>Princess Daisy</i>	Krantz				4	35	Crown	
<i>Firestarter</i>	King				5	38	Viking	
<i>The Key to Rebecca</i>	Follett				6	28	Morrow	
<i>Random Winds</i>	Plain				7	25	Delacorte	
<i>The Devil's Alternative</i>	Forsyth				8	30	Viking	
<i>The Fifth Horseman</i>	Collins et al				9	25	Simon & Schuster	●
<i>The Spike</i>	de Borchgrave				10	27	Crown	●
<i>Come Pour the Wine</i>	Freeman				11	25	Arbor House	●
<i>Fanny</i>	Jong				12	12	NAL	
<i>Loon Lake</i>	Doctorow	★			13	21	Random House	
<i>Answer As a Man</i>	Caldwell				14	22	Putnam	●
<i>The Tenth Commandment</i>	Sanders				15	19	Putnam	
<i>Crisis Investing</i>	Casey				1	34	Stratford Press	●
<i>Cosmos</i>	Sagan		☆		2	59+	Random House	
<i>Free to Choose: A Personal Statement</i>	Friedman				3	51	Harcourt Brace	
<i>Anatomy of an Illness as Perceived by the Patient</i>	Cousins				4	39	Norton	
<i>Thy Neighbor's Wife</i>	Talese				5	23	Doubleday	●
<i>The Sky's the Limit</i>	Dyer				6	25	Simon & Schuster	●
<i>The Third Wave</i>	Toffler				7	25	Morrow	
<i>Craig Claiborne's Gourmet Diet</i>	Claiborne				8	36	Times	●
<i>Nothing Down</i>	Allen				9	45	Simon & Schuster	
<i>Shelley Also Known as Shirley</i>	Winters				10	22	Morrow	●
<i>Side Effects</i>	Allen				11	19	Random House	
<i>Jim Fixx's Second Book of Running</i>	Fixx				12	16	Random House	●
<i>Betty Crocker's International Cookbook</i>					13	13	Random House	●
<i>The Coming Currency Collapse</i>	Smith				14	17	Books in Focus	●
<i>How to Become Financially Independent by Investing in Real Estate</i>	Lowry				15	24	Simon & Schuster	●

☆ Nominated but did not win ★ Awarded ● Out of Print ○ Available via print-on-demand

book. It, too, was by a repeat author, E. L. Doctorow. But in 1975 *Ragtime* had sat at the very top of the list; in 1980, *Loon Lake* resided toward the bottom.

#### VERTICAL INTEGRATION

The most interesting thing about Erica Jong's presence with *Fanny* was her publisher, NAL. It was emblematic of the growing trend of "mass market firms entering the hardcover mainstream," as Daisy Maryles said in *PW*.<sup>68</sup> Warner and Bantam also joined the fray, and by the mid-1980s Bantam would be mass-marketing a seemingly unbeatable phalanx of hardcover bestsellers.

Consolidation within the industry grew apace in the 1980s, and companies began to feel they had to own both hardcover and mass market paperback houses to do business. Vertical integration provided an advantage in the big auctions.

Later, as the trade paperback assumed much greater importance as a moneymaking format, it became necessary for hardcover houses not only to be allied to mass market imprints under the same corporate roof, but also to have their own trade paperback affiliation as well. As former Random publisher Ann Godoff said in an interview, she fought hard to persuade Random Inc.'s management to allow her to start a trade paperback line because "we want control of the life of the book in every format."<sup>69</sup>

On the nonfiction front, fully a third of the annual bestsellers of 1980 were about money. They were truly books of the day, reflecting worries about the double-digit inflation and 20 percent prime lending rate of the time. The usual kinds of self-help were also in evidence, from dieting to cooking to overcoming illness.

Jim Fixx's how-to book showed how much running was becoming an established part of

the American scene. Sex worked best-selling miracles for Gay Talese. Carl Sagan's *Cosmos* followed the blockbuster TV tie-in pattern seen five years earlier with Bronowski's *Ascent of Man*. Shelley Winters replaced David Niven in the celebrity memoirist slot, and indeed, was representative of a whole wave of tell-alls that would come to populate publishers' lists in the '80s and early '90s. Woody Allen was the best-selling humorist of the day.

Predictably, most of the nonfiction bestsellers faded away with their era. But the novels didn't last as well as the 1975 crop. Five from 1980 have long been out of print. (Although one of them, *Fanny*, is due to be reissued in spring 2003. It is being given a new lease on life to coincide with the publication of a new novel by Erica Jong. Publishers typically use the promotional adrenaline of a new book to help garner attention for backlist; occasionally, as in this case, an out-of-print title will be the beneficiary.)

On the other hand, the weekly bestseller lists in 1980, both in fiction and nonfiction, had a number of big best-book carryovers from the 1979 lists: William Styron's NBA-winning *Sophie's Choice*; Norman Mailer's Pulitzer-winning *The Executioner's Song*; Tom Wolfe's NBA-winning *The Right Stuff*. Kurt Vonnegut's *Jailbird* and John le Carré's *Smiley's People* did not make the annual list, but were among the longest-running best-selling novels of 1980. All of these books went on to sell large quantities when they were reprinted as paperbacks either later in 1980 or during the following year.

#### SELF-PUBLISHING CIRCA 1980

Self-publishing worked for Robert Ringer in 1975, and he went on to have another bestseller on the weekly lists in 1980 with *Restoring the American Dream*. But the really big self-publishing phenomenon that year was a controversial exposé of the management style and

culture of what was then the U.S.'s largest corporation: *On a Clear Day You Can See General Motors*, by journalist J. Patrick Wright. The book focused specifically on the Chevrolet Corvair's checkered history. The author published it under an eponymous imprint, Wright Associates. His source for much of the information was John Z. DeLorean, whose own checkered business career was later chronicled in print.

The book spent seventeen weeks on the hardcover list. It remains to be seen whether the most recent cluster of corporate catastrophes in America could spawn that kind of self-publishing success. It seems rather unlikely, though, even with the marketing potential of the Internet; most self-publishing successes these days are fantasy or feel-good or promise success or romance or spiritual connection, and grow from a local, hand-sold or niche base. Even Stephen Wolfram's recent tome, *A New Kind of Science*, can be regarded as specialized. The big public issues are another thing entirely.

## BEST BOOKS OF 1980

TABLES 17, 18, 19, 20, 21

Doctorow's *Loon Lake*; Ann Beattie's *Falling in Place*; Walker Percy's *The Second Coming*; Maxine Hong Kingston's *China Men*; *The Collected Stories of Eudora Welty*; Robert K. Massie's *Peter the Great*; Justin Kaplan's *Walt Whitman: A Life*; Ronald Steel's *Walter Lippmann and the American Century*; William Manchester's *Goodbye, Darkness: A Memoir of the Pacific War*; Studs Terkel's *American Dreams: Lost and Found*. Ten of the best books of 1980 were on the hardcover weekly bestseller list at some point during the course of that year, or, in the case of Welty and Whitman, January of the next. An eleventh book, Carl Sagan's *Cosmos*, a spectacularly

successful bestseller, was nominated for an NBA in a special science category. (The prize went to Stephen Jay Gould.)

Although *Loon Lake* and *Cosmos* were the only books among them to reach an annual list, this impressive assembly once again counters the theory that bestseller inevitably means lowest common denominator. It's worth repeating what Frank Mott said five decades ago: there are different audiences for different kinds of bestsellers, not simply one audience for them all.

Of those eleven books, ten are still in print. That is a surprisingly strong intersection of sales, quality and longevity. Justin Kaplan's biography of *Walt Whitman*—NBA winner, Pulitzer runner-up and *Times* choice—has gone out of print, a mystery that perhaps has something to do with the declining study of dead white (albeit great) male poets in American universities these past two decades. On the other hand, the dawn of the age of political correctness and of ethnic studies has made Maxine Hong Kingston's *China Men* live on, on many a university syllabus.

*The Cost of Good Intentions* was pinned to a very specific time and place and problem, New York City in the '60s and '70s and its financial implosion, and is no longer with us. Other out-of-print best books, *Nature and Culture* and *American Education: The National Experience 1783-1876*, academic studies both, had relatively limited prospective readerships to begin with. Marshall Frady's "journalist's odyssey" through the South has been supplanted by explorations of more recent vintage. But Victor Navasky's *Naming Names*, out of print after a revised edition in 1991, is being reissued once again, to live another day.

### DUNCES, HOURS, AND THE PRIZE EFFECT

A remarkable phenomenon took hold across the Atlantic in the 1980s: the Booker Prize. The

Table 17 1980 NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW EDITORS' CHOICE

TITLE	AUTHOR	AWARDS			ANNUAL RANK	TOTAL WEEKS	ORIGINAL HARDCOVER PUBLISHER	OUT OF PRINT
		NYT	NBA	PUL				
<i>The Collected Stories of Eudora Welty</i>	Welty	★	☆			2	Harcourt Brace	
<i>Falling in Place</i>	Beattie	★					Random House	
<i>Italian Folktales</i>	Calvino	★					Harcourt Brace	
<i>Loon Lake</i>	Doctrow	★			13	21	Random House	
<i>Man in the Holocene: A Story</i>	Frisch	★					Harcourt Brace	
<i>China Men</i>	Kingston	★	★	☆		13	Knopf	
<i>Walt Whitman: A Life</i>	Kaplan	★	★	☆		2	Simon & Schuster	●
<i>Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality</i>	Boswell	★	★				U. of Chicago	
<i>The Cost of Good Intentions: New York City and the Liberal Experiment</i>	Morris	★					Norton	●
<i>Nature and Culture: American Landscape Painting 1825–1875</i>	Novak	★					Oxford	●
<i>Conrad in the Nineteenth Century</i>	Watt	★					U. of California	

Table 18 1980 PULITZERS (Categories: Fiction, History, General Nonfiction, Biography)

TITLE	AUTHOR	AWARDS			ANNUAL RANK	TOTAL WEEKS	ORIGINAL HARDCOVER PUBLISHER	OUT OF PRINT
		NYT	NBA	PUL				
<i>A Confederacy of Dunces</i>	Toole			★			Louisiana State	
<i>Godric</i>	Buechner			☆			Atheneum	
<i>So Long, See You Tomorrow</i>	Maxwell		☆	☆			Knopf	
<i>American Education: The National Experience, 1783–1896</i>	Cremin			★			Harper	●
<i>Over Here: The First World War and American Society</i>	Kennedy			☆			Oxford	
<i>A Search for Power: The “Weaker Sex” in 17th c. New England</i>	Koehler			☆			U. of Illinois	●
<i>Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture</i>	Schorske		☆	★			Knopf	
<i>China Men</i>	Kingston	★	★	☆		13	Knopf	
<i>Southerners: A Journalist's Odyssey</i>	Frady			☆			NAL	●
<i>Goodbye, Darkness: A Memoir of the Pacific War</i>	Manchester			☆		19	Little, Brown	
<i>Peter the Great: His Life and World</i>	Massie		☆	★		18	Knopf	
<i>Walt Whitman: A Life</i>	Kaplan	★	★	☆		2	Simon & Schuster	●
<i>Walter Lippmann and the American Century</i>	Steel		☆	☆		7	Atlantic-Little, Brown	

**Table 19 1980 NATIONAL BOOK AWARDS** (Categories: Fiction, History, General Nonfiction, Biography)

TITLE	AUTHOR	AWARDS			ANNUAL RANK	TOTAL WEEKS	ORIGINAL HARDCOVER PUBLISHER	OUT OF PRINT
		NYT	NBA	PUL				
<i>Plains Song: For Female Voices</i>	Morris		★				Harper	
<i>The Collected Stories of Eudora Welty</i>	Welty	★	☆			2	Harcourt Brace	
<i>So Long, See You Tomorrow</i>	Maxwell		☆	☆			Knopf	
<i>The Transit of Venus</i>	Hazzard		☆				Viking	
<i>The Second Coming</i>	Percy		☆			9	Farrar, Straus	
<i>Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality</i>	Boswell	★	★				U. of Chicago	
<i>Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture</i>	Schorske		☆	★			Knopf	
<i>Fire in the Minds of Men</i>	Billington		☆				Basic	
<i>The Age of Reform, 1250–1550</i>	Ozment		☆				Yale	
<i>The Shaping of America: A People's History of the Young Republic</i>	Smith		☆				McGraw-Hill	●
<i>China Men</i>	Kingston	★	★	☆		13	Knopf	
<i>The Dream of the Golden Mountains</i>	Cowley		☆				Viking	●
<i>From a Limestone Ledge</i>	Graves		☆				Knopf	
<i>Naming Names</i>	Navasky		☆				Viking	
<i>American Dreams: Lost &amp; Found</i>	Terkel		☆			16	Pantheon	
<i>Walt Whitman: A Life</i>	Kaplan	★	★	☆		2	Simon & Schuster	●
<i>Peter the Great: His Life and World</i>	Massie		☆	★		18	Knopf	
<i>Walter Lippmann and the American Century</i>	Steel		☆	☆		7	Atlantic-Little, Brown	
<i>Nathaniel Hawthorne in His Times</i>	Mellow		☆				Houghton Mifflin	
<i>Orwell: The Transformation</i>	Stansky		☆				Knopf	

**Table 20 1980 BEST BOOKS INTERSECTIONS**

TITLE	AUTHOR	AWARDS			ANNUAL RANK	TOTAL WEEKS	ORIGINAL HARDCOVER PUBLISHER	OUT OF PRINT
		NYT	NBA	PUL				
<i>Peter the Great: His Life and World</i>	Massie		☆	★		18	Knopf	
<i>Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture</i>	Schorske		☆	★			Knopf	
<i>So Long, See You Tomorrow</i>	Maxwell		☆	☆			Knopf	
<i>Walter Lippmann and the American Century</i>	Steel		☆	☆		7	Atlantic-Little, Brown	
<i>Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality</i>	Boswell	★	★				U. of Chicago	
<i>The Collected Stories of Eudora Welty</i>	Welty	★	☆			2	Harcourt Brace	
<i>China Men</i>	Kingston	★	★	☆		13	Knopf	
<i>Walt Whitman: A Life</i>	Kaplan	★	★	☆		2	Simon & Schuster	●

☆ Nominated but did not win   ★ Awarded   ● Out of Print   ○ Available via print-on-demand

Table 21 1980 BESTSELLERS/BEST BOOKS INTERSECTIONS

TITLE	AUTHOR	AWARDS			ANNUAL RANK	TOTAL WEEKS	ORIGINAL HARDCOVER PUBLISHER	OUT OF PRINT
		NYT	NBA	PUL				
<i>Loon Lake</i>	Doctorow	★			13	21	Random House	
<i>Goodbye, Darkness: A Memoir of the Pacific War</i>	Manchester			☆		19	Little, Brown	
<i>Peter the Great: His Life and World</i>	Massie		☆	★		18	Knopf	
<i>American Dreams: Lost &amp; Found</i>	Terkel		☆			16	Pantheon	
<i>China Men</i>	Kingston	★	★	☆		13	Knopf	
<i>The Second Coming</i>	Percy		☆			9	Farrar, Straus	
<i>Walter Lippmann and the American Century</i>	Steel		☆	☆		7	Atlantic-Little, Brown	
<i>Walt Whitman: A Life</i>	Kaplan	★	★	☆		2	Simon & Schuster	●
<i>The Collected Stories of Eudora Welty</i>	Welty	★	☆			2	Harcourt Brace	

☆ Nominated but did not win   ★ Awarded   ● Out of Print   ○ Available via print-on-demand

Booker became a media event, a talisman that propelled winner after winner onto Britain's best-seller list. It now virtually guarantees a place not just for winners, but for many finalists as well.

The first such winner, according to John Sutherland, was Iris Murdoch's *The Sea, The Sea*, in 1978. His roster of Booker-blessed bestsellers from 1981-87 includes: William Golding's *Rites of Passage*, Anthony Burgess's *Earthly Powers*, Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, Thomas Keneally's *Schindler's List*, Paul Scott's *The Jewel in the Crown*, Anita Brookner's *Hotel du Lac*, Kingsley Amis's *The Old Devils*, and Penelope Lively's *Moon Tiger*. "Never had so much good, new British fiction done so well," Sutherland concludes.<sup>70</sup>

The ability of a prize to spur sales in America has usually been far less predictable or potent than in Britain, and for most of the 1980 prizewinners, the effect on sales was probably not all that significant. To be sure, NBA executive director Neil Baldwin and Pulitzer deputy administrator Edward Kliment

agree that the prizes' influence on sales has grown stronger during the last decade.<sup>71</sup> The media and the bookselling community make more use of them now; they are labels that can be easily leveraged in a society that communicates through brand identities.

But the awarding of the Pulitzer fiction prize in spring 1981 to a novel by a young male writer from Louisiana, John Kennedy Toole, demonstrated the rare effect a prize could have even in America, even back then.

Toole was an unknown. His complicated, longish novel had been written almost twenty years earlier. He also happened to be dead. Toole's mother had badgered Walker Percy into reading her son's book, and Percy had acted as unlikely midwife. The novel was published in hardcover in May 1980 by Louisiana State University Press, and did not make the *Times* or the NBA lists. When it won the Pulitzer, the story behind the novel, its deceased young author and his relentlessly persistent mother created a publicity bonanza.

The trade paperback edition of the book was published on May 1, 1981 by Grove Press; 700,000 copies were printed. It went on the paperback list on May 15 and remained there until December 4. It went back on the list on January 1, 1982. Right out of the gate, it was the lead trade paperback bestseller at the Walden and Dalton chains deep in the mall meccas of middle America.

Twenty years later, after Michael Cunningham's third novel, *The Hours*, won the fiction Pulitzer, the sales trajectory was remarkably similar. *The Hours* went from 35,000 hardcover copies sold to 100,000 very quickly. When the paperback was published with the facsimile of the Pulitzer seal on the cover, it sold 600,000 copies.

Cunningham's editor, Farrar, Straus publisher Jonathan Galassi, commented, "There's a certain attention that a new phenomenon gets." He reckoned that prizes are often of greater benefit to people who are less well known—provided, of course, they are highly promotable or that a highly promotable story can be appended to them. For "someone who is widely known, the Pulitzer doesn't have much effect," Galassi concluded.<sup>72</sup>

When discussing both "the triumphant parade of Booker Prize winners" and Stephen Hawking's spectacularly surprising '80s bestseller, *A Brief History of Time*, John Sutherland says that such books stand as witnesses to "an upward spiral of taste in reading matter—a spiral in which [readers'] aspiration exceeded [their] intellectual grasp."<sup>73</sup> Although Sutherland sees "America's upward spiral during the 1980s" as "different from that of the U.K." (he focuses on the growth of African-American literature in the 1970s and '80s with Alex Haley's *Roots*, Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* and the work of Maya Angelou), *Dunces* was in fact quite a similar phenomenon.

It also foreshadowed a far more dramatic upward spiral in which aspiration did not necessarily equal intellectual grasp. While the Brits, traditionally a much more literate and homogeneous culture, put their faith and their betting pools into the Booker, mongrel mass America turned to the unifying force of the media. Oprah and the book club movement were waiting to happen.

## BESTSELLERS OF 1985

TABLE 22

By 1985, books were being distributed beyond the independents, beyond the chains, to retail outlets they had never reached before. They were being discounted to an extent they had never been before. As a result, for the first time three hardcover fiction bestsellers sold more than a million copies in one year. Prior to 1985, according to *Publishers Weekly*, only two novels had ever sold more than a million copies their first year out, Richard Bach's *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*, with 1.8 million in 1970, and J. R. R. Tolkien's *The Simarillion*, with 1.05 million in 1977.<sup>74</sup>

Jean Auel had gone from being a 1980 runner-up to leading the annual list in 1985. James Michener's extraordinary staying power put *Texas* in second place. And Garrison Keillor's *Lake Wobegon Days* made publishers reawaken to the power of radio, something many had neglected in the scramble to get as much TV airtime as possible. The intimacy of voices reaching into the home or car could sell as well as, and sometimes far better than, faces on the small screen. National Public Radio was beginning to come into its own.

Radio's strengths had never exactly been forgotten across the Atlantic, but in 1979 the enormously rapid success of Douglas Adams's *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* had reminded British publishers exactly how powerful it could be. *Hitchhiker* topped the British charts as a paperback original for two years, and became a cult phenomenon in the U.S. as well.<sup>75</sup>

Also, 1985 was the first year the top two nonfiction titles sold over a million copies each: *Iacocca* was in the number-one position for the second year in a row, and Chuck Yeager proved that there's always

room for heroes, as Colin Powell would again a few years later. *Iacocca* was a prime factor in establishing the idea of the CEO-as-savior in the public mind, an idea whose price the public now finds itself paying in the debacles of Enron et al, and in the excesses of imperial CEOs like Jack Welch (whose own book was no *Iacocca*).

John Irving's *Cider House Rules* was, along with Keillor's book, the closest the annual fiction list came to "serious literature." Carl Sagan used the tremendous success of *Cosmos* five years earlier to perform the nonfiction-to-fiction trick à la Larry Collins and Dominique Lapierre. Dominick Dunne's *The Two Mrs. Grenvilles* and Elmore Leonard's *Glitz* were prominent among the runners-up.

However, the most interesting bestseller on the annual fiction list from the vantage point of the book business and its future direction was by a first novelist who was published by the Naval Institute Press, far from the mainstream. The brand of Clancy had arrived, and *The Hunt for Red October* issued in a new sub-genre, the male techno-thriller, that would come to have many imitators.

If money was the self-help theme of 1980, the equivalent for '85 was fitness, diet and healthy eating, with five titles on the nonfiction list. Celebrity counted for a great deal in books from Priscilla Presley, Shirley MacLaine, Howard Cosell and Charles Kuralt. Among the celebrity runners-up were books by or about Geraldine Ferraro, Peter Ueberroth, Marilyn Monroe, Bob Hope and George Burns. By the early '90s, the celebrity bubble would be bursting with one failed big book after another, the occasional success floating up from time to time in between.

The weekly bestseller lists yet again yielded a fine cluster of serious fiction and nonfiction coming on for spells lasting from one week

Table 22 1985 BESTSELLERS

TITLE	AUTHOR	AWARDS			ANNUAL RANK	TOTAL WEEKS	ORIGINAL HARDCOVER PUBLISHER	OUT OF PRINT
		NYT	NBA	PUL				
<i>The Mammoth Hunters</i>	Auel				1	46	Crown	
<i>Texas</i>	Michener				2	30	Random House	
<i>Lake Wobegon Days</i>	Keillor				3	47	Viking	
<i>If Tomorrow Comes</i>	Sheldon				4	37	Morrow	
<i>Skeleton Crew</i>	King				5	32	Putnam	
<i>Secrets</i>	Steel				6	20	Delacorte	
<i>Contact</i>	Sagan				7	23	Simon & Schuster	
<i>Lucky</i>	Collins				8	18	Simon & Schuster	
<i>Family Album</i>	Steel				9	22	Delacorte	
<i>Jubal Sackett</i>	L'Amour				10	19	Bantam	
<i>Thinner</i>	Bachman				11	24	NAL	
<i>The Cider House Rules</i>	Irving				12	19	Morrow	
<i>The Hunt for Red October</i>	Clancy				13	31	Naval Institute Press	
<i>The Fourth Deadly Sin</i>	Sanders				14	15	Putnam	
<i>Inside, Outside</i>	Wouk				15	21	Little, Brown	
<i>Iacocca: An Autobiography</i>	Iacocca				1	77	Bantam	
<i>Yeager: An Autobiography</i>	Yeager				2	42	Bantam	
<i>Elvis and Me</i>	Presley				3	22	Putnam	
<i>Fit for Life</i>	Diamond				4	72	Warner	
<i>The Be-Happy Attitudes</i>	Schuller				5	33	Word	
<i>Dancing in the Light</i>	MacLaine				6	25	Bantam	●
<i>A Passion for Excellence</i>	Peters				7	28	Random House	
<i>The Frugal Gourmet</i>	Smith				8	56	Morrow	●
<i>I Never Played the Game</i>	Cosell				9	16	Morrow	●
<i>Dr. Berger's Immune Power Diet</i>	Berger				10	21	NAL	●
<i>Weight Watchers® Quick Start® Program Cookbook</i>	Nidetch				11	23	NAL	●
<i>Smart Women, Foolish Choices</i>	Cowan et al				12	31	Clarkson Potter	
<i>On the Road with Charles Kuralt</i>	Kuralt				13	19	Putnam	
<i>Weight Watchers® New International Cookbook</i>	Nidetch				14	1	NAL	●
<i>Loving Each Other</i>	Buscaglia				15	48	Slack / Henry Holt	

☆ Nominated but did not win   ★ Awarded   ● Out of Print   ○ Available via print-on-demand

to a couple of months. Gore Vidal's *Lincoln* and Studs Terkel's *The Good War* were carry-overs from 1984. Also appearing on the weekly lists were Gail Godwin's *The Finishing School*, Anita Brookner's Booker-winning *Hotel du Lac*, E. L. Doctorow's *World's Fair*, Kurt Vonnegut's *Galapagos* and Richard Feynmann's *Surely You're Joking, Mr. Feynmann*.

Like Bronowski and Sagan before him, and Hawking and Dava Sobel and others thereafter, Feynmann showed there was a growing appetite for science books. Once again, these were books that appealed to the vision boomers liked to have of themselves, even if they often ended up only half read.

#### PACKAGING COUNTS

More likely to be taken up from the coffee table and thoroughly perused was *Ansel Adams: An Autobiography*, a \$50 gift book five years before *The Civil War* reached that price point. It clocked up 112,500 copies in print between its publication in October and the end of the year. Marguerite Duras's *The Lover* was a different kind of gift book: small, short and sexy. Some years later, *Damage* and *The Kiss*, equally petite, well-packaged novels, would be infused with the same kind of titillating anomie. Bret Easton Ellis, in his brat-pack debut, made the list with *Less Than Zero*.

On the weekly paperback bestseller lists of 1985 could be found a couple of distinguished books that had been published in hardcover the previous year, Joseph Heller's *God Knows* and Alison Lurie's Pulitzer winner *Foreign Affairs*. Eudora Welty's *One Writer's Beginnings* was an unlikely mass market candidate, having been reprinted by Warner in a 600,000-copy edition from the Harvard University Press hardcover the year before.

## BEST BOOKS OF 1985

TABLES 23, 24, 25, 26, 27

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The one book every critic agreed upon in 1985 was Tony Lukas's *Common Ground*. It managed to break new ground, becoming the exemplar of a kind of narrative nonfiction that had the power and depth and imaginative reach of fiction itself. It was a joint winner of the Pulitzer, a *Times* choice and the winner of the NBA.

But as a hardcover, *Common Ground* made the bestseller list for only one week in October, a month after its publication, when it had 52,000 copies in print after going to press three times. One year and many accolades later, it was a trade paperback candidate but, like Caro's *The Power Broker*, didn't actually make the list. It would be several years before publishers would put an intense marketing investment into making this kind of book into a sustained bestseller.

Tracy Kidder's *House*, which received plaudits from the *Times*, was more accessible to a wider reading public than Lukas's portrait of a big city's wrenching troubles. It was intimate, personal and more upbeat, and it sold remarkably well, becoming a runner-up on the annual list.

The Pulitzer for fiction went to another book that just missed the annual list, Larry McMurtry's *Lonesome Dove*. It was one of the longest-running bestsellers of the year. *The Accidental Tourist* was a Pulitzer runner-up and a best-seller both in hardcover and in paperback. Its commercial success was even more unusual because of Anne Tyler's disinclination to tour.

In early 1986, two blockbuster films made three literary paperbacks into bestsellers. Alice Walker's already much-lauded and much-sold *The Color Purple*, published in 1982, became for a time the number-one mass market paper-

Table 23 1985 NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW EDITORS' CHOICE

TITLE	AUTHOR	AWARDS			ANNUAL RANK	TOTAL WEEKS	ORIGINAL HARDCOVER PUBLISHER	OUT OF PRINT
		NYT	NBA	PUL				
<i>Flaubert's Parrot</i>	Barnes	★					Knopf	
<i>Love Medicine</i>	Erdrich	★					Henry Holt	
<i>Mr. Palomar</i>	Calvino	★					Harcourt Brace	
<i>The Old Forest and Other Stories</i>	Taylor	★					Doubleday	●
<i>Common Ground: A Turbulent Decade in the Lives of Three American Families</i>	Lukas	★	★	★		1	Knopf	
<i>Move Your Shadow: South Africa, Black and White</i>	Lelyveld	★		★			Times	●
<i>The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust</i>	Wyman	★					Pantheon	
<i>All Fall Down: America's Tragic Encounter with Iran</i>	Sick	★					Random House	
<i>Footsteps: Adventures of a Romantic Biographer</i>	Holmes	★					Viking	
<i>House</i>	Kidder	★				17	Houghton Mifflin	
<i>The Periodic Table</i>	Levi	★					Schocken	

Table 24 1985 PULITZERS (Categories: Fiction, History, General Nonfiction, Biography)

TITLE	AUTHOR	AWARDS			ANNUAL RANK	TOTAL WEEKS	ORIGINAL HARDCOVER PUBLISHER	OUT OF PRINT
		NYT	NBA	PUL				
<i>Lonesome Dove</i>	McMurtry			★		21	Simon & Schuster	
<i>Continental Drift</i>	Banks			☆			Harper	
<i>The Accidental Tourist</i>	Tyler			☆		27	Knopf	
<i>The Heavens and the Earth: A Political History of the Space Age</i>	McDougall		☆	★			Basic	
<i>Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work and the Family from Slavery to the Present</i>	Jones			☆			Basic	
<i>Novus Ordo Seclorum: The Intellectual Origins of the Constitution</i>	McDonald			☆			U. of Kansas	
<i>Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America</i>	Miller			☆			Oxford	
<i>Common Ground: A Turbulent Decade in the Lives of Three American Families</i>	Lukas	★	★	★		1	Knopf	
<i>Move Your Shadow: South Africa, Black and White</i>	Lelyveld	★		★			Times	●
<i>Habits of the Heart</i>	Bellah et al			☆			U. of California	
<i>Louise Bogan: A Portrait</i>	Frank			★			Knopf	
<i>George Washington Williams: A Biography</i>	Franklin			☆			U. of Chicago	
<i>A Hidden Childhood: A Jewish Girl's Sanctuary in a French Convent, 1942–1945</i>	Weinstein			☆			Hill & Wang	●

☆ Nominated but did not win   ★ Awarded   ● Out of Print   ○ Available via print-on-demand

**Table 25 1985 NATIONAL BOOK AWARDS** (Categories: Fiction, Nonfiction)

TITLE	AUTHOR	AWARDS			ANNUAL RANK	TOTAL WEEKS	ORIGINAL HARDCOVER PUBLISHER	OUT OF PRINT
		NYT	NBA	PUL				
<i>White Noise</i>	DeLillo		★				Viking	
<i>Always Coming Home</i>	LeGuin		☆				Harper	
<i>The Tree of Life</i>	Nissenson		☆				Harper	
<i>Common Ground: A Turbulent Decade in the Lives of Three American Families</i>	Lukas	★	★	★			Knopf	
<i>In the Name of Eugenics: Genetics and the Uses of Human Heredity</i>	Kevles		☆				Knopf	●
<i>The Heavens and the Earth: A Political History of the Space Age</i>	McDougall		☆	★			Basic	

**Table 26 1985 BEST BOOKS INTERSECTIONS**

TITLE	AUTHOR	AWARDS			ANNUAL RANK	TOTAL WEEKS	ORIGINAL HARDCOVER PUBLISHER	OUT OF PRINT
		NYT	NBA	PUL				
<i>Common Ground: A Turbulent Decade in the Lives of Three American Families</i>	Lukas	★	★	★		1	Knopf	
<i>The Heavens and the Earth: A Political History of the Space Age</i>	McDougall		☆	★			Basic	
<i>Move Your Shadow: South Africa, Black and White</i>	Lelyveld	★		★			Times	●

**Table 27 1985 BESTSELLERS/BEST BOOKS INTERSECTIONS**

TITLE	AUTHOR	AWARDS			ANNUAL RANK	TOTAL WEEKS	ORIGINAL HARDCOVER PUBLISHER	OUT OF PRINT
		NYT	NBA	PUL				
<i>The Accidental Tourist</i>	Tyler			☆		27	Knopf	
<i>Lonesome Dove</i>	McMurtry			★		21	Simon & Schuster	
<i>House</i>	Kidder	★				17	Houghton Mifflin	
<i>Common Ground: A Turbulent Decade in the Lives of Three American Families</i>	Lukas	★	★	★		1	Knopf	

☆ Nominated but did not win   ★ Awarded   ● Out of Print   ○ Available via print-on-demand

back, courtesy of the film adaptation of the book. The Meryl Streep/Robert Redford film turned the Vintage edition of *Out of Africa* into a number-one trade paperback bestseller. Judith Thurman's biography of its author, *Isak Dinesen: The Life of a Storyteller*, made it on to the mass market list.

But many of the *Times*, NBA and Pulitzer best books didn't make any list at all, and intersected less with each other than in previous years. *White Noise* by Don DeLillo—another famously private author and a writer's writer—won the NBA but made no other list.

One first novelist cited by the *Times* would go on to find a popular following. Louise Erdrich's Native American background and arresting face would make her commercially promotable. Julian Barnes, courtesy of his standing and success in Britain, would be supported by his publisher and given the time to build a readership

here. In 1985, as in 1980, Italo Calvino's stories would be chosen by the *Times*, a testament to the Helen and Kurt Wolff imprint at Harcourt and its unwavering support of translations.

Most of the 1985 bestsellers—except for the food and dieting books, so many of which have a built-in obsolescence—are with us still. Of the best books, it's not entirely surprising that Joseph Lelyveld's portrait of apartheid in his native South Africa, joint winner of the Pulitzer and endorsed by his colleagues at the *Times*, would go out of print in the post-apartheid era. Other records of Jewish childhoods protected from or subjected to Nazi atrocities would come to replace Frida Weinstein's account in print. And the three first works of fiction cited by the NBA in a separate category (not included on Table 25)—Bob Shacochis's *Easy in the Islands*, Elizabeth Benedict's *Slow Dancing* and Cecile Pineda's *Face*, alas shared a common enough first fiction fate—they are all out of print.

## BESTSELLERS OF 1990

TABLE 28

In 1985, as we've seen, three novels each sold more than one million copies in hardcover; in 1989, four did so; 1990 brought five. *PW* proclaimed, "Fiction sales outpace nonfiction," and Jean Auel led the pack as she had five years earlier.<sup>76</sup>

### FICTION BRANDS

More than ever, the brand was the thing wherein fiction readers' dollars were caught. What franchises like Harlequin or Mills & Boon bring to their faithful—a guaranteed escape into a fantasy of love or adventure, comfordingly familiar and yet excitingly "other"—is also what brand-name hardcover authors are expert at bringing to the page. To be sure, they season it with great dollops of history, horror, money, sex, religion or murder—and occasionally some pretty good writing as well. But the common denominator is the ability to flip between the familiar and the unknown and keep the pages turning all the while.

Auel's fans bought 1.69 million copies of *The Plains of Passage* in 1990, an increase of more than 200,000 on *The Mammoth Hunters* in 1985. They also transcended geographic boundaries: *Plains* reached first place on bestseller lists in Britain, Canada, Australia, Holland, Norway, Denmark and Sweden.

Brand loyalty was exhibited throughout the list. The astonishing productivity of Stephen King made him the best-selling novelist of the 1980s, and his pace continued in 1990 with two books on the annual list: the second-place *Four Past Midnight*, with 1.28 million sold, and the seventh-place *The Stand*, with just over half that number (653,828 copies).

Sidney Sheldon brought back his mass market heroine from the mid-'70s, Catherine Douglas,

in *Memories of Midnight*, and fans returned with her, this time to buy 1.04 million hardcover copies. Danielle Steel's trademark romance was represented by *Message from Nam* with 1.037 million copies, and every single other name on the annual list had been there before: Robert Ludlum, Jackie Collins, Anne Rice, Rosamunde Pilcher, Judith Krantz, Dean Koontz, Barbara Taylor Bradford, Colleen McCullough, Clive Cussler.

According to Daisy Maryles, there were no first novels among those selling more than 100,000 copies, and "it was hard to find even a single breakout novel for an up-and-coming author." Indeed, compared to the others, Scott Turow was a relative newcomer, making his second appearance on the annual list with his second novel, *The Burden of Proof*, which sold 1.044 million copies. It was given an enormous boost by the movie release of his 1987 bestseller, *Presumed Innocent*.

Again, novels by more "literary" authors found their way onto the list of runners-up. These included Larry McMurtry's *Buffalo Girls*, which sold more than 200,000 copies for S&S; P. D. James's *Devices and Desires* and Gabriel García Márquez's *The General in His Labyrinth*, each with sales hovering around 180,000 for Knopf. John Updike's *Rabbit at Rest* and Kurt Vonnegut's *Hocus Pocus* also did very well.

The weekly lists included some rather high-culture offerings: Umberto Eco's carryover, *Foucault's Pendulum*; the elusive Thomas Pynchon's much-heralded *Vineland*; Gore Vidal's *Hollywood*; Philip Roth's *Deceptions*; Mario Vargas Llosa's *In Praise of the Stepmother*; and Martin Amis's *London Fields*. A. S. Byatt's *Possession* would go on to be a tremendous bestseller in trade paperback.

But although these books made weekly lists, and publishers pumped a great deal of marketing

Table 28 1990 BESTSELLERS

TITLE	AUTHOR	AWARDS			ANNUAL RANK	TOTAL WEEKS	ORIGINAL HARDCOVER PUBLISHER	OUT OF PRINT
		NYT	NBA	PUL				
<i>The Plains of Passage</i>	Auel				1	24	Crown	
<i>Four Past Midnight</i>	King				2	20	Viking	
<i>The Burden of Proof</i>	Turow				3	33	Farrar, Straus	
<i>Memories of Midnight</i>	Sheldon				4	23	Morrow	
<i>Message from Nam</i>	Steel				5	18	Delacorte	
<i>The Bourne Ultimatum</i>	Ludlum				6	24	Random House	
<i>The Stand: The Complete and Uncut Edition</i>	King				7	27	Doubleday	
<i>Lady Boss</i>	Collins				8	15	Simon & Schuster	
<i>The Witching Hour</i>	Rice				9	16	Knopf	
<i>September</i>	Pilcher				10	22	St. Martin's / Dunne	
<i>Dazzle</i>	Krantz				11	12	Crown	
<i>The Bad Place</i>	Koontz				12	14	Putnam	
<i>The Women in His Life</i>	Bradford				13	9	Random House	
<i>The First Man in Rome</i>	McCullough				14	13	Morrow	
<i>Dragon</i>	Cussler				15	15	Simon & Schuster	
<i>A Life on the Road</i>	Kuralt				1	20	Putnam	
<i>The Civil War</i>	Ward, Burns				2	26	Knopf	
<i>The Frugal Gourmet on Our Immigrant Ancestors</i>	Smith				3	7	Morrow	●
<i>Better Homes &amp; Gardens New Cook Book*</i>					4		Meredith Books	●
<i>Financial Self-Defense</i>	Givens				5	36	Simon & Schuster	●
<i>Homecoming: Reclaiming and Championing Your Inner Child</i>	Bradshaw				6	22	Bantam	
<i>Wealth Without Risk</i>	Givens				7	134	Simon & Schuster	●
<i>Bo Knows Bo</i>	Jackson				8	12	Doubleday	●
<i>An American Life</i>	Reagan				9	7	Simon & Schuster	
<i>Megatrends 2000</i>	Naisbitt et al				10	33	Morrow	
<i>By Way of Deception</i>	Ostrovsky				11	12	St. Martin's	
<i>Get to the Heart: My Story</i>	Mandrell et al				12	19	Bantam	
<i>Millie's Book: As Dictated to Barbara Bush</i>	Bush				13	23	Morrow	●
<i>Men at Work: The Craft of Baseball</i>	Will				14	26	Macmillan	
<i>The Cat and the Curmudgeon</i>	Amory				15	7	Little, Brown	

\* The 1990 edition out of print; updated editions in print.

☆ Nominated but did not win ★ Awarded ● Out of Print ○ Available via print-on-demand

money into many of them to achieve that, the balance sheet was sometimes in the red at the end of the day. However well they did, expectations were simply too high for some of them—as were returns.

The beginning of 1991 was not kind to the hardcovers published late in 1990 nor to the paperback reprints of 1990 books. The Gulf War drew attention elsewhere. Nevertheless, the effect of a major movie release could be seen very clearly despite the war. The films of *Awakenings* and *The Sheltering Sky* were both released in December 1990; the former was a trade candidate for six weeks in early 1991, and the latter actually made it on to the list. In April, the movie release of *The Silence of the Lambs* made Thomas Harris's novel the number-one paperback, and also brought an older novel, *Red Dragon*, on to the list.

Also to be noted was the arrival on the paperback list for one week in September 1991 of a novel that had been published in June 1989 by a minor house, Wynwood Press. Everybody has to start somewhere, and John Grisham started here, with *A Time to Kill*.

Killing loomed large in Bret Easton Ellis's *American Psycho*, the novel that S&S cancelled because of its graphic gore and exploitation. Vintage brought a cool postmodern eye to the controversy, added a little First Amendment self-justification and used the attendant publicity to sell books. The novel, brought out as a paperback original, made it on to the list a month after the Gulf War ended.

In 1980, the largest cluster of nonfiction bestsellers centered on money; in 1985, the theme was diet and fitness. The most consistent link for 1990 wasn't genre but medium, namely television and the ability of celebrities from every walk of life to use it for promoting their work. Newsman/essayist Charles Kuralt;

*Frugal Gourmet* Jeff Smith; the documentary-making Burns brothers in tandem with writer Geoffrey C. Ward; John Bradshaw, also with a PBS series; sports star Bo Jackson; country music singer Barbara Mandrell; even First Lady Barbara Bush found that the medium got across the message best of all.

Lest we forget, there was also the great celluloid communicator himself. Ronald Reagan's memories brought an annual bestseller for S&S, although the amount of profit they brought in for the publisher was questionable even then. Many other celebrities put their names on the covers of books that were hyped on-screen and off, but that failed to perform.

#### THE PRICE THE MARKET WILL PAY

On the other hand, *The Civil War*, tied in to the PBS series, did wonderfully well for Knopf. It was the gift book of the year, selling more than 560,000 copies in the three-month run-up to Christmas. Knopf's pricing of the book provided a windfall for the publisher. The company considered charging \$40, which would have covered costs and made a profit. But they took a gamble and charged \$50. "It was a question of what the market would pay, and also whether there would be a big percentage of sales taking place at big discounters," one Knopf insider recalled.<sup>77</sup> The \$10 differential allowed for the deep discounting that moved many books off the shelves at non-traditional outlets.

Nevertheless, *PW* judged the market for nonfiction in 1990 softer at the top than in previous years. Kuralt's *A Life on the Road* sold 602,371 copies, less than any book that had occupied the first slot since 1982. *PW* listed sixty titles that sold 100,000 copies or more, but seventy-eight had sold that many the previous year.

Charles Givens spoke to people's economic fears and accomplished Stephen King's feat of having two bestsellers on the annual list in the

same year. Indeed, *Wealth Without Risk* was on for a combined 89 weeks during 1989 and 1990. Cleveland Amory spoke to the cat crowd. The national pastime transported George Will well beyond his usual political base.

Controversy and the threat of suppression worked for Bret Easton Ellis in fiction; on an entirely different plane, it worked for Victor Ostrovsky in nonfiction. When the Israeli government tried to suppress U.S. publication of his book about the Mossad spy operation, it provoked best-selling sales instead. (The same situation prevailed when the British government attempted to quash *Spycatcher*.)

#### SERIOUS NONFICTION MAKES THE LIST

The weekly bestseller lists for 1990 make it clear that publishers had begun to put more of their marketing efforts behind some serious nonfiction, and that those efforts were paying off. Given the financial climate of the times, it was not surprising that *Liar's Poker* carried over from 1989 and stayed on the list for a total of thirty-six weeks, a number equally matched in 1990 alone by *Barbarians at the Gate*.

But Roger Penrose's *The Emperor's New Mind*, which had been published by Oxford in November 1989, was a far less likely candidate when it became a weekly bestseller in February 1990. Diane Ackerman's *Natural History of the Senses* did so in August; Buzz Bissinger's *Friday Night Lights* got there in October; and Harold Bloom's *The Book of J* was listed in November. Deborah Tannen raised the level of self-help quite a few notches with *You Just Don't Understand*.

Eleven years after *Sophie's Choice* was the second-biggest-selling novel of the year, William Styron's searing personal essay on depression, *Darkness Visible*, was a weekly bestseller in 1990. And Robert Caro finally made it well and truly onto the hardcover

bestseller list, reaching the number-one position in April with the first volume of his LBJ biography, *Means of Ascent*.

Finally, it should be remembered that in the children's department, Dr. Seuss got there a long time before Harry Potter did. *Oh, The Places You'll Go!* may not have been on the annual *PW* list, but it led the magazine's longest-running hardcover fiction list for 1990, having been published in February and a fixture on the list for thirty-seven weeks.

## BEST BOOKS OF 1990

TABLES 29, 30, 31, 32, 33

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Nineteen-ninety was remarkable for how very little convergence there was among *Times*, Pulitzer and NBA selections. No surprise that one of the few intersections was the final installment in John Updike's canonical saga of late twentieth-century American life, *Rabbit at Rest*, which won the fiction Pulitzer and was selected by the *Times*. (Curiously, the novel wasn't even nominated by the NBA, which seemingly had other things, like multiculturalism, on its mind.) The Pulitzer committee and the *Times* also agreed about Tim O'Brien's harrowing Vietnam stories, *The Things They Carried*.

As for commonality between the Pulitzer and NBA, the sole example was in biography. Steven Naifeh and Gregory White Smith's tome, *Jackson Pollock: An American Saga*, was the winner of the Pulitzer as well as an NBA nominee.

Generally speaking, university press titles appear with greater frequency among the Pulitzer nominees than among the other two best books groupings, and 1990's crop of nominees was particularly crowded with press books. One explanation is the Pulitzer's separate category devoted to history. Many university presses are

Table 29 1990 NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW EDITORS' CHOICE

TITLE	AUTHOR	AWARDS			ANNUAL RANK	TOTAL WEEKS	ORIGINAL HARDCOVER PUBLISHER	OUT OF PRINT
		NYT	NBA	PUL				
<i>Rabbit at Rest</i>	Updike	★		★		12	Knopf	
<i>The Things They Carried</i>	O'Brien	★		☆			Houghton Mifflin	
<i>Friend of My Youth</i>	Munro	★					Knopf	
<i>London Fields</i>	Amis	★				4	Harmony	
<i>My Son's Story</i>	Gordimer	★					Farrar, Straus	
<i>Possession: A Romance</i>	Byatt	★				23	Random House	
<i>Biting at the Grave: The Irish Hunger Strikes and the Politics of Despair</i>	O'Malley	★					Beacon	
<i>Lawrence of Arabia: The Authorized Biography</i>	Wilson	★					Atheneum	●
<i>The Search for Modern China</i>	Spence	★					Norton	
<i>Simone de Beauvoir: A Biography</i>	Bair	★					Summit	
<i>Tropical Gangsters</i>	Klitgaard	★					Basic	
<i>Vladimir Nabokov: The Russian Years</i>	Boyd	★					Princeton	

Table 30 1990 PULITZERS (Categories: Fiction, Biography, General Nonfiction, History)

TITLE	AUTHOR	AWARDS			ANNUAL RANK	TOTAL WEEKS	ORIGINAL HARDCOVER PUBLISHER	OUT OF PRINT
		NYT	NBA	PUL				
<i>Rabbit at Rest</i>	Updike	★		★		12	Knopf	
<i>The Things They Carried</i>	O'Brien	★		☆			Houghton Mifflin	
<i>Mean Spirit</i>	Hogan			☆			Atheneum	
<i>Jackson Pollock: An American Saga</i>	Naifeh et al		☆	★			Clarkson Potter	
<i>The Five of Hearts: An Intimate Portrait of Henry Adams</i>	O'Toole			☆			Clarkson Potter	●
<i>Alfred I. Du Pont: The Man and His Family</i>	Wall			☆			Oxford	●
<i>The Ants</i>	Holldobler			★			Belknap / Harvard	
<i>River of Traps: A Village Life</i>	deBuys			☆			U. of New Mexico	
<i>Looking for a Ship</i>	McPhee			☆			Farrar, Straus	
<i>A Midwife's Tale</i>	Ulrich			★			Knopf	
<i>Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939</i>	Cohen			☆			Cambridge	
<i>The Civil Rights Era: Origins and Development of National Policy</i>	Graham			☆			Oxford	●
<i>America in 1857: A Nation on the Brink</i>	Stamp			☆			Oxford	

**Table 31 1990 NATIONAL BOOK AWARDS** (Categories: Fiction, Nonfiction)

TITLE	AUTHOR	AWARDS			ANNUAL RANK	TOTAL WEEKS	ORIGINAL HARDCOVER PUBLISHER	OUT OF PRINT
		NYT	NBA	PUL				
<i>Middle Passage: A Novel</i>	Johnson		★				Atheneum	
<i>Chromos</i>	Alfau		☆				Dalkey Archive	
<i>Paradise</i>	Castedo		☆				Grove / Atlantic	
<i>Dogeaters</i>	Hagedorn		☆				Random House	
<i>Because It Is Bitter, and Because It Is My Heart</i>	Oates		☆				Dutton	
<i>The House of Morgan</i>	Chernow		★				Grove / Atlantic	
<i>Small Victories: The Real World of a Teacher, Her Students, and Their High School</i>	Freedman		☆				Harper	
<i>Richard Milhous Nixon: The Rise of an American Politician</i>	Morris		☆				Henry Holt	●
<i>Jackson Pollock: An American Saga</i>	Naifeh et al		☆	★			Clarkson Potter	
<i>Righteous Pilgrim: The Life and Times of Harold L. Ickes</i>	Watkins		☆				Henry Holt	●

**Table 32 1990 BEST BOOKS INTERSECTIONS**

TITLE	AUTHOR	AWARDS			ANNUAL RANK	TOTAL WEEKS	ORIGINAL HARDCOVER PUBLISHER	OUT OF PRINT
		NYT	NBA	PUL				
<i>Rabbit at Rest</i>	Updike	★		★		12	Knopf	
<i>The Things They Carried</i>	O'Brien	★		☆			Houghton Mifflin	
<i>Jackson Pollock: An American Saga</i>	Naifeh et al		☆	★			Clarkson Potter	

**Table 33 1990 BESTSELLERS/BEST BOOKS INTERSECTIONS**

TITLE	AUTHOR	AWARDS			ANNUAL RANK	TOTAL WEEKS	ORIGINAL HARDCOVER PUBLISHER	OUT OF PRINT
		NYT	NBA	PUL				
<i>Possession: A Romance</i>	Byatt	★				23	Random House	
<i>Rabbit at Rest</i>	Updike	★		★		12	Knopf	
<i>London Fields</i>	Amis	★				4	Harmony	

☆ Nominated but did not win   ★ Awarded   ● Out of Print   ○ Available via print-on-demand

particularly strong in the field; they are more amenable to giving writers the time required to produce first-rate books; and they are more willing to publish for somewhat limited markets. Despite the financial pressures that increasingly plague the presses, they do have a mission, after all. Nevertheless, most prizewinners through the years have come from among the ranks of the commercial houses.

The NBA fiction choices for 1990 are notable for their ethnic diversity, with three of the four finalists—Felipe Alfau, Elena Castedo, and Jessica Hagedorn—as well as the winner, Charles Johnson, being members of minority groups. There were many murmurs at the time about “political correctness.”

Among the *Times* choices, Alice Munro and Nadine Gordimer provide examples of old-fashioned long-term commitments between fine writers and their publishing houses. Brian Boyd, on the other hand, was not able to publish his definitive Nabokov biography with the commercial house, S&S, that had originally contracted it. Multi-volume biographies are not easy to publish, and these days, most commercial houses shy away from doing them unless the author is already a known and marketable quantity. Boyd found his work required two volumes and the patience and commitment a university press could offer.

Turning to best book/bestseller intersections, it was to be expected that *Rabbit at Rest* would straddle both spheres. Knopf reported sales of more than 150,000 copies, and the book went on the following year to become a bestseller in trade paperback.<sup>78</sup>

*London Fields* received a very significant marketing push from its publisher, which had announced a 40,000-copy first printing. The book did make the list, but for only a couple of weeks. It was also briefly a trade paperback

candidate the following year. Martin Amis is a magnet for publicity and controversy in his native England, but that has never translated sufficiently to America to make his books sustained hardcover bestsellers, certainly not beyond our two coasts.

On the other hand, *Possession* was exactly the kind of big, cinematic, latter-day descendant of Dickens that does extraordinarily well here. (Zadie Smith’s *White Teeth* is a more recent example, and it’s hardly coincidental that both books were sold to the screen. Michel Faber’s *The Crimson Petal and the White* is yet another.)

Ron Chernow’s *The House of Morgan* did not make the hardcover bestseller list, but was a trade paperback candidate for a couple of weeks in April 1991. Charles Johnson’s *Middle Passage* became a weekly bestseller briefly as a trade paperback.

Undoubtedly the biggest best book/bestseller surprise came from Jonathan Spence’s *The Search for Modern China*. Although it did not make the *PW* list, the book was a *Times* bestseller for three weeks, a remarkable achievement for what had been conceived as a college textbook, and a weighty one at that. The book was beautifully packaged; Spence is a fine writer who had published a number of extremely well-received books before; and most important, people were looking to understand what had happened at Tiananmen Square the previous year.

There is a market for instant books when war or international disaster strike, as Tiananmen Square, the Gulf War and Sept. 11 all attest. But people also know the difference between a quick take and what a seasoned expert, reflecting not simply on the moment but on the history that led up to it, can offer. The success of *The Search for Modern China* yet again confirms vox pop’s ability to discern that difference.

## BESTSELLERS OF 1995

TABLE 34

### THE REAL ESTATE BUSINESS

By 1995, bookselling in America was becoming part of the real estate business. The chains employed retail property experts to scout out locations—wherever independent stores were thriving, for example—to set up superstores themselves. To a certain extent they established stores in areas that were not being otherwise served, but targeting established markets was a lot easier, especially if one could fuel traffic into the store through the kind of deep discounting no independent could match.

The real estate business also began to prevail inside the bookstores. The tradition of publishers' paying cooperative advertising premiums to retailers was being transformed by the chains into systematic subvention of virtually every display space. A publisher had to pay thousands of dollars to give a potential bestseller a major promotion in every store. Window, table, end-cap displays; front-of-store placement; a slot in the chains' newspaper ads: all these and more were changing the economics of the bookselling business, and the publisher/bookseller relationship.

In addition, the warehouse clubs and discount marketers, given over to selling brands in bulk, discovered that SKUs of books by brand-name authors could move like SKUs of paper towels or soap. The mass-marketing of best-selling hardcovers had become the norm and was setting new norms not only in terms of marketing costs to the publishers, but also in terms of sales and profits.

Remember how extraordinary it was in 1985 to find three novels selling a million copies each? By 1990, the figure had crept up to five novels, and by 1995, eleven books—four of them nonfiction—had accomplished that feat.

In the previous year, 1994, an astonishing seventeen books had done so.<sup>79</sup>

At the same time, quantities of unsold books were being plucked from the shelves and returned to their publishers faster than they had been before, and in unprecedented numbers, rising to truly alarming proportions.

There's nothing new about the dominance of brand-name authors on the 1995 fiction bestseller list, apart from the consolidation of Patricia Cornwell's position among them, and the fact that the first printing for John Grisham's novel *The Rainmaker*, at 2.8 million copies, set an industry record for the time. Crichton, Steel, King, Sheldon, Rice, Higgins Clark—all were known quantities producing known "products."

Pat Conroy was finally able to satisfy all those booksellers who had waited nine years for *Beach Music*. As for Nicholas Evans's *The Horse Whisperer*, what it showed yet again was how much Hollywood thinking had come to influence book publishing. The sale to the movies was what put Evans's work-in-progress on the map, and it clinched the reported \$3.15 million advance he got from Delacorte.

### SELF-PUBLISHING CIRCA 1995

More interesting is the presence of two self-published novels on the annual list. *The Christmas Story* and *The Celestine Prophecy* did pretty well on their own, but after being taken up by major houses and benefiting from their distribution and marketing clout, they sold phenomenally well, especially in the chains and in non-traditional outlets. Twenty years after Robert Ringer—and fifteen years after Patrick Wright—had turned self-published nonfiction into major bestsellers, fiction had become the format for repeating such a feat. (Although recently, Stephen Wolfram would show that it could still be

Table 34 1995 BESTSELLERS

TITLE	AUTHOR	AWARDS			ANNUAL RANK	TOTAL WEEKS	ORIGINAL HARDCOVER PUBLISHER	OUT OF PRINT
		NYT	NBA	PUL				
<i>The Rainmaker</i>	Grisham				1	23	Doubleday	
<i>The Lost World</i>	Crichton				2	20	Knopf	
<i>Five Days in Paris</i>	Steel				3	18	Delacorte	
<i>The Christmas Box</i>	Evans				4	11	Simon & Schuster	
<i>Lightning</i>	Steel				5	10	Delacorte	
<i>The Celestine Prophecy</i>	Redfield				6	142	Warner	
<i>Rose Madder</i>	King				7	11	Viking	
<i>Silent Night</i>	Clark				8	13	Simon & Schuster	
<i>Politically Correct Holiday Stories</i>	Garner				9	12	Macmillan	
<i>The Horse Whisperer</i>	Evans				10	39	Delacorte	
<i>Politically Correct Bedtime Stories</i>	Garner				11	60	Macmillan	●
<i>Memnoch the Devil</i>	Rice				12	13	Knopf	
<i>Beach Music</i>	Conroy				13	24	Doubleday	
<i>From Potter's Field</i>	Cornwell				14	10	Scribner	
<i>Morning, Noon and Night</i>	Sheldon				15	15	Morrow	
<i>Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus</i>	Gray				1	193+	HarperCollins	
<i>My American Journey</i>	Powell				2	18	Random House	
<i>Miss America</i>	Stern				3	10	ReganBooks	
<i>The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success</i>	Chopra				4	82	Amber-Allen	
<i>The Road Ahead</i>	Gates				5	13	Viking	
<i>Charles Kuralt's America</i>	Kuralt				6	17	Putnam	
<i>Mars and Venus in the Bedroom</i>	Gray				7	26	HarperCollins	
<i>To Renew America</i>	Gingrich				8	13	HarperCollins	●
<i>My Point...and I Do Have One</i>	DeGeneres				9	24	Bantam	
<i>The Moral Compass: Stories for a Life's Journey</i>	Bennett				10	2	Simon & Schuster	
<i>The Book of Virtues: A Treasury of Great Moral Stories</i>	Bennett				11	55	Simon & Schuster	
<i>I Want to Tell You</i>	Simpson				12	9	Little, Brown	●
<i>In the Kitchen with Rosie: Oprah's Favorite Recipes</i>	Daley				13	58	Knopf	
<i>Emotional Intelligence</i>	Goleman				14	50	Bantam	
<i>David Letterman's Book of Top 10 Lists</i>	Letterman				15	8	Bantam	●

☆ Nominated but did not win ★ Awarded ● Out of Print ○ Available via print-on-demand

done with carefully orchestrated, attention-grabbing, self-published nonfiction, with a strong niche base.)

Richard Paul Evans had published *The Christmas Story* in 1993. S&S paid \$4.2 million to buy reprint rights at the end of 1994 for publication the following year, while allowing the author to continue to sell the trade paperback himself. The velocity of sales was tremendous. By the end of 1995, the combined hardcover and paperback total in print was well over four million copies.<sup>80</sup> Since then, come Christmas, the book has continued to sell and has been joined by other tropes on the same formula from the same author.

*The Celestine Prophecy* was a carryover from the 1994 list, and in turn continued on to the 1996 list, for 142 weeks in all. Its author, James Redfield, embodied the very model of the aggressive self-marketer. John Gray was another extraordinarily busy go-getter on the 1995 list.

As superstores proliferated, so did signings. Many authors of both fiction and nonfiction bestsellers found themselves working longer and harder on the lecture, TV, radio and bookstore circuits. Tours of twenty or thirty cities were undertaken by Pat Conroy, Anne Rice, and Richard Paul Evans among others.<sup>81</sup>

Soon it would become clear that far too many writers were being sent on far too many tours. Static was building up from all the competing readings and signings, and far too few books were sold at many of the venues. Of course, that was not a problem for brand-name authors, whose much-coveted appearances could be used as leverage by their publishers in their financial negotiations with the chains. It was also not a problem for authors who found innovative ways to flog their wares. Thus, by the end of the 1990s, E. Lynn Harris, who began by making the rounds of black beauty parlors with a

carload of his novels and selling them himself, had carved out a major readership.

In 1995, the political turmoil, fallout and backlash resulting from the clashing Clinton presidency and the Contract-with-America Republican Congress found their way, not surprisingly, onto both the fiction and nonfiction lists in myriad forms. There were James Finn Garner's *Politically Correct Bedtime Stories* and *Politically Correct Holiday Stories*; Newt Gingrich's *To Renew America*; and William Bennett's *The Moral Compass* and *The Book of Virtues*. Colin Powell provided some relief and common ground in *My American Journey*.

The 1995 upmarket self-help successor to 1990's *You Just Don't Understand* was Daniel Goleman's *Emotional Intelligence*, but it was John Gray and Deepak Chopra who had the more common touch. *Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus* had been on the list since 1993, and stayed on well into 1996. In 1995, it was joined by *Mars and Venus in the Bedroom*. Chopra's *Seven Spiritual Laws of Success* showed how useful numbers can be to hang a book on; so did David Letterman's *Book of Top 10 Lists*.

Charles Kuralt no longer placed at the top of the annual nonfiction list as he had five years earlier, but he did well enough. Television also gave us Ellen DeGeneres and O. J. Simpson. (Both Simpson's and Gingrich's books were quickly enough out of print.)

And then there was Rosie Daley, or rather, Oprah. Although the book club would not debut until the following year, the runaway success of the little cookbook by Winfrey's personal chef was a harbinger of things to come. But although they shared a metier, a medium, and a publishing house, it is the differences between Daley and Julia Child that show the distance the business had travelled in a few decades.

## BIG BOOKS, FEW HOUSES

The increasing concentration of bestsellers among the biggest corporate publishers was noted by *PW*, which had begun tracking the phenomenon in 1993. Seven publishers—Random House Inc., Bantam Doubleday Dell, S&S, HarperCollins, Time Warner, Putnam Berkley, Penguin and Hearst—accounted for 87 percent of the hardcover bestseller slots and 82 percent of the paperback slots in 1995.<sup>82</sup> Since then, Random and BDD have combined, as have Penguin and Putnam. (Recently Putnam was “combined” even more—it was eliminated as part of the corporate name, although it still exists as an imprint.) *PW*’s comment that “one can clearly see how few opportunities are left for midsize and smaller publishing firms” [to make the best-seller list] is even truer now.<sup>83</sup>

On the weekly lists, one finds *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil* in the midst of its unusually sustained, multi-year run; *The Bridges of Madison County* continuing its astonishing stay; and long runs for Anne Tyler’s *Ladder of Years*, Jane Smiley’s *Moo*, and Phillip Howard’s *The Death of Common Sense*, among others. Distinguished fiction by William Trevor, P. D. James, Pete Dexter, Robertson Davies, John le Carré and Gabriel García Márquez all made it onto the list, if often rather briefly.

The film of *Awakenings* had put Oliver Sacks’s name before a much wider audience, which was evident in the seven weeks his *An Anthropologist on Mars* spent on the list. Other serious nonfiction joining him there for briefish stints included Isabel Allende’s *Paula*, Kay Redfield Jamison’s *An Unquiet Mind*, Gore Vidal’s *Palimpsest* and Barbara Kingsolver’s *High Tide in Tucson*.

Also to be noted were some old names recalled to life. Louisa May Alcott’s rediscovered manuscript, *A Long Fatal Love Chase*, piqued

enough curiosity to put it on the list for four weeks; Albert Camus’ *The First Man* was only on for one week; and a big marketing push behind a revised edition of Anne Frank’s *Diary of a Young Girl* made the book a hardcover bestseller again after so many years, this time for five weeks.

All of the books we’ve discussed from the weekly lists had been published by large houses, with the exception of a couple from Farrar, Straus and Harcourt’s small trade operation. *Sisters*, by Carol Saline and Sharon Wohlmut, was unusual, having been published by Running Press in Philadelphia; so was *My Old Man and the Sea* by David and Daniel Hays, which originated at Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill.

## BEST BOOKS OF 1995

TABLES 35, 36, 37, 38, 39

The rare unanimity that had been expressed ten years earlier for Tony Lukas’s *Common Ground* was heard again in 1995, this time for another work of nonfiction, Tina Rosenberg’s *The Haunted Land: Facing Europe’s Ghosts After Communism*. It took both the Pulitzer and the NBA and was cited by the *Times*. But the book came nowhere near any bestseller list; rather, it was well known in the industry from remarks made by publisher Harry Evans that its sales were quite modest.

Indeed, Evans had created a stir the previous year when he revealed that twenty-nine Random House books cited by the *Times* as being notable in 1993 had collectively lost nearly \$700,000. Those losses had been covered by the profits from two bestsellers that, between them, had earned \$1.4 million. To view each book as a profit-making entity on its own, Evans said, would be “the death of publishing.”<sup>84</sup>

Table 35 1995 NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW EDITORS' CHOICE

TITLE	AUTHOR	AWARDS			ANNUAL RANK	TOTAL WEEKS	ORIGINAL HARDCOVER PUBLISHER	OUT OF PRINT
		NYT	NBA	PUL				
<i>Sabbath's Theater</i>	Roth	★	★	☆			Houghton Mifflin	
<i>Independence Day</i>	Ford	★		★			Knopf	
<i>The Information</i>	Amis	★				1	Harmony	
<i>The Island of the Day Before</i>	Eco	★				11	Harcourt	
<i>The Stories of Vladimir Nabokov</i>	Nabokov	★					Knopf	
<i>The Haunted Land: Facing Europe's Ghosts after Communism</i>	Rosenberg	★	★	★			Random House	
<i>In Confidence: Moscow's Ambassador to America's Six Cold War Presidents</i>	Dobrynin	★					Crown	
<i>The Life of Graham Greene, Vol. 2</i>	Sherry	★					Viking	
<i>Lincoln</i>	Donald	★				12	Simon & Schuster	
<i>Overcoming Law</i>	Posner	★					Harvard	
<i>Zola: A Life</i>	Brown	★					Farrar, Straus	

Table 36 1995 PULITZERS (Categories: Fiction, History, General Nonfiction, Biography)

TITLE	AUTHOR	AWARDS			ANNUAL RANK	TOTAL WEEKS	ORIGINAL HARDCOVER PUBLISHER	OUT OF PRINT
		NYT	NBA	PUL				
<i>Independence Day</i>	Ford	★		★			Knopf	
<i>Mr. Ives' Christmas</i>	Hijuelos			☆			HarperCollins	
<i>Sabbath's Theater</i>	Roth	★	★	☆			Houghton Mifflin	
<i>William Cooper's Town: Power and Persuasion on the Frontier of the Early American Republic</i>	Taylor			★			Knopf	
<i>The Sacred Fire of Liberty: James Madison and the Founding of the Federal Republic</i>	Banning			☆			Cornell	
<i>Dark Sun: The Making of the Hydrogen Bomb</i>	Rhodes			☆		2	Simon & Schuster	
<i>The Haunted Land: Facing Europe's Ghosts after Communism</i>	Rosenberg	★	★	★			Random House	
<i>Darwin's Dangerous Idea: Evolution and the Meanings of Life</i>	Dennett		☆	☆			Simon & Schuster	
<i>Mr. Wilson's Cabinet of Wonder</i>	Weschler			☆			Pantheon	
<i>God: A Biography</i>	Miles			★			Knopf	
<i>John Sloan: Painter and Rebel</i>	Loughery			☆			Henry Holt	●
<i>Mozart: A Life</i>	Solomon			☆			HarperCollins	

☆ Nominated but did not win   ★ Awarded   ● Out of Print   ○ Available via print-on-demand

Table 37 1995 NATIONAL BOOK AWARDS (Categories: Fiction, Nonfiction)

TITLE	AUTHOR	AWARDS			ANNUAL RANK	TOTAL WEEKS	ORIGINAL HARDCOVER PUBLISHER	OUT OF PRINT
		NYT	NBA	PUL				
<i>Sabbath's Theater</i>	Roth	★	★	☆			Houghton Mifflin	
<i>All Souls' Rising</i>	Bell		☆				Pantheon	
<i>Krik? Krak!</i>	Danticat		☆				Soho	
<i>Interstate: A Novel</i>	Dixon		☆				Henry Holt	
<i>The House on the Lagoon</i>	Ferré		☆				Farrar, Straus	
<i>The Haunted Land: Facing Europe's Ghosts after Communism</i>	Rosenberg	★	★	★			Random House	
<i>Darwin's Dangerous Idea: Evolution and the Meanings of Life</i>	Dennett		☆	☆			Simon & Schuster	
<i>Salvation on Sand Mountain: Snake Handling and Redemption in Southern Appalachia</i>	Covington		☆				Perseus	
<i>A Civil Action</i>	Harr		☆				Random House	
<i>Ghosts of Mississippi: The Murder of Medgar Evers, the Trials of Byron de la Beckwith and the Haunting of the New South</i>	Vollers		☆				Little, Brown	

Table 38 1995 BEST BOOKS INTERSECTIONS

TITLE	AUTHOR	AWARDS			ANNUAL RANK	TOTAL WEEKS	ORIGINAL HARDCOVER PUBLISHER	OUT OF PRINT
		NYT	NBA	PUL				
<i>Independence Day</i>	Ford	★		★			Knopf	
<i>Sabbath's Theater</i>	Roth	★	★	☆			Houghton Mifflin	
<i>The Haunted Land: Facing Europe's Ghosts after Communism</i>	Rosenberg	★	★	★			Random House	
<i>Darwin's Dangerous Idea: Evolution and the Meanings of Life</i>	Dennett		☆	☆			Simon & Schuster	

Table 39 1995 BEST BOOKS/BESTSELLERS INTERSECTIONS

TITLE	AUTHOR	AWARDS			ANNUAL RANK	TOTAL WEEKS	ORIGINAL HARDCOVER PUBLISHER	OUT OF PRINT
		NYT	NBA	PUL				
<i>Lincoln</i>	Donald	★				12	Simon & Schuster	
<i>The Island of the Day Before</i>	Eco	★				11	Harcourt	
<i>Dark Sun: The Making of the Hydrogen Bomb</i>	Rhodes			☆		2	Simon & Schuster	
<i>The Information</i>	Amis	★				1	Harmony	

☆ Nominated but did not win   ★ Awarded   ● Out of Print   ○ Available via print-on-demand

The truth was the same, whether in 1940 or 1995: however good the reviews, however aggressively one publicized, however many distinctions accrued to the title, for many books a mass audience could not be made. And yet the exigencies of corporate ownership had clearly mandated such bottom-line thinking within the big houses, where editors were forced to find highly imaginative ways to work the profit-and-loss estimates for some of their books, or drop certain authors altogether. The squeeze was evident in the increasingly nervous culture that prevailed within many houses.

But unlike Rosenberg's experience, a number of other best books made it on to the weekly bestseller lists for brief periods in hardcover. Richard Rhodes was a known quantity, and his *Dark Sun: The Making of the Hydrogen Bomb*, a Pulitzer nominee, was on for two weeks, helped by the fiftieth anniversary of the dropping of the atomic bomb. Among the *Times* choices, Martin Amis's *The Information* was on for one week; Umberto Eco's *The Island of the Day Before* stayed on for eleven; David Herbert Donald's biography, *Lincoln*, was on for twelve weeks.

However, as S&S publisher Carolyn Reidy remarked in an interview, "Most books these days have one major life, in either hardcover or paperback, but not both."<sup>85</sup> What was becoming clear was that for many best books, the real selling life was in trade paperback, the format that was proving to be the long-term home of literary fiction, narrative nonfiction, and biography. Jack Miles's *God: A Biography* won the Pulitzer and a ten-week spot on the trade paperback list in 1996; so did Richard Ford's novel *Independence Day*, which stayed on for thirteen weeks.

Back in 1975, Judith Rossner's publisher had decided that *Looking for Mr. Goodbar* was a book to be made. Twenty years later, Harry Evans and Random House exhibited even greater tenacity vis-à-vis Jonathan Harr's *A Civil Action*, which was an NBA nominee. They went so far as to relaunch it with a new marketing campaign. Readers who gobbled up Grisham-esque accounts of dedicated lawyers fighting the good fight now had before them a compelling, real-life equivalent. The book ended up reaping sustained success as a trade paperback. By the end of 1997, it had been a bestseller for fifty-six weeks.

## BESTSELLERS OF 2000

TABLE 40

During the last five years of the second millennium, the most obvious changes sweeping the bestseller list were named Harry and Oprah. The longer-term change sweeping the industry was named Amazon, with its imitators and competitors large and small. Amazon didn't simply open up a whole new universe for book-selling; it also became the publisher's, author's, and bookseller's best market-research friend.

### FAMILY READING WITH HARRY

Publishing had not seen a children's series like Harry Potter take over the popular consciousness for many years. J. R. R. Tolkien had provided the last such phenomenon, but *The Lord of the Rings* had appealed more to the college crowd than to kids. Moreover, what J. K. Rowling's series accomplished went far beyond Tolkien. It did nothing less than revive the pre-radio, pre-movies, pre-television tradition of the family reading book, the kind of book that A. D. Dickinson and Frank Mott had highlighted from the early years of the twentieth century as being both classic bestseller and best-selling classic.

Rowling's novel appealed to a core audience of children, as well as to the adult readership that exists for children's books. It expanded to take in adult fans of fantasy, mystery and all things British. Thereafter, it took on a life of its own.

Rowling had succeeded in creating a serial, multi-volume world, à la Dickens and Walter Scott. The books could be entered and enjoyed and shared across generations. The Harry universe would evolve over seven titles—that was key, both in terms of her publishers' willingness to invest heavily in marketing the first book, and in terms of her potential audience.

Twentieth-century technology, media and marketing spread the word about Harry faster

and further than was possible in Dickens's and Scott's day, very quickly turning the series into a touchstone, a common cultural happening around the world. Rowling, highly attractive and with a highly promotable welfare-mother-makes-good story, showed a remarkable degree of control as she donned the mantle of the public author.

The first Potter book had been published in America in October 1998; two sequels were published in 1999, making for exceptional velocity. When the fourth book, *The Goblet of Fire*, was published in 2000, it sold 7.9 million copies that year. In 2000 alone, 23.2 million Potter books were sold in the U.S.<sup>86</sup>

### OPRAH AND HER PREDECESSORS

And then there was Oprah. Rosie Daley's cookbook had shown in 1995 what a really close association with Oprah's name and enthusiasm could do. But from the time she announced the book club in September 1996 to its abrupt halt five years later, Oprah's brand was leveraged to sell not just a lot of well-written, middlebrow fiction, but also, sometimes, the more challenging novel whose likes hadn't been regularly seen on an annual list since 1975's Doctorow/Bellow duet.

Oprah did not simply appear fully formed out of the ether. There were precedents going back at least to the 1940s. Clarkson Potter could have been writing about Oprah when he recalled the power radio had at the beginning of his long career: "By the time I worked in a bookstore in 1949, radio programs were of supreme importance. Mary Margaret McBride had the greatest following, and we had to know in advance what she would be talking about every day, and make certain the book was in.... Women would walk in...around ten or eleven and say that they wanted the book that Mary Margaret had just been discussing.

"They didn't know what the title was or who had written it: they only had a vague notion that

Table 40 2000 BESTSELLERS

TITLE	AUTHOR	AWARDS			ANNUAL RANK	TOTAL WEEKS	ORIGINAL HARDCOVER PUBLISHER	OUT OF PRINT
		NYT	NBA	PUL				
<i>The Brethren</i>	Grisham				1	30	Doubleday	
<i>The Mark: The Beast Rules the World</i>	Jenkins et al				2	9	Tyndale House	
<i>The Bear and the Dragon</i>	Clancy				3	20	Putnam	
<i>The Indwelling: The Beast Takes Possession</i>	Jenkins et al				4	14	Tyndale House	
<i>The Last Precinct</i>	Cornwell				5	13	Putnam	
<i>Journey</i>	Steel				6	8	Delacorte	
<i>The Rescue</i>	Sparks				7	12	Warner	
<i>Roses Are Red</i>	Patterson				8	12	Little, Brown	
<i>Cradle and All</i>	Patterson				9	10	Little, Brown	
<i>The House on Hope Street</i>	Steel				10	10	Delacorte	
<i>The Wedding</i>	Steel				11	7	Delacorte	
<i>Drowning Ruth</i>	Schwarz				12	12	Doubleday	
<i>Before I Say Goodbye</i>	Clark				13	14	Simon & Schuster	
<i>Deck the Halls</i>	Clark				14	9	Simon & Schuster	
<i>Gap Creek</i>	Morgan				15	14	Algonquin	
<i>Who Moved My Cheese?</i>	Johnson				1	103+	Putnam	
<i>Guinness World Records 2001</i>	Footman				2	20	Guinness	
<i>Tuesdays with Morrie</i>	Albom				4	183	Doubleday	
<i>Body for Life</i>	Phillips				4	122	HarperCollins	
<i>The Beatles Anthology</i>	Beatles				5	14	Chronicle	
<i>The O'Reilly Factor</i>	O'Reilly				6	30	Broadway	
<i>Relationship Rescue: A Seven Step Strategy</i>	McGraw				7	33	Hyperion	
<i>The Millionaire Mind</i>	Stanley				8	15	Andrews McMeel	
<i>Ten Things I Wish I'd Known</i>	Shriver				9	21	Warner	
<i>Eating Well for Optimum Health</i>	Weil				10	17	Knopf	
<i>The Prayer of Jabez</i>	Wilkinson				11	44+	Multnomah	
<i>Flags of Our Fathers</i>	Bradley				12	29	Bantam	
<i>A Short Guide to a Happy Life</i>	Quindlen				13	27	Random House	
<i>On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft</i>	King				14	12	Scribner	
<i>Nothing Like It in the World: The Men Who Built the Transcontinental Railroad 1863–1869</i>	Ambrose				15	20	Simon & Schuster	

☆ Nominated but did not win ★ Awarded ● Out of Print ○ Available via print-on-demand

it had sounded interesting and that, since Mary Margaret had been talking about it, it must be worth reading. That was the real point. It was not that they really wanted any given book, it was that they trusted Mary Margaret.<sup>87</sup> Or Donahue or Imus or Oprah.

Although studies have shown that the peak Oprah effect was reached in 1999<sup>88</sup> and a falling-off occurred thereafter, throughout the book-club years there was no more powerful sales tool than Winfrey. In 2000, both *Drowning Ruth* and *Gap Creek* owed their best-selling readerships to her.

The practice of the one-day laydown led to far more novels reaching the number-one spot, but it was also leading them to be knocked off far more quickly. In 1990, eleven novels spent some time at the top, but that figure had almost doubled, to twenty-one in 2000. Eighteen of those books became number-one bestsellers during their first week on sale.<sup>89</sup>

On the annual fiction list, John Grisham had held the first position since 1994, and he did so again in 2000, when *The Brethren* sold more than 2.8 million copies. Close behind, with 2.6 million copies sold, Jerry B. Jenkins and Tim LaHaye's *The Mark* showed how much the Christian sector had penetrated the mainstream. A couple of new names, James Patterson and Nicholas Sparks, achieved latter-day brand status, the former being well-versed in brand creation from his career as an advertising executive.

While more authors scrambled for a briefer moment at the top, fewer publishers got them there. In 2000, five companies—Random House, PenguinPutnam, HarperCollins, Simon & Schuster and AOL Time Warner—accounted for 83.5 percent of slots on the weekly hardcover bestseller lists and 78.9 percent on the weekly paperback lists.<sup>90</sup>

But the nonfiction pattern at the top of the hardcover list differed markedly from that of fiction. By 1995 it was already very clear that more and more nonfiction titles were staying for very long runs. Fully one-third of the annual bestsellers that year—*Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus*; *In the Kitchen with Rosie*; *The Book of Virtues*; *The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success*; and *Emotional Intelligence*—were on the list for a minimum of fifty weeks.

Five years later, four hardcovers—*Who Moved My Cheese?*; *Tuesdays with Morrie*; *Body for Life*; *The Beatles Anthology*—had stays of at least one hundred weeks. Two of them, *Cheese* and *Morrie*, were small, short and well-packaged, a trend that had been growing for some years. But though popular, it would be a mistake to assume that short books had some sort of hegemony over the list. Long would prove equally successful in 2001, with David McCullough's *John Adams*.

The weekly lists of 2000 reflected, as they always do, celebrity and fad. It's just that the wrestlers Mankind and The Rock replaced the usual movie stars. In a curious way, though, these celebrity titles also overlapped with self-help. The long lines at signings revealed that a substantial proportion of the books were being bought by legions of boys who wanted to leave their skinny selves behind and transmogrify into pumped-up Rocks.

#### SPIRITUALITY ANSWERS PRAYERS

The 2000 annual nonfiction list provides ample evidence of Americans' popular obsessions with self-help and spirituality. Try *The Prayer of Jabez* and *A Short Guide to a Happy Life* for starters. Add the comforting words of *Tuesdays with Morrie* as boomers began to have to come to terms with their parents' and their own mortality. Stir in some *Relationship Rescue*, *Body for Life* and *Eating for Optimum Health*. And then learn to plumb the depths of the

soul and get it down on paper via Stephen King's *On Writing*.

The runners-up from the weekly lists convey the same message: Gary Zukav's *Soul Stories*; Gordon Hinckley's *Standing for Something: Ten Neglected Virtues that Will Heal Our Hearts and Home*; Dr. Robert Atkins's *Age-Defying Diet Revolution*; Iyanla Vanzant's daily devotional *Until Today*; psychic Sylvia Browne's tour of the afterlife, *Life on the Other Side*; or the Dalai Lama's *The Art of Happiness*. The latter had sold more than one million copies in two years; the others had each sold at least 300,000 copies.

The passing of the millennium was marked by a picture collection, *LIFE: A Century of Change*, and two nostalgia collections. The first, *The Greatest Generation*, propelled and sustained by the nightly television presence of its author, Tom Brokaw, had achieved 3.7 million copies in print since its publication at the end of 1998. The second, *Flags of Our Fathers*, also looked back to the Second World War.<sup>91</sup> The closest the annual list came to substantive history was the transcontinental railway saga, *Nothing Like It in the World*, by Stephen Ambrose.

The seriously serious or literary was represented on the weekly 2000 nonfiction lists by writers like Dava Sobel, who had followed up her short, nicely packaged surprise bestseller *Longitude* with the considerably longer *Galileo's Daughter*. Frank McCourt followed up *Angela's Ashes* with *Tis*. Length was no obstacle to Dave Eggers's *A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius*, or Jacques Barzun's *From Dawn to Decadence*. Adam Gopnik went from *Paris to the Moon* to the bestseller list.

Varying degrees of literary fiction from the weekly lists included Kent Haruf's *Plainsong* (championed by independent stores); Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* and Isabel Allende's *Daughter of Fortune* (both championed by

Oprah); Margaret Atwood's *The Blind Assassin*; Michael Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost* (an example of how an Oscar-winning movie can confer long-term name recognition on an author); Philip Roth's *The Human Stain*. E. L. Doctorow and Saul Bellow, the solid bookends of 1975's annual bestseller list, made it only very briefly on to the weekly lists twenty-five years later, with *City of God* and *Ravelstein*, respectively.

## BEST BOOKS OF 2000

TABLES 41, 42, 43, 44, 45

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No single title received the blessing of all three best-books panels in 2000. Indeed, the National Book Awards and the *Times* shared no books in common at all. Four titles showed some overlap between the Pulitzer choices and the other two panels. Far more interesting: seven of the twenty-eight best books of 2000 spent some time on a hardcover bestseller list. That level of intersection hadn't occurred since 1980. The commonality can be interpreted in several ways.

Perhaps best-books panels were consciously or otherwise being more influenced by the marketplace than in previous years in making their choices. Perhaps, given that the prime book-buying season is the month before Christmas, being chosen by the NBA in November or the *Times* in early December was having a greater effect on sales than in the past (the Pulitzers aren't announced until the following spring). Or perhaps publishers were putting more marketing investment behind certain selected higher-culture titles in a marketplace where a known author, or a highly promotable newcomer, or a subject that serendipitously touches upon the zeitgeist, could sell in greater quantities than ever before.

In 2000, one can make a case for all three.

Table 41 2000 NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW EDITORS' CHOICE

TITLE	AUTHOR	AWARDS			ANNUAL RANK	TOTAL WEEKS	ORIGINAL HARDCOVER PUBLISHER	OUT OF PRINT
		NYT	NBA	PUL				
<i>Being Dead</i>	Crace	★					Farrar, Straus	
<i>Beowulf: A New Verse Translation</i>	Heaney	★				9	Farrar, Straus	
<i>Gertrude and Claudius</i>	Updike	★					Knopf	
<i>The Human Stain</i>	Roth	★				3	Houghton Mifflin	
<i>White Teeth</i>	Smith	★				4	Random House	
<i>A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius</i>	Eggers	★		☆		9	Simon & Schuster	
<i>Way Out There in the Blue: Reagan, Star Wars and the End of the Cold War</i>	Fitzgerald	★		☆			Simon & Schuster	
<i>Genome: The Autobiography of a Species...</i>	Ridley	★					HarperCollins	
<i>One Palestine, Complete: Jews and Arabs under the British Mandate</i>	Segev	★					Metropolitan / Holt	
<i>Rimbaud: A Biography</i>	Robb	★					Norton	

Table 42 2000 PULITZERS (Categories: Fiction, History, General Nonfiction, Biography)

TITLE	AUTHOR	AWARDS			ANNUAL RANK	TOTAL WEEKS	ORIGINAL HARDCOVER PUBLISHER	OUT OF PRINT
		NYT	NBA	PUL				
<i>The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay</i>	Chabon			★		3	Random House	
<i>Blonde</i>	Oates		☆	☆			Ecco	
<i>The Quick and the Dead</i>	Williams			☆			Knopf	
<i>Founding Brothers</i>	Ellis			★			Knopf	
<i>The Right to Vote: The Contested History of Democracy in the U.S.</i>	Keyssar			☆			Basic	
<i>Way Out There in the Blue: Reagan, Star Wars and the End of the Cold War</i>	Fitzgerald	★		☆			Simon & Schuster	
<i>Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan</i>	Bix			★			HarperCollins	
<i>Newjack: Guarding Sing Sing</i>	Conover			☆			Random House	
<i>A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius</i>	Eggers	★		☆		9	Simon & Schuster	
<i>W. E. B. Du Bois: The Fight for Equality and the American Century, 1919–1963</i>	Lewis		☆	★			Henry Holt	
<i>The First American: The Life and Times of Benjamin Franklin</i>	Brands			☆			Doubleday	
<i>Johann Sebastian Bach: The Learned Musician</i>	Wolff			☆			Norton	

*Table 43 2000 NATIONAL BOOK AWARDS* (Categories: Fiction, Nonfiction)

TITLE	AUTHOR	AWARDS			ANNUAL RANK	TOTAL WEEKS	ORIGINAL HARDCOVER PUBLISHER	OUT OF PRINT
		NYT	NBA	PUL				
<i>In America</i>	Sontag		★				Farrar, Straus	
<i>Blonde</i>	Oates		☆	☆			Ecco	
<i>The Feast of Love</i>	Baxter		☆				Pantheon	
<i>The Diagnosis</i>	Lightman		☆				Pantheon	
<i>Blue Angel</i>	Prose		☆				HarperCollins	
<i>In the Heart of the Sea: The Tragedy of the Whaleship Essex</i>	Philbrick		★			7	Viking	
<i>W.E.B. Du Bois: The Fight for Equality and the American Century, 1919–1963</i>	Lewis		☆	★			Henry Holt	
<i>From Dawn to Decadence: 500 Years of Western Cultural Life</i>	Barzun		☆			10	HarperCollins	
<i>The Collaborator: The Trial and Execution of Robert Brasillach</i>	Kaplan		☆				U. of Chicago	
<i>Darkness in El Dorado: How Scientists and Journalists Devastated the Amazon</i>	Tierney		☆				Norton	

*Table 44 2000 BEST BOOKS INTERSECTIONS*

TITLE	AUTHOR	AWARDS			ANNUAL RANK	TOTAL WEEKS	ORIGINAL HARDCOVER PUBLISHER	OUT OF PRINT
		NYT	NBA	PUL				
<i>W. E. B. Du Bois: The Fight for Equality and the American Century, 1919–1963</i>	Lewis		☆	★			Henry Holt	
<i>Blonde</i>	Oates		☆	☆			Ecco	
<i>A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius</i>	Eggers	★		☆		9	Simon & Schuster	
<i>Way Out There in the Blue: Reagan, Star Wars and the End of the Cold War</i>	Fitzgerald	★		☆			Simon & Schuster	

☆ Nominated but did not win   ★ Awarded   ● Out of Print   ○ Available via print-on-demand

Table 45 2000 BESTSELLERS/BEST BOOKS INTERSECTIONS

TITLE	AUTHOR	AWARDS			ANNUAL RANK	TOTAL WEEKS	ORIGINAL HARDCOVER PUBLISHER	OUT OF PRINT
		NYT	NBA	PUL				
<i>From Dawn to Decadence: 500 Years of Western Cultural Life</i>	Barzun		☆			10	HarperCollins	
<i>A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius</i>	Eggers	★		☆		9	Simon & Schuster	
<i>Beowulf: A New Verse Translation</i>	Heaney	★				9	Farrar, Straus	
<i>In the Heart of the Sea: The Tragedy of the Whaleship Essex</i>	Philbrick		★			7	Viking	
<i>White Teeth</i>	Smith	★				4	Random House	
<i>The Human Stain</i>	Roth	★				3	Houghton Mifflin	
<i>The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay</i>	Chabon			★		3	Random House	

☆ Nominated but did not win   ★ Awarded   ● Out of Print   ○ Available via print-on-demand

Seamus Heaney’s version of *Beowulf* spent nine weeks on the hardcover bestseller list, an extraordinary achievement for a new translation of a middle-English verse poem that has stymied generations of undergraduates.

The well-timed, glowing reviews certainly helped. But for a crucial window of selling time, the sheer buzz surrounding the fact of its having been retranslated at all was what provided the velocity necessary to get it on the list. The success of something so rarefied shows how much intelligent marketing, excellent packaging and savvy leveraging of a brand—in this case, the Nobel prize—can work to our cultural advantage. (Gao Xingjian’s Nobel had the same effect on the sales of *Soul Mountain* in 2000. Indeed, it was far more dramatic, courtesy of his having been the first Chinese writer to have won the award.)

Philip Roth’s *Sabbath’s Theater* won the NBA in 1995, was shortlisted for the Pulitzer and made the *Times* list, but never managed to become a hardcover bestseller. In 2000, the Clinton-tinged *Human Stain* was taken up by the media, and it made the list for three weeks.

Dave Eggers’s ego may have alienated some potential readers of *A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius*, but it worked to promote his memoir to many others, particularly of his generation. Readers felt they “knew” his story, in the way they knew that J. K. Rowling had been on welfare. And with Eggers, they could get to know him even better via the Internet.

In Zadie Smith, her publisher had an attractive, articulate unknown bursting on the scene with a novel of Dickensian proportions. *White Teeth* had been anointed by the British, and its appeal bridged the Atlantic with themes that resonated with Americans. Like Eggers, Smith was someone ideally suited to being “made.” Youth worked for Michael Chabon as well, along with brilliant, well-timed reviews and the same kind of generational and period nostalgia that was evident in the sales of *The Greatest Generation*.

Nathaniel Philbrick’s NBA-winning *In the Heart of the Sea: The Tragedy of the Whaleship Essex* benefited from crossover appeal to two readerships, aficionados of Patrick O’Brian’s historical fictions of the sailing kind and

devotees of true-life adventure/disasters like Sebastian Junger's *The Perfect Storm*. In many ways, Jacques Barzun's *From Dawn to Decadence* is the most surprising bestseller among the best books, although its appeal—a seemingly definitive rendering in a beautiful package—was not dissimilar to Jonathan Spence's *The Search for Modern China* ten years earlier.

Joyce Carol Oates—whose *We Were the Mulvaney*s sold more than 1.5 million trade paperbacks in 2001, largely courtesy of Oprah—did not make the hardcover bestseller list with *Blonde*. Marilyn Monroe can still sell books, but Oates writing in the guise of Monroe did not necessarily appeal to the usual fans of either. The book's reviews were also mixed. John Updike's *Gertrude and Claudius*, too, was absent from the weekly hardcover lists, perhaps a sign of generational change given how many Updike novels have resided on the weekly lists over the years.

The fact that seven of the twenty-eight best books made it on to the hardcover list is significant. And eight of the twenty-eight titles became trade paperback weekly bestsellers in their reprint editions the following year. Eggers's memoir clocked sales of more than 500,000 copies in 2001; Philbrick's more than 373,000; Chabon's novel, 260,000; *White Teeth*, 209,000; *Beowulf*, 142,000; Charles Baxter's NBA nominee, *The Feast of Love*, 139,000; *The Human Stain*, 135,000; Barzun's tome, 125,000.

However, despite winning the Pulitzer and being nominated for the NBA, David Levering Lewis's W. E. B. DuBois biography did not grace the list, nor did Francine Prose's *Blue Angel*. Biography was still a much harder sell than memoir. And while *Memoirs of a Geisha* may have caught the popular fancy a few years earlier, the seriously historical *Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan* was another matter entirely.

## 4. AFTERWORD

The trade book business likes to worry about itself. Projections made by an industry think tank, the Book Industry Study Group, in a report released in spring 2002, do give cause for concern.<sup>92</sup> The report predicted that book prices will continue to rise; unit sales will decline in 2002 and 2003; mass market paperback sales will continue to be flat; and direct-to-consumer mail-order sales will plummet. And, excepting Harry Potter and a few other magical series, BISG is negative about the future of children's trade book sales as well.

Michael Cader, publisher of the Web newsletter *Publishers Lunch*, used the BISG statistics to prognosticate further doom and gloom. He pointed to the glut of new books; to the "more liquid market" for used books courtesy of fast-growing online sales; to fewer books going out of print courtesy of the technological innovations of print-on-demand. It all adds up to fewer new books being bought, and fewer books being published well.<sup>93</sup>

Certainly, too many books are published, and too often, the pushiest and loudest among them drown out the quieter, higher-quality read. The huge inequity between the select few—books by brand-name authors and books that have been "anointed" to be "made"—and all the rest is very troubling. If one could do the impossible—a study of how money, in terms of advances and marketing budgets, is allocated to each book on a publisher's list in any given year—it would speak volumes about the distortions of today's business.

We all suffer from information overload, with lots of distractions that can easily keep us away from books. The upswing in used book sales is significant and it is indeed worrying. Young people are keen to build libraries of CDs, DVDs and computer games, but are we communicating to them the value of building personal libraries of books? Alarms have been sounding

for many years about the need to improve literacy and to get more kids to read in America.

Yet despite all these very real distortions, dislocations and challenges, the book business is not going to implode any time soon. Yes, as evidenced by the remarks of many people quoted in these pages, it is a hard business to be in, and conglomeration and cultural trends have made it that much harder.

But this report, and especially the study of the books themselves over the past quarter century, also tells a different story. Brand names clog the bestseller list, but many more people are buying those books than had bought their equivalents twenty-five years ago. Think of the numbers of best books that have spent some time on the bestseller list. Think of how many best books find a large and lasting readership in trade paperback.

William Styron, in a speech given in late October 2002 at the Whiting Writers' Awards in New York, looked back a half century to 1951 and the publication of his first novel, *Lie Down in Darkness*. He recalled *Time* magazine pointing to his book and two other first novels published that year and saying they expressed "a depressing and negative trend in American literature." The other novels were *From Here to Eternity* and *The Catcher in the Rye*. All three made the bestseller list. Fifty years later, fine novels still find their way on to the weekly lists.

Oprah's sales effect may have been more about Americans' search for community and cultural talismans than about the books themselves, but books were the medium. And the kind of family-reading phenomenon of a Harry Potter cannot be ignored.

In the "good old days" when publishing was much more of a cottage industry and profession for gentlemen, when it was a far cozier, smaller and more paternalistic world, Max Schuster

and Frank Mott saw similar strains and ambivalences. But let us go back even further. Dickens knew about it 150 years ago, long before the Internet and Oprah, long before the rollout of chain stores and warehouse clubs, long before the computer technology that has changed the making and selling of books and fast-forwarded the roles of the people involved.

Dickens knew about the peculiarly shifting love-hate dynamics among authors and publish-

ers and booksellers; the power of vox pop and the author's and publisher's and bookseller's job to harness it for money and, just occasionally, for glory and art. Most important, he knew that, far from being immutable, book publishing is a business, no more nor less. An enterprise of its time, it reflects the opportunities and changes and confusions of the day for good and ill. In book publishing, as in most human activities, it's always, as Dickens would have it, the best and worst of times.

## 5. NOTES

- 1 *Publishers Weekly*, December 15, 1945, p. 2613.
- 2 *The Bowker Annual Library and Book Trade Almanac*, 46th edition, 2001. Additional interviews with *Publishers Weekly* librarian Gary Ink and with Bowker's Andrew Grabois on 7/24/02. When the total for 2001 is finalized in 2003, it is likely to surpass that of 2000, and the figure for 2002 is expected to be even higher, according to both Ink and Grabois.
- 3 *Publishers Weekly* 2/9/76.
- 4 *Ibid.*
- 5 *Publishers Weekly* 3/19/01.
- 6 *Publishers Weekly* 3/18/02.
- 7 *Ibid.*
- 8 From an author interview with the book's publisher, Michael Pietsch, December 2002.
- 9 Scholastic, Inc. Sales are cumulative to December 2002.
- 10 According to Daisy Maryles, *Publishers Weekly* executive editor and compiler of the bestseller lists.
- 11 From an author interview, fall 2001. Interviewee prefers to remain anonymous.
- 12 NB: Twenty-five years ago, the *PW* annual list comprised ten novels and ten nonfiction titles; it later increased to fifteen each.
- 13 Frank Luther Mott, *Golden Multitudes: The Story of Best Sellers in the United States*, New York, R.R. Bowker, 1947, p. 6.
- 14 John Sutherland, *Reading the Decades: Fifty Years of the Nation's Bestselling Books*, London, BBC Worldwide Ltd., 2002, p. 83.
- 15 Mott, p. 2.
- 16 *Ibid.*, p. 4.
- 17 *Ibid.*, p. 4.
- 18 *Ibid.*, p. 4.
- 19 Asa Don Dickinson, *One Thousand Best Books: The Household Guide to a Lifetime's Reading and Clue to the Literary Labyrinth*, New York, H.W. Wilson Company, 1931.
- 20 *Ibid.*, p. 122.
- 21 *Ibid.*, p. 172.
- 22 Mott, p. 5.
- 23 Sutherland, p. 8.
- 24 From a series of author interviews with Daisy Maryles, fall 2001 to spring 2002.
- 25 Mott, p. 5.
- 26 *Ibid.*, p. 273.
- 27 William Miller, *The Book Industry: A Report of the Public Library Inquiry*, New York, Columbia University Press, quoted in "Faces in the Mirror: Five Decades of Research and Comment on the Book Trade 1931-2001" by Peter W. Adams, in *Publishing Research Quarterly*, spring 2001, New Brunswick, New Jersey.
- 28 From an author interview, fall 2001. Interviewee prefers to remain anonymous.
- 29 See, for example, a transcription of an NBC television program, *The Open Mind*, on 11/13/60, in the Cerf Archive at Columbia University.
- 30 From an author interview with Carol Schneider, fall 2001.
- 31 Samuel Vaughan quoted in *American Authors and the Literary Marketplace Since 1900* by James L. West III, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988, pp. 75-76.
- 32 From an author interview with Carolyn Reidy, fall 2001.
- 33 From an author interview with Elisabeth Sifton, fall 2001.
- 34 From a session observed by the author in fall 2001.
- 35 Laura J. Miller, in "The Bestseller List as Marketing Tool and Historical Fiction," p. 291, in *Book History*, Vol. 3, 2000, Penn State University Press.
- 36 Maryles interviews.
- 37 Maryles interviews.
- 38 Maryles in *Publishers Weekly*, 2/9/76, p. 42.
- 39 See the essay by AOL Time Warner publisher Laurence Kirshbaum in *Book Industry Trends* 2001, p. 7, prepared for the Book Industry Study Group by the Center for Communications and Media Management at the Fordham University Graduate School of Business Administration.
- 40 From an author interview with Maureen Howard, fall 2001.
- 41 Clarkson N. Potter, *Who Does What and Why in Book Publishing: Writers, Editors and Money Men*, Secaucus, Birch Lane Press, 1990, p. 59.
- 42 From an author interview with Jane Friedman, fall 2001.
- 43 From an author interview with Ann Godoff, fall 2001.
- 44 Godoff interview.
- 45 David D. Kirkpatrick report for the Authors Guild, p. 5.
- 46 Howard interview.
- 47 From an author interview with Michael Jacobs, fall 2001.
- 48 From an author interview with Barbara Marcus, summer 2001.

- 49 Jacobs interview.
- 50 *The Bowker Annual Library and Book Trade Almanac*, 46th edition, 2001.
- 51 Maryles in *Publishers Weekly*, 1/8/01, p. 36.
- 52 IPSOS/NPD *Booktrends*, as reported in *Publishers Weekly*, 4/15/02, p. 12.
- 53 Potter, p. 159.
- 54 From an author interview, summer 2001. Interviewee prefers to remain anonymous.
- 55 From an author interview, fall 2001. Interviewee prefers to remain anonymous.
- 56 From an author interview, fall 2001. Interviewee prefers to remain anonymous.
- 57 Reidy interview.
- 58 From an author interview, fall 2001. Interviewee prefers to remain anonymous.
- 59 From an author interview with Ardy Khazaei, HarperCollins, fall 2001.
- 60 From an author interview with Laurie Rippon, fall 2001.
- 61 *People and Books: A Study of Reading and Book-Buying Habits*, 1948, quoted by Peter W. Adams in "Faces in the Mirror: Five Decades of Research and Comment on the Book Trade 1931-2001," in *Publishing Research Quarterly*, pp. 43-50.
- 62 *Publishers Weekly*, 2/9/76, p. 42.
- 63 From an author interview, fall 2001. Interviewee prefers to remain anonymous.
- 64 Sessalee Hensley quoted by M.J. Rose in "Everything Old Is New Again," in *Poets & Writers*, May/June 2002.
- 65 Sutherland, p. 83.
- 66 Maryles in *Publishers Weekly*, 3/13/81, p. 31.
- 67 From an author interview, fall 2001. Interviewee prefers to remain anonymous.
- 68 Maryles in *Publishers Weekly*, 3/13/81, p. 32.
- 69 Godoff interview.
- 70 Sutherland, p. 128.
- 71 From author interviews, in fall 1999 and spring 2002, respectively.
- 72 Jonathan Galassi, from a *Brill's Content* article, quoted in the *Authors Guild Bulletin*, summer 2001, p. 35.
- 73 Sutherland, p. 128.
- 74 Maryles in *Publishers Weekly*, 3/14/86, p. 29.
- 75 Sutherland, p. 115.
- 76 Maryles in *Publishers Weekly*, 3/8/91, p. 17.
- 77 From an author interview, fall 2001. Interviewee prefers to remain anonymous.
- 78 *PW*, 3/8/91, p. 19.
- 79 Maryles in *Publishers Weekly*, 3/4/96, p. 53.
- 80 Maryles in *Publishers Weekly*, 1/1/96, p. 51.
- 81 *Ibid.*
- 82 *Ibid.*, p. 53.
- 83 *Ibid.*
- 84 *Publishers Weekly*, 3/7/94, p. 10.
- 85 Reidy interview.
- 86 Diane Roback in *Publishers Weekly*, 3/19/01, p. 43.
- 87 Potter, p. 51.
- 88 Steven Zeitchik in *PW Newslines*, 4/9/02.
- 89 Maryles in *Publishers Weekly*, 3/19/01, p. 32.
- 90 Maryles in *Publishers Weekly*, 1/8/01, p. 36.
- 91 Maryles in *Publishers Weekly*, 3/19/01, p. 36.
- 92 *Book Industry Trends 2002*, as quoted by Linton Weeks in *The Washington Post*, 5/14/02, p. C1.
- 93 Michael Cader, as quoted by Linton Weeks in *The Washington Post*, 5/14/02, p. C1.

## 6. APPENDICES

MASTER BESTSELLERS								
TITLES 1975	AUTHOR	AWARDS			ANNUAL RANK	TOTAL WEEKS	ORIGINAL HARDCOVER PUBLISHER	OUT OF PRINT
		NYT	NBA	PUL				
<i>Ragtime</i>	Doctrow	★			1	38	Random House	
<i>The Moneychangers</i>	Hailey				2	34	Doubleday	
<i>Curtain</i>	Christie				3	31	Dodd, Mead	
<i>Looking for Mr. Goodbar</i>	Rossner				4	35	Simon & Schuster	
<i>The Choirboys</i>	Wambaugh				5	26	Delacorte	
<i>The Eagle Has Landed</i>	Higgins				6	32	Holt, Rinehart	
<i>The Greek Treasure</i>	Stone				7	22	Doubleday	●
<i>The Great Train Robbery</i>	Crichton				8	24	Knopf	
<i>Shogun</i>	Clavell				9	33	Atheneum	
<i>Humboldt's Gift</i>	Bellow	★	☆	★	10	21	Viking	
<hr/>								
<i>Angels: God's Secret Agents</i>	Graham				1	30	Doubleday	
<i>Winning Through Intimidation</i>	Ringer				2	21	Funk & Wagnalls	
<i>TM: Discovering Inner Energy and Overcoming Stress</i>	Bloomfield				3	25	Delacorte	●
<i>The Ascent of Man</i>	Bronowski				4	38	Little, Brown	●
<i>Sylvia Porter's Money Book</i>	Porter				5	25	Doubleday	●
<i>Total Fitness in 30 Minutes a Week</i>	Morehouse et al				6	33	Simon & Schuster	●
<i>The Bermuda Triangle</i>	Berlitz et al				7	34	Doubleday	●
<i>The Save-Your-Life Diet</i>	Reuben				8	19	Random House	●
<i>Bring on the Empty Horses</i>	Niven				9	28	Putnam	●
<i>Breach of Faith: The Fall of Richard Nixon</i>	White				10	24	Atheneum / RDP	●

### KEY

All bestsellers are from *Publishers Weekly (PW)*

NYT *New York Times Book Review* Editors' Choice (an honor awarded to a small number of books each year)

NBA National Book Awards

PUL Pulitzer Prizes

ANNUAL RANK Ranking on the *PW* annual (as opposed to weekly) bestseller list

TOTAL WEEKS Total number of weeks a book appears on the *PW* weekly bestseller list

☆ Nominated but did not win

★ Awarded

● Out of Print

○ Available via print-on-demand

==== Double lines separate fiction from nonfiction in the bestseller tables

MASTER BESTSELLERS (CONT'D)

TITLES 1980	AUTHOR	AWARDS			ANNUAL RANK	TOTAL WEEKS	ORIGINAL HARDCOVER PUBLISHER	OUT OF PRINT
		NYT	NBA	PUL				
<i>The Covenant</i>	Michener				1	42	Random House	
<i>The Bourne Identity</i>	Ludlum				2	33	Richard Marek	
<i>Rage of Angels</i>	Sheldon				3	42	Morrow	
<i>Princess Daisy</i>	Krantz				4	35	Crown	
<i>Firestarter</i>	King				5	38	Viking	
<i>The Key to Rebecca</i>	Follett				6	28	Morrow	
<i>Random Winds</i>	Plain				7	25	Delacorte	
<i>The Devil's Alternative</i>	Forsyth				8	30	Viking	
<i>The Fifth Horseman</i>	Collins et al				9	25	Simon & Schuster	●
<i>The Spike</i>	de Borchgrave				10	27	Crown	●
<i>Come Pour the Wine</i>	Freeman				11	25	Arbor House	●
<i>Fanny</i>	Jong				12	12	NAL	
<i>Loon Lake</i>	Doctorow	★			13	21	Random House	
<i>Answer As a Man</i>	Caldwell				14	22	Putnam	●
<i>The Tenth Commandment</i>	Sanders				15	19	Putnam	
<i>Crisis Investing</i>	Casey				1	34	Stratford Press	●
<i>Cosmos</i>	Sagan		☆		2	59+	Random House	
<i>Free to Choose: A Personal Statement</i>	Friedman				3	51	Harcourt Brace	
<i>Anatomy of an Illness as Perceived by the Patient</i>	Cousins				4	39	Norton	
<i>Thy Neighbor's Wife</i>	Talese				5	23	Doubleday	●
<i>The Sky's the Limit</i>	Dyer				6	25	Simon & Schuster	●
<i>The Third Wave</i>	Toffler				7	25	Morrow	
<i>Craig Claiborne's Gourmet Diet</i>	Claiborne				8	36	Times	●
<i>Nothing Down</i>	Allen				9	45	Simon & Schuster	
<i>Shelley Also Known as Shirley</i>	Winters				10	22	Morrow	●
<i>Side Effects</i>	Allen				11	19	Random House	
<i>Jim Fixx's Second Book of Running</i>	Fixx				12	16	Random House	●
<i>Betty Crocker's International Cookbook</i>					13	13	Random House	●
<i>The Coming Currency Collapse</i>	Smith				14	17	Books in Focus	●
<i>How to Become Financially Independent by Investing in Real Estate</i>	Lowry				15	24	Simon & Schuster	●

MASTER BESTSELLERS (CONT'D)								
TITLES 1985	AUTHOR	AWARDS			ANNUAL RANK	TOTAL WEEKS	ORIGINAL HARDCOVER PUBLISHER	OUT OF PRINT
		NYT	NBA	PUL				
<i>The Mammoth Hunters</i>	Auel				1	46	Crown	
<i>Texas</i>	Michener				2	30	Random House	
<i>Lake Wobegon Days</i>	Keillor				3	47	Viking	
<i>If Tomorrow Comes</i>	Sheldon				4	37	Morrow	
<i>Skeleton Crew</i>	King				5	32	Putnam	
<i>Secrets</i>	Steel				6	20	Delacorte	
<i>Contact</i>	Sagan				7	23	Simon & Schuster	
<i>Lucky</i>	Collins				8	18	Simon & Schuster	
<i>Family Album</i>	Steel				9	22	Delacorte	
<i>Jubal Sackett</i>	L'Amour				10	19	Bantam	
<i>Thinner</i>	Bachman				11	24	NAL	
<i>The Cider House Rules</i>	Irving				12	19	Morrow	
<i>The Hunt for Red October</i>	Clancy				13	31	Naval Institute Press	
<i>The Fourth Deadly Sin</i>	Sanders				14	15	Putnam	
<i>Inside, Outside</i>	Wouk				15	21	Little, Brown	
<i>Iacocca: An Autobiography</i>	Iacocca				1	77	Bantam	
<i>Yeager: An Autobiography</i>	Yeager				2	42	Bantam	
<i>Elvis and Me</i>	Presley				3	22	Putnam	
<i>Fit for Life</i>	Diamond				4	72	Warner	
<i>The Be-Happy Attitudes</i>	Schuller				5	33	Word	
<i>Dancing in the Light</i>	MacLaine				6	25	Bantam	●
<i>A Passion for Excellence</i>	Peters				7	28	Random House	
<i>The Frugal Gourmet</i>	Smith				8	56	Morrow	●
<i>I Never Played the Game</i>	Cosell				9	16	Morrow	●
<i>Dr. Berger's Immune Power Diet</i>	Berger				10	21	NAL	●
<i>Weight Watchers® Quick Start® Program Cookbook</i>	Nidetch				11	23	NAL	●
<i>Smart Women, Foolish Choices</i>	Cowan et al				12	31	Clarkson Potter	
<i>On the Road with Charles Kuralt</i>	Kuralt				13	19	Putnam	
<i>Weight Watchers® New International Cookbook</i>	Nidetch				14	1	NAL	●
<i>Loving Each Other</i>	Buscaglia				15	48	Slack / Henry Holt	

MASTER BESTSELLERS (CONT'D)

TITLES 1990	AUTHOR	AWARDS			ANNUAL RANK	TOTAL WEEKS	ORIGINAL HARDCOVER PUBLISHER	OUT OF PRINT
		NYT	NBA	PUL				
<i>The Plains of Passage</i>	Auel				1	24	Crown	
<i>Four Past Midnight</i>	King				2	20	Viking	
<i>The Burden of Proof</i>	Turow				3	33	Farrar, Straus	
<i>Memories of Midnight</i>	Sheldon				4	23	Morrow	
<i>Message from Nam</i>	Steel				5	18	Delacorte	
<i>The Bourne Ultimatum</i>	Ludlum				6	24	Random House	
<i>The Stand: The Complete and Uncut Edition</i>	King				7	27	Doubleday	
<i>Lady Boss</i>	Collins				8	15	Simon & Schuster	
<i>The Witching Hour</i>	Rice				9	16	Knopf	
<i>September</i>	Pilcher				10	22	St. Martin's / Dunne	
<i>Dazzle</i>	Krantz				11	12	Crown	
<i>The Bad Place</i>	Koontz				12	14	Putnam	
<i>The Women in His Life</i>	Bradford				13	9	Random House	
<i>The First Man in Rome</i>	McCullough				14	13	Morrow	
<i>Dragon</i>	Cussler				15	15	Simon & Schuster	
<i>A Life on the Road</i>	Kuralt				1	20	Putnam	
<i>The Civil War</i>	Ward, Burns				2	26	Knopf	
<i>The Frugal Gourmet on Our Immigrant Ancestors</i>	Smith				3	7	Morrow	●
<i>Better Homes &amp; Gardens New Cook Book*</i>					4		Meredith Books	●
<i>Financial Self-Defense</i>	Givens				5	36	Simon & Schuster	●
<i>Homecoming: Reclaiming and Championing Your Inner Child</i>	Bradshaw				6	22	Bantam	
<i>Wealth Without Risk</i>	Givens				7	134	Simon & Schuster	●
<i>Bo Knows Bo</i>	Jackson				8	12	Doubleday	●
<i>An American Life</i>	Reagan				9	7	Simon & Schuster	
<i>Megatrends 2000</i>	Naisbitt et al				10	33	Morrow	
<i>By Way of Deception</i>	Ostrovsky et al				11	12	St. Martin's	
<i>Get to the Heart: My Story</i>	Mandrell et al				12	19	Bantam	
<i>Millie's Book: As Dictated to Barbara Bush</i>	Bush				13	23	Morrow	●
<i>Men at Work: The Craft of Baseball</i>	Will				14	26	Macmillan	
<i>The Cat and the Curmudgeon</i>	Amory				15	7	Little, Brown	

\* The 1990 edition out of print; updated editions in print.

☆ Nominated but did not win   ★ Awarded   ● Out of Print   ○ Available via print-on-demand

MASTER BESTSELLERS (CONT'D)								
TITLES 1995	AUTHOR	AWARDS			ANNUAL RANK	TOTAL WEEKS	ORIGINAL HARDCOVER PUBLISHER	OUT OF PRINT
		NYT	NBA	PUL				
<i>The Rainmaker</i>	Grisham				1	23	Doubleday	
<i>The Lost World</i>	Crichton				2	20	Knopf	
<i>Five Days in Paris</i>	Steel				3	18	Delacorte	
<i>The Christmas Box</i>	Evans				4	11	Simon & Schuster	
<i>Lightning</i>	Steel				5	10	Delacorte	
<i>The Celestine Prophecy</i>	Redfield				6	142	Warner	
<i>Rose Madder</i>	King				7	11	Viking	
<i>Silent Night</i>	Clark				8	13	Simon & Schuster	
<i>Politically Correct Holiday Stories</i>	Garner				9	12	Macmillan	
<i>The Horse Whisperer</i>	Evans				10	39	Delacorte	
<i>Politically Correct Bedtime Stories</i>	Garner				11	60	Macmillan	●
<i>Memnoch the Devil</i>	Rice				12	13	Knopf	
<i>Beach Music</i>	Conroy				13	24	Doubleday	
<i>From Potter's Field</i>	Cornwell				14	10	Scribner	
<i>Morning, Noon and Night</i>	Sheldon				15	15	Morrow	
<i>Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus</i>	Gray				1	193+	HarperCollins	
<i>My American Journey: An Autobiography</i>	Powell				2	18	Random House	
<i>Miss America</i>	Stern				3	10	ReganBooks	
<i>The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success</i>	Chopra				4	82	Amber-Allen	
<i>The Road Ahead</i>	Gates				5	13	Viking	
<i>Charles Kuralt's America</i>	Kuralt				6	17	Putnam	
<i>Mars and Venus in the Bedroom</i>	Gray				7	26	HarperCollins	
<i>To Renew America</i>	Gingrich				8	13	HarperCollins	●
<i>My Point...and I Do Have One</i>	DeGeneres				9	24	Bantam	
<i>The Moral Compass: Stories for a Life's Journey</i>	Bennett				10	2	Simon & Schuster	
<i>The Book of Virtues: A Treasury of Great Moral Stories</i>	Bennett				11	55	Simon & Schuster	
<i>I Want to Tell You</i>	Simpson				12	9	Little, Brown	●
<i>In the Kitchen with Rosie: Oprah's Favorite Recipes</i>	Daley				13	58	Knopf	
<i>Emotional Intelligence</i>	Goleman				14	50	Bantam	
<i>David Letterman's Book of Top 10 Lists</i>	Letterman				15	8	Bantam	●

MASTER BESTSELLERS (CONT'D)

TITLES 2000	AUTHOR	AWARDS			ANNUAL RANK	TOTAL WEEKS	ORIGINAL HARDCOVER PUBLISHER	OUT OF PRINT
		NYT	NBA	PUL				
<i>The Brethren</i>	Grisham				1	30	Doubleday	
<i>The Mark: The Beast Rules the World</i>	Jenkins et al				2	9	Tyndale House	
<i>The Bear and the Dragon</i>	Clancy				3	20	Putnam	
<i>The Indwelling: The Beast Takes Possession</i>	Jenkins et al				4	14	Tyndale House	
<i>The Last Precinct</i>	Cornwell				5	13	Putnam	
<i>Journey</i>	Steel				6	8	Delacorte	
<i>The Rescue</i>	Sparks				7	12	Warner	
<i>Roses Are Red</i>	Patterson				8	12	Little, Brown	
<i>Cradle and All</i>	Patterson				9	10	Little, Brown	
<i>The House on Hope Street</i>	Steel				10	10	Delacorte	
<i>The Wedding</i>	Steel				11	7	Delacorte	
<i>Drowning Ruth</i>	Schwarz				12	12	Doubleday	
<i>Before I Say Goodbye</i>	Clark				13	14	Simon & Schuster	
<i>Deck the Halls</i>	Clark				14	9	Simon & Schuster	
<i>Gap Creek</i>	Morgan				15	14	Algonquin	
<i>Who Moved My Cheese?</i>	Johnson				1	103+	Putnam	
<i>Guinness World Records 2001</i>	Footman				2	20	Guinness	
<i>Tuesdays with Morrie</i>	Albom				4	183	Doubleday	
<i>Body for Life</i>	Phillips				4	122	HarperCollins	
<i>The Beatles Anthology</i>	Beatles				5	14	Chronicle	
<i>The O'Reilly Factor</i>	O'Reilly				6	30	Broadway	
<i>Relationship Rescue: A Seven Step Strategy</i>	McGraw				7	33	Hyperion	
<i>The Millionaire Mind</i>	Stanley				8	15	Andrews McMeel	
<i>Ten Things I Wish I'd Known</i>	Shriver				9	21	Warner	
<i>Eating Well for Optimum Health</i>	Weil				10	17	Knopf	
<i>The Prayer of Jabez</i>	Wilkinson				11	44+	Multnomah	
<i>Flags of Our Fathers</i>	Bradley				12	29	Bantam	
<i>A Short Guide to a Happy Life</i>	Quindlen				13	27	Random House	
<i>On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft</i>	King				14	12	Scribner	
<i>Nothing Like It in the World: The Men Who Built the Transcontinental Railroad 1863-1869</i>	Ambrose				15	20	Simon & Schuster	

☆ Nominated but did not win   ★ Awarded   ● Out of Print   ○ Available via print-on-demand

MASTER BEST BOOKS								
TITLES 1975	AUTHOR	AWARDS			ANNUAL RANK	TOTAL WEEKS	ORIGINAL HARDCOVER PUBLISHER	OUT OF PRINT
		NYT	NBA	PUL				
<i>Humboldt's Gift</i>	Bellow	★	☆	★	10	21	Viking	
<i>The Dead Father</i>	Barthelme	★					Farrar, Straus	
<i>Ragtime</i>	Doctorow	★			1	38	Random House	
<i>A Sorrow Beyond Dreams: A Life Story</i>	Handke	★					Farrar, Straus	
<i>Far Tortuga</i>	Matthiessen	★				2	Random House	
<i>I Would Have Saved Them If I Could</i>	Michaels	★					Farrar, Straus	●
<i>Guerrillas</i>	Naipaul	★					Knopf	
<i>JR</i>	Gaddis		★				Knopf	
<i>Collected Stories of Hortense Calisher</i>	Calisher		☆				Morrow	●
<i>Other People's Lives</i>	Kaplan		☆				Knopf	○
<i>Tyrants Destroyed and Other Stories</i>	Nabokov		☆				McGraw-Hill	●
<i>Beyond the Bedroom Wall: A Family Album</i>	Woiwode		☆				Farrar, Straus	
<i>Edith Wharton: A Biography</i>	Lewis	★	☆	★			Harper	●
<i>The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, 1770–1823</i>	Davis	★	★				Cornell	
<i>Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape</i>	Brownmiller	★				5	Simon & Schuster	
<i>The War Against the Jews, 1933–1945</i>	Dawidowicz	★					Henry Holt	
<i>The Gulag Archipelago, Vol. II</i>	Solzhenitsyn	★				15	Harper	
<i>The Great Railway Bazaar: By Train Through Asia</i>	Theroux	★				6	Houghton Mifflin	
<i>Lamy of Santa Fe</i>	Horgan		☆	★			Farrar, Straus	
<i>The Great War and Modern Memory</i>	Fussell		★				Oxford	
<i>Nijinsky Dancing</i>	Kirstein		☆				Knopf	●
<i>The Holocaust and the Literary Imagination</i>	Langer		☆				Yale	
<i>Modern Painting and the Northern Romantic Tradition</i>	Rosenblum		☆				Harper	●
<i>The Female Imagination</i>	Spacks		☆				Knopf	●
<i>Michelangelo's Last Paintings</i>	Steinberg		☆				Oxford	●
<i>Passage to Ararat</i>	Arlen		★				Farrar, Straus	
<i>Global Reach: The Power of the Multinational Corporations</i>	Barnet, Muller		☆				Simon & Schuster	●
<i>Pyramids of Sacrifice: Political Ethics and Social Change</i>	Berger		☆				Basic	●
<i>Money: Whence It Came, Where It Went</i>	Galbraith		☆			6	Houghton Mifflin	●
<i>A Time to Die</i>	Wicker		☆			4	Quadrangle / Times	○
<i>Recasting Bourgeois Europe</i>	Maier		☆				Princeton	
<i>American Slavery - American Freedom</i>	Morgan		☆				Norton	
<i>Russia Under the Old Regime</i>	Pipes		☆				Scribner	
<i>Charles Ives and His America</i>	Rossiter		☆				Liveright	●
<i>A World Destroyed: Hiroshima and Its Legacies</i>	Sherwin		☆				Knopf	
<i>Why Survive? Being Old in America</i>	Butler			★			Harper	●

MASTER BEST BOOKS (CONT'D)

TITLES 1980	AUTHOR	AWARDS			ANNUAL RANK	TOTAL WEEKS	ORIGINAL HARDCOVER PUBLISHER	OUT OF PRINT
		NYT	NBA	PUL				
<i>The Collected Stories of Eudora Welty</i>	Welty	★	☆			2	Harcourt Brace	
<i>Falling in Place</i>	Beattie	★					Random House	
<i>Italian Folktales</i>	Calvino	★					Harcourt Brace	
<i>Loon Lake</i>	Doctorow	★			13	21	Random House	
<i>Man in the Holocene: A Story</i>	Frisch	★					Harcourt Brace	
<i>So Long, See You Tomorrow</i>	Maxwell		☆	☆			Knopf	
<i>Plains Song: For Female Voices</i>	Morris		★				Harper	
<i>The Transit of Venus</i>	Hazzard		☆				Viking	
<i>The Second Coming</i>	Percy		☆			9	Farrar, Straus	
<i>A Confederacy of Dunces</i>	Toole			★			Louisiana State	
<i>Godric</i>	Buechner			☆			Atheneum	
<i>China Men</i>	Kingston	★	★	☆		13	Knopf	
<i>Walt Whitman: A Life</i>	Kaplan	★	★	☆		2	Simon & Schuster	●
<i>Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality</i>	Boswell	★	★				U. of Chicago	
<i>The Cost of Good Intentions: New York City and the Liberal Experiment</i>	Morris	★					Norton	●
<i>Nature and Culture: American Landscape and Painting 1825–1875</i>	Novak	★					Oxford	●
<i>Conrad in the Nineteenth Century</i>	Watt	★					U. of California	
<i>Peter the Great: His Life and World</i>	Massie		☆	★		18	Knopf	
<i>Fin-de-Siècle Vienna: Politics and Culture</i>	Schorske		☆	★			Knopf	
<i>Walter Lippmann and the American Century</i>	Steel		☆	☆		7	Atlantic-Little, Brown	
<i>Nathaniel Hawthorne in His Times</i>	Mellow		☆				Houghton Mifflin	
<i>Orwell: The Transformation</i>	Stansky		☆				Knopf	
<i>The Dream of the Golden Mountains</i>	Cowley		☆				Viking	●
<i>From a Limestone Ledge</i>	Graves		☆				Knopf	
<i>Naming Names</i>	Navasky		☆				Viking	
<i>American Dreams: Lost &amp; Found</i>	Terkel		☆			16	Pantheon	
<i>Fire in the Minds of Men: Origins of the Revolutionary Faith</i>	Billington		☆				Basic	
<i>The Age of Reform, 1250–1550</i>	Ozment		☆				Yale	
<i>The Shaping of America: A People's History of the Young Republic</i>	Smith		☆				McGraw-Hill	●
<i>American Education: The National Experience, 1783–1896</i>	Cremin			★			Harper & Row	●
<i>Over Here: The First World War and American Society</i>	Kennedy			☆			Oxford	
<i>A Search for Power: The "Weaker Sex" in 17th c. New England</i>	Koehler			☆			U. of Illinois	●
<i>Southerners: A Journalist's Odyssey</i>	Frady			☆			NAL	●
<i>Goodbye, Darkness: A Memoir of the Pacific War</i>	Manchester			☆		19	Little, Brown	

☆ Nominated but did not win ★ Awarded ● Out of Print ○ Available via print-on-demand

MASTER BEST BOOKS (CONT'D)								
TITLES 1985	AUTHOR	AWARDS			ANNUAL RANK	TOTAL WEEKS	ORIGINAL HARDCOVER PUBLISHER	OUT OF PRINT
		NYT	NBA	PUL				
<i>Flaubert's Parrot</i>	Barnes	★					Knopf	
<i>Love Medicine</i>	Erdrich	★					Henry Holt	
<i>Mr. Palomar</i>	Calvino	★					Harcourt Brace	
<i>The Old Forest and Other Stories</i>	Taylor	★					Doubleday	●
<i>White Noise</i>	DeLillo		★				Viking	
<i>Always Coming Home</i>	LeGuin		☆				Harper	
<i>The Tree of Life</i>	Nissenson		☆				Harper	
<i>Lonesome Dove</i>	McMurtry			★		21	Simon & Schuster	
<i>Continental Drift</i>	Banks			☆			Harper	
<i>The Accidental Tourist</i>	Tyler			☆		27	Knopf	
<i>Common Ground: A Turbulent Decade in the Lives of Three American Families</i>	Lukas	★	★	★		1	Knopf	
<i>Move Your Shadow: South Africa, Black and White</i>	Lelyveld	★		★			Times	●
<i>The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust</i>	Wyman	★					Pantheon	
<i>All Fall Down: America's Tragic Encounter with Iran</i>	Sick	★					Random House	
<i>Footsteps: Adventures of a Romantic Biographer</i>	Holmes	★					Viking	
<i>House</i>	Kidder	★				17	Houghton Mifflin	
<i>The Periodic Table</i>	Levi	★					Schocken	
<i>The Heavens and the Earth: A Political History of the Space Age</i>	McDougall		☆	★			Basic	
<i>In the Name of Eugenics: Genetics and the Uses of Human Heredity</i>	Kevles		☆				Knopf	●
<i>Louise Bogan: A Portrait</i>	Frank			★			Knopf	
<i>Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work and the Family from Slavery to the Present</i>	Jones			☆			Basic	
<i>Novus Ordo Seclorum: The Intellectual Origins of the Constitution</i>	McDonald			☆			U. of Kansas	
<i>Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America</i>	Miller			☆			Oxford	
<i>George Washington Williams: A Biography</i>	Franklin			☆			U. of Chicago	
<i>A Hidden Childhood: A Jewish Girl's Sanctuary in a French Convent, 1942–1945</i>	Weinstein			☆			Hill & Wang	●
<i>Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life</i>	Bellah et al			☆			U. of California	

MASTER BEST BOOKS (CONT'D)

TITLES 1990	AUTHOR	AWARDS			ANNUAL RANK	TOTAL WEEKS	ORIGINAL HARDCOVER PUBLISHER	OUT OF PRINT
		NYT	NBA	PUL				
<i>The Things They Carried</i>	O'Brien	★		☆			Houghton Mifflin	
<i>Friend of My Youth</i>	Munro	★					Knopf	
<i>London Fields</i>	Amis	★				4	Harmony	
<i>My Son's Story</i>	Gordimer	★					Farrar, Straus	
<i>Possession: A Romance</i>	Byatt	★				23	Random House	
<i>Rabbit at Rest</i>	Updike	★		★		12	Knopf	
<i>Middle Passage: A Novel</i>	Johnson		★				Atheneum	
<i>Chromos</i>	Alfau		☆				Dalkey Archive	
<i>Paradise</i>	Castedo		☆				Grove / Atlantic	
<i>Dogeaters</i>	Hagedorn		☆				Random House	
<i>Because It Is Bitter and Because It Is My Heart</i>	Oates		☆				Dutton	
<i>Mean Spirit</i>	Hogan			☆			Atheneum	
<i>Biting at the Grave: The Irish Hunger Strikes and the Politics of Despair</i>	O'Malley	★					Beacon	
<i>Lawrence of Arabia: The Authorized Biography</i>	Wilson	★					Atheneum	●
<i>The Search for Modern China</i>	Spence	★					Norton	
<i>Simone de Beauvoir: A Biography</i>	Bair	★					Summit	
<i>Tropical Gangsters</i>	Klitgaard	★					Basic	
<i>Vladimir Nabokov: The Russian Years</i>	Boyd	★					Princeton	
<i>Jackson Pollock: An American Saga</i>	Naifeh et al		☆	★			Clarkson Potter	
<i>The House of Morgan</i>	Chernow		★				Grove / Atlantic	
<i>Small Victories: The Real World of a Teacher, Her Students, and Their High School</i>	Freedman		☆				Harper	
<i>Richard Milhous Nixon: The Rise of an American Politician</i>	Morris		☆				Henry Holt	●
<i>Righteous Pilgrim: The Life and Times of Harold L. Ickes</i>	Watkins		☆				Henry Holt	●
<i>A Midwife's Tale</i>	Ulrich			★			Knopf	
<i>The Ants</i>	Holldobler			★			Belknap / Harvard	
<i>Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919–1939</i>	Cohen			☆			Cambridge	
<i>The Civil Rights Era: Origins and Development of National Policy</i>	Graham			☆			Oxford	●
<i>America in 1857: A Nation on the Brink</i>	Stamp			☆			Oxford	
<i>The Five of Hearts: An Intimate Portrait of Henry Adams</i>	O'Toole			☆			Clarkson Potter	
<i>Alfred I. Du Pont: The Man and His Family</i>	Wall			☆			Oxford	●
<i>River of Traps: A Village Life</i>	deBuys			☆			U. of New Mexico	
<i>Looking for a Ship</i>	McPhee			☆			Farrar, Straus	

☆ Nominated but did not win ★ Awarded ● Out of Print ○ Available via print-on-demand

MASTER BEST BOOKS (CONT'D)								
TITLES 1995	AUTHOR	AWARDS			ANNUAL RANK	TOTAL WEEKS	ORIGINAL HARDCOVER PUBLISHER	OUT OF PRINT
		NYT	NBA	PUL				
<i>Sabbath's Theater</i>	Roth	★	★	☆			Houghton Mifflin	
<i>Independence Day</i>	Ford	★		★			Knopf	
<i>The Information</i>	Amis	★				1	Harmony	
<i>The Island of the Day Before</i>	Eco	★				11	Harcourt	
<i>The Stories of Vladimir Nabokov</i>	Nabokov	★					Knopf	
<i>All Souls' Rising</i>	Bell		☆				Pantheon	
<i>Krik? Krak!</i>	Danticat		☆				Soho	
<i>Interstate: A Novel</i>	Dixon		☆				Henry Holt	
<i>The House on the Lagoon</i>	Ferré		☆				Farrar, Straus	
<i>Mr. Ives' Christmas</i>	Hijuelos			☆			HarperCollins	
<i>The Haunted Land: Facing Europe's Ghosts after Communism</i>	Rosenberg	★	★	★			Random House	
<i>In Confidence: Moscow's Ambassador to America's Six Cold War Presidents</i>	Dobrynin	★					Crown	
<i>The Life of Graham Greene, Vol. 2</i>	Sherry	★					Viking	
<i>Lincoln</i>	Donald	★				12	Simon & Schuster	
<i>Overcoming Law</i>	Posner	★					Harvard	
<i>Zola: A Life</i>	Brown	★					Farrar, Straus	
<i>Darwin's Dangerous Idea: Evolution and the Meanings of Life</i>	Dennett		☆	☆			Simon & Schuster	
<i>Salvation on Sand Mountain: Snake Handling and Redemption in Southern Appalachia</i>	Covington		☆				Perseus	
<i>A Civil Action</i>	Harr		☆				Random House	
<i>Ghosts of Mississippi: The Murder of Medgar Evers, the Trials of Byron de la Beckwith and the Haunting of the New South</i>	Vollers		☆				Little, Brown	
<i>William Cooper's Town: Power and Persuasion on the Frontier of the Early American Republic</i>	Taylor			★			Knopf	
<i>God: A Biography</i>	Miles			★			Knopf	
<i>The Sacred Fire of Liberty: James Madison and the Founding of the Federal Republic</i>	Banning			☆			Cornell	
<i>Dark Sun: The Making of the Hydrogen Bomb</i>	Rhodes			☆		2	Simon & Schuster	
<i>John Sloan: Painter and Rebel</i>	Loughery			☆			Henry Holt	●
<i>Mozart: A Life</i>	Solomon			☆			HarperCollins	
<i>Mr. Wilson's Cabinet of Wonder</i>	Weschler			☆			Pantheon	

MASTER BEST BOOKS (CONT'D)								
TITLES 2000	AUTHOR	AWARDS			ANNUAL RANK	TOTAL WEEKS	ORIGINAL HARDCOVER PUBLISHER	OUT OF PRINT
		NYT	NBA	PUL				
<i>Being Dead</i>	Crace	★					Farrar, Straus	
<i>Beowulf: A New Verse Translation</i>	Heaney	★				9	Farrar, Straus	
<i>Gertrude and Claudius</i>	Updike	★					Knopf	
<i>The Human Stain</i>	Roth	★				3	Houghton Mifflin	
<i>White Teeth</i>	Smith	★				4	Random House	
<i>Blonde</i>	Oates		☆	☆			Ecco	
<i>The Feast of Love</i>	Baxter		☆				Pantheon	
<i>The Diagnosis</i>	Lightman		☆				Pantheon	
<i>Blue Angel</i>	Prose		☆				HarperCollins	
<i>In America</i>	Sontag		★				Farrar, Straus	
<i>The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay</i>	Chabon			★		3	Random House	
<i>The Quick and the Dead</i>	Williams			☆			Knopf	
<i>A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius</i>	Eggers	★		☆		9	Simon & Schuster	
<i>Way Out There in the Blue: Reagen, Star Wars and the End of the Cold War</i>	Fitzgerald	★		☆			Simon & Schuster	
<i>Genome: The Autobiography of a Species...</i>	Ridley	★					HarperCollins	
<i>One Palestine, Complete: Jews and Arabs under the British Mandate</i>	Segev	★					Metropolitan / Holt	
<i>Rimbaud: A Biography</i>	Robb	★					Norton	
<i>W. E. B. Du Bois: The Fight for Equality and the American Century, 1919–1963</i>	Lewis		☆	★			Henry Holt	
<i>From Dawn to Decadence: 500 Years of Western Cultural Life</i>	Barzun		☆			10	HarperCollins	
<i>The Collaborator: The Trial and Execution of Robert Brasillach</i>	Kaplan		☆				U. of Chicago	
<i>In the Heart of the Sea: The Tragedy of the Whaleship Essex</i>	Philbrick		★			7	Viking	
<i>Darkness in El Dorado: How Scientists and Journalists Devastated the Amazon</i>	Tierney		☆				Norton	
<i>Founding Brothers</i>	Ellis			★			Knopf	
<i>Hirohito and the Making of Modern Japan</i>	Bix			★			HarperCollins	
<i>The Right to Vote: The Contested History of Democracy in the U.S.</i>	Keyssar			☆			Basic	
<i>The First American: The Life and Times of Benjamin Franklin</i>	Brands			☆			Doubleday	
<i>Johann Sebastian Bach: The Learned Musician</i>	Wolff			☆			Norton	
<i>Newjack: Guarding Sing Sing</i>	Conover			☆			Random House	

☆ Nominated but did not win   ★ Awarded   ● Out of Print   ○ Available via print-on-demand

## 7. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Gayle Feldman has worked in book publishing since 1976. She is currently a contributing editor at *Publishers Weekly*, the New York correspondent for the *London Bookseller*, and has contributed articles on publishing to *The New York Times*, *The Nation*, and others. She is under contract to Random House for a biography of its co-founder, Bennett Cerf.

This study is the result of research begun during a National Arts Journalism Fellowship at Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism for the academic year 2001-2, and completed in December 2002.

Gayle Feldman started her career in London, first in publicity at Mitchell Beazley, then as an editor at Harrap and Edward Arnold. She spent 1984-5 at the Commercial Press in Beijing, where she represented the British Publishers Association on a cultural exchange with the PRC. From China she wrote articles for the *London Bookseller* as well as an academic study of Chinese publishing for the *China Quarterly*.

After moving to New York, she began writing for *Publishers Weekly* and became a contributing editor in 1986. From 1989 through 1995 she was on staff as *PW*'s book news editor. She has written many analyses, features, reviews and profiles for *PW* and others.

*You Don't Have to Be Your Mother*, Gayle Feldman's memoir about her family history of breast cancer, was published by Norton in 1994. It has appeared in foreign editions in the U.K., Germany and Brazil, and was excerpted in *Reader's Digest* and *Ladies Home Journal*.

Gayle Feldman was educated at the Philadelphia High School for Girls, the University of Pennsylvania, and at Cambridge University in England. She lives in New York City with her husband and son.

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