

# Bibliotekarstudentens nettleksikon om litteratur og medier

Av Helge Ridderstrøm (førsteamanuensis ved OsloMet – storbyuniversitetet)

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Om leksikonet: [https://www.litteraturogmedieleksikon.no/gallery/om\\_leksikonet.pdf](https://www.litteraturogmedieleksikon.no/gallery/om_leksikonet.pdf)

## Bestselger

I noen sammenhenger også kalt en “kioskvelter”, men bestselgere selges langt fra bare i kiosker. Grensen til en langselger (“longseller”) er flytende (Rehm 1991 s. 25).

“A highly publicized trade book currently in such high demand in bookstores and libraries that large numbers of copies are sold and circulated. Major newspapers and review publications often publish ranked lists of bestsellers in adult fiction and nonfiction, and sometimes in children’s literature, based on sales volume over a given period of time (example: The New York Times Best-Seller Lists). The Bowker Annual Library and Book Trade Almanac usually includes an essay analyzing the previous year’s bestsellers.” (Joan M. Reitz i [http://lu.com/odlis/odlis\\_c.cfm](http://lu.com/odlis/odlis_c.cfm); lesedato 30.08.05) “The bestseller list is as much ahead of the event as behind it, and exists to *create* as much as to record them. It is dynamic, not passive; an engine, not a catalogue. It belongs to the publicity rather than the accounting department of the trade.” (John Sutherland sitert fra [http://www.akademiskkvarter.hum.aau.dk/pdf/vol7/1a\\_RasmusGroen\\_TheBestsellerist.pdf](http://www.akademiskkvarter.hum.aau.dk/pdf/vol7/1a_RasmusGroen_TheBestsellerist.pdf); lesedato 08.10.19)

“The category ‘bestseller’ reminds readers that books are commodities” (Fuller og Sedo 2023 s. 3).

“Definitions of bestsellers range from being on the bestseller list, to being sold to 1 % of the population within the decade of publication, to a selling curve that is distinctive because it is fastselling at first and then becomes steady, to being a fastselling book that never achieves the respectable middle age of steady demand (Sutherland 68).” (Cinda Gault i <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/j.1540-5931.2006.00330.x>; lesedato 16.12.21) John Sutherland ga i 1981 ut boka *Bestsellers: Popular Fiction of the 1970s*.

“There are primarily three ways to understand the forces that propel bestsellers. Firstly, a bestseller sells well simply because it is a good book. It has the certain literary qualities that can generate huge interest: well written in its genre, thrilling, exciting, something new, and possibly addressing contemporary issues. The second answer is that the book market is a structure designed to create and promote bestsellers. Publishers are driven by profit demands in ways that force them to

focus on titles that will sell in large quantities. And thirdly, it is the readers' interest in sharing their experiences with others that compels them to read the same thing as everyone else. None of these three are full answers to the question, of course, but it is these variables and factors connected to them, that are essential to the process.”  
(Ann Steiner i Helgason, Kärrholm og Steiner 2014 s. 41-42)

“The ten characteristics of a bestseller, an extract from *Write a Bestseller* [2014] by Jacqueline Burns [...]

1 A bestseller ‘knows’ what it is and for whom it is written. It knows its audience. It is clear what the story is really about and conveys that clearly to the reader. It is written for an identifiable audience and genre, so making itself more easily discoverable.

2 Bestsellers have a good backstory. This creates authenticity around a novel, as well as providing ready-made hooks and angles for publicity. It is also the why and the how of the book’s creation, which readers are invariably fascinated by.

3 Bestsellers either present a unique concept or a fresh spin on an old subject. The material is unique in some way; or, if not, it shows how it is demonstrably different from the competition. So, if, for example, it is important to the subject matter to be timely or contemporary, then it captures the zeitgeist at just the right time. If it covers an old subject, the writing casts fresh new light that dazzles with its cleverness, or has such a clear stamp of a winning approach that everyone wonders why no one thought of it before.

4 Bestsellers contain good enough writing. Bestsellers are well written: they’re readable, not necessarily literary masterpieces, but written well enough to keep readers turning the pages. And, more often than not, they will have been improved through feedback and professional editing.

5 Bestsellers have a strong and clear voice. They can be loud or quiet but they’re distinctive and sound unlike any other writer. They’re not dulled or swamped by being stuffed with every thought, opinion and idea the author has. If there is a cathartic aspect to the writing they make it work, taking Hemingway’s advice to ‘write hard and clear about what hurts.’

6 Bestsellers engage with their readers to create powerful word of mouth. They speak to the reader by telling a story that readers will care about and enjoy enough to invest their money and time in it, and afterwards their energy in telling others about it.

7 Bestsellers have impactful covers. Bestselling authors know that their cover is a key marketing tool that can create a winning first impression. They have covers

that adhere to genre conventions and don't mislead the reader by having an off-genre cover.

8 Bestsellers can grow out of being part of a series. Each book in a series helps to sell another. Publicity and marketing yield more return for effort because they benefit multiple books rather than a single one.

9 Bestselling authors use brand and platform to make their book visible. They understand that visibility is everything and they work hard to build it. And they're switched on to the value of genuinely and effectively engaging with readers.

10 Bestselling authors have bold and energetic marketing plans. Whether trade or self-published, bestselling authors market their books with gusto, and are guided by a clear PR and marketing plan. What's more, they start doing so well in advance of the publication date, and they keep on going well after it. They also measure and monitor what works and what doesn't for every book's campaign." (Jacqueline Burns i <https://londonwritersclub.com/2018/05/ten-characteristics-bestseller-extract-write-bestseller-jacqueline-burns/>; lesedato 17.08.23)

Et viktig aspekt "is relevance. A book many people enjoy reading has to be relevant in one way or another [...] Often novels tap into fears, dreams, or pressing issues of the day" (Ann Steiner i Helgason, Kärrholm og Steiner 2014 s. 52). Romanen *Go as a River* (2023) av den amerikanske forfatteren Shelley Read har vært på en prestisjetung bestselgerliste: "Feelgood-forfatter toppler listene [...] Read fikk oppleve noe riktig stort da romanen gikk rett til topps på Sunday Times' bestselgerliste – samt at de gode anmeldelsene har stått i kø. Boken skriver seg inn i samme tradisjon som de umåtelig populære "Der krepsene synger" og "Å vanne blomster om kvelden", og forfatteren svarer slik på hvorfor verden er så klar for gripende fortellinger akkurat nå: - Jeg tror den kollektive opplevelsen av pandemien etterlot oss med et sug etter historier om menneskelig styrke. De fleste av oss har måttet grave dypt i oss selv for å finne en motstandskraft vi kanskje ikke visste at vi hadde, for å komme oss igjennom den urolige tiden. Historier som gjenspeiler styrke og motstandskraft, kan være spesielt nødvendige akkurat nå. Jeg tror også at historier som tar leserne med til naturen, er svært viktige i moderne tider. [...] Mange mennesker har mistet sin forbindelse med naturen, men fortsatt ønsker man at den har en essensiell plass." (<https://www.msn.com/nb-no/nyheter/other/feelgood-forfatter-toppler-listene-mange-mennesker-har-mistet-forbindelsen-med-naturen/>; lesedato 07.07.23)

I artikkelen "Top or Flop: Characteristics of Bestsellers" (2007) hevder Sabine Albers at bestselgere bør gjøre det lett for leseren å identifisere seg med hovedpersonen og begynnelsen av boka bør være så emosjonell at den berører leseren sterkt (gjengitt fra <https://journals.openedition.org/fixxion/12042>; lesedato 27.02.24).

Jörg Magenau's book *Bestselgere: Bøker som vi elsket – og hva de røper om oss* (2018; in German) illustrates how books become part of a community ("Bindeglied") in society by stimulating discussions and shared experiences (http://www.literaturhaus.at/index.php?id=11991&L=636; last accessed 25.03.20). "For many readers, the desire to discuss and have an opinion about specific books is what motivates them to read." (Tveit 2004 p. 72)

Magenau argues that bestsellers have a "fever-termometer-function", where books can show what is trending in society (https://www.bpb.de/shop/zeitschriften/apuz/287324/lesen/; last accessed 17.02.25). German politician Thilo Sarrazin's book *Tyskland avskaffer seg selv* (2010) sold millions of copies in Germany. It contributed to a greater sense of suspicion and distrust, particularly among the younger generation (Magenau in https://www.bpb.de/shop/zeitschriften/apuz/287324/lesen/; last accessed 17.02.25).

"[T]he breakthrough of a single bestselling title is often dependent on marketing strategies coupled with the word-of-mouth effect of enthusiastic readers. Being a phenomenon placed somewhere in between the power spheres of producers and consumers is one of the things that makes the bestseller particularly interesting." (Helgason, Kärrholm and Steiner 2014 p. 8)

The English historian Michael Grant was an expert in Roman history, and he cited an example from antiquity: "in the third or second century B.C., Bolus of Mendes in Egypt wrote a treatise explaining and justifying the correspondence between stars and human beings. This book, *On Sympathies and Antipathies*, was a best-seller almost unequalled in its influence on the peoples of the Mediterranean world." (Grant 1961 p. 157)

"Kempis' *The Imitation of Christ* (1473), became a type of religious best seller, exceeding over 100 editions in various languages before 1500. (The fact that he may not have written the book is another matter.) The work continues to be popular and as of 1992, can claim well over 3,200 editions. Erasmus' *In Praise of Folly* (1509) and *The Education of a Christian Prince* (1515), an early work on etiquette, proved to be equally well read. Luther's many books were popular, and various vernacular editions of the Bible then, as now, outsold all secular works. Turning to non-theological works, they were few and far between in the fifteenth-sixteenth centuries, although [Chaucer's] *Canterbury Tales* (c. 1400) and Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* (1532), the best known Italian romantic work, were reprinted scores of times." (Katz 1995 p. 165)

"Book historians agree that the term "bestseller" is probably of American origin, and they usually associate the beginning of the bestseller phenomenon with the publication of the list of the six "New Books, in the order of demand" that appeared in the inaugural issue of a New York periodical, *The Bookman*, in February 1895.

The term's American origin is confirmed by the *Oxford English Dictionary*, which gives the definition “one of the books having the largest sale of the year or the season” and finds the earliest citation in a report in the *Kansas Times & Star* of April 25, 1889. “Kansas City’s literary tone is improving. The six best sellers here last week were *Fools of Nature* (etc.),” claimed this report, referring to a little-remembered work by Alice Brown, published in 1887. [...] What the editors of the *OED* and book historians seem to have overlooked, however, is that the American *Bookman* was an imitation of a London periodical, also called the *Bookman*, which had, from its beginning in October 1891, included a list of the “best selling books” from a leading West End bookseller.” (Michael Winship i <http://www.common-place.org/vol-09/no-03/winship/>; lesedato 19.06.13)

De første bestselgerlistene for bøker ble ifølge Erhard Schütz lagd i USA ca. år 1900 (2010 s. 48). “Lists of bestsellers, for example, were published in the US from the late nineteenth century, but only systematically produced [in] the UK in the late 1970s” (Matthews og Moody 2007 s. xiv). Den første bestselgerlisten i Tyskland ble publisert i 1927 (Julia Büttner i <https://www.grin.com/document/73890>; lesedato 18.08.21).

“Snøball-effekten er stor: Det som leses av mange, blir lest av mange flere og blir slik et fenomen det skrives enda mer om, noe som fører til at enda flere leser.” (Tveit 2004 s. 119) Bestselgerlister er et selvforsterkende system (David Oels i <https://www.blogs.uni-mainz.de/fb05-sachbuchforschung/files/2014/11/>; lesedato 21.06.24). At et verk er på lista, gir den oppmerksomhet og bidrar ofte til økt salg, som i sin tur gjør at boka blir værende på lista.

Betegnelsen “blockbuster books” har også blitt brukt (Helgason, Kärrholm og Steiner 2014 s. 9). “Blockbuster” er en “slang term for a new book for which the sale of a very large number of copies is virtually guaranteed, usually due to the reputation or popularity of the author (Mary Higgins Clark, Stephen King, Danielle Steel, etc.). Public libraries often order such titles in multiple copies to satisfy initial demand. Also used in reference to the willingness of publishers to repeatedly sign such authors and promote their works, sometimes to the neglect of writers of lesser fame whose works deserve to be read. Synonymous with megabook. Compare with bestseller. In the motion picture industry, a newly released feature film expected to attract large audiences and sell well on videocassette and DVD, usually because it has won a major award or because its cast includes actors and/or actresses who are stars.” (Joan M. Reitz i [http://lu.com/odlis/odlis\\_c.cfm](http://lu.com/odlis/odlis_c.cfm); lesedato 30.08.05) Amerikanske Mary Higgins Clark hadde i 2017 solgt 100 millioner bøker i USA, over 25 millioner i Frankrike og nesten 4 millioner per år i verden for øvrig (<https://journals.openedition.org/fixxion/12357>; lesedato 27.02.24).

Litteraturpriser kan ha stor påvirkning på salget. Den amerikanske forfatteren Alice Walkers brevroman *The Color Purple* “was a small quiet book when it emerged on the literary scene in 1982. The subject of the book is a young, abused, uneducated

Black girl who evolves into womanhood and a sense of her own worth gained by bonding with the women around her. When Alice Walker won the American Book Award and the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1983, the sales of the novel increased to over two million copies, placing the book on the *New York Times* best-seller lists for a number of weeks.” (Jacqueline Bobo i [http://armytague.net/pdsdata/\[Rhoda\\_Barnes,\\_Patrick\\_Bellegarde-Smith,\\_Elsa\\_Bark\(BookFi.org\).pdf](http://armytague.net/pdsdata/[Rhoda_Barnes,_Patrick_Bellegarde-Smith,_Elsa_Bark(BookFi.org).pdf); lesedato 13.09.18)

“In his benchmark study of the Booker Prize and the impact it has had on British fiction, *Consuming Fictions* (1996), Richard Todd delineates the ways in which prize-winning novels have almost automatically become literary bestsellers.” (Collins 2010 s. 187)

“Whereas ‘bestseller’ in a market context [...] possesses positive anticipatory connotations, it is in academic works primarily used derogatively as a synonym for commercial opportunism, representing the ‘dark side’ of the classic dichotomy between masterpiece and mayfly.” (Rasmus Grøn i [http://www.akademiskkvarter.hum.aau.dk/pdf/vol7/1a\\_RasmusGroen\\_TheBestsellerist.pdf](http://www.akademiskkvarter.hum.aau.dk/pdf/vol7/1a_RasmusGroen_TheBestsellerist.pdf); lesedato 08.10.19)

Det har blitt skilt mellom:

“Stars”: produkter/verk som allerede har en høy markedsandel, og den er økende; potensialet for adaptasjoner i andre medier er stort (f.eks. film basert på bok)

“Cash Cows”: verk som gir stor inntekt i en avgrenset periode, men der markedet neppe vil ekspandere

“Question Marks”: verk som med stor sannsynlighet vil komme til å selge godt

“Poor dogs”: gir lite inntjening og tas relativt raskt ut av salg  
(Schütz 2010 s. 300)

“The word ‘hype’ is used to describe trends, things, fashions, and phenomena that receive massive attention at a given point in time. In the world of books and literature, the word ‘hype’ is often used to describe bestseller phenomena – the books that sell the most, that are read by large numbers of people, and that are talked about everywhere. It is frequently success itself that generates the interest – popularity begets popularity.” (Helgason, Kärrholm og Steiner 2014 s. 7) Det er altså her en såkalt snøballeffekt, som en snøball som ruller nedover en bakke og blir stadig større.

“Hype is when agents, publishers, and sale representatives push for a book in different contexts. Buzz, on the other hand, occurs when the recipients respond positively to a book (whether it was hyped or not) by talking about it, writing positive reviews, posting blogs and so on. Hype can thus be described as being connected to sales, marketing, and media logic, while buzz is linked to reception

and audience response. Word of mouth is a key ingredient in the making of a bestseller, of course, and it should be noted that ‘buzz marketing’ is a concept that has come to stay in the book industry. There are various techniques for creating a buzz by using early adopters or other influential readers, such as bloggers, Amazon reviewers, and other active readers online.” (Helgason, Kärrholm og Steiner 2014 s. 16)

“Part of selling a book is the buzz it creates and the information cascade created by a popular reception (Greco A, Rodriguez C, Wharton R, 2007). An information cascade is different sources, such as television shows, blogs, radio programs, reviews and word of mouth that positively mention a product.” (Michael Wright Johnson i <https://www.ojcmt.net/download/bestsellers-beyond-bestsellers-the-success-of-a-good-story.pdf>; lesedato 29.06.23)

“There are three main ways a book can attain bestseller status: it can land a spot on a bestseller list, become an Amazon bestseller, or sell a significant number of copies. The bestseller label is misleading, however, because each of these avenues is unregulated. Bestseller lists have no standard formula, Amazon bestseller status can be gamed, and there is no specific number of sales that officially turns a book into a bestseller. [...] bestows “Amazon bestseller” status to any book that edges into the top 100, even if only for a day. It took about 30 seconds for authors and publishers to realize that if they launched a campaign asking everyone on their email list to buy a particular book on the same day, they had a good chance of getting the book into Amazon’s top 100. Then it could honestly be called an Amazon bestseller. Amazon’s ranking formula does give extra weight to books that remain in the top 100 for long periods of time, and its ranking displays the number of days a book has been on the list. “Secrets of the Amazon best-seller list,” by Marion Manaker, spills the beans on how some authors attempt to manipulate Amazon’s ranking system.” (Lynette Padwa i <https://laeditorsandwritersgroup.com/what-is-a-bestseller/>; lesedato 17.08.23)

Nettbokhandelen Amazon publiserer ukentlig Amazon Charts, basert på “big data” om hva som faktisk blir lest, og hvor raskt, på lesebrettet Kindle (Sylvie Ducas i <https://journals.openedition.org/fixxion/12357>; lesedato 27.02.24). Amazon samler statistikk over hvilke bøker som leses og når leserne eventuelt gir opp en bok og slutter å lese i den. De samler også statistikk fra lydboktjenesten Audible. Oversikten gjelder dermed ikke hva som selges i ett land (USA), slik det er tilfelle med *New York Times* sin bestselgerliste, men hva som blir lest internasjonalt av bøker tilgjengelige fra Amazon. Disse bøkene kan så bestilles med noe få klikk fra Amazon Charts.

De største bestselgerne blir “sometimes referred to as megasellers, supersellers, or hypersellers. Bestsellers such as Dan Brown’s *The Da Vinci Code* or Stieg Larsson’s *Millennium* trilogy belong to this category, while a book such as *The Help* (2009) by Kathryn Stockett is a typical bestseller of the standard kind, having

reportedly sold approximately ten million copies.” (Helgason, Kärrholm og Steiner 2014 s. 14) “[T]he term *hyper-bestseller* is focused on the size, explosive expansion, and popular nature of the phenomenon at hand” (Bergman 2013).

“To describe and classify the most successful works of fiction from recent decades – those that have succeeded beyond even the status of bestseller or blockbuster – the concept of hyper-bestseller is introduced here. The list below defines its main features:

1. A popular cultural phenomenon
2. Originates in a novel/a series of novels, which turn/s into something much bigger than the average No. 1 *New York Times* bestseller
3. Translated into a large number of languages
4. Sells in many millions of copies
5. Turned into blockbuster films
6. Adapted for several other media formats
7. Attracts enormous international popularity and fan culture
8. Known also to people who have not read the original novel/novels or approached the text through its remediations
9. Attracts extensive attention by media
10. Attracts extensive attention by scholars” (Bergman 2013)

Noen forfattere blir det Clive Bloom har kalt “brand authors”, med høy sannsynlighet for at deres bøker blir bestselgere ([http://www.akademiskkvarter.hum.aau.dk/pdf/vol7/1a\\_RasmusGroen\\_TheBestsellerist.pdf](http://www.akademiskkvarter.hum.aau.dk/pdf/vol7/1a_RasmusGroen_TheBestsellerist.pdf); lesedato 30.05.18).

“In 1947 Erle Stanley Gardner was proclaimed “the most popular whoduniter [dvs. forfatter av en type krimromaner] of his times” by Frank Luther Mott in *Golden Multitudes: The Story of Best Sellers in the United States*. He went on to attain the distinction of being the “top-selling author” in the world, an estimated 310,910,603 copies as of January 1, 1979, with translations into twenty-three languages including such exotic tongues as Tamil and Urdu, a record which still stands in the *Guinness Book of World Records*. During the mid-1960s his paperback publisher was selling 2,000 of his books an hour, eight hours a day, 365 days a year. [...] his books have sold more copies worldwide than any book except the Bible.” (Fugate og Fugate 1980 s. 13-14)

I 1949, altså fire år etter 2. verdenskrig, ga C. W. Ceram ut *Götter, Gräber und Gelehrte* (*Guder, graver og lærde*), som i flere tiår ble den største sakprosa-bestselgeren i Vest-Tyskland. Forfatteren brukte pseudonym, og het egentlig Kurt Wilhelm Marek. Boka handler om arkeologi, byen Troja, egyptiske kongegraver, utgravinger i Pompeii, og om Heinrich Schliemann, en tysk forretningsmann og arkeolog som i siste halvdel av 1800-tallet blant annet drev med utgravinger for å finne Homers Troja. Boksuksessen har blitt oppfattet som tyskernes behov for å slippe unna hverdagen med bekymringer og nød, og møte fjerne, fremmede verdener, og håpet om at ruiner kan inneholde noe enestående viktig, at ikke alt er i stykker, men at noe verdifullt er tilbake (Jörg Magenau i <https://www.bpb.de/shop/zeitschriften/apuz/287324/lesen/>; lesedato 17.02.25). Boka inneholder ikke et eneste ord om 2. verdenskrig og de tyske ruinene etter krigen, og opplyser ikke om at forfatteren var krigspropaganda-forfatter under krigen.

Amerikaneren Dale Carnegies selvhjelpbsok *How to Stop Worrying and Start Living* (1948) ble oversatt til tysk samme år. I 1998 havnet den tyske oversettelsen uventet på førsteplass på bestselgerlistene for sakprosabøker i Tyskland. Forklaringen kan være at kapitalismen, etter Berlinmurens fall, var en seirende ideologi, og kapitalisme oppstod i en ny, rå variant i Øst-Tyskland (det tidligere DDR). Budskapet i boka er at enkeltmennesket må tro på seg selv, være sterk og vinne i konkurransen med andre (Jörg Magenau i <https://www.bpb.de/shop/zeitschriften/apuz/287324/lesen/>; lesedato 17.02.25).

“The effects of bestselling fiction such as the *Harry Potter*, the *Twilight* series, and the *Da Vinci Code* series spread like ripples on the water, influencing not only the personal taste of its readers or the literary genres they belong to (sometimes creating genres or market categories of their own), but also tourism, music, fashion, and other cultural industries.” (Helgason, Kärrholm og Steiner 2014 s. 8)

“[M]any people enjoy reading bestsellers in part because they do actually like to read and a headline-hitting title that is being read by all their friends and relations provides a shortcut to finding the next book that will offer genuine reading pleasure. People also, of course, like to talk about what they are reading, and again the bestselling novel provides shortcuts; you can be sure that other people will be reading the same book and be happy to talk about it.” (Margaret Mackey i <https://journals.aau.dk/index.php/ak/article/view/2832/2343>; lesedato 08.11.22)

Den franske sosiologen Pierre Bourdieu bruker uttrykket “the heteronomous principle of the marketplace” om et slags mengde-argument “in which bestseller status is a guarantor of quality (one million readers can’t be wrong)” (Beaty 2007 s. 6). “[I]ndividuals’ behaviour is strongly influenced by their observation of other people’s choices. The literature suggests that, from a sociological and economic point of view, a bestseller’s success can in part be interpreted as a tendency towards people wanting to join the crowd, and that individuals perceive an advantage in

copying the actions of others. [...] The fact that a great many other people have already chosen this particular piece of fiction is an argument in its favour in a world with an ever-increasing multitude of books. The comfort a bestseller list can provide should not be underestimated. The critique of such behavior – herd mentality – is also the bestseller’s constant companion.” (Helgason, Kärrholm og Steiner 2014 s. 19)

“[N]umbers are generally inflated as a large previous sale is regarded as a marketing argument and publishers tend to exaggerate if they can.” (Ann Steiner i Helgason, Kärrholm og Steiner 2014 s. 44)

Et verk får størst utbredelse når det appellerer til ulike publikumsgrupper og tillater ulike resepsjons- (eller lese-)måter (Dörner og Vogt 2013 s. 182). Men noen bøker blir bestselgere i en sosial klasse eller gruppe, f.eks. amerikaneren Cameron Hawleys “business novels among the lower middle class of America in the 1950s” (Rabkin 1973 s. 4).

Kerstin Bergman “argues that genre hybridization is a ‘fundamental ... feature that contributes to such a novel’s success by causing it to attract a larger and more diverse audience’. [...] genre awareness and playfulness are important aspects of many bestselling titles.” (Ann Steiner i Helgason, Kärrholm og Steiner 2014 s. 47)

Bestselgerromaner synes å ligge under et krav om å framstille det uvanlige på en formmessig likefram måte og i et hverdaglig språk (Bourdieu 1992 s. 143). Innholdet bør være uvanlig og oppsiktsvekkende, men ikke skrivemåten. “Kunstnerisk innovasjon fjerner nødvendigvis litteraturen fra det store publikum.” (Joch og Wolf 2005 s. 266) Den mest populære skrivestilen, som de fleste bestselgere har, har blitt kalt “populær realisme” og “hedonistisk realisme” (Moritz Bassler i Lüdeke 2011 s. 102).

“[A]ll of the hyperselling titles have suspense as a main component, not necessarily in the sense of a mystery or a thriller, but in anticipation of revelation and continuation. [...] Suspense has been defined as a combination of fear, hope, and uncertainty.” (Ann Steiner i Helgason, Kärrholm og Steiner 2014 s. 48)

“Many bestsellers make use of popular generic patterns in ways that serve to attract many readers. Bestselling fiction may also often share the functions that John G. Cawelti has identified in what he calls formulaic literature. According to Cawelti, literary formulas have two general, somewhat opposing functions that attract its readers: one is that the formula is based on archaic narrative plot structures that have always been popular; the other that the formula is filled with thematic content that is highly contemporary and corresponds to specific interests in its specific time. As Cawelti puts it: ‘formulas are ways in which specific cultural themes and stereotypes become embodied in more universal archetypes ... But in order for these patterns, to work, they must be embodied in figures, settings, and situations

that have appropriate meanings for the culture which produces them.' This combination of a specific cultural content and archaic narrative pattern seems to be at work in many of the bestsellers as well as in popular literature." (Helgason, Kärrholm og Steiner 2014 s. 24).

"[W]hat constitutes a bestselling novel in an international publishing context [...] – genre and themes, style and form, emotional impact, and contextual relevance [...] genre typologies are often used for book jackets, blurbs, and marketing material." (Ann Steiner i Helgason, Kärrholm og Steiner 2014 s. 46)

"Bestsellers, according to Fred Botting, have two functions. The one is commercial: they exist to make money. The other is 'ideological' reinforcement: a bestseller reasserts prevailing attitudes and assumptions as well as existing norms and values. Occasionally, as Botting also points out [...] bestsellers can seemingly subvert those norms and values. The ideological aspects of bestsellers explain, according to Botting, part of the success of bestselling fictions, namely 'their ability to tap a specific cultural nerve and thereby serve as exercises in the management of social anxieties.' [...] Bestselling fiction is not simply a sponge that absorbs ideological, cultural, and aesthetic ideas that the reader can then wring from it, but it also has an impact on those ideas." (Helgason, Kärrholm og Steiner 2014 s. 11-12)

Hva som kan regnes som en bestselger, er avhengig av sjanger. Ulike sjangerer selger tradisjonelt i ulik mengde, slik at det vil være relativt hva som kan eller bør regnes som en bestselger. En bok kan være en bestselger ved å selges i 50.000 eksemplarer, hevdet den franske litteratursosiologen Robert Escarpit (1965 s. 123). I Tyskland regner forlag og litterære agenter bøker som i løpet av noen få uker selger fra 15.000 eksemplarer og oppover for bestselgere (Neuhaus 2009 s. 170).

"10,000 sold copies would be outstanding for a collection of poems but average for a crime novel" (Rasmus Grøn i [http://www.akademiskkvarter.hum.aau.dk/pdf/vol7/1a\\_RasmusGroen\\_TheBestsellerist.pdf](http://www.akademiskkvarter.hum.aau.dk/pdf/vol7/1a_RasmusGroen_TheBestsellerist.pdf); lesedato 08.10.19). Det har også blitt foreslått å regne på andre måter: "The alternative approach is to define an absolute (national) criterion for a bestseller's sales figures. But apart from being dependant on information on a title's total sales, this absolute number is determined to be contingent and disputable. Should it be minimum 10-15,000 copies? (Handesten, 2010, p. 115). Or should it correspond to 1 % of the population, as suggested by a number of American studies (Sutherland, 1981, p. 6), thereby including all titles on the Danish market with sales of minimum 56,000 copies." (Grøn, samme kilde)

"A best seller, as defined in Frank Luther Mott, *Golden Multitudes: The Story of Best Sellers in the United States* (New York: R. R. Bowker Company, 1960), was a book with a total sale equal to one percent of the national population. This represented a minimum of 1,200,000 copies. A "runner-up" was one which almost reached the required total. From 1933 through 1938, [Erle Stanley] Gardner was

author of ten of the forty-four books (both fact and fiction excluding bibles, hymnals, textbooks, reference works, etc.) which composed the best-seller and runner-up lists – almost twenty-five percent.” (Fugate og Fugate 1980 s. 193)

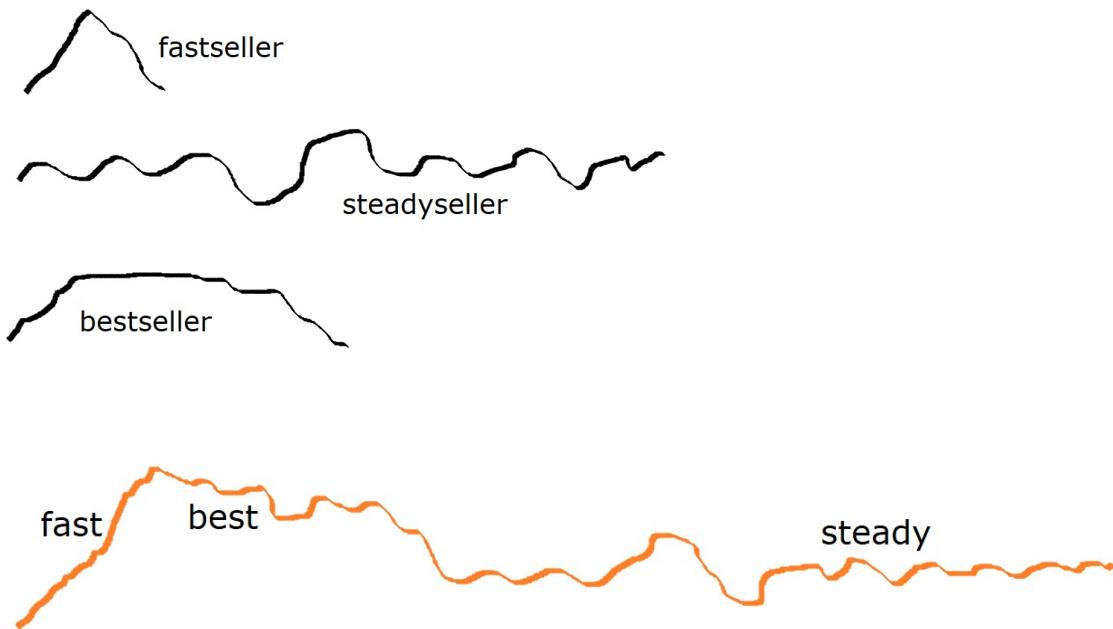
“National, local, and regional bestsellers are created all the time without receiving the same kind of attention as the few works of fiction that circulate into the global loop of stardom. [...] A region can be a distinct area of one country, a transnational context, or a number of countries with a cultural, often linguistic, affinity.”  
(Helgason, Kärrholm og Steiner 2014 s. 21-22)

Mange har ment at den irske forfatteren James Joyces eksperimentelle roman *Ulysses* (1922) er en svært krevende tekst å lese. “The publication of *U*[lysses] in a Polish translation in December 1969 caused a literary sensation in Poland. [...] 40,000 copies disappeared from bookshops immediately, while hundreds of thousands of potential readers ... were unable to get hold of a copy in spite of strenuous book hunting. The black market responded to this demand instantly: copies of *U* were sold at a price seven, ten or even fifteen times the original price” (Lernout og Mierlo 2004a s. 224).

Escarpit skilte mellom “fastsellers, steadysellers and bestsellers [...] a distinction between ‘*Fastsellers*’ (titles with large momentary sale, but steep downward sale curves – that is, the conception of the volatile bestseller [...]), ‘*Steadysellers*’ (titles with relatively low but stable and long sales – typically associated with ‘classics’) and ‘*Bestsellers*’ that is the small minority of titles that combines the two. A Bestseller is thus a Fastseller, which eventually turns into a Steadyseller (Escarpit, 1972).” (Rasmus Grøn i [http://www.akademiskkvarter.hum.aau.dk/pdf/vol7/1a\\_RasmusGroen\\_TheBestsellerist.pdf](http://www.akademiskkvarter.hum.aau.dk/pdf/vol7/1a_RasmusGroen_TheBestsellerist.pdf); lesedato 30.05.18) “[T]he ‘steadiness’ of Escarpit’s bestseller most likely will not reveal itself as a smooth temporal line of popularity, but rather as a winding, oscillating path of oblivions and revivals. [...] most titles experience one or more revivals related to the issuing of new (mostly paperback) editions.” (Grøn, samme kilde)

“Escarpit introduced the terms fast-sellers, steady sellers, and bestsellers. Fast-sellers are books that very quickly reach high sales, but that sell for only a short period of time, are soon forgotten, and go out of print. Steady sellers, on the other hand, never achieve high sales, and will therefore never end up in any bestseller list, but they sell in medium quantities over a long period of time. In publishing terms, these books will be regarded as bestsellers, but in the eyes of the public they will rarely be visible. [...] a bestseller in Escarpit’s terminology is a title that will combine both of the above. It will start out as a fast-seller but end up a steady seller. The combination of spectacular sales and sales over a long period of time gives a bestseller an impact on the market, on culture, and on reading that cannot be compared with any other kind of book. Escarpit’s terms are useful, but they do not conform to the usage in the book industry, where a bestseller is often, as John

Sutherland puts it, ‘a fast-selling book which never achieves the respectable middle-age of steady demand’.” (Helgason, Kärrholm og Steiner 2014 s. 9-10)



Den amerikanske politikerens Sarah Palins memoarer *Going Rogue: An American Life* (2009) “sold a record-breaking 500,000 copies in a single week, but the sale numbers dropped steadily afterwards” (Burcu Yucesoy m.fl. i <https://epjdata-science.springeropen.com/articles/10.1140/epjds/s13688-018-0135-y>; lesedato 02.08.19).

“[F]iction authors commonly write novels in serialized form and once a series builds up an audience, the subsequent books in the series also receive substantial attention. [...] When readers enjoy a series, subsequent books will have a higher potential of success. Interestingly, nonfiction authors writing in a serialized fashion focusing on a theme enjoy similar repeat success. As readers prefer the familiar over unknown, having some sense of what to expect drives more people towards a book or a series. This insight is consistent with the observation that people enjoy reading about celebrities or historic figures and events with whom they already have some degree of familiarity.” (Burcu Yucesoy m.fl. i <https://epjdata-science.springeropen.com/articles/10.1140/epjds/s13688-018-0135-y>; lesedato 02.08.19).

“[M]any readers [are] looking for long narratives that promise a continued story.” (Ann Steiner i Helgason, Kärrholm og Steiner 2014 s. 45) Serier kan bli lange, særlig hvis første bok selger godt, neste selger godt osv. “A second common feature of bestselling fiction is a general trend towards serialization. [...] Many times, publishers also use a book to promote its sequel. In the paratexts this can be done through advertisements or by publishing a first chapter from the next novel in the series at the end of the book. Another way to use book series is to use audience

feedback and reader engagement in developing the story.” (Ann Steiner i Helgason, Kärrholm og Steiner 2014 s. 48-49)

Noen forlag satser sterkt på at bestemte bøker skal bli internasjonale bestselgere, uten alltid å lykkes. En selvbiografi av den amerikanske presidenten Bill Clinton solgte dårlig i Tyskland, og det samme gjaldt en bok av Monica Lewinsky (som hadde hatt et seksuelt forhold til Clinton) (Schütz 2010 s. 51). Det er vanskelig å beregne hvilke bøker som blir de største bestselgerne. Det viktigste er at lesere liker og anbefaler boka til sine venner og kjente, som deretter anbefaler boka videre, osv. (“munnpropaganda”; Schütz 2010 s. 51). Store medie- og reklamekampanjer er kostbare for forlagene, og de har ikke alltid en stor virkning på salget. Bøker med “bestselger-potensial” kan bli kommersielle fiaskoer.

Charles Dickens ga ut romanen *Our Mutual Friend* i 1864-65. “Posters advertising *Our Mutual Friend*, Dickens’s own last complete work, were now on omnibuses and even steamboats; posters on the major outlets of W. H. Smith; posters at railway stations and bills wrapped around gas-lamps.” (Ackroyd 1991 s. 999-1000) Dickens hadde blitt en “merkevare”, så svært mange kjente hans tidligere bøker og var interessert i hans nyeste roman.

“Det vil ikke kunne eksistere noen form for idealisme eller pluralisme i et forlag hvis ikke regnskapstellene er sorte og ikke røde. Forlagene jager og jakter etter morgendagens litterære superstjerner. All historie viser at den kan være hvor som helst, og dukke opp når du minst aner det. Ingen fasit og ingen fast oppskrift.” (Kristian Strøm-Fladstad i *Bok og bibliotek* nr. 4 i 2015 s. 72) At en bok blir en bestselger kan altså komme uventet på forlaget og andre markedsaktører.

En tendens på det internasjonale bokmarkedet på 2000-tallet har vært et “agent-drevet auksjonssystem” med bud-runder om bestselgere (Tore Slaatta i *Morgenbladet* 21.-27. oktober 2016 s. 44). Disse “bestselgerne” er ikke alltid publisert før de erklæres som bestselgere. De er ofte bare planlagte eller forventede bestselgere, ut fra erfaringer med hva som selger i store opplag. Noen ganger er det kjendislitteratur, eventuelt skrevet av skyggeskrivere (ghostwritere).

“I Emma Clines roman *Jentene* [på norsk 2017] blir hverdagsbekymringene til en tenåringsjente mer vesentlige enn den voldelige kultlederen Charles Manson. [...] Clines forsøk ble å ta tak i en av de mest omtalte og mytologiserte hendelsene i amerikansk etterkrigshistorie – drapstoktet som kulten rundt Charles Manson satte ut på sommeren 1969 – og forsøkte det litterære blikket fra Manson til de unge, anonyme jentene som utgjorde kulten rundt ham. Hvem var de? Hva fant de i Manson? Hva fant de i hverandre? Clines forsøk, romanen *Jentene*, må kunne kalles en suksess. Den utløste budkrig i millionklassen mellom de største, amerikanske forlagene, rettighetssalg til 35 land, lanseringsturneer til nær og fjernt – denne uken var det Norge.” (*Morgenbladet* 28. april–4. mars 2017 s. 48)

“Amerikanske Emma Clines debutroman, *Jentene*, ble berømt nærmest før den ble utgitt. Debutantens manus avstedkom en budkrig som endte i et forskudd på to millioner dollar og en kontrakt på tre bøker, samt filmrettigheter. Da må det vel være snakk om en usedvanlig begavet forfatter? Tja, det er ikke helt slik bokbransjen fungerer, særlig ikke den amerikanske, kan det være fristende å innvende. *Jentene* er utvilsomt en uvanlig bok, skrevet av en ung forfatter (Cline er født i 1989) med en misunnelsesverdig språkbeherskelse. Også norske forlag ville ha slåss om en slik debutant. Men bakgrunnen for viraken ligger nok også i det faktum at *Jentene* fiksjonaliserer en av Amerikas mest populariserte kriminalhistorier, nemlig mordene som ble utført av Charles Mansons såkalte familie i California på slutten av 1960-tallet.” (Carina E. Beddari i *Morgenbladet* 10.–16. mars 2017 s. 54) “With her debut novel, “The Girls,” spending 12 weeks on the New York Times bestseller list, Cline has received plenty of attention – and cash. She reportedly got a \$2 million advance for a three-book series that includes this book, which tells the story of a cult focused on the followers, not the leader.” (<https://www.forbes.com/profile/emma-cline/#7e5d6db668c2>; lesedato 06.11.18)

Den danske forskeren Rasmus Grøn påpeker at “the bestseller is perceived as closely attached to its momentary context, and its popularity explained by its resonance with social themes and aesthetic conventions in contemporary society (Handesten, 2010; Bloom, 2002; Sutherland, 1981). This contextualising of the bestseller leads to an assertion about the *volatile* nature of the bestseller: Bestsellers live on the momentary lust for novelty rather than the long-standing curiosity. They sell quickly – and quickly stop selling because they fail to outlive their own opportunistic excitations. These conceptions of the ‘bestseller’ term thus display an intermixture of quantitative and value-laden criteria, which largely adds to the ambiguity of the concept.” ([http://www.akademiskkvarter.hum.aau.dk/pdf/vol7/1a\\_RasmusGroen\\_TheBestsellerist.pdf](http://www.akademiskkvarter.hum.aau.dk/pdf/vol7/1a_RasmusGroen_TheBestsellerist.pdf); lesedato 30.05.18)

Bestselgerlister som er etablert av aviser, tidsskrifter eller bokhandlerkjeder, bidrar ofte sterkt til økt salg av bestselgertitlene (Schütz 2010 s. 48). Det at mange potensielle leserer får vite hvilke bøker som selger best, gir en forsterkende effekt. Det er også en faktor at en bok det snakkes mye om og som mange har kjøpt (og lest), gir samtalestoff: Det kan virke sosialt ekskluderende ikke å ha kjennskap til boka, og helst ha lest den (Schütz 2010 s. 48).

“The question is – how many people decided to read *Harry Potter* or *The Da Vinci Code* because they wanted to know what all the fuss was about or to be in the loop?” (Michael Wright Johnson i <https://www.ojcmt.net/download/bestsellers-beyond-bestsellers-the-success-of-a-good-story.pdf>; lesedato 29.06.23)

“Bestselger-lister er spesielt viktig for dem som ikke leser. Man vet på grunn av listene alltid hva man burde ha lest. Dermed kan man med stor sikkerhet kjøpe og gi som gave den aktuelle boka. Kort sagt: Bestselgere avlaster dømmekraften.

Forfatterstjerner sparer leseren for å ha egne meninger om verket.” (Schütz 2010 s. 144-145)

“Finding a good book to read is part of the challenge of becoming a successful reader. Bestseller lists offer shortcuts, and many readers take advantage of the power to select from a radically smaller pool of possibilities. [...] There are too many books published for any reader even to imagine, as illustrated by one recent example from one country, the United States: in 2011, somewhere between 325,000 and 350,000 books were published there (Price, 2012, n.pag.). The number of self-published books is rising exponentially (from 235,000 titles reported by Bowker in 2011 to 391,000 in 2012, for example [...] the bestseller list becomes a very helpful selection tool. [...] what Valerie Bang-Jensen calls the “social contagion” (2010, 169) of other readers’ choices is a potent reading energizer in itself. These are the books that other people will be talking about. A choice that was simply impossible to make suddenly becomes very manageable indeed.” (Margaret Mackey i <https://journals.aau.dk/index.php/ak/article/view/2832/2343>; lesedato 13.10.22)

“Svenska Dagbladet går nye veier og lager bestselgerliste basert på en kombinasjon av anmeldelser og salg. [...] Det som kritikerlistene ikke fanger opp, men som bestselgerlistene derimot gjør, er hvilke spørsmål, forfattere og temaer leserne er mest interesserte i for øyeblikket. Tradisjonelt har disse to listetypene sett ganske ulike ut. Men SvDs liste har ambisjoner om å fange opp bøker som går hjem både hos kritikere og lesere. Bestselgere som ikke har vært likt av anmelderne kommer dermed ikke gjennom nåløyet. [...] Vi vil liste opp de beste bestselgerne og kunne garantere våre lesere at dette er bøker som ikke bare selger bra, men også er godt likt av kyndige bedømmere. [...] I praksis foregår utvalget slik: Kulturredaksjonen tar utgangspunkt i de 100 mestselgende titlene i Sverige hver uke – både faglitteratur og skjønnlitteratur – basert på statistikk fra Bokhandlerforeningen og Forleggerforeningen. For å komme inn på SvDs liste kreves så at en bok har fått overveiende god kritikk i minst to av landets hovedorganer for litteraturkritikk: Svenska Dagbladet, Dagens Nyheter, Aftonbladet, Expressen og Sveriges Radio.” (Moa Kärnstrand i <https://bok365.no/artikkel/sveriges-bestе-bestselgere/>; lesedato 17.08.23)

“Resultatet av den breddningen av titelutbudet har blivit vad man kanske kan kalla en decentrering av den litterära kulturen, alltså en process där de gemensamma referensramarna blir mindre inom bokens samhälle. En stor del av bokförsäljningen och den litterära uppmärksamheten fokuseras kring ett fåtal bästsäljare – det är processer som Hans Hertel har undersökt och sammanfattat med orden *koncentration* och *polarisering*. Men utanför denna värld av säljrekord och megabucks är produktionen av böcker större än någonsin.” (Svedjedal 1998 s. 55-56).

“[B]estselgere selger massevis, og jeg tenker at det er bra, at det holder romanformen levende som en del av kulturen. Så lenge den er det, vil det komme seriøse romanforfattere også, og noen av dem vil gjøre viktige ting, uavhengig av salgstall.” (den amerikanske forfatteren Don DeLillo i *Morgenbladet* 2.–8. desember 2016 s. 48)

“[B]estselling books do not simply remain as books. They are adapted into movies. They provide the base plot of game worlds. They feed fan fiction. They supply fodder for countless articles, interviews, reviews, commentaries, and critiques, on paper, online, on television and radio. [...] You start with the original and keep moving through different layers of adaptation, stopping when you feel you are getting too far away from the pure gold of the first text in the sequence.” (Margaret Mackey i <https://journals.aau.dk/index.php/ak/article/view/2832/2343>; lesedato 13.10.22)

James Bond-historiene, med bøker og filmer, har blitt sammenlignet med en pandemi (Neuhaus og Holzner 2007 s. 433).

Det har hendt at svært litterært ambisiøse og komplekse romaner har blitt bestselgere. Et eksempel er den tyske forfatteren Uwe Tellkamps *Tårnet* (2008), som i løpet av de tre første årene ble solgt i nesten én million eksemplarer (Dörner og Vogt 2013 s. 162). Boka handler om ulike miljøer i DDR (det sosialistiske Øst-Tyskland). Den italienske forfatteren Elena Ferrante Napoli-romankvartett (2011–14) “har vært noe så sjeldent som en kritikersuksess og bestselger. Bøkene har toppet både bestselgerlistene og favoritlistene kritikerne skriver når de oppsummerer bokåret.” (*Dagbladet* 8. oktober 2016 s. 52)

En roman eller annen skjønnlitterær bok som blir mye lest i skolen, kan bli en bestselger uten at elevene selv av egen lyst velger å lese den (Lylette Lacôte-Gabrysiak i <http://communication.revues.org/3130>; lesedato 02.10.15). Slike bøker er ofte også langselgere, dvs. de selges gjennom en årrekke (dette gjelder særlig klassikere). Noen religiøse tekster er langselgere, men kan også være bestselgere: “Bibel-selskapet selger alene mer enn 90 000 bibler og nytestamenter hvert år.” (*Amagasinet* 16. september 2011 s. 32) “2011-bibelen hadde ved utgangen av 2012 solgt 157 000 eksemplarer, og toppet salgslistene. Den foregående bibelutgaven solgte to millioner, og i et “normalår” selges det 60 000 bibler i Norge.” (*Morgenbladet* 27. mars – 2. april 2015 s. 65)

Daniel Defoes *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) er et eksempel på “tidiga båstsäljare. Att verket kvalificerar för benämningen visas av att den gick ut i fem engelska upplagor under sitt första år och att man fram till 1895 i Storbritannien hade publicerat 200 ordinarie upplagor, 150 reviderade eller adapterade upplagor, och 277 imitationer. Under samma tid publicerades 115 översättningar i andra länder i ett okänt antal upplagor.” (Dag Hedman i <https://uu.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:913216/FULLTEXT01.pdf>; lesedato 16.08.18)

Robert Darntons bok *The Forbidden Bestsellers of Pre-Revolutionary France* (1995) "traces the merging of philosophical, sexual, and anti-monarchical interests into the pulp fiction of the 1780s, banned books that make fascinating reading more than two centuries later. French literature of the eighteenth century means to us today Rousseau and Voltaire and the "classic" texts that, we imagine, gave rise to the Revolution. Yet very few of the standard works of the Enlightenment were as widely read as books whose names we have never heard, books that were the currency of a huge literary underground during the reign of Louis XVI." (<http://books.wwnorton.com/books/978-0-393-31442-7/>; lesedato 06.05.15)

Jean-Jacques Rousseaus brevroman *Julie, eller Den nye Héloïse* (1761) ble en sensasjon og bestselger. "The sentiment overwhelmed Rousseau's readers in the eighteenth century – thousands of them [...] *La Nouvelle Héloïse* was perhaps the biggest best-seller of the century. The demand for copies outran the supply so badly that booksellers rented it out by the day and even by the hour, charging twelve sous for sixty minutes with one volume, according to L.-S. Mercier. At least seventy editions were published before 1800 – probably more than for any other novel in the previous history of publishing. [...] ordinary readers from all ranks of society were swept off their feet. They wept, they suffocated, they raved, they looked deep into their lives and resolved to live better, then they poured their hearts out in more tears" (Darnton 2009 s. 242-243).

Den britiske dikteren lord Byrons versefortelling *The Corsair* (1814) ble solgt i 10.000 eksemplarer på den første dagen verket var til salgs (Escarpit 1965 s. 23). Den amerikanske forfatteren Susan Warners roman *The Wide, Wide World* (1850) ble en bestselger. "The larger public voted with their pocketbooks [dvs. lommebøker] and turned *The Wide, Wide World* into a runaway bestseller. In fact, at the time of its publication, its sales were unprecedented (though they would be topped by *Uncle Tom's Cabin* just a couple of years later): in less than a year, Warner's novel sold more than 40,000 copies, and that figure would grow to over 225,000 copies by the end of the decade." (Jennifer L. Brady i <http://www.common-place.org/vol-12/no-01;brady/>; lesedato 21.06.13) Da den amerikanske forfatteren Harriet Beecher Stowes roman *Uncle Tom's Cabin: Or, Life Among the Lowly* (1852) kom på det engelske markedet i 1852, ble det solgt 150.000 eksemplarer det første halvåret (Ortoleva 1995 s. 53).

Når en ny roman av den franske 1800-tallsforfatteren Paul de Kock ble lansert, var det enorm pågang hos de parisiske bokhandlerne av lesere som ville få tak i et eksemplar. Byens leiebiblioteker kjøpte opptil ti eksemplarer av hver av hans bøker, og annonserte med plakater i sine vinduer når et nytt verk var til låns (Olivier-Martin 1980 s. 48). pave Gregor XVI var en ivrig leser av Kocks bøker, og under hans paveordmme kunne, innen romansjangeren, kun Kocks romaner leses i Vatikanet (Olivier-Martin 1980 s. 51).

Den franske dikteren Victor Hugos roman *De elendige* (1862) ble først trykt i 7000 eksemplarer, men disse ble utsolgt i løpet av én dag. Bokhandelen til forleggeren Pagnerre ble overfylt av kjøpere på utgivelsesdagen (Gély 1975 s. 19). Fram til slutten av året 1951 hadde det blitt solgt ca. fem millioner eksemplarer av *De elendige* i kinesisk oversettelse i Kina, og den franske forfatteren André Malraux har fortalt at han så denne romanen “overalt” i India, Afrika og Latin-Amerika (Gély 1975 s. 23). Boka har vært både en bestselger og en langselger.

Den tyske 1800-tallsforfatteren Karl May var en bestselger i Tyskland både i sin samtid og på 1900-tallet. Hans romaner har blitt solgt i ca. 100 millioner eksemplarer, og May er dermed en av de aller mest leste forfatterne gjennom tidene (Bohnsack og Foltin 1999 s. 143). Blant de personene som har sagt at de med glede har lest Mays bøker, er berømtheter som Albert Einstein, Albert Schweitzer, Adolf Hitler, Hermann Hesse, Karl Liebknecht og Arno Schmidt. Hitler var en nesten fanatisk May-beundrer, og den tyske emigrantforfatteren Klaus Mann uttalte i 1940: “The Third Reich is Karl May’s ultimate triumph, the ghastly realization of his dreams” (sitert fra Bohnsack og Foltin 1999 s. 159).

Den tyske forfatteren Gustav Freytags roman *Debet og kredit* (1855; tysk tittel *Soll und Haben*) ble fram til 1860 solgt i 22.000 eksemplarer, og fram til 1914 i 300.000 eksemplarer. Først på 1900-tallet begynte romanens egentlige suksesshistorie, med en stor økning i salget etter 1907. Dette har blitt forklart med den mentaliteten som preger hovedpersonene i boka, og senere med fascismens framvekst i Tyskland (Günter 2008 s. 173). I paret Sabine og Anton i romanen er mange motsetninger kombinert: huslighet og fremmedhat, arbeidsglede og asketisk holdning, gemyttlighet og hardhet, sedelighet og følelsesløshet, pliktoppfyllelse og bornerthet. Også etter 2. verdenskrig solgte romanen godt, med over 400.000 eksemplarer i perioden 1950-65 (Günter 2008 s. 173).

Tyskeren Artur Dinter var en ekstrem antisemitt. Hans roman *Synden mot blodet* (1917) ble en bestselger i Tyskland, med over 260.000 solgte eksemplarer fram til 1934. Romanen framstiller seksuelle forhold mellom jøder og ikke-jøder som biologisk skadelig.

Den franske barneboka *To barns reise rundt i Frankrike* (1877), skrevet av psevdonymet G. Bruno, ble fram til 1902 solgt i åtte millioner eksemplarer. Den italienske forfatteren Edmondo De Amicis ga i 1886 ut ungdomsromanen *Hjerte*, som handler om Giuseppe Garibaldi og andres kamp for å forene Italia noen tiår tidligere. Boka ble en enorm suksess i hjemlandet, og ble oversatt til flere andre språk. Seks italienske utgaver kom i løpet av få måneder. I Italia ble det solgt én million eksemplarer fram til 1924 og ytterligere to millioner fram til 1960 (Quinsat 1990 s. 300). Edouard Drumonts *Det jødiske Frankrike* (1886) ble trykt i to hundre utgaver (Six 1975 s. 278). En av de største bestselgerne rundt århundre-skiftet 1900 var den historiske romanen *Ben Hur* (1880) av den amerikanske forfatteren Lewis Wallace. Den ble solgt i over en million eksemplarer bare i USA (Ortoleva 1995 s.

55). Kun Bibelen ble på 1800-tallet trykt i høyere opplag enn *Ben-Hur* (Liptay og Bauer 2013 s. 158). “The exciting story of Lew Wallace’s *Ben-Hur* was not only read by millions of Americans, but sections of it became staples in Sunday school classes across the country” (Towheed, Crone og Halsey 2011 s. 396).

*Ben-Hur* ble distribuert av postordrefirmaet Sears & Roebuck. Kundene kunne velge varer, blant annet bøker, fra en stor katalog (Ortoleva 1995 s. 55).

James Russell “argues that the appeal of *Ben-Hur* (and its filmic adaptations) rested in its mix of “sensation and spirituality,” thrill and conversion narrative, lavish physical descriptions and hazy epiphanic encounters with Jesus, which enthralled “a sizable demographic of committed Christians who had previously avoided the ‘frivolous’ pleasures of novel reading” (MR 158). [...] perhaps the immense appeal of the tale is not so much the message about being meek as Christians and giving up the chance for violent action, but, instead, the capacity of the hero to engage in precisely that kind of violent action and gain the advantageous position of the winner, the stronger man who can then choose to be merciful. This mentality best summed as “speak softly and carry a big stick,” captures perfectly America’s image of itself, especially in terms of its international relations, and would explain why readers/viewers consider the chariot race scene as the climax of the novel, not Ben-Hur’s conversion at the foot of the Cross.” (<https://journals.openedition.org/ejas/10162>; lesedato 30.03.24)

Den engelske litteraturkritikeren Q. D. Leavis skrev i boka *Fiction and the Reading Public* (1932) at på slutten av 1800-tallet “the term ‘bestseller’ became a derogatory epithet among the cultivated readers.” (Matthews og Moody 2007 s. 84)

Det falske dokumentet “Sion vises protokoller” ble kjent i Russland i 1903, og ble antakelig skrevet av en antisemitt samme år. Det “avsløres” i dokumentet at jødene har en forrædersk og morderisk plan om å drepe ikke-jøder og erobre hele verden. I 1920 ble det publisert en tysk oversettelse som raskt ble solgt i 100.000 eksemplarer.

Ellen Turners artikkkel “The Sheik Returns: Imitations and Parodies of the Desert Romance” (2014) “handlar om den rika flora av följdskrifter som uppstått till brittiska författarinnan E.M. Hulls succéroman *The Sheik* (1919), filmad 1921 med Rudolf Valentino i titelrollen, och den symbios som dessa verk lever i. I en tankeväckande växelverkan har en del av följdskrifterna också blivit bässtsäljare, medan de genom sin blotta existens aktualisrat Hulls original. [...] det kontroversiella motivet “sexuellt våld mot en kvinna som erotisk njutning” i Hulls ökenroman. Att konceptet fungerat omvittnas av det faktum att *The Sheik* enbart i Storbritannien under sina första fem år på bokmarknaden trycktes i 108 upplagor och fortfarande finns i bokhandeln. [...] Sålunda har särskilt många romantiska ökenromaner utkommit efter Kuwaitkriget 1990-91 och terrorattackerna mot New York och Pentagon 2001. Ett av många tecken på samtidens ambivalens inför Hulls

våldtäktsromantik är det faktum att det feministiska förlaget Virago 1996 gav ut *The Sheik* med ett entusiastiskt förord, där romanen hyllades som en erotisk klassiker.” (Dag Hedman i <https://uu.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:913216/FULLTEXT01.pdf>; lesedato 16.08.18)

Den østerrikske musikeren og forfatteren Vicki Baums *Mennesker på hotell: En kolportasjeroman med bakrunner* (1930) traff en nerve i Tyskland på 1920-tallet, og Baum ble en “opplagsdronning” i Weimarrepublikken. Menneskene på et luksushotell i Berlin er delvis lykkejegere og delvis suicidale. Baum var en av de første kvinnelige tyske forfatterne som bevisst bygde opp sitt forfatterimage gjennom fotosesjoner, hjemme-hos-intervjuer, motebevisst frisyre og ekstravagante klær. Hennes “reklamekampanjer” for seg selv ga inntrykk av eleganse og glamour (<https://www.dw.com/de/vicki-baum-menschen-im-hotel/a-43151155>; lesedato 08.04.20). For å få stoff til å skrive *Mennesker på hotell*, tok hun jobb på et hotell i Berlin. I romanen plasserer hun på samme hotell en nevrotisk danserinne som har sine beste år bak seg, en baron i pengenød som stjeler, en dødssyk bokholder og en forelsket sekretær. Hotellet skulle fungere som et speilbilde av samfunnet. Romanen ble filmatisert i Hollywood med tittelen *Grand Hotel* (1932; regissert av Edmund Goulding), ble en stor suksess og fikk i 1932 en Oscar for beste film. Greta Garbo og Joan Crawford spilte hovedroller. Berømmelsen fikk Baum til å flytte til USA i 1932, som var heldig for den tysk-jødiske kvinnan. I det nazistiske Tyskland ble hennes bøker brent og hånet som “overfladiske, amoralske sensasjonsromaner” (<https://www.dw.com/de/vicki-baum-menschen-im-hotel/a-43151155>; lesedato 08.04.20).

“Hitler dikterte første bind [av *Min kamp*] i 1924 til vennen Rudolf Hess mens begge satt i fengsel etter det mislykkede ølkjellerkuppet året før. Andre bind ble skrevet rett etter løslatelsen rundt nyttår 1925. I 1930 ble *Min Kamp* samlet i ett bind, i et format som helt bevisst var det samme som den tyske folkeutgaven av Bibelen. Opplaget skjøt i været, og etter maktovertagelsen i 1933 fikk alle som giftet seg borgerlig, *Min Kamp* i bryllupsgave fra den tyske stat. Mot slutten av krigen var det samlede opplaget kommet opp i over ti millioner eksemplarer.” (Aftenposten 27. april 2012 s. 3)

Tyskeren Heinz Werner Höber har blitt kalt den mest ukjente bestselgerforfatteren i verden. Han skrev i løpet av 20 år hele 522 bøker i krimserien *Jerry Cotton*. Den belgiske krimforfatteren Georges Simenons 400 romaner er solgt i over 700 millioner eksemplarer (Reuter 1997 s. 24). Margit Sandemo var på begynnelsen av 2000-tallet Europas mest solgte forfatter. Hennes *Sagaen om Isfolket* (1982-1989) hadde da solgt i ca. 25 millioner eksemplarer i Skandinavia og Øst-Europa.

Den tyske forfatteren Johannes Mario Simmel ga ut tallrike romaner mellom 1960 og 1999 som til sammen ble solgt i mer enn 73 millioner eksemplarer (Dörner og Vogt 2013 s. 255). Litteraturkritikerne oppfattet han lenge som “triviell”, men anerkjente han stadig mer som en seriøs forfatter (Dörner og Vogt 2013 s. 163).

Hans bok *Ingen er en øy* (1976) ledet til en heftig politisk diskusjon, og dessuten til konkrete forbedringer av den medisinske behandlingen av funksjonshemmerte barn i en institusjon i Düsseldorf (Dörner og Vogt 2013 s. 257).

Den britiske fysikeren Stephen Hawkins ga i 1988 ut *A Brief History of Time*, som i 2009 hadde solgt over ni millioner eksemplarer.

Amerikaneren Alex Haleys roman *Roots: The Saga of an American Family* ble utgitt i 1976 og gjorde året etter “a rare double, winning a Pulitzer prize and a National book award [...] as Frances Smith Foster has pointed out, “in terms of actual audience and effect on politics and policies, *Roots* has been the most influential such story in the modern era”. Beyond the literary realm, Haley’s books are credited with not only introducing millions to black history but also inspiring the genealogy boom – *Who Do You Think You Are?* and similar series are directly descended from Haley’s research on his family tree. His work continues to resonate in popular culture” (<https://www.theguardian.com/books/booksblog/2017/feb/09/alex-haley-roots-reputation-authenticity>; lesedato 08.10.19).

En av de mest suksessrike tyske bøkene i det 20. århundre er Patrick Süskinds roman *Parfymen* (1985) (Joch, Mix m.fl. 2009 s. 234).

Tyskeren Daniel Kehlmann ble bestselgerforfatter med romanen *Oppmålingen av verden* (2005; på norsk 2008). Han sa deretter ja til en rekke intervjuer i aviser og tidsskrifter, og ble erklaert som “litterær superstjerne” (Joch, Mix m.fl. 2009 s. 233). Boka holdt seg oppe på de tyske bestselgerlistene gjennom halvannet år. Den kom i 36 opplag i løpet av 16 måneder og solgte over en million eksemplarer.

“Jacqueline Susann was one of the most successful writers in the history of American publishing. Her first novel, *Valley of the Dolls*, published in 1966, is one of the best-selling books of all time. When *The Love Machine* was published in 1969, it too became an immediate #1 bestseller and held that position for five months. When *Once is Not Enough* was published in 1973, it also moved to the top of the best-seller list and established Jackie as the first novelist in history to have three consecutive #1 books on The New York Times Best Seller list. She was a superstar, and became America’s first brand-name author.” ([http://www.goodreads.com/author/show/22485.Jacqueline\\_Susann](http://www.goodreads.com/author/show/22485.Jacqueline_Susann); lesedato 12.01.16)

“[W]hile over 3 million books are published each year, very few are read widely and less than 500 make it to the New York Times bestseller lists. [...] of the 2.7 billion books sold in 2015, 1.7 billion were printed books (577 million hardcover, 1.18 billion trade or mass market paperback) [...] the average American reads 12 to 13 books per year, and how people select the reading has been of much interest for researchers for decades. Consequently, book publishing is a huge industry in the U.S., with a revenue that is projected to reach nearly 44 billion U.S. dollars in 2020. In 2015, about 2.7 billion books were sold, a number that has remained fairly

consistent in the last few years. Of the over 3 million books in print in the U.S. every year, more than a hundred thousand are new titles. Yet, only a tiny fraction attract considerable readership. For example, less than 500 books make it to the New York Times bestseller lists and only a handful of authors stay on the list for ten or more weeks. These near impossible odds reflect the challenges of capturing an audience in today's highly competitive world." (Burcu Yucesoy m.fl. i <https://epjdatascience.springeropen.com/articles/10.1140/epjds/s13688-018-0135-y>; lesedato 02.08.19)

"The longest presence [på The New York Times bestseller list] during our observation period is *The Help*, the 2009 book by Kathryn Stockett, which has been featured on the bestseller list for 131 subsequent weeks. Its continuous presence was helped by a movie adaptation nominated for the Academy Award in 2011." (Burcu Yucesoy m.fl. i <https://epjdatascience.springeropen.com/articles/10.1140/epjds/s13688-018-0135-y>; lesedato 02.08.19) Romanen handler om tre afro-amerikanske kvinder i Jackson i Mississippi på 1960-tallet, og hvordan afrikanske kvinder hadde det når de jobbet i "hvite" hjem.

"These exceptionally late peaks [på en av bestselgerlistene] are typically triggered by exogenous events such as winning awards, being adapted for a movie or in rare cases, having a prominent public figure's endorsement. [...] *The Help* [...] by Kathryn Stockett on the other hand was a 'sleeper hit' which gradually increased in sales until a movie adaptation was announced. The announcement, coinciding with the holiday shopping season, propelled the book's sales to more than 60,000 a week. Another peak in sales happened when the first pictures of the movie's cast appeared and the following holiday shopping season was also beneficial for the book. [...] These exogenous events aside, the data indicates that the first few weeks of a book are crucial: This is when the books capture the interest of their readership. Also this is the time when publishers will invest in a book's advertising and the most likely period for a book to be featured in the front of book stores and considered for reviews in various media." (Burcu Yucesoy m.fl. i <https://epjdatascience.springeropen.com/articles/10.1140/epjds/s13688-018-0135-y>; lesedato 02.08.19)

"According to a 2015 survey, mystery, thriller and crime are the preferred book genres in the U.S., nearly half of Americans reading in these genres. About 33% of the surveyed readers chose history as their favorite genre, while 31% preferring biographies and memoirs. [...] Among nonfiction books, almost half of the 2025 bestsellers are from the Biography/Memoir category, consisting of books written by or about famous individuals, from politicians to artists or business personalities. Their dominance on the nonfiction market demonstrates a continuous interest in the life stories of well known individuals. [...] In the nonfiction category, 24% of books stayed only for one week on the list and 18 books lasted for more than a year. The most remarkable was *Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience, and Redemption* by Laura Hillenbrand which remained on the list for a

record 203 weeks. Other examples of long-lasting success are *Outliers* by Malcolm Gladwell (125 weeks) and *Killing Lincoln* by Bill O'Reilly (96 weeks). In popular science category, *The Grand Design* by Stephen Hawking and Leonard Mlodinow stayed longest (23 weeks) on the NYTBL [New York Times bestseller lists].” (Burcu Yucesoy m.fl. i <https://epjdatascience.springeropen.com/articles/10.1140/epjds/s13688-018-0135-y>; lesedato 02.08.19)

“It is sufficient for an author to have written a single book that appeared on the NYTBL for a single week to be labeled a ‘bestselling author’, a label that sticks for life. Yet, not all bestselling authors are alike. There are those with a single high selling book in their career, like Kathryn Stockett (*The Help*), and there are authors with over fifty books with varying sale numbers under their belt, like James Patterson or Stephen King. Additionally, some authors build their readership over time, achieving bestseller status with their later work while others enter the NYTBL with their first book.” (Burcu Yucesoy m.fl. i <https://epjdatascience.springeropen.com/articles/10.1140/epjds/s13688-018-0135-y>; lesedato 02.08.19)

“In nonfiction, Christian evangelist and motivational speaker born with tetra-amelia syndrome (a rare disorder characterized by the absence of arms and legs) Nick Vujicic is one of the more productive authors starting his writing career in 2010 [...]. His first book, *Life Without Limits*, was an international success, being translated into more than 20 languages. Yet, it did not make the NYTBL. His second book, *Unstoppable*, got there two years later, helped by the buzz created by his first book and possibly his motivational speaking engagements.” (Burcu Yucesoy m.fl. i <https://epjdatascience.springeropen.com/articles/10.1140/epjds/s13688-018-0135-y>; lesedato 02.08.19)

“Despite the introduction of 100,000 new titles each year, only a tiny fraction of these attract a large enough readership to make The New York Times best-seller list. [...] I’m a data scientist. Recently, with help of Burcu Yucesoy, a postdoc in my lab, I put the reading habits of Americans under our data microscope. We did so by analyzing the sales patterns of the 2,468 fiction and 2,025 nonfiction titles that made The New York Times best-seller list for hardcovers during the last decade. [...] Memoir and biographies, with almost half of the 2,025 nonfiction best-sellers falling into this category. Then we examined the fiction list. Much of the press focuses on literary fiction – books we see debated by critics, lauded as important and culturally relevant, and eventually taught in schools. But in the past decade, only 800 books categorized as literary fiction made the best-seller list. Most best-sellers – 67 percent of all fiction titles – represent plot-driven genres like mystery or romance or the kind of thrillers that Danielle Steel and Clive Cussler write. Action sells – there’s no surprise there. But it was unexpected the degree to which only a handful of authors repeatedly appear: Eight-five percent of best-selling novelists have landed multiple books on the list. Mystery and thriller novelist James Patterson, for example, had 51 books on the best-seller list in the period we explored. James Patterson has sold over 100 million copies of his books, grossing

more than US\$ 1 billion in sales.” (Albert-László Barabási i <https://theconversation.com/what-big-data-can-tell-us-about-how-a-book-becomes-a-best-seller-106427>; lesedato 19.09.24)

“Publishers eagerly slap “New York Times Bestseller” stickers on each book that appears on the list’s 15 slots. A quarter of those, however, have only a cameo appearance, briefly grabbing a spot at the bottom of the list and dropping out after a single week. Only 37 percent have some staying power and spend more than four weeks on the best-seller list. Even fewer – 8 percent – attain the number one spot. Some rare exceptions can lease out a spot for years: “The Help” by Kathryn Stockett lingered on the fiction list for an astonishing 131 weeks, while Laura Hillenbrand’s “Unbroken” stayed on the nonfiction list for a record 203 weeks. One big misconception is that you have to write a mega-seller to make the list. The majority of titles on The New York Times best-seller list only sell between 10,000 and 100,000 copies in their first year. “The Slippery Year,” a 2009 memoir by Melanie Gideon, made the list with a yearly sale of fewer than 5,000 copies. How is this possible? Our data set shows that just about your only chance of making the list is right after your publication date. That’s because book sales, we discovered, follow a universal sales curve – there’s a single mathematical formula that captures the weekly sales of all books. And that sales curve has a prominent peak right after the release, meaning you sell the most copies during the first weeks after your book’s release. Fiction sales almost always peak within the first two to six weeks; for nonfiction, the peak can come any time during the first 15 weeks. [...] While you might assume that there would be overlooked books that build their audiences slowly and eventually make it onto the hallowed list, there really aren’t. [...] In other words, what happens during a brief window of time can foretell a book’s success. For this reason, the timing of the release matters a great deal, especially since the threshold to reach the list varies throughout the year. In February or March, selling a few thousand copies can land a book on the best-seller list; in December – when sales skyrocket during the holidays – selling 10,000 copies a week might not guarantee a book a spot. [...] At the same time, appearing on The New York Times best-seller list doesn’t necessarily guarantee that a book will sell more copies. Research shows that appearing on the list tends to boost sales only for unknown authors, and the effect disappears after one to three weeks.” (Albert-László Barabási i <https://theconversation.com/what-big-data-can-tell-us-about-how-a-book-becomes-a-best-seller-106427>; lesedato 19.09.24)

Amerikaneren Mickey Spillane “made it onto the [*The New York Times*] list once, with his 1952 novel *Kiss Me, Deadly*. The book’s hardcover sales were meager, barely enough to put it at #11. In paperback, meanwhile, it sold millions. [Erle Stanley] Gardner, on the other hand, never once appears, despite the fact that his novels regularly received first printings of over half a million copies. For comparison, contemporary estimates suggest that 10,000 copies sold in a week is enough to put a book on the lower rungs of the bestseller list. Notably, before 1940, the *Times* occasionally published an alternative bestseller list, drawn from numbers

taken straight from book distributor Baker and Taylor rather than from bookstore sales. Gardner appeared on that list multiple times, probably because distributors also sold books to nontraditional outlets.” (Jordan Pruett i <https://www.publicbooks.org/what-counts-as-a-bestseller/>; lesedato 19.09.24)

“In 1983, William Blatty – author of *The Exorcist* – sued the *New York Times*. His lawsuit alleged that the *Times* had incorrectly excluded his latest novel, *Legion* (a sequel to *The Exorcist*), from its bestseller list – the coveted ranking that purports to show the books that have sold the most copies that week in the United States. According to Blatty’s lawyers, *Legion* had sold enough copies to warrant a spot on the list, so its absence was due to negligence or fraud, for which Blatty was entitled to compensation. *The Times* countered with what might sound like a surprising admission: the bestseller list is not mathematically objective; it is editorial content, which is protected by the First Amendment. The court ruled in favor of the *New York Times*. [...] The fact that this list exclusively tracks hardcover sales at bookstores means it necessarily won’t reflect the popularity of other books: that is, those that sold in large numbers as paperbacks at nontraditional outlets. [...] the comparative absence of mystery and thriller bestsellers before 1980 reflects, in part, the fact that the biggest authors in these genres aren’t even being counted.” (Jordan Pruett i <https://www.publicbooks.org/what-counts-as-a-bestseller/>; lesedato 19.09.24)

I 1978 var den mest solgte boka i USA Hal Lindsays *The Late, Great Planet Earth*, en “nyfortolking” av Johannes’ Åpenbaring i Det nye testamente (Mullen 2013 s. 184). Det er en kristen, profetisk bok som kom med en rekke spådommer basert på tolknninger av Bibelen, f.eks. spådde Lindsay at Sovjetunionen kom til å invadere Israel.

“We can still find deep puritan values in the late seventies, as in Scott Peck’s *The Road Less Traveled* (1978), which describes a world where “original sin does exist; it is our laziness” (Peck 1978: 15), a world where goodness comes from self-discipline, hard work, delayed gratification and honesty. Its phenomenal popularity and its Christian themes made it a bestseller, especially among the Bible Belt readers.” (Effing 2009)

Mange bestselgerbøker inngår i serier, men nesten alle bøkene av amerikaneren Stephen King har blitt bestselgere uten at de samme personene opptrer på nytt i tekstene (<http://communication.revues.org/3130>; lesedato 02.10.15). King har hatt svært mange bestselgere: 40 av hans romaner (ofte skrekkromaner) hadde i 2010 solgt i til sammen ca. 350 millioner eksemplarer.

“Den brasilianske forfatteren Paulo Coelho [...] er populær over hele verden. På bokmessen i Frankfurt ble han i denne uken feiret med stor fest. Forfatteren som fikk sitt gjennombrudd med *Alkymisten* (1988), har nemlig solgt så mye som 100 millioner bøker verden over. [...] Coelho som er bosatt i Frankrike, ble feiret med

feiende brasiliansk musikk, mat, drikke og notering i Guinness rekordbok.”  
(Aftenposten 17. oktober 2008 s. 8)

“Simon & Schuster offered Houston televangelist Joel Osteen \$10 million in 2006 for the right to publish his 2007 book, *Become a Better You*. The reason? His book *Your Best Life Now: 7 Steps to Living at Your Potential*, published by small publisher Faithwords, had sold millions of copies since its release in 2004.

Probably at least as important was that its audience bought audiobooks, calendars, and other spinoffs that seemed to suggest the pastor’s writing career has legs. He also has television and radio gigs that continually keep him in the eye of the people who would buy his books. When such large deals are signed, observers inevitably ask if they are worth the money. Sometimes they loudly conclude they aren’t.

Consider the case of *Thirteen Moons*, the second novel by Charles Frazier.

Frazier’s previous (and first) novel was *Cold Mountain*, which the relatively small Atlantic Monthly Press published. As a result of the huge success of that book, Random House grabbed him from Atlantic Monthly by offering Frazier an \$8 million advance for *Thirteen Moons*. *Publishers Weekly* called it the highest amount ever paid for a single novel and questioned the logic of the publisher’s action. The magazine’s reasoning went this way: “Random ordered a 500,000-copy first printing. As of January 22, Nielsen BookScan reported 225,000 copies sold, though Random House says total sales are closer to 300,000 copies. For most books, that would be impressive. But *PW* calculates that, based on standard publishing formulas, Random needs to sell about a million hardcovers and two million paperbacks to earn out its advance.” That, *PW* suggested, was unlikely. [...] *Publishers Weekly* lists standard reasons that books with hopes for great sales ended in disappointment: “one too many sequels, a book where a magazine article would do, a celebrity whose day has come and gone.” When a string of similar books sells strongly at the outset but ends with disappointing sales, acquisitions editors generalize about what people appear not to want to buy anymore, at least for a while. It also works the other way. When one or two books on a topic take off, editors begin to think a trend is at work and they look for books that relate to the same or similar topics. The large number of Sudoku puzzle books pouring into stores is one example. Another, perhaps stranger and more tentative example, is a seeming mini-trend of books that try to promote atheism. *Publishers Weekly* pointed out in 2007 that at the same time that religious books were selling well, three titles against religion had also been garnering large numbers of readers: Christopher Hitchens’ *God Is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything* (published by Twelve), Richard Dawkins’ *The God Delusion* (Houghton Mifflin) and Sam Harris’ *Letter to a Christian Nation* (Knopf).” (Turow 2009 s. 287-289)

Den britiske forfatteren Jackie Collins “har spesialisert seg på å skrive om det glamorøse livet i Hollywood, og har solgt over 400 millioner bøker i 40 land.” (A-magasinet 10. september 2010 s. 22)

“Vi vet at lyrikk selger fint lite, men salgstallene og utlånstall på medianromanen under innkjøpsordningen ville overraske de fleste. De er svært lave. Den langsiktige trenden i norsk litteratur er at krim erobrer salgsstatistikken. Dagens ordninger sikrer at bøkene er tilgjengelige, men klarer ikke å sikre at de nødvendigvis blir solgt. Lesernes litterære kosthold er langt mindre variert enn utbudet kan gi inntrykk av.” (*Dagbladet* 6. februar 2013 s. 3)

“För svensk del syns tydligt genomslaget av “det svenska deckar-undret”. Forskargruppen har poängsatt författare efter deras placeringar på bästsäljarlistor inom åtta europeiska bokmarknader 2008-2010 (Frankrike, Italien, Nederländerna, Spanien, Storbritannien, Sverige, Tyskland, Österrike). Bland de tjugo högst placerade författarna finns Stieg Larsson (plats 1), Henning Mankell (10) och Camilla Läckberg (14). Av de högst placerade författarna var åtta engelskspråkiga, men genomslaget för de tre svenska toppförfattarna gjorde svenska till det näst viktigaste originalspråket i de undersökta länderna. Forskargruppen har arbetat med ett poängsystem som omräknas till *impact points*, beräknade för varje författare efter antal veckor på bästsäljarlistan och placering där.” (Svedjedal 2012)

“Markedskonformitet” (Neuhaus 2009 s. 280) innebärer bl.a. liten utgivelsesbredde og at få titler profileres av forlag og bokhandlere. Såkalt “kryssubsidiering” innebärer at forlagenes inntekter fra bestselgere bidrar til å finansiere bøker som selger mindre. “Forfattere innen alle sjangre trenger som regel lang tid og flere utgivelser for å utvikle sitt potensial. I små språkområder som det norske, er breddelitteraturen kjennetegnet av svært lave opplag og salgstall. Disse utgivelsene er kun mulig i et system som tilrettelegger for effektiv kryssubsidiering fra bøker som selger mye til bøker som selger mindre.” (<http://www.forleggerforeningen.no/nyhetsarkiv/forslag-til-boklov-er-fremlagt>; lesedato 19.06.13)

“[S]elv kan jeg takke “Fifty Shades of Grey” [den britiske forfatteren E. L. James’ erotiske bestselgerroman fra 2011] for at jeg fortsatt får gi ut mine uselgelige essaysamlinger på Gyldendal.” (Tor Eystein Øverås i *Klassekampens* bokmagasin 30. august 2014 s. 12)

Å bli oversatt til andre språk er ofte et tegn på bestselgerstatus. I 2010 var amerikaneren Stephen King verdens mest oversatte levende forfatter (Schütz 2010 s. 351). Oversettelser av verk som er beregnet å bli bestselgere i mange land, kan bli utgitt omtrent samtidig med originalverket (Schütz 2010 s. 353).

“At *Tarzan – apenes konge* har vært og fortsatt er en viktig litterær og populærkulturell helt, bekrefter opplysninger i den amerikanske Penguin-utgaven fra 1990: “Denne boken med de 22 oppfølgerne er solgt i mer enn 30 millioner eksemplarer på 58 språk.” ” (Ann Kristin Lande i *Aftenpostens* magasin *Historie* nr. 4 i 2018 s. 65)

Den britiske forfatteren Joanne K. Rowlings *Harry Potter*-bøker var i 2012 solgt i over 300 millioner eksemplarer og oversatt til 67 språk (Parkinson 2012 s. 64). I 2024 var det solgt over 500 millioner bøker i *Harry Potter*-serien (*Morgenbladet* 28. juni–4. juli 2024 s. 46). “*Harry Potter* regenerated children’s reading culture.” (Gunhild Agger m.fl. i <http://www.akademiskkvarter.hum.aau.dk/pdf/vol7/Intro.pdf>; lesedato 08.10.19)

“The overall success of the *Harry Potter* books is similar. As of 2008 the *Harry Potter* series has sold over 400 million copies worldwide and had been translated into 67 languages (Dammann G, 2008). When *Harry Potter and The Order of The Phoenix* was released, Borders, Barnes & Noble and Walmart combined sold more than 1,966,000 copies in the first week (“Phoenix sales remain strong” *Publishers Weekly*, 2003 p 10). The global sales for *Harry Potter and The Order of The Phoenix* on the first day alone are estimated at 6.8 million (Gunelius S, 2008 p 76). This peaked with *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* at 11 million sales on the first day (Gunelius S, 2008 p 76).” (Michael Wright Johnson i <https://www.ojcmt.net/download/bestsellers-beyond-bestsellers-the-success-of-a-good-story.pdf>; lesedato 29.06.23)

“Were you one of the millions of people who signed up with bookstores to reserve a copy of the seventh and final installment of the *Harry Potter* series, in 2007? Even if you weren’t, the frenzy was hard to miss. [...] Further focusing attention on the release, author J. K. Rowling and her British publisher, Bloomsbury, made sure that bookstores would begin selling the novel at the same time around the world: 12:01 a.m. on Saturday July 21 in the eastern United States. Bookstores opened at odd hours so that their customers could get their copies at exactly the release time. [...] Moreover, reviewers from the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* got their hands on the novel and wrote assessments before the book hit the shelves. Despite these breaches of secrecy (or maybe because of them), the book garnered record-breaking sales worldwide. According to Scholastic, *Harry Potter*’s publisher in the United States, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* became the fastest-selling book in U.S. history; an unprecedented 8.3 million copies were sold within the first 24 hours of the book’s release. In the U.K., the market auditing company Nielsen BookScan reported that 2.6 million copies of *Deathly Hallows* were sold in the first 24 hours at bookstores, making it the fastest selling book in the country’s history. The sales were also brisk in non-English-speaking places. In Germany, for example, 398,271 copies of the novel were sold in the first 24 hours.” (Turow 2009 s. 263)

“Ett minutt over midnatt natt til lørdag [i oktober 2000] ble bokhandler over hele Tyskland stormet av halvhysteriske barn og ungdommer. Da kom nemlig den tyske utgaven av den nye Harry Potter-boken i salg. Ventetiden har falt lang for svært mange av den unge trollmannslærlingens tyske fans. For å gjøre det litt lettere å komme seg igjennom de siste timene, arrangerte mange bokhandlere Harry-partyer som begynte ved stengetid fredag, og varte til 00.01 lørdag. Det var det i dobbelt

forstand magiske øyeblikket, da fansen endelig kunne få sine svette små fingre i “Harry Potter og Ildbegeret”. Dette er fjerde bok i Joanne K. Rowlings romanserie, en av de mest sensasjonelle boksuksesser de senere år. [...] Forlaget visste lørdag ikke om det ville greie å holde tritt med etterspørsmålet etter den nye boken, selv om førsteopplaget av den tyske utgaven var på mer enn en million. Og mange av Tysklands postbud grudde seg for å gå på jobben lørdag. Internett-bokhandelen amazon.de hadde nemlig gjort klar ikke mindre enn 40.000 forhåndsbestilte eksemplarer, som lå på posthusene klare til utbæring. Amazon hadde gitt noen spesielt utvalgte unge lesere forhåndseksemplarer til bedømmelse, og dommen var klar: Fem stjerner av fem mulige. Stemningen var ekstra høy på festen som Tysklands største Harry Potter-fanklubb, den i Berlin, arrangerte for å markere utgivelsen. Her sto selvsagt Harrys livretter på menyen: Bønner i alle smaksvarianter, med gresskar-saft i glassene, til glede for rundt 2000 små og middelstore, samtlige i trollmannsdrakt. [...] Kritikere er enige om at Rowlings bøker har betydelige litterære kvaliteter, blant annet et svært oppfinnsomt språk og en rik humor.” ([http://www.aftenposten.no/kul\\_und/kultur/d168247.htm](http://www.aftenposten.no/kul_und/kultur/d168247.htm); lesedato 25.10.2000)

Den amerikanske forfatteren Jeff Kinneys bokserie *En pingles dagbok (Diary of a Wimpy Kid)* “er de mest populære barnebøkene siden Harry Potter. [...] Bokserien handler om “pinglen” Greg Heffley, vennene og de håpløse foreldrene hans. Utgitt på 43 språk. 600 000 eksemplarer er trykket i Norge, 115 millioner på verdensbasis. Til sammenligning var det i 2001 solgt 450 millioner Harry Potter-bøker.” (*A-magasinet* 15. november 2013 s. 34 og 36) Da Rowling ga ut den siste boka i sin fantasyserie om Harry Potter i 2007, ble det “åpnet hjelpetelefon i England, der opprørte fans kunne ringe inn og dele sine sorger over at eventyret ble slutt.” (*Dagbladet* 5. desember 2008 s. 44)

“In 2005, for example, *Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*, published by Scholastic in the United States, sold 13.5 million copies and in doing that accounted for 8 percent of all hardback juvenile books sold in the United States. But *Potter* has not been the only large driver of juvenile hardback sales. That same year, the newest title in the immensely popular Lemony Snicket series, *The Penultimate Peril*, sold more than 1.7 million copies. Moreover, earlier editions of the series continued to sell so well in 2005 that they claimed the sixth through tenth spots on the list of bestselling hardback juveniles for the year that the trade magazine *Publishers Weekly (PW)* compiled. As for children’s paperbacks, the *Chronicles of Narnia* fantasy books have been successful due to the release that year of the *Chronicles of Narnia* movie based on them. In fact, in 2005, *Narnia* titles occupied the top nine spots on *PW*’s list of juvenile trade paperbacks.” (Turow 2009 s. 275)

Bestselgerbøker for barn og ungdom er ofte serielitteratur. Også andre faktorer er viktige, f.eks. om barn anbefaler en bok videre til andre barn, om en bok er filmatisert, og om forlag og bokhandel satser mye på å markedsføre den.

Den amerikanske forfatteren Dan Browns spenningsroman *The Da Vinci Code* (2003) solgte over 80 millioner eksemplarer over hele verden. Oppfølgerromanen *The Lost Symbol* (2009) ble også en suksess: Brown “har jobbet sju dager i uka de siste seks åra med oppfølgeren til “Da Vinci-koden”. “Det tapte symbol” har allerede satt salgsrekord. For seks år siden kom “Da Vinci-koden”, som har solgt utrolige 80 millioner på verdensbasis. [...] Etter suksessen med “Da Vinci-koden” har forventningene til “Det tapte symbol” vært enorme. Boka har et førsteopplag verden over på mellom fem og seks millioner. [...] Tirsdag ble romanen lagt ut for salg over hele verden, og britiske forhandlere rapporterer at det er den raskest selgende voksenromanen noensinne. Ifølge The Daily Telegraph er det bare “Harry Potter og dødstalismanen” som har solgt raskere.” (*Dagbladet* 17. september 2009 s. 40) Browns bok er et eksempel på “the flashiness of American ‘breastsellers’ ” (Matthews og Moody 2007 s. 16).

Da manuskriptet til *The Da Vinci Code* “first arrived on the desk of the editor he crunched the numbers and looked at the market research, and according to that data the book should be a moderate success (Drummond K, 2006). This data was based on the fact that Dan Brown was an unknown author; the book would not come out in time for the Christmas season; and it was not sexy enough for a beach book. There was one factor outside of the data that influenced the decision. The editor stayed up all night reading the book and could not put it down.” (Michael Wright Johnson i <https://www.ojcmt.net/download/bestsellers-beyond-bestsellers-the-success-of-a-good-story.pdf>; lesedato 29.06.23)

“*The Da Vinci Code* had sold over 25 million copies in 44 languages before it was even released in paperback (Drummond K, 2006 p 65). *The Da Vinci Code* held number 1 on the bestseller list for 2 years, and as of 2008 there were over 70 million copies of the book in circulation around the globe (Adams L, Heath J, 2007 p 261) (Gunelius S, 2008 p 136). The amount of revenue generated by *The Da Vinci Code* does not end there. A large number of spin off books or books related to the artwork mentioned in the book have also became become best sellers, including books debunking or critiquing the accuracy of *The Da Vinci Code* (Drummond K, 2006). These books have generated untold wealth for the publishing companies and booksellers.” (Michael Wright Johnson i <https://www.ojcmt.net/download/bestsellers-beyond-bestsellers-the-success-of-a-good-story.pdf>; lesedato 29.06.23)

*Da Vinci-koden* kan sies å ha fått noe av sin suksess fra – og også bidratt til – en av vår tids “hauntings”, nemlig troen på store sammensvergelser/konspirasjoner som manipulerer befolkningen (Dörner og Vogt 2013 s. 183). Romanen traff en “tidsånd” preget av mistanker og mistillit til hva som er sant, med konspirasjons-teorier og skrantende tro på at myndigheter og politikere tjener sitt folks interesser (Alladaye 2006 s. 101-105). “Popular culture, although constrained by the market values, plugs into what haunts the culture because what haunts us also fascinates us and draws us.” (Joseph Natoli sitert fra Dörner og Vogt 2013 s. 193)

“Dan Brown’s *The Da Vinci Code* and Stieg Larsson’s *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* [...] are found to share many genre-related features, in particular, their dynamic detective duos, feminist agendas, anti-authoritarian attitudes, political criticism, exoticism, and religious elements. A majority of the shared genre conventions are also found to enable a strong sense of reader identification with the detective characters.” (Bergman 2013)

En stor bestselger, som var tilfellet med *The Da Vinci Code*, kan føre til at forfatterens tidligere bøker (før bestselgeren) blir utgitt på nytt og disse kan i sin tur bli bestselgere (Lylette Lacôte-Gabrysiak i <http://communication.revues.org/3130>; lesedato 02.10.15). Bestselgere kan altså ha en slags tilbakevirkende effekt på det tidligere forfatterskapet.

Det forlag og bokhandlere kaller “epidemisk salg” gjelder “et unormalt stort og eksponentielt salgsmønster” (Kristian Strøm-Fladstad i *Bok og bibliotek* nr. 4 i 2015 s. 72).

Waterstone er en britiske bokhandlerkjede. “I 2004 kom femti prosent av salet hos Waterstone’s fra tre prosent av titlane det var tilbod om.” (Riel, Fowler og Downes 2011 s. 130)

Den kanadiske journalisten og forfatteren Malcolm Gladwells bok *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference* (2000) gir bl.a. en forklaring på hvorfor noen bøker blir bestselgere. Et eksempel hos Gladwell er den amerikanske forfatteren Rebecca Wells’ roman *Divine Secrets of the Ya-Ya Sisterhood* (1996). “*Divine Secrets of the Ya-Ya Sisterhood* was not yet on the bestseller lists. That wouldn’t happen until February 1998, when it would hit the charts and stay there, through 48 printings and 2.5 million copies. The national media attention – the articles in the big women’s magazines and the appearance on television shows that would turn Wells into a celebrity – hadn’t started yet either. But through the power of word of mouth, her book had tipped. “The turning point for me was probably in northern California, the winter after the paperback came out,” Wells said. “I walked into a situation where all of a sudden there were seven hundred and eight hundred people at my readings.” Why did *Ya-Ya Sisterhood* turn into an epidemic? In retrospect, the answer seems fairly straightforward. The book itself is heartwarming and beautifully written, a compelling story of friendship and mother-daughter relationships. It spoke to people. It’s sticky. Then there’s the fact that Wells herself is an actress. She didn’t read from her novel as she traveled across the country so much as she acted it out, playing each character with such skill that she turned her readings into performances. Wells is a classic Salesman. But there is a third, less obvious, factor here, which has to do with the last of the principles of epidemics. The success of *Ya-Ya* is a tribute to the Power of Context. More specifically, it is testimony to the power of one specific aspect of context,

which is the critical role that groups play in social epidemics.” (Gladwell sitert fra <http://www.fspcol.com/>; lesedato 30.07.14)

“The first bestseller list on which *Ya-Ya Sisterhood* appeared was the Northern California Independent Bookseller’s list. Northern California, as Wells said, was where 700 and 800 people first began showing up at her readings. It was where the *Ya-Ya* epidemic began. Why? Because, according to Reverand, the San Francisco area is home to one of the country’s strongest book-group cultures, and from the beginning *Ya-Ya* was what publishers refer to as a “book-group book.” It was the kind of emotionally sophisticated, character-driven, multi-layered novel that invites reflection and discussion, and book groups were flocking to it. The groups of women who were coming to Wells’s readings were members of reading groups, and they were buying extra copies not just for family and friends but for other members of their group. And because *Ya-Ya* was being talked about and read in groups, the book itself became that much stickier. It’s easier to remember and appreciate something, after all, if you discuss it for two hours with your best friends. It becomes a social experience, an object of conversation. *Ya-Ya*’s roots in book-group culture tipped it into a larger word-of-mouth epidemic. Wells says that at the end of readings, during the question-and-answer session, women in the audience would tell her, “We’ve been in a book group for two years, and then we read your book and something else happened. It started to drop down to a level of sharing that was more like friendship. They told me that they had started going to the beach together, or having parties at each other’s houses.” Women began forming *Ya-Ya Sisterhood* groups of their own, in imitation of the group described in the book, and bringing Wells pictures of their group for her to sign. Wesley’s Methodism spread like wildfire through England and America because Wesley was shuttling back and forth among hundreds and hundreds of groups, and each group was then taking his message and making it even stickier. The word about *Ya-Ya* was spreading in the same way, from reading group to reading group, from *Ya-Ya* group to *Ya-Ya* group and from one of Wells’s readings to another, because for over a year she stopped everything else and toured the country nonstop. The lesson of *Ya-Ya* and John Wesley is that small, close-knit groups have the power to magnify the epidemic potential of a message or idea.” (Gladwell sitert fra <http://www.fspcol.com/>; lesedato 30.07.14)

Mange utenlandske romaner blir bestselgere i Norge. “Dette er del av en større trend som startet for noen år siden. Vi kan godt spore det tilbake til Dan Browns gjennombrudd med “Da Vinci-koden” i 2003. Det har de senere åra bygget seg opp en type internasjonal litterær “bestsellerisme”, der noen bøker slår voldsomt an internasjonalt. Norske lesevaner er nå mer like utenlandske enn de var. Vi velger de mest populære bøkene selv om de ikke er skrevet av forfattere fra vårt eget land.” (Janneken Øverland i Gyldendal forlag, sitert fra *Dagbladet* 24. februar 2010 s. 42)

“A frequently used term in the critique of bestsellers is ‘bestsellerism’, meaning that the book market and the media in general have become so focused on a few

successful titles that little else has a chance to get noticed.” (Helgason, Kärrholm og Steiner 2014 s. 34)

“Er det virkelig bedre for bokbransjen at én forfatter selger 500 000 eksemplarer av én tittel enn at 100 forfattere selger 5000 hver av sine bøker? Det første fører til ekstrem ensretting og undergraving av litteraturen. Det andre fører til mangfold, berikelse og litterær vekst som ikke bare kommer litteraturen, men hele samfunnet til gode. Så hva er det som har skjedd? Jo, kjedene har funnet ut at det er mye enklere å selge ekstremt mange eksemplarer av noen få titler enn et mindre antall eksemplarer av mange titler. Det siste krever kompetanse, kreativitet, formidlingsevne og genuin, litterær interesse. Det første krever nesten ingenting: Man bygger bare opp en kjendis, helst en som skriver motstandsløs og ukontroversiell underholdning/krim, og så pusher man bøkene hans/hennes på kundene gjennom storstilte kampanjer spekket med skryt og hype. Vips, så “trenger” man bestselgerne omtrent slik en stoffmisbruker trenger den daglige fiksen sin. Hva så med den besnærende tesen om at bestselgerforfatterne “drar kunder til bokhandlene”, slik at andre bøker selges? Meg bekjent finnes det ingen studier som viser at dette stemmer. Hvis det hadde vært et korn av sannhet i dette, ville ikke salget av en ny, norsk roman ha ligget på 300-400 eksemplarer, men på 3000-4000, slik tilfellet var før bestselgerne gjorde sitt inntog i bokhandlene, og liksom “reddet” bransjen – kanskje ordet “kuppet” er mer dekkende.” (forfatter og oversetter Roar Sørensen i *Dagbladet* 20. november 2014 s. 44)

Kjendiser selger ofte godt når de utgir bøker. “Forlagene kjemper [i 2020] om influencerne som automatisk gir dem bestselgere – og i år kommer det bøker av blant andre Mads Hansen, Mina Jacobsen, Emma Ellingsen, Anniken Jørgensen, Sophie Elise Isachsen og Karolina Maria Griciute – som til sammen har tre millioner følgere. [...] Influencere med mange følgere er jo nesten doping for forlagene. For uavhengig av kvaliteten, selger de bra på grunn av lojaliteten til alle følgerne. [...] Mads Hansen. Han har selv 438.000 følgere på Instagram, og forhåndssalget av hans kommende bok “Min instastory” tok sånn av de første timene at redaktørene på forlaget Kagge fikk gåsehud og tårer i øynene. Boken kommer først 18. september, men Ark kan opplyse om svært gode tall. - Jeg kan dessverre ikke gi deg konkrete salgstall, men forhåndssalget har vært eksepsjonelt bra, det er sjeldent vi ser slike tall, sier Jonathan Orrall som er kommersiell sjef i bokhandlerkjeden Ark. [...] Etter at Anniken Jørgensens “Bare en natt til” ble en av 2018s mest solgte bøker, Mina Jacobsens “Bullet Journal” ble fjorårets hemmelige bestselger med nærmere 30.000 solgte eksemplarer og Karen Elene Thorsens “Fattig student” ble fjorårets femte mest solgte nye bok, er det blitt influencerbonanza i bokbransjen [...] Det er stor bredde i bokutgivelsene i Norge, men utviklingen er at influenserbøker stadig blir mer populære og har vært med på å prege bestselgerlistene de siste årene” (Camilla Norli i <https://www.vg.no/rampelys/bok/i/nadXVx/influencerboom-i-bokbransjen-samme-hvor-dritt-boken-er-selger-den-bra; lesedato 04.03.22>).

“Den enda mer kreative unnskyldningen for at noen få forfattere skal ha alt, mens det store flertallet ikke engang skal få delta i konkurransen, er at bestselgerne angivelig “finansierer de smale utgivelsene”. Men dette har innkjøpsordningen allerede gjort i alle år. Dessuten satser ikke forlagene på disse bøkene i det hele tatt; akkurat som debutantbøkene stues de bare vakk innerst i bokhandlene og når knapt ut til noen lesere. Men den mest tvilsomme “forklaringen” på at et knøttlite forfattersjikt skal ha alt på det store flertallets bekostning, er at inntektene av dette salget “opprettholder bokhandler og stillinger i bransjen”. Litt som å si at uten fangene blir vi kanskje nødt til å legge ned fengslene. Sannheten er dessverre at verken samfunnet eller bransjen trenger mer enn halvparten av disse bokhandlene, for nesten alt de gjør, er å selge flat underholdningslitteratur for å holde seg selv kunstig i live, og bokprisene kunstig høye. [...] Det er likevel dette – mangfold og bredde – bokhandlere og forlag faktisk har forpliktet seg til gjennom lover og bokavtaler.” (Roar Sørensen i *Dagbladet* 20. november 2014 s. 44)

“ “Bestselgere står for mindre del av omsetninga nå enn for ti år siden”, skriver John Tørres Thuv, administrerende direktør i ARK Bokhandel AS i sitt svar til Forfatterforeningen. [...] - Salget i bredden er viktigere nå enn før. Utviklingen de siste årene er preget av at vi sørger for bedre tilgjengelighet for bredden av bøker, mer enn at vi har blitt så mye bedre på å fremme bestselgere, sier Thuv til Klassekampen. - Utgjør de mestselgende titlene dermed en mindre andel av titlene dere selger nå enn før? - De eksakte tallene har vi av konkurransemessige årsaker ikke lyst til å gå ut med. Men bestselgere har en mindre andel av omsetningen enn folk later til å tro. Bestselgerne er likevel viktige, spesielt fordi de bringer lesere til oss som ikke ellers går så mye i bokhandel.” (Klassekampen 18. april 2015 s. 22)

Forfatteren Bror Hagemann har kritisert hvordan “bestselgerlitteratur” skapes av forlag: “Hvilke bøker som skal selge er bestemt lenge før utgivelse, ofte før manus er ferdigskrevet, og kundene, også det økende antallet som går inn i de virtuelle butikkene, skal i størst mulig grad styres mot titler man har blitt enige om. Nytt og ennå i en startfase er drømmen om å kunne initiere bokprosjekter fra bunnen, utarbeide plotideer og sjangerstro oppskrifter forfatterne kan forelegges og ferdigstille i nært samarbeid med redaktørene.” (<https://www.dagbladet.no/kultur/litteraturens-loslashgnspraringk/63685734>; lesedato 07.06.11)

Forfatter Anne B. Ragde og forlegger Arve Juritzen ”misliker bestselgerslakten. Nå vil de at forfatterne skal tørre å skrive kommersielt. [...] - De som når bestselgerlistene får nesten alltid dårlige anmeldelser, men de selger, sier Juritzen. Blant forfatterne i panelet er Anne B. Ragde, som har innsett at bransjen til tider kan oppfattes som kommersiell. - Det er ikke slik at man velger mellom penger og litterære priser, men bransjen er kommersiell – bøker er big business. Man jobber jo litterært når man skriver, men i det øyeblikket boka er ferdig, er den blitt til en råvare som skal ut til leserne, og da må man bli kommersiell. - Man må være synlig, tilgjengelig for intervjuer, takke ja til invitasjoner og stille opp på arrangementer. Som forfatter kan man ikke være mystisk og sjener. Ragde

understreker at det finnes flere norske forfattere som stadig vekk havner på bestselgerlisten, samtidig som de er litterære: - Jostein Gaarder, Dag Solstad, Lars Saabye Christensen, Roy Jacobsen og Linn Ullmann er alle eksempler på litterære forfattere som selger godt. [...] Forfatter Levi Henriksen mener at han er blant forfatterne som både er litterære og i stand til å selge. - For egen del må jeg innrømme at jeg har klart begge deler, sier Levi Henriksen. - Men det er en typisk norsk, snobbete og meget søkt problemstilling. Det er ikke slik at folk som skaper kunst ikke kan tjene penger, men tvert imot, sier han." (Dagbladet 3. mars 2012 s. 51)

Bestselgere kan oppfattes som litterær "fastfood": "Den tsjekkiske forfatteren Jachym Topol lanserte begrepet *euroburger* for noen år siden. Euroburger er, ifølge ham, samlebetegnelsen på samtidsromaner som er lettleste, underholdende og motstandsløse. I begrepet ligger det også at denne litterære retten kjennetegnes av *one taste fits all*, altså en karakterløshet i smaken som skal gjøre den akseptabel for så mange som mulig å fortære. Sammenligningen er enkel, men ikke så dum. Etter at strømmen av kvalitetslitteratur fra Latin- og Sør-Amerika og Afrika toppet seg, har det dukket opp en mengde populære utgivelser fra alle kanter av verden, som både handlingsmessig og språklig ser ut til å være skreddersydd til vestlige markeder. Vi har fått et voksende problem med forlag, en bokbransje og en kritikerstand som hausser i været flommen av euroburgere. [...] dette etter hvert store slenget med romaner som selger så godt [...] med setninger som flyter over av selvtilfredshet og billig frieri til leseren – som jo så mange lesere er henrykte over. Det er ikke noen stor ulykke at underholdningsromaner og euroburgere blir kjøpt og lest. Det som er viktig er at den genuint interessante litteraturen som opererer med en annen tyngde, språklig bevissthet og dybde, blir *gjenkjent*, slik at vi ikke havner i det uføret som noen kritikere befinner seg i: De sier ja til bransjens ønskede sammenblanding av salgbarhet og mangel på bevissthet om kvalitet. Ille er det også at den seriøse litteraturen i stadig større grad fortenges fra den mediale offentligheten. Og på grunn av bokmaskineriets prioriteringer forvises den til akademia, litterære tidsskrifter og de hengivne idealistenes rekker; de som ikke har problemer med å skjønne at litteratur er noe man tar til seg for dens egen skyld." (Jonny Halberg i Morgenbladet 7.–13. januar 2011 s. 32-33)

"There used to be something thought of as 'a Booker novel' – a big, ambitious balloon sent up to signify seriousness and loftiness of purpose." (James Wood sitert fra Matthews og Moody 2007 s. 77) Booker er en britisk litteraturpris.

"Selv begynte jeg for bare et par år siden å stusse over de utallige romanene med variasjoner over et identisk omslagsmotiv: en bevokst port som åpner seg mot et bølgende landskap, ofte med en ryggvendt figur som står og stirrer utover dette landskapet. Det var ikke bare på flyplassene jeg så dem. Plutselig så jeg dem over alt. Trude Rønnestad i Gyldendal lærte meg at på engelsk finnes det et navn på denne litteraturen, den kalles *pretend literature*. [...] Dette er altså ikke litteratur, underforstårlig denne betegnelsen, men litteratur som utgir seg for å være litteratur,

ligner på litteratur, disse bøkene er en slags liksom-litteratur, som finner opp nye betegnelser på seg selv, noen kalles “landskapsromaner”, og er lagt til eksotiske steder som Lofoten eller Patagonia. Noen av disse bøkene er som en slags piratkopier, produkter skrudd sammen av forfatternavn og forlag med forestillinger om hvordan det salgbare produktet roman ser ut og med forestillinger om hvordan en forfatter som kan representer et slikt salgbart romanprodukt oppfører seg.” (Tor Eystein Øverås i *Klassekampens* bokmagasin 30. august 2014 s. 12)

“Den “kommersielle kvalitetslitteraturen” får stadig større markedsmakt og splitter bokbransjen. Er den ufarlig underholdning eller litteraturens død? [...] Lykke på bok: Bokhandlene fylles i stadig større grad av duse pastellomslag. I kjølvannet av bestselgende forfattere som Cecilia Samartin og Victoria Hislop, prøver alle de store forlagene å ta en bit av markedet for “kommersiell kvalitetslitteratur”. [...] i motsetning til kiosklitteraturens dvaske pocketbøker har bøkene av forfattere som Cecilia Samartin og Victoria Hislop hard perm og selges i alle de store bokhandlene. Mange har uttrykt bekymring for hvordan den kommersielle suksessen små forlag som Juritzen og Bazar har opplevd, nå får de store forlagene til å satse på samme type bøker. [...] Disse bøkene fortrenger norsk skjønnlitteratur fra bestselgerlistene, de tar opp mye plass i bokhandelen, og vi ser at de smitter av på hvordan forlagene presenterer annen litteratur. [...] Noen få bøker blir vinnere, og de blir større vinnere enn tidligere. Men det gjelder også de store litterære romanene som Jonathan Franzens Frihet. Så det er selvsagt ikke bare krim og underholdningsromaner som selger, heldigvis. Underholdningsromaner av forfattere som Cecilia Samartin og Lucinda Riley har en stor popularitet akkurat nå, men det sier kanskje mest om hvordan folk i vår tid har behov for virkelighetsflukt, drama og romantikk. [...] Det er opplagt at stadig flere norske bøker ikke blir “synlige” i kraft av å bli anmeldt. Kanskje det er grunnen til at damelitteraturen velger andre synliggjøringsstrategier, for eksempel i form av omslag som sender tankene på langhelg til Provence.” (Solveig Nygaard Langvad m.fl. i [https://morgenbladet.no/boker/2013/litteraturens\\_kongekrabbe](https://morgenbladet.no/boker/2013/litteraturens_kongekrabbe); lesedato 12.05.20)

“Lucinda Riley-eventyret [...] 11. mai [2021] avsluttet suksess-serien “De syv søstre” med verdenslanseringen av “Atlas”. Cappelen Damms Knut Gørvell forteller her om veien fra boksigneringer der én person møtte opp, til Riley fylte Grieghallen med fans. Siden 2016 har det vært en Lucinda Riley-bok på den norske bestselgerlista hver eneste uke. [...] Lucinda Riley (1965-2021) har av mange blitt omtalt som dronningen av underholdningsromaner. [...] Siden hennes første roman på norsk, *Orkideens hemmelighet*, kom for snart tolv år siden, har hun solgt over 1,9 millioner bøker her til lands. [...] Salgssuksessen er enestående i norsk sammenheng, og det er vanskelig å forestille seg 1,9 millioner bøker. Men man kan illustrere det ved en stabel bøker ved siden av noe annet vi kjenner godt. Hvis man hadde lagt alle de solgte Lucinda Riley-bøkene oppå hverandre til et boktårn, ville tårnet blitt rundt 75 000 meter høyt. Det utgjør omtrent 8,6 Mount Everest’er oppå hverandre! På verdensbasis er Lucinda Rileys titler oversatt til 40 språk og solgt i over 50 millioner eksemplarer, og de har vært på bestselgerlistene til både Sunday

Times og New York Times. [...] I Bergen skulle Riley signere bøker på en Narvesen-kiosk rett ved Fisketorget. Til signeringen kom det én person. Fire år senere – ved utgivelsen av *Stormens søster* – fylte vi vestbylen i Grieghallen med 500 mennesker, med intervju og en Grieg-konsert. [...] Hun fant sin helt egen oppskrift der hun knyttet sammen flere tidsplan og historier og brukte drama, romantikk og lidenskap. I “De syv søstre”-serien knyttes disse ingrediensene til hovedpersonenes lengsel etter å spore opp egne røtter. På mesterlig vis vevde også Riley viktige hendelser i boka sammen med noen av de mest ikoniske elementene ved landene der historien utspiller seg, som f.eks. Kristus-skikkelsen i Brasil og Griegs musikk i Norge.” (Knut Gørvell i <https://www.boktips.no/skjonn litteratur/underholdningsromaner/lucinda-riley-eventyret/>; lesedato 17.07.23)

Knut Gørvell, markedsdirektør i forlaget Cappelen Damm, sa i et intervju “- Tom Harald Jenssen hevdet at det er et gammelt *saying* i kulturbransjen fra langt tilbake at hvert sjette produkt er lønnsomt. Nå har vi begynt å snakke om kanskje hvert tiende produkt er lønnsomt, og da blir man mer og mer avhengig av de få vinnerne, og innimellom, slik som med Lucinda Riley, blir vinnerne enda større. [...] den pornografiske bølgen som skylte over norsk forlagsbransje rundt 2016, da Gyldendal utga *Fifty Shades of Grey* og Cappelen Damm kastet seg på med bokserien *Calendar Girl*. De var ikke bra for forlaget, medgir Gørvell, de lyktes ikke særlig godt økonomisk med utgivelsene, selv om de var lønnsomme. De var et feiltrinn fra forlagets side. - Men hadde *Calendar Girl*-bøkene vært riktige hvis de solgte bedre? - Hvis du selger sjela di, så må du i hvert fall få mye penger for den. Det hadde nok hjulpet på. Men nei, sett i ettermant er nok den type bøker for spekulativ og ikke bra for vårt omdømme. Det kan bli for kommersielt selv for meg. [...] man klarer å skape fenomener som Harry Potter. Det vil komme sånn bølger der du plutselig får stor nylesning blant unge.” (*Morgenbladet* 26. mai–1. juni 2023 s. 47-48)

“Bestsellers talk about love, wealth, and hardship, and they do this with the help of history and geography which are often set in the context of family sagas. Readers seek relaxing, vicarious adventure, information, and a sense of being “in.” To this recipe, Quebec authors add a search for collective identity. The bestseller is often packaged in a typical format: 300 pages, an attractive front cover, often with a reddish photograph (at the time of our interviews), and a back cover with a photo of the author. On the cover page, the author’s name becomes as big as or bigger than the title if success has followed success. [...] We now turn to the type of story told in bestsellers. Looking at our short list of typical bestsellers, we first find a strong similarity between fiction and biography. Both are based on a constant reference to reality. Fiction is a story that could happen. A biography is a story that did happen (but is it strictly the truth that is told?). Both must be written in a realistic manner. And, probably, both are read with interest if the action is sustained. On a second level, there is a strong similarity between bestsellers and films and, very often, bestsellers are made into films. Both are built in the same frame of social discourse. Both are constantly exchanging stories (films are made out of books, books are

written using films or television themes). Finally, we see that bestsellers offer simultaneously the story of an adventure mixed with ample information on the setting of this adventure. We follow someone struggling with the Mafia and we learn about the Mafia at the same time. On the whole, bestsellers are also firmly rooted in themes of social importance and can be seen as exemplary of society's way of thinking." (Claude Martin: "Production, Content, and Uses of Bestselling Books in Quebec"; <http://www.cjc-online.ca/>; lesedato 04.04.12)

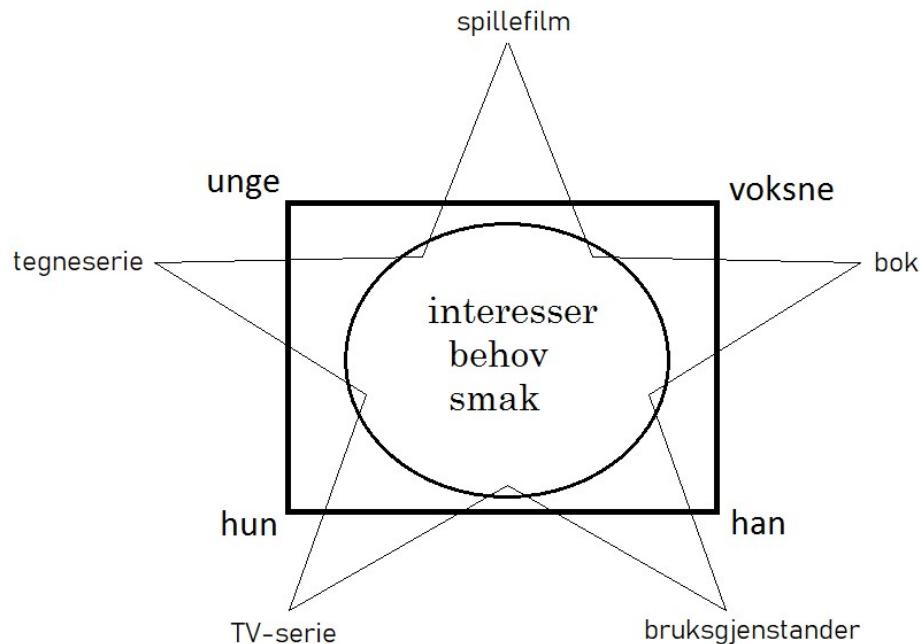
Filmadaptasjoner kan bidra til at en bok blir en bestselger, når de som har sett filmen ønsker å kjøpe boka den er basert på. En filmatisering av Choderlos de Laclos' 1700-tallsroman *Farlige forbindelser* førte i Frankrike til at romanen solgte i mer enn 200.000 eksemplarer etter filmpremieren (Lylette Lacôte-Gabrysiak i <http://communication.revues.org/3130>; lesedato 02.10.15).

"Bibliographic records suggest that after the 1939 film, *Wuthering Heights* suddenly passed into general circulation. *Brontë Society Transactions* for 1939 noted that 'more copies of *Wuthering Heights* were sold in the three weeks after the first showing of the film than in any five year period since the book was published' (Edgerley 1939: 239). By 1947, we learn that "more than 220,000,000 people have seen the United Artists production of 'Wuthering Heights' since it was first released in April, 1939 ... Since the release of 'Wuthering Heights' in America, a pocket edition of the book has sold 700,000 copies there and is continuing to sell." (A[ndrews] 1947: 175) The Pocket Book edition printed in 1939 has as cover illustration a drawing taken from the scene in the film where Heathcliff carries Catherine to the open window to die (*WH* 1939). This scene, which does not appear in the novel, was nevertheless henceforth a part of the mythology of the story." (Stoneman 1996 s. 155)

"The blockbuster concept affects the choice of themes and structure: to enable the diversification of the cinematic product, 'blockbusters tend towards openended, inter-textual narratives which can be easily reformulated in other media' (Mazdon, 2000, p. 22). Numerous film adaptations, remakes, novelised prequels or sequels, spin-offs and online fan fiction highlight this tendency, expanding media stories across borders and audiences. [...] Films and television series are produced as platform productions for different media (cinema, television, mobile media) in combination with merchandise, franchising and destination tourism. [...] Books such as *Twilight* and *Game of Thrones* are combined with fan culture on the internet." (Gunhild Agger m.fl. i <http://www.akademiskkvarter.hum.aau.dk/pdf/vol7/Intro.pdf>; lesedato 08.10.19)

Det kan være hensiktsmessig å "targeting different audiences through diversified advertising and merchandizing strategies. In film business talk, this has been called "filling out the quadrant"." (Collins 2010 s. 159) Kvadratet av målgrupper er kvinner, menn, gamle og unge.

Figuren nedenfor skal illustrere at en person først og fremst søker etter det som interesserer, fyller et opplevd behov og faller innenfor personens foretrukne smak (noen elsker skrekkromaner, andre hater dem). Et produkt som blir en bestselger, vil kunne appellere til både barn/unge, voksne, kvinner og menn, slik *Harry Potter*-bøkene til en viss grad gjorde. Adaptasjoner til spillefilm, tegneserie osv. både tjener på og bidrar til suksessen. Store suksesser blir dessuten ofte brukt til å selge en lang rekke bruksgjenstander og klær, f.eks. matbokser med bilder fra Rampete Robin-bøkene, t-skjorter med utvalgte sitater fra en kjærlighetsroman, tryllestaver av plast som tilhører Harry Potter-fiksjonsverdenen osv.



"Not only is the bestseller made into a film, game, or graphic novel, but there is often a whole franchise surrounding a successful title. Encompassed in the term 'franchise' are also adaptations, spin-offs, tie-ins, and merchandise. [...] The franchise surrounding a literary work can also encompass tourism, as shown by Kristin Thompson when she discusses the wave of tourism caused by the production of *The Lord of the Rings* in New Zealand [i boka *The Frodo Franchise: The Lord of the Rings and Modern Hollywood*, 2007]." (Helgason, Kärrholm og Steiner 2014 s. 25-26)

"There are three kinds of publishing synergies: the transferal of the content to other media formats (film, game, apps); tie-in products (for example, a book about a film based on a book, or a book about the characters of the story); and merchandise (posters, jewelry, clothes, action dolls, and so on)." (Ann Steiner i Helgason, Kärrholm og Steiner 2014 s. 45)

En del bøker er fra forlagenes side planlagte bestselgere, og blir promotert som dette. Det britiske forlaget Dorling Kindersley satset etter George Lucas' film *The*

*Phantom Menace* (1999) på bøker med historier fra *Star Wars*-filmens fiktive univers, men “sold only three million of 13 million tie-in books, losing av hefty £18 million in the process” (King og Krzywinska 2002 s. 97). “British publisher Dorling Kindersley (DK) has seen its profits plunge after spectacularly overestimating demand for Star Wars books. [...] It announced that chief executive James Middlehurst had left the company and that it was reviewing its strategic options with advisers. Peter Kindersley, founder and executive chairman, would assume responsibility for the group until a new chief executive is found, the company said.” (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/616623.stm>; lesedato 04.08.14)

“Contents of bestsellers can also be characterized by a typical scenario [...]. Our proposition is that there is a specific moment in the narrative discourse often (but not always) associated with the bestselling narratives.

1. A character (male, female, or collective) is in a state of euphoric equilibrium.
2. A big problem puts his/her survival or his/her freedom at stake.
3. The character struggles and sets the stage for the upturn of the situation (this is the longest phase of the narrative).
4. S/he encounters sentimental problems.
5. S/he achieves success.
6. S/he also overcomes sentimental problems.
7. S/he tells or writes the story.

Only the central motives (survival problems, resistance, sentimental troubles, and overcoming survival problems) are necessary to make the model work. The others are quite optional. The order can be changed, except for the main sequence of problems and subsequent victory.” (Claude Martin: “Production, Content, and Uses of Bestselling Books in Quebec”; <http://www.cjc-online.ca/>; lesedato 04.04.12)

“We asked “What is a ‘good book’?” We were told that it must be “well written” or “well developed” but this dissolved into a list of contradictory characteristics almost impossible to organize. One way to bring such characteristics together is to view a good book as one that offers an occasion for reflection by presenting heroes who can be admired while carrying the reader into another world. The reader is removed from reality, but not so far removed that realism no longer prevails. The informational or cognitivist side of a bestseller is not that of an encyclopedia but rather the exemplary aspect of the narrative and of the characters. This we call psychological realism. One learns through the characters’ hardship. Ideological orientations can be seen in the choice of themes. Books outside of the reader’s thematic range have a good chance of being rejected. Men show a good deal of male chauvinism by quite clearly rejecting feminine and feminist themes. This is not explicitly stated but it is clear from the authors cited as examples of those liked most; men rarely cite women authors as their favourite authors.” (Claude Martin:

“Production, Content, and Uses of Bestselling Books in Quebec”; <http://www.cjc-online.ca/>; lesedato 04.04.12)

“Chetan Bhagat is a phenomenon. Every one of his four previous novels – all published only in paperback – has been a national bestseller, and each has been sold to Bollywood for a film version. [...] This only works if you can expand the readership of the typical English-language novel in India, and his success in doing so is the key to appreciating Chetan Bhagat’s importance in the all-too-often rarefied world of Indian Writing in English. For all our billion-strong population, India is hardly commercially viable territory for the workaday Indian-English novelist. The typical Indian literary “bestseller” sells between 3,000 and 5,000 copies; a true success is one that remains in print for years, with successive reprints of 1,500 copies or so every nine or twelve months. (Thus my Indian publishers tell me that my *The Great Indian Novel*, now in its 36th printing in India, has only sold a grand total of 41,000 copies in all of 22 years.) In this modest market, Bhagat’s novels reportedly sell over 1,00,000 [sic] copies in the first month after publication, mainly in small towns where literary fiction is rarely found, and keep selling: the demand for all his books shows no sign of letting up, and *Revolution 2020* has had five reprints before this review could even be written.” (Shashi Tharoor i <http://www.outlookindia.com/>; lesedato 04.04.12)

På 1980-tallet “Christian publishers began to discover that in adopting the romance formulas of such successful series as Harlequin, they could sell a great number of fiction titles to their customers. Perhaps more than any other single author, Janette Oke would rock the Christian publishing world, with her first romance, *Love Comes Softly* (1979). Over the next decade, Oke would sell more than eight million copies of her novels, starting a fiction boom among Christians that would only gain speed throughout the 1980s and 1990s. Oke’s success did much to open the door to a host of new Christian romances, which would appear in series such as Zondervan Publisher’s romance lines, Serenade Serenata and Serenade Saga.” (Paul C. Gutjahr i Towheed, Crone og Halsey 2011 s. 391)

“The other genre is more singularly Christian and of more recent inception. It centers on issues of supernatural intervention and warfare, as God and Satan battle for human souls. While romances have clear precedents in American Protestant and trade publishing, spiritual warfare novels do not. These novels are a more unique genre, almost totally monopolized by Evangelical-Christian publishing. This kind of fiction saw its first breakaway bestseller with Frank Peretti’s *This Present Darkness* (1986). Peretti would follow up the vast success of this novel with others in the same genre, but a host of imitators would also join the market. The most successful of those to follow in Peretti’s wake would be Jerry B. Jenkins and Tim LaHaye’s novel series on the end times, *Left Behind*.” (Paul C. Gutjahr i Towheed, Crone og Halsey 2011 s. 391-392)

I USA utgis “bestselgerbøkene, og filmene i Left Behind-serien, som vel og merke kun er bestselgere i USA. Det er endetidshistorier. [...] produsert av Clarion-stiftelsen, den er grunnlagt av en kanadisk-israelsk filmprodusent. *Den tredje Jihad* er en serie, *Iranium* er en ny en.” (*Morgenbladet* 2.–8. mars 2012 s. 39) Titler i Left Behind-serien er blant annet *Biblical Prophecy; The Truth of Gods Word; Is evolution a scientific fact?*

“In the early 1990s, author and theologian Tim LaHaye approached Frank Peretti about co-authoring a book about the end of the world and the return of Christ. Peretti turned down LaHaye’s offer because he wished to continue working on his own projects, but LaHaye did not give up on his idea and eventually enlisted the help of another established Christian author, Jerry B. Jenkins. Out of this collaboration, *Left Behind*, the first book of the series, appeared from Tyndale Publishing House in 1995. Any doubt about the rising importance and popularity of Protestant fiction disappeared in the face and the absolutely astonishing sales of this book and the series it spawned. A one-book contract turned into a six-book series as hundreds of thousands of copies of *Left Behind* flew off the bookstore shelves. Eventually, Tyndale Publishing House would expand the series deal to an expected twelve books as sales of the sixth volume, *Assassins*, topped 1.4 million copies in the first five months of its release. During the summer of 1999, many of the titles from this series climbed up and down the bestseller lists of Amazon.com and the *New York Times*. The rise of Protestant fiction had found a new champion, as seven million copies of the series were in circulation by the end of 1999.” (Paul C. Gutjahr i Towheed, Crone og Halsey 2011 s. 392)

“ “Unlike Madame Bovary you don’t chase the glittering life, you lay a trap for it.” Det skriver Helen Gurley Brown i kultboken fra 1962, *Sex and the Single Girl*, spekket med gode råd, fra hvordan få seg en stabil jobb til hvordan lykkes med seksuelle affærer. Boken, som fikk single amerikanske kvinner til å snøre på seg sine *kitten heels* og spurte til nærmeste bokhandel, solgte 2 millioner eksemplarer på like mange uker.” (*Morgenbladet* 15.–21. juli 2016 s. 52)

Peter Mayle var en brite som etter å ha vært forretningsmann flyttet til Provence i Frankrike. Han skrev en serie memoarer, blant andre *A Year in Provence* (1989; senere adaptert til en TV-serie). Denne bestselgende boka ga et bilde av Provence som lokket mange britiske turister dit, og det har blitt hevdet at denne boka inspirerte mange briter til på 1990-tallet å kjøpe sommerhus der (Mauricette Fournier og Marina Marengo i <https://journals.openedition.org/rbnu/5517>; lesedato 29.11.22).

Den britiske reality-TV-serien *Supernanny* (2004–08) “is a part of a trend in the makeover format that addresses parenting and child behaviour. There are various modern parenting methods available with different advice for child rearing. *Supernanny* is based on an approach to parenting that emphasises boundaries and rules. Jo Frost is a ‘modern-day Mary Poppins’ who spends three weeks with

families who have troublesome toddlers. [...] Her childcare book topped the bestseller lists in the USA off the back of the first series.” (Annette Hill i Creeber 2008 s. 144) Frost har blant annet publisert boka *Supernanny: How to Get the Best from Your Children* (2005).

Amerikanske Elizabeth Gilberts memoarbok *Eat, Pray, Love: One Woman’s Search for Everything Across Italy, India and Indonesia* (2006) “has over five million copies in print [...] Richard from Texas, for example, the drawling former junkie she meets at an ashram in India, has already appeared on *Oprah* [Oprah Winfrey litteraturprogram på TV]. Twice.” (Dreyfus og Kelly 2011 s. 26) Også filmadaptasjonen av Gilberts bok ble en stor suksess. Dette førte til at en hel region på Bali i Indonesia ble transformert (Bittner 2017 s. 83). Turistindustrien i området måtte endres for å tilfredsstille turistenes ønsker, som var å oppleve mest mulig av det som skjer i boka og filmen. Men på grunn av den massive tilstrømningen av turister ble det vanskelig å gi folk den følelsen av å være åndelige pilegrimer som de ønsket, og opplevelsen kunne ligne det å besøke et kommersielt filmstudio. Samtidig var “konstruert autentisitet” det eneste som kunne gi turistene den følelsen og opplevelsen de var ute etter (Bittner 2017 s. 83).

“Oprah Winfrey, more than any other figure or factor, represents the complicated interplay among commerce, culture, and self-cultivation within the popular literary. Her power to turn novels into bestsellers of a magnitude comparable only to blockbuster franchise films has been extensively reported in virtually every form of American mass media. The announcement of a new title has automatically led to bestseller status at Amazon within twenty-four hours and immediate placement on the tables inside the front door at superstores.” (Collins 2010 s. 87) “Once it was selected by the Oprah Book Club, Franzen’s novel *The Corrections* (2002), became a bestseller within hours and remained the bestselling book in America for weeks thereafter.” (Collins 2010 s. 104). “[E]very book features on her show – whether by a Nobel Prize winner or an obscure first-time novelist – sold hundreds of thousand of copies.” (Long 2003 s. 200)

Fri markedspris på e-bøker “betyr bestselgerfokus, om man liker det eller ikke. Om ordinære markedsmekanismer får virke fritt vil det få konsekvenser for de mest utsatte delene av litteraturen. [...] Bredden er mindre synlig og det er mer ensidig fokus på bestselgerne i en internasjonal e-bokhandel. Hos store utenlandske e-bokforhandlere er det lite annet enn de internasjonale bestselgerne å finne på forsiden, på tross av at man som skandinavisk bruker kan søke noe annet.” (forlagssjef Mads Nygaard i Aschehoug; i *Dagbladet* 3. januar 2012 s. 48)

Forlags og bokhandleres vekt på bestselgere er styrt av en økonomisk betinget “kjøttvekt” – mange leser gir større mulighet for inntjening. “Digitale bokhandlere har en tendens til å fronte bestselgere selv om de også har backlistene. Markedet for gamle bøker er i realiteten svært lite, selv om denne nisjen ofte legitimerer digitale strategier.” (*Morgenbladet* 1.–7. august 2014 s. 39)

Noen verk kan kalles “tvungne bestselgere”. Den irakiske diktatoren Saddam Hussein publiserte verket *Zabiba og kongen* (utgitt på engelsk i 2004). “Til tross for litterære kvaliteter under pari, ble boka en bestselger i Irak, med mer enn en million solgte eksemplarer. Bokas popularitet kan naturligvis ha sammenheng med at den ble solgt for rundt fem kroner da den ble gitt ut og at det i et diktatur generelt er en fornuftig leveregel å lese diktatorens verker. [...] En av de sprøeste bøkene er ”Rukhnama” (“Sjelens bok”) av Turkmenistans avdøde diktator Saparmurmat Niyazov. Niyazov var bedre kjent under tilnavnet Turkmenbashy, som betyr “alle turkmeneres far”. ”Rukhnama” er en blanding av historie, religion, filosofi, politikk, selvbiografi og poesi, alt blandet sammen i en salig smørje. Det viktigste med ”Rukhnama” er likevel ikke innholdet, men hvordan boka ble brukt til å bygge opp under Turkmenbashys personlighetskult, som var en av de mest omfattende blant diktatorer i nyere tid. Boka var inntil nylig pensum i Turkmenistans utdanningssystem fra barneskolen til universitetet. Under Turkmenbashys styre måtte man til og med regne med å bli hørt i ”Rukhnama” under førerprøven. Måneden september ble omdøpt til Rukhnama (Turkmenbashy ga alle månedene nye navn) og utenlandske firmaer måtte oversette boka til sitt språk for å kunne drive forretninger i landet. Derfor er ”Rukhnama” oversatt til 41 språk. Boka er til og med kopiert på en mikrofilm som ble skutt opp i bane rundt jorda med en russisk rakett, antakelig for å spre Turkmenashys visdom til utenomjordiske vesener.” (Dagbladet 2. februar 2012 s. 60-61)

“Haitis diktator Francois “Papa Doc” Duvalier hadde et sterkt ønske om å bli anerkjent som en stor politisk tenker. Han ga ut sin ”Essensielle verker” i 1967 etter inspirasjon fra ”Maos lille røde”. Da boka ikke solgte spesielt bra, trakk han alle offentlige ansatte på Haiti 100 kroner i lønn og ga dem et eksemplar av boka i bytte.” (Dagbladet 2. februar 2012 s. 61)

“In 1997, Daniel Jonah Goldhagen’s *Hitler’s Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* antagonized traditional scholars who fiercely attacked his ”monocausal simplicity” in posing deep-seated eliminationist anti-Semitism as the motivational force behind the participation of millions of ordinary Germans in the genocide of the Jews (Eley 2000, 30). The book became a bestseller in Germany and the United States” (Knuth 2003 s. 81).

Store bokmesser som den i Frankfurt bidrar til å sirkulere bestselgere og forventete bestselgere mellom land (Aron og Viala 2006 s. 104).

Noen bestselgere ble i Norge fra begynnelsen av 2000-tallet solgt fra paller i store dagligvareforretninger.

Såkalt ”stabelsalg” (<https://bok365.no/artikkel/smilende-uenighet/>; lesedato 04.03.22) i bokhandlene er stabler med bestselgere, eller forsøk på å påvirke salget at bøker som forlag og bokhandlere tror og ønsker at skal bli bestselgere (etter logikken: ”denne boka kommer så mange til å kjøpe at vi like godt lager en stor stabel med

eksemplarer”). Marit Grue, innkjøpsansvarlig i bokhandlerkjeden Ark sa i et intervju i 2015 at “det er vanskelig for en bokkjede å skape en bestselger. Hun hadde mange eksempler på bøker som forlag og bokhandel var sikre på skulle bli storselgere – og som knapt solgte. Og på bøker som ingen – verken forlag eller bokhandel – egentlig hadde stor tro på – og som tok av i kraft av seg selv. De ble snakkiser. Leserne ville ha dem. - X-faktoren, sa Grue. Det er nemlig ikke slik at en bok blir en bestselger *fordi* den ligger i stabler midt i butikken. Alle kjedene har tallrike eksempler på bunker som forblir bunker – uten at leserne vil ha bøkene. Og på det motsatte: Leserne etterspør titler som bokkjedene ikke har hatt tro på i utgangspunktet, men som gradvis har blitt til bestselgere.” ([http://forfatterforeningen.no/artikkel/debatt mote-om-bokbransjen/](http://forfatterforeningen.no/artikkel/debatt-mote-om-bokbransjen/); lesedato 04.03.22)

“Ingulstad tjener 21 ganger mer enn Solstad. Dag Solstad regnes som en smal forfatter, mens Frid Ingulstad når ut til massene. Det gir utslag i inntektene. [...] Ligningstallene viser tydelig at det kan lønne seg å skrive bøker – gitt at du som forfatter koncentrerer deg om rett type litteratur. Det er nemlig de forfatterne som skriver krim- og populær litteratur som gjør det skarpest på inntektsstatistikken. [...] Jo Nesbø, kjent for krimtitler som *Hodejegerne* og *Rødstrupe*, dro inn over 7 millioner kroner i fjor. [...] Både Unni Lindell og Anne Holt kan gni seg i hendene over millioninntekter fra salg av kriminallitteratur. Frid Ingulstad, som nektes plass i Forfatterforeningens gode selskap, er den ubestridte dronningen av såkalt kiosklitteratur, en betegnelse som for øvrig er omdiskutert. Serien *Sønnavind*, som henter sin handling fra arbeiderforstaden Sagene utenfor Oslo (daværende Kristiania) i 1905 er blitt svært populær, og det vises da også på Nordstrands-forfatterens inntekter. Hun tjente nesten 8 millioner kroner i fjor [2007].” (<http://www.aftenposten.no/okonomi/innland/Ingulstad-tjener-21-ganger-mer-enn-Solstad-6613480.html>; lesedato 12.12.13)

“Etter at det ble kjent at USAs spionmyndigheter leser all epost i verden, lytter til alle telefonsamtaler og leser alle chat-loggene dine, har en viss bok klatret betraktelig på bestselgerlistene. Salget av George Orwells *1984*, som beskriver et dystopisk, gjennomspionert samfunn (og som ble gitt ut i 1949) økte med tusenvis av prosent i de første dagene etter at skandalen ble kjent.” (*Morgenbladet* 14.–20. juni 2013 s. 45)

For noen bøker “their rise in popularity seems more directly linked to the emergence of [Donald] Trump as a political leader. Sinclair Lewis’s *It Can’t Happen Here*, a 1935 novel about the rise of an authoritarian fascist leader in the U.S., is currently [i 2017] the 26th most-purchased book on Amazon, and its spike on Google Trends corresponds with the U.S. presidential election on November 8.” (Sophie Gilbert i <https://www.theatlantic.com/entertainment/archive/2017/01/1984-george-orwell-alternative-facts-trump-kellyanne-conway/514259/>; lesedato 15.06.21)

“President François Hollandes ekssamboer Valérie Trierweiler overrasket og rystet Frankrike i forrige uke med boken *Merci pour ce moment*. Der beskrives den upopulære presidenten som en løgner, kyniker, og som en som er glad i luksus og forakter fattige. Bokens førsteopplag på 200 000 er revet bort, og eksens “avsløringer” er analysert i alle medier. Ni måneder er gått siden Hollandes utroskap ble offentlig avslørt og Trierweiler brøt sammen. Hevn via bok er nå som alltid den beste terapi.” (*Morgenbladet* 12.–18. september 2014 s. 39)

Politimannen Eirik Jensen ble i 2014 arrestert og tiltalt for grov korruption. I 2017 var det en langvarig rettssak som ble dekket grundig i massemediene. Det førte til stort boksalg: “Jensens to år gamle dokumentarbok rives vekk fra butikkhyllene. Det kan gjøre den korruptionstiltalte politimannen til millionær. For to år siden ga Jensen ut boka “På innsiden” om sitt liv i politiet. Nå har publikum fått fornyet interesse for boka, som rives vekk fra hyllene. [...] Pågangen gjør at flere butikker har begynt med ventelister. Norli-kjeden opplyser til NRK at nesten alle de mer enn 100 butikkene deres er utsolgt for boka. - Vi måtte bestille et nytt opplag, som vi fikk levert i går, forteller forlagssjef Anne Gaathaug i Kagge Forlag. [...] boka som etter hvert fikk tittelen “På innsiden”, ble påbegynt halvannet år før han ble arrestert, forteller Gaathaug. [...] Samtidig har Spesialenheten for politisaker tatt beslag i Jensens framtidige bokinntekter. Pengene får han riktignok tilbake dersom han ikke blir dømt.” (<https://www.nrk.no/kultur/eksplosiv-interesse-for-eirik-jensen-bok-1.13327632>; lesedato 18.01.17)

“Kjendislesere” kan gi god reklame for en bok og bidra til at den blir en bestselger. Den britiske forfatteren Ian Flemings bøker om James Bond ble enormt populære. “President Kennedy’s inclusion of Bond on his list of favorite reading helped his popularity, as did pulpit denunciations of sex, snobbery and sadism.” (Van Dover 1984 s. 158) “President Barack Obama ble sett med [den amerikanske forfatteren Jonathan] Franzens “Frihet” da han ferierte på Martha’s Vineyard i august. Spekulasjoner oppstod straks i pressen om hvordan Obama hadde fått tak i romanen ti dager før den offisielle lanseringsdatoen. Det viste seg at det var en lokal bokhandler som hadde gitt presidenten et forhåndsutsendt eksemplar.” (*Dagbladet* 19. oktober 2010 s. 61)

Forfatteren Eduardo Galeano fra Uruguay skrev over 40 bøker og ble kjent over hele Latin-Amerika. “Da en smilende Hugo Chávez overrakte Obama et eksemplar av “Latin-Amerikas åpne årer” i 2009, spratt boken fra plass nummer 62.800 til nummer to på Amazons bestselgerliste på noen timer, og salget økte med 466.378 prosent. Med dét tok Galeanos beretning om fortiden skrittet inn i den internett-drevne framtiden, og fikk sin levetid som relevant samfunnslitteratur forlenget med flere tiår.” (*Klassekampen* 18. april 2015 s. 31)

“The most spectacular illustration of online political news consumers demanding in-depth reading followed the November 2012 presidential election [i USA]. Sales skyrocketed for Nate Silver’s *The Signal and the Noise* (2012) based on his *New*

*York Times* blog, *fivethirtyeight*, which predicted an Obama landslide months before it occurred. Sales of Silver's book increased 850 % in one day, making it the second bestselling title on Amazon at the time [...]. As with Curt Brown, long complex works by journalists and bloggers such as Silver go viral when readers can access and recommend these titles easily through social media." (David Dowling i <http://www.digitalhumanities.org/dhq/vol/8/2/000180/000180.html>; lesedato 10.02.17)

"Although most of the ire of the anti-globalization movement has been directed to the rise of films produced in the U.S., almost no attention is paid by anti-globalization writers to the rise to international prominence of such authors as Naguib Mahfouz, Mario Vargas Llosa, V. S. Naipaul, or Yukio Mishima." (Tom G. Palmer i <http://www.fnf.org.ph/downloadables/Globalization%20and%20Culture.pdf>; lesedato 18.09.15)

"The early history of American bestsellers is recorded in Frank Luther Mott's *Golden Multitudes: The Story of Best Sellers in the United States* (New York, 1947), James D. Hart's *The Popular Book: A History of America's Literary Taste* (New York, 1950), and the series of compilations by Alice Payne Hackett beginning with *Fifty Years of Best Sellers, 1895-1945* (New York, 1945)." (Michael Winship i <http://www.common-place.org/vol-09/no-03/winship/>; lesedato 19.06.13)

*Making the List: A Cultural History of the American Bestseller, 1900-1999* (2001) av Michael Korda "offers an overview of the annual bestseller lists for books in the United States in the 20th century. [...] He notes how a few authors have come to dominate recent bestseller lists (1997 finds Danielle Steel with 3 (three!) of the top five fiction bestsellers, for example), and how difficult it has become for new authors to break in." (<https://www.complete-review.com/reviews/publish/kordam2.htm>; lesedato 27.02.24)

Lisa Adams og John Heaths *Why We Read What We Read: A Delightfully Opinionated Journey Through Contemporary Bestsellers* (2007) analyserer "the bestsellers of 1991 to 2006. [...] American reading habits speak volumes about our quirks – but even more about our desires and fears. [...] Lisa Adams and John Heath take a snappy tour through nearly 200 of the bestselling books to hit the shelves since 1990, hauling out their persistent themes and noodling into the American psyche. [...] Immersing themselves in the mega-selling worlds of Nora Roberts, J. K. Rowling, Dan Brown, Nicholas Sparks, Bill O'Reilly, John Grisham, John Grey, Spencer Johnson, Rick Warren, and hundreds of other authors, Adams and Heath demonstrate that top-selling books are not merely flukes, not merely predictable favorites from a handful of genre masters. Rather, their common themes stretch across genres, satisfying a reading public scouring the bookshelves for comfort and encouragement from these disparate (and perhaps unlikely) gurus. That's all well and good – if a bit repetitive – but it turns out that most of these

favorite books do exactly the opposite of what readers say they want. Ferreting out the appeal of these titles, Adams and Heath demonstrate how many inspirational books obstruct change, romances keep readers lonely, thrillers comfort, and political books undermine democratic values. They also explore those bestsellers, springing up from the oddest places at times, that bare human experience in all its messy, complicated, shades-of-gray splendor and thus give readers a more realistic shot at the growth and answers they seek. [...] Why We Read What We Read is an incisive and eye-opening journey through American culture and all its angst and anxieties, obsessions and dreams.” (<https://lisaadams.com/category/books/whywe/read/>; lesedato 27.02.24)

James W. Halls *Hit Lit: Cracking the Code of the Twentieth Century's Biggest Bestsellers* (2012) forklarer bøkers suksess blant annet med såkalte “hot button topics”. “A hot button is a burning issue of the day, such as the American civil rights movement, which was in full swing in 1960 when Harper Lee’s *To Kill a Mockingbird* was published, with its theme of racism. The novel has endured partly because, sadly, so has its theme; but even if racism is eradicated, people will always be interested in fairness. *To Kill a Mockingbird* was topical, but it also stood the test of time, unlike *The Valley of the Dolls* by Jacqueline Susann. This also hit on topics of the day but dated more than the other books on Hall’s list. So there’s a fine line in finding a topic burningly relevant to today’s world that will last into tomorrow. [...] *Hit Lit* is about more than hot button topics. Hall sees twelve features in common in the twelve bestselling novels he chose. [...] In the chapter, *The Big Picture*, Hall says that bestselling novels take place on expansive historical or social stages with that setting and its customs and beliefs getting more attention than the inner emotional world of the protagonists. This is similar to the hot button, in that if you can tap into something much bigger than the day-to-day lives of your characters then your novel has wider relevance. [...] For the most part, these novels are thoroughly sincere and heartfelt. There’s no attempt to cast furtive signals to the reader, no evidence the language is trying to say anything more than exactly what it says. It is that simplicity of tone, that artlessness, that wins the hearts of so many readers” (Yvonne Spence i <https://yvonnespence.com/book-reviews/hit-lit-by-james-w-hall-a-review/>; lesedato 27.02.24).

“Tirsdag ble årets mest hypede boknyhet, “Go Set a Watchman” sluppet. For dem som ved et mirakel ikke har fått det med seg, er dette altså den eneste boka den sky [amerikanske forfatteren] Harper Lee skrev, ved siden av klassikeren “Drep ikke en sangfugl” fra 1960. [...] To millioner eksemplarer av “Go Set a Watchman” har denne uka blitt sendt fra HarperCollins. Harper Lees andre bok er den mest forhåndsbestilte boka i forlagets historie. Bokhandlere over hele Amerika markerte utgivelsen med fester, maratonopplesninger, diskusjonsgrupper, filmvisninger og sørstatssmat.” (Dagbladet 18. juli 2015 s. 54 og 56)

Amerikaneren Michael Crichtons roman *State of Fear* (2004) ble en bestselger, fordi den er en spennende thriller og fordi den (kontroversielt) satte spørsmålstege

ved menneskeskapt global oppvarming. Romanen “promises a dilemma between hard facts and what-if scenarios implemented by ecological terrorists. NERF (National Environment Resource Fund), a mega-conglomerate environmental agency, is raising awareness for the drastic, climate altering effects of global warming, but when their über rich sponsor, philanthropist George Morton, finds opposing scientific evidence, the structure and the funding of NERF is challenged. When George disappears in a fatal car accident, only his whiney attorney (Peter Evans) and hot assistance (Sarah Jones) are left to unravel the true mystery of what George discovered. Meanwhile, a mysterious interloper, John Kenner, and his marine like assistant, Sanjon Thapa, arrive on the scene to shed some true light onto the myth of global warming and the greed of NERF. [...] Personally, to step outside my reviewing self for a moment, I’ve always found global warming to ring more as an alarmist fairy tale and so was somewhat inclined to accept Crichton’s proposition that the theory was actually fantasy.” (Frances Carden i <https://www.readerslane.com/reviews-title/state-of-fear/>; lesedato 23.04.24)

“Seven-figure bidding wars still break out over potential blockbusters, even though these battles often turn out to be follies. The quest for publishing profits in an economy of scarcity drives the money toward a few big books. So does the gradual disappearance of book reviewers and knowledgeable booksellers, whose enthusiasm might have rescued a book from drowning in obscurity. When consumers are overwhelmed with choices, some experts argue, they all tend to buy the same well-known thing. These trends point toward what the literary agent called “the rich getting richer, the poor getting poorer.” A few brand names at the top, a mass of unwashed titles down below, the middle hollowed out: the book business in the age of Amazon mirrors the widening inequality of the broader economy.” (George Packer i 2014; [http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2014/02/17/140217fa\\_fact\\_packer?currentPage=all](http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2014/02/17/140217fa_fact_packer?currentPage=all); lesedato 10.04.14) Den såkalte Matteus-effekten er oppkalt etter evangelisten Matteus, som skriver (i kapittel 25, vers 29): “For den som har, skal få, og det i overflod. Men den som ikke har, skal bli fratatt selv det han har.”

Thomas Whitesides bok *The Blockbuster Complex* (1981) handler bl.a. om vår “big-company, big-book era of publishing [...] the requisite bases: the mergers and conglomerate takeovers; author TV appearances; fierce paperback competition; chain store merchandising; agent “orchestration”; movie tie-ins” (<https://www.kirkusreviews.com/book-reviews/thomas-whiteside-6/the-blockbuster-complex/>; lesedato 11.06.18). Dette inngår i en “US-Bestsellerkultur” (Waldow 2011 s. 35).

En såkalt “stille bestselger” selger godt “basert på “jungeltelegrafen” og “fra munn til munn” mellom lesere (Kristian Strøm-Fladstad i *Bok og bibliotek* nr. 4 i 2015 s. 72). “E. L. James’ trilogi *Fifty Shades of Grey* fra 2011 begynte i det små, som episoder basert på Stephenie Meyers *Twilight*-serie, publisert på nettsider for *fan fiction*. Etter flytting av teksten til egen nettside og ulike omskrivninger, ble den første boken gjort tilgjengelig både som e-bok og såkalt Trykk på forespørsel (*print*

*on demand)* gjennom det nettbasert forlaget The Writers' Coffee Shop. Med begrenset markedsføringsbudsjett satser forlaget på eget nettforum, blogger og jungel-telegrafen. Trilogien har nå solgt over 40 millioner i 37 land. James var en rik kvinne lenge før bøkene ble plukket opp av pocketgiganten Vintage Books, som ga dem ut på nytt i april i år.” (*Morgenbladet* 28. september–4. oktober 2012 s. 36–37)

*Fifty Shades of Grey* (2011) er en erotisk roman av den britiske forfatteren Erika L. James, som ble en bestselger. Denne romanen “moved into the next stage of blockbusterdom with rampant speculation, bets, and online votes concerning the actors who would play the main roles in the upcoming movie. The paratextual impact was considerable, as potential viewers get to imagine the story through the prism of different casts.” (Margaret Mackey i <https://journals.aau.dk/index.php/ak/article/view/2832/2343>; lesedato 08.11.22)

Amerikanske Anna Todd opplevde at hennes kjærlighetsroman for ungdom *After* ble lest 1,5 milliarder ganger på nettstedet Wattpad og solgt i 15 millioner eksemplarer ga den ble utgitt som bok i 2014 (Alexandre Gefen i <https://journals.openedition.org/fixxion/12042>; lesedato 27.02.24).

“Hørt om Riley Sager? JP Delaney? Og er de kvinner eller menn (eller noe mer moderne)? The Guardian melder at den nyeste trenden i spekulativ markedsføring av bestselgerbøker er å spille ned kjønnsidentiteten til – trommehvirvel – mannlige forfattere. Gitt at kvinner er overrepresentert blant lesere, og den generelle feminiseringen av samfunnet, er det kanskje mest overraskende at forfattere som J.K. Rowling har sett seg nødt til å gjøre den omvendte operasjonen såpass lenge, men nå har altså vinden snudd.” (*Morgenbladet* 28. juli–3. august 2017 s. 38)

“Lee Child er en av verdens mestselgende og mest prisvinnende forfattere. Han har toppet bestselgerlistene i prestisjetunge publikasjoner som New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Publishers Weekly, Washington Post, Los Angeles Times og Sunday Times. Bøkene hans utkommer i over 90 land, og hvert femte sekund kjøpes det en Lee Child-bok et eller annet sted i verden.” (<https://www.cappelen-damm.no/forfattere/Lee%20Child-scid:26414>; lesedato 11.07.16)

“Mum-of-two Amanda Prowse began writing when she was diagnosed with cancer and had to quit her three jobs [...] Forced to rely on credit cards, the couple found themselves £ 6,000 in debt, and down to their last £ 20 in 2012. Amanda said: “We'd been visiting my parents in London and we didn't even have enough petrol money to get home. I knew it was time to go back to work.” [...] But just three days later, Amanda, who had begun writing while she recovered from the illness, was handed a £ 5,000 advance by an agent who had been given her book, Poppy Day, by a journalist. [...] The cheque came as a shock to Amanda, who had suffered countless rejections after sending a copy of her manuscript to “everyone”, but been told that “no one wanted to read a love story set between London and

Afghanistan". The deal meant she didn't have to return to working multiple jobs, although the family were still forced to rely on Simeon's military wage for the next year. Amanda said: "It wasn't until 2013, after I'd written two or three bestsellers, that I got my first big cheque of about £ 50,000 or £ 60,000." Amanda has now written 23 books, which have been published in 22 different languages, and she makes over £ 1million a year as a bestselling author. She produces three or four bestsellers each year" (<https://www.thesun.co.uk/fabulous/4690969/amanda-prowse-author-millionaire-single-mum-poppy-day/>; lesedato 16.10.17).

"Det er så mye bullshit-litteratur som sirkulerer! Mye av det som får bred oppmerksomhet i media, for eksempel. Og ingen sier at det er bullshit. Alt skal liksom være like bra og ha like stor vekt. Men alt er ikke like bra. Alt har ikke like stor vekt. Såne holdninger er en hån mot litteraturen, mot oss som leser. Det siste tiåret er skillet mellom litteratur og bestselgende, kommersielle romansuksesser blitt visket ut i den norske litterære offentligheten. Det å selge er blitt et kvalitetstegn, et litterært kvalitetstegn. Selger du bra, så er litteraturen din bra. Det er ikke sånn det er, men dette er blitt den mediale fortellingen. Massene vil ha brød og sirkus, de vil ha underholdning, de vil slippe bort fra seg selv. Og litteraturen gjør det motsatte, det litterære språket holder såret åpent i oss. Og det gjør ofte vondt – fordi språket får oss til å se alt vi ikke har hatt språk til å se." (Hanne Ørstavik i *Morgenbladet* 1.–7. august 2003 s. 18)

Journalisten og forfatteren Morten Strøksnes "hadde nylig sin jomfruseilas med Jo Nesbøs forfatterskap, som leser av hans ferskeste bok *Blod på snø*. Han beskriver romanen som en "tynn suppe, med tegneserieaktige karakterer, og et plott på krykker. Klisjeene ramler som små takras ned sidene." Strøksnes spør seg hvordan det er mulig å selge hundretusener eksemplarer av dette, og gir raskt sin analyse: "Man trenger ikke være en lynskarp politietterforsker for å finne svaret. *Blod på snø* er overalt. I kioskene, dagligvarebutikkene, supermarketene, bensinstasjonene og pølsebodene. Ja, selv bakeriene, fiskehandlene og musikkbutikkene har store stabler liggende ved kassen. Bokhandlene har den selvsagt også. Hele vegger er tapetert med bilder av forfatteren, mens det står paller rundt på gulvene og ved kassen. Og vi teppebombes av reklame for boken, via boards, plakater og egne stativer, samt via nett, avisar og TV. Siden jeg har googlet Nesbø, popper bilder av boken opp hver gang jeg går på nettet." [...] Strøksnes har liten sans for påstanden om at slike bestselgere gir nødvendig drahjelp til smalere litteratur: "Det sies ofte at storselgtere som Nesbø drar med seg den smalere og bedre litteraturen, men det er neppe sant. For i likhet med mye annet i den nye økonomien virker det som om vinneren tar alt ... Han er ikke et lokomotiv som drar med seg mindre forfattere. Han er en bulldoser som skyfler alt annet unna. Logikken er blitt så fremtredende at svært mange norske bokhandlere er blitt skygger av seg selv", skriver Strøksnes og legger til: "Når så du sist en reklame for en diktsamling, en kritikerrost roman skrevet av en som ikke allerede er kjendis, eller en sakprosabok skrevet av andre enn Lars Monsen, som mer eller mindre er Jo Nesbø på et hundespann gjennom ødemarken?" [...] Likevel, når bransjen skal forsvere sine privilegerte ordninger, snakker de alltid om mangfold, bredde og

kulturpolitisk ansvar – altså det stikk motsatte av det systemet fremmer. [...] forfattere med større produksjoner får nok i mye større grad lov til å utgi halvdårige hvileskær.” (<https://bok365.no/artikkel/til-helvete-med-bokbransjen/#.VV22tPntmko>; lesedato 04.03.22)

“Dype innsikter kan settes på formel, som Einsteins lov [...]. Den som vil være à jour nå, må kjenne  $r > g$ . Den fortetter årets, trolig tiårets, viktigste samfunnsvitenskapelige bok: Thomas Pikettys *Kapitalen i det 21ste århundre*, en murstein på 700 sider. Den kom på fransk i fjor, på engelsk i år. Den er nå Amazons mest solgte, og på tredje plass for sakbøker i New York Times. Suksessen i USA har slått tilbake i Frankrike: der er boken ikke til å få før 15. mai. På Google får “Thomas Piketty” 3,4 millioner treff. Sist en bok i politisk økonomi hadde et slikt gjennomslag, var i 1958, da John Kenneth Galbraiths *The Affluent Society* lå på bestselgerlistene i ukevis. Den myntet uttrykk som “offentlig fattigdom i privat velstand” og “den konvensjonelle visdom”. [...] avkastningen på kapital etter skatt ( $r$ ) er større enn den økonomiske veksten ( $g$ ). Altså:  $r > g$ . Mer enn det: Kapitalen konsentreres. Den bygges og arves innen næringslivseliten: Det du når, skyldes ikke det du gjør, men det du får. Ulikhetene overføres gjennom arv; rikdom overføres i familiedyner.” (*Morgenbladet* 9.–15. mai 2014 s. 48)

“Blir bøker bedre dersom forfatterne visste hvordan bøkene ble lest? Det finner de som bruker Scribd ut. Det er et slags Spotify for bøker, der brukerne mot en sum får adgang til et digitalt bibliotek. Men Scribd beholder også data på hvordan bøker leses: Hvilke bøker folk gir opp etter ti sider og når de hopper rett til slutten. Disse data tilbys forfattere, som kan optimalisere sitt produkt.” (*Dagbladet* 3. januar 2014 s. 53)

“Scientists have developed an algorithm which can analyse a book and predict with 84 per cent accuracy whether or not it will be a commercial success. A technique called statistical stylometry, which mathematically examines the use of words and grammar, was found to be “surprisingly effective” in determining how popular a book would be.” The group of computer scientists from Stony Brook University in New York said that a range of factors determine whether or not a book will enjoy success, including “interestingness”, novelty, style of writing, and how engaging the storyline is, but admit that external factors such as luck can also play a role. [...] By downloading classic books from the Project Gutenberg archive they were able to analyse texts with their algorithm and compare its predictions to historical information on the success of the work. Everything from science fiction to classic literature and poetry was included. It was found that the predictions matched the actual popularity of the book 84 per cent of the time. They found several trends that were often found in successful books, including heavy use of conjunctions such as “and” and “but” and large numbers of nouns and adjectives. Less successful work tended to include more verbs and adverbs and relied on words that explicitly describe actions and emotions such as “wanted”, “took” or “promised”, while more successful books favoured verbs that describe thought processes such as

“recognised” or “remembered”.” (<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/news/10560533/Scientists-find-secret-to-writing-a-best-selling-novel.html>; lesedato 24.03.14)

*The Bestseller Code: Anatomy of the Blockbuster Novel* (2016) av Jodie Archer og Matthew L. Jockers prøver å forutse hvilke bøker som blir bestselgere i USA ved bruk av en modell med mange faktorer inkludert i en algoritme, et såkalt “bestseller-ometer”. Archer og Jockers “analysed bestselling books using an algorithm. [...] If it is your ambition to write a bestselling work of fiction, you would be well advised to focus on certain topics and to avoid others. Among the topics you should focus on are, for instance, marriage, funerals, guns, schools, children, mothers and vaguely threatening technologies. Among the topics you should avoid are sex, drugs and rock’n’roll. [...] the numbers generated by the text-mining algorithm created by two Stanford University scholars, Jodie Archer and Matthew L Jockers, in order to crunch the data on 20,000 New York Times bestselling novels. [...] it leaves you with the distinct impression of the New York Times bestseller list as an oblique portrait of cultural psychopathy. Rendered in such stark terms, the preferences of the American reading public – dead and injured bodies: hell, yes; other types of bodies: thank you, no – can seem overwhelmingly bleak. “The reading public prefers to see the stock market described,” as the authors impassively report, “more so than the human face.” The data has not just been crunched on bestselling themes; the algorithm also has wisdom to impart on the question of literary language and style, too. Certain words, we learn, tend to crop up with startling frequency in novels that hit the Times list. The word “thing”, for instance, can be read six times more often in bestsellers than non-bestsellers. Simple, straight-forward language is, perhaps unsurprisingly, much favoured. [...] Will authors now write their books to conform to the algorithmic model for success? Will agents and editors consult the machine before making a call on a manuscript? Will readers be enticed to part with their money by stickers proclaiming that a book “Scored a 97 on the bestseller algorithm”? What will this mean for the future of publishing?” (Mark O’Connell i <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/sep/25/the-bestseller-code-review-dismal-science>; lesedato 26.04. 22)

Filmer og TV bidrar til å skape “transmedia bestsellers” (Fuller og Sedo 2023 s. 4). Jon Helgason, Sara Kärrholm og Ann Steiner redigerte i 2014 boka *Hype: Bestsellers and Literary Culture*. “Romanserier säljer alltså bäst och det är viktigt med transmediering, det vill säga att ett litterärt verk överförs till andra medier [...] Till detta kommer synergieffekter via försäljningen av muggar, kepsar, musmattor, dataspel och dylikt som kan kopplas till bästsäljarna. Det ena mediet befrämjar det andra. Steiner söker textmässiga kvaliteter och gemensamma faktorer som kan förklara den häpnadsväckande framgången för super/mega/hypersäljarna, och finner att spänning och emotionell laddning är två minsta gemensamma nämnare. Det låter möjligt enkelt, men det är ett axiom inom bokindustrin i dag att man inte kan förutse en bästsäljare, vilket bekymrar många företrädare för branschen,

eftersom den blivit beroende av sådana succéer. Internationella förlag kan publicera upp till 5000 titlar om året i förhoppningen att någon av dem ska nå bästsäljarstatus, och allra helst givetvis super/mega/hypersäljarnivå.” (Dag Hedman i <https://uu.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:913216/FULLTEXT01.pdf>; lesedato 16.08.18)

“Albert Zuckerman: *Writing a Blockbuster Novel* (1994). Det som gjør denne så interessant er at forfatteren var agenten til Ken Follett, og bruker hans utkast for å vise hvordan et manus kan forbedres.” (*A-magasinet* 28. juli 2017 s. 39)

“A before-and-after example of the Internet’s effect on the publishing world is Lorenzo Carcaterra’s *Sleepers* (1995) and James Frey’s *A Million Little Pieces* (2003). Both were mega-bestellers whose publication dates bookend the Internet’s ascension in daily life. Both were published as memoirs, and both had their factual accuracy challenged. The mass media reported the controversy around *Sleepers* by copy-and-pasting publisher press releases and quoting book agents. *A Million Little Pieces* was put under the Internet’s collective magnifying glass thanks to an investigation by the amateur web site *The Smoking Gun*. This people-powered exposé became a nightmare for James Frey, and his reputation never recovered. [...] Carcaterra largely escaped unscathed in 1995 thanks to the controversy being framed by the media as a publishing industry squabble.” (Jim Nelson i <https://j-nelson.net/2021/07/twenty-years-later-b-r-myers-a-readers-manifesto/>; lesedato 04.03.22)

Den tyske forleggaren Götz Kubitschek er en høyreekstrem aktivist som fikk en salgssuksess da hans forlag publiserte boka *Finis Germania* av historikeren Rolf Peter Sieferle. Denne boka “vart ikkje tatt med på bestseljarlista i Der Spiegel, fordi avisar ikkje ville bidra til meir sal av boka. [...] det styrkar berre tilhengjarane hans i trua på at makthavarane sensurerer desse ideane, og dersom folk berre fekk høyre dei, så ville dei forstå at ideane er gode. Men at ein ikkje bør late som dei ikkje finst, tyder heller ikkje at ideane er verdt å diskutere offentleg. Treng vi å ta debatten om vi skal ha ein remigrasjon? Skal vi diskutere om Tyskland har fått for mykje skuld for andre verdskrig? Openbert ikkje.” (*Morgenbladet* 7.–13. mai 2021 s. 38-39)

I 1991 “Renan Demirkan’s semiautobiographical account of conflicting loyalties in a Turkish family in Germany, *Schwarzer Tee mit drei Stück Zucker* (“Black Tea with Three Sugars”), becomes a bestseller.” (Canton, Cleary m.fl. 2016 s. 324)

“The 30 -year-old female protagonist is expecting a baby, not from a Turkish man, but an Austrian. Whilst being in the maternity ward awaiting a caesarean section in a Cologne hospital, she lets the different periods of her life parade in front of her. She has associations about the early childhood in Turkey, about her parents and her little sister in Germany when she entered school, etc.; all being often disturbed by the going-ons on the ward. [...] Here we sometimes meet a variation of the oppression of the Turkish women by men, and them being “rescued” by a German. [...] After three decades of living and working in Germany the Turkish parents

return to Ankara, to spend the rest of their lives there. Alas, the father reacts with a circulatory collapse to the meanwhile changed environment, and returns to Germany only after one week. Shortly afterwards, the mother returns to Germany, too. To her as well, the return to Turkey has become a return to a strange country.” (<https://www.uni-trier.de/fileadmin/fb2/JAP/Berichte/J-Bungaku/Jaschke.pdf>; lesedato 06.02.24)

“ “Platform” is trade press lingo for an author’s ability to generate the kind of free publicity in newspapers and magazines, through radio and television appearances, and on the Internet that can move product, which, like a tube of toothpaste or a six-pack of Diet Coke, is what a book is.” (Donald Craig Mitchell i [https://www.huffpost.com/entry/joe-mcginniss-the-rogue\\_b\\_977070](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/joe-mcginniss-the-rogue_b_977070); lesedato 04.03.22) “Every writer wants his or her name on the bestseller list, but these days it helps to have a proven following. T. Harv Eker, who hosts “success” seminars, recently pushed his first book – “Secrets of the Millionaire Mind” [...] Mr. Eker has succeeded thanks largely to a “platform” – industry lingo for a regular column, frequent TV appearances or recurring speaking gigs that allow an author to pitch to a ready-made audience. [...] Such writers are more attractive to publishers because they can generate media exposure and free publicity. [...] Mr. Eker’s agent, Bonnie Solow, president of Solow Literary Enterprises Inc. in Santa Monica, Calif., says such results underline how the nonfiction publishing business has changed. “Today I need to know your credentials, your speaking calendar, your media contacts, and whether you have an active Web site,” she says.” (Jeffrey Trachtenberg i <https://www.wsj.com/articles/SB111197528178990604>; lesedato 26.04.22)

“Tio år gamla boken Pandemi av Björn Olsen blev bästsäljare på nytt som POD [print on demand] [...] Boken Pandemi från 2010 utgiven på nytt 2020 med ett nytt omslag. Författaren Björn Olsen har blivit efterfrågad efter Covid-19-pandemin – och så även hans bok. [...] Norstedts insåg att en slutsåld bok från 2010 var aktuell igen. På en förmiddag gjordes en ny utgivning via print on demand och vecka 14 var boken Pandemi av Björn Olsen den sjätte mest sålda fackboken i Sverige. [...] Olsen, överläkare och professor i infektionssjukdomar. Han är även “ornitolog och expert på fågelinfluensa” och har i Corona-pandemin följaktligen blivit en efterfrågad gäst i media. [...] Även om boken har tio år på nacken så finns ett scenario formulerat som stämmer in exakt på hur coronaviruset spridit sig. Och det skulle helt enkelt gå snabbare att ge ut den som POD, säger förläggaren Peter Karlsson som därför mejlade till författaren på onsdagsmorgonen den 11 mars, tog fram nytt avtal och letade fram en pdf av inlagan i arkivet. [...] I inlagan ändrade vi bara kolofonen. [...] Boken har legat högt uppe på både Adlibris och Bokus topplistor, säger Olle Lidbom, kommunikationschef på Norstedts. Faktum är att boken sålt så bra att när man studerar Bokhandlareföreningens och Förläggareföreningens topplista för vecka 14 (30 mars-5 april) hittar du Pandemi på sjätte plats i listan över de fackböcker som sålde bäst den veckan. [...] gamla böcker får ett nytt liv. I det här fallet av en stor omvärdshändelse.” (Sölve Dahlgren i <https://>

[www.boktugg.se/2020/04/16/tio-ar-gamla-boken-pandemi-av-bjorn-olsen-blev-bastsaljare-pa-nytt-som-pod/](http://www.boktugg.se/2020/04/16/tio-ar-gamla-boken-pandemi-av-bjorn-olsen-blev-bastsaljare-pa-nytt-som-pod/); lesedato 17.08.23)

I mars 2020 skrev NRK om den nye aktualiteten til romanen *Pesten* av Albert Camus: “Bok-klassiker fra 1947 er global bestselger. [...] Koronaviruset fører til økt etterspørsel etter litterære skildringer av epidemier. Særlig gjelder dette klassikeren ”Pesten” av Albert Camus. Den fransk-algeriske forfatteren fikk nobelprisvinneren i litteratur i 1957. På den italienske nettbutikken Libreria IBS steg boka fra 71. plass til 3. plass allerede i februar, rapporterer Repubblica. I Sør-Korea kapret ”Pesten” andre plassen på nettbutikken Yes24 på søndag. Den er ikke på bestselgerlister både for e-bøker, papirbøker og lydbøker, melder Korea Herald. I Japan har salget syv- eller åttedoblet seg, og boka trykkes nå opp i ytterligere 4000 eksemplarer, melder Republic World. Britiske Penguin opplever en salgsøkning på 150 prosent i forhold til samme tid i fjor. De har hatt ”Pesten” i salg siden den kom ut i 1947 og påskynder nå et opptrykk, fordi boka er utsolgt på Amazon, ifølge The Guardian. [...] Romanen skildret et utbrudd av byllepest i den algeriske kystbyen Oran tidlig på 40-tallet. En død rotte med blod rundt snuten er det første illevarslende tegnet. Hovedpersonen og fortelleren Dr. Rieux varsler tidlig om smittefarene. Men myndighetene nekter lenge å bruke ordet pest av frykt for å skremme befolkningen. Ettersom epidemien raser, skildrer Camus hvordan karantene, frykt og uvirksomhet virker inn på innbyggerne. [...] Romanen har gjerne blitt lest allegorisk, som et bilde på nazistenes inntog i Frankrike. I disse dager virker den rett og slett som en realistisk skildring av et samfunn grep av epidemi. [...] På norsk har boka vært utsolgt fra forlaget i flere år. Oversettelsen fra 1949 var dessuten utdatert språklig. Men en ny utgave er like rundt hjørnet. [...] Camus klarer å beskrive visse stemninger og hva som skjer med mennesket i isolasjon og stillstand. Det er en åndelig krise såvel som en fysisk en.” (Siss Vik i <https://www.nrk.no/kultur/korona-gjor-klassiker-til-bestselger-1.14947155>; lesedato 29.09.23)

“Alle bøker som er gode, er gode fordi de åpner tankene våre og gir oss nye språklige og kritiske perspektiver. Ofte er de også gode fordi de, noen ganger overraskende, taler direkte til oss og vår situasjon. Et nylig og opplagt eksempel er de hundretusenvis av leserne over hele verden som [under korona-pandemien] har gjenoppdaget Albert Camus’ *Pesten*.” (<https://www.morgenbladet.no/boker/kommentar/2020/06/26/i-ukenefremover-gir-vi-deg-boker-for-var-tid-skriver-ane-farsethas/>; lesedato 26.06.20)

Sakprosabøker kan bli bestselgere fordi de er sensasjonelle, praktisk nyttige, provoserende eller av andre grunner. Boka *Why Johnny Can't Read And What You Can Do About It* (1955) av amerikaneren Rudolf Flesch kritiserte måten den første leseopplæringen ble gjennomført på i skoler i USA. Boka tok opp det alvorlige samfunnsproblemene med analfabetisme og dårlige leseferdigheter, og lå 30 uker på USAs bestselgerliste (Renate Valtin i [https://www.pedocs.de/volltexte/2020/21065/pdf/Valtin\\_1998\\_Der\\_neue\\_Methodenstreit.pdf](https://www.pedocs.de/volltexte/2020/21065/pdf/Valtin_1998_Der_neue_Methodenstreit.pdf); lesedato 27.12.24).

“Prins Harrys bok “Spare” [2023] er sommerens mest etterlatte bok, hevder reiseselskap [...] Prins Harrys selvbiografi er sommerens “mest kastede” bok blant ferierende [...] hevder et reiseselskap. Hertugen av Sussex’ oppsiktsvekkende bok “Spare” skal angivelig ha blitt lagt igjen på hotellrom, kastet i søppelbøtter og etterlatt ved bassengkanten på forskjellige feriesteder i Spania, Hellas og Tyrkia. Reiseselskapet “On The Beach” sier de har funnet over 100 kopier av boken denne sommeren, skriver New York Post. [...] Hittegodskontorene på våre mest populære feriesteder er fulle av kopier av “Spare”. [...] Prins Harrys bok slo rekorden for raskest selgende sakprosabok noensinne den første uken etter utgivelsen. Hans avslørende beretning om den britiske kongefamilien og hans personlige liv solgte 1,43 millioner kopier den første dagen den var til salgs i Storbritannia, USA og Canada, ifølge Guinness World Records.” (<https://www.msn.com/nb-no/nyheter/other/prins-harrys-bok-spare-er-sommerens-mest-etterlatte-bok-hevder-reise-selskap/>; lesedato 25.07.23)

“Siden 2020 har bokelskere på Tiktok funnet sammen i subkulturen og emneknaggen #booktok. Videoer derfra ble i 2022 sett over 91 milliarder ganger, og fenomenet har frembrakt en rekke bestselgere” (*Morgenbladet* 7.–13. juli 2023 s. 38). Videoer med bokanbefalinger på den sosiale nettplattformen TikTok kalles Booktok. “BookTokers demonstrably pushed specific books like the young adult (YA) queer dystopia *They All Die at the End* by Adam Silvera and Madeline Miller’s novel *The Song of Achilles* onto bestseller lists.” (Fuller og Sedo 2023 s. 12) “If there is one type of reader who can create a bestseller, it is a social media influencer who recommends books. Often acting as a trusted other for avid readers who go online to seek out their next book choice, influencers have a significant role to play in reading recommendation culture by lending both legitimacy and visibility to the books that they review, discuss, and display across social media platforms.” (Fuller og Sedo 2023 s. 33)

“BookTube and Bookstagram [på de sosiale nettplattformene Youtube og Instagram], the names given to the niches where reading cultures operate on those platforms [...] an affective and relational practice of ‘loving a book in public’ [...] Novels were propelled onto the bestseller lists, regardless of whether they were new publications or had been on shelves for years” (Fuller og Sedo 2023 s. 33-34).

Thor Heyerdahl “hadde store bokhonorarer i Sovjet som han ikke kunne ta ut av landet. Den eneste utveien var å bruke rublene på kaviar, vaktelegg, sibirsk bjørnestek og lokal champagne.” (*Aftenpostens* magasin *Historie*, nr. 11 i 2017 s. 50)

### ***Uncle Tom's Cabin***

Den amerikanske forfatteren Harriet Beecher Stowes roman *Uncle Tom's Cabin; or, Life Among the Lowly* (1852) har blitt oppfattet som det eneste svært

politisk effektive litterære verket i hele litteraturhistorien (Philip Fischer i Bohn 1987 s. 182). Den “is widely recognized as the great American bestseller of the nineteenth century – the “greatest book of its kind” as its original publisher styled it. Written by Harriet Beecher Stowe, the daughter of the leading American evangelical of the time and wife of one of our first biblical scholars, the novel was her impassioned response to the enactment of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, which implicated all Americans, both northern and southern, in support of the moral outrage of chattel slavery. Stowe, who had been supplementing her family income by publishing stories and sketches since the 1830s, was regularly contributing material to the moderate antislavery *National Era* in March 1851, when she wrote to its editor, Gamaliel Bailey, announcing that she was at work on a story that addressed the evils of slavery. Initially she expected that it would extend to only three or four installments, but eventually the text of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* expanded to make up many more, which were published weekly from June 6, 1851, to April 1, 1852. The work attracted a considerable following as a serial, but not until its publication in book form would it truly become a bestseller.” (Michael Winship i <http://www.common-place.org/vol-09/no-03/winship/>; lesedato 19.06.13)

Stowe “published *Uncle Tom's Cabin* first as forty-one weekly installments in a nationally circulated antislavery newspaper, *The National Era*, so that fifty thousand people had read it before the book went to press. The controversy the story elicited was already enormous when the books came on sale – among the hate mail she received from the South was a small package containing a slave's severed ear. Such a threat, appalling as it is, attests to the impact the novel had on the popular imagination of the day. [...] When she visited England in 1853 (two years after the publication of that first installment in *The National Era*), she was greeted by huge crowds, with fans climbing over her carriage in an effort to catch a glimpse of their idol. A large, hardbound volume in the Stowe Visitor Center recalls what must have been a high point for the activist. The volume is one of a set of twenty-six that were presented to her by the women of Britain with a message begging their American sisters to work for the abolition of slavery, followed by more than half a million signatures.” (Tom Christopher i <https://www.neh.gov/humanities/2012/mayjune/feature/parlor-politics>; lesedato 25.10.22)

“The first edition of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was published March 20, 1852, in two volumes priced \$1.00, \$1.50, or \$2.00, depending on the binding. From the start, the book was a hit. The first printing of five thousand copies was exhausted in a few days, and by April 1, a second run of five thousand had been produced. In mid-April, Jewett announced that ten thousand copies had been sold and that “three paper mills are constantly at work, manufacturing the paper, and three power presses are working twenty-four hours per day, in printing it, and more than one hundred bookbinders are incessantly plying their trade to bind them, and still it has been impossible, as yet, to supply the demand.” By mid-May fifty thousand copies had been sold, seventy-five thousand copies by mid-September, and in mid-

October one hundred and twenty-five thousand were claimed. For the 1852 holiday season, Jewett produced two further editions: three thousand copies of an expensive one-volume gift edition with over one hundred vignette illustrations, costing \$2.50 to \$5.00 depending on the binding, and an inexpensive “edition for the millions,” selling for only thirty-seven and a half cents, of which fifty thousand had been produced by year’s end.” (Michael Winship i <http://www.common-place.org/vol-09/no-03/winship/>; lesedato 19.06.13)

“All this made Stowe wealthy – Jewett paid her over twenty thousand dollars in royalties by the end of 1852 – and world renowned. The first London edition of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* appeared in late April or early May, and the work was reported to have sold over one million copies in various British editions before year’s end. It was soon also reprinted, in both English and translation, on the European continent and around the world. But the *Uncle Tom* phenomenon extended beyond the novel to offshoots – children’s versions, sheet music, figurines, games, muslin handkerchiefs, among others – not to mention a multitude of responses, known as “Anti-Uncle Tom” novels, which attempted to counter the work’s antislavery sentiments. In the United States, dramatizations of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* became a staple of American melodrama well into the twentieth century.” (Michael Winship i <http://www.common-place.org/vol-09/no-03/winship/>; lesedato 19.06.13)

“A bestseller? Certainly. Less widely recognized is that the market for the original text of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* soon dried up in the United States. Jewett produced something like three hundred and ten thousand copies of the work during its first year of publication, but subsequent demand remained small for many years. Forced to suspend payment of his debts during the panic of 1857, Jewett produced another small printing in late 1859, shortly before he finally left the publishing business entirely in August 1860. The rights to *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* were then acquired by another Boston publisher, Ticknor and Fields, which first published a small printing of only two hundred seventy copies in November 1862. During the 1860s, that firm and its successors produced just under eight thousand copies. But sales were increasing: during the 1870s, nearly twenty thousand copies were produced, and during the five-year period from 1886 to 1890 just under one hundred and ten thousand copies. By the time that *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* entered the public domain in 1893, the work had [...] become a steady seller.” (Michael Winship i <http://www.common-place.org/vol-09/no-03/winship/>; lesedato 19.06.13)

“The initial success of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* was no doubt due, in part, to its topicality: the Fugitive Slave Act meant that no American could ignore the implications of slavery any longer. Stowe’s depiction of that “peculiar institution” stressed not only its cruelty but also the ways in which it compromised the values of Christianity and domesticity that were so much a part of the dominant culture of Victorian middle-class America. The promotional activities of its publisher J. P. Jewett also played a role. Jewett was recognized by his contemporaries as an

innovative book promoter at a time when a truly national market for books was first established in the United States. His successes included not only *Uncle Tom's Cabin* but also the second great bestselling domestic novel of the decade – *The Lamplighter* (1855) by Susanna Cummins. In promoting *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Jewett spent thousands of dollars for advertising before the work was published, and upon its publication he traveled to Washington to push the book to all leading senators, both northern and southern, a tactic that surely served to draw attention to it. Front matter added to the new 1878 edition of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* made sure to stress that this was a work that championed the downtrodden, now generalized over ten years after the emancipation of the African American slaves, but also the work's status as an American classic that had been recognized worldwide. It was promoted as a book that deserved to be read.” (Michael Winship i <http://www.common-place.org/vol-09/no-03/winship/>; lesedato 19.06.13)

“*Uncle Tom's Cabin* achieved remarkable sales in Britain, where it was not protected by copyright [...] If copyright can be viewed as restricting the free flow of books and the information that they contain, as is often claimed, then perhaps we need to explore just how copyright also fosters that flow by controlling the markets that enable it. Surely it is no coincidence that bestseller lists emerged in the United States only after the nation passed an international copyright law in 1891.”  
(Michael Winship i <http://www.common-place.org/vol-09/no-03/winship/>; lesedato 19.06.13)

“Freedom seekers all over the globe have cited it as an inspiration. In Russia, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was supposed to have helped bring about the freeing of the serfs in 1861. Antislavery agitators in Brazil and Cuba used it to fuel their work, and it was the first American novel to be translated into Chinese – suggesting an alternative to that nation’s crumbling imperial hierarchy. The central idea [...] is that we – citizens of all races – are “still working to fulfill the promise of America.”” (Tom Christopher i <https://www.neh.gov/humanities/2012/mayjune/feature/parlor-politics>; lesedato 25.10.22)

### **Peyton Place**

I 1956 ga den amerikanske forfatteren Grace Metalious ut romanen *Peyton Place*, en fortelling om skitne hemmeligheter bak de anstendige fasadene i en fiktiv småby i New England. Romanens tittel ble “synonymous in the public mind with Fearlessly Salacious Truth-Telling On Small-Town Life” (<https://grandoldmovies.wordpress.com/2016/09/07/astor-place/>; lesedato 16.08.24). Boka ble raskt en suksess, og allerede etter ti dager var det solgt 60.000 eksemplarer. I løpet av noen år steg salget slik at boka passerte Margaret Mitchells *Gone With the Wind* i antall solgte eksemplarer. Metalious’ roman solgte mer enn ti millioner fram til midten av 1960-tallet.

“Located in a small New Hampshire town, Peyton Place is based on a true tale of patricide, involving a young girl who had been sexually abused by her father for years.” (Ardis Cameron i <https://www.islandinstitute.org/working-waterfront/imagining-coastal-maine/>; lesedato 08.11.22)

Written by Grace Metalious, the young wife of a local school principal, it took off like fireworks, bringing the open secrets of incest, homosexuality, and abortion into sharp national relief. In an age when the average first novel sold 2,000 copies, it sold 60,000 copies within the first ten days. Soon, it would become the fastest selling book ever published and the best-seller of the century. [...] “New England towns are small and they are often pretty,” she explained to reporters, “but they are not just pictures on a Christmas card. To a tourist these towns look as peaceful as a postcard picture, but if you go beneath that picture, it’s like turning a rock with your foot – all kinds of strange things crawl out.” While critics split over the merits of the book, thousands of readers felt empowered by a story that finally reflected their lives. Hundreds wrote the author to let her know. “Your characters are all true to life!” a New Hampshire woman wrote. “One of them is my uncle!” “I live in Peyton Place,” a Belfast woman told Grace. And not a few saw redemption in the tale. “I had an abortion too. Thank you for pleading my case.” [...] as Grace Metalious understood, and many readers discovered, if we can’t imagine the trauma of unwanted pregnancy or the abuse young girls and women face in our own backyards, then we will remain powerless to stop it. From the letters readers sent to Grace Metalious, we can see the depth of emotion her story of incest, rape, and abortion aroused and the hopes her female characters put into play, and the pain and longing that echoes down to us still.” (Ardis Cameron i <https://www.islandinstitute.org/working-waterfront/imagining-coastal-maine/>; lesedato 08.11.22)

*Peyton Place* ble til både enkelfilmer og en TV-serie på 514 episoder (Johannes Binotto i Ritzer og Schulze 2016 s. 271). Boka var kontroversiell, og ble ikke innkjøpt til alle bibliotek, fordi den tok opp temaer som utroskap, barn utenfor ekteskap, konemishandling, abort, homoseksualitet og incest. “Peyton Place” ble et fast amerikansk uttrykk for dobbeltmoralen og hykleriet i en typisk småby (Ritzer og Schulze 2016 s. 272).

Metalious vil ta et oppgjør med det idylliske bildet av New England som et moralsk og puritansk samfunn. En av de ansatte på skolen sier til lærerinnen Elsie Thornton i begynnelsen av romanen: “When you discover how to break the bone of the shell-backed New Englander, Elsie, you will become world famous”. Det var denne berømmelsen Metalious selv fikk ved å sette et stort spørsmålstege ved bildet av den moralske, sømmelige USA og den amerikanske drømmen. Hennes roman har blitt oppfattet som et amerikansk mareritt med alle sine perversjoner (Eddy Chevalier i <http://revel.unice.fr/loxias/index.html?id=6333>; lesedato 28.10.22). Romanen har blitt kalt en *trashedie*, en blanding av “trash” (søppel, avfall) og tragedie (Eddy Chevalier i <http://revel.unice.fr/loxias/index.html?id=6333>; lesedato 28.10.22).

“Published in 1956, *Peyton Place* became a bestseller and a literary phenomenon. A lurid and gripping story of murder, incest, female desire, and social injustice, it was consumed as avidly by readers as it was condemned by critics and the clergy. Its author, Grace Metalious, a housewife who grew up in poverty in a New Hampshire mill town and had aspired to be a writer from childhood, loosely based the novel’s setting, characters, and incidents on real-life places, people, and events. The novel sold more than 30 million copies in hardcover and paperback, and it was adapted into a hit Hollywood film in 1957 and a popular television series that aired from 1964 to 1969. [...] a patricide in a small New England village circulated over time and became a cultural phenomenon. [...] *Peyton Place*, with its frank discussions of poverty, sexuality, class and ethnic discrimination, and small-town hypocrisy, was more than a tawdry potboiler. Metalious’s depiction of how her three central female characters come to terms with their identity as women and sexual beings anticipated second-wave feminism. [...] the novel was also part of a larger postwar struggle over belonging and recognition. Fictionalizing contemporary realities, Metalious pushed to the surface the hidden talk and secret rebellions of a generation no longer willing to ignore the disparities and domestic constraints of Cold War America.” (<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Unbuttoning-America-Biography-Peyton-Place/>; lesedato 26.10.17)

Da Metalious sin ektemann George “finally landed a low-paying job as a school principal in 1954, the couple and their three young children moved into a tiny house in Gilmanton, New Hampshire, where she would complete the novel *Peyton Place*, and eventually sell it. The *Cosmopolitan* feature emphasized how “keeping up appearances” had shaped Grace Metalious’s life in Gilmanton: “the house was an unsightly mess and the children went about unkempt and dirty. They were actually healthy, happy and vigorous children – but they didn’t look exactly well groomed, and tongues in Gilmanton, Belmont, and Laconia began to wag. [...] Some women in Gilmanton [...] circulated the idea that George Metalious should not have his contract renewed” (Zolotow 41). Zolotow’s account suggests that the community’s disapproval of Grace Metalious was the real reason her husband lost his job, but Grace, who had signed with a publisher, found the best way to profit from adversity: she told the press that the novel “probably cost my husband his job” (qtd. in Toth 121). George Metalious was fired on the eve of the novel’s publication, and both he and Grace claimed it was because of the novel; the school never publicly gave a reason (Toth 24-25). Thanks to a scandal she helped to invent, the first significant coverage of Metalious outside her New Hampshire community occurred a month in advance of her novel’s release.” (Creadick 2009)

“Hal Boyle’s *Laconia Evening Citizen* feature broke as an Associated Press story, appearing in the *Boston Traveler* among other venues, on 29 August 1956, with two-inch headlines screaming “TEACHER FIRED FOR WIFE’S BOOK” (Associated Press 1). The early publicity had the unprecedented effect of making the book a bestseller *before* its release. Even before its publication, her work had the power to

unseat patriarchy in her own household, making her the breadwinner and her husband somehow guilty by association. By packaging her novel in controversy and linking that controversy to her personal life, Metalious had encouraged the public to see both her story and herself as threats. The publicity surrounding Metalious thus began well before *Peyton Place* hit the shelves [...] She was labelled as a plain-clothed (thereby, gender-defying) truth-teller, a “Pandora in Blue Jeans” who wrote about sex with “Freudian frankness” (Boyle 1). Finally, these early features showed Metalious actively using the platform of the media to launch a cultural critique of post-war morality: “To a tourist,” she famously explained to Hal Boyle, “[New England] towns look as peaceful as a postcard picture, but if you go beneath that picture, it’s like turning over a rock with your foot. All kinds of strange things crawl out” (1).” (Creadick 2009)

“[T]here is more to this groundbreaking novel than a tawdry tale of debauchery, adultery and abortion. Disdained by scholars, America’s first “blockbuster” is grotesquely trashy and its parade of immoral and sensational freaks makes it unspeakable. ‘Fathers must die’: this outrageous motto underlies the novel in which shrouded secrets are revealed. Perversion pervades this trashy carnival of a novel, thus revealing America’s intimate fears. A genealogy-based study of *Peyton Place* could help us understand why degeneration and decadence are paramount to this hybrid novel, for the whiff of scandal enveloping this bastardized tragedy also smells like soap.” (Eddy Chevalier i <http://revel.unice.fr/loxias/index.html?id=6333;lesedato> 28.10.22).

“Metalious did not conform to gender expectations, generally preferring more comfortable, “masculine” clothes to the hyper-feminine styles of her time: “Her appearance was as much of a scandal as the book was,” one reader recalled (“Let’s Play House”). Metalious drank to excess; she didn’t try to stay slim; she didn’t coif her hair; she didn’t like to wear dresses or lipstick or heels; she didn’t talk pretty. Both the local and the national press capitalized on these transgressions, emphasizing her “un-feminine” appearance in almost every article. *Time* magazine called her the “plump, pony-tailed, blue-jeaned wife of the principal of Gilmanton grammar school” (“Outsiders” 100). [...] Despite the media’s sneering tone, Metalious here literally embodies her social critiques, rejecting cults of slenderness, stylishness, tidiness, and consumerism. Economic success had bought Metalious a forum in which to speak against the American mainstream, and she was as bold in her self-presentation as she had been in her fiction. While some critics see Metalious as a victim, she exercised a remarkable amount of control over her own representation. She used the media as much as it used her, lobbing one-liners like grenades and refusing to conform to public expectations.” (Creadick 2009)

Metalious sine “scandalized neighbours in Gilmanton fretted over the possibility that this small town was “their” small town. One even brought a libel suit against Metalious, claiming that she had purposefully named her character Tom Makris after him (Toth, *Inside* 175). In interviews, Metalious’s knowing response to such

fears was, “if the shoe fits, put it on” (qtd. in “Let’s Play House”). The “ugly secrets” behind the façades in *Peyton Place* existed in every American town. In indicating this, Metalious subtly worked to make deviance the norm in post-war America.” (Creadick 2009)

Metalious “received letters in the mail with obscene threats in them (ostensibly from angry locals). Other letters were from readers in Massachusetts, Ohio, Florida, and California saying, “I’m sure that you are writing about my town. I live in *Peyton Place*.” Other letters said, “If you think *Peyton Place* is bad, you should live in my town.” Others got into arguments through letters written to the editors of hundreds of newspapers. [...] And through all the comments, good and bad, the book continued to sell and sell and sell.” (Creadick 2009)

*Peyton Place* “ranks as “one of the top-selling American novels of all time,” with guesstimates placing paperback sales at nine million (Hackett 170). And as popular literature, it has been seen as a gold standard of sorts: “If you are (or were) a typical American, you may have read the novel by Grace Metalious” (Friedrich 161). [...] faced with critical derision, Metalious said defensively, “If I’m a lousy writer, a hell of a lot of people have got lousy taste” (qtd. in Friedrich 160). [...] Metalious was promoted by her publisher as the 1950s housewife writing in her kitchen for other women just like her; she was an Anywoman who, perhaps like her readers, “wanted to write, but ... had not yet met with success” (Miner 9). [...] Metalious has overturned sentimental clichés of her day by creating an unwed mother who finds a husband, a male lover who fights for female sexuality, a pillar of the community who gives a woman a well-deserved abortion, a murderer who is vindicated in the courtroom, and a rebellious young woman of the 1950s who believes she can have a man and a career. While *Peyton Place* is not a direct call to arms for feminist political action, it uses the sentimental romance tradition to commandeer issues of interest to women and redeploy them according to a new set of criteria. In so doing, Metalious anticipated (and indeed may have helped to trigger) the subsequent widespread and popularized feminist movement of the 1960s. [...] In 1960, after seven million copies of *Peyton Place* had been sold, a man who sold the book to a minor was convicted. See “‘Peyton Place’ Ruled Obscene” and “‘Peyton Place’ Sales Banned.” The novel was banned in Providence, Omaha, Fort Wayne, and Canada (Friedrich 161). Appearing in 1956, it “was generally considered, by the innocent standards of those days, too below and lascivious ... this was fairly typical of what the society of the 1950s considered scandalous” (Friedrich 161).” (Cinda Gault i <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/j.1540-5931.2006.00330.x>; lesedato 16.12.21)

“*Peyton Place* spent seventy-six weeks on the *New York Times* bestseller list, including twenty-nine weeks at number one (Justice 218). It was the third most popular work of fiction of 1956 and the second most popular of 1957 (Hackett and Burke 169-171). In 1958, *Peyton Place* upset *Gone with the Wind*’s twenty-year record as the nation’s all-time bestseller, holding that position for almost a decade

(Cameron xxvii). Nearly twenty years after its publication, *Peyton Place* still ranked as the fourth bestselling piece of paperback fiction of all time (Hackett and Burke 33). [...] With its knockout sales, *Peyton Place* “the book” soon became *Peyton Place* “the brand.” Like many 1950s bestsellers, the novel spawned a hit film just one year after its publication. This was followed by a sequel to the novel (1959), a sequel to the film (1961), a long running television series (1964-1969), a string of spin-off novels written by a lesser known author (1967-1970), and several subsequent efforts, one as recently as 1985, to bring the brand back to television. [...] Over forty years after the novel’s publication, the 1998 impeachment hearings on President Bill Clinton’s affair with White House intern Monica Lewinsky began with Republican Congressman Lindsey Graham imploring, “Is this Watergate or *Peyton Place*?” (qtd. in Toth 375). [...] The challenge that *Peyton Place* presented to prospective publishers was echoed by subsequent censorship efforts. Many libraries refused to purchase the book, while several towns prohibited its sale. The state of Rhode Island and the author’s country of birth, Canada, also banned the novel. Not surprisingly, these reactions proved most effective in boosting sales (Toth 131-132). (Stacey Stanfield Anderson i [https://www.americanpopularculture.com/journal/articles/fall\\_2006/anderson.htm](https://www.americanpopularculture.com/journal/articles/fall_2006/anderson.htm); lesedato 11.02.22)

“In an age when the average novel sold two thousand copies, *Peyton Place* sold sixty thousand within the first ten days of its official release on 24 September 1956. After seventeen months, and in spite of censorship battles and “chilly reviews,” one out of every twenty-nine Americans had purchased the book (Cameron viii). By January 1958, following the release of a major motion picture version, *Peyton Place* had sold nearly ten million copies, more than *Gone With the Wind* (Hackett 202). In September of 1964, well before the long-running and very dissimilar television serial debuted, and for another decade afterward, *Peyton Place* ranked as the bestselling novel in the United States’ history.” (Creadick 2009)

“In the autumn of 1956, Mrs. John L. Harris sat down to read *Peyton Place*, but her reading was fraught with difficulties. Her son, a student at Dartmouth College, “was disgusted,” she wrote its author, “and my husband wasn’t much better pleased.” Distracted and annoyed by the men in her family, the Seattle housewife nevertheless found the story “completely fascinating,” while the writing “caused me to fairly race through the pages.” *Peyton Place*’s critics had simply missed the point, she fumed. “The so-called ‘filth’ which many people censure in your book is to me only a small part of a truly good story.” Mrs. Harris urged Grace Metalious to carry on. “Please keep writing,” she implored. “Your talent is too good to hide.” Then she sat down to read *Peyton Place* a second time.” (Ardis Cameron i <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/10.7591/j.ctt20fw5v0.5.pdf>; lesedato 03.09.24)

Ardis Cameron i *Unbuttoning America: A Biography of Peyton Place* (2015) “mines extensive interviews, fan letters, and archival materials including contemporary cartoons and cover images from film posters and foreign editions to tell how the story of a patricide in a small New England village circulated over time

and became a cultural phenomenon. She argues that *Peyton Place*, with its frank discussions of poverty, sexuality, class and ethnic discrimination, and small-town hypocrisy, was more than a tawdry potboiler. Metalious's depiction of how her three central female characters come to terms with their identity as women and sexual beings anticipated second-wave feminism. More broadly, Cameron asserts, the novel was also part of a larger postwar struggle over belonging and recognition. Fictionalizing contemporary realities, Metalious pushed to the surface the hidden talk and secret rebellions of a generation no longer willing to ignore the disparities and domestic constraints of Cold War America." (<https://www.cornellpress.cornell.edu/book/9780801456091/unbuttoning-america/#bookTabs=1>; lesedato 03.09.24)

"Regarding the novel's popularity: after one year of sales, *Peyton Place* became the nation's all-time bestselling novel, and it remained so until 1975, when *The Godfather* ushered in a new era of mega-blockbusters, fuelled largely by new marketing strategies." (Creadick 2009)

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