

Notes on Turning a Doctoral Thesis into a Book

We strongly recommend that you read Frances Halpenny's classic article* carefully when considering whether to turn your thesis into a book. The following is intended only as an aide-memoire. Moreover, it is not meant to put you off but only to draw attention to a few aspects of the work involved which you may not have taken into account.

It is important to recognise that there are fundamental differences between a thesis and a book which is suitable for publication. These are differences of **purpose**, **presentation** and **tone**. It does not follow from the fact that you have written a successful thesis that a book is the next step.

Making the Decision to Turn your Thesis into a book

Before deciding:

- Do leave a gap in time to gain perspective on your work.
- Do realise that not every thesis is worth revising for publication: often the scope or nature of the theme will not support a book for a more general audience.
- Do think carefully whether you are still sufficiently interested in your subject to undertake the extra work on it.
- Do discuss with your supervisor and examiners whether revision is worthwhile in your case and how much work they think will be necessary.

If You Do Decide to Go Ahead

In the development of a book manuscript from a thesis there are two principle considerations:

- 1) The new and larger audience to be addressed;
- 2) The treatment of the material in the way which will best meet the needs and interests of this audience.

This will usually require:

- Attracting the attention of the general reader.
- Giving your topic a context.
- Arriving at a manuscript which is self-contained and which leads up to the drawing of inferences and conclusions.
- The ordering of the topic attractively for the better understanding of the general reader.
- Speaking directly to the reader.
- Simplicity and directness of style.
- Avoiding formal summaries, jargon, sub-headings and most footnotes.

If you feel confident that both you and your book will be able to meet all these requirements then you should certainly prepare to approach a university press with your proposal.

*"The Thesis and the Book", Scholarly Publishing, January 1972 (University of Toronto Press)