UNIVERSITEIT
GENT
Faculteit Letteren en Wijsbegeerte

Line Mertens

A Tale of Three Cities

Independent publishing, small presses, and race in the Midwestern United States

Masterscriptie voorgedragen tot het behalen van de graad van
Master in de Moderne Vergelijkende Letterkunde

2015

Promotor: Dr. Éireann Lorsung

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the presses and bookstores who gave me a glimpse into their world. Without their guidance, my insights would have remained far more superficial. I am especially grateful to the staff at Quimby's Bookstore in Chicago, who showed me every chapbook and zine in their store, and I am particularly indebted to Bennett Johnson from Third World Press, who took the time to share his experiences in a personal interview. I would like to thank my parents for their financial and moral support and for their boundless confidence. I would like to thank Bastiaan Malcorps, for his careful reading, his insightful comments, and in general – for everything. Of course, to conclude, I would like to thank my promotor, dr. Éireann Lorsung. For challenging my thoughts. For treating me like a human being. For reassuring me that I would not die, even though sometimes it might feel like it. It did and I didn't. For the care, and for the wisdom.

I cannot hide my anger to spare you guilt, nor hurt feelings, nor answering anger; for to do so insults and trivializes all our efforts. Guilt is not a response to anger; it is a response to one's own actions or lack of action. If it leads to change then it can be useful, since it is then no longer guilt but the beginning of knowledge. Yet all too often, guilt is just another name for impotence, for defensiveness destructive of communication; it becomes a device to protect ignorance and the continuation of things the way they are, the ultimate protection for changelessness.

Audre Lorde

"The Uses of Anger: Women Responding to Racism", *1987.*

Content

Preface 5

Introduction THE AMERICAN PUBLISHING LANDSCAPE 8

Before World War II 8

After World War II: The Rise of Publishing Corporations 10

Institutionalization of Small Press 11

Common Beliefs Demystified 14

Small, Micro-, and Indie Press: A Working Definition 16

PART 1 Exploring Diversity 19

1.1 The Numbers – Some Elementary Information 19

1.2 The Motivations: Publishing the 'Right Way' 21

1.2.1 'Literature Should Supersede the Economic' 22

1.2.2 Publishing as Book Art 23

1.2.3 The Battle of Genres 25

1.2.4 Strategic Disinterest – Charismatic Publishing 28

1.2.5 Emancipatory Publishing 32

1.3 Symbolic Capital 37

PART 2 On What Does 'Independent Publishing' Depend? Racial Disparity and Invisibility 46

2.1 Strategies (what is going on?) 48

2.1.1 Identifying the *Naifs* 48

2.1.2 The Exclusion and Denial of the Political 54

2.2 Positions (why is it allowed to happen?) 57

2.2.1 'White Fragility' 58

2.2.2 The Position of the Field 64

Conclusion 68

Bibliography 71

Publishers Discussed 73

Appendices 75

U.S. Census Data: race and education 75

Gathered Data Symbolic Capital (Collected) + VIDA-count 76

The Detailed Data – Titles Published in 2014 79

Preface

At the outset of this research project, my aims were simple. I wanted to describe an area of publishing that had not yet been described accurately. I wanted to draw a picture of the landscape of independent publishing in the United States. Rather than defining it by opposition, by what it is defined against – corporate, big business, site of soulless mass production – I wanted to determine the intrinsic values, projects, and points of view of the small-press movement itself .

Early on in my investigations, I learned that as a movement, small press is hard to define. Although several initiatives[1] want to unite and reinforce small press publishing, the landscape remains fragmentary, dispersed. And yet, there are recurrent motivations and convictions that lead people to invest their spare time, their capital and their enthusiasm in publishing the literature they feel to be necessary in today's world. I looked closely at a geographically delineated area in the Midwestern US (Chicago, the Twin Cities, and Detroit) and I discerned five distinguishable lines of argument - all of them rudimentary, none of them offering complete explanations. Together, these lines form a frame for understanding the motivations and beliefs of today's Midwestern small press world. These lines and the resulting picture form the first part of my thesis.

At this point however, my research project was interrupted. The following experiences, conversations and literature challenged and changed my perspective.

1) I visited Third World Press in Chicago. Third World Press is an African-American publisher in a racially segregated city. I wanted to find out how they fitted into what is hailed as the city's small press and literary community. I discovered that they did not fit into it at all.

2) I attended several panels at this year's AWP conference in Minneapolis.[2] On Friday, April 10, I attended a panel entitled 'In the Middle of Everything: Independent Publishing in the Midwest', where the vibrant literary culture of Midwestern cities was celebrated by four white publishers with very similar publishing projects. There was no mention of other literary projects. The audience

[1] E.g. the Community of Literary Magazines and Presses (CLMP), Poets and Writers, and Small Press Distribution (SPD); all of these are non-profits and I will come back to their efforts further on.
[2] The Association of Writers and Writing Programs organises a yearly conference, that I attended in 2015 in Minneapolis. At this conference, over 500 panel discussions were held featuring more than 2000 people active in the field. Over 800 stands of small presses and literary organisations presented themselves in an accompanying bookfair. This yearly event is the largest literary conference in North America, and for many writers and publishers provides a unique networking opportunity. (https://www.awpwriter.org/awp_conference/overview)

was overwhelmingly white, as was overall attendance at AWP. Immediately after I attended 'Writers of Color Moving Beyond the Boundaries of Our Community: A VONA/Voices Writers Panel'. I was one of perhaps five or ten white people attending, among an enthusiastic and interested audience of all colors. One of the panelists, David Mura, stated at the outset that when he visited AWP, he always felt the racial segregation strongly there.

3) I read texts by Audre Lorde and bell hooks. As a female university student, I felt liberated by their ideas, and at the same time so angry - for I had never before encountered them. I didn't even know this kind of thinking existed.

4) I remembered a conversation with my promotor early this academic year. I said something like : "I only want to look at publishers with a solely literary interest." I wanted to exclude publishers with an emancipatory project. I saw this exclusion as apolitical – I was only following "literary parameters". That these literary parameters were themselves tied to broader societal disparities, is something I did not see, or perhaps even ignored. My reasoning was fraught and deeply complicit with a system of cultural validation that systematically excludes so many voices. I no longer want to make that mistake.

I took on this research project because I felt an affinity with these small presses. I strongly sympathized with their artistic resistance to capitalism. I have started to doubt the integrity of this resistance. I wanted to know how exclusive mechanisms in the literary world work. As a humanities student, as a student of literature, I feel it is my duty to look at this, rather than look away. Ellen Spolsky has poignantly phrased this concern:

> After Foucault it has become difficult to pretend that one does not know that social structures produce gains and losses and not randomly. It seems to me that it would be difficult to justify not asking how the structures we investigate as literary or cultural historians are constructed and valued. (2002: 56)

Literature can help us deal with difficulties and problems essential to life. If we want literature to be validated for that, than we cannot refrain from asking what difficulties and problems are intrinsic to literary production. In my small research, I could not look into all social disparities in the small press world. I picked the one that struck me as I immersed myself into the small press world: blatant ignorance or denial of racial disparities. I continued to read my way through frameworks I did not know, frameworks that could counter the white one in which I have been trained. The second part of my thesis is the result of my efforts to understand the

racial prejudice that is inherent in a historically western notion of ‘quality literature’. This section is the result of a query that lay outside my comfort zone. It is an intervention by ethics, literature, and narratology in my research. The second section is also the conclusion of my education, and its construction has been a way to come to terms with my educational program as a whole, and with my own role and place within it.

The overall structure of my thesis can be seen as a mirror. After a short introduction, which will offer a brief history of the American publishing landscape and a working definition of small press, I will re-construct small presses’ underlying motivations and beliefs in Part One, only to de-construct them in Part Two through thorough reflection.

Introduction

THE AMERICAN PUBLISHING LANDSCAPE

Throughout the 20th century, the publishing business underwent a dramatic change. Until the 1950s, US publishing houses were usually owned by their publishers, who could operate them as they saw fit. That changed radically in the 1960s. In 'Merchants of Culture' John Thompson meticulously describes how "a wave of mergers swept through the industry"(2010: 102). This tide of incorporation continues to sweep independent publishers until this very day: the field of book publishing is now dominated by a small number of big publishing concerns, led by boards of directors that guard the companies' financial health. In 2008, the twelve largest US trade publishers had a combined market share of over 60%. Together, the largest two (Random House and Penguin) had a market share of nearly 25% (Thompson 2010: 116). At the same time, however, a large number of small, independent publishing operations arose. (For the purposes of this dissertation the difference between a 'small' press and the 'large' press is not only financial – even the largest small press does not have the same financial means as the smallest big press – but also structural; that is, 'large' or 'corporate' presses differ from 'small' presses in that they are governed by boards of directors among whose primary interests are the financial wellbeing of the company.) According to an estimation by the Book Industry Study Group from 2005, 93% of book publishers had revenues under one million dollar, while 74.6% of all publishers had yearly revenues lower than 50,000 dollars.[3] (Thompson 2010: 152) The current publishing landscape in the United States is thoroughly polarized between these two publishing fields. Contrary to what one might expect, the structure of the field does not entail that small and large presses are entirely adversarial. Rather, they seem to have found a form of structural symbiosis. I will briefly elaborate on the historical development of the U.S. publishing landscape, in order to clarify what that symbiosis entails. I will end this chapter by describing what small press appears to mean today and how I will define it in the rest of this thesis.

Before World War II

It would be incorrect to assume that independent publishing as we know it today, is the direct heir of independent publishing as it is known to have existed in the past. The rise of capitalism

[3] These figures are based on ISBN-ownership and can only provide estimates at best. Self-publishers for instance, were not eliminated. For publishers with yearly revenues lower than $50.000, self-publishers constitute 46%. Independent publisher likewise constituted 46% in this tier. As revenues increase, the level of self-publishers decreases, and the level of independent publishers increases. (Thompson 2010: 152-153)

changed the market of book publishing drastically, and many literary critics, scholars, and writers are concerned about the consequences of a profit-driven publishing business. As grounded as these concerns often are, this should not lead us to romanticize the past. Historically speaking, neither independence, nor commerciality has a monopoly on 'high' literary production.

I will begin this historical oversight in the early twentieth century. Though the roots of American publishing lie in the nineteenth century, only twentieth century movements still affect today's publishing field. In the early twentieth century, privately owned publishing houses were often socially conservative. This had to do on the one hand with external pressures; rising production costs made publishers unwilling to invest in risky projects. Moreover, powerful organizations and regulations concerning public decency[4] continuously threatened those who dared publish 'immoral' works with prosecution. Societal and economic pressures however, were not the only cause of publishers' conservative literary preferences. According to a historical overview of alternative publishing in the US by Robert McLaughlin, the book publishing industry was dominated by old, oligarchic, family-owned firms, whose values and standards were often closely linked to "the sound ethics as well as the solid prejudices of Victorian Americans." (McLaughlin 1996, 177) In Bourdieusian terms, the aesthetic dispositions of these older independent publishers often aligned with conservative politics.

At the outset of the twentieth century, conservatism in publishing was challenged by commercial publishers. These younger, subversive publishers (often of Jewish descent and therefore excluded from mainstream publishing) recognized the value of realist, naturalist and even experimental fiction. Viking Press and Knopf are notable examples of publishers with roots in this movement.[5] Both of them are now part of large publishing concerns, respectively Penguin and Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group. Knopf and Viking Press still represent literary imprints with a high reputation.

In the years following World War I, literary modernism incited another alternative publishing movement. The difficulty and inaccessibility of avant-garde writings constituted too great a risk for commercial publishing businesses. And so, writers started their own *small presses*, often in Europe, to publish their own work and the work of their friends. Several now-acclaimed modernist writers were only accepted by commercial publishers once they had become more established, i.e. after their successful publication by small presses[6]. The oldest independent

[4] The Watch and Ward Society in Boston, the New York Society for Suppression of Vice and the New York Clean Books Bill. McLaughlin 1996, 177.
[5] McLaughlin 1996, 178-179.
[6] e.g. Ezra Pound, Gertrude Stein, Ernest Hemingway.

publisher in the United States I know of, New Directions[7], was founded in this avant-garde realm. Their status (as first publisher of, among others, Wallace Stevens, Tenessee Williams and Dylan Thomas) has by now secured an established and nearly untouchable place for them in the literary landscape.

These two early publishing movements still resonate in today's publishing landscape, as models for enterprise and due to their high literary credibility. The current publishing landscape, however, underwent some drastic changes following World War II.

After World War II: The Rise of Publishing Corporations

Commercial publishing took on different forms after World War II. The war had benefited U.S. publishers financially, as the government 'bought large numbers of books, regardless of title, author or critical reception, to distribute to overseas military personnel' (McLaughlin 1996: 180). After W.W. II, the book publishing industry continued to flourish, as many veterans benefited from the G.I. bill entering a higher education. There was a growing market for textbooks and series of paperbacks. Many publishers soared economically, and as their value rose, their corporate structure began to change. In the 1950s and 1960s, deeding the businesses to heirs became more difficult due to increased estate taxes, and, as many publishers reached the age of retirement, organizational change was often welcomed. This change was twofold: privately owned businesses went public, and larger firms started to acquire smaller firms. The tide of mergers had begun. Publishers now had to justify business actions to stockholders, and as companies continued to merge and grow, so did the interests of large corporations.[8]

In the 1980s, these tendencies continued, but with greater urgency. The growth of retail chains[9] significantly increased possible revenue from bestsellers. As a result, the prices for manuscripts with bestseller potential went up - and so did financial risk. With prices for manuscripts going up, the literary agent gained a crucial role in the field. Publishing firms were now played against each other financially, and successful authors wanted to see past success rewarded with larger advances. Independent publishers had a hard time competing with companies that had already merged and could afford larger risks (Thompson 2010: 107). The

[7] New Directions was founded in 1936 by James Laughlin, according to whom the foundation was a career move based on the advice from Ezra Pound. ND website, 'about', http://ndbooks.com/about/a-brief-history-of-new-directions [consulted on 20/03/2015]
[8] McLaughlin 1996, 180-181. For a more detailed account, including examples, see Thompson 2010, 104-107.
[9] Barnes and Nobles is a notorious example in the USA: for more information on the rise of retail chains, see Thompson 2010, 26-57.

appearance of several publishers on the stock market further necessitated continuous growth. Contrary to this need to expand, however, the book market remained stable. Expanding therefore entailed an expansion of market share, which meant either buying out companies, pushing out companies, or expanding overseas. The latter tactic proved especially interesting for international media conglomerates, who continue to hold a large stake in the American publishing industry.[10] (Thompson 2010: 107-108)

Institutionalization of Small Press

The ideological currents underlying independent publishing today, are numerous and variable, but the growth of small press (both in figures and in visibility) as a movement, is directly related to the linear expansion of technological and organizational possibilities. I will return to ideology in the next chapter; here, I want to outline the institutionalization and professionalization of small press publishing.

In "Small Press: an annotated guide", Loss Glazier notes that it is impossible to locate a moment "in which contemporary small press was born" (Glazier 1992: 1). Though individual small presses and their legacies can be traced back to the nineteenth century, the transformation into the broad movement that we might recognize today starts with the technological developments of the 1960s. At this point, a variety of publishing methods became broadly available and the number of small press publishers rose accordingly. The period is sometimes referred to as 'The Mimeo Revolution', referring to the low-cost mimeographic equipment that flooded the market. This term, however, is not entirely accurate, as other printing methods (offset and letterpress) were as well represented among small presses as the newer mimeo technique. What is sure, nonetheless, is that the linear increase of small presses starts at this point (Glazier 1992: 2-3). The rise in number of small presses was reinforced by a first form of structural support. In 1967, the "Coordinating Council of Literary Magazines" (CCLM) was founded. This forerunner of today's Community of Literary Magazines and Presses (CLMP) was brought into life as a regranting organization, redistributing grants from the National Endowment for the Arts among United States literary magazines. Rodney Philips from the New York Public Library insists that this first institutionalization was crucial for the survival of literary magazines; 'Indeed, he reckons that in many cases funding through CCLM was "the only way these magazines continued to publish"' (Feldman 2001).

[10] German conglomerate Bertelsmann, British conglomerate Pearson, and the French conglomerate Lagardère are the parent companies of respectively Random House, Penguin and the Hachette Book Group USA. Random House and Penguin both have a market share of over 10%. The Hachette Book Group has a market share of 5,3%.

The rise of small press *book* publishers, however, soared in the seventies, when offset printing became the dominant technique. “Statistics published by Len Fulton show offset printing to be dominant in 1973, used by 69 percent of small presses; mimeo had dropped to 13 percent and letterpress to 18 percent (Fulton 1973a, iii)” (Glazier 1992: 4). More and more, the low-profile publications of the sixties gave way to (often outsourced) professionally printed books, which had become less expensive than before through technological developments (Feldman 2001). Glazier notes that “not every press of the seventies adopted this book-as-product mentality”, but “the trend toward more professionally produced titles was striking” (1992: 4). Around the time that professionally printed books became easier to produce, a change in postal rates made the publication of literary journals less attractive. Bookstores were less inclined to stock journals, since it had become significantly more expensive to return unsold magazines. (Feldman 2001) In the late 1970s, the organizational possibilities for small press book publishers increased with the beginning development of improved distribution channels (Feldman 2001).

These developments towards professionalization and pragmatism consolidated during the 1980s. The distribution channels that had come into life during the 1970s now became viable national operations. As Gayle Feldman describes, this evolution was crucial in terms of getting small press books into bookstores.

> Development of viable national book distribution channels during the 1980s and early 1990s was the key factor in counteracting booksellers’ skittishness about stocking literary press titles, and in turning many publishers away from pamphlets and journals to books. (2001)

Ties between small press and the corporate world likewise grew stronger. It is at this point that CCLM starts to look at support from the private sector to diversify its funding base (Uchmanowicz 2003: 81). In her history of CCLM/CLMP, Pauline Uchmanowicz notes that this move might have been “more necessary than mercenary, since the Ronald Reagan presidential administration would in the early years yank the block grant away from the re-granters, pulling it back-in-house [sic] at the NEA” (81). And so CCLM’s function changed as well, shifting away focus from regranting, and towards “projects to increase advertising in, and sales of, small magazines as a means of revenue” (Uchmanowicz 2003: 81). CCLM went through this “corporate shift” by the 1990s, when its focus changed to include book publishers as well, and its name changed to the Council of Literary Magazines and Presses. In the early nineties, CLMP initiated two new funding programs that allowed literary presses that had always struggled with financing to consider a stable future and make business plans accordingly. In 1990, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation funded nine presses so they could

“develop organizational long-term planning ability in the hope that they would serve as models for others”. One year later, the Lila Wallace-Reader’s Digest Fund supported presses focusing on audience development (Feldman 2001). The largest three publishers included in my dataset today (Graywolf Press, Coffee House Press and Milkweed Editions) all were able to draw on these funds to develop their organizations (Feldman 2001). The combined impact of funding alongside technical and organizational improvements professionalized literary small presses. According to data collected by Ted Fulton, the volume of poetry produced by small presses in 1990 “exceeds by approximately tenfold the poetry published in 1965” (Glazier 1992: 4).

In the past two decades, similar trends have continued to transform the world of independent publishing. Digitalization has had a dramatic impact on entry costs to the field. Whereas mimeo printing was relatively cheap, it is incomparable to today’s technological ubiquity. Thompson outlines three important technologies made available through the digital revolution: cheap desktop publishing software, online purchase of low-cost ISBN numbers and the addition of short-run digital printing or print on demand to traditional offset printing, which makes lower print runs affordable. In addition, more and more parts of the publishing process can be outsourced (Thompson 2010: 154). These combined factors brought on a new wave of even smaller publishers or “micropresses”, which can be run by one or two people, in their spare time and -room – or even at the kitchen table. “In the age of digital printing and viral advertising, “Anyone making a living wage will have enough disposable income to start a press,”, say Counterpath’s Carr and Roberts” (Pelton 2010: 4).

Apart from technological transformations, reinforcement of the distribution network similarly enhanced small presses’ organizational opportunities. At this point, there are several distributors to which small presses can turn. Small Press Distribution remains the only nonprofit distributor, who “take on even the smallest publishers”. In 2001, Gayle Feldman described how Consortium and Publishing Group West are arguably “two most important independent press distributors nationally”. Today both Consortium and Publishing Group West, together with CDS (another influential distributor) have been acquired by the Perseus Group, who are now “the leading provider of sales and distribution services to independent publishers in the US” (Thompson 2010: 178).

CLMP has continued its development in the same direction. In 2003, Uchmanowicz described how “providing technical assistance that demystifies processes between writers and publishers – mainly printing and distribution – is central to the organization’s current mission of delivering literature to mass audiences.” They continue to provide information to reinforce practical knowledge for small presses. The advice available through their website focuses on marketing strategies, obtaining grants, distribution and technological opportunities. There is a continuous

cooperation between CLMP and the corporate world. In 2003, Uchmanowicz wrote down comments by Jeffrey Lependorf, who is still CLMP's executive director:

> The indie-publishing world, historically viewed as "alternative" when compared to negative-connoting "commercials," should now work in partnership with the economies of conventional publishing to engage new, worldwide audiences. "We now see this as an eco-system between large publishers and small," the executive director said. "It makes sense to go back and forth between the worlds. We're trying to broker more relationships, making this mutually beneficial." (Uchmanowicz 2003: 84)

In accordance with this vision, CLMP is currently supported by several large corporations, including some of the largest publishing concerns (Random House, Penguin and Hachette Book Group are all named on the website as contributors) (www.clmp.org/support/index.html) [11/02/2015]. Likewise, several of the larger small presses included in my dataset receive corporate support, a point to which I will come back later.

Common Beliefs Demystified

As this brief history shows, there is no structural relationship of direct opposition between small and large press. Small presses and corporate publishing concerns grew at the same time and in parallel realms. Similarly, the literary output and functioning of corporate publishing and small presses cannot simply be framed as adversary. It would be reductive to align high quality literary production with small presses and commercial genres with corporate publishing. Thompson demystifies some common beliefs about corporate publishing. His nuance is important in order to de-romanticize the image of small press publishing, which often legitimizes its existence by opposition to the corporate 'machine'. I will only explain those myths that are often used in contexts of small press justification.

The first myth is that "corporations have no interest in publishing quality books. All they are interested in publishing is commercial bestsellers." This is an oversimplification and it is countered by the fact that "all of the large publishing corporations have imprints or divisions that are explicitly concerned with publishing literary fiction or serious non-fiction" (Thompson 2010: 139). Depending on a corporation's organizational structure, these imprints may even have a relatively large degree of autonomy.[11] The reason why publishing corporations hold onto these imprints is threefold. Though the audience for 'quality' literature is restricted, these

[11] Publishing corporations differ in how they run their divisions and imprints. Thompson draws a scale from centralized to federal. In federal groups, individual imprints have more autonomy. (Thompson 2010 125-139)

books can sell well and they can sell well for much longer than commercial hits – finances are not surprisingly part of the reason for maintaining a literary imprint. In addition, 'quality' literature forms a different kind of financial risk than do commercial works. It is "difficult to know which author will be successful in five years' time." Publishers want to develop a balanced list, not only as a matter of senior manager's predispositions, but also in order to spread their risks. A third reason is less directly related to finances: publishing is never "just a matter of financial success". For large publishers - as well as small ones - symbolic capital matters too. And, in publishing, literary writing holds symbolic capital (Thompson 2010: 140).

The second myth about the difference between small and large publishers is that "corporations don't experiment with new authors. They're only interested in publishing established authors who write books according to tried and tested formulas" (Thompson 2010: 141). First, let me bring some nuance to Thompson's nuance. It is true that many successful small press authors are picked up by corporate publishers. Small presses rely on different channels for manuscript acquisition than large corporations, who rely primarily on agents. They are often more active in their search (Thompson 2010: 158-159). Hence, much talent is discovered and provided with the opportunity to publish through small presses in the first place. Large corporations benefit from the fieldwork done by the independents in scouting new talent. Publishers Weekly published an article in 2013, in which an editor at Vintage relates his "experience in picking up titles released from small presses and bringing them to wider distribution" ("Eyeing Indie Presses for the Next Great Thing"). There is no doubt that small presses can play an active and important role in discovering new talent. This does not, however, result from publishing corporations' being unwilling to experiment. Thompson explains that "publishing corporations are not uninterested in new talent" (Thompson 2010: 142). In their search for the next big thing, large corporations are continuously taking risks, although they may be reluctant to provide room for the author to develop. When financial or symbolic success does not follow the first or second publication, authors are likely to be thrown overboard (Thompson 2010: 142). For these authors, small presses can play an important role. As Gayle Feldman describes, independents "give another chance to good writers whose first or second or third books haven't performed as commercial balance sheets mandate; and they bring back into print distinguished works that have dipped below the literary radar screen" (2010).

A third myth regards the care of editors. In an article describing the benefits for writers to choose a small press rather than a publishing corporation, Steve Almond describes a common vision, framed through his own experience as an author published by both Random House and small presses:

> The smaller the house, the more passionate and detailed the editor. Ben George, for instance, went over every single line of every single story in *God Bless America*—even the pieces that had been selected for the Pushcart and Best American anthologies. We spent hours debating particular words and phrases. Neither of my editors at Random House had that kind of time to commit. In fact, over the past few years, as the publishing industry has contracted, the pressure applied to editors at big houses has become even more intense. It's no longer an editor's job just to midwife great books; she also has to worry about how to generate sales of those books. (2011: 87)

Thompson acknowledges that editor's commitments can strongly vary in degree, but he does not align this variation with the structural difference between small presses and large corporations. Though Steve Almond's experience might point towards such a division, Thompson's broader research reveals that a generalization might not be accurate.

> It is undoubtedly the case that editors vary in the degree of their conscientiousness when it comes to editing: some are known for the care and attention that their editors give to their books, whereas others have a reputation for churning out large numbers of books and hoping some will catch on – the proverbial spaghetti against the wall. It is also undoubtedly the case that most editors in all publishing houses – large or small, corporate or independent – are expected today to do a lot more administrative work and this makes growing demands on their time. […]
>
> At many imprints in the large New York publishing corporations, it is common for an editor to edit around 8-12 books a year – at most, one a month. Of course they have many other things to do; […] But an editor will typically invest a good deal of time and effort in the 8-12 books that they will be putting into production each year.

Editors for small presses, like their colleagues at the larger publishing houses, have plenty of other tasks often including a day job. They are often also charged with more tasks within the publishing operation – from acquisition, design, and typesetting to grant applications and administration. As with corporate publishers, the amount of time and care spent on editing a work will differ between different editors and different publishers.

Small, Micro-, and Indie Press: A Working Definition

> Caryn James writing in the New York Times says that a small press is "Anyone who is not in it for the money. Entrepreneurs say a small press is a company with an annual sales volume of under $1 million." Others claim that a small publisher is any one who

issues fewer than five books annually, or who reports revenues of less than $250.000. (Gabriel 1990: 62)

The articles and books dealing with small press publishing, micropresses (is a more recent term) or independent publishing ("indies"[12]), use their introduction to offer a definition of what small press is. As Gabriel (above) indicates, these definitions can employ several parameters. Yearly revenue and book production are often deemed objective parameters, yet some initiates are reluctant to define 'small press' in merely these terms. Rather, they emphasize intention, non-commerciality or devotion to literary quality.

In his 1992 annotated guide to small presses, Loss Pequeno Glazier distinguishes five features that define his notion of small press.

1. A small press is not "corporate," that is, its conception is tied neither to a requirement of large amounts of capital as start-up money, nor the expectation of profit as a return on an investment.
2. Small press is locally based. Though possibly speaking to a national or international community, a press is firmly rooted in a region.
3. Small press is administered on a small scale; this can be by one person, by a few, or by a collective; however, the administration of a small press does not depend on an elaborate managerial structure.
4. The motivation criterion for what is published is the integrity of the publication, that is, a small press publication is conceived because of its intrinsic merit, not because of its value as a commodity.
5. Small press publications have a well-defined, limited readership.
   (Glazier 1992: 9)

These criteria describe well what initiates would like independent and small press to be. They capture the spirit of small press as well as applying some practical and organizational restraints that align with that spirit. Only point two no longer seems to apply, or, rather is no longer a necessary condition. Due to the important role of online platforms in informing and finding likeminded cultural consumers or producers, strong local affinity is not a strict requirement. Though several independent publishers still maintain local bonds, some now prefer virtual communities. This seems to be bound to changing circumstances, rather than to an intrinsic change of spirit; by deleting point two, or adapting it to include virtual communities as well as geographical communities, Glazier's definition can be made to apply in full.

[12] Online articles commonly refer to independent publishers as "indies". The mere attribution of this nickname points towards a sense of community vivid in conversations about small press.

Another problem with this operational definition is more difficult to overcome. In Glazier's affinity to the small press world, his definition somehow seems too reductive for describing the current reality of small press publishing. If we want to describe a sub-field of production in Bourdieusian terms, "there is no other criterion of membership of a field than the objective fact of producing effects within it" (Bourdieu 1983: 323). In 2001, Gayle Feldman wrote "A Forty-Year Retrospective" of independent presses and little magazines, commissioned by CLMP. In her description she outlines the following current:

> Some of the new presses that have entered the field in the last few years have done so on a for-profit basis, often as sole proprietorships. […] who sustain themselves by publishing literature for certain niches not currently being reached by the large houses.

At this point, some niche publishers prioritize financial gain to some extent – even though there will always be a primary focus on quality and profit is rarely the sole motivation. I will return to this later, but what matters here is that these publishers are part of the small press world – they have acquired their place by producing an effect in the small press world, despite any lack of the right motivation (cf. Part 1: charismatic publishing).

My working definition will be less elaborate than Glazier's, in the hope of describing a site that can be as complete and inclusive as possible. My two main criteria for identifying small presses are:

1) Publishers cannot be corporate. They must function independently from publishing concerns.
2) Publishers need to have a self-defined literary focus. They publish literary genres, which I interpret broadly. I merely mean to exclude cooking books, tourist guides and other non-fictional, specialized publications. [13]

Often, a distinction is made on the basis of scale between micropresses, small presses and independent presses. These boundaries can be drawn, but are always somewhat arbitrary. Very often, publishers move from one scale to another, or operate on the boundaries between them. I will use small and independent press more or less as synonyms. I will use both as overarching terms, including all presses that are part of this research. The use of the term micropress will be restricted to the smallest publishers included, who often publish in different and cheaper formats such as chapbooks.

[13] Though I interpret literature rather broadly and will not make any judgements based on aesthetic criteria, I do exclude both youth literature and comic books/graphic novels from my research. The reasons for this exclusion are twofold: firstly, both youth literature and comic books are often judged by different parameters than adult literature. For both, a separate system of specific consecration, with its own judges, exists. Secondly, following the first, my time and word count are restricted and hence it is not possible for me to include two "genres" that would require a broader scope to such an extent.

PART 1
Exploring Diversity

In presenting the image of a 'small press world' or a 'field of independent publishing', an impression of coherence is established through the general opposition of this field to that of corporate publishing. This seeming unity reveals its diversity once the particular products and individual motivations of small presses are charted. In this chapter, I aim to grasp the different currents that form the landscape of small press publishing. This landscape, however, is in continuous flux. With every *prise de position* - every publication, every new author's entrance, every review of an established author, every new editor and indeed, even with every description of the field (an act that may claim an outsider perspective, but is nevertheless deeply embedded in the field it describes) - the field transforms, be it spectacularly or minutely. All I can offer then, when I try to lay bare the currents that shape the landscape, is a sketch of a moment. I compiled my information as meticulously as possible under the proviso that it could never be complete, for as I stopped to write things down, things went on regardless.

1.1 The Numbers – Some Elementary Information

I gathered information on what was published by independent presses in the year 2014 in the cities of Chicago (IL), Detroit (Metropolitan Area)[14] (MI) and 'Twin Cities' Minneapolis - Saint Paul (MN). (An extended list of titles is appended to this thesis.) I included every publisher that made a literary effort. On the basis of content, I excluded leisure books (e.g. cookbooks and tourist guides), highly specialized non-fiction (e.g. hydraulic neuro nano-chip processing manuals) and youth literature. I also did not look into graphic novels or comic books. I did not make any aesthetic judgement. As to formal requirements, I excluded literary magazines[15] and self-publishers. Every publisher that set out to publish text in literary genres (poetry, prose)

[14] I originally processed only data from Detroit City, but found that the nearby Ann Arbor is home to some additional publishers, who also view themselves as part of the Detroit publishing culture, or are viewed by other literary organizations as part of it. Dzanc Books and Midwestern Gothic are located in Ann Arbor and not in Detroit City.

[15] The line between literary magazines and independent publishers is sometimes thin, especially when you look at the smallest publishers, or those closest related to punk. I maintained this line to keep the data set of my research manageable. The fact that I was able to do that without considerable definition problems, seems to imply that there still is a line separating 'book publishers' from magazine publishers, though it might also point to one of my preconceptions.

was included.

The information available is often as fragmented as the publishers themselves are, so let me start with a note on my methods. To identify extant publishers, I first examined two online databases: the CLMP database[16] and the database made available online by Poets and Writers[17]. In addition, I consulted *The International Directory of Little Magazines & Small Presses*, 46th annual edition 2010-2011, though some of this information was obviously outdated. To make a complete sketch, however, these overviews did not suffice. Their compilers rely heavily on the efforts of the small presses themselves. For many of these (often volunteer-run) presses, however, databases are not a priority. The information these databases provide, therefore, though helpful, remains incomplete. I gathered extra information through local resources, blogs, online conversations and personal encounters. In Chicago, several independent bookstore employees were able to point me further[18]. In Minneapolis I relied heavily on information of The Loft Literary Center[19], which compiles its own local database. For Detroit, the online platform Literary Detroit was of use. Through these sources I compiled a picture of the publishers that are still active or were active in 2014. To form a list of the works they published in 2014, I first looked at publishers' own websites. Unfortunately, these do not always mention publication dates. When the dates were not available first-hand, I turned to the website of their distributor. When there was no mention of publication dates on the publisher's website, nor a distributor to rely on and when e-mails remained unanswered – for I tried to contact several presses personally ─ the easiest and often only way to obtain this information was through publication info on Amazon.com. I too find it a bit uncanny to depend on Amazon for data on independent publishing, but sometimes there was simply no other way.

In 2014, approximately 218 literary works[20] were published by independent publishers in Chicago, Minneapolis and Detroit. The largest number of publishers can be found in Chicago, where 20 publishers and imprints[21] were active in 2014. The largest number of books however

[16] Available online at http://clmp.org/directory/ [22/07/2015]
[17] "Poets & Writers, Inc., is the primary source of information, support, and guidance for creative writers. Founded in 1970, it is the nation's largest nonprofit literary organization serving poets, fiction writers, and creative nonfiction writers." www.pw.org/about-us [22/07/2015]
[18] I am particularly grateful to Quimby's and Unabridged Bookstore.
[19] Available online at https://www.loft.org/resources/digital_resources/ [22/07/2015]
[20] Dancing Girl Press in Chicago publishes a large number of chapbooks every year, but since no publication dates are mentioned, I cannot account for an exact number. According to their website, in ten years, Dancing girl published over 300 chapbooks, in my data, an approximate 30 chapbooks were counted for Dancing Girl Press. http://www.dancinggirlpress.com/index2.html [consulted on 10/07/2015]
[21] It is remarkable that some small publishers have imprints. From what I gathered, it appears that these imprints usually arise independently, but sometimes join larger small publishers for support. They keep their own editorial staff and often their own project, which is the reason I included them separately in my count.

was produced in Minneapolis. 93 publications were counted, of which 73 can be ascribed to the city's three largest independent publishers: Graywolf Press, Milkweed Editions and Coffee House Press. Similarly, both in Detroit and Chicago, one press stands out in terms of publication output. In Chicago, Curbside Splendor's output accounts for one third of the total number of publications[22] in the city. For the Detroit Metropolitan Area, Dzanc Books clearly leads the way, with 20 out of a total of 33 publications.

Across the three metropolitan areas, output not only varies greatly in number, but also in publication form. Whereas the largest publishers usually publish full-length, perfect bound books, the smallest publishers often publish chapbooks. Out of the total 218 publications, 39 are chapbooks, whereas 179 are full-length publications (either novels or poetry collections). Chapbooks are more difficult to get a grip on, as sometimes even their paper version does not mention a publication date. Again, however, there is a large difference between chapbooks. Some chapbooks are published with as much care and detail as full-length publications, differing only in length, whereas others are quite literally two white folios stapled between a coloured folio. The latter are obviously not meant for broad circulation[23]. Quimby's Bookstore in Chicago is the only store I came across where you could actually buy these tiniest of publications. The most carefully published chapbooks can be attributed to mid-size independent publishers, who publish both full-length books and chapbooks, and to micropresses with a particular interest in older technologies or finer materials (cf. infra).

1.2 The Motivations: Publishing the 'Right Way'.

As explained before, independent publishing is not a lucrative career path. In order to put in the energy needed to publish despite an often negative financial balance, independent publishers must be driven. In this section, I will look at their motivations. Obviously, there is 'love of literature', but that is an evasive definition, for both love and literature can be broadly and wildly interpreted. What all independent publishers have in common, is that they publish books the way they feel books "should be published". What way that is, however, is a site of argument, related to different notions of what literature is. I distinguished five major motivational currents, four of which are interrelated and are part of the internal dynamics of the field of cultural production as described by Pierre Bourdieu (1983, 325-341). The fifth current,

[22] Even almost half, if you include their imprints.
[23] These chapbooks, in their most rudimentary form, can be numbered by hand. In these cases, I hardly encountered a number higher than 10, indicating that not much more copies were made.

however, does not fit well within these terms, as it is part of a struggle that supersedes the level of cultural production.

I will describe these currents in the following paragraphs, linking their theoretical frameworks to the concrete examples from my dataset. It is to be noted, however, that all currents are fluid spectra rather than fixed entities. They are discernible as separate motivations, yet often overlap. They are in no way mutually exclusive. Hence, a publisher mentioned as exemplary for one current might also support the causes of other currents.

1.2.1 'Literature Should Supersede the Economic'

> In a world where the humanities must often defend themselves, The Green Lantern Press offers intimate examples of creative thought, demonstrating the value of artistic and intellectual pursuits in the public sphere. – *The Green Lantern Press* (http://sector2337.com/green-lantern-press/about-the-green-lantern-press/) [04/07/2015]

The first and foremost current, is a general resistance against the economic system in which literature is mostly produced in today's publishing field. The main object of publishers who function within this paradigm is to resist the pressures of the market and to create room for writers to develop. Editorial care is foregrounded as an essential part of the artistic process that leads up to the finished work of art. In providing this editorial care, the publisher fulfils a crucial artistic role. Through their continuous production of works of high literary quality, publishers build their own symbolic capital and can acquire great literary credibility. Dzanc Books, in Detroit, for instance builds its reputation as follows:

> [Dzanc] Publishes innovative and award-winning literary fiction, including short story collections and novels by accomplished and award-winning writers such as Roy Kesey, Yannick Murphy, Peter Markus, Hesh Kestin, Kyle Minor, Michael Czyzniejewski, Suzanne Burns, Peter Selgin, Laura van den Berg, Robert Lopez, Dawn Raffel, Jeff Parker, Terese Svoboda, and Henning Koch – *Dzanc Books* (http://www.dzancbooks.org/about-dzanc) [04/07/2015]

The word award-winning is used twice in only four lines, and through the long enumeration of "accomplished" writers, their prestige is transferred to the prestige of the publisher.

Though nearly all independent publishers (including those implicated in the other currents) try to resist the pressures of the market, this first category distinguishes itself through the fact that resisting economic pressure is a primary motivation. Though individual works may challenge

dominant literary aesthetics, as a publisher they do not care to transform the definition of literary quality. Their definition is traditional and romantic in its unquestioned acceptance of literary authority. Their motivation is artistically 'pure': art for art's sake. They stake their reputation on artistic excellence and experience.

> By building on the best traditions of publishing and the book arts, we produce books that celebrate imagination, innovation in the craft of writing, and the many authentic voices of the American experience. Help Support Good Books. – *Coffee House Press (*http://coffeehousepress.org/about-2/) [03/07/2015]

By stating their mission in terms of 'the best traditions of publishing and the book arts', they accomplish two things. On the one hand, they refer to the art of publishing, opposing it to commerciality. On the other hand, they state their position with regard to belonging to a history of non-commercial — i.e. literary — publishing, reaffirming their authority in the field on the basis of tradition.

The largest small presses seem to work within this paradigm. They are often organized as nonprofit, securing a (seeming) independence from the market (cf. infra). The nonprofit status, which is an organizational necessity, at the same time secures additional symbolic capital. It turns their literary output into a common good, rather than a commodity. As nonprofits, they rely partly on tax-exempt donations for their income. The story with which they solicit these donations, is revealing for the way in which they present their value. The above quote from Coffee House Press relies on the generally accepted necessity of non-profit organisations to publish "good" literature. This aligns with Bourdieu's theory of cultural production, where symbolic capital rises with distance from economic profit. (1983: 330) Nonprofit status becomes a crucial mark of legitimacy. This stance is made explicit again by Milkweed Editions.

> "Operating as a nonprofit organization allows us to choose titles on the basis of artistic excellence and transformative potential." – *Milkweed Editions* http://milkweed.org/about-us/ [03/07/2015]

The essence of 'artistic excellence' is directly related to this nonprofit status, without which 'true' artistic excellence would not be possible.

1.2.2 Publishing as Book Art

> Another New Calligraphy believes creating art in mass quantities lessens its value and cheapens its spirit. We feel the only thing that outshines the quiet thrill of making something beautiful with our hands is the satisfaction of passing it along to someone

> else's so they may reflect on the time, effort, and love that went into its creation. – *Another New Calligraphy* (http://www.anothernewcalligraphy.com/search/label/information?max-results=50) [22/07/2015]

Whereas the first current sees the difference that can be made by small presses on a *textual* level – the care for literature is a care for the text – this second current transfers a similar care to the *material* level. The publisher is not only an editor, but a sculptor of the book, an artisan who delicately manufactures every object that leaves the publishing house. The form of the book – the combination of its binding, design and material – is as important as the text. It is an art form in its own right.

As the introductory quote from Another New Calligraphy's mission statement reveals, this current can be seen as a reaction against mass production. To counter the scale of industrial publishers, some publishers resort to older, artisanal publishing methods (e.g. letterpress printing, saddle-stitch binding). In some cases, this can result in a defensive attitude to digitalization as well, where slow, tactile reality is set against the fleeting proliferation of virtual life.

> Our aim is to work with our collaborators in establishing a singular visual and tactile presence in our increasingly virtual world. By making an artist's album or manuscript visually recognizable, we hope to make it stand out in the great American media overload. – *Another New Calligraphy* (http://www.anothernewcalligraphy.com/search/label/information?max-results=50) [22/07/2015]

Wariness of the digital, however, is not universal. Virtual Artists Collective embraces new digital possibilities to engage in dialogue across country borders, yet for one of their imprints they use specialized, artisan printing techniques.

> All of these volumes were selected by a diverse editorial committee operating by consensus and printed using digital technology that **makes the books accessible worldwide.** […]
>
> Since January 2011, Timberline Press (founded by Clarence Wolfshohl in 1975) has been our fine press imprint. Timberline publishes **hand bound letterpress chapbooks** — usually poetry — usually 20-30 pages, in limited editions of 50-100 printed by forgetgutenberg in Boston.
> *Virtual Artists Collective* (bolds mine)
> http://vacpoetry.org/about/ [22/07/2015]

It is noticeable that Virtual Artists Collective outsources its letterpress printing. Outsourcing printing is not uncommon. Thompson remarks that "[n]early all publishers today, small and large, outsource typesetting and printing", a custom that makes it easier to start a publishing company. (2010: 154) What strikes me in this case, however, is how the two areas cooperate: the artist-publisher collaborates with the artist-printer. The printer here fulfils a separate, specialized artistic role, detached from the act of 'publishing'. This is different to operations like Another New Calligraphy, for whom the act of printing is an essential part of the publishing process.

Since the printing process can be very labor-intensive, publishers most driven in this current, tend to be small organizations, who publish their work only in limited editions.

> "Holon Press […] produces small edition, saddle-stitch chapbooks that benefit from low-fi, in house production, and are only sold in our store."- *Holon Press*[24]
> http://sector2337.com/green-lantern-press/about-the-green-lantern-press/
> [22/07/2015]

Limited editions offer works more exclusivity. Parallel to the logic of symbolic capital and opposition to the market, this exclusivity does not necessarily imply high price tags[25]. It can however contribute to higher symbolic capital.[26]

1.2.3 The Battle of Genres

> The poet Thomas McGrath spoke of the "lost poets" of his generation, poets such as Don Gordon, Naomi Replansky, and Bert Meyers; Red Dragonfly Press began in an effort to provide a haven for the next generation of lost or overlooked poets
> – *Red Dragonfly Press*
> (http://www.reddragonflypress.org/about.html) [23/07/2015]

As a third current, I include publishers who see their task as promoting a certain literary genre in which they specialize. The most common genre for small press publishers to specialize in is poetry. This does not come as a surprise, since poetry is the prototypical genre to raise nearly no economic capital, while increasing literary status. When Bourdieu describes the field of

[24] Holon Press, an imprint of Green Lantern Press, did not publish books in 2014, but remains active according to their website. The small production scale might indicate that some of their publications remain under the radar.
[25] Most letterpress books are sold for $10-20.
[26] Within the area I focused on, true artisan publishers remained on micro-level. In other cities however, some artisan publishers have built a great reputation and have grown beyond micro-size (e.g. Ugly Duckling Presse, Brooklyn, NY).

cultural production in 19th century France, he describes how, within a hierarchy of genres, poetry is at the bottom from the economic point of view. Symbolically, however, distance from economic profit elevates the specific artistic legitimacy of this form of literature. (1983: 328-330) The same symbolic value – and economic lack of value – continues to define the position of poetry as a genre, in the United States as well as in Europe. A defense of poetry thus aligns with the traditional battle in the broad field of cultural production between genres and between principles of legitimization (the autonomic vs. the heteronomic, or the commercial). Many small presses are strongly involved in publishing poetry, though they do not always limit themselves to the genre.

Other genres can fulfil a similar role. Consider, for instance, the policy of Other Voices Books[27] in Chicago:

> Other Voices Books is an independent press devoted to keeping books of short fiction alive and well in a dominant corporate publishing climate that increasingly marginalizes the short story form. – *Other Voices Books* (http://ovbooks.com/about/) [23/07/2015]

From a European perspective, the short story occupies a different position than does poetry. It does not have the same historical and artistic legitimacy. Within an American context, however, the short story does occupy an important slot in the formation of a national literary history. Canonical figures, from Edgar Allan Poe to Raymond Carver, have shaped the genre and its acclaim. In The *Culture and Commerce of the American Short Story* Andrew Levy explains the importance of the genre for American literature as follows:

> With its admixture of unresolvable aristocratic and democratic values, this vision of artistic activity resonates strongly within American literary history. It is the same vision of the artist in America that Emerson proferred in "The Poet" with his elaborate economies of symbols and value, and his prophecy that the artist who shunned the marketplace would eventually become landlord of the earth. In fact, this vision of artistic activity has lived at the heart of the short story project since the antebellum era. The proliferation of workshops is merely the latest permutation of the same spirit that infused Poe's famous review of Hawthorne's *Twice-Told Tales,* the success of the slick magazine story in the first half of this century and the work of the New Critics at mid-century. All these phenomena created institutions that kept the short story directly or indirectly profitable, while preserving a partial foothold in high culture. (Levy 1993: 3)

[27] OV Books did not publish any works in 2014, though they remain active according to their website and the website of Dzanc Books, of which OV Books is now an imprint.

The separate and special position of the short story is indebted to two seemingly opposed tendencies. On the one hand, there is a strong (and maybe more recent) reliance on the ideas of the artistically pure. A short story collection does not have the same commercial value as a novel, but as a short form of literature it is particularly suited for formal experiment and analysis (as Levy's referral to the New Critics indicates). On the other hand, it was born as a particularly commercial genre, printable in magazines, and thus able to reach a broad audience, giving it a democratic allure. Unlike poetry, which is the traditional elevated form of literature, the short story thus merely preserves a partial, yet thoroughly American, 'foothold in high culture'.

The stance of OV Books, which is that the short story form is increasingly marginalized, is remarkable when you compare it to Levy's introduction. He opens his book with the following remark:

> The American short story is experiencing a renaissance. "In the last 15 to 20 years," Gary Fisketjon of Knopf Publishing has observed, "some world-class writers have been working in the short story form." Many major publishers have increased their support of short story collections to the point where young writers are no longer automatically encouraged to write novels instead. (1993: 1)

This book dates from 1993. OV Books was founded 11 years later. Perhaps its inception was a reaction to a decline in the publication of short stories during that decade, or perhaps it was a result of the stronger position of the genre, as Levy suggests, resulting in more confidence and a claim to more space in the publishing field.

A third publisher does something different when claiming space for their genre. The Dark House press focuses on:

> Neo-noir, fantasy, science fiction, horror, literary, magical realism, transgressive, crime, surrealism, and the grotesque. Everything we like has an elevated perspective, a literary voice, so whatever the genre, avoid the expected, the formulaic, the same old stories and voices. Memoir and poetry will be a very hard sale but we're not saying 100% no yet—the same for YA/NA. – *Dark House Press* (http://www.thedarkhousepress.com/) [23/07/2015]

Whereas poetry and the short story have a historic claim to artistic legitimacy, the subgenres listed by Dark House Press are traditionally considered to be of little artistic value.[28] Fantasy, science fiction, horror and crime are considered commercial genres. Dark House Press

[28] In *Other Worlds: The Fantasy Genre,* John Timmerman describes the necessity of claiming room for fantasy in the literary canon as a reaction against "the common failure to identify fantasy's place in the tradition of western literature" (1983: 2). His book is one of many scholarly works placing fantasy in a defensive position with regard to symbolic legitimation.

however does emphasize “an elevated perspective, a literary voice” within these genres. This points towards the development “ of an “autonomous” sub-field, springing from the opposition between a field of restricted production and a field of mass production.” (Bourdieu 1983: 333) Traditionally commercial genres are here elevated to the level of ‘true art’, moving away from mass production and into the field of restricted production. This rejection of the commercial goes hand in hand with a claim to literary credibility, and is thus a challenge to the dynamics of the field of restricted production. Within this field, these newcomers oppose the elitist and consecrated avant-garde, the cultural orthodoxy represented for instance by publishers with a particularly poetic focus. (Bourdieu 1983: 333) While making a similar move in their claim for the symbolic capital of a single genre, Dark House Press and Red Dragonfly are thus directly opposed in their poetics. While the latter might rely on traditional values under pressure, the former reinforce the artistic claims of new poetic values, putting even further pressure on the traditions.

1.2.4 Strategic Disinterest – Charismatic Publishing

> “We publish books. What do you do?” – *Cloud City Press* (http://cloudcitypress.com/?page_id=2) [24/07/2015]
>
> [Victor David Giron] started Curbside Splendor originally to publish his first novel Sophomoric Philosophy, but then was like "damn, publishing is fun," and so here we are. – *Curbside Splendor* (http://www.curbsidesplendor.com/about/) [03/07/2015]

This fourth current does not enter into discussion over literary value. Nor does it claim a desire for change. In fact, it does not claim any particular external motivation. What drives these publishers is that they like to publish. Nothing more, nothing less. The legitimization of these publishers consists of their apparent disinterest in any form of legitimization.

This current again ties back to the internal logics of autonomous fields of production as described by Bourdieu. “As the field of restricted production gains in autonomy, producers tend […] to think of themselves as intellectuals or artists by divine right, as ‘creators’, that is as *auctors* ‘claiming authority by virtue of their charisma.’” (1985: 26) Publishers within this category rely on their charisma without claiming institutionalized expertise, and thereby necessarily claim a certain privileged artistic insight. They just know – as if by divine right or simply ‘because they are cool’ - what is worth publishing and what is not.

Bourdieu goes further to describe the resistance of such charismatic cultural producers to institutionalized forms of legitimization. He asserts that “[they] cannot but resist […] the

institutional authority which the educational system, as a consecratory institution, opposes to their competing claims." (Bourdieu 1985: 26-27) This opposition to academia can be found literally in the manifesto of the Chicago Center for Literature and Photography (CCLAP). The manifesto consists of several bullet points. After reassuring his readership that there is no shame in being an intellectual, Jason Pettus goes on to explain what being an intellectual entails:

> There is a difference between 'intellectual' and 'academe.' And it has nothing to do with how much schooling you've had, or where you got that schooling, or what you studied at that school; it has everything to do with whether you're using that ivory tower as a jumping-off point into the real world, or as a shield against it. Academes are fussy and unyielding people, drawn to academia precisely because it hasn't changed in any major way since it was first invented by monks in the 13th century; intellectuals, however, are open-minded and roll with the punches, understanding that formal education and practical experience go hand-in-hand. - Jason Pettus, *CCLaP Manifesto* http://www.cclapcenter.com/2007/08/personal_essay_the_cclap_manif.html [24/07/2015]

If there is any claim to legitimacy, this thinking implies, it cannot be bestowed through institutionalized educational labels. Rather it comes through experience in "the real world". The credit literary publishers can build through "real-world experience" has much to do with their social circles. Many of these publishers prefer to point out their personal connection to other writers, or their involvement in a city's literary scene. What they publish, then, is determined by how they experience the "literary scene" or, more cynically, by whom they know. Featherproof Books in Chicago even overtly relies on a policy of nepotism, which in return helps enhance their charisma – they know they rely on nepotism and they don't care.

> We're gonna be honest with you: our submissions policy is 100% nepotism. We are really just doing books by our friends or friends of friends. You're already friends with one of us? Great! Send us your book! You know someone that is friends with one of us? Ask them to send us your book. Sorry. It's not the official policy, but it is the real policy and we're comfortable with it. Different businesses exist for different reasons and that's part of what's built into ours. – *Featherproof Books* http://featherproof.com/pages/about-us [24/07/2015]

Three out of the four publishers I mentioned in this section so far are located in Chicago: Featherproof books, Curbside Splendor and CCLaP. It is interesting, thus, to see how these three organizations are socially intertwined. CCLaP published the latest book by Curbside

Splendor editor Ben Tanzer. Curbside Splendor's editor-in-chief Naomi Huffman also recently became Featherproof's managing editor.

In an article on the role of the editor in early 20th century modernist periodicals, Matthew Philpotts discerns different types of editors. His analysis of "charismatic editorship" can be transposed to this current in the world of small press publishing:

> [Charismatic] editorship is defined by the subordination of the common institutional habitus of the journal to the personal habitus of the editor. The former is not only aligned with the latter, it comes to be wholly determined by it. (Philpotts 2012: 48)

The personal sphere of the editors ─ their taste, their friends - become the hallmark of the publisher. As the reference to Philpotts' article already suggests, this current is not new, but has extended historical roots. In the early 20th century, a likewise charismatic alternative publishing movement arose, connected to the rise of literary modernism (cf. supra). Though the aesthetics connected to modernism might find closer resemblance in the first current I described (relying on expertise and literary excellence, cf. 2.2.1), the atmosphere that surrounded its inception resembles the spirit of this current within small press publishing, not only in its opposition, but also in its organisation around charismatic individuals and circles. (McLaughlin 1996: 179-180)

In this reliance, however, lies a certain vulnerability.

> Because this form of editorship rests on capital in a personal embodied state, the capital accumulated by the journal [or publisher] is not easily transferred to a new post-holder. For these reasons, we would expect this form of editorship to be associated primarily with instances of the prototypically little magazine or only with the initial foundation phase of larger review journals. In other words, it typically underpins the heretical position of a newcomer in the field. (Philpotts 2012: 49)

Relying on personal charisma, is not a durable strategy. Over time, publishers will either have to rely on symbolic capital accumulated as an organization (rather than as an individual), or they will disappear. New Directions, the modernist publisher organized around James McLaughlin is still active in the publishing world today, yet, over time, McLaughlin's charisma has been institutionalized. New Direction's symbolic capital now relies on their publication list and the renowned status of their established authors.

Apart from a parallel with modernist author-publisher circles, a direct relation can be established between this current and the 'punk and zine' movement. As described in the introduction, the 'mimeo revolution' was a crucial point for small press publishing. Besides the advent of technical improvements, the sixties also embodied a certain adversarial spirit; "an

atmosphere of dissent was prevalent and the drive to make a social and political change created a sense of mission in the movement" (Glazier 1992: 1-2). Whereas the sixties were the basis for specific social and political movements (cf. infra 1.2.5), only a generalized sense of dissent followed through to the seventies, eighties and nineties. Its heirs joined forces with the heirs of 'fanzines', such that we can now refer to a "zine culture". Though zines take pride in their countercultural character and generally defy definition, Stephen Duncombe describes their current form accurately: "zines are noncommercial, nonprofessional, small-circulation magazines which their creators produce, publish, and distribute by themselves." (2014: 6) He derives their history from two movements.

> […] zines as a distinct medium were born in the 1930s. It was then that fans of SF, science fiction, often through the clubs they founded, began producing what they called "fanzines" as a way of sharing science fiction stories and critical commentary, and of communicating with one another. Forty years later, in the 1970s, the other defining influence on modern-day zines began as fans of punk rock music, ignored by and critical of the mainstream music press, started printing fanzines about their music and cultural scene. In the early 1980s these two tributaries, joined by smaller streams of publications created by fans of other cultural genres, disgruntled self-publishers, and the remnants from printed political dissent from the 60s and 70s were brought together and crossfertilized […] a culture of zines developed." (Duncombe 2014: 6-7)

Chicago's charismatic publishers have close ties to the punk movement and the DIY-spirit of zine culture. These ties go beyond the attitudinal. Both CCLaP and Curbside Splendor refer to their punk history in the information they present on their website.[29] Consistent with Philpotts' analysis, both Curbside Splendor and CCLaP are relatively young publishers. Curbside Splendor was started in 2009. CCLaP started in 2007 and started publishing full-length paperbacks only in 2013. Some older publishers continue to work within a punk paradigm, e.g. Puddin'head Press, but they are significantly smaller – they are micropresses, publishing limited material for a limited audience.

[29] "The Chicago Center for Literature and Photography (or CCLaP) is the brainchild of Jason Pettus, a former writer and photographer whose DIY roots go back to the punk/zine days of the 1980s." www.cclapcenter.com/plans.html [24/07/2015] and "Curbside Splendor was conceived as a punk rock band in the early 1990s in an apartment in Urbana, Illinois. The band never really went anywhere, but Curbside was re-founded as an independent press in the fall of 2009." www.curbsidesplendor.com/about/ [24/07/2015]

1.2.5 Emancipatory Publishing

As mentioned in the introduction to this section, the fifth current I identify supersedes the level of cultural production in its resistance to commerciality. Rather than opposing a specific aesthetic or method of production, it opposes the social inequalities that determine society itself, that likewise determine the field of artistic production. Three large fields of emancipation are present in my dataset: gender equality, sexual identity and racial equality.

Switchback Books in Chicago, firstly, promotes gender equality in the literary world.

> Switchback Books is a nonprofit feminist press publishing and promoting collections of poetry by women, including transsexual, transgender, genderqueer, and female-identified individuals. We aim to educate the public about poetry by women, gender issues in poetry, and methods for poetry writing, with the goal of advancing groundbreaking poetry by women. – *Switchback Books* (http://www.switchbackbooks.com/mission.html) [25/07/2015]

Their emphasis on 'groundbreaking poetry' ties back to the aesthetic imperative of the first current (cf. 2.2.1). The aim is, again, to publish good literature - literature that has a value for literary history. To achieve literary greatness, however, they want to include a heritage and tradition that has historically been excluded from symbolic capital. They started publishing in 2006, but draw on a heritage and literary tradition that dates previous to the 21st century, and is specifically indebted to the feminist movement of the second part of the 20th century.

> Women poets, for the first time in history, have a deep and wide women's literary tradition from which to draw. As the fortunate inheritors of the social, psychological, and linguistic spaces carved out by the artists and activists who have come before us, we seek to honor those visions and achievements while at the same time celebrating the multiplicity of voices that continue to emerge in women's poetry. – *Switchback Books* (http://www.switchbackbooks.com/mission.html) [25/07/2015]

According to Len Fulton, who publishes the annual *Directory of Little Magazines and Small Presses*, the women's movement became a significant category for small press publishers in the seventies, when several cultural and social investigations of the sixties led to mature subject areas. (In: Glazier 1992: 3) Switchback carries that work forward in today's small press publishing field.

These cultural and social investigations of course went beyond feminism and so do their contemporary inheritors. The LGBT movement, for example, continues to be represented. In Minneapolis, 'Squares and Rebels' publishes books "that explore the queer and/or disability

experience". They were founded in 2006 and remain closely connected to their flagship Handtype press, which focuses on literature about the deaf or signing experience (www.squaresandrebels.com/about/; handtype.com/about/index.html) [25/07/2015]. New Victoria Publishers[30] in Chicago, is driven to showcase both gender equality and the experience of sexual identities, publishing "lesbian e-books". Their current operation is a direct descendant of the emancipatory drift of the sixties and seventies: "New Victoria Publishers started in 1976 as a small print shop, during this time our feminist foremothers were breaking barriers by publishing feminist books by lesbians." (newvictoria.com) [25/07/2015] With these publishers, what is noticeable, is that their aim is not solely to reinforce the position of writers. They also want to provide literature that embodies a particular human experience. Literature is the vehicle through which this experience can be expressed and heard, both by a broader audience and especially within the community. These presses advocate for the emancipation of both writer and audience.

A third emancipatory movement tries to reinforce racial equality. In today's literary landscape, several organisations support the development of literature connected to a specific heritage. Cave Canem, Kundiman and Canto Mundo were established to support poets writing from respectively an African-American, Asian and Latino/a tradition. These organisations support writers, but they do not publish them. Many of their authors, however, are published through small presses. Willow Books in Detroit, for instance, has published several Cave Canem anthologies. Their mission is a broad one.

> The mission of Willow Books is to develop, publish and promote writers typically underrepresented in the literary field. An independent press with a woman of color at its helm, Aquarius Press/Willow Books is recognized as an industry leader for its commitment to artistic development. – *Willow Books* (http://willowlit.net/) [25/07/2015]

In this mission statement, Willow Books shows awareness of both racial and gender disparities, by emphasizing that the press is led by a woman of color. Its commitment to "artistic development" and the promotion of underrepresented voices points towards an overtly emancipatory politic. At the same time, this mission statement ties in with the first current as well, emphasizing its commitment to artistic development.

The struggle for racial equality in the literary world does not arise out of thin air. Two cities included in my research, Detroit and Chicago, have inherited a tradition which has long

[30] Though New Victoria Publishers remain active to the best of my knowledge, I have not been able to establish which books they published in 2014. Since no information was available, their publications are not included in the detailed data list.

intertwined African-American emancipation and artistic expression. This history is and has been crucial to the development of an African-American Literary tradition. In addition, it has accounted for a significant movement within the world of small press publishing and has brought forth Chicago's oldest independent publisher, Third World Press. In Detroit, likewise, Dudley Randall's Broadside Press and Naomi Long Madgett's Lotus Press, while no longer active publishers, are still crucial to understand Detroit's literary significance. Before I go on, I will briefly introduce the particular and significant African-American publishing history of Chicago and Detroit.

In both cities, the 1960s and 1970s were especially prolific in terms of specifically African-American book publishing. Donald Franklin Joyce charted the history of African-American book publishing in the U.S. from the early nineteenth century until the 1980s. He emphasizes the importance of the years between 1960 and 1974, during which African-American publishing became more visible. He describes the decade as follows:

> Never before in the history of the United States had the Black American and his allies pursued so aggressively and on such a broad scale, the goals of securing for all Black Americans full political, social, and economic equality (1983: 78)

This revolutionary zeal, combined with rising literacy among the African-American population and an increasing number of African-American students enrolling in institutions of higher learning, reinforced the awareness of African-Americans' culture, present and past. The demand for books about African-American heritage, and books written with an awareness of this heritage, rose accordingly (Joyce 1983: 78-79). Combined with the democratization of printing technology that had instigated the 'mimeo revolution', African-American small presses bloomed.

In Chicago, this revolutionary spirit has links to vestiges of the Chicago Black Renaissance, which followed the better-known Harlem Renaissance. Starting in the 1930s, the city of Chicago went through "a revitalization of the black expressive arts, especially music, art, literature, theatre, and dance." (Knupfer 2006: 1) This artistic revival was closely connected to a form of political awareness and intellectual activism that continued to be a driving force among the 1960s African-American micropublishers. Anne Meis Knupfer, who charted the influence of women's movements in the Chicago Black Renaissance, describes this underlying political view as follows:

> Chicago black artists, scholars, teachers, and activists drew from a pan-African identity, thereby expanding their social protests to include the worldwide exploitation of people of African descent. Put differently, activists during the Chicago Black Renaissance did not view lynchings in the South, restrictive covenants in the North, the segregation of

> black soldiers during World War II, or the Italian invasion of Ethiopia as isolated events but rather saw them as linked by colonial, racist practices. (2006: 1)

Artistic production in the Chicago Black Renaissance was part of a larger resistance to the hegemonic structures that had oppressed African-Americans for so long (i.e. structures of colonialism and white supremacy). This same broader resistance resonates in the inception of African American small presses.

In Detroit in the 1960s, different art forms and political activism were likewise intertwined. Music may be the artistic field for which Detroit is most known – I doubt anybody would dismiss the influence of Motown – but Motown did not stand alone. Literary movements flourished under the impulses of micropresses such as Dudley Randall's Broadside Press and Naomi Long Madgett's Lotus Press. Small, underground presses were part of a larger literary movement, working from a poetics particular to their time and surroundings, both geographically and ideologically. In his doctoral dissertation "Dissent: Detroit And The Underground Press, 1965-69", Matthew Pifer delineates a poetics specific for "poets of a Detroit School", and notes that

> […] central to their identity as artists was their involvement in different forms of artistic expression, such as those sponsored or inspired by the Black Arts Movement, and the fact that they were marginalized from conventional means of publication. Many were committed to the civil rights movement of the early 1960s. After Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated in Memphis in 1968, however, some shifted, as Julius Lester did, toward the more militant black nationalist movement (Pifer 2001: 110-112)

Again, we see how countering white supremacy is an integral part of the artistic expression. Being involved in political equal rights movements is part of the artists' identity, and hence becomes part of their poetics, which have left a significant legacy.

During the sixties and seventies several African-American publishers sprang up in both Chicago and Detroit, yet many did not survive. Out of six publishers in Chicago, and four in Detroit[31], only one remains active today. Third World Press in Chicago, founded by poet and professor Haki Madhubuti, incorporates the heritage of Path Press, founded by Benett Johnson, who is now Vice President of Third World Press. Apart from Third World Press, the most profound symbolic and literary marks of African-American literary production in Detroit

[31] Chicago based African-American publishers: African-American Images; Afro Am.; Du Sable Museum of African-American History; Book Division of Johnson Publishing Company; Path Press and Third World Press. Detroit based African-American publishers: Agasha Publishing; Balamp Publishing Company; Broadside Press; Lotus Press. Several of these publishers published primarily non-fictional works. Sources: D.F. Joyce, *Gatekeepers of Black Culture.* Greenwood Press: 1983; D.F. Joyce, *Black Book Publishers in the United States,* Greenwood Press: 1991.

and Chicago, were left by Broadside Press and Lotus Press in Detroit[32]. These three presses were started by poets with little means. Madhubuti's enterprise started with a mimeograph machine bought with the honorarium of a poetry reading. Dudley Randall started by publishing single poems on a broadside, sold for under a dollar. Naomi Long Madgett started by home-printing posters with a single poem to be used in classrooms. Later she hand-stapled chapbooks and learned to bind books herself. These were micropresses that considerably contributed to the history of American literature, publishing authors such as Gwendolyn Brooks, Audre Lorde and each other. (www.thirdworldpressbooks.com ; www.broadsidelotuspress.com/) [26/07/2015]

Above, I outlined the importance of the sixties African-American nationalist political impetus. It is to be noted, however, that literary publishers dealt differently with the importance they attributed to it in their mission. Dudley Randall, for instance, foregrounds this aspect more than does Naomi Long Madgett. In a 1970 article in the *Black Academy Review*, Randall stated the following:

> We (Africans in the United States) are a nation of twenty-two million souls, larger than Athens in the age of Pericles or England in the age of Elizabeth. There is no reason why we should not create and support a literature which will be to our own nation what those literatures were to theirs (no. 1: 40 – 47). - *Dudley Randall, Broadside Press (*http://www.broadsidelotuspress.com/) [25/07/2015]

Randall should, however, not be seen primarily as a radical ideologist; he was an artist in the first place. In 1975, at the celebration of Broadside Press's 10th anniversary, he explained the role of ideology in his publishing business.

> I have not locked myself in any rigid ideology in managing Broadside Press, but I suppose certain inclinations or directions appear in my actual activities. As clearly as I can see by looking at myself, which is not very clear, because of closeness, I restrict the publications to poetry, which I think I understand and can judge not too badly. […] I reserve the press for Black poetry (except in "For Malcolm"), as I think the vigor and beauty of out Black poets should be better known and should have an outlet. (in Joyce 1983: 86)

Likewise, Naomi Long Madgett clearly draws on the dual necessities of art and an outlet for Black art as the main impetus for her endeavour. Replying to a publisher who had stopped publishing poetry, because it did not sell, she answered: "That's why I'm doing it. Somebody

[32] The publishers are now no longer active. The only activity remaining is the yearly Naomi Long Madgett Poetry Award. The winner of this award is now published by Wayne State University Press, which (through the significance of university presses) marks an increase in symbolic capital.

has to." (http://www.broadsidelotuspress.com/) [25/07/2015] As stated, of these presses only Third World Press remains currently active. Their mission statement foregrounds the emancipation of African-American reading audiences through

> [Quality] literature that primarily focuses on issues, themes, and critique related to an African-American public. The Third World Press mission is to make this literature accessible to as many individuals as possible including our targeted market of primarily African-American readers. – *Third World Press* (http://www.thirdworldpressbooks.com/index.php/sample-sites-2) [25/07/2015]

During my visit to Chicago, I spoke to Bennett Johnson and asked him what distinguished them as publishers so that they could survive when others faded.

> At one time there were six African-American publishers in Chicago. But yeah, many have gone. It's like this – when you are young, you have a lot of friends. And then you get married and kids and you settle down and your circle grows smaller. And then when you're old – it's just you and your partner. Johnson's publishing arm is out of business. Doris Saunders was a key figure. She left to teach. Then Lerone Benett kept it going for a while but he ran out of gas. It's about secretary management. To keep things going when a driving force leaves, you need a stable secretary management. That's better here [at TWP].

In Johnson's account, a key element is the stability of the organisation, apart from the presence of driving forces. The demise of African-American publishers then, strongly recalls Philpotts' argument about the fragility of publishers who rely on charismatic editors (cf. supra, 2.2.4). Whereas the strength of African-American small presses lay in the vigour of entrepreneurs and artists who pushed on despite a lack of means and difficult circumstances, this reliance also determined their transience. Nonetheless, emancipatory publishing with a focus on racial equality remains represented in Detroit and Chicago through Third World Press and Willow Books.

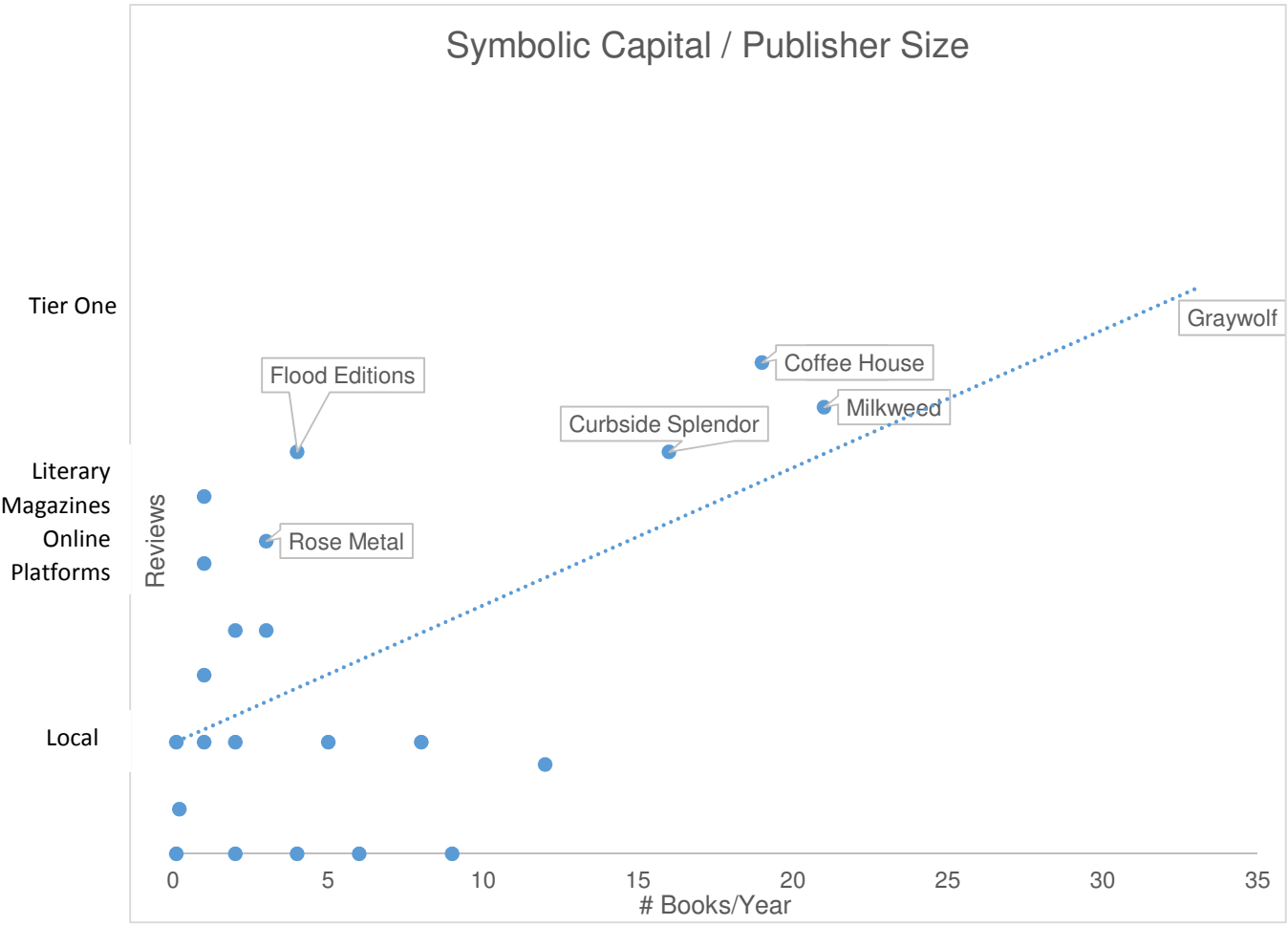
1.3 Symbolic Capital

Considering that all presses from all currents are somehow involved in efforts for literary legitimacy, I wanted to measure the degree to which they succeed in attaining symbolic capital. In order to do this, I turned towards reviews. For each title published by these presses in 2014, I looked up whether it got reviewed and by whom. A detailed description of this endeavour is included in the appendices of this thesis.

I ranked the results according to the perceived literary status of the reviewing institution. The highest category consists of widely recognized prominent literary venues and newspapers, such as the *New York Times Book Review*, the *Washington Post* and the *New Yorker*. Next come established literary magazines, online platforms and important outlets specifically addressed to the literary sector. Online platforms have grown to reach broad audiences and are often sympathetic to independent publishers. *The Rumpus*, *Largehearted Boy* and *Entropy*, for instance, more often review books by the small presses included in this survey than do the larger and more established literary venues. Although several of these online venues have considerable credibility among small presses, they cannot endow a small press publication with the same symbolic capital as members of category one. This is not only due to the symbolic capital, built over time, of the tier one members, but also because tier one publications are more selective about which small press books they will cover. A review by the *New York Times* for instance is more exceptional for a small press than a review by *The Rumpus*. Similarly, this sense of exclusivity increases the symbolic value of their reviews. Important outlets for the literary sector include *Publisher's Weekly* and *Library Journal*. These venues target a specific, yet important niche for publishers. Their audience is less broad, but more influential. Next come local presses and local literary outlets. These are followed closely by the final category, that of individual blogs. For the presses endowed with the least symbolic capital, I could not find a single review. (More details about this ranking can be found in the appendix.)

Overall, large small presses have more symbolic capital than their micro counterpart. (cf. figure 1) This comes as no surprise since larger publishers can often rely on (larger) staff, which creates possibilities for more professional design, promotion and communication. What is interesting to consider, however, is how symbolic capital interacts with the currents I drew in the above paragraphs. In figure 2, I organize the presses according to these currents. What stands out is that publishers who work purely within the first paradigm (i.e. who justify their organization as a defense of pure literature against a rapacious economy, cf. 2.2.1) have by far the most symbolic capital. Moreover, the highest forms of symbolic capital are not restricted to the largest publishers. Flood Editions, who published only four works in 2014, got reviews from the highest categories, including one from *The New Yorker*. Likewise, Rose Metal

Figure 1: Symbolic Capital Related to Small Press Sizes
Based on reviews for 2014 releases



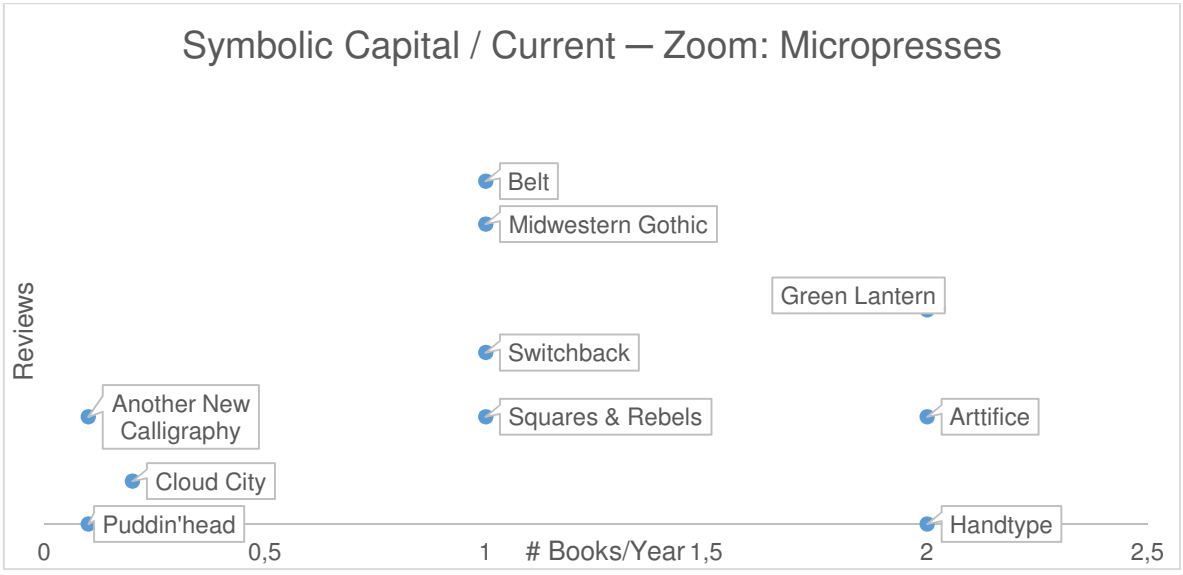
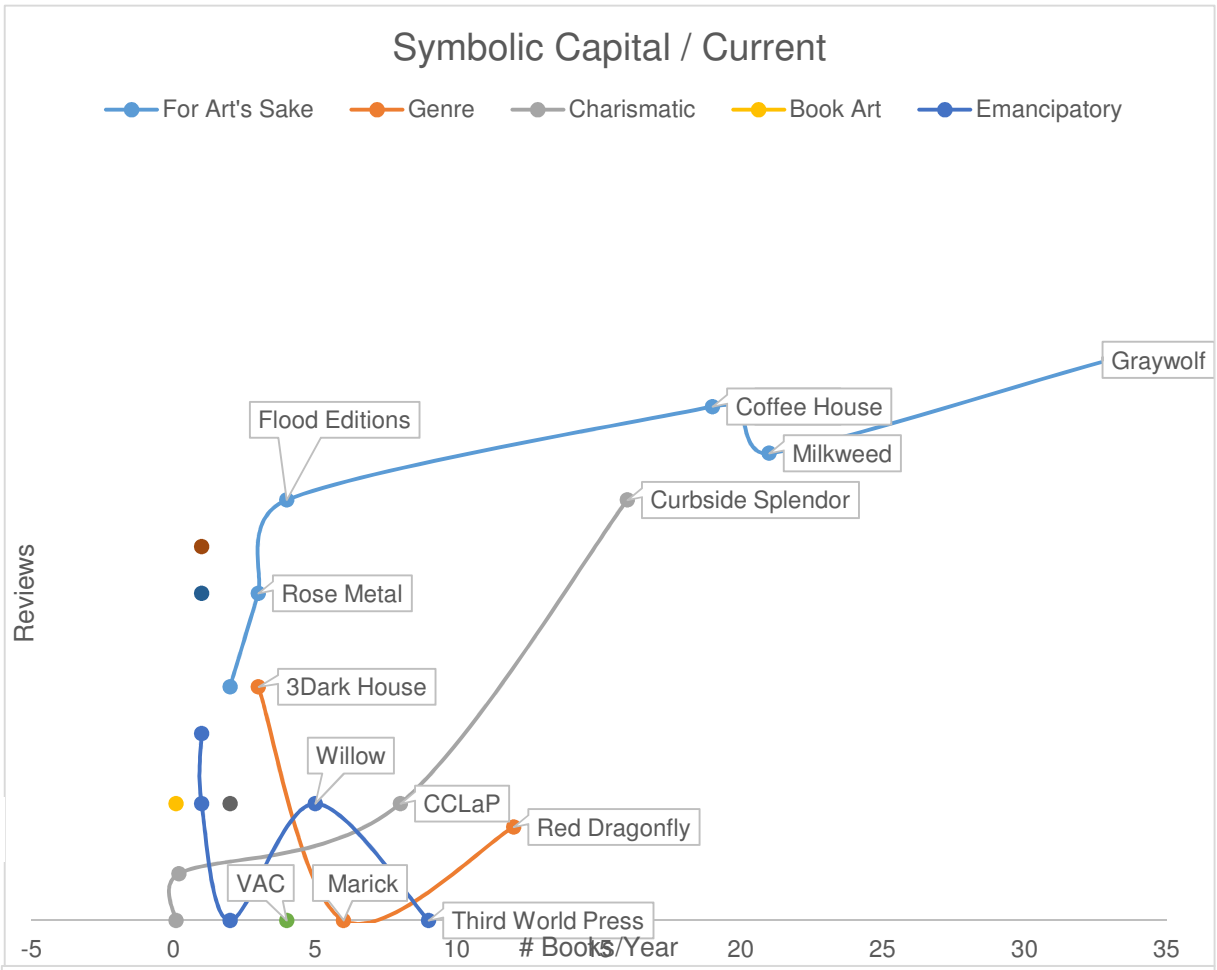
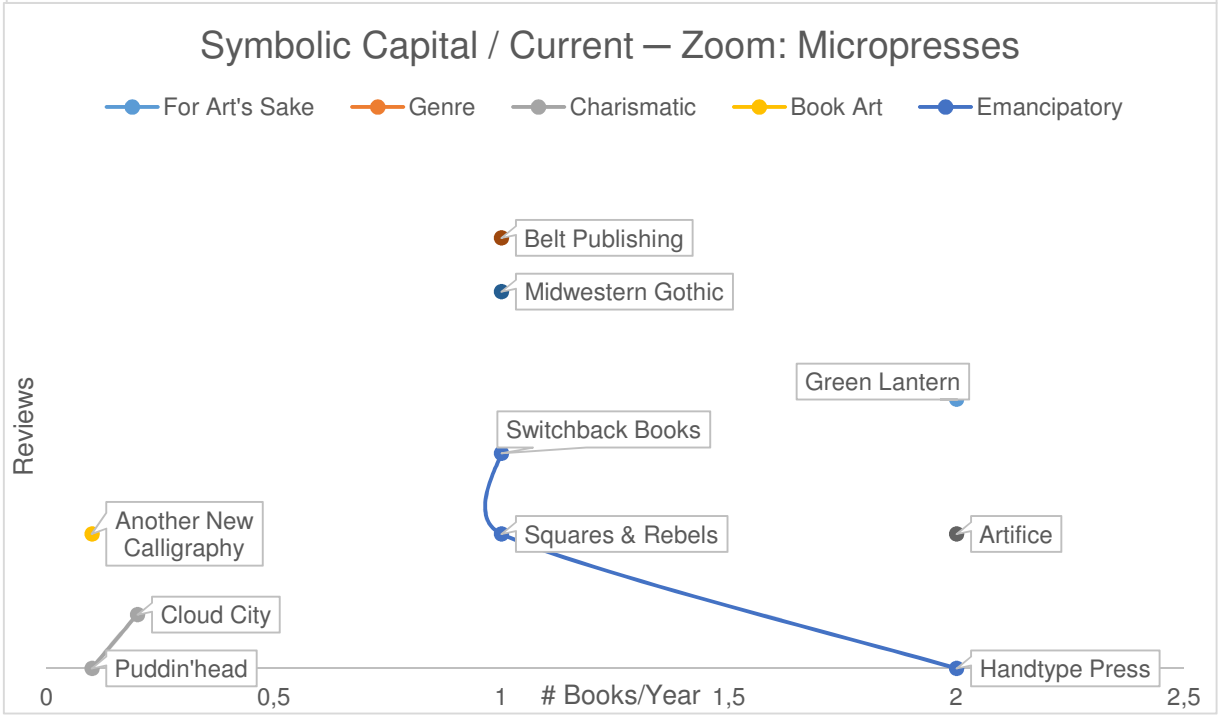


Figure 2: Symbolic Capital Related to Publishing Currents
Based on reviews for 2014 releases - (publisher size conveyed through font size)


Symbolic Capital / Current
For Art's Sake
Genre
Charismatic
Book Art
Emancipatory
Tier One
Literary Magazines
Online Platforms
Local
Reviews
Graywolf
Coffee House
Flood Editions
Milkweed
Curbside Splendor
Rose Metal
3Dark House
Willow
CCLaP
Red Dragonfly
VAC
Marick
Third World Press
-5
0
5
10
15
20
25
30
35
Books/Year


Symbolic Capital / Current — Zoom: Micropresses
For Art's Sake
Genre
Charismatic
Book Art
Emancipatory
Reviews
Belt Publishing
Midwestern Gothic
Green Lantern
Switchback Books
Another New Calligraphy
Squares & Rebels
Artifice
Cloud City
Puddin'head
Handtype Press
0
0,5
1
1,5
2
2,5
Books/Year

Press, who published only three books, including one chapbook, got reviews from the *LA Review of Books* and several notable online platforms and literary reviews. Green Lantern Press, which only published two books, got the least reviews, but still did not remain unnoticed. One book was reviewed by local media, and discussed on several blogs relating to art and feminism. The other got a review from online literary magazine *Entropy*. The largest publishers in this current are the largest independent publishers of the area. Four out of five large independent publishers, publishing around 20 books per year (or more), are active in this current. They are well-endowed with symbolic capital. The largest two (ranked by number of publications), Graywolf Press and Coffee House Press, received tier one reviews for nearly all their books. An additional sign of their literary authority, is that several of their books are also published by renowned presses in the UK or Canada. This points either towards their ability to acquire the rights of published books, which requires both financial and symbolic capital, or towards the influence of their publications abroad. Several books published by Graywolf were republished in the UK. Noticeable is also that Graywolf not only attracts reviews that bestow them with the highest literary capital but also those which broaden the press's appeal. Several of their works were also discussed by *Oprah*, *Vogue*, *Cosmopolitan* and *Elle*. Though these media might not represent highly respected literary criticism, they do considerably widen the publisher's reach[33].

Only one publisher who foregrounds the second current (literature as book art, cf. 2.2.2) published a work in 2014. Another New Calligraphy published just one chapbook. This category was underrepresented in 2014. For that one chapbook, however, Another New Calligraphy did get considerably more attention than the other chapbook publishers. With a nomination for the Pushcart Prize[34], it gets significant symbolic capital within the chapbook world.

Within the battle of genres, what stands out is that publishers focusing on the traditional genre of poetry do considerably worse than Dark House Press, which publishes less traditionally consecrated genres. On the one hand, this might have to do with a degree of saturation. Poetry is well represented by the larger independent publishers, whereas horror and gothic stories are relatively new to 'literary' presses. What might also contribute is support from flagship Curbside Splendor, or broader support from the 'horror scene'. Several niche websites have

[33] In 'Merchants of Culture', Thompson devotes over ten pages to Oprah's influence on book sales and her importance to publishers. He explains the so-called 'Oprah-effect', whereby the sales figures of books chosen for Oprah's Book Club rise explosively in the following weeks. Ellie Wiesel's *Night* is included as example: "Oprah's choice catapulted a stable backlist title into a runaway bestseller". (Thompson 2010: 270-284)

[34] The Pushcart Prize yearly publishes "the best of small presses". It is one of the only "awards" for which chapbook collections qualify. http://www.pushcartprize.com/index.html [27/07/2015]

hailed Dark House Press, not only in reviews, but also with awards such as the horror writer's association Bram Stoker Award.

For publishers relying on charisma, size forms the largest gap. Curbside Splendor is one of the largest enterprises in the dataset and they seem to have the symbolic capital to match, though they get fewer tier-one reviews than the large publishers within the first category. They do get a great deal of attention from online platforms and the literary sector, but not a single review by the *New York Times*, contrary to presses of the same size that work within the first current. It should be noted that Curbside Splendor is considerably younger than Graywolf Press, Coffee House Press or Milkweed Editions and so may need more time to build an established literary reputation. Dzanc Books, on the other hand, is only one year older than Curbside Splendor and yet they have managed to get reviews at several tier-one publications. Time will tell whether Curbside Splendor will attain reviews from the most established literary institutions and whether their strategy will develop accordingly. Further down the scale, CCLaP is growing steadily, but started publishing full-length books only recently. On the scale of symbolic capital they are almost central, but still on the lower half. Chapbook publishers relying on charisma, such as Puddin'head and Cloud City Press, are at the bottom of the scale, but their publications are most likely not intended to reach broad audiences. They only publish a limited number of chapbooks, distributed very locally.

Finally then, the emancipatory publishers form an interesting category. They are all on the lower half of the scale, but there is some diversity that cannot be attributed to scale. As seen in the previous paragraphs, publishers within this current are various. Parallel to the differences in their missions, there is a difference in their reception. Squares and Rebels for instance published one book in 2014. *Lincoln Avenue: Chicago Stories* went unnoticed by literary reviews, but did get picked up by several LGBT venues. Switchback Books, a Chicago-based feminist press, also published one book. It did not get any tier-one attention, nor was there feminist niche interest, but it did get reviews from online literary venue *The Rumpus* and from *Publishers Weekly*. The book did not resonate widely, but the reviews it did get are symbolically significant.

Two publishers with a focus on racial equality are present in this dataset. First, Willow Books in Detroit has a peculiar review pattern. It is very inconsistent. They published five books in 2014. Four books did not get any reviews. Out of those four, *This house, my bones* by Elmaz Abinader, was a Pushcart Prize nominee, thus acquiring some small press status. The fifth book, however, *The Four Words for Home* by Angie Chuang, resonated on an entirely different level. It got reviewed by the *LA Review of Books* and *The Rumpus*, which I would position respectively as tier one and two literary venues. This is a discrepancy compared to Willow

Books' other publications, which got virtually no attention. It seems probable that in this case, the symbolic capital of the publisher did not deliver the reviews. What is more likely, is that these reviews were attained on the basis of the symbolic or personal capital of the writer, Angie Chuang, who has written as a reporter for several newspapers, including as a staff writer for the LA Times (http://angiechuang.com/biography/) [28/07/2015]. Of course, a publisher might benefit from the symbolic or personal capital of one of its writers. In this case, however, the discrepancy between the attention for Angie Chuang's book and Willow Book's other publications, makes me doubt whether the press itself has benefitted symbolically so far. The final publisher in this category, is Third World Press. They are relatively large for a small press. In 2014, they published nine full-length paperbacks, but received just one review, for Terry O'Neal's *The Sparrow's Plight*. This poetry collection was reviewed by Chicken Bones, which describes itself as a journal "dedicated to Nathaniel Turner, prophet of Southampton, and Marcus Bruce Christian, Poet of New Orleans." It is a blogspot website, a one man operation run by Rudolph Lewis (http://journalchickenbones.blogspot.be/) [28/07/2015]. No other Third World Press works were reviewed, nor did they get any other attention from established literary venues. It seems that, within the literary field, their entire operation goes by unnoticed.

This virtual invisibility of Third World Press to "the literary field" in general (as evidenced by lack of reviews) and the more community-oriented small press field, strikes me, since two aspects of its work point towards its undeniable presence and impact. Firstly, Third World Press has been around for half a century. During that time they grew into a stable independent literary publishing organization, whose main income derives from book sales. Their books continue to be bought and presumably read despite a complete neglect by the dominant literary frame. Secondly, looking into the history of small press publishing, it appears that in the past half century, Third World Press has offered a tremendous literary contribution. With the publication of Gwendolyn Brooks alone, it has altered the literary canon – at least, it has altered the literary canon of writers of color, for – to my great surprise and wonder, this appears to be a separate realm, of which primarily writers, scholars, and publishers of color, seem to be aware.

The overall impression that arises from this exploration, is one that complies to the field of restricted production in Bourdieusian terms. The purer one's devotion to art as a realm of its own, the more likely that one is to be bestowed with symbolic capital. By this logic, the position of the emancipatory current as a whole – which does not accept the notion of art as a realm separated from a broader reality – is symbolically polluted from the start. Bourdieu himself explains the difficult place of this current in a footnote to the description of the conflicting legitimizing principles in the world of artistic production:

> The status of "social art" is […] thoroughly ambiguous. Although it relates artistic or literary production to external functions (which is what the advocates of "art for art's sake" object to about it), it shares with "art for art's sake" a radical rejection of the dominant principle of hierarchy and of the "bourgeois" art which recognizes it. (1983: 321)

In this quote, Bourdieu describes the difficulty of the art world when dealing with "social art"[35] in its own terms. In the second section of this thesis, I will try to reverse this logic. I will describe the difficulties "social arts" experience while dealing with art that aligns itself with universality superseding social realities.

The structure and workings of a field of cultural production, entails that "there is no other criterion of membership of a field than the objective fact of producing effects within it." (Bourdieu 1983: 323) Third World Press and Willow Books have virtually no impact on "the literary field" as it is commonly perceived. But, their books are sold and presumably read. While they might not have an impact on consecrated media, they do have an impact on readers. And they will have an impact on this thesis. As a student of literature, I have a choice. I could at this point, only look into consecrated independent presses. That would entail an affirmation of the consecration mechanisms, which from an academic point of view, I cannot mindlessly accept. So instead, I will look into what is *not* consecrated, and question the rules of entry from an informed outsider perspective. Since a thesis is per definition a space for limited inquiry – both the research time and word count are restricted – I cannot look into all emancipatory publishing movements, each with its own history, its specific difficulties, and its unique position in the field of power. I will come back to this later, but for now, suffice it to state that in what follows, I will question the exclusion of publishers of color with an emancipatory publishing mission.

[35]I bracketed the term social arts, since I can no longer apply it unproblematically. I believe that by describing art as "social art", its position in the cultural field becomes weakened. I believe that language use has an impact. Rather, I would like to suggest to refer that we refer to art for art's sake as anti-social, exclusionary, or perhaps unaware art, though I maintain an open attitude to other suggestions.

More and more, I'm sure that I have to refuse intellectual "community" whose joy is in some way predicated on enjoyment of what is, at best, obliviousness to these harms, or worse, actual celebration of the specialness of all-white clubs. It is total bullshit to enjoy being in a social or creative community that is segregated the way poetry is segregated.

- Simone White
From: 'Flibbertigibbet in a White Room'

"We don't publish trash. We publish Literature."

- Bennett Johnson, Third World Press (interview)

PART 2

On What Does 'Independent Publishing' Depend? Racial Disparity and Invisibility

In *Anecdotal Theory*, Jane Gallop convincingly explains and shows the force with which real-life experiences challenge forms of theorizing, writing that 'Subjecting theory to incident teaches us to think in precisely those situations which tend to disable thought, forces us to keep thinking even when the dominance or our thought is far from assumed' (Gallop 2002, 15). As a literature student, educated within a theoretical paradigm that rests largely on the same assumptions as those reigning in the more autonomous fields of literary production, the challenge of anecdote has forced me to come to terms with some of my own prejudices. Through engaging with anecdotes, rather than discarding them as insignificant, my thinking has become more nuanced and critical. A new perspective opened up, as I learned that these anecdotes are not isolated testimonies, but rather tie into an elaborate framework of critical thought and theory about race, gender, class, etc. that was rarely considered when discussing literature on an academic level within my education.

In this section I will draw on anecdotes to determine how racial disparities are reinforced through the dominant literary-aesthetic paradigm, and how this paradigm continuously works to conceal that reinforcement. My argument will consist of two parts. First, I will identify what is going on - i.e. how does racial exclusion play a role in the world of independent publishing? Then, I will provide a framework for understanding why it is going on and why it can continue to do so – i.e. why does it remain unnoticed? In addition to drawing on the conversation I had with Bennett Johnson from Third World Press, and on the panels I attended at the AWP conference, I will refer to three essays, written by established writers of color: I will refer to Junot Diaz's introduction to *Dismantle*, which was also published as an online article titled 'POC vs. MFA'[36], David Mura's essay 'The Student of Color in the typical MFA-program' and Simone White's 'Flibbertigibbet in a White Room / Competencies'. Beautiful and insightfully written as these three texts are, they are not only an intervention of the personal in the theoretical, but also an intervention of literature into sociology.

As you can deduct from the titles of the essays, two of them deal with MFAs, or Master's of Fine Arts, programs. These are academic writing educations at graduate level. This might seem a digression from my subject, a turn away from the world of publishing. I will therefore briefly elaborate on the correlation between independent publishing and MFA programs, participation in both of which has increased exponentially over the past decades.

[36] Online available at http://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/mfa-vs-poc [20/07/2015]

First of all, there is a great deal of overlap between MFA culture and small press publishing. To a large degree, they are directly intertwined, since the influx of small press publishers at this point are predominantly MFA program graduates. Moreover, creative writing programs are often supplemented by an engagement in the program's own publishing activities, thereby directly preparing students for a publishing career. The connection between small press publishing and MFA programs can also easily be seen by looking at supporting organizations. It is not coincidental that *Poets & Writers*, who describe themselves as 'the primary source of information, support, and guidance for creative writers', have created online databases for both MFA programs and independent publishers (http://www.pw.org/about-us). The same image appears when you consider who is represented at the yearly AWP-conference. Panel-topics range from writing advise to publishing advise and at the book fair, between the many stands of independent publishers, a great deal of universities present their creative writing programs. These direct links between MFA programs and independent publishing – the involvement of the same people and the reliance on the same informational channels – indicates that the notions of literature dominant in MFA programs will significantly overlap with the small press paradigm. Considering that this literary-aesthetic paradigm is the central focus of my critique – the paradigm which dominates the world of small press publishing, but which is a force that extends beyond small press publishing — critiques on MFA programs will prove valuable for my analysis.

A second reason why lived experience in MFA programs can prove especially useful as a way to interrogate publishing mechanisms, is that these programs use a workshop model in which students give each other feedback - almost as if they were editing each other's texts. The experiences of MFA students of color echo what has been described as the main reason why there is a necessity for racially diverse publishers. In our conversation, Bennett Johnson from Third World Press in Chicago, insisted that 'what it comes down to, is editing. A black editor is the key; they have more insight. A white editor will edit black literature differently.' This statement, based on experience is supported by research using editorial theory. In 'Black Writers, White Publishers: Marketplace Politics in Twentieth-Century', John K. Young examines the editorial process of works by Nella Larsen, Ralph Ellison, Gwendolyn Brooks, Ishmael Reed, and Toni Morrison, arguing that 'a problematic view of race has worked its way into the published work of African-American writers, in each case flouting the writer's own apparent purposes' (Simmons 2008).

Both Junot Diaz and David Mura function as spokespersons for many writers and students of color. They have gathered experience and credibility as writers and educators. Their essays relate their own personal experience to testimonies heard over the past years, which both connect to a theoretical framework on race with which they are thoroughly acquainted. Thus,

their essays prove to be both insightful and grounded in a larger base of testimony that has not reached the sphere of public debate. Rather than ignoring this testimony, I will allow it to critically intervene in my own framework. This opening up of academic discourse to include the personal is indebted to feminist theory, that recognised how 'the inclusion of the personal within the academic [is] a way to consider thoughts, responses, and insights which would not traditionally be recognized as knowledge.' (Gallop 2002: 55) Though it goes against the dominant framework, I consider this view to be more critically aware. It does not ask to include all personal opinions as absolute truth – this is how anecdote could be described as a threat to traditional knowledge, and is also a distorted representation of what anecdotal theory tries to achieve. Anecdote does not serve absolutes – rather, it deconstructs them. I hope this will become clear as I continue to draw parallels between experience, theory and sociology. I will not lose sight of Bourdieu. Neither will I lose sight of Audre Lorde and bell hooks.

2.1 Strategies (what is going on?)

In this part I will provide an account of two reigning prejudices within the world of independent publishing. The first is the assumption that literature by writers of color tends to be less interesting 'on a literary basis', because the writer of color might have less access to/knowledge of the history of western literature. The second is the assumption that literature with a so-called political content tends to be less interesting 'on a literary base', because the political intervenes with stylistic experiment. As you might deduct from my use of quotation marks, judgments made 'on a literary base' will prove to be problematic when confronted with an engaged consideration of anecdote.

2.1.1 Identifying the *Naifs*

The basic premise of the literary-aesthetic paradigm is that literature has no other responsibility than to be interesting 'on a literary base'. Though the content of what is literarily interesting has changed over the decades along the lines of the different dominant aesthetics, the concept of literature for literature's sake has been dominant ever since the Romantic era. For several decades, a relatively autonomous field of production[37], to come back to Bourdieu, has been able to develop. This centuries-long evolution has been accompanied by simultaneously developing demands for entry into the field. As Bourdieu himself describes it in 'The field of cultural production, or: the economic world reversed':

> '[…] in an artistic field, which has reached an advanced stage of this history [of functioning according to its own principles, with a certain autonomy], there is no place

[37] I will come back later to the ways in which the field is not as autonomous as it likes to claim.

> for *naifs;* more precisely, the history is immanent to the functioning of the field, and to meet the objective demands it implies, as a producer but also as a consumer, one has to *possess* the whole history of the field' (Bourdieu 1983: 341)

This quote gives rise to two main lines of inquiry. First of all, we should question whether we can call on these 'objective demands' and a possible lack of knowledge thereof to explain racial inequality, as often happens. And, secondly, what are these objective demands?

2.1.1.1 An Educational Gap

So let me begin with the first question. In the literary world, critiques of social disparity are often deflected by referring to the difficulties of the excluded group to reach the same artistic level of production as the dominant group. These critiques are particularly strong when referring to class or race, since race can be related to class and class can be related to education level. Lower education levels, or lower acquaintance with 'culture' in general, are then drawn upon to explain 'objective' lower levels of artistry, which, it is then claimed, have nothing to do with any essentialist interpretation of class or race.[38]

There are two main problems with this reasoning when invoked to explain racial inequality. The first is rather straightforward and will please academics who are still weary of anecdotes. There is no evidence that would point towards general lower levels of literary knowledge among people of color. Rather, the numbers that are available[39], give contrary indications. According to a report from the National Endowment of the Arts (NEA), in 2011, only 13% of U.S. writers were non-white. This stands out sharply compared to 32% of the entire work force, and compared to 19.4%[40] of the population with a bachelor degree or higher (NEA 2011: 7; United States Census Bureau 2014, see table in appendix).

[38] A similar argument has often been made for African American college students in general. An article on *the Atlantic* examines this issue. "When capable black college students fail to perform as well as their white counterparts, the explanation often has less to do with preparation or ability than with the threat of stereotypes about their capacity to succeed." This article relates how the threat of this stereotype affects the academic performances of African-American students. The stereotype itself has become so strong that it significantly affects society. It remains a stereotype nonetheless. (Steele 1999)

[39] for there is little systematic inquiry

[40] This does not mean that the educational system does not pose problems for diverse racial groups of U.S. citizens. As the numbers indicate, within the group of People of Color with a higher education, Asian people are relatively overrepresented, whereas all other racial groups have a significant lower share in the group with the highest educational attainment, compared to their overall share of the population. This is a point I will come back to further on. What these numbers do indicate, however, is that the white population is overrepresented in the writing population, compared to their representation in the group with the highest educational attainment.

It could be argued that the NEA's definition of 'writer' is too broad[41], and therefore does not reflect the condition of writers in a field of restricted production, relying more on symbolic capital. There is some more information available, but to conduct an inquiry into racial demographics is not an easy task and what is available, remains fragmented or distorted. Let me point out two noteworthy initiatives. In 2012, the Rumpus posted an article by Roxane Gay who, with the help of Philip Gallager, made a personal effort to get a grasp on the numbers, by establishing the ethnicity of all writers reviewed by the New York Times in 2011. Out of 742 books, 655 were written by Caucasian authors. That amounts to 88 percent (Gay 2012). It could then be argued that the New York Times is only one publication and it is not a small press. What cannot be ignored, however, is that it nonetheless still functions as the highest marker for symbolic capital, even in a small press world (cf. supra).

Gay's article was a response to the VIDA-count, which is the second 'counting initiative' I wanted to point out. 'VIDA: Women in Literary Arts' was founded 'as a research-driven organization […] to increase critical attention to contemporary women's writing as well as further transparency around gender equality issues in contemporary literary culture' (About VIDA, www.vidaweb.org). Every year, VIDA counts the number of women reviewed by the most literarily prestigious press outlets in the United States. They have done this for women since 2009, but last year (2014) they added a 'VIDA Women of Color Count'. In this count, they tried to get a grasp on race as well as on gender, but this proved to be methodologically more difficult. Whereas gender can be established with considerable ease[42], race cannot easily be attributed. Hence, VIDA reached out to the writing community with a survey, in which writers could identify themselves racially. Depending on the cooperation of individual writers, they found themselves confronted with a great deal of non-response and were often unable to track authors down. Their results were published online at http://www.vidaweb.org/2014-women-of-color-vida-count-2/#The 2014 Women of Color VIDA Count. As might be expected, an overwhelming majority of all respondents was white. This tells us little, however, about figures

[41] "Writers and authors—advertising writers; authors; biographers; copy writers; crossword-puzzle creators; film writers; magazine writers; novelists; playwrights; sports writers; and lyricists" (NEA 2011, 4)

[42] The VIDA-methodology for attributing gender: 'We often allow for names that are nearly certain to be allocated to a specific gender, ie. Jessica or Michael. We consider MANY names gender-ambiguous, (Lesley, Karen, Chris, Pat, Dana, Ryan, etc. as well as names that are not common to the English-leaning ear and initials). In order to determine the gender of these authors, we go to the internet and seek out the pronouns... whether they be on the author's bio, professional pages, interviews, reviews, etc. We have yet (knock on wood) to be unable to determine the gender of any author. One time we did physically contact a journal to ask about someone who used initials. • There is no leeway, we must be certain about each author. This is also why 5 people count each journal.' [online available at:] http://www.vidaweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/VIDA-Count-Methodologies.pdf

of disparity, since so many authors (in most cases 50% or more) were either not reached or did not respond.

Looking at all these figures together, it seems difficult to rely on an educational gap as the main reason why writers (or publishers) of color acquire less symbolic capital. There are few data available to make such a claim, and what is available indicates a significant discrepancy between the percentage of writers of color (13%, or less if you consider the numbers from the New York Times more representative) vs. the percentage of non-white American citizens with a higher education (19,4%).

If we turn to our dataset again, it is clear that an educational gap is not something that can be ascribed to the emancipatory publishers and publications that were included in this research. Third World Press (TWP), for example, was founded by Haki Madhubuti, who holds an MFA from the University of Iowa[43] and was a professor of English at Chicago State University. The press was founded in 1967 - they have almost fifty years of publishing experience. Out of the nine books TWP published in 2014, four were written by authors with a doctoral degree[44].

That this claim is made, nonetheless, reinforces the prejudice that writers of color are uninformed, uneducated and perhaps even overall stylistically less interesting. Simone White asks herself and her readers "what people mean when they say that US poetry that is not interested in reproducing the familiar (call it what you want: experimental, innovative) is a white practice, a white thing, dominated by white poets and white institutions" (2014). We may additionally ask what people *do* when they imply, over and over again, that writers of color are of no stylistic relevance and what happens when people who have these preconceived notions occupy gatekeeping positions in the literary landscape. In her 1990 essay 'Culture to Culture', bell hooks quotes James Clifford's introduction to *Writing Culture*:

> It may be generally true that groups long excluded from positions of institutional power, like women or people of color, have less concrete freedom to indulge in textual experimentation. To write in an unorthodox way, Paul Rabinow suggests in this volume, one must first have tenure. In specific contexts a preoccupation with self-reflexivity and style may be an index of privileged estheticism. For if one does not have to worry about the exclusion or true representation of one's experience, one is freer to undermine ways of telling, to focus on form over content. But I am uneasy with a general notion that privileged discourse indulges in esthetic or epistemological subtleties whereas marginal discourse "tells it like it is." The reverse is too often the case. (in hooks 1990: 129)

[43] Until this day, the Iowa MFA program is one of the most prestigious in the U.S.
[44] *Into Africa, Being Black* by Fred L. Hord, *Fields watered with Blood* by Maryemma Graham, *Hip Hop & Sankofa* by Kerry A. Foster and *Arkansippi Memwars* by Eugene Redmond.

hooks agrees with Clifford's suspicion of 'any suggestion that marginalized groups lack the freedom and opportunity to engage in textual experimentation', and goes further, questioning the pressure exercised by dominant groups over marginalized groups.

> Marginalized groups may lack the inclination to engage in certain ways of thinking and writing because we learn early that such work may not be recognized or valued. Many of us experiment only to find that such work receives absolutely no attention. Or we are told by gatekeepers, usually white, often male, that it will be better for us to write and think in a more conventional way. (hooks 1990: 129)

Bringing these pressures into view turns white assertions of stylistic insignificance of writers of color into a case of self-fulfilling prophecy, rather than claiming mere description – which is at once impossible (for description at the same time always reinforces what it describes) and begs the question: description of what? For the supposed underlying reality appears to have little supporting evidence.

The notion of self-fulfilling prophecy brings us to the second main problem when attributing racial disparity to lower levels of literary education, namely the connection between educational systems and hegemonic power. Bourdieu wrote extensively on how educational systems help reproduce the social order, privileging the experiences and competences of the dominant classes, while maintaining an illusion of neutrality through the organization of an 'objective' examination system, which nonetheless again privileges the competencies of dominant fractions of society. These systems lead to the exclusion and self-exclusion of dominated groups, which is framed as an objective selection. (Laermans 1982, 36-39) As the dominant cultural fractions of the United States are white, so are its educational requisites. How this relates to the content of MFA and Literature programs is something I will come back to in the next paragraph. Here, I merely want to point out that these educational systems are not objective, but rather reinforce forms of social, and thus also racial, dominance. Not recognizing this not only avoids responsibility, it also poses extra barriers for students of color and takes away opportunities to oppose this frame – for the dominant attitude is that there is no frame. In several testimonies, students of color relate of the difficulties they experienced as people of color in a white educational system. Junot Diaz summarizes it as follows:

> I can't tell you how many students of color seek me out during my visits [to writing classes] […] A lot of these MFA-heads are usually the only people of color in their workshop and a lot of them admit to feeling wounded by their experiences. In the last seventeen years I must have had at least three hundred of these conversations, *minimum.* Some of the students talk clinically; some with tremendous rage; others seem resigned and more than a couple have broken into tears during our conversations. It's

> all so familiar – and terrible. […] Many of the writers I've talked to often finish up by telling me they're considering quitting their programs.' (Diaz 2014: 4-5)

There are no numbers that could give us an idea of how many students of color do not finish an education they started. I would nonetheless like to see those numbers in the near future. That they do not exist at this point, should not prevent us from questioning the extra obstacles white education systems might pose for students of color. Relying on a general lack of education to explain and justify racial disparities relieves both the literary and the educational system of their responsibility. There is no inquiry into the functioning of either system, or of how this functioning reproduces inequality. Rather, 'external' conditions (class, economics) are blamed. I do not mean to minimalize the impact of class structures within the current capitalist system on people's lives and opportunities. I do however, want to question the complicity of systems that claim to be oppositional and autonomous, while still relying on capitalism's hegemonic structures to account for the injustice that reigns within them.

2.1.1.2 Objective demands are not being met

Bourdieu describes how, in order to participate in a field which has developed with relative autonomy over centuries, one has to possess the history of that field. Knowledge of that history becomes an objective demand for participation (cf supra). What that history is, however, is a site of controversy. Here, we come back to the connection between educational content in MFA and English programs, and cultural hegemony. Consider the following quote from Junot Diaz's critique of whiteness in MFA programs:

> From what I saw, the plurality of students and faculty had been educated in the traditions of writers like David Foster Wallace, Jayne Ann Phillips, Lydia Davis, or Alice Monroe – and not at all in the traditions of Toni Morrison, Maxine Hong-Kingston, Arundhati Roy, Edwige Danticat, Alice Walker, or Jamaica Kincaid. (Diaz 2014: 2)

A similar critique is made by David Mura when he explains the necessity of writing programs such as Voices of Our Nation (VONA), 'a conference for writers of color taught by writers of color', which both Mura and Diaz are involved in organizing. He states that '[at] VONA the other writers and the instructor […] know the literary traditions that most writers of color write out of, something that is not the case with many white MFA professors.' (Mura 2015) These comments pose an interesting intervention to the dominant prejudice explained in the previous paragraph. The suggestion is the following: writers of color do not lack knowledge of the dominant referential literary framework, but rather, white institutions lack knowledge of non-white literary frameworks. Hence, their appreciation of works that write from a different tradition, cannot rely on the knowledge necessary to properly validate the work of art. What these comments make clear, is that a plea for more inclusion, for a more open framework of

references and for acknowledgement of the limitations of the dominant frame of reference, is not a plea for aesthetic relativism. The value of (white) literary history is not being denied. What is rejected, is the segregated content of a history that claims to be universal. What is denied is the idea that people who have only familiarized themselves with a fraction of literary history could make universal claims about the general literary value of a text. Such universal claims can be attributed to 'racial arrogance', one of the factors Robin DiAngelo identifies as inculcating white fragility, a concept I will come back to later. DiAngelo writes that

> dominance leads to racial arrogance, and in this racial arrogance, whites have no compunction about debating the knowledge of people who have thought complexly about race. Whites generally feel free to dismiss these informed perspectives rather than have the humility to acknowledge that they are unfamiliar, reflect on them further, or seek more information. (2011: 61)

The results of this racial arrogance sound familiar. 'They [whites] confuse not understanding with not agreeing' (DiAngelo 2011: 61). DiAngelo describes the difficulties of having a constructive debate about race, and she does not expand her argument to include aesthetic discussions. In terms of aesthetic validation, however, the results of racial arrogance are strikingly similar. An (almost) exclusively white framework may lead to a complete aesthetic dismissal of works of art that rely on a different framework, and with it, the denial of the validity of that entire framework.

The writers of color on whose testimonies I draw for this thesis cannot be said to lack a historical framework of English literature. Both Diaz and Mura obtained their MFA's. Simone White obtained an MFA and is now completing a PhD in English. Their claims do not imply the invalidity of a (white) literary canon, but argue that literary history as it is dominantly seen, is racially biased and segregated. To dismiss the writings of authors of color as stylistically irrelevant, points to a deficit. This deficit may well have to be situated at the level of white literary history, unaware of frames other than its own and unaware of its own prejudice.

2.1.2 The Exclusion and Denial of the Political

In 'The Market of Symbolic Goods', Bourdieu describes the internal logics of fields of restricted production as follows: '[…] the principles of differentiation regarded as most legitimate by an autonomous field are those which most completely express the specificity of a determinate type of practice.' (1985: 20) In a field that wants to impose its own rules, and continuously wants to claim the legitimacy of those rules, the elements that are the 'least reducible to any other form of expression' are valued most. He elaborates on this point for the field of art, but

parallels can easily be drawn for the field of restricted literary production. The following logic, for instance, seems to apply: 'The true subject of the work of art, is nothing other than the specifically artistic manner in which the artist grasps the world, those infallible signs of his mastery of his art.' Or, put differently, the field insists on 'the primacy of the mode of representation over the object of representation'. This insistence becomes clear when we again turn to the descriptions of the problems students of color face in MFA programs. Junot Diaz gives the following example:

> Another young sister told me that in the entire two years of her workshop the only time people of color showed up in her white peer's stories was when crime or drugs were somehow involved. And when she tried to bring up the issue in class, tried to suggest readings that might illuminate this madness, her peers shut her up saying *Our workshop is about writing, not political correctness.* (2014: 4)

In this example, a critique of the content of a work is censored by referring to that content as irrelevant to the quality of the writing, which is considered to stand loose from any political concerns. David Mura explains in more general terms what happens when the student of color wants to voice a critique of a piece containing racial stereotypes.

> If and when the student of color voices her objections to the piece, more often than not, neither the white professor nor the other white students will respond to the actual critique; nor will they inquire further into why the student of color is making that critique. Instead, the white professor and the other white students will generally first invoke some notion of the freedom of the imagination (perhaps echoing something like James' donné—you have to grant the writer their starting premises). They will emphasize the subjectivity of all responses both to the reality around us and to a specific text. At best, the white professor or other white students will argue that the problems with the white student's piece may be caused by technical deficiencies --i.e., it is not really a racial issue. (2015)

Moreover, by referring to the 'freedom of imagination', the critique of the student is not only not taken seriously, it is even deemed dangerous for the practice of art:

> […] the student of color is subtly or openly charged with acting as a censor—this despite the fact that the student of color obviously has no or very little power to affect the writing of anyone in the room. If the student of color is designated as a censor, then of course her critique must be suspect, since censorship is always the enemy of any writer. (Mura 2015)

The ‘form over content’ argument thus shields (some) writers from serious conversation about or contemplation of the issues of race. And yet, this privilege does not extend to anecdotes in which the roles are reversed. Again from Diaz:

> I remember one young MFA’r [sic] describing how a fellow writer (white) went through his story and erased all the ‘big’ words because, said the peer, that’s not the way ‘Spanish’ people talk. This white peer, of course, had never lived in Latin America or Spain or in any US Latino community – he just knew. The workshop professor never corrected or even questioned said peer either. Just let the idiocy ride. (2014: 4)

The assumption that the quality of a work can be seen apart from content, as ‘the specifically artistic manner in which the artist grasps the world’, is highly problematic (Bourdieu 1985: 20). In its division of form and content this assumption implies a common vision of what that ‘world’ is, a universal essence that can be dealt with in more or less objectively artistic ways. This distorted logic protects works that align with ‘universal’ (i.e. dominant, i.e. white) content, while attacking works that oppose this content – all the while claiming that content is of no importance. The universality of white literature can be correlated to an unawareness of the dominant white perspective as a perspective. This relates back to another of DiAngelo’s key concepts, namely ‘universalism’:

> Whiteness is not recognized or named by white people, and a universal reference point is assumed. White people are just people. Within this construction, whites can represent humanity, while people of color, who are never just people but always most particularly black people, Asian people, etc., can only represent their own racialized experiences (Dyer 1992). (2011: 59)

Thus at the same time that white experience is seen as uncolored and thus universal, the experience of people of color is perceived as specific. Hence, white (non-racialized) literature is considered universal and apolitical – having significance for anyone, while non-white literature, which might oppose this view, is considered specific and political – and thus of no importance to those dealing with literature, or as Diaz calls it, “*Literature* with a capital Gothic L – […] white, straight and male” (2014: 2). In the VONA panel I attended during AWP David Mura pointed out a very straightforward and common practice that illustrates this point well. A white character does not need to be racially identified, while, according to general editing standards, a black, Asian, Latino character – in other words, a character with any racial identity that is not white – needs to be racially identified from the beginning. Some experimental literary wisdom illuminates the case further. ‘Recitatif’, Toni Morrison’s only short story, relates the tale of two girls whose racial identity remains unspoken, though it thoroughly shapes their personality and their perception. The story offers a reading experience that illustrates our

dependence on racial markers in literature. The practice of racial marking for characters of color versus no racial indicators for white characters is seen to be neutral, but nevertheless reveals an engagement in politics. What makes it unnoticeable is that it aligns with dominant sociopolitical views, rather than going against them.

Simone White's essay calls out this practice in the field of poetry. Her account again reverses the roles of knowing and *naif* when she argues that the focus on form takes up much energy and attention, while shielding a segregated community from essential questions.

> I think about the ubiquitous "Kill List"[45] and the unending commentary that surrounded its publication—as if it had provoked some genuine emergency of craft, when, for me, it just raised a lot of ethical questions that I consider to be asked and answered *while leaving untouched every problem that concerns me about the operation and future of poetry as community* (2014 – italics mine)

White's comment refers to continuous discussions of the poem and its social implications, that nevertheless stay clear of commentary on the presumed whiteness of the poetry world.

2.2 Positions (why is it allowed to happen?)

> What I propose here is to examine the impact of racial hierarchy, racial exclusion, and racial vulnerability and availability on nonblacks who held, resisted, explored or altered those notions. The scholarship that looks into the mind, imagination, and behaviour of slaves is valuable. But equally valuable is a serious intellectual effort to see what racial ideology does to the mind, imagination, and behaviour of masters. (Morrison 1993: 12)

In 'Playing in the Dark', Toni Morrison counters the assumptions that "traditional, canonical American literature is free of, uninformed and unshaped by the four-hundred-year-old presence of, first, Africans and then African-Americans in the United States." (1993: 4-5) She charts the influence of African presence on the formation of American literature and its characteristics. Just as the formation of a national literature (including literary themes and aesthetic values) cannot have happened separated from and untouched by the hierarchical racial relations – relations that "shaped the body politic, the Constitution, and the entire history

[45] "Kill List" is a poem by Josef Kaplan, in which he lists poets as either 'rich' or 'comfortable'. An article on the Poetry Foundation's website describes the poem and its importance as follows: "And we mention Kaplan's *Kill List* because it makes a new group, forcing questions of poetry capital and formation, rumor, neutrality, material lives, and affection all in one go. A clean, long list of poets *you may know* are called out as either "rich" or "comfortable," by unknown means." http://www.poetryfoundation.org/harriet/2013/10/baltimores-cars-are-real-presents-josef-kaplans-kill-list-among-other-clean-energy/ [consulted on 15/07/2015].

of the culture" – so the criteria for evaluating literature, and the distribution of the right to legitimize literature did not arise isolated from a racial context and from the hegemonic relations this context has always implied. (Morrison 1993: 5)

In section 2.2.1, I will draw on Robin DiAngelo's article 'White Fragility' to lay bare the effects of white supremacy on the thought and actions of white people in general and on the behavioral patterns in the white literary system in specific. In section 2.2, I will then connect these patterns to the position of any field of restricted production within the larger spheres of power and class relations, which I believe hold the key for understanding why these patterns continue to be a hidden yet pervasive presence in the world of small press publishing.

2.2.1 'White Fragility'

To be formed by a literary canon that bears the marks of white supremacy, cannot but affect the way in which individuals make literary judgments — particularly when they glorify this canon in the name of Literature, setting art apart from social responsibility. The segregated literary education of individuals works pervasively to reinforce whiteness in the literary community. This can be brought into a clearer perspective by transferring Robin DiAngelo's insights on how 'White Fragility' works to sustain implicit racist notions in individuals, to how it affects the literary community as a whole. DiAngelo's analysis ties in well with sociological insights into the workings of artistic preferences, for her concept of white fragility relies on a Bourdieusian framework. Just as aesthetic judgments and values can be related back to a person's dispositions[46], so can racial prejudice. DiAngelo explains the situation as follows:

> Whites have not had to build the cognitive or affective skills or develop the stamina that would allow for constructive engagement across racial divides. Bourdieu's concept of habitus (1993) might be useful here. […] White Fragility may be conceptualized as a product of the habitus, a response or "condition" produced and reproduced by the continual social and material advantages of the white structural position.' (DiAngelo 57-58)

As in American society in general, the condition of 'White Fragility' is likewise 'produced and reproduced' within the literary world.

DiAngelo describes several concepts that condition our thinking along racially prejudiced lines. Two of those concepts have already been mentioned in the previous paragraphs, namely racial

[46] i.e. one's internalised and thus unnoticed yet socially taught value positions. The sum of a person's array of dispositions is what Bourdieu calls habitus.

arrogance and universalism. To explain the broad and deep impact of racial socialisation however, I will now relate DiAngelo's other concepts back to preconceptions reigning in the literary field.

2.2.2 Individualism

> 'Since writers are generally a liberal lot, the white faculty and students in these institutions profess the most progressive views on race. They see themselves as people who are generally without racial bias. Racism and racial bias can be found in the country, yes, but presumably that would be in the Republican Party or the Tea Party, not in a population of liberal white artists. Unfortunately, that is not the experience of many MFA students of color.'(Mura 2015)

As Mura suggests in this quote, it is particularly difficult to address issues of race in white contexts that see themselves as liberal, and thus as adversaries of racism. This position is maintainable by seeing the self, or in this case even the entire social sphere as specific, and unaffected by broader social schemes. The field of restricted literary production, which relies for its credibility on itself and only itself, and which takes pride in its independence, is particularly affected by this claim to individuality. By adhering this stance, literary producers are able 'to view themselves [and indeed the entire world of Literature] as unique and original, outside of socialization and unaffected by the relentless racial messages in the culture.' (DiAngelo 2011: 59) This ties back to the notion of universalism and has dubious consequences. Considering measures of literary validation as literary universals allows the literary world 'to recognize Whiteness as something that is significant and that operates in society, but to not see how it relates to [their own practice].' (2011: 59) So even when the current dynamics of literary validation systematically privilege white writers while disadvantaging writers of color, by referring to these dynamics as universal, we can deny that this has anything to do with the ubiquitous Whiteness.

2.2.1.1 Segregation

Individualism might distract from it, but racial segregation is as deeply embedded in the literary world as it is in the surrounding society. It is pervasive on multiple levels, but I will start by explaining the impact of the most tangible form: geographical segregation. Noticeably, all publishers who have a high level of symbolic capital, are located in demographically white areas, even when two of the cities included in my research (Detroit and Chicago) have a large

African-American population and a long history of involvement in African-American literary, artistic and emancipatory movements.

In the case of Minneapolis / St-Paul, "the composition of the population is almost 85% white, only 6.4% of the population is Black and 5.0% is Asian." (Center for Economic Development, 2011). According to the 2010 U.S. census, Chicago has a white population of 45%. 32,9% is black or African-American. 28,7% Reports to be of Latino or Hispanic descent. Even though these numbers suggest a racially mixed environment, the city is highly segregated in terms of black and white[47]. Chicago has 77 community areas. In 2011, the Chicago Reader reported the following:

> 'Fifty-five percent of Chicago's 964,000 African-Americans live in […] 21 community areas, in which the aggregate population is 96 percent black. Two-thirds of the city's blacks live in community areas that are at least 80 percent black. On the flip side are the 33 community areas, most of them on the north and southwest sides, with less than 10 percent African-Americans. In 26 of these community areas less than 5 percent of the residents are black' (Bogira 2011)

Third World Press is the only press based in the African-American part of Chicago, located in the neighborhood Avalon, with a population that is at least 91% black. No other literary organizations or bookstores are located in the southern part of the city. When 'Chicago's literary community' is celebrated, it is implicit that this community is to be located in the white part of the city.[48] Detroit city has a population that is 82,7% black or African-American and 10,6% white. Four of the publishers included in this research as publishing in the Detroit metropolitan area are located in the city[49], yet the most influential publisher of the area (Dzanc Books), is located in the nearby Ann Arbor, where demographics show a very different racial composition: 73% of the residents are white and only 7.7 % of the population is black or African-American. (U.S. Census Bureau)

---

[47] This segregation has been enforced over time by city policy. Ta-Nehesi Coates covered this issue for the Atlantic in 'A Case for Reparations' (June 2014). The article is freely available at http://www.theatlantic.com/features/archive/2014/05/the-case-for-reparations/361631/

[48] Examples include: Chicago Small Press Week: Report on Small Press Week: Jess D'Amico, 'Small Presses with Local Flavor', in: *The Chicagoist,* 10/03/2015. http://chicagoist.com/2008/03/10/championing_the.php [consulted on 01/03/2015]; a panel conversation during the AWP conference titled 'In the Middle of Everything: Independent Publishing in the Midwest'; And many articles covering Chicago's literary scene: from Chicago's Writers Association (http://www.chicagowrites.org/chicagos-literary-scene-2nd-to-none/), Poets & Writers (http://www.pw.org/content/chicago) , Newcity Literature (http://lit.newcity.com/2015/06/04/lit-50-2015-who-really-books-in-chicago/), etc.

[49] Willow Books, Atomic Quill Press, Belt Publishing and Marick Press. Belt Publishing is also connected to other Midwestern Cities.

That the most prominent independent publishers are located in overwhelmingly white areas, makes it easier to ignore race as a significant factor. This segregation however, tacitly reinforces whiteness, since, as DiAngelo explains, there is a connotation of gain rather than loss when it comes to all-white neighborhoods, since the absence of people of color is what defines them as "good neighborhoods"(2011: 58-59). Likewise, the all-white publishing house in the all-white neighborhood is seen to be aesthetically pure, whereas the literary quality of works published by a publisher of color in the historically black neighborhood might be "contaminated" by political motives or a lack of literary awareness of a white canon (cf. supra). This already indicates that segregation in the literary world goes further than segregated living areas. The segregation of African-American literature from the general concept of literature is reinforced by separate canons, and even separate bookshelves for African-American poetry and literature in bookstores.[50] This again reinforces the primacy of white literature over African-American literature, since the African-American literature is racially marked, while white literature maintains a neutral appearance. Furthermore, white publishers often publish for a white audience. Editing practices, such as marking a character racially only when it is not white, erasing words that might not be instantly clear for the white reader, or a general avoidance of topics uncomfortable for the white reader, point to the far-reaching impact of racial segregation and exclusion of reading audiences.

Third World Press explicitly publishes African-American writers for an African-American audience. To a white audience, less used to thinking and discussing race, this seems an exclusionary move, reinforcing the divides between white and black. Yet when we consider the tacit racial politics in the literary and publishing world, which excludes both black audiences and frames of reference, the decision to publish for an African-American public from an African-American framework can be seen as a necessary means to join a literature and readership that exist, yet are not acknowledged.

2.2.1.2 Entitlement to racial comfort

This concept, like the others, is straightforward: "Whites are almost always racially comfortable and thus have developed unchallenged expectations to remain so (DiAngelo, 2006b)" (DiAngelo 2011:60). The consequences of this sense of entitlement stretch far since any challenges to this entitlement are seen as a threat. DiAngelo explains it as follows:

> White insistence on racial comfort ensures that racism will not be faced. This insistence also functions to punish those who break with codes of comfort. Whites often confuse

[50] Seen in Detroit at John K. King's and Barnes and Nobles.

> comfort with safety and state that we don't feel safe when what we really mean is that we don't feel comfortable. This trivializes our history of brutality towards people of color and perverts the reality of that history. (2011: 61)

This reversal of the source of violence, can be seen in the literary world as well. I already gave one example from David Mura, where the student of color is seen as a censor for commenting on racially prejudiced content. That was an example of symbolic aggression on a personal scale – the student of color was silenced by referring to white universals. A more structural form of repression can be found in the common assumption that 'literary quality' will suffer when a more prominent place is demanded for writers of color. The representation of writers of color is introduced as a threat to pure Literature, all the while ignoring the actual oppression of voices of color through that very notion of 'pure Literature with a Gothic L'.

2.2.1.3 Racial Belonging

The sense of entitlement to racial comfort relates back to whites' ubiquitous racial belonging, whereby we "enjoy a deeply internalized, largely unconscious sense of racial belonging in U.S. society" (DiAngelo 2011: 62) This racial belonging then relies on the structures of segregation, which assure that whites are comfortable in virtually "any situation or image deemed valuable in dominant society" (62) Disrupting the feeling of racial belonging is unsettling to white people, who therefore prefer racially segregated environments, yet refuse to acknowledge this.

> This segregation is unremarkable until it is named as deliberate […] – as long as we don't mean to segregate, as long as it "just happens" that we live segregated lives, we can maintain a (fragile) identity of racial innocence. (62)

In the literary world, an African-American press can be called African-American. A press who publish all women can be called a feminist press. But would we be able to call a press whose books are written almost solely by white men, a white-male press? Though few presses will publish only white men – in most cases there will be a token woman or person of color – an overwhelming majority of works published for the sole purpose of 'literary value' is produced by whites (cf. supra), reinforcing the sense of racial belonging of white people in the literary world at the expense of writers of color.

2.2.1.4 Psychic Freedom

As discussed in the paragraph on racial segregation, an all-white environment reinforces whiteness, but it also allows whites to dismiss the problem of race altogether. Race is considered irrelevant for whites, but rather something "for people of color to think about – it is what happens to them" (DiAngelo 2011: 63). Audre Lorde poignantly describes this phenomenon in her essay 'Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference'

> Traditionally, in american [sic] society, it is the members of oppressed, objectified groups who are expected to stretch out and bridge the gap between the actualities of our lives and the consciousness of our oppressor. For in order to survive, those of us for whom oppression is as american as apple pie have always had to be watchers, to become familiar with the language and manners of the oppressor, even sometimes adopting them for some illusion of protection. Whenever the need for some pretense of communication arises, those who profit from our oppression wall upon us to share our knowledge with them. In other worlds, it is the responsibility of the oppressed to teach the oppressors their mistakes. […] The oppressors maintain their position and evade the responsibility for their own actions. (2007: 114-115)

Apart from a blatant avoidance of responsibility on the part of whites, this referral of the consideration of race to people of color, has a cynical side effect. People of color have thought about race. People of color have written about race and about the structures of domination that sustain racial hegemony. Yet, because critical thought on race requires change from the larger dominant structure and is thus perceived as a threat – the entire critique, and indeed the voices who utter it, are either ignored or dismissed. Hence, independent publishers who openly admit to have adapted their course of action according to insights into racial disparities, are not rewarded, but punished in terms of literary credibility.

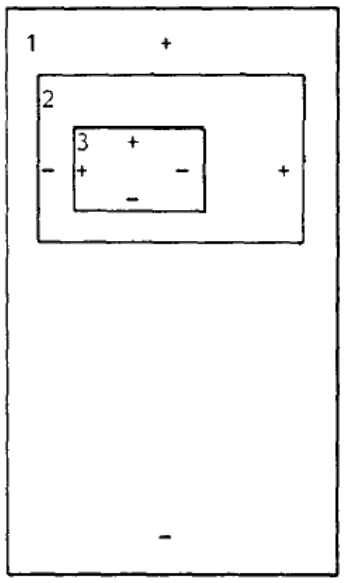
2.2.1.5 Constant messages that whites are more valuable – through representation in everything

Our entire surroundings are filled with images and language that convey and reinforce the notion that white people are "better and more important than people of color" (DiAngelo 2011: 63). This pervasive representation influences us, even when we object to any essentialist notion of race, or racism. "While one may explicitly reject the notion that one is inherently better than another, one cannot avoid internalizing the message of white superiority, as it is ubiquitous in mainstream culture (Tatum, 1997; Doane, 1997)." (63) White superiority is conveyed by holding white people as the measure for everything valuable. The literary world

is not immune to this ubiquitous representation of white superiority. It is not only present in mainstream culture, but is continuously reinscribed in the definitions of literary quality, and the ruling images of writers, publishers, and even of 'interesting' characters.

2.2.2 The Position of the Field

Since the small press world, as a field of restricted production, is not disconnected from the larger society - a position it implicitly accepts by denying responsibility for the disparities in the field - it can be helpful to consider how it relates to the larger structural fields in which it is embedded. According to Bourdieu, the artistic field is dominated by the larger field of power in which it is embedded. The latter is itself embedded within the field of class relations. Bourdieu draws the following diagram.



"Fig. 1. Diagram of the artistic field (3), contained within the field of power (2) which is itself situated within the field of class relations (1). '+' = positive pole, implying a dominant position; '-' = negative pole (dominated)." (Bourdieu 1983: 319)

At the first level, the artistic field thus has ties to the larger field of power. The more autonomous an artistic field, the more it can impose its own rules compared to that of the field of power, i.e. the more weight gets assigned to symbolic rather than economic capital. However, every artistic field remains embedded, which means that even the most autonomous artistic field, "continues to be affected by the laws of the field which encompasses it, those of economic and political profit" (Bourdieu 1983: 320). Even though the logic of the field of restricted production presents itself as oppositional to the larger field of power by overtly rejecting the logics of monetary gain, the relationship it entails with the dominant fractions in the field of power, is more ambiguous than it is likely to admit.

As described in the introductory chapter, there is a form of structural symbiosis between the small press world and the world of corporate publishing. This symbiosis shows in the financial dependency of small presses. The largest publishers[51] included in this research, are organized as non-profits. Donations made to these organizations are tax-deductible and constitute a large part of their overall income.[52] The economic survival of these presses thus relies in part on the continued support of the economically most powerful. Donation tracts are often difficult to discern, as many donations run through funds and foundations. From the little direct information that is available however, it appears that there is even a financial tie to the world of large-scale publishing concerns, the practices of which these independent publishers oppose in their operation. Amazon, for instance, provides great organizational support for both Graywolf and Coffee House. The latter were also supported directly by Penguin Group. As seen in the introductory chapter, overarching non-profit organization CLMP likewise leans on corporate support from the largest publishing corporations. Corporate support for independent publishers is likely to be beneficial for both parties. Through donations large organizations can enhance their reputation as benefactors of the arts rather than as corporate vultures, but the use of small presses for corporate publishing goes beyond this symbolic advantage. As described, small presses tend to help in developing the talent, the new bestseller authors, that corporate presses are constantly looking for. When the risks taken by the small publisher to bring out something daring or new, turn out well, large corporations often outbid the independents and swoop away the author who now already comes with some symbolic capital. (Thompson 2010: 164-166). Through these two dynamics – of financial support and of creative incentive – the field of corporate publishing and that of independent publishing enhance each other's chances for survival.

The relationship entertained by fields of restricted production and the larger field of power, however, goes beyond mutual organizational benefits. It can be transposed to the internal logic of both fields. In ' The Market of Symbolic Goods' Bourdieu explains how the logic of the attribution of symbolic capital goes hand in hand with the power exerted by the dominant fractions in the field of power.

---

[51] 'Large' both in terms of number of annual publications and symbolic capital (cf. part 2): Graywolf Press, Coffee House Press, Milkweed Editions and Dzanc. For Curbside Splendor, no information about the financial structure of the organization is available through their website. They do not solicit donations, nor do they provide a clear mission statement. Hence, it is probable that they are not organized as non-profit.

[52] Thompson notes for nonprofit publishers in general, that "grants [from foundations, trusts and individuals] can comprise half or even two-thirds of their income" (2010 :155). For Graywolf Press, 41% of the revenu comes from grants and donations (https://www.graywolfpress.org/about-us/financial-transparency) [20/07/2015]. For Coffee House Press in 2010, 53% of the total income was donated (http://coffeehousepress.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/FY2010-annual-report.pdf) [20/07/2015].

> The fact is that its fixation on technique draws pure art into a covenant with the dominant sections of the bourgeoisie. The latter hereby recognize the intellectual's and the artist's monopoly on the production of art as an instrument of pleasure (and secondarily, as an instrument for the symbolic legitimization of economic or political power); in return, the artist is expected to avoid serious matters, namely social and political questions. (1985: 31)

This passage lays bare the relationship of mutual reliance between the assumptions of the field of (restricted) cultural production and those of the broader field of power. I have my doubts, however, about the awareness it implies through the use of terminology that recalls a straightforward negotiation. Rather than through a transparent agreement, the relationship between the two fields, in my view, arises from their position within the larger field of class relations. It lies in their mutual disregard of what lies beyond their scope as members of the field of power, a disregard for the dominated classes within society – to whom neither field answers, since the dominated fractions can never achieve the legitimacy they need to be heard in the field of power. To be heard in the field of power requires becoming part of the field of power.

Bourdieu distinguishes a field of class relations, but he does not draw parallels between class and race. For my research, however, this has become inevitable, for "class structure in American society has been shaped by the racial politic of white supremacy" (hooks 2000: 3). I doubt that there will be any contention about this assertion. How could one deny the material effects of generations of slavery and exploitation or fail to see the social impact of centuries of racial privileging and deprivation? Certainly, within the liberal atmospheres of writing and literature, there will be a broad agreement that the structural social position of the African-American population in the United States is significantly worse than that of the white population and that this is the result of a history of white supremacy and slavery. However, it requires a further intellectual move to see how today's latent racist assumptions work as a reinforcement of class structure. It demands as a starting point a thorough consideration of what 'class' truly means, not only for material, but also for mental conditions.

> Class is much more than Marx's definition of relationship to the means of production. Class involves your behaviour, your basic assumptions about life. Your experience (determined by your class) validates those assumptions, how you are taught to behave, what you expect from yourself and from others, your concept of a future, how you understand problems and solve them, how you think, feel, act. It is in these behavioural

> patterns that middle-class women[53] [and middle class in general] resist recognizing although they may be perfectly willing to accept class in Marxist terms, a neat trick that helps them avoid really dealing with class behaviour and changing that behaviour in themselves. It is these behavioural patterns which must be recognized, understood, and changed. (Rita Mae Brown in bell hooks 2000: 3-4)

Whereas Bourdieu recognizes that behavioral patterns, habitus and dispositions, are dependent on a person's position in society, inescapably located within the field of class relations, Brown suggests that the habitus can be critically interrogated through awareness of our behavioural patterns and of the societal forces that formed them. This does not imply a denial of the pervasiveness of societal structures. It does however allow for agency within socially determined positions, and demands accounting for our dispositions, our assumptions and our behavior – even when they are a social construction, and work latently.

Racism in the world of independent publishing works through the persistence of whiteness to reinforce a blatant disregard of what happens outside the field of power. An example can illuminate this. At the AWP conference, I attended a panel conversation titled 'In the Middle of Everything: Independent Publishing in the Midwest'. Three out of four panelists were located in Chicago, so it was an ideal opportunity to ask whether these publishers had any connection to or contact with the African-American population in the city. They did not, yet spent time considering why this was not the case. Their answer – Ben Tanzer from Curbside Splendor uttered it, but they all agreed — was that they did not have the time. This simple answer follows a persistent logic. on the one hand, it says that they would love to do more. The problem does not lie with intentions, but with the constraints imposed by their position in the field – dominated as they are by an all-encompassing economy. At the same time however, it reveals that racial segregation is not considered an essential concern to publishing or to the (white) literary community. Rather than considering dialogue beyond whiteness crucial for artistic production, it would be an additional, social, perhaps even a *charitable* concern. As small presses are often run in their owners' and editors' spare time, it is true that the time they have to spend on publishing is restricted. How that little time is spent, then, bears all the more significance. Claiming a lack of time implies that taking the time for community-building beyond the borders of racial segregation would be a diversion from the act of publishing literature. I believe the contrary to be true. It would help to establish a true literary sensibility that could go beyond a pro forma stance of opposition to dominant modes of publishing.

[53] Brown emphasises the importance of recognizing class differences for feminism. Her words, however, can easily be transposed to support a broader argument encompassing the realm of literature.

For humanities scholars as well it is important to keep in mind what lies outside the field of power. A problem I have with the diagram Bourdieu draws is that he situates the artistic field solely within the field of power, thereby implying that the dominated classes produce no art. This implication, an assumption relying itself on an elitist definition of art, not only reinforces prejudice, but it deprives the dominated classes of their ability to speak, of their claim to artistic expression. It becomes particularly difficult to maintain this claim when we look at the field of small press publishing in the Midwest in particular and to the history of African-American literature in general. Even when there is no literary fame to claim and no money to be made, Third World Press in Chicago and Willow Press in Detroit publish their books and bring them to an audience that has been likewise excluded from the field of power. In an essay from 1977 titled 'Poetry is not a Luxury', Audre Lorde describes how little material there is needed to write poetry (no reams of paper, no typewriter), yet how much there is to be gained.

> 'Poetry is the way we help give name to the nameless so it can be thought. The farthest horizons of our hopes and fears are cobbled by our poems, carved from the rock experiences of our daily lives.' (2007: 37)

Conclusion

It comes as no surprise that the disparities that can be discerned in society are at work within the realms of cultural production as well. In 2004, Peterson and Anand described the specific vulnerability of the field of professional writing as follows:

> Bourdieu (1993) and Anheier et al. (1995) characterize the field of professional writing as both vertically stratified as "elite" and "peripheral" and horizontally differentiated as "literary" or "light" works. Such structuring produces the need for specialized gatekeepers (Hirsch 1972) such as talent agents (Bielby and Bielby) who selectively favor a subset of producers over others, thereby magnifying distortions in age, gender and other demographic characteristics (Tuchman 1989, Lang & Lang 1990, Bielby & Bielby 1996). (317)

In this quote however, they refer to talent agents, and three studies that investigated respectively Victorian novelists (Tuchman), etching artists between 1880 and 1930 (Lang & Lang), and writers in the film industry (Bielby & Bielby). We can understand that in earlier days – when gender and racial equality were less universally accepted – or in commercial production circuits, distortions in demographic characteristics occur. Even for professional writing in a commercial environment, with agents and conglomerates looking for more sales, what else

could we expect? It is harder to see however, that even when motivations are not tied to commerciality, but to artistic excellence, exclusionary politics are likewise in play.

In the first part of my thesis, I discerned five currents that inspire and motivate publishers in Chicago, the Twin Cities and Detroit. A minority of these publishers, those belonging to the emancipatory current, were concerned as a primary goal with correcting demographic disparities in the literary landscape. They remained low in the hierarchy of symbolic capital, and can thus be said to produce little effect in the literary landscape. These publishers were themselves diverse, both in whom they seek to reinforce and in how they are validated. The small feminist press had more symbolic capital than the large African-American publisher. I turned my attention toward the latter. Gender disparities are still at work in small press community[54], but the lack of attention to African-American publishing resembled a symbolic annihilation that I found particularly difficult to understand. Each distortion along demographic lines – be it sexism, racism, or classism – has its own particularities. These particularities need to be taken into account, and so I turned my attention specifically to racism.

In the second part of my thesis, I zoomed in on white supremacy in the small press world. Through interventions of anecdote and literature, I reconsidered and re-evaluated some preconceived notions about a literary tradition that is persistently represented as universal but is in truth specific and white. I found that the internal logic of a field of restricted production (FRP), and a literary one especially, works to justify white supremacy in two ways. Firstly, it accepts the common notion of an educational gap between white people and people of color to justify racial disparities – even when numbers show a different reality. In its referral to "objective demands", it denies any responsibility, transferring accountability to society in general. It furthermore refuses to reexamine its own "objective demands" or to confront them with other frameworks. Secondly, it excludes what is seen as political. "Seen" is a crucial word here, since what is seen is political is only that which stands out by countering hegemonic notions. Through this logic, the literary FRP perversely prevents any inquiry into literature that accords with the hegemonic white framework, which is seen as apolitical and thus shielded from critique.

I related these two tendencies to white fragility and the specific position of the literary FRP as located within the field of power. White fragility is part of the habitus of any white civilian in western society. Hence, it is part of the habitus of most literary consecrators. Whiteness works particularly strongly for literature, which relies heavily on an exceptional status (outside of society and beyond accountability) and which continues to be strongly racially segregated.

[54] I did a VIDA-count of the small presses included in my research. The results can be found in the attachment.

Consider again the few numbers that are available: only 13% of all writers are non-white, only 11% of authors reviewed by the New York Times were non-white. This segregation allows the literary FRP to function seemingly without any intervention from people of color, continuously reinforcing the image of the white writer at the expense of that of the writer of color.

The literary FRP gains its symbolic status in a large degree through its opposition to the dynamics of capitalist society. The question I want to raise, is how sincere this opposition can be, if the field itself continues to produce the same (and worse) racial disparities, even (and particularly) when only symbolic capital is at play. There is a strong connection between the world of large corporate publishing and the field of independent publishing. They are not only materially interwoven, as explained in the introductory and final chapter, they are also part of the same dominant fraction in society. As capitalist society continues to deprive African-Americans of equal economic capital, the literary FRP continues to deprive African-Americans of equal symbolic capital, and therefore of an equal voice. In its focus on being economy's adversary and victim, the literary FRP neglects what lies beyond the field of power. This negligence reaffirms the demographic distortions that capitalism creates and enforces. The literary FRP is not capitalism's adversary, it is its co-conspirator.

Bibliography

[Anonymous], 'Eyeing Indie Presses for The Next Great Thing', *Publishers Weekly,* 18/11/2013. [online available at:] http://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/industry-news/publisher-news/article/60029-eyeing-indie-presses-for-the-next-great-thing.html [05/08/2015]

About VIDA. [online available at:] http://www.vidaweb.org/about-vida/ [13/07/2015]

Almond, Steve, 'The Big Myth: Why Going With a Small Press Can Yield Big Dividends', *Poets & Writers* (2011: November/December), 83-89.

Bogira, Steve, 'Separate, Unequal, and Ignored', *Chicago Reader,* 10/02/2011. http://www.chicagoreader.com/chicago/chicago-politics-segregation-african-american-black-white-hispanic-latino-population-census-community/Content?oid=3221712 [17/07/2015]

Bourdieu Pierre, 'The Market of Symbolic Goods.' *Poetics* 14 (1985): 13-44.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 'The field of cultural production, or: the economic world reversed.' *Poetics* 12 (1983): 311-356.

Center for Economic Development, *Minneapolis Saint Paul Regional Analysis: Demographics, Economy, Entrepreneurship and Innovation*. Ohio, 2011.

Diaz, Junot, 'Introduction.' In: Johnson-Valenzuela, Marissa (ed.), *Dismantle: An Anthology of Writing from the VONA/Voices Writing Workshop*. Philadelphia, 2014, 1-8.

DiAngelo, Robin. 'White Fragility.' International Journal of Critical Pedagogy 3:3 (2011): 54-70.

Duncombe, Stephen, *Notes from underground: Zines and the politics of alternitive culture.* Portland, OR, 2014

Feldman, Gayle, 'Independent Presses and "Little" Magazines in American Culture: A Forty-Year Retrospective.' Commissioned by CLMP, 2001. [online available at] www.clmp.org/indie_publishing/feldman.html [11/02/2015]

Gabriel, Michael R., 'The Astonishing Growth of Small Publishers 1958-1988', *Journal of Popular Culture* 24:3 (1990), 61-68.

Gallop, Jane, *Anecdotal Theory.* Duke University Press, Durham and London, 2002.

Gay, Roxane, 'Where Things Stand', *The Rumpus,* 06/06/2012. [online available at] *http://therumpus.net/2012/06/where-things-stand* [20/07/2015]

Glazier, Loss Pequeno, *Small Press: An Annotated Guide.* Westport, CT, 1992.

hooks, bell, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center.* Cambridge, MA, 2000.

hooks, bell, *Yearning: Race, Gender and Cultural Politics.* Boston, MA, 1990.

Johnson-Valenzuela, Marissa (ed.), *Dismantle: An Anthology of Writing from the VONA/Voices Writing Workshop*. Philadelphia, PA, 2014

Joyce, Donald Franklin, *Black Book Publishers in the US*. Westport, CT, 1991.

Joyce, Donald Franklin, *Gatekeepers of Black Culture.* Westport, CT, 1983.

Knupfer, Anne Meis, *The Chicago Black Renaissance and Women's Activism.* Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2006.

Levy, Andrew, *The Culture and Commerce of the American Short Story.* Cambridge, 1993.

Laermans, Rudi, 'Bourdieu voor beginners', *Heibel* 15 (1982): 21-47.

Lorde, Audre, *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches by Audre Lorde.* Berkeley, 2007.

McLaughlin, Robert L., 'Oppositional Aesthetics/Oppositional Ideologies: A Brief Cultural History of Alternative Publishing in the United States', *Critique* 37:3 (1996), 171-186.

Morrison, Toni, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination.* New York, 1993.

Mura, David, 'The Student of Color in the typical MFA-program', *Gulf Coast: A Journal of Literature and Fine Arts.* Gulf Coast Online: 21/04/2015. [online available at] www.gulfcoastmag.org/online/blog/the-student-of-color-in-the-typical-mfa-program/ [26/06/2015]

National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), *Research Note # 105: Artists and Art Workers in the United States.* Washington, 2011.

Pelton, Ted, 'Introduction to Focus: A Company of Companies: Essential Micropress Reading.' *American Book Review* 31:4 (2010), 3-4.

Simmons, Ryan, 'Young, John K. *Black Writers, White Publishers: Markerplace Politics in Twentieth-Century African-American Literature.* Jackson: UP of Mississippi, 2006) [review], *Callaloo* 31 (2008): 957-961.

Spolsky, Ellen. 'Darwin and Derrida: Cognitive Literary Theory as a Species of Post-Structuralism.' *Poetics Today* 23:1 (2002): 43-65.

Thompson, John B., *Merchants of Culture: The Publishing Business in the Twenty-First Century.* Cambridge: 2010.

Timmerman, John, *In defence of fantasy: a study of the genre in English and American literature since 1945.* Bowling Green, OH, 1983.

Uchmanowicz, Pauline, 'A Brief History of CCLM/CLMP', *The Massachusetts Review* 44: 1 (2003), 70 - 87.

United States Census Bureau, *Current Population Survey: CPS Table Creator.* [online available at:] http://www.census.gov/cps/data/cpstablecreator.html [13/07/2015]

United States Census Bureau, *State and County QuickFacts: Chicago.* [online available at:] http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/17/1714000.html [17/07/2015]

United States Census Bureau, *State and County QuickFacts: Ann Arbor*. [online available at] http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/26/2603000.html [17/07/2015]

United States Census Bureau, *State and County QuickFacts: Detroit* [online available at] http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/26/2622000.html [17/07/2015]

Simmons, Ryan, 'Black Literature, White Publishers: Marketplace Politics in Twentieth-Century African-American Literature (review)', *Callaloo* 31: 3 (2008), 957-961.

Steele, Claude, "Thin Ice: Stereotype Threat and Black College Students', *The Atlantic* august 1999. [online available at] http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1999/08/thin-ice-stereotype-threat-and-black-college-students/304663/ [06/08/2015]

White, Simone, ‘Flibbertigibbet in a White Room / Competencies.’ *Poetry Foundation: Harriet, a Poetry Blog*. 16/04/2014. [online available at] http://www.poetryfoundation.org/harriet/2014/04/flibbertigibbet-in-a-white-room-competencies/ [11/07/2015]

Publishers Discussed

Chicago

Another New Calligraphy : www.anothernewcalligraphy.com

Chicago Center for Literature and Photography (CCLaP): www.cclapcenter.com

Curbside Splendor: www.curbsidesplendor.com

Artifice Books: www.artificebooks.com

Dark House Press: www.thedarkhousepress.com

Dancing Girl Press: www.dancinggirlpress.com

Featherproof Books: www.featherproof.com

Flood Editions: www.floodeditions.com

Green Lantern Press: http://sector2337.com/green-lantern-press

Holon Press: http://sector2337.com/green-lantern-press

Midwestern Gothic: www.midwestgothic.com

New Victoria: www.newvictoria.com

Projective Industries: www.projectiveindustries.com

Puddin’head Press: www.puddinheadpress.com

Rose Metal Press: www.rosemetalpress.com

Switchback Books: www.switchbackbooks.com

Third World Press: www.thirdworldpressbooks.com

Virtual Artists Collective: www.vacpoetry.org

Twin Cities: Minneapolis - St.-Paul

Cloud City Press: www.cloudcitypress.com

Coffee House Press: www.coffeehousepress.org

Graywolf Press: www.graywolfpress.org

Handtype Press: www.handtype.com

Squares and Rebels: www.squaresandrebels.com

Milkweed Editions: www.milkweed.org

Nodin Press: www.nodinpress.com/

Red Dragonfly Press: www.reddragonflypress.org

Detroit Metropolitan Area

Aquarius Press/ Willow Literature: www.willowlit.net

Atomic Quill Press: http://press.atomicquill.com/index2.htm

Belt Publishing: www.beltmag.com/belt_publishing

Dzanc Books: www.dzancbooks.org

Midwestern Gothic: www.midwestgothic.com

Appendices

U.S. Census Data: race and education

CPS Data Collected in Year: 2014

Persons – All

Percentages by Race

(Sums in Thousands)

The 2014 CPS ASEC included redesigned questions for income and health insurance coverage. The redesigned income questions were implemented to a subsample using a probability split panel design.

The source of data for this table is the portion of the CPS ASEC sample which received the income questions consistent with the 2013 CPS ASEC, approximately 68,000 addresses.

	Totals		Race											
			White alone		Black or African-American alone		American Indian and Alaska Native alone		Asian alone		Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone		Two or more races	
	Persons		Persons		Persons		Persons		Persons		Persons		Persons	
	Sum	PCT	Sum	PCT	Sum	PCT	Sum	PCT	Sum	PCT	Sum	PCT	Sum	PCT
Totals	313,395	100.0%	243,399	77.7%	40,671	13.0%	3,369	1.1%	17,070	5.4%	1,133	0.4%	7,755	2.5%
Educational Attainment														
Children under 15	61,051	100.0%	44,434	72.8%	9,178	15.0%	825	1.4%	3,067	5.0%	234	0.4%	3,314	5.4%
No high school diploma	42,090	100.0%	31,845	75.7%	6,329	15.0%	731	1.7%	1,961	4.7%	194	0.5%	1,030	2.4%
High school or equivalent	71,145	100.0%	56,177	79.0%	10,026	14.1%	843	1.2%	2,699	3.8%	270	0.4%	1,129	1.6%
Some college, less than 4-yr degree	69,041	100.0%	54,474	78.9%	9,384	13.6%	710	1.0%	2,880	4.2%	282	0.4%	1,311	1.9%
Bachelor's degree or higher	70,068	100.0%	56,469	80.6%	5,754	8.2%	259	0.4%	6,463	9.2%	153	0.2%	970	1.4%

Data requested through: Current Population Survey (CPS) – CPS Table Creator
[online available at:] http://www.census.gov/cps/data/cpstablecreator.html [13/07/2015]

Gathered Data Symbolic Capital (Collected) + VIDA-count

Categories for reviews:

1) Prominent literary venues and newspapers e.g. New York Times, Washington Post

2) Established literary magazines, online platforms and important outlets for the literary sector, e.g. Kirkus Review, The Rumpus, Monkey Bicycle, Electric Literature, Entropy, Largehearted Boy, Publishers weekly, Booklist, Library Journal

3) Local literary venues and local newspapers

4) Blogs

Chicago

	# books published in 2014	**# Google Hits / launched title[55]**	**Reviewed by categories…**	**Extra information**	**VIDA: female authors/ # of books**
Another New Calligraphy	1 (?)	228	(2) - 3	Chapbooks, # varies greatly: 10 in 2015	2014: 1/1 (Total: 6/14)
CCLaP	8	150 – 800 *! Exceptional figure for 'The Wounding Time': 6.830*	4 *once/twice* 2 several books not reviewed		1,54/8[56]
Curbside Splendor	16 (+ 5 < imprints)	Range: 300 – 5000 Average between: 1000 – 2000	2-4		5,5 / 16
→ *Artifice*	2	500-600	4		1 female, 1 unknown[57]
→ *Concepcion*	0			Only publication in 2013	
→ *Darkhouse*	3	2000 – 9000	2-4 + niche: horror		1,35/3
Dancing Girl Press	30?			Chapbooks, publishing date often unclear	30?
Endeavour Press	?			Only evidence of this press existing: 1 chapbook at Quimby's	
Featherproof	0				

[55] For each title, the following formula was entered: ["Title of the book" "Name of the Author"]. Example: ["Jillian" "Halle Butler"]. Irregularities, for instance due to a publication of the same book by a different publishing house were discarded. More detailed information

[56] .54 is the share of women authors included in 1 anthology. In 'Chicago after Dark', out of 31 authors, 17 are female.

[57] I do not know how Sara/Russ Woods would identify him/herself

Flood Editions	4	600 – 1000	1-3 + Academic interest		2/4
Green Lantern Press	2	1000 – 4000	2-4 + niche: Art		2/2
→ *Holon press*	0			Last publication 2013	
Midwestern Gothic	1	286	3-4		1/1
New Victoria	?				**?**
OV Books	0			9 books since 2005. Last publication 2013.	
Parking Block Publishing	?			zines and 'art books': publishing dates unclear	
Projective Industries	2	50-200		Chapbooks	2/2
Puddin'head Press	1	13		Chapbook	1
Rose Metal Press	3	300-400	2-3		0,6/3
Switchback Books	1	306	2-3	Normally 2/year	1/1
Third world press	9	500 - 2.500			3/9
Virtual Artists Collective	4	1000 – 6.500			¾

Twin Cities

	# books published in 2014	**Average # Google Hits / launched title[58]**	**Reviewed by categories…**	**Extra information**	**VIDA**
Cloud City Press	2?	5 – 150 *! Exceptional figure for 'Demon in Plastic': 1.590*	4	6 chapbooks were published since 2012, but not clear when	2/2
Coffee House Press	19	Range: 500 – 8000 Average: 1.000-2.000	1-4		11/19 (2013: 5/18) (2012: 6/16)
Graywolf Press	33	Range: 549 – 41.200 Average: 1.000 - 5.000	1-4	Several publications were also published in the UK	12/33 (2013: 11/33) (2012: 8 / 29)
Handtype Press	2	350 – 5.000			0/2

[58] For each title, the following formula was entered: ["Title of the book" "Name of the Author"]. Example: ["Jillian" "Halle Butler"]. Irregularities, for instance due to a publication of the same book by a different publishing house were discarded. More detailed figures included separately.

→ *Squares and Rebels*	1	186	4 + LBGT		0/1
Milkweed Editions	21	Range: 500 – 6000 Average: 1000	2-4 Twice: 1		9/21 (2013: 6/ 15) (2012: 7/ 17)
Nodin Press	3[59]	Ca. 500 *! Exceptional figure for 'Stopping for Breath': 14.000*	4		3/3
Red Dragonfly Press	12	Range: 250 – 4500	4		5/ 12
Spout Press	0			Last publication 2013	

Detroit Metropolitan Area

Aquarius Press / Willow Books	5	Range: 50 – 700	Often not reviewed. Ocassionally 1, 2 and 4.		2/5
Atomic Quill Press	1	8			1/1
Belt Publishing	1	951	1-4	*Only publish city anthologies: 'Detroit Anthology'*	?
Dzanc Books	20	Range: 300 – 3000 Average: 750 - 1500	1-4		3 / 20
Marick Press	6	Range: 50 - 5000			2/6
Midwestern Gothic	*see Chicago: publisher based in both cities*				
Past Tents Press	?				
Broadside Lotus Press				Hand out Naomi Long Madgett Poetry Prize: winner published by Wayne State University Press → no longer active publisher themselves?	

[59] Nodin Press publishes several non-literary genres. In this count, only their literary publications (poetry) are included

The Detailed Data – Titles Published in 2014

Literary prizes are mentioned under Extra info.

CHICAGO – TITLES PUBLISHED IN 2014

Title – Author	# Google Hits	Reviews	Extra info
ANOTHER NEW CALLIGRAPHY			
Laps – JoAnna Novak	228	Small Press Book Review, Tupelo Quarterly	Pushcart Prize Nominee
CHICAGO CENTER FOR LITERATURE AND PHOTOGRAPHY (CCLaP)			
The Links in The Chain – Fred Russel	138		
The Wounding Time – Hussein Osman	6.830		
Chicago After Dark	718		31 authors: 17 female
Love Songs of the Revolution – Bronwyn Mauldin	803	Entropy, Grab the Lapels	
Turtle and Dam – Scott Abrahams	196	Chicago Literati, Words Notes and Fiction	
The King in Yellow – Robert Chambers	11.200		Distortion: reprint
Death to the Bullshit Artists of South Texas – Fernando Flores	161	Austin Review several blogs	
Humboldt – Scott Navicky	385	several blogs	
CURBSIDE SPLENDOR			
Jillian – Halle Butler	2.110	Kirkus, Electric Literature, Publishers Weekly, Booklist Chicago Tribune, Chicago Literati	
Dead Wrestles Elegies – Todd Kameko	1.190	Green Mountain Review, microreviews	
Losing in Gainesville – Brian Costello	1.090	Kirkus Chicago Reader, Newcity Lit	
Does not Love – James Adcox	1.490	Electric Literature, Monkey Bicylce, Atticus Review, Largehearted Boy, htmlgiant, Chichago Literati, CCLaP Reviews	
Crazy Horse's Girlfriend – Erika T. Wurth	1.950	Kirkus, Publishers Weekly, Booklist Foreword Review, Words for Worms	- Storycircle Book Reviews: women

			- Rich In Color: YA, writers of color
The Game We Play – Susan Lanier	1.750	Largehearted Boy, Paste Magazine Chicago Literati, Newcity Lit	
Where to? A Hack Memoir – Dmitry Samarov	1.010	Largehearted Boy, Booklist Chicago Tribune Newcity Lit, Chicagoist	Niche: The Geeky Press The Virtual Memories Show
Animals in Peril - Ryan Kenealy	445	Chicago Literati, Chicago Reader, CCLaP Reviews, Chicago Literati, Newcity Lit	
The Amazing Mister Orange – Marvin Tate	351	Chicago Tribune Newcity Lit	
Once I Was Cool – Megan Sielstra	2.410	Chicagoist, Chicago Reader, Chicago Literati	
If I Would Leave Myself Behind – Lauren Becker	781	Largehearted Boy, Atticus Review Small Press Book Review Grab the Lapels	http://www.twobirds-onestoned.org/ podcast
Don't Start Me Talking – Tom Williams	5.370	Kirkus, Largehearted Boy, htmlgiant Booklist Small Press Book Review	
The Old Neighborhood – Bill Hillman	3.300	Largehearted Boy Booklist, Library Journal Chicago Sun Times Chicago Reader, Chicago Literati	
Lost in Space – Ben Tanzer	3.970	Entropy, Largehearted Boy Small Press Book Review Chicago Mag, Literary Chicago, Newcity Lit	Niche: The Geeky Press
The Desert Places – Sparks & Kloss	1.170	Entropy, Monkey Bicycle, htmlgiant Small Press Book Review	
Let go and go on and on – Tim Kinsella	3.120	Bookslut, Booklist, Small Press Book Review Chicagoist, CCLaP Reviews	

Artifice

Kill Manual – Cassandra Troyan	572	Wildhorses on Fire	
Wolf Doctors – Sara/Russ Woods	565	Newcity Lit	

Darkhouse

After the people lights have gone off – Stephen Jones	*3.400*	Monkey Bicycle, Pantheon Magazine, Portland Bookreview	*Niche: horror horrortalk, horrornews, Bram Stoker's Award, This is Horror Short Story Collection of the year*
Echo Lake – Letitia Trent	*9.510*	Pantheon Mag, Monkey Bicycle, Kirkus, LA Review of Books	

The New Black: A Neo-Noir Anthology	2.010	Pantheon Mag, Largehearted Boy Windy City Reviews	Niche: horror The Horror Bookshelf Entropy's Halloween list 7/20 authors female

FLOOD EDITIONS

ARK – Ronald Johnson + "flood editions"	443.000 "1.200"	New Yorker Publishers Weekly	Distortion: reprint of text often included in anthologies Academic interest: Notre Dame Review
The Open Secret – Jennifer Moxley	616	LA Times, LA Review, Publishers Weekly	Poetry Society of America's 2015 William Carlos Williams Award (4)
Life – Elizabeth Arnold + "flood editions"	61.100 "924"		Distortion: author also published "Pieces of my sister's life" at Penguin-Random House
Red Mavis - Merrill Gilfillan	1.190	The Rumpus, Drunken Boat San Francisco Gate	

GREEN LANTERN PRESS

Mothernism – Lise Halle Baggesen	3.990	Chicago Magazine Art en feminist blogs	2014 favorite on Vol. 1 Brooklyn (4)
Ghost Nature – Caroline Picard (ed.)	1.060	Entropy Art blogs	

MIDWESTERN GOTHIC

Autoplay – Julie Babcock	286	American Microreviews, blogs	Pushcart prize nominee (4)

PROJECTIVE INDUSTRIES

Obvious Metals – Leona Fridman	68		
Picturing everything closer visible - Linda Russo	164		

PUDDIN'HEAD PRESS

Gently Broken – Greg(ory) Curry	13		

ROSE METAL PRESS

My Very End of the Universe – Bower,	+/- 400 *depending on added*	Largehearted Boy Small Press Book Review, PANK magazine	Entropy 'Best of 2014' (2)

Chapman, Holland, Pokrass and Teel	*author: range 323-464*		
The Imagination of Lewis Carroll – Willam Todd Seabrook	319	LA Review, The Rumpus Small Press Book Review, PANK magazine	
All Movies Love the Moon – Gregory Robinson	378	LA Review, Largehearted Boy, htmlgiant, Rain Taxi, Small Press Book Review	

SWITCHBACK BOOKS

A table that goes on for miles – Stefania Heim	306	The Rumpus, coldfrontmag, Publishers Weekly	

THIRD WORLD PRESS

Where Do People in Dreams Come From –Norman Jordan	603		
Sing Me Different – Norman Jordan	579		*e-book was already available in 2013*
Ascending and Other Poems – Richard Long	8.790		Distorted: republication
Into Africa, Being Black – Fred Hord	2.530		*Found publication dates vary (2013-2014)*
Fields Watered with Blood – Maryemma Graham	1.860		
Hip Hop & Sankofa – Kerry A. Foster	390		
PoeTaree – Aerle Taree	2.210		
The Sparrow's Plight – Terry O'Neal	976	ChickenBones: A Journal is dedicated to Nathaniel Turner, prophet of Southampton, and Marcus Bruce Christian, Poet of New Orleans	
Arkansippi Memwars – Eugene Redmond	1.630		No reviews, but attention on Armageddon of Funk, Black Bird Press (6) and St. Louis Beacon (5)

VIRTUAL ARTISTS COLLECTIVE

Woman with a Wandering Eye – Patricia Goodrich	5.750		
All the Stars Blown to One Side of the	4.820		

Sky – Lorraine Henrie Lens			
Gapers' Delay – Matthias Regan	1.050		
In this Glad Hour – Martha Modena Vertreace Doody	6.500		

MINNEAPOLIS / ST.-PAUL – TITLES PUBLISHED IN 2014

Title – Author	# Google Hits	Reviews	Extra info

CLOUD CITY REVIEW

Since 2012, Cloud City published 6 Chapbooks. The specific publishing dates are not clear.

Filmpocalypse – Luke Marcott	159	Twin Cities Daily Planet	
Demon in Plastic – Vidal Soto	1.590		
All I Want to Do is All I Want To Do with Your Brain	7		
The Final Failure of A Professional Small Animal Insider-Outer And Other Stories – MP Johnson	4		
Dragons are Hung – Oliver Saint John	5		
Your Heart Really Does Explode – Angus McLinn	194	Twin Cities Daily Planet	

COFFEE HOUSE PRESS

Streaming – Allison Adelle Hedge Coke	1.770	Washington Independent Review of Books, LA Review of Books, Largehearted boy, Rumpus, Doctor TJ Eckleburg Review, …	
It Will End With Us – Sam Savage	956	New York Times Kirkus, Doctor TJ Eckleburg Review Publishers Weekly, Library Journal	
Expect Delays – Bill Berkson	1.140	Atticus Review, Doctor TJ Eckleburg Review Publishers Weekly	
House of Coates – Brad Zellar	2.250	NY Times Kirkus, Publishers weekly, Book Riot, Minneapolis Post	

The Baltimore Atrocities – John Dermott Woods	1750	Atticus Review, Rumpus, Largehearted Boy, Electric Lit, Kirkus Baltimore Atmosphere	
Prelude to Bruise – Saeed Jones	7910	Washington Post, Time Magazine, Time Out NY, Flavorwire, Rain Taxi, Publishers weekly	Stonewall Book Award (GLBT) PEN/Joyce Osterweil Award (poetry) Finalist: 4 other awards
A Girl is a Half-formed Thing – Eimear McBride +"*Coffee House"*	40.100 "1370"	New Yorker, Washington Post, NY Times Rumpus, Kirkus, LA Review of Books Publishers weekly, Library Journal Vol 1: Brooklyn	Distorted: first published in the UK (faber & faber)
How a Mother Weaned Her Girl from Fairy Tales – Kate Bernheimer	1.400	Time Out NY Electric Lit, Largehearted Boy, Heavy Feather, Bookslut, Entropy, Library Journal Microreviews, Vol 1: Brooklyn	
Dark. Sweet. – Linda Hogan	1.660	Rosemary and Reading Glasses, The Volta Santa Barbara Independent	
Cross Worlds: Transcultural Poetics	4.020	Kenyon Review, Cultural Weekly	*Anthology*
You Animal Machine – Eleni Sikelianos	1.260	Huffington Post Believer, Kirkus, LA Review, Largehearted Boy Publishers Weekly, Booklist	
Office at Night – Bernheimer & Hunt	1.330	Star Tribune	Niche: art Smithsonian, Walker Art Center
Sidewalks – Valeria Luiselli	4.200	LA Review LA Review, Electric Lit, Flavorwire, Kirkus, Rumpus Publishers Weekly	
Faces in the Crowd – Valeria Luiselli + "*Coffee House"*	10.100 "2.080"	LA Times LA Review, Rumpus, Electric Lit, Largehearted Boy, Book Riot Publishers weekly, Bookforum American Microreviews	Distorted: published in UK (Granta)
The Artist's Library: A Field Guide	497	Kirkus Publishers Weekly, Library Journal	
Selected Poems – Mark Ford	6.370	?	Distorted: Mark Ford edited "Collected Poems" by John Ashbury and Frank O'Hara
The Devil's Snake Curve – Josh Ostergaard	1530	NY Times Largehearted Boy Publishers Weekly Star Tribune	
Anime Wong – Karen Tei Yamashita	1.300	National Public Radio (NPR) Portland Book Review	
The Rise and Fall of Scandamerican	6.010	NY Times Largehearted Boy, Bookslut	

Domestic – Christopher Merkur		Library journal, Publishers weekly, Booklist Star Tribune, Detroit Metro Times	

GRAYWOLF PRESS

Repast – D.A. Powell	1.160	New Yorker Flavorwire, Washington Independent Review of Books	
Useless Landscape, or a Guide For Boys – D.A. Powell	3.260	Rumpus, Flavorwire Poetry Foundation, Publishers weekly, Library Journal San Francisco Gate	Academic interest: The Antioch Review, Colorado Review
See You in Paradise – J. Robert Lennon	3.710	NY Times, Boston Globe Kirkus, Washington Independent, Nervous Breakdown, Star Tribune	
Twenty Poems that Could Save America and Other Essays – Tony Hoagland	1.460	Rumpus, Entropy, Washington Independent Star Tribune, Houston Chronicle	
In Times of Fading Light – Eugen Ruge + "Graywolf"	6.750 526	NY Times	Distorted: published in UK (Faber)
Blood Lyrics – Katie Ford	4.310	Washington Independent Publishers Weekly	
Duplex – Kathryn Davis	4.710	NY Times, NPR Rumpus, Washington Independent Star Tribune	
Citizen – Claudia Rankine	41.200	NY Times, New Yorker, Washington Post Rumpus, NY Review of Books, BOMB magazine Poetry Foundation	National Book Critics Circle Award (3?)
On Immunity – Eula Biss	26.600	NY Times, Washington Post, New Yorker, Time Out Kirkus, Bookforum, Publishers Weekly	Also: Cosmopolitan
Tumbledown – Robert Boswell	5.460	NY Times, Washington Post Kirkus Review, Rumpus Publishers Weekly	
Geek Sublime – Vikram Chandra + "Graywolf"	15.600 "1.680"	NY Times, New Yorker Paris Review, Kirkus Publishers weekly, Library Journal	Distorted: published in UK (Faber)
Underground – Jim Moore	18.700	Publishers Weekly Star Tribune	Distorted: existing work "Underground Liverpool" by Jim Moore
If the Tabloids Are True What Are You? – Mattea Harvey	1.960	LA Times, NPR Rumpus, Paris Review, Entropy, Volta, Rain Taxi, Publishers Weekly , American Microreviews	
The Art of Daring – Carl Phillips	1.280	LA Times, Huffington Post, Entropy Publishers Weekly	
Blackboard – Lewis Buzbee	3.190	NPR Kirkus, Entropy, Slate	

		Publishers Weekly Star Tribune	
Second Childhood – Fanny Howe	12.700	NY Times, NPR Rumpus Publishers Weekly	
Cataract City – Craig Davidson + "Graywolf"	13.300 1.700	Timeout Kirkus, Largehearted Boy Publishers Weekly	Distorted: published in Canada (Doubleday)
Song of the Shank – Jeffery Renard Allen	4.860	NY Times, Wall Street Journal, LA Times Kirkus Publishers Weekly	
On Sal Mal Lane – Ru Freeman	5.010	NY Times, USA Today, Rumpus, Largehearted Boy, Nervous Breakdown, Colorado Review	Also: Oprah
The Colour of Memory – Geoff Dyer + "Graywolf"	6.040 444	NY Times Washington Independent, Flavorwire Publishers Weekly	Distorted: published in UK (Jonathan Cape)
The Search – Geoff Dyer + "Graywolf"	57.200 4.030	NY Times Washington Independent, Flavorwire) Publishers Weekly	Distorted: published in UK (Hamish Hamilton)
Corridor – Saskia Hamilton	1.060	PBS Rumpus, Publishers Weekly, Library Journal	
Night Talk – Elizabeth Cox	1400		Distorted: republished (St. Martin's Griffin)
Woke Up Lonely – Fiona Maazel	5.090	NY Times, Time Out, Washington Post Believer, Kirkus, Largehearted Boy, Rumpus, LA Review of Books	Also: Cosmopolitan, Oprah
The Empathy Exams – Leslie Jamison + "Graywolf"	28.300 "3.820"	NY Times, Atlantic, Washington Post, New Yorker Flavorwire, Book Riot, LA Review of Books, The Millions, Kirkus, Largehearted Boy Publishers Weekly, Library Journal	Distorted: Republished (later) in UK (Granta) Also: Cosmopolitan
Directing Herbert White – James Franco + "Graywolf"	6.390 "846"	NY Times, Boston Globe Atticus Review Publishers Weekly	Distorted: Republished in UK (Faber)
How to Dance As the Roof Caves In – Nick Lantz	549	Washington Independent, Rumpus, Largehearted Boy Publishers Weekly, Booklist	
The Great Floodgates of the Wonderworld – Justin Hocking	7.750	NY Times, Boston Globe LA Review, Largehearted Boy, Kirkus,	
Glyph – Percival Everett + "Graywolf"	5.230 "809"	NY Times Publishers Weekly	Distorted: Published in UK (Faber) Academic Interest: Canadian Review of American Studies

Karate Chop – Dorthe Nors +"Graywolf"	5.930 "967"	NY Times, LA Times Paris Review, Kirkus, Rumpus, Flavorwire	Distorted: Republished in UK (Pushkin Press) Also: Vogue, Oprah, Elle
The Earth Avails – Mark Wunderlich	1.930	Rumpus, LA Review of Books, Slate, Boston Review, Washington Independent	University of Texas Rilke Prize
Ask Me – William Stafford + "Graywolf"	139.000 2.340		Distorted: classic British poem, here used as title of collection: celebrate centennial Stafford
Before I Burn – Gaute Heivoll + "Graywolf"	3.970 "872"	NPR, Wall Street Journal NY Journal of Books, Kirkus, Rumpus, LA Review Publishers Weekly, Library Journal, Booklist	Distorted: published in UK (Atlantic Books)

HANDTYPE PRESS

From Heart into Art – Raymond Luczak	5.290		
Where I Stand – John Lee Clark	378		

SQUARES AND REBELS

Lincoln Avenue: Chicago Stories – Gregg Shapiro	186	Blogs + LBGT	LBGT: http://baltimore-outloud.com/ , Out in print blog, Gay & Lesbian Review, Livingoutli, Guy Magazine

MILKWEED EDITIONS

Ordinary Sins – Jim Heynen	774	Kirkus, Doctor T. Jeckleburg Review Star Tribune	
Sins of Our Fathers – Shawn Lawrence Otto	4.030	LA Times, Huffington Post, Time Out Kirkus, Book Riot Star Tribune	
You Must Remember This – Michael Bazett	714	Rumpus, Ampersand Review, Green Mountains Review, Publishers weekly Star Tribune	
Adventures in the Anthropocene – Gaia Vince + "Milkweed"	7.380 "290"	Literary Review, Kirkus Publishers Weekly Star Tribune	Distorted: published in UK (Chatto & Windus) Ecological interest (scholarly): ecologist, American Scholar
Zoologies – Alison H. Deming	1.540	LA Review of Books, Kirkus Publishers Weekly Star Tribune, Tucson Weekly, KNAV's Southwest Book Review	Ecological interest (scholarly): Oxford Journals: Interdisciplinary Studies Literature Environment

Dandarians – Lee Ann Roripaugh	965	Literary Review, LA Review, Bookslut, Ampersand, Entropy Publishers Weekly American Microreviews	
Bone Map – Sara Eliza Johnson	1.330	Literary Review, Ampersand, Bookslut Publishers Weekly American Microreviews, PANK	Selected: National Poetry Series
Seeking the Cave – James P. Lenfestey	1.420	Kirkus, Rain Taxi Minneapolis Post, Star Tribune	
Under a Wild Sky – William Souder + "Milkweed"	5.600 298	NY Times Publishers Weekly	Distorted: Republication (North Point Press, 2004), Pulitzer Prize Finalist
Let Him Go – Larry Watson	4.990	Rumpus, Kirkus, Booklist, publishers weekly Gazette, Star Tribune	Niche: historical novel society
Braiding Sweetgrass – Robin Wall Kimmerer	5.950	Publishers Weekly Star Tribune	Niche: witches and pagans, blueotterschool
Stilwater – Rafael De Grenade	972	Huffington Post Kirkus, Vol 1. Brooklyn Coachella Valley Independent	
Things that Are – Amy Leach	4.360	Guardian Rumpus, Largehearted Boy, Kenyon Review Publishers Weekly Star Tribune	
Translations from Bark Beetle – Jody Gladding	668	Kenyonreview, Numero Cinq, Orionmagazine	
Jewelweed – David Rhodes	2.870	Publishers Weekly Star Tribune, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, Wisconsin State Journal	
Day Unto Day – Martha Collins	779	Ampersand Review Mead Magazine, Coalhill Review	
The Book of Duels – Michael Garriga	1.190	Publishers Weekly Foreword Reviews, Barn Owl Review, Empty Mirror Books, Cleveland Magazine	
Inappropriate Behavior – Murray Farish	954	Lit Reactor, Kirkus, Electric Literature, Rain Taxi, the Millions Publishers Weekly, Booklist, Star Tribune	
The Wish Book – Alex Lemon	1.240	Publishers Weekly, Library Journal, Booklist American Microreviews Hazel & Wren, Literary Review, Colorado Review, Missouri Review	
The Star By My Head – Malena Morling	615		*Poets from Sweden*
Dangerous Goods – Sean Hill	939	Rumpus, Harvard Review, LA Review of Books Library Jounal,	Winner: Minnesota Book Award for Poetry (5)

Nodin Press

Stopping for Breath – Norita Dittberner Jax	14.000	Whistling Shade	
Sometimes – Jill Beckenridge	346		Release covered by Rain Taxi, The Loft (6)
Evidence of Rain – Carol Rucks	636		Release covered by Rain Taxi, The Loft (6)

Red Dragonfly Press

A Slow Dissolve of Egrets – Alixa Doom	576	Star Tribune, Marshall Independent Whistling Shade	
Wrestling with the Angel – Edith Rylander	340		
Patches of Light – Chad Hanson	4.490		Mention: Washington Independent (2)
Petrified Time – Yannis Ritsos	1.390	Rain Taxi	
Some Measure of Existence – Marjorie Buettner	2.920		Niche: United Haiku and Tanka Online Society, Contemporary Haibun online society, Haiku Society of America
The Grand Piano – Floyce Alexander	706	North Dakota Review	
The Initiation of Praise – Larry Gavin	268		
The Yellow House – Dave Etter	1.220		
To the Palace of Kings – Timothy Young	289		
Continuous Performance – Maggie Jaffe	460	Rain Taxi, American Book Review	
The Hummingbird's Tongue – Vicki Graham	446		
The Light under the Door – Robert Hedin	360		

DETROIT (METROPOLITAN AREA) – TITLES PUBLISHED IN 2014

Title – Author	**# Google Hits**	**Reviews**	**Extra info**

AQUARIUS PRESS

➔ **WILLOW BOOKS**

Cairo Workbook – T.J. Anderson III	45		
This House, My Bones – Elmaz Abinader	591	Time Out	Pushcart Prize Nominee (4) *VONA*
Wonderkind – Curtis L. Chrisler	179		*Prof.*
The Four Words for Home – Angie Chuang	286	Rumpus, LA Review of Books Women's Review of Books Blogs	
Comprehending Forever – Rich Villar	692		

ATOMIC QUILL PRESS

Uncertain Departures – Timothy Dugdale	8		

BELT PUBLISHING (Rust Belt Chic Press)

Belt Publishing, connected to Belt Magazine, publishes *Rust Belt* city anthologies. 'A Detroit Anthology' was published in 2014.

A Detroit Anthology – Anna Clark (ed.)	951	Boston Globe, *The Daily Beast* The Millions, Largehearted Boy, WMUK Radio Waxwing Literary Review	! Ebony Magazine

DZANC BOOKS (Ann Arbor)

Dzanc also has a digital rEprint Series. These works are not included in this list.

The Old Reactor – David Ohle	1450	NY Times BOMB magazine, Heavy Feather Publishers Weekly	
Offerings from a Rust Belt Jockey – Andrew Plattner	678		Niche: Horse riding 'Tony Ryan Book Award'
A Different Bed Every Time – Jac Jemc	1700	Time Out Rumpus, Heavy Feather, Largehearted Boy, Kirkus Publishers Weekly	
By Light We Knew Our Names – Anne Valente	774	Rumpus, Largehearted Boy, Heavy Feather Publishers Weekly	
The Maggot People – Hennig Koch	1.100	Electric Lit, Kirkus oneticktobesick.blogspot	
The Annotated Mixtape – Joshua Harmon	444	Litreactor, Largehearted Boy, Kirkus	

History of Cold Seasons – Joshua Harmon	1380	Kirkus	
Come Away – Stephen Policofff	558	Kirkus, Largehearted Boy	
My Beautiful Hooknosed Beauty Queen Strutt Wave – Jeff Kass	311		
Wait 'til You Have Real Problems – Scott Beal	239		
When Blackness Was a Virtue – Michael Grant Jaffe	329	Largehearted Boy	Included in Entropy's "The Great 2014 Indie Press Cheat Sheet"
Byrd – Kim Church	3.330	Huffington Post, Observer Monkey Bicycle, Largehearted Boy, Nervouw Breakdown, PANK Star Tribune, Fayetteville Observer	
Not For Nothing – Stephen Graham Jones	1.990	Monkey Bicycle Blogs	
The Brunist Day of Wrath – Robert Coover	3.080	NY Times, Wall Street Journal, Time Out, Observer, New Yorker Rumpus, Numéro Cinq Publishers Weekly	
The Mayflies – Sara Veglahn	386	Gesture	Niche: Horrernovelsreviews
Between Wrecks – George Singleton	1.230	Rumpus, Monkey Bicycle, Heavy Feather, Largehearted Boy Booklist	
Friday Was the Bomb – Nathan Deuel	1.290	LA Times, NPR LA Review of Books, Heavy Feather, Kirkus, Monkey Bicycle	
The Sea God's Herb – John Domini	2.020	Largehearted Boy, Heavy Feather, Electric Lit, Open Letters Monthly, Indigest Mag	Winnipeg Review (Canada)
The Committee of Town Happiness – Alan Michael Parker	1.140	Time Out Kirkus, Electric Lit, Rumpus, Heavy Feather, Monkey Bicycle	
The Fish and the Not Fish – Peter Markus	830	Brooklyn Rail	Included in Entropy's "# Summerstuff"

Marick Press

The Ministry of Emergency Situations – Todd Swift	5.330		
The Inner Space - Kjell Espmark	3.660		

Mephisto's Flea Song – Richard Frost	4.440		
The Bees Are Waiting – Karina Borowicz	327		
I Dreamt About Sam Shepard Last Night – Ingela Strandberg	53		
No One's Rose – Paul Celan	1.190		Distortion: 'no one's rose' is also a line in the (earlier) English translation of one of Celan's poems, entitled 'Psalm'

MIDWESTERN GOTHIC (Ann Arbor)

One publication, see Chicago (publisher based in both cities).

PAST TENTS PRESS

?