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by

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Producing Young Adult Literature in the 21st Century

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Producing Young Adult Literature in the 21st Century

by

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Report

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Dedication

“There are these two young fish swimming along and they happen to meet an older fish swimming the other way, who nods at them and says ‘Morning, boys. How’s the water?’ And the two young fish swim on for a bit, and then eventually one of them looks over at the other and goes ‘What the hell is water?’”

David Foster Wallace

“I find it really offensive when people say that the emotional experiences of teenagers are less real or less important than those of adults.

I am an adult, and I used to be a teenager, and so I can tell you with some authority that my feelings then were as real as my feelings are now.”

John Green

This report is dedicated to everyone
who has ever not forgotten to be awesome.

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by

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The University of Texas at Austin, 2012

SUPERVISOR: Barbara Immroth

The book publishing industry experienced a period of drastic change during the final decades of the twentieth century. Small publishing companies consolidated and were purchased by large, profit-minded media conglomerates. The widespread adoption of digital media technologies prompted many questions about the very future of the book itself. Yet at the pinnacle of these changes, the American young adult publishing market gradually began to experience not a decline, but a renaissance. In this report, I explore ways that changes in book publishing have manifested themselves in contemporary young adult literature through two case studies. Are today's young adult books works of literature or commercial products? Is their increased popularity due to widening readership or more savvy marketing? Are the companies producing them more concerned with the public good or their own profit margins?

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Introduction: Literary Rock Star

On a chilly Saturday evening in January 2012, I waited in a line that wrapped around a high school in an affluent suburb of Austin, Texas, and wished I'd brought a jacket. The line was comprised mostly of teenagers, with a smattering of parents and younger siblings. Groups of friends chattered excitedly. A few sing-alongs were attempted.

The girls behind me in line struck up a conversation with me after only a few minutes. They were high school seniors, had driven four hours from Dallas for the event, and planned to leave after the show that night to drive back in time to try to see the headliner again at a fundraiser the next morning. When the doors opened and we made it into the school's auditorium, one of the event's organizers asked the crowd to please not leave any empty seats in the middle of rows, because every one of the auditorium's 1,100 seats was sold out. This was, he told us, the largest audience of the entire tour. The crowd's cheers in response left my ears ringing.

I wasn't in the auditorium that night to see a buzzworthy band or a hot, hyped celebrity. I was there to see John Green, an author of books for teenagers. Green doesn't even write the kinds of books for teenagers that make headlines. There aren't any vampires in them, or wizards, or post-apocalyptic societies. They're just about teenagers facing relatively commonplace issues: peer acceptance, crushes and romances, identity, and what to do on a Saturday night.

Yet in June of the previous year, when Green announced that he would autograph every pre-ordered copy of his newest novel, which wasn't going to

be published for another ten months and didn't even have a cover yet, the book immediately shot to the top spot on Amazon.com and stayed there for four days (Trachtenberg B1). The publisher was so astonished that they bumped his release date forward five months and began to arrange a seventeen-city book tour.

How did this happen? The young adult novel and the young adult reader, a category distinct from both children's and adult books and their readers, have emerged over the course of the past fifty years. During that time, the American book publishing industry as a whole has experienced an unprecedented transformation, as small, family-owned companies consolidated and were purchased by transnational media conglomerates. Finally, digital technology has also begun to impact the relationships between writers, publishing companies, and readers, making established practices obsolete and opening up unexpected new possibilities.

In this report, I begin by briefly describing the changes that have taken place in the American book publishing industry and the rise of young adult literature as a distinct segment of the trade book market. I also introduce some of the ways this topic has been previously explored in the literature of fields like library science and media studies. I then explore two case studies that provide contrasting illustrations of what it means to produce and market a novel for young adults in this changed market.

This report enthusiastically embraces the theory of political economy, which holds that economic, social, and political circumstances shape the creation, distribution, and reception of media products as much as individuals or groups. Using this approach to examine young adult literature is important for two reasons. First, the exploration of literature as a commodity is often

neglected or resisted due to lingering ideas about books as works of art exempt from sociopolitical critique. Second, books for children and young adults are generally expected to engage their readers socially and morally as well as artistically. The paraliterary content of books may change as they are produced by writers and editors working in an industry that values profits more than the best interests of children, teenagers, and society.

Chapter One: Falling Skies and Golden Ages

In 1997, Michael Korda, then the editor in chief at Simon & Schuster, told Ken Auletta, writing for *The New Yorker*,

I've been in publishing for nearly forty years, and in that time people have always behaved as if the sky were about to fall. The sky was about to fall because of television. The sky was about to fall because of discounting books. The sky was about to fall because of conglomerates. The sky was about to fall because of agents. The sky hasn't fallen. (33)

Yet the industry Korda entered in 1958 is unrecognizable to itself today, some fifty-four years later in 2012.

Until about the 1970s, the publishing industry was comprised of a number of companies of varying size and scope. Joel Taxel emphasized that these companies were often owned by families with personal interests in the daily aspects of the business (“Children’s Literature” 158). For example, Jacques Schiffrin fled Europe during World War II and founded Pantheon Books, where his son, André, became executive editor in the early 1960s. In his memoir, *The Business of Books*, which has become a seminal text about the transformation of publishing, André Schiffrin described his industry as “an intellectually and politically engaged profession” in which publishers “prided themselves on their ability to balance the imperative of making money with that of issuing worthwhile books” (5). This balance was struck, Schiffrin explained, because of the well-established practice of allowing the profits made on popular, best-selling books to make up for the losses incurred by publishing high quality

material that never became popular (“When We Devoured Books” 116). Marni Hodgkin, a children’s editor at Macmillan, echoed this sentiment: “In times past, the selling titles helped to support those that didn’t: the experimental books or those with minority appeal, or by unknown authors” (qtd. in Reynolds 34).

Just as a person standing on a beach will have a difficult time pinpointing the exact moment the tide begins to come in, but will have no difficulty observing that, at some point, their feet are wet where they once were dry, so too do those within publishing find it difficult to say precisely when their industry began to change. Joe Moran described the changes as “parallel phenomena”: In the first, large book publishing companies were acquired by international conglomerates who operated in many other industries, like manufacturing and telecommunications. In the second, those same large book publishing companies purchased or merged with smaller companies (441). James Twitchell notes that between 1958 and 1970, 307 mergers and acquisitions took place that involved American publishing companies (84).

Of the major publishing companies producing books for children in 1958 (teenagers were not yet a designated publishing market demographic then), today only the Scholastic Corporation remains independently owned. The vast majority of books for children and teens are published by imprints, divisions, or subsidiaries of one of the “Big Six” publishing companies, which in turn are owned by international conglomerate corporations: News Corporation (which owns HarperCollins), Lagardere (Hachette), The Georg von Holtzbrinck Publishing Group (Macmillan), Pearson PLC (Penguin), CBS Corporation (Korda’s own Simon & Schuster), and Bertelsmann (Random House). These corporations, of course, also own other companies. News Corporation and its

polarizing founder Rupert Murdoch own Twentieth Century Fox, for example, while Sumner Redstone, who holds the majority stake in the CBS Corporation, also owns Viacom, which in turn owns MTV, Nickelodeon, and Paramount Films. Other media companies have jumped into publishing as well, like The Walt Disney Company, which founded Hyperion Books and bought Marvel Entertainment. Moran's 1997 observation remains true today: "There are now few areas of book publishing which do not, either directly or indirectly, come under the control of the conglomerates" (441).

Auletta bluntly stated the primary effect of the transformation of the publishing industry: "For the first time, publishing companies are being looked at simply for the money they make" (35). This gaze has produced a number of changes to the practice of book publishing. First, marketing and publicity departments have been restructured and given greater resources and prominence within publishing companies. Book marketing strategies have also changed, embracing television advertising and promotion on talk shows (and, more recently, on the internet) and the cultivation of authors as brands or star personalities. Author advances have increased as a way to build "buzz" for a book, and publishers eagerly issue books by celebrity authors, who have built-in audiences and are often immune to poor reviews (Moran 442-446).

Changes have also become evident in the financial demands placed on publishing companies by their new owners. Schiffrin explained how, in contrast to the established model of bestsellers funding mid-list and special interest titles, the new media conglomerates demanded that the acquisition and publication of each book be financially justified on a "title-by-title basis" ("When We Devoured Books" 116). According to Taxel, books had typically been expected to produce a profit rate of about 4%, "an indication that money itself"

was not the publishing industry's primary concern. Publishing companies' new owners, however, expected their acquisitions to match the profit rates accomplished by other companies under the corporate umbrella. These rates were sometimes as high as 15% ("Economics of Children's Book Publishing" 486). The new emphasis on the bottom dollar meant publishers had to generate revenue in new ways.

The first, according to James Twitchell, transformed books into "deal material," a product with "a multigenerational life: first, teasing excerpts in magazines, then hardcover publication, then film sale, possibly a tradepaper edition, then the mass-market paperback, the release of the film, then back to the presses with the publishing of the edition tied to the movie ..." (83-84). Nadia Crandall observed that books are now viewed as "an essential link in a media food chain" (3). Shannon Maughan provided a dramatic example of the impact this kind of "deal-making" can have on book sales. In October 2002, Scholastic Entertainment produced an adaptation of Natalie Babbitt's 1975 novel, *Tuck Everlasting*, originally published by Farrar, Straus, and Giroux. Michael Eisenberg, a senior vice-president at the book's publisher, told Maughan that *Tuck Everlasting* usually sold about 10,000 copies during an average October. In October 2002, however, the book sold 66,000 copies. Additionally, Farrar, Straus and Giroux had released a paperback edition with a movie-tie in cover in September 2002, which had sold 150,000 copies by mid-November ("Moving On Up").

The final link in the media food chain, especially in the case of children's books, is the sale of merchandise licenses. Philip Nel explained that merchandise licenses, which are protected under trademark law, rather than copyright law, are desired by the owners of intellectual properties like the characters of

children's books for two reasons. First, copyright protections expire; in the United States, as of the Sonny Bono Copyright Term Extension Act of 1998, copyright lasts until seventy years after the death of the author. Trademarks, on the other hand, may be renewed every ten years. Second, trademark law protects the elements of a text, like characters and names, so crucial to products like toys, whereas copyright does not (239-240). For example, if Warner Brothers, which owns both the rights and the trademarks to *Harry Potter*, wanted to prevent someone from selling unauthorized Harry Potter dolls, they would be able to sue under trademark law, but not under copyright law. Assuming that copyright protections are not further extended, this means that seventy years after the death of J.K. Rowling, when the books enter the public domain, Warner Brothers will still be able to profit from the sale of *Harry Potter* merchandise. However, a trademark "must be attached to a product: in other words, for [an author's] work to gain protection under trademark law, [they] must enter into licensing agreements" (Nel 239, emphasis in original).

Of course, the sale of merchandised products drawn from the realm of children's literature is nothing new. John Newbery, the English writer and publisher widely credited as the father of children's literature, sold an edition of *A Little Pretty Pocket-Book* with a toy for a small mark-up in price (Stevenson 188). Margaret Mackey also points to the proliferation of products prompted by L. Frank Baum's *Wizard of Oz* books as a reminder that merchandising is not a new phenomenon (502). What have changed are the pace of commodification, the scope or reach of the increasingly global market, and the profits that can potentially be made as a result.

None of these changes have been wholeheartedly or uncritically embraced by children's media scholars, educators, or industry insiders.

Children's literature scholar Jack Zipes has written extensively about the impact of capitalism on children and childhood. "In simple terms," he observed, "we calculate what is best for our children by regarding them as investments and turning them into commodities" (ix). Children's media scholar Beryl Langer concurred, explaining that, over the course of the twentieth century, capitalism has "reconstitute[d] life stages as cradle-to-grave markets" from which childhood is no exception (254). Daniel Hade and Jacqueline Edmondson have also expressed concern with the corporate logic that views reading as merely another form of consumption (140).

Another source of criticism emerges out of an examination of how the publishing industry actually manufactures children's books and products. Langer explained that toys and merchandise purchased and consumed by parents and children in developed countries are, as a result of an increasingly global labor market, manufactured by grossly underpaid workers (who are sometimes children themselves) in developing countries, in often unsafe working conditions (264-269). To reduce costs, many publishers have also outsourced the actual task of physically manufacturing books to Asia (Hade, "Curious George," 160). Thus, child consumers of literature or literary merchandise benefit from practices that many find deplorable.

Publishing companies' new drive toward the bottom line may also be impacting what books eventually make it to the shelves of libraries and bookstores. Moran cited several examples of controversial books rejected by large publishers and eventually being released by smaller university presses (450). Jane Kurtz explained the logic by which such decisions are made:

If your job was to buy clothes for K-Mart, you wouldn't choose to stock quirky clothes that only a few people wear—you'd stock

clothes that masses of people buy. So if a money-spinner owns a publishing company and gives its employees the mandate to make money, of course the huge temptation is going to be to publish only books that masses of people buy. (qtd in Taxel, “Children’s Literature” 161)

Taxel has also speculated about the negative impact of bottom-dollar publishing on “the creative processes of writers and illustrators” (“Economics of Children’s Book Publishing” 490). When authors internalize the demands of the market, a new kind of censorship emerges.

Several writers have pointed out the most serious consequence of the changed publishing industry on children and their books. Our culture believes children’s literature is important because at its best, it teaches children what it means to be alive, what it means to be a human being in society (Hade and Edmondson 140). We also believe that a literate, educated citizenry is essential for the health of a democracy (Schiffrin, *Business of Books* 152-153). These writers remain unconvinced of the potential of a literature motivated solely by profit, created to reach the widest possible audience, to accomplish these essential goals. As Schiffrin warned, “The threat to ... books and the ideas they contain—what used to be known as the marketplace of ideas—is a dangerous development not only for professional publishing, but for society as a whole” (172).

During the second half of the twentieth century, as American book publishing underwent the changes described above, a second change also took place. However, this change did not become widely apparent to society at large until the first decade of the twenty-first century, when it became impossible to ignore. In the years after World War II, the concept of the teenager coalesced

in culture and became both an important consumer demographic and a key target audience for producers of media. Eventually, teenagers acquired a literature of their own, separate from both traditional children's literature and contemporary adult fiction: The young adult novel had arrived. Because the contemporary young adult novel is the focus of this report, a brief history and introduction to the category is necessary.

One of the difficulties involved in writing about young adult or children's literature is the issue of definitions. Writing about children's literature, Deborah Stevenson noted, "To define children's literature we need, at bare minimum, to define a child and to define literature" (179-180). Michael Cart, former president of YALSA, the American Library Association's Young Adult Library Services Association, echoed this challenge: "Young adult literature' is inherently amorphous, for its constituent terms 'young adult' and 'literature' are dynamic, changing as culture and society—which provide their context — change" (qtd. in Doll).

Thus, today's young adult literature looks very different than what constituted young adult literature at its inception. While at one time we might have at least agreed that young adult literature is literature read by teenagers, this is no longer even the case. Adults are now buying and reading young adult literature in significant numbers. Young adult literary agent Barry Goldblatt, who represents popular authors like Holly Black, Libba Bray, and Cassandra Clare, commented that "the [young adult] market has grown tremendously, and some of that growth is clearly attributable to adult readers" (qtd. in Benedetti 42). So what is young adult literature, and where did it come from?

Julia Eccleshare noted that the concept of young adulthood was suggested by the educator Sarah Trimmer as far back as 1802, but "the notion of teenagers

as a separate group of readers with their own tastes and demanding a style of writing that is directed specifically at them was not adopted by publishers until relatively recently” (383-384). Historian Leonard Marcus points to other historical impetuses for the development of the category, like psychologist G. Stanley Hall’s distinguishing of adolescence as a unique stage of life, and the impact of World War II on teen soldiers unprepared for the reality of war (qtd. in Doll). Indeed, the decade following the war saw the publication of two notable precursors to the young adult novel, J.D. Salinger’s *The Catcher in the Rye* and William Golding’s *Lord of the Flies*, both published in 1954 (Eccleshare 383). Other landmark novels followed: Beverly Cleary’s *Fifteen* (1956), S.E. Hinton’s *The Outsiders* (1967), Judy Blume’s *Forever* (1975), Robert Cormier’s *The Chocolate War* (1975) (Eccleshare 384-389; Fraustino 652). The novels had common characteristics, according to Michael Cart. They were always set in the contemporary world, and they were “marketed to institutions—libraries and schools,” rather than directly to teen readers (qtd. in Doll).

The market remained relatively stable throughout the final decades of the twentieth century, but teen readership actually declined. According to a 2004 National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) study, between 1982 and 2002, young adult readership declined by twenty percent, or an estimated twenty million readers (Withers and Ross). Jack Martin, assistant coordinator of young adult series at the New York Public Library, explained that the drop was because teens were turned off by “so-called problem novels” because they were too “cautionary and sermonlike” (qtd. in Reno). Eccleshare unwittingly confirmed this view of the category when she described young adult literature as “the most narcissistic of all fictions ... primarily directed towards mirroring society and in so doing offering reassurance about ways of behaving” (383).

Authors simply weren't writing books that teens wanted to read. And then came Harry Potter.

It is beyond the scope of this report to explain why *Harry Potter* became a global media phenomenon. What is obvious, however, is that J.K. Rowling's seven novels about The Boy Who Lived and his battles against the evil wizard Who Must Not Be Named, the first of which was published in the United States in 1998, transformed the young adult fiction market. For example, the overall number of titles published has increased, as has the market share occupied by fiction (Sutton). *Harry Potter* raised the stakes for profits as well. When the fourth book in the series was released, its publisher, Scholastic, increased its quarterly profits by 37%; when the fifth book was released, the increase was by 55% (Galligan 37-39). Roger Sutton has claimed that *Harry Potter* proved that young readers were willing to buy lengthy hardcover titles. He also asserted that the success of *Harry Potter* was due in part to publishers bypassing the institutional market of libraries and schools and "selling books directly to children and parents."

Whatever the reasons, the market for young adult literature in 2012 is very different from the market of even twenty years ago. A 2009 NEA study found a 21% increase from 2002 to 2008 in the number of young adults who spent time reading. This was echoed by a Kaiser Family Foundation study, which reported that the average amount of time teens spent reading books for pleasure increased from 21 minutes per day in 1999 to 25 minutes per day in 2010 (Withers and Ross). In 2008, David Levithan, executive editorial director at Scholastic and himself the author of several young adult titles, told Newsweek, "This is the second golden age for young-adult books," the "most exciting time for young-adult literature since the late 1960s and 1970s when *The Chocolate*

War and *Forever* were published” (qtd. in Reno). Alessandra Balzer of Balzer + Bray, a children’s and young adult imprint owned by HarperCollins, agreed: “Retailers have caught on to the enormous potential. People are paying more attention ... there’s a lot more money to be made” (qtd. in Corbett). Total sales of young adult literature totaled more than three billion dollars in 2009 (Grady).

Explanations for the explosion of young adult literature vary widely. Jen Doll points to teenage population growth rate of seventeen percent, a simple increase in the number of teenagers that exist to buy books in the first place. Lev Grossman posited that literary fiction for adults often focuses on style, whereas young adult fiction prioritizes storytelling and description. David Levithan suggested that the creation of separate spaces in libraries and bookstores have helped distinguish the category in readers’ minds (qtd. in Reno). Finally, Jim McCarthy, a literary agent who represents young adult fiction writers, acknowledged that increases in writers’ advances may have helped attract more writers to the category: “You can tell that a lot of people actually see it as the real place to make money now” (qtd. in Doll).

Since the halcyon days of *Harry Potter*, young adult fiction has spawned other successful properties, many of which have been adapted to other mediums such as film and television. The *Twilight Saga* film franchise has made over a billion dollars in domestic ticket sales, with one film yet to be released (BoxOfficeMojo.com). When the big screen adaptation of *The Hunger Games* opened in March 2012, it made \$155 million, more money in its opening weekend than any non-sequel ever had before (Bowles). Popular book series like *Gossip Girl*, *The Vampire Diaries*, and *Pretty Little Liars* are now popular television series on The CW and ABC Family networks. Yet these franchises are anomalies, their profits the exception rather than the rule. While the final

Harry Potter book sold 11 million copies in its first 24 hours, one of the novels profiled later in this report was given a more typical initial paperback run of 500,000 copies (Withers and Ross; “Thirteen Reasons Why”). To explore the impact that the changes in publishing practices have made on the production of young adult literature, I examine two more typical titles: Jay Asher’s *Thirteen Reasons Why* and John Green’s *The Fault in Our Stars*. These titles are notably successful within the category, but have not yet seen the kind of phenomenal success reached by blockbusters such as *Harry Potter* or *Twilight*. Because their level of success is slightly more attainable, examining their industrial context provides insight into the work of producing young adult literature in the twenty-first century.

Chapter Two: Marketing Suicide

In the fall of 2006, three publishers engaged in a brief bidding war over a novel by first-time author Jay Asher (Asher, “Break On Through”). Razorbill, the young adult imprint of Penguin, emerged victorious, having signed Asher to a two-book deal in the “low six-figures” (Rich). The novel was then titled *Baker’s Dozen: The AudioBiography of Hannah Baker* (Asher, “Break On Through”). It was retitled *Thirteen Reasons Why* and published in October 2007. Since then, its popularity and staying power have been remarkable, even in a market full of blockbusters: It made the *New York Times* bestseller list and stayed there for sixty-five weeks. By June 2009, it had sold over 200,000 copies (Roiphe). Its hardcover edition sold so consistently well that Razorbill only released a cheaper paperback edition in June 2011 (Brunner). By that time, the hardcover edition had sold 750,000 copies (Lodge).

Thirteen Reasons Why was a critical as well as a commercial success. The book’s website, www.thirteenreasonswhy.com, lists a generous handful of awards and honors. Among them are selections as a Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) “Best Books for Young Adults” and “Quick Picks for Reluctant Readers;” membership on “Best Books” lists of the Chicago Public Library and the Association of Booksellers for Children; and an Editor’s Choice designation by Kirkus. Critically acclaimed author of both young adult and literary fiction Sherman Alexie wrote a blurb published on both the website and later editions of the hardcover. In it, he wrote,

Thirteen Reasons Why is a mystery, eulogy, and ceremony.

Twenty or thirty times, I snapped the book shut when a sentence,

an image, or line of dialogue was too beautiful and painful. But I, afraid and curious, would always return to this amazing book. (“The Book”)

The story of the novel’s success exemplifies many practices that have taken root in the new, vertically integrated American publishing industry, but the novel contains some problematic content that its success only amplifies.

Thirteen Reasons Why has a simple premise, but a complex narrative structure. One day after school, high school senior Clay Jensen receives a shoebox containing seven numbered audio cassette tapes in the mail with no return address on the box. When he plays the first tape, he hears the voice of Hannah Baker, a classmate who, weeks earlier, committed suicide. Hannah says she is going to explain how thirteen people, to whom she has each dedicated one side of one tape, caused her to want to kill herself. She mailed the tapes to the first person on the morning of her suicide. When each person finishes listening to the tapes, they must pass on the tapes to the next person, or a second set of tapes will be released publicly. Clay, readers discover, is the eighth person on the tapes. Hannah has also given each person a map of locations relevant to her stories, in case they want to revisit the scenes of their crimes. The novel progresses over the next twelve hours of Clay’s life, as Clay wanders around his town, guided by Hannah’s map, and listens to the tapes. It concludes the next morning, when he mails the tapes to the next person on the list.

The design of the book structures its narrative content in several ways. First, chapter titles are placed on black strips designed to look like the masking tape Hannah used to label her cassette tapes. The placement of display text on a masking tape background occurs across many elements of the book (front

cover, spine, inside jacket flaps, and title page). It also occurs on the heading text of the book's promotional website. This unity of design contributes to a seamless visual brand for the book, potentially allowing readers to transition more easily between the narrative spaces of the digital site and the physical book. It also adds to the book's shelf appeal, something Alessandra Balzer, vice president at Balzer + Bray, a children's and young adult imprint owned by HarperCollins, has highlighted as increasingly important. "It's become a hardcover market, fueled by that collectability issue" she explained, "so it's important to create a beautiful package" (qtd. in Corbett).

Second, as Clay interacts with the technology he uses to play Hannah's tapes - a stereo in his garage and then a Walkman he borrows from a friend - the text uses symbols common to this technology (▶ ◀◀ ▶▶ || ■) to break up the text blocks and show, rather than tell, Clay's actions. These elements are carried onto the back cover of the hardcover edition of the book and used to replace letters: "You can't st■p the future." This element serves two functions. Like any decorative element used in a section break, it simply highlights the break. However, it also draws the reader deeper into Clay's experience of interacting with Hannah's tapes by expressing with the immediacy of an image his pausing and playing of her recordings.

Finally, Asher has interwoven Clay and Hannah's narrations at a minute level. Because both are in the first-person, some visual guidance is necessary to indicate who is telling the story, especially in scenes where characters talk to Clay as he listens to Hannah's tapes. Asher or the book's designers chose to accomplish this through the use of italicized text. The effect is occasionally almost dialogic. Consider this scene from Hannah's tape about Clay (Hannah's voice is italicized; Clay's thoughts are not):

“I don’t know why,” you said, “but I think we need to talk.”

It took all the guts in the world to keep that conversation going.
Guts and two plastic cups of beer.

*And I agreed, with probably the dumbest smile plastered on my
face.*

No. The most beautiful. (208-209)

Asher has said that the idea for this narrative structure occurred to him after an audio tour of an exhibit about the ancient Egyptian pharaoh Tutankhamun in Las Vegas (“Interview”). A conversational tone and extremely short sentences dominate the novel’s prose, both of which increase readability for reluctant or less skilled readers. The novel’s unique structure and tone easily lent themselves to an online pseudo-viral marketing campaign for the book.

Despite the aforementioned bidding war, Asher told *Entertainment Weekly*’s Rob Brunner that his initial expectations for his novel’s success were “modest.” The novel became a “cult hit via word of mouth” but spent its first months “making steady, small sales gains” (SuperSpy). Then Razorbill hired Grey, a New York-based advertising agency, in an attempt to increase sales. Regan Meador led the campaign’s digital strategy. She told *Agency Spy*, an advertising blog, that the goal of the campaign was “to intrigue people. Penguin/Razorbill knew they had a book on their hands that was being discovered and it was obvious that we could build this fervor on the web” (qtd. in SuperSpy).

The campaign, according to its video profile on Grey’s website, allowed Hannah to “tell the story in her own words” (Grey Group). Grey hired actress Olivia Thirlby, best known for playing the titular character’s best friend in *Juno*, to read excerpts from Hannah’s tapes (SuperSpy). They then released these tapes periodically via the YouTube account “hannahsfriend13” beginning

on October 13, 2008, and ending on February 12, 2009 (hannahsfriend13, “Profile”). Grey also launched a blog, *Hannah’s Reasons*, which purports to be published by the same “friend” that posted the YouTube videos. The blog primarily republished the videos by embedding them in updates, but also occasionally added “new” material to the narrative, such as a facsimile of a police report that features in the narrative. That this material is promotional, an advertisement for a product, is not announced anywhere in the campaign, which sometimes confuses viewers of the videos or blog. For example, an anonymous comment on a blog entry reads, “is this whole thing about Hannah Baker true? i need to know if she even existed before” (hannahsfriend13, “Hannah’s first tape”). While the novel announces itself as a work of fiction, Grey’s marketing campaign raised the stakes by cloaking itself in authenticity. *Thirteen Reasons Why* is the product of Asher’s imagination, but Hannah, readers are meant to believe, is *real*.

Joe Moran asserted that two significant changes to the practice of American book publishing after the mergers and acquisition frenzy of the 1960s and 1970s were the development of “sophisticated forms of book publicity” and the increased status and role of marketing departments within publishing companies (442-443). Patricia Lee Gauch, editor of three Caldecott-winning titles, concurred, writing in 2003 that “the marketing departments of major publishers have grown in number and importance ... to rival in significance and power the editorial departments” (133). Hiring an outside agency may have been more expensive for Razorbill than generating a campaign in-house. However, Rachel Kempster, publicity manager at DK, a publisher of children’s educational and reference materials, explained that online marketing can be “a super cheap way of replicating the kinds of campaigns that TV and movie

studios use” (qtd. in Sellers). Furthermore, online marketing may be a more effective way to reach teens. Diane Naughton, vice president of marketing for HarperCollins Children’s, told *Publisher’s Weekly* that her company had embraced online marketing “because we know that the online world is where kids are and we know that kids are comfortable with online platforms” (qtd. in Maughan, “Way Cool”).

Whatever the cost or motivation, Grey’s campaign for *Thirteen Reasons Why* worked. Within two weeks, the videos had been viewed sixty thousand times (Grey Group). It re-entered the *New York Times* children’s hardcover chapter book best-seller list and charted as high as number three in March of 2009 (Rich). As of late July 2012, the sixteen YouTube videos (some of the recorded content is split across two videos) have been viewed a total of almost 1.3 million times (hannahsfriend13, “Profile”). When Razorbill released the paperback edition in June 2011, it debuted at the top of the *New York Times* children’s paperback chapter book list (Asher, “1 and 9”). As of December 2011, it had sold about 242,000 copies (Roback).

The physical design of the book and the content of Grey’s marketing campaign are seamlessly married on the book’s promotional website, www.thirteenreasonswhy.com. One of the most interesting features of the site is an interactive map of Crestmont, Hannah and Clay’s fictional town (“Hannah’s Map”). In the novel, Hannah leaves this map in Clay’s locker before her death, and a later edition of the book features a slightly different version of it on the reverse side of the dust jacket. The purpose of the map, like the “real” tapes recorded by Grey, is to provide authenticity to the narrative through the specificity of space. However, Crestmont is actually a bland everytown, comically suburban, its streets laid out in near-grids; hallmarks of suburban

society such as the post office, school, hospital, and park are neatly labelled. Readers of the novel also know that Crestmont has a public bus system so prosperous that it has free service late at night on weeknights, a preposterous notion to anyone familiar with public transit. The map also features Rosie's diner, where Clay at one point receives a free milkshake because the man behind the counter observes, "Something's clearly gone wrong in your life" (Asher, *Thirteen Reasons Why* 192). Crestmont must also have a very low crime rate or be perceived as very safe, because Clay and Hannah walk all over town at all hours of the night.

In other words, geography and place are subservient to the needs of Asher's narrative. Rather like a movie lot, the spaces on the map and in the novel are idealized canvases through which characters can pass and onto which readers are invited to project their own experiences and personal surroundings in order to maximize the novel's emotional and moral impact. Unfortunately, *Thirteen Reasons Why* does not provide teen readers with a realistic or responsible representation of depression and suicide, and all the savvy marketing money can buy can't change that.

As in many young adult novels, adults play relatively limited roles in *Thirteen Reasons Why*. The adults in the novel are generally oblivious to the troubles of the teens in their lives and are also powerless to control their behavior. When Clay realizes that he wants to finish listening to the tapes in one night and doesn't want to do so home, he lies to his mother, telling her he'll be working on a school project at a friend's house; she accepts the lie without question. Hannah's final tape is addressed to her English teacher and guidance counselor, Mr. Porter. Shortly before her death, Hannah meets with Mr. Porter and asks for help with her suicidal feelings, but he tells her, "sometimes there's

nothing left to do but move on” from the problems in her life that make her feel this way, rather than providing her with resources or referring her to a mental health professional (Asher, *Thirteen Reasons Why* 279). As Hannah slips into depression and her grades drop, her parents ground her, but she easily sneaks out her bedroom window to go to a party. The invisibility and powerlessness of adults in the novel legitimizes what scholar danah boyd has called the segregation of teen culture from adult culture (113). It also suggests to teen readers that adults cannot understand or effectively provide solutions to their problems.

Despite using him to narrate half the novel, Asher also provides the reader with very little information about Clay Jensen. Readers are told that he is his class’s valedictorian, that he works at the local movie theater, and that his parents are still married. They also discover, when he listens to the eighth tape, that he is the only person on the tapes whom Hannah does not blame for her suicide. This fact is the key to unlocking Clay’s function in the novel. Just as the town of Crestmont provides a generic setting onto which readers are invited to project their own surroundings, Clay provides readers a blank slate on which to experience Hannah’s stories. His character invites readers to question the impact they have on the lives of those around them, to ask themselves whether they might one day find themselves on someone’s tape, but ultimately permits them to emerge relatively unscathed from the experience. In the novel’s final pages, Clay skips class to strike up a conversation with a girl he’s noticed has been socially withdrawn, suggesting that readers ought to reconsider their own behavior if they want to prevent those around them from making Hannah’s choice.

Asher uses Hannah herself to reinforce this didactic message twice in

the novel. “No one knows for certain how much impact they have on the lives of other people. Oftentimes, we have no clue. Yet we push it just the same,” Hannah observes (*Thirteen Reasons Why* 156). Later, she reflects,

You don’t know what goes on in anyone’s life but your own. And when you mess with one part of a person’s life, you’re not messing with just that part. Unfortunately, you can’t be that precise and selective. When you mess with one part of a person’s life, you’re messing with their entire life. Everything ... affects everything.
(201-202)

This emphasis on individual actions misrepresents and underplays important aspects of mental illnesses, especially the fact that they can sometimes be rooted in chemical imbalances in the brain rather than external factors. For a moralizing novel targeted to teens who may themselves be suffering from mental or emotional difficulties, this representation is irresponsible. It places a significant amount of blame for suicide on people in the victim’s life, and could suggest to depressed teens who feel victimized by the world around them that suicide is a legitimate solution to their problems. Writing in the *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychology*, Ebele Okpokwasili of Massachusetts General Hospital echoed this concern, adding that *Thirteen Reasons Why* “ignores clinical and public health research regarding a teen’s risk for suicide.” She also commented that “Asher’s failure to ... address what teens and caregivers can do to combat the reality of [the risk of suicide] troubled me” (1192). Grey’s marketing campaign’s emphasis on the authenticity of Hannah’s character only amplifies this problem.

Razorbill’s strategy for marketing *Thirteen Reasons Why* since Grey’s initial campaign has not addressed this issue. It has, however, deviated from

Grey's emphasis on the novel's authenticity. Instead, Razorbill has attempted to highlight the impact of the novel on its readers. As Razorbill president Ben Schrank told *Publisher's Weekly*, "We knew [the novel] was striking a chord with teens. We have been honored and amazed to see it affect so many teenagers' lives" (qtd. in "'Thirteen Reasons Why' Heads to Paperback"). In May 2011, one month before the novel was released in paperback, Razorbill launched a second promotional website for the novel, *The Thirteen Reasons Why Project*, sometimes referred to as *The 13RW Project* (Lodge). The site, according to its own description, is "an online scrapbook where you can record your thoughts about Jay Asher's *Thirteen Reasons Why* and see what other readers have shared" ("Instructions"). Users can upload text, images, or link to a YouTube video; as of late July 2012, the site contained almost 1,500 such uploads ("Reviews"). Courtney Wood, assistant director of online marketing for the Penguin Young Readers Group, which oversees Razorbill, commented that the site "seemed like a natural next step in creating a destination for readers to share their thoughts" (qtd. in Lodge).

The 13RW Project is part of a trend in book advertising campaigns that effectively invite readers to market the book themselves (Sellers). The site essentially manufactures the appearance of word-of-mouth buzz and teen approval. An animation that plays during the *13RW Project* site's introduction features a testimonial from "Jessica" in a font that mimics handwriting: "This book changed my life. Truly inspiring." How much of the site's content is actually generated by teens and how much is seeded by the publisher itself is unknowable. The strategy raises concerns, however, about the use of what is essentially unpaid teen creative labor to market teen books back at teens themselves. The site also does not create any dialogue or community between

readers and Asher, or among readers themselves. Site users simply upload their content, and Razorbill uses that content to advertise the book.

Thirteen Reasons Why may soon join another hallmark of the transformed publishing industry, the use of books as “deal material” for multimedia products like film and television (Twitchell 83-84). Sally Lodge of *Publisher’s Weekly* reported that Universal Pictures has agreed to distribute a film adaptation of the novel, with Disney starlet Selena Gomez as Hannah. Asher admitted that he refused to sell rights to the novel until meeting with Gomez and her mother. “We had a fun talk about the book,” he told *Entertainment Weekly’s* Rob Brunner. “And they totally got it. Their vision for the movie was identical to mine.” Despite the troubling flaws in this vision, the sale of film rights and the potential box-office earnings of the movie itself will certainly add to Razorbill’s bottom line. Unfortunately, its commercial success may be due to the most troubling way in which American publishing has changed in the past decades. Patricia Lee Gauch has expressed concern that marketing departments are increasingly influencing editorial decisions about which books are acquired by publishers (134). Perhaps Razorbill published *Thirteen Reasons Why* not because it believed it was right book for teenagers, but because it believed it might be best suited to make them the most money.

Chapter Three: DFTBA

In 2007, John Green was a moderately successful author of two young adult novels. Four years later, when Green announced the title of his latest novel on his blog, the book, which wasn't due to be published for ten months, shot to number one bestselling book on Amazon.com within twenty-four hours (Trachtenberg B1). Green's trajectory, literary and otherwise, represents a second possibility for young adult publishing in the 21st century.

In the summer of 2000, having just graduated from Kenyon College, Green was hired at *Booklist*, a publication of the American Library Association (Green, "Becoming a YA Writer" 84). There, he reviewed works of literary fiction, young adult fiction, and books about Islam (Trachtenberg B1; Johnson). He also "periodically" went out to lunch with *Booklist's* senior editor, Ilene Cooper (Johnson). In August, he told her about an idea he had for a young adult novel, and she encouraged him to pursue it (Green, "Becoming a YA Writer" 84). That novel, *Looking for Alaska*, was eventually published in March 2005 by Dutton Children's Books, a division of the Penguin Group (85). Green explained how his tenure at *Booklist* led to what he felt were modest, realistic hopes for the novel's success:

I was aware of how quickly books come and go, so I didn't have the high expectations that some first-time authors have. The first time I met with my editor, she asked, "What are your expectations for this book?" I said, "I'd like to see it make it to paperback." "She said, "Well, I'd like it to see the Printz Award." I was like, "Yeah, whatever." ("Literature is Not" 68)

The Michael L. Printz Award is an annual award given by the American Library Association to “the best book, written for teens, based entirely on its literary merit” (“Michael L. Printz”). *Looking for Alaska* won it, and Green’s follow-up novel, *An Abundance of Katherines*, was also awarded a Printz Honor a year later. According to Green, *Looking for Alaska* sold “okay” prior to winning the Printz, received “a huge boost” due to the publicity and prestige associated with the award, but returned to “slow” sales within a few months. When Dutton released a paperback edition, it was given “a big marketing push” but “didn’t do particularly well” (Green, “385 Weeks”). In other words, Green had embarked on a slightly remarkable but mostly typical young adult fiction career.

Near the end of 2006, Green and his younger brother, Hank, began to plan an experiment of sorts. They were concerned that “their relationship had become nothing more than a series of text messages and e-mails.” John suggested they communicate only via short video blogs, posted to the online video hosting site YouTube (Green and Green, “Brothers Reconnect”). Hank agreed, and posted the first video on New Year’s Day, 2007. The video outlined the basic rules of the project, which the brothers titled “Brotherhood 2.0”:

Starting on January 1st, today, I will send you a video blog. Tomorrow you will reply to that video blog. We will continue like this until the year is up. If one of us fails to send a video blog on a weekday, there will be certain punishments. The punishments will be outlined later. (Green, “January 1st”)

Hank later admitted that John had to call him the next day for instructions on how to upload his own video. The project continued over the ensuing months. Initially, the brothers’ audience was comprised of “just a few people” (Green and Green, “Brothers Reconnect”). Many early viewers found the videos after

reading John's books (Green, "Radiohead"). On Wednesday, July 18, 2006, Hank uploaded a video in which he sang a song he had written about his anticipation of the release of the seventh and final *Harry Potter* book, scheduled for midnight the following Saturday, July 21 (Green, "Accio Deathly Hallows"). The book sold 11 million copies in its first day, and on Wednesday, July 25, YouTube featured Hank's video on its homepage (Withers and Ross; Green, "Re: July 18"). Traffic to the brothers' videos spiked; the original "Accio Deathly Hallows" video has now been viewed almost 1.5 million times (Green, "Accio Deathly Hallows").

The brothers realized that a kind of organic community of viewers was coalescing around their videos. The community adopted the name "Nerdfighters" after a video in which John misread the name of an arcade game, *AeroFighter*, then speculated about what a game called *Nerdfighter* might entail (Green, "February 17th"). According to Lili Wilkinson, John and Hank "decided early on that the community needed a kind of mission statement" (par. 1.6). The mission statement emerged over the course of several videos in March: Decreasing "world suck levels" (Green, "March 5"). In a frequently-asked-questions video, Hank explained that "world suck is kind of exactly what world suck sounds like. It's hard to quantify exactly, but, you know, it's, like, the amount of suck in the world" (Green and Green, "How to Be a Nerdfighter"). Led by the Green brothers, the Nerdfighter community (commonly referred to as "Nerdfighteria") participate in both creative fan labor and various forms of political activism (Wilkinson, par. 1.6).

Nerdfighteria has also made a significant impact on John's career as a writer. Although the Brotherhood 2.0 project ended at the end of 2007, John and Hank continued to make videos—renaming the new project Vlogbrothers—and interact with Nerdfighteria. John's first novel after the beginning the video

blogs, *Paper Towns*, was released on October 16, 2008. Earlier that summer, Hank “mass e-mailed” nerdfighters to request that they pre-order their copies of the book in honor of John’s late August birthday (Minard). *Paper Towns* debuted in fifth place on the *New York Times* children’s chapter book hardcover list (“Children’s Chapter Books”).

John Green did not begin videoblogging as a way to promote his books or with the explicit intent to advance his career as an author. Nevertheless, his popularity highlights the increased importance placed on the public face of the author in contemporary publishing. Jack Zipes asserted that, in a publishing industry increasingly focused on profit, authors become just as much a commodity as their books (67). Consequently, many publishers now regularly publish children’s and young adult books written by celebrities, who have a “built-in” readership and are guaranteed free publicity on television and in magazines (Taxel, “Economics of Children’s Book Publishing” 488; Fraustino 647). Disney starlet Hilary Duff, supermodel Tyra Banks, and reality stars Kendall and Kylie Jenner have all recently published young adult novels. In an interview, an author who asked to remain anonymous revealed that he worried publishers were increasingly supporting authors who had “already proven themselves to be profitable,” and that this might ultimately make it more difficult for unknown authors to be published (qtd. in Taxel, “Children’s Literature” 171).

Online social media provides an ideal arena in which authors can promote themselves. Tim Tuggan, executive editor of Harper, an imprint of HarperCollins, told *The Wall Street Journal*, “Everyone is now focused [online], because when it works, it can be a runaway train” (qtd. in Trachtenberg). In contrast to the online marketing of *Thirteen Reasons Why*, Green’s online

presence is self-made, to a point, but he has cautioned those who interpret his success as indicating the demise of traditional publishing and marketing, pointing out that his publisher supported him financially and artistically in the years leading up to the *Brotherhood 2.0* project. “Without Penguin there is no vlogbrothers,” he wrote on his blog (Green, “Radiohead”). However, Green’s online presence and the community of Nerdfighters differ from the online promotional efforts of many publishers in two significant ways. First, Green’s relationship with his readers is a genuine dialogue. Second, Green’s readers have created a community that has turned outward in attempts to positively impact the world around them.

Many spaces exist within Nerdfighteria where readers interact with each other and with John and Hank. John and Hank both maintain blogs, where they regularly re-blog content from Nerdfighteria and reply to reader comments. They are also both active on Twitter, where John has 1.2 million followers. The Nerdfighter site on web host Ning.com, where Nerdfighters can create profiles and converse in forums, contained nearly eighty thousand members as of late July 2012 (“Members - Nerdfighters”). Nerdfighters also run a wiki where they transcribe and translate John and Hank’s videos into other languages (*Nerdfighteria Video Wiki*). “Question Tuesday,” in which John answers “real questions from real Nerdfighters” in a video has become a regular feature of the video blog. Following the release of his most recent novel, John created a separate blog solely for the purpose of answering reader-submitted questions about the book (“So the Idea Here”). This dialogic relationship is an extension of Green’s approach to the very acts of reading and writing themselves, which Green believes is an active collaboration between author and reader:

I think what happens when you read a book—ideally, anyway—is

... complicated and beautiful and collaborative. My intent as an author matters some, but you as the reader get some agency, too. You get to discover meaning within the story, and sometimes the meaning you discover will be meaning I hoped you would discover, and sometimes it will be meaning I could never have imagined you discovering. (Green, “You Often Say”)

This open, dialogic relationship stands in stark contrast to marketing efforts such as the *Thirteen Reasons Why Project*, where readers remain isolated from the author and from one another.

Prompted by John and Hank Green, Nerdfighteria’s mission to decrease world suck has also resulted in a number of significant activities focused not on John’s books or even a more broad celebration of reading, but on various forms of political and philanthropic action. An early such effort was dubbed the Project for Awesome and was organized via a now-defunct email newsletter. The project itself, which took place on December 17th, 2007, invited Nerdfighters to create and upload a video promoting a charitable cause or organization, embed a common image within the video that YouTube would automatically select as the preview image for the video, and then leave comments on videos with the thumbnail in order to manipulate YouTube’s algorithms into automatically featuring the videos on the homepage of the site (Green, “Project for Awesome”). The Project for Awesome became an annual event and, beginning in 2010, was sponsored by YouTube. That year, the Project generated three thousand videos, 600,000 comments, 10 million total views, and \$130,000 (Green, “Thoughts on the Project”).

In September 2011, Green created a video that explained the principles of microfinance and encouraged Nerdfighters to consider joining and contributing

to the microfinance website Kiva.org (Green, “Awesome Bankers?”). Within hours, Nerdfighters contributed more than \$5,000 to the site’s Nerdfighter group (Green, “Nerdfighters Have Lent”). Of his effort, Green commented that he wanted to introduce Nerdfighters to “the idea that your money goes further when someone other than you spends it” (qtd. in Wilkinson, par. 3.6). In March 2012, Kiva received a large donation from LinkedIn co-founder Reid Hoffman; as a result, Kiva then announced that the next forty thousand people to join the site would be able to make free \$25 microloans (Constine). Green then created a video promoting the offer and again encouraging Nerdfighters to join the site (Green, “Actually Free Money!”). At least 1,500 new Nerdfighters joined Kiva, and the Nerdfighter group became the largest on the site (Green, “Oh My Gosh;” Green, “In the Three Hours”). As of late July 2012, Nerdfighters had lent more than \$800,000 on Kiva, placing them in eighth on the site’s list of groups lending the most money (“Kiva Lending Team: Nerdfighters”).

By encouraging Nerdfighters to actively participate in both the act of reading and in the world around them and creating a community in which they are empowered to do so, John Green represents a hopeful possibility for the future of young adult literature. In part, he has done so by following an initialism that has become the mantra of Nerdfighteria: DFTBA, or, “Don’t Forget to Be Awesome” (Green, “Brotherhood 2.0 on the Road”).

Conclusion: The Truth Resists Simplicity

In a recent episode of *The Simpsons* entitled “The Book Job,” idealistic Simpson daughter Lisa runs into her favorite author, T.R. Francis, when the woman is working at a dinosaur puppet show. Lisa is dismayed when the woman tells her she’s just a model paid to appear in photos as T.R. Francis, who is actually the creation of a publishing company. Then the woman delivers the final blow:

Oh, I hate to break it to you, but all the books you kids love are conceived in executive board rooms. The plots are based on market research, and the pages are churned out by a room full of pill-popping lit majors desperate for work. Publishers rake in the cash and unsuspecting kids get ten books a year by their favorite author. (“The Book Job”)

The rest of the episode then becomes a heist film parody, as Homer puts together a crack team to write a bestselling children’s book and make a million dollars. Of course, this episode wouldn’t be so funny if it didn’t contain a grain of truth, and it wouldn’t have made it past the writers’ room pitch meeting unless the people behind *The Simpsons* thought enough people in the show’s audience would recognize these grains of truth and would therefore be “in” on the jokes. The growing popularity and visibility of the young adult book markets makes this more likely than ever before.

In this report, I have characterized a vertically integrated book publishing industry that is increasingly driven by profit over the best interests of young readers. I have described how this new publishing landscape has impacted some

of the books it produces. What I have *not* done is explore how real teenage readers consume and create meaning from these books. American teenagers are constantly underestimated by the culture in which they live, and a full picture of the young adult publishing landscape must at some point include young adults in its assessment. A book on a shelf means nothing until someone reads it, after all.

I hope that the success of franchises drawn from young adult literature such as *Twilight* and *The Hunger Games* will encourage continued academic scrutiny of the industrial contexts that produce them. This work is often difficult, because modes of production in book publishing are both hidden and romanticized. After all, when readers open a copy of *Twilight*, they don't see a notice that reads, "The multinational corporation you've supported by buying this book also develops electronic communication technology used by the military!" Instead, they see the author's name and the name of her publisher.

In video blogs, at public appearances, in his blog and on Twitter, John Green often reminds Nerdfighters that "the truth resists simplicity." The idea that every book is solely the product of an individual author's imagination, and publishing companies simply bring an author's vision to readers is simplistic. So, too, however, is the idea that publishing companies' only goal is to make as much money off of unwitting teenagers as possible. Neither of these visions fairly represent the writers, editors, marketers, librarians, booksellers, and readers who comprise the entirety of book publishing. As a librarian, my job is not to eliminate the commercial from my library, nor is it to stock my shelves with only popular, well-marketed titles. My job is to help children and teens understand the complex relationships that put books on my shelves in order to gain a deeper appreciation of the role reading can play in their lives.

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