

ROLE OF PUBLISHING IN THE CULTURAL AND CREATIVE INDUSTRY

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The examination of culture poses a demand for a dialectical reflection on the homology of local and global cultures as a resource to be preserved not only by conservation, but also by future upgrading. Publishing as an industry has a direct impact on both of these segments of culture as a resource or, in other words, through its production, publishing simultaneously conserves the existing cultural values and also upgrades them. Owing to these qualities, publishing has two roles – one pertains to the market in question, whereas the other pertains to culture. These qualities are intertwined within the cultural and creative industry, a sector which is now emerging in Croatia. Another important role within the sector of cultural and creative industry belongs to the book, which is a product of the publishing industry. This research regards the book as a product of the publishing industry for which an attractive niche in the market should be found and takes the position that from the sales perspective, a potential reader, i.e. a future consumer of this cultural good, should be approached in an understandable and efficient manner. This means that the function of the book is also twofold (both a cultural and an economic good). Therefore, the book demands a comprehensive approach that combines local and global cultures around the fact that it is precisely the book that is the basic means by which language capital of a specific cultural identity, as well as cultural diversity on a global scale, is nurtured.

KEYWORDS: *publishing, literature, cultural good, cultural and creative industry, culture, art.*

INTRODUCTION

The cultural and creative industry, which includes publishing, music, cinema, crafts and design, is increasingly becoming a driving force in the international market place. Providing an overview of the main approaches to assess

the economic and cultural importance of publishing and introducing the book as a product of the publishing industry, this paper highlights the specific role of publishing in the cultural and creative industry.

As stated in a report by UNESCO, being one of the oldest means of the distribution of information on a mass scale, books not only have spiritual, educational and cultural implications, but also involve the legitimate industrial and economic aspects of the publishing trade. The combination of these two factors – namely, the cultural impact and economic interests – results in a complex system of parameters that may seem incompatible with one another. Developing the scope of publishing and reading requires understanding of the existing internal relations between the different elements comprising a book's lifespan such as literary invention and the respective functions of the publisher and printer.

The objectives of the study article are as follows:

- to offer an overview of modern publishing through a discussion of its literary and cultural role as well as the economic foundation of publishing as a business
- to identify the function of the book in terms of it being a product of the publishing industry
- to determine the role of literary work as well as readership in the cultural and creative industry.

PUBLISHING AS AN INDUSTRY

As an industry that organises the publication process, publishing finances publication and the distribution of books, from the preparation of manuscripts to sales, and has two key dimensions.¹ As with any other business endeavour, publishing has its main economic goal, which is profit. However, what makes this industry specific is the fact that publishing is not only a production category, but also a cultural category that shapes the cultural identity of a country and, respectively, that of its citizens. The term “publishing” is not always unambiguous. Escarpit states:

Initially, the French words *éditer* (to publish) and *publier* (to make public, to publicise), often used as synonyms, did not have the same meaning. *Éditer* derives from the Latin word *edere*, which literally means to bring into the world, to give birth. The word *publier* derives from the Latin word *publicare* and means to display something in a public place, for anonymous passers-by. Publishing is oriented towards a work, whereas publicising is oriented towards an anonymous reader.²

Be that as it may, publishing is always an enterprise which poses a great risk. A publisher cannot predict with any certainty the amount of attention eventual readers will pay to any given book, how long it will remain on the market, how much attention it will draw, nor how the book will resonate in the long term.

It is impossible to discuss the book as a product of mass consumption without addressing the following question: “Who are the consumers of books?” One possible definition is given by Escarpit, who regards readers as a sum of those who are capable of reading independently.³ The same author states that “those who are capable of reading independently” are not necessarily the same as those who make up an *educated readership* (those who are capable of judging a work), and especially do not equate with a *real readership* (those who *buy books regularly*). Escarpit makes the following estimation: “In high production countries *real readership* constitutes 3–5% of the general readership. The overall production and distribution apparatus is conceived precisely for that minority, and the only way to calculate the upper limit of a normal booktrade’s success is by the numbers that make up that minority.” If we accept the above stated definition of readership, the answer to the question: When does a book become a product of mass consumption? reveals itself. The answer is: at the moment when social and purchasing categories of *real readership* are increased. The past has shown that two types of books have undoubtedly been the strongest categories for increasing the numbers of *real readership*:

- a) literary books that became bestsellers and entered into the “paperback” category and
- b) science books.

Besides readers’ tastes and preferences, sales are influenced by one key element, namely, the price of a book which, in turn, is influenced by the quantity of printed copies. Publishers will try to calculate the number of printed copies by taking into consideration the size of a potential market. The quantity of printed hardcover books varies significantly, thus their retail prices vary accordingly. The number of copies sold varies immensely, from several sold copies of an extremely expensive limited edition, to a large number of copies of a bestseller, the price of which is accordingly much lower. Bestsellers are rarities and most titles from a general list of publishers will probably have an initial number of copies in the range between one thousand and several thousand, with a limited and defined range of prices (this also includes paperback editions). Following a long tradition, “fictional” books

1 ROCCO, Fedor. *Poslovni marketing: Business to business*. Zagreb, 1998, p. 40–120.

2 ESCARPIT, Robert. *Revolucija knjige*. Zagreb, 1972, p. 30–172.

3 Ibid.

almost always have a lower price than non-fiction books (biographies will probably have a higher price than a novel of comparable length).

THE CULTURAL INDUSTRY AND ART AS A CULTURAL GOOD

It is not possible to discuss the cultural industry without first defining culture. Milivoj Solar emphasises the original meaning of the word culture (Lat. *cultura* – breeding, tilling, bettering, nurturing, ennobling) and then points out its ambiguity, and the fact that it is frequently assigned very different meanings in various sciences (culturology, ethnology, sociology and history, as well as philosophy). Solar states that culture, in the widest sense, is

opposed to nature as a separate activity by which man, unlike animals, establishes his own world, imposed on a natural environment, which, to some extent, puts man in opposition to nature because man does not adapt to the environment but, quite to the contrary, adapts the environment, mentally and technically, to his own needs. The historical sciences have used the term ‘culture’ on the basis of such an anthropological conceptualisation, and it is this meaning that has entered everyday speech. In this sense, the term is defined as the totality of creative activities, encompassing religion, philosophy, science and art, as well as customs, law and certain institutions, primarily those of pedagogic and educational character. Philosophy has often insisted on a distinction between culture and civilisation, where civilisation was mainly understood as an opposition to barbarism, but in some instances it denoted mostly technical achievements of a ‘material culture’, while the general term ‘culture’ pertained to spiritual values (‘spiritual culture’). However, such differentiations have been abandoned, therefore culture and civilisation are usually synonymous.⁴

Eagleton emphasises that the word “culture” falls into the group of a few (two or three) of the most complex words in the English language (this is confirmed by the 164 definitions of culture presented by Kroeber and Kluckhohn in 1963).⁵ The complexity of the term “culture” is also confirmed by its frequent appearance in the *Dictionary of Sociology* (Oxford, 1998), with over twenty definitions of various terms closely connected to the key word “culture” (including *cultural anthropology*, *cultural assimilation*, *cultural capital*, *cultural diffusion*, *cultural integration* and “all of that which, in human society, is socially (not biologically) determined”).

Hutnyk states that this large variety is due to the fact that every comment on culture must begin with the recognition of the local and the global, of that inextricable antithesis of the simultaneous existence of the individual and the universal.⁶

Even the illustrious institution UNESCO felt obligated to begin its “Report on World Culture” in 1998 with the following words: “Cultures can no longer be explored as if they are islands of an archipelago.”⁷ UNESCO’s swerve prompted a new line of reflection on ethnocentrism and eurocentrism, as well as numerous scholarly works on the topic.⁸

It is probably for this reason that Eagleton studies “culture” by considering the importance of the historical development of the understanding of culture and refers to three fundamental, traditional lines of defining culture in a historical context.⁹ The first line connects culture to *civilisation* (it is “civility coloured by value”), the second understands culture as *art*, and the third traditional line views culture as a group of people’s *way of life*.

Cultural studies have transferred “culture” to the arena of politics, and therefore contributed to the “general confusion in the understanding of culture”, as Clifford excellently illustrated in 1988. By paraphrasing here, the intention is to convey the chaotic nature of his interpretation of culture in his original text: “culture” is simultaneously a playground and a commodity; it is refined and deeply rooted, a fundamental thing – everyday, prosaic and extreme. Culture is defined by identity, tradition and change; it is a resource, a stronghold, a competition... It is a collection of kitchenware... and they are for sale. Culture is what makes us human in so many different ways, some of which are still changing. It is not something completely different and separated from trade policy, or religion, or hate, and it makes us remember that to search for an analysis of culture is culture itself. It is a disputed domain and, whether good or bad, it is our “awkward position” that we still cannot do without.¹⁰

Of course, at this level, “culture” depends on interpretation. It is precisely the possibility of different interpretations that makes it problematic. It is still unclear whether culture is an object to be possessed (as well as the way a cultural good is produced) or if it is what makes up those who possess (consume) a cultural good. Considering that culture turns from something that is possessed into something a person does,

4 SOLAR, Milivoj. *Književni leksikon: pisci, djela, pojmovi*. Zagreb, 2008, p. 203.

5 EAGLETON, Terry. *Ideja kulture*. Zagreb, 2002, p. 1–152.

6 HUTNYK, John. Culture. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 2006, 23, br. 2–3, p. 351–375.

7 UNESCO. *World Culture Report 1998: Culture, Creativity and Markets*. Paris: UNESCO, 1998.

TOMAŠEVIĆ, Nives; Kovač, Miha. *Knjiga, tranzici-*

ja, iluzija. Zagreb: Naklada Ljevak, 2009, p. 22–138.

8 COOK, John W. *Morality and Cultural Differences*. New York, Oxford: University Press, 1999, p. 7.

9 EAGLETON, Terry. Op. cit., p. 1–152.

10 CLIFFORD, James. *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-century Ethnography, Literature and Art*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988, p. 20–72.

it becomes clear that today's culture is not equivalent to identity. Kutnyk maintains that cultural goods are influenced by all social determinants – production structures, social acts, community work, communication systems, forms of legislation, government, financing, etc.¹¹ The author states that if we are to examine only one aspect, for example the influence of law on the cultural economy, the correct analysis should include the influence of the legal apparatus, such as commercial negotiations, GATT and discussions on fees, copyrights and legislation on intellectual property.

It is generally acknowledged today that culture is not simply something that needs to be understood or translated in the old anthropological sense. Hutnyk tries to clarify the processes of interpreting “culture” which have led to its “blurring”.¹² The same author indicates that the initial interpretation of European “culture” has followed the postulates of a “high culture whose categories of civilisation are laid along the course of world ‘history’”. He also emphasises that the said standpoint has later been altered by the view that everyone has a culture (at which point the terms “working class cultures” and “mass cultures” were introduced), which led to an anthropological understanding of culture that ascribed “culture” to everyone, regardless of how unequally or unjustly that culture is treated or valued. Hutnyk indicates that after the systematisation of the criticism of imperialism and anthropological “authorities”, the understanding of “culture” further changed through the global adoption of culture as a resource that transforms cultural enrichment and cultural revolution into the *cultural industry*.¹³

Therefore, at the conclusion of these reflections on culture, it is useful to point to the dialectical reflection on the homology of local and global cultures, and also to the acceptance of culture as a resource that must necessarily be preserved not only through conservation but also through future upgrading (firstly through cultural activities and then through the activities of the cultural industry).

PUBLISHING AS A SEGMENT OF THE CULTURAL AND CREATIVE INDUSTRY

With the development of printing (which, together with publishing, flourished from the beginning of the 16th to the end of the 18th centuries), the process of the diversification of printing activities was also launched. The first publishers and booksellers began to appear and the publisher took over the central role of producing and publicising books from the printers. As time passed, publishers entered the domain of book publishing, while printers were oriented mostly on book production techniques. Stipčević illustrates the following early period publishing features: “Book distribution was at that time mostly in the domain of professional

booksellers who owned shops in all major cities. However, only a small number of booksellers could make a living from bookselling. Inspection of their dealings shows that they also often had to resort to bookbinding, plating, the selling of paper and parchment as well as trading in ink and other writing materials, even to book printing itself. They mostly printed modest editions that needed no large investments, such as prayer books, abecedariums, liturgical books, calendars, etc., but had a regular clientele. However, book selling was not only in the domain of booksellers but also of publishers, who often owned their book stores for the purpose of selling their own editions, but also other publishers' editions which they procured through exchange. Stipčević names the first European publisher – Johann Rynmann in Germany¹⁴ – and states that he did not own a press but instead had his manuscripts printed in Germany and other countries.¹⁵

Publishing, as well as other activities related to culture, are tightly connected to dominant social and production relations. During socialism the role of editor was scholastically defined by the following activities:

- a) programme investigation – procuring information about international and domestic publishing;
- b) reading manuscripts or books in source languages;
- c) informing the editorial board, the sales and marketing department and management about potential editions and holding discussions with a view to finding solutions to problems;
- d) preliminary acceptance of a title and the organisation of production and sales;
- e) following the initiation of the production, developing the promotion and sales programme with active participation in having the text translated at home and abroad and creating reviews and publicity plans for future editions;
- f) helping in organising and preparing promotional and social activities for authors and their associations;
- g) acquiring the qualifications needed for understanding and applying publications associated with other media, as well as the exchange and application of those media;
- h) informatical treatment of documents, manuscripts, finished editions, films and other formats.¹⁶

11 HUTNYK, John. *Culture. Theory, Culture & Society*, 2006, 23, br. 2–3, p. 351–375.

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid.

14 Rynmann had published 200 books before his

death in 1522.

15 STIPČEVIĆ, Aleksandar. *Povijest knjige*. Zagreb, 2006, p. 815, 372.

16 JURIČEVIĆ, Branko. *Ekonomija knjige: organizacija i tehnika rada*. Zagreb, 1987, p. 1–58.

Živković indicates that the traditional understanding of basic book-related professions – librarianship and publishing – is deeply rooted in the heritage of industrial society.¹⁷

If we accept theories on the cultural industry, that is, on cultural goods, the need to view a book in the context of these theories imposes itself. Firstly, it imposes the question: When did the book become a product of the cultural industry?

Undoubtedly, printing, with its attributes of simple and fast multiplication, first made a step from traditional ways of book production towards the mass produced standard. Miha Kovač indicates that J. Feather, the leading British publishing historian, claims that the late 20th and early 21st century society distinguishes itself from previous societies by the fact that today information has become a good whose value can be measured not only by the cost of its creation and distribution, but also by the fact that its possession brings real power, whereas its absence brings the loss of that power.¹⁸ Therefore, the key paradox of the information revolution arises from the fact that the development of computerisation and thereby the emersion of a “broad accessibility to information” has had the result that the expense of modern technologies and access to information constrains the people who would benefit the most from it.

LITERARY WORK AS A CULTURAL GOOD

According to an economic theory, cultural goods have a twofold fate.¹⁹ They are supposed to serve their purpose for a specific time, after which they should become a permanent cultural good, therefore a part of the cultural heritage. Cultural goods have an exhaustable (undurable, i.e. made of material substance) and inexhaustible (durable, i.e. civilisational, that is, cultural) value. Art arises from a process of work. An indisputable role in that process is attributed to bodily labour, which is a result of physical and mental work. This applies to literature, music, and the visual arts, including painting and sculpture. Literary work (novels, plays, etc.) can be long or short and can be written in a long or short period of time, but the quantity of work and the amount of working time invested do not have to have implications on the value of the work itself. Therefore, the author of a literary work does not transcribe or copy reality but interprets it, forms it, and creates new understandings and phenomena. A writer creates and observes, makes notes, therefore he or she already invests a certain quantity of work and time before the actual act of writing. That time also fits in the economic description of “production time”. Therefore, not only the actual act of writing is work, but also the preparation of ideas, thoughts, and notes constitute work. This also includes the work done

after the act of creation – the intellectual work of sorting, refining, etc. All of these stages require working time. (E. Hemingway supposedly rewrote the last page of his novel *A Farewell to Arms* 39 times.)

Therefore, every work of art is, above all, an unrepeatable compound of material and spiritual elements. In other words, a cultural product is a product that possesses all those product marks that can be quantified, that is, more clearly materially expressed. Yet, the main characteristic of a cultural product is the fact that it is included in the group of products *sui generis* that possess their own material substance (*corpus materialis*) and also their own spiritual value (*corpus mysticum*), and these features make it a unique creation that is termed a cultural good.²⁰

Changes in technology concerning “book production” could not be a sufficient “trigger” for changing the role of the book, especially in the field of “belles-lettres”, that is, literature. Literature has ceased to be the limited social phenomenon that it was considered to be when the term literature was understood to connote only works appraised as such by the elite. Literature has become a phenomenon of mass communication.²¹

READERSHIP

In his work *The Book Revolution* [6] R. Escarpit points out two components that are crucial for the life of a book:

- a) the existence of a substantial quantity of educated, economically strong and politically influential members of the population;
- b) the diversity of taste and behaviour of the readership regardless of its numerical presence.

In colloquial terms, without a reader a book is stripped of all its value. Solar has successfully answered the question ‘who is a reader?’:

A reader is a person who reads written texts with understanding.²² The term ‘reader’ is at the center of attention in recent literary theories, especially the reception theory and the American school called *Reader-response criticism*. The reader has been the subject of literary theories that understand and elaborate literature as a special form of communication. However, there arose a disharmony between the terms *author* and *work*, on one side, and the

17 ŽIVKOVIĆ, Daniela. *Elektroničko izdavaštvo*. Zagreb, 2001.

18 TOMAŠEVIĆ, Nives; KOVAČ, Miha. *Knjiga, tranzicija, iluzija*. Zagreb, 2009, p. 22–138.

19 ROCCO, Fedor. Op. cit., p. 40–120.

20 Ibid.

21 ESCARPIT, Robert. Op. cit., p. 30–172.

22 SOLAR, Milivoj. *Književni leksikon: Pisci, djela, pojmovi*. Zagreb, 2008. (Literary Lexicon: Authors, Works, Terms), p. 69–67, 204–204.

term *reader* on the other, because the author and work can easily be understood as separate subjects of analysis, while the reader is regularly immersed in the undefined, general term 'readership', that is, the audience. Therefore, as a subject of analysis, the reader is perceived exclusively as a certain type of reader, which explains why, in that sense, categorisations were made either based on sociological terms or on phenomenological and structuralist terms in line with the recipients in communication. At the same time, the main difficulty arises from the fact that the responsibility for understanding literature is being transferred entirely to the reader, with the result that a literary work is actually not of key importance, and everyone can have his or her own understanding of a certain literary work. Since this paradox is unresolvable, there is a constant effort within a number of modern literary theories to introduce the reader into an analysis of literary work but, at the same time, to maintain that the comprehension of value and the significance of an author's supposed meaning for a given text remains important.²³

Undoubtedly, the role of the reader is gaining importance. Escarpit has perceived the reader's role on a very practical level:

The information that is being commented on is taken from a survey 'An examination of books and reading in France' carried out from January to April 1960 on the incentive of the National Syndicate of French Publishers. The research was supplemented by the French Institute of Public Opinion, which conducted a survey on "a book buyer". Unfortunately, the practical value of this great work is significantly diminished by the fact that the examiners lacked a scientific definition of a book and reading.²⁴

In addition to Jelušić, Alida Bremer maintains that research conducted on books and reading is still very rare. Bremer emphasises the need for research as follows:

Since young people can prepare themselves for the future and also train their thinking skills and ability to imagine, the culture of reading is much more than simply a question of whether or not someone has read a certain work.

According to a study by PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment), reading is the "key competence", and in the era of rapid obsolescence of knowledge, it is becoming a skill more important than any positive knowledge. The initial postulate of the PISA research is as follows: the skill of text reading (*reading literacy*) and understanding are the most important competences needed for the acquisition of knowledge. Herman Lang, the German president of the PISA council, states:

Reading competence is a precondition for learning in all fields as well as for participation in political and social processes, also (or rather especially) in the era of modern communication technologies.²⁵

Furthermore, reading prose fiction is the main form of this competence since it is the basis of attaining emotional and social maturity as well as the strengthening of the ability to think in terms of abstract concepts. Reading competence itself, however, is not limited to prose fiction but also extends to other texts, as well as forms, graphs, charts, diagrams, tables or combinations of pictures and texts. A command of language and proficiency in reading mathematical symbols and models are the core of “cultural literacy”, which is a general reading ability as a cultural technique. In the case of texts as well as mathematical symbols, language competence makes fundamental forms of communication relational to the world. PISA also notices the connection between the parental home, that is, the social status of an examinee, and his or her reading skill (reading foundations are set in childhood).

Reflection on whether the Internet has replaced books neglects the fact that reading, as a skill of understanding and analysing what has been read, is essential for using the Internet as well, though it is not a skill that is acquired through the Internet. Besides the Internet, another risk is “resorting to television as a source of oral tradition.” It is known that comprehending pictures cannot replace reading as a key skill needed for making one’s way in a world full of signs and information. PISA shows how interpretation linked to an ability to combine signs and read values that often have multiple meanings is acquired exclusively through the development of reading as a cultural technique.

At the end of this elaboration, let us mention the cover of the 1927 edition of *Time* magazine proclaiming the person of the year. The 2007 cover of the same magazine shows, instead of a photo of the person of the year, a mirror that reflects *an average reader*. *Time* announced that the person that had the most influence on the news in 2006 was an ordinary man or woman – a reader who, using Web sites, had gained great power in distributing information.

23 SOLAR, Milivoj. Op. cit., p. 69–70.

24 ESCARPIT, Robert. Op. cit., p. 38.

25 PISA – Organisation for Economic Co-oper-

ation and Development [accessed 3 September 2013]. Access through Internet: <<http://www.oecd.org/pisa/>>.

In the 21st century of information and informatics, publishing companies undoubtedly face communication challenges. Regardless of the country of origin, every European publishing company should be interested in promoting European cultural traditions, as well as contemporary thought in the form of the written word. In the publishing process attention should be paid to employing the domestic graphic industry and adapting to the fact that public opinion supports questions of environmental protection as well as ethical questions (in the production process, supply chain, in terms of deforestation, carbon emission tax during transport, etc.). Therefore, from a long-term perspective, capital investment implies support for the development of differentiated projects, especially considering the sustainability of environmental protection as well as efforts to retain paper as the most important and most popular media in the publishing industry. With this kind of promotion, it is in every publishing company's interest to promote and encourage participants of this branch to observe laws while producing printed products of any origin, and at the same time making the process visible and transparent for the public.

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Santrauka

Kultūros tyrimai susiję su poreikiu dialektiškai apmąstyti vietinių ir globalių kultūrų homologiją. Ši kultūros šaltinį būtina išlaikyti ne tik išsaugojant kultūrą, bet ir užtikrinant tinkamą jos atnaujinimą ateityje. Leidyba kaip industrija, būdama kultūros šaltinis, turi tiesioginį poveikį šiems abiem kultūros segmentams. Kitais žodžiais tariant, dėl savo produkcijos leidyba tuo pačiu metu išsaugo esamas kultūros vertybes ir jas patobulina. Šios savybės suteikia leidybai du vaidmenis – vienas jų susijęs su rinka, kitas su kultūra. Abi šios savybės susijungia kultūros ir kūrybinėje industrijoje, kuri šiuo metu formuojasi Kroatijoje. Kitas svarbus kultūros ir kūrybinės industrijos sektoriaus vaidmuo susijęs su knyga, kuri yra leidybos industrijos produktas. Straipsnyje aptariami atlikti tyrimai, knygą laikant leidybos industrijos produktu, kuriam turėtų būti rasta patraukli niša rinkoje. Autorės teigia, kad, žiūrint iš pardavimo perspektyvos, su potencialiu skaitytoju, tai yra su būsimu šios kultūros vertybės vartotoju, derėtų elgtis suprantamai ir efektyviai. Visa tai rodo, kad knygai taip pat tenka dvilypė funkcija (ji yra tiek kultūrinė, tiek ekonominė vertybė); todėl šią sritį būtina nagrinėti kompleksiskai, apimant vietines ir globalias kultūras ir sutelkiant dėmesį į tai, kad būtent knyga ir yra pagrindinė priemonė, kuri leidžia puoselėti tam tikros kultūros tapatybės kalbinį kapitalą bei kultūros įvairovę visame pasaulyje.

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