

DISTRIBUTORS AND ORGANIZERS

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Summary

Culture does not happen spontaneously: it needs the institutions and customs of a specific society, the art lovers and readers, the critics and cognoscenti, the academic study of the cultural process in all its forms. People must be trained in the art of reading, listening and viewing. The role of the publisher or producer is crucial for the success of a work of art on the modern market. During the eighteenth century the journal became

one of the most important vehicles for authors to reach an audience. Journals are often an outlet where for some reason book publishing does not function. In the nineteenth century many newspapers carried novels in serialized form. The state and the churches have always looked at the uncontrolled production and distribution of art and literature with great suspicion. While the publishers reproduce the work of artist for the market and organize its distribution, marketing and advertisement, the public comes into physical contact with the products of the art market in bookshops, galleries, in the media, concert halls, theatres and cinemas. Without criticism and critical appreciation the arts would not only grow in a wild and often mediocre way, criticism is also necessary for the reader to find amongst the overwhelming number of books and other art products those that are worth reading.

1. The Cultural Public and Its Relationship to The Artist

Except in the very smallest cultures, artists and their work have no immediate access to their audience. They always need some institution, distributor, publisher, impresario or organizer to make themselves known and available to their audience. Yet there are cultures with little or no cultural infrastructure, no important critics, no theoreticians of art forms, no university study of the culture of their own country which extends beyond the university buildings as well as , an insufficient amount of reporting about culture in newspapers, radio or TV. No culture can flourish under the economic conditions of the twenty-first century without such networks of producers, distributors and organizers. Culture does not happen spontaneously: it needs the institutions and customs of a specific society, the art lovers and readers, the critics and cognoscenti, the academic study of the cultural process in all its forms.

The world of culture consists not only of artists and producers, but also essentially of all those who make use of all the various art forms available as part of their life: the audience. Without an audience an artist is like the poet Ovid in exile in Tomi, where nobody understands or appreciates his stories and poems. But an audience needs to be built up, and each new generation of artists is faced with the task of making itself known and creating for itself such an audience.

While commercial distributors and organizers are dependent on the market with its unpredictable fluctuations, state subsidized distributors and organizers work in a more predictable economic climate, but they often face stringent cuts when the state or city budget for culture is cut, which happens whenever the state is forced to save. Culture always seems to be the most expendable area of the budget. The distribution and organization of art are thus very vulnerable to sudden changes in the political, economic and cultural climate.

(see *Perception of the Arts*)

2. Producers

2.1 Publishers

The distribution of art, except in the smallest circle, is not possible without some means of reproduction: woodcut printing, book printing, music recording, filming,

photography or radio and TV transmission. Those who control these means of production are usually those who have a material interest in the distribution of these works of art and will thus try to use their networks to advertise them and to make them available to reviewers in the media for evaluation. Where such production networks do not work or where they are insufficient, artists will seek outlets elsewhere. In the English-speaking world many artists therefore do not publish in their own countries but attempt to publish in London or New York, in the hope of finding there a larger and more developed market. Similarly Austrian and Swiss authors very often publish with German publishers rather than in their home country, and South American authors try to capture the European market in Spain and Portugal (except during the eras of the Salazar and Franco dictatorships).

The role of the publisher or producer is crucial for the success of a work of art on the modern market: his skill at marketing and advertising often determines the success or failure of an artist. While visual artists do not normally need reproduction of their work but sell originals, they are equally dependent on galleries and exhibitions to become known and to make their work available to an interested public. Here again the national and international connections of a gallery and the efforts to make its artists known beyond a local circle is crucial for the success of a painter or sculptor. The ability and reputation of a publisher, producer or gallery owner is often decisive in the success or otherwise of a young, unknown artist.

Publishing in the modern sense was made possible by the invention of printing. In 206 B. C. Chinese printers produced books made of stone, paper was invented in 105 A. D., and the invention of movable type came in 1313 A. D. Because of the complex system of writing, this technique was not generally accepted in China, and printing from wooden blocks remained common there until the twentieth century. Printing using movable type was reinvented by Gutenberg in Germany.

The state and the churches have always viewed uncontrolled production and distribution of art and literature with great suspicion. The church attempted to control the process by its index of forbidden books. Modern dictatorships of whatever nature have tried to control the process by subjecting all publishing houses to complete state control. This was the case in Nazi Germany, and in another way in all communist countries, where the publishing houses were essentially state owned. China had a modern commercial press since 1897. In 1949 all publishers were subjected to state control, and the number of publishing houses was reduced to 100 by 1956. It was only in 1970 that a certain relaxation of this rigid control was allowed and that the number of publishing houses was allowed to grow again. Even after a certain liberalization a state like China finds it difficult to relax the controls of the past. All publishing houses must be licensed by the state and are controlled by the state administration for the publishing industry or directly by the central committee of the Communist Party.

Censorship can be disguised under laws which ostensibly are directed towards "quality control", such as the so-called *Schmutz- und Schundgesetz* of the Federal Republic of Germany, where it is not quite clear who determines what is "dirt" and what is "trash", or the various rules and regulations which circumscribe what can be published by whom

in China. Censorship can also be disguised under the control of raw materials like paper, access to the internet, to photocopying machines and fax machines. (see *Media*)

2.2 Journals

During the eighteenth century the journal became one of the most important vehicles for authors to reach an audience. In the beginning these journals were directed to the general public, like the *Almanach des Muses*, and often specifically to women readers like the elegant *Journal des Dames*. Later journals became more focused on one or more areas of specific interest, and there were journals for the various art forms, such as Wieland's journal *Der Teutsche Merkur* or later Schillers *Die Horen*. Journals like these not only provided writers with a paid outlet, they also carried publishers' advertisements and independent reviews of books, thus contributing to the sale of books. Many journals since then have also served specific artistic movements, introducing and propagating the authors of a particular circle. While Wieland's journal served the late Enlightenment circle, Schiller propagated his own and Goethe's Classicism, and the *Phoebus* attempted to make Heinrich von Kleist's circle known. Such journals were often the place of first publication of many works of art which are now famous, and carried illustrations by the foremost artists of the time. *Die Nachtwachen des Bonaventura* (possible author: Ernst August Friedrich Klingemann) first appeared anonymously in 1804 in the very specialized *Journal von neuen deutschen Originalromanen*. James Henry Leigh Hunt, who was a member of the Romantic Hampstead literary circle whose members included Keats, Shelley, Hazlitt, Lamb, Reynold and others, was also the editor of *The Liberal*. In 1834 Hunt founded the *London Journal*, another important publication venue, and the place for sometimes acrimonious debates about Romanticism and sharp attacks against his old friend Byron. Edmond Goncourt's *Journal* gives us important information about the contemporary cultural and spiritual life of the early nineteenth century. Stendhal was the art and theater critic of the *Journal de Paris*.

In the nineteenth century many newspapers carried serialized novels, and some of the work of Dickens and Dostoevsky appeared originally in this form. Adalbert Stifter published his *Die Mappe meines Urgroßvaters* in 1841/1842 in the *Wiener Zeitschrift für Kunst, Literatur, Theater und Mode*. Eugène Sue's *Les mystères de Paris* first appeared in 1842/1843 in the *Journal des Débats*, as did Alexandre Dumas' (père) *Le comte de Monte Cristo*. *The Time Machine* by Herbert George Wells first appeared in *The Science Schools Journal* in 1888, *The National Observer* in 1894, and *The New Review* in 1895. From 1907 on Ludwig Thoma published his satirical letters of the Bavarian member of parliament, Filser, in the very successful satirical journal *Simplicissimus*. Functionally the soap opera and the TV serial have taken over the place of the serial novel in newspapers: they attract large audiences for the advertisements, which pay for the infrastructure and running costs of the TV station.

Unfortunately for many writers the time when newspapers published novels as an inducement for readers to scan the advertisements which paid for the production of the newspapers, are all but gone, and writers can only hope to publish short extracts in literary journals of much smaller circulation. Some of these have been instrumental in furthering an entire group of writers, like the futuristic journal *Lef* (*Levyj front*, Left Front) of Mayakovsky, *Die Fackel* of the Austrian writer Karl Kraus, or the Chicago

journal *Poetry*, and the journal *Akzente*, which published all the authors of the German *Gruppe 47*.

Journals are often an outlet, where for some reason book publishing does not function. Thus in Austria and Germany after the World War II, when paper was in short supply and the Allied censorship was a serious obstacle to book publication, literary and cultural journals, which could be produced cheaply, flourished. The Austrian journal *Der Turm* attempted to define a specifically autonomous Austrian literature separated from German literature on the “basis of the Christian Western spirit”. Otto Basil’s *Der Plan*, founded in 1937 to combat National Socialism and Austrofascism, was started again in 1945 to signal a renaissance of Austrian culture and a democratic-republican state as a counter movement against the writers of the ”Austrian NS-Parnass”. During the times of Apartheid in South Africa a number of journals like *The Classic*, *Ophir*, *The Purple Renoster* and *Staffrider* published poems and stories by writers whose political leanings and skin color made it difficult to find a publisher in the country. Because of their content these journals were banned by the government from time to time.

3. Distributors

While the publishers reproduce the work of artists for the market and organize its distribution, marketing and advertisement, the public comes into physical contact with the products of the art market in bookshops, galleries, in the media, concert halls, theatres and cinemas.

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Biographical Sketch

Peter Horn studied German and English at the University of the Witwatersrand. In 1971 he graduated Ph.D. from the University of the Witwatersrand with a thesis on "Rhythm and structure in the poetry of Paul Celan", and was offered the chair of German at the University of Cape Town in 1974. From 1987 to 1990 he was Dean of the Faculty of Arts, and from 1993-1994 Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor of the University. He was president South African Association of German Studies (1989-1997), president of the Institute for Research into Austrian and International Literary Processes (Vienna) (2001-), on the executive committee of the Elias-Canetti-Gesellschaft, the National Executive of the Congress of South African Writers (COSAW) (1991 - 1992), the National Executive of the South African Writers' Association. Besides he was Honorary Vice President of the National Union of South African Students (1977-1981), Trustee of the South African Prisoners' Educational Trust Fund (1980-1985), and a member of the Interim Committee of the Unemployed Workers' Movement (1984/5). In 1974 he received the Pringle Prize of the South African English Academy for an essay to the concrete poetry, in 1992 he received the Noma Award for Publishing in Africa (Honourable Mention for *Poems 1964-1989*), and in 1993 the Alex La Guma/Bessie Head Award and in 2000 the Herman Charles Bosman Prize for the short story collection *My Voice is under Control now*. In 1994 the University of Cape Town granted him a Honorary Fellowship for life. Two of his volumes of poetry and numerous other publications by him were banned for possession during the Apartheid regime. His poems are anthologised in most major anthologies of South African poetry, and more than 100 have been published in journals. He has published numerous contributions to academic books, learned journals, and reviews and review articles.