



Fate, Death and Marketing. Is a Book the Same Product as Yogurt or a Car?

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Abstract. Today's book overproduction means that we cannot rely on tradition and recommendations in the field of book sales. Today, the book is not only an object of social and cultural events, but also a product of industry and trade. A book as a product has its own specifics, which must be respected when offering and selling it. It is not a fast-moving product, nor an object of long-term consumption. The book is a specific product, therefore, when selling it, it is necessary to work with it also taking into account the context of culture, not only direct trade. Our study will deal with some of the background necessary for an awareness of the specificities of the book as a product of the cultural industry and, consequently, its successful placement on the market and sale.

Keywords: Book · Marketing · Creative Industry · Media · Culture

1 Introduction: World of Books

The book is a ticket to a vast world of knowledge and fantasy. According to data from the world's largest bibliographic institution Bowker (which also awards ISBNs for the USA and Australia), approximately 5 to 7 thousand book titles are published daily [1]. The Institute of Statistics at UNESCO indicates that 2.2 million book publications will be added annually in the world [2]. We are talking about the number of titles, not the number of books printed, some of which cost over millions.

If we are already talking about bestsellers, the most successful publication in the world is the Bible, which according to the British and Foreign Bible Society and the Guinness Book of Records has so far sold an incredible 5–7 billion copies [3]. By the way, according to available sources, this book has been translated into more than 1,853 languages [4]. Another bestseller is undoubtedly the Quran, whose circulation so far is estimated at over 800 million to 1 billion copies. But just as it is in the case of the Bible, in the case of the Koran, the number cannot be accurately estimated, since they are books with a very long history of publication.

According to other data, the most popular novel, which reached the world as early as 1605, is the work *Don Quixote De La Mancha*, the creator of which Miguel Cervantes de Saavedra created during his stay in prison. It is estimated that *Don Quixote* has

been published in a circulation of more than 500 million copies and in more than 145 languages of the world [5].

But not all titles have ambitions to become bestsellers, but nevertheless they were able to influence our thinking about the world in a significant way. This is also the charm of the book, that it becomes the key to new knowledge. Today, books like Sir Isaac Newton's *Philosophiæ Naturalis Principia Mathematica* [6] are incomprehensible and are only read by individuals devoted to the history of natural sciences. But in principle, this Newton's book is important, because it defined the starting points of modern mathematics and physical calculations, i.e., the sciences that gradually led us to the current digital presence.

Today, we perceive reading as a self-evident act, without which we cannot even imagine functioning. Naturally, not everyone reads books, but the very ability to work with letters, decode small signs and perceive their meaning - that is, reading literacy - is an obvious prerequisite for success in society. Literacy reached a global level of 86% in 2021 [7], with the regions with the lowest economic levels in sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia being the least literate, while the developed countries of the EU, the US, Australia, Japan and some countries in South America reach more than 97% literacy [8].

Education and the ability to read are activities that are very closely related to each other and at the same time represent a kind of imaginary ladder to a more successful society. Writing and books have become an important extension of human memory. The Internet has deepened the need for reading, despite the visualization of communication, we cannot move without the ability to read and write.

The goal of our study is to grasp the book as a complex product, which not only involves a lot of creative work by the author, publisher, and distributor, but is also part of the offer and sale.

2 Book as a Product

A book is not a product like yogurt, socks, or a car. And yet it is a product diametrically different from standard products. It is produced and sold, it has its life cycle, it has its target groups, its lifespan.

The book as a product is also very different from the artistic activity, to which it likes to be added. Only part of the book production has artistic ambitions. Much of the production is focused on various other aspects of our lives - from practical advice on how to cook spaghetti to very serious reflections on the concepts of the meaning of being. From motivational manuals to religious hymnals, from mathematical tables to interpretations of historical events, not forgetting textbooks and dictionaries.

Book is a word that today primarily refers to a physical object printed on paper. This information is verbal and visual (illustrations, photos, graphs). Today, the book is not a unique and original art object, because it exists in several identical copies. The production of a book is today a standardized process, in which there are customary procedures both for the creation and processing, subsequent printing and distribution of the book.

In 1964, when setting standards for statistics, UNESCO defined a book as a printed non-periodical publication that has at least 49 pages without a cover [9]. It can be a

literary work of fictional or non-fictional nature, a textbook, or any manual. A book from a socio-cultural and civilizational phenomenon is also a product, something that is sold in stores.

The book represents a very specific product in human culture. Its price is only partly based on visibly material inputs. What is important is not hidden in the price of paper, binding and printing inks, but in the information we buy in a book, the intangible goods. Books are our moral map, or they are, as Umberto Eco says, an education in fate and death [10].

Despite the big words, books are also a product of the cultural industry. In terms of the success of the product and its placement on the market, they exhibit many specificities and peculiarities, which will be discussed in the following pages.

The book is a very volatile, fast, and also very long-lasting product. If a well-written novel, a compelling biography, a valuable scholarly publication, or a book of contemplative essays is produced, it can be sold for years, decades, with its content unchanged, with changing at most its physical form. Such an endless repetition, with the success of the original product, is virtually impossible with, for example, an automobile. On the other hand, an unsuccessful book, one that has not captivated an audience, has a very short life and can fade away after a few months on the market. We don't even have any economic or marketing theory on the specifics of discovered manuscripts that become famous after the death of the author (just look at the example of Franz Kafka) from a modern product perspective. Simply because the strict precepts of economics or marketing work only to a limited extent on books. Try monetizing education about fate and death...

The book itself has another specificity, as a commodity it is probably one of the most varied products we will come across on the market. At any one time, the shops themselves offer tens of thousands of different titles, which are practically daily replenished with new pieces, while those already published books do not disappear from the shop counters for years - they simply do not spoil, they often sell slowly but steadily.

The variety of books on offer also worries marketers, as not all books can be sold in the same way, and it would be counterproductive to sales if, for example, a Norwegian detective story and a scholarly scientific work were sold using the same marketing tools. There are very varied, often non-overlapping, specific target groups for certain parts of the book production.

Our study will deal with some of the background necessary for an awareness of the specificities of the book as a product of the cultural industry and, consequently, its successful placement on the market and sale. Although even here we must draw attention to a certain form of elusiveness of the book, which may not even be primarily prepared by the publisher to be sold in the thousands of copies. Poetry or literary fiction with experimental content will almost never sell en masse, yet its cultural and social value is relatively important, since it is often about the perception of language, its possibilities, a laboratory of ideas and emotions, a certain degree of virtuosity in working with language, as well as the setting of important value criteria.

So, can we talk about the specificity of book marketing? Can we use the tools of traditional product marketing in publishing? How to approach the book as a product to

be sold to a specific customer? Does the book have some specific practices that apply only to the marketing of cultural products?

3 Book as a Part of Cultural Industry

The book industry has undergone significant changes since the 15th century, which will not be dealt with in detail, but a few indicative data will be mentioned. The first democratising modern change was undoubtedly Gutenberg's invention of the printing press around 1450 [11] and subsequent improvement of printing presses. The birth of the *Gutenberg Galaxy* [12] meant the gradual expansion of books, education, knowledge, with the book gradually establishing itself as a separate and distinct product, which could be included in the category of luxury goods, but also in the category of entertainment, pop-culture products ("dime" or trashy novels, various calendars, etc.).

The book revolution of the modern era was the acceleration of printing, new processes in paper production [13] and increasing literacy, as compulsory schooling was introduced virtually throughout Europe from the 18th century onwards. In the nineteenth century it underwent a very significant democratization. Books gradually became a mass product, with book production itself touching virtually every person who became part of the educational process (textbooks). Although the moralists pointed out that "*the cause of the mighty evil was the mind of the working classes, corrupted by the influence of their reading*" [14].

First, we must define the book as a product of the cultural industry. We do not understand the term culture industry in the original sense as defined by Adorno and Horkheim in their classic work *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, i.e. as systems and methods of mass production of goods for consumption in leisure time [15]. Today, the Frankfurt School's critical view of the cultural industry as a mass production has been transformed into the neutral term cultural and creative industries, which is used to refer to a wide range of artistic creation and creative or media production intended to develop the spiritual needs of society as well as active leisure time through the consumption of the products of this industry, and is part of the strategy for the development of the European Union [16]. These cultural and creative sectors include book production.

A book can be defined as a non-periodical publication that contains a textual and, depending on the type of book, a pictorial component, is printed on paper (or has pages made-up as an e-book), and is bound in some form of hardcover. Its content may include fictional literature (various forms of fiction and poetry, essays, picture books, etc.), non-fictional literature (non-fiction, biographies, interview books, travel books, popular science, or reportage literature), professional and scientific literature, books for children and young people, religious literature, textbooks, and various other books. For our purposes in this text we can work with the generally known content of the term book as defined in the Oxford English Dictionary, i.e., "*a written work published in printed or electronic form*".

There are academic debates about what exactly can be defined as a book, especially in 21. Century. Digital technologies have enabled changes in the publishing process. The emergence of e-books, self-publishing, digital distribution caused the need to redefine what we can consider a book today. These problems were very well summarized by

the study *What is Book?* where it “*identified four attributes of the book: length, textual content, boundaries to its form, and book information architecture (e.g. linear structure and key textual elements). The application of these attributes to particular species of the book, from the printed book to the colouring book, has produced a hierarchy of the book. The species of the book genus differ: some have more and some have fewer of the full set of attributes of the printed book. The purest definition of the book demands the presence of all four identified attributes*” [17].

To be included in the book system today and not have a distribution problem, a publication should receive its International Standard Book Number (ISBN), which is given in the form of a 13-digit number. This is a kind of “personal identification number” for the book, which should uniquely identify the book. You can apply for an ISBN free of charge to the National ISBN Agency, which is administered in our country by the Slovak National Library [18]. The ISBN is requested by the publisher, as each publication must have its own “producer”, in most cases publishers for whom book publishing is a core or non-core business. The exception is titles that are self-published by the authors, under their own “direction”, but if the publication is intended for sale, they have to comply with the legal requirements (i.e., they can publish it under their own trade licence, under a non-profit organisation or under another legal form).

It can also be seen from this procedure that book publishing today is an (industry) standardised process, which not only has its production procedures, but also its legislative requirements.

Speaking of the production process, a book as a product takes a relatively long time to prepare, from the idea itself, through the creative process of preparing the content, editorial work, graphic work, subsequent printing, distribution and delivery to the shop, it can be a period of more than two or three years, and for some titles even considerably longer. Editorial and publishing plans at major publishing houses are prepared at least one to two years in advance. The production process of a book, of course, also depends on the potential marketability, targeting of the title, seasonality and other circumstances that make a part of the book market similar to standard products.

While a well-conceived book product can be highly profitable, on the other hand, with today’s large book market, sales and market placement can be a matter of concern.

From the perspective of the creation of a work (product) of the creative industry, the book has an interesting position: on the one hand, it is a unique work that has an author (author collective) behind it, thus resembling specific and unique cultural artistic products such as artworks, paintings, for example. On the other hand, a production group (publishing house and individual editorial, graphic, printing and distribution channels) is also needed to realise this product. The originality of a particular book is thus, in a way, more akin to the collective works of, for example, the film industry, where the entire film crew is behind the product, with authorship most often attributed to the director and scriptwriter. From this point of view, the book has less in common with theatrical performances and live music, since these performative arts need a live act, a performance, to be realised, which the book does not. The economic-marketing view of culture is discussed in more detail by several authors [19].

At this point, we have to draw attention to one interesting thing: although we consider books as part of the creative industry and the economy of culture, only a marginal or

even no part is devoted to them in the publications devoted to the marketing of culture. For example, in the overview publication *Handbook of Cultural economics*, only one out of sixty chapters deals with publishing practice [20]. The book production itself and its marketing is only a small part of the much larger research field of culture and art marketing [21].

4 Marketing of a Book

We view marketing as a set of practices designed to successfully market a product. From the perspective of the traditional form of marketing, the book represents a non-standard type of product. According to Phillip Kotler, a product is “*anything that can be offered on the market to satisfy a certain need or demand, whether it is goods, services, people, places, organizations, or ideas*” [22].

The problem in this respect arises when we consider the specificity of book (and cultural) production itself. The consumption of cultural goods is not the fulfilment of some basic needs of life, it is not a commodity without which we would not live. Indeed - artistic creations are an anomaly from the perspective of a traditional product because they are primarily based on the author’s need to express himself in some way about this world.

There are enough books in the world; if no books were published from today on, we would still have plenty to read for decades or centuries to come. A book is a relatively durable product, and even though paper and book covers are subject to the ravages of time, they will still survive centuries in most cases. The individual author wants to offer the world his thoughts, his ideas, his story, but if he doesn’t, humanity will not be “impoverished.” After all, even in the history of literature we know stories of authors who published a book or two and then “gave up” on the craft of writing, such as J. D. Salinger, who after the phenomenal success of his novel *The Catcher in the Rye* published only a few short stories and then gave up on publishing altogether in 1963, or authors such as Franz Kafka, who asked his friend Max Brod to burn the manuscripts of his unfinished books after his death.

In the case of book production, moreover, the diversity of the offer is overwhelming, as book production is a heterogeneous and multifunctional space. The *heterogeneity* lies in the fact that different book titles appeal to very specific target groups, which often do not overlap or are even antagonistic – for example, specific expert literature vs. occult and esoteric production, children’s books vs. erotic literature, etc. The *multifunctionality* of the products is also visible at first glance when naming the heterogeneity of this production: we look for books for entertainment and relaxation, for education, for personal development, for meditation, for practical advice on various aspects of life.

Books are also a problematic product in terms of their durability. In principle, they are not fast-moving goods, although some book production is aimed at short-term sales (best-selling literature). Nevertheless, they are closer to durable products, as books become part of home libraries for many years and decades. They represent a degree of knowledge, wisdom, documents and family chronicles.

It is this ambivalence of books that makes it impossible for us to talk about book marketing as a simple set of rules that work for the successful sale of any book. Not every

book needs direct marketing, but some titles can work with direct advertising without any problem. Some publishers, on the other hand, would literally “hurt” themselves with advertising because their target audience is fundamentally allergic and suspicious of advertising or transparently marketing communications. There are specific book segments where “word of mouth”, i.e. the recommendation of friends who have read the book, works extremely well. Other books have their target groups in a very narrow segment (specific expert literature, for example) where it is inefficient to invest in standard marketing communication tools.

5 Product and Its Social Value

As to the marketing work with a book, the publishing house already works with factors that are not directly related to the standard of the text and the quality of the book, when planning the publication of a title. The price of a book does not only correspond to the costs of its preparation and processing (advance payment for the author’s fee, the price of paper, the price of typographic make-up, image material, printing work, binding, a share in the publishing house’s operation, distribution costs), but also takes into account a certain market value and, possibly, the social value of the publication.

The market value of a book is hidden in the sales potential of a particular title. If a publishing house is preparing a book for sale that comes from a popular, well-selling author, it can afford to increase the resulting price of the book. At the same time, the price level of books for the final consumer also reflects the social value of books in society. As long as book production is perceived as something that is important and valuable, it also becomes an object of interest for the general media and media discourse. At the same time, it is presented as an important value and part of the life of society, for example, by the fact that prominent authors are awarded state honours for their creative work, their work is part of the presentation of the country abroad, and so on.

The social value of a book cannot be defined by any cost items. The specificity of the book is manifested in its long-term presence in the cultural circle as a carrier of knowledge, as historical memory, as scientific thought and as a mediator of experience. Since book production is part of the construction of value systems, literary production goes beyond the utilitarian value of “consumption” and is part of the creation of cultural and social context, which is also reflected in the direct support of book production in the state. From this perspective, books are also not a “standard” product, as authors, translators and publishers can draw funding through grants.

Book production, especially by domestic authors, is also directly supported by subsidies and scholarships, which enable the production of book content that is “unprofitable” from the point of view of market principles. Subsidies intended for the publication of original literature and scholarships intended for the production of mainly belles-lettres type of literature have their counterpart, for example, in the support of theatre performances, film production or gallery work, but not in other commodity segments. At the same time, in most EU Member States, the tax burden on books is lower, the so-called reduced VAT rate, than on standard goods (in our country, VAT on books is 10%, for example in Germany 7%).

The second peculiarity of the book product is the network of libraries that keep books and lend these kinds of goods for minimal fees, or just library memberships or free loans.

There are no other goods commonly available in shops that one can borrow and return after use, while the costs of storing the goods, buying them, running the library, etc. are borne by society as a whole (city, municipality, school, state - in effect, all of us).

At this moment, however, we are moving away from thinking about books as a reflection of trade and moving to questions of culture as a social and creative value. And this question is no longer marketing, pragmatic, but much more relevant to thinking about the meaning of artistic production today. And this is beyond the scope of our paper.

6 Publishing House and Marketing

In the case of publishing practice today, it is not possible to speak of standardised marketing tools, given that publishing houses are inherently as heterogeneous business entities as heterogeneous is the book production itself. Publishing is a business activity, but some publishers tend to operate on state-supported grant schemes, so they are not forced by the market to find marketable titles. Others produce low-budget literature rather as occasional print (for example, books of poetry). There are also publishing houses dealing with specialized literature (professional, religious, etc.), where the production of books is the result of funding, for example, research or the functioning of the church as a whole. There are also companies which, in addition to their other primary activity, publish a book just because they find it interesting, so they are publishing books on an occasional basis.

However, if a company decides to operate commercially on the publishing market, it must include marketing activities in its business plans. The publishing activity itself and the movement in the book environment at the very beginning of the publishing activity is characterised by a marketing decision as to which segment of the book market the publishing house wants to address. Whether it be the production of fiction, children's books, specialist and popular science writing, reportage literature, etc. This does not mean that the publishing house cannot include other titles in its portfolio and create series (which is also a marketing tool) that were not originally in its publishing portfolio.

The basic orientation marketing tool of the publishing house as a whole is the publishing house brand itself. The name and logo of the publishing house is a valuable tool that also gives the book a certain positioning within the book market system. A publisher of popular and bestselling literature uses its brand to inform the reader that it is reaching for a book that belongs to a certain reading interest group. It undoubtedly takes time to create a recognisable brand that connects with a certain type of reader and a certain type of book. Design elements such as book covers and unifying design elements of different series are also tools that help to do this.

Series of books share a certain characteristic element. For example, it may be series of detective fiction, series of reportage literature, series of educational literature of a certain type, etc. The books of a given series have a uniform design that serves as a marketing element at the point of sale. The reader sees a cover similar to the one he or she has read, and the reader's expectations are naturally the same for another title with a similar cover and design. Creating series is one of the publishing house's marketing tools, which wants to draw readers' attention to the information – in this collection of unique titles there are titles that are similar (in genre, content). The publishing house is

saying - if you liked book Y from series X, you might also like book Z, which we have included in the same series. A unique title thus becomes part of a larger whole.

A powerful publishing marketing tool is published publishing plans, usually oriented to the publishing half-year; some book publishers also prepare publishing plans with a monthly frequency. Most of the so-called bricks-and-mortar publishers, i.e. companies that have been publishing books for a long time as a commercial business, have in their plans an idea of the titles they will produce in the near future (one to two years). This is based on the fact that the preparation and processing of a manuscript into a quality book form takes some time, foreign translation titles are sometimes contracted for several years in advance even when they are still in the project stage, etc. At the same time, the book market has its seasonal cycle, to which the supply can also adapt.

The publishing plan highlights titles that will be on the market in the near future, thus sparking interest in the next title. Publishing plans exist in print form and are given to readers, for example, when they buy books in bookshops free of charge, or appear on publishers' websites as announcements of forthcoming titles. This is useful information because it is a way of generating interest in a topic. Additionally (especially with internet sales), it's important to talk about a title from a publisher before it goes on sale, as although internet sales have seemingly endless offer, you only see a few titles on offer on the retailer's website, and you have to search for the rest.

Corporate marketing (company logo, editions, catalogues, websites) is in some cases complemented by other activities aimed at media publicity of the publishing house or participation in book events, where, however, the marketing of a particular title and author is often intertwined with the marketing of the company.

A relatively new topic of publishing texts is self-publishing and self-promotion in the digital environment. Marketing tools for self-publishing have become a popular topic of Internet recommendations for amateur authors. Just after the success of the title *50 Shades of Grey*, which gained popularity as an "Internet" book, [23] many recommendations appeared on how to deal with the book before its publication and after its publication. However, self-publishing carries the pitfalls of insufficient book preparation. The book does not go through a standard editorial process, and so it often happens that readers end up with unfinished texts. Marketing such a publication will only help in the short term. The situation we know from Umberto Eco's novel Foucault's Pendulum is obvious - you can find publishing houses that let authors pay for the publication of books in the digital environment as companies that will advise you, help you, or even organize a crowdfunding campaign. And the author just adds some text. Any text.

7 Title and Its Marketing

The book world creates certain genre groups in which we can already talk about marketing practices. Examples include cookery books, science fiction and fantasy literature, detective or romantic fiction, domestic fiction, biographical books, or books of interviews with famous personalities, etc.

Although every book title is different, there are certain patterns that make it possible to replicate the processes involved in creating such a publication and then apply the rules of successful book marketing. Every cookery book today should have a recipe section

with a clear layout of recipes, clear ingredients, quantities, and a simple procedure, accompanied by a photograph of the final dish and, where appropriate, the basic points of the procedure. This type of book then has the opportunity to offer itself to readers through established methods of promoting the title, such as presentations of one of the recipes in the media coupled with an interview with the author of the book, show-cooking - i.e. the public cooking of dishes from the book coupled with the sale of the title, or the offering of such a cookbook not only at traditional but also at non-traditional points of sale (e.g. a book on the preparation of pizza in a pizzeria or an Italian grocery store).

By default, the marketing of a title starts with the announcement of the title in the publishing plans. Genre classification, the fact that the author is widely known, and the potential of his or her personal presentation are important in building future sales of a title. In fact, the author is an extremely important element of book marketing because it is the brand that helps sales with its popularity (it doesn't have to be just bestsellers; fiction also has its authors, where the sale of the book is expected to return the initial cost of the book).

The author of the book often takes part in the marketing of the title with his or her face and in person - by participating in marketing events such as the launch of the title in a bookstore, media activities (media interviews), book signings. Such events are sometimes not even organised by the publishing house as a promotional tour for the book but are organised by the authors themselves to help sell the book or are organised by libraries or bookshops themselves as a form of contact with readers.

A special element of the title's communication is its media coverage through information about the new titles in literary magazines, daily press, on the websites of literary magazines or through social networks. Literature occupies a relatively distinctive position in the media; book news are also reported in the more tabloid media, women's magazines, etc., albeit only in the form of book tips.

It is in this media environment that the cultural and social function of the book comes to the fore. "Non-art" goods cannot share such a function in a marketing environment. However, an artistic review (whether the subject is a book, a ballet, a theater, a musical work, an exhibition) does not primarily aim to sell, but to create the context that makes cultural products something that goes beyond the pragmatism of goods.

8 From Gutenberg Galaxy to Zuckerberg Metaverse

The shift from Gutenberg Galaxy to Zuckerberg Metaverse marks not only the change of print to digital world and from text to hypertext. It also marks a change in marketing communication, from more or less visible marketing tools (TV, print or radio advertising, OOH, public relations) to hidden tools of algorithms in social media environment. In this environment, the user-consumer cannot recognize whether an information is clear of marketing intent or whether it is a work of marketing media specialist or algorithms running behind the digital platforms.

We can even mention soft and hard marketing communication, whereby under soft communication we understand acknowledged, visible communication, while under that hard marketing communication we understand manipulative tools that are not visible to and recognizable by the average user.

The difference between Gutenberg Galaxy and Zuckerberg Metaverse is like a difference between reality and virtuality. We know categories like true, false, manipulation, advertising, ideology. In real space, physical, chemical, evolutionary rules for nature and social rules enshrined in laws and unwritten ethics and morals apply. And some laws also apply to media production. Advertising communication is made to be recognizable as advertising communication (TV, radio, out of home etc.) or it is at least recognizable to the information provider (publisher, public relations department) and to the media, which perceives hidden advertising and public relations as part of the market. Although sometimes the consumer does not know that he is the target of marketing communication.

In the digital metaverse, the rules of the virtual game apply. This means that we are entering an age in which the speed of information transfer is accelerating, while everything is possible. Just like in virtual reality; after all, it is the Metaverse, a fantastic world. And reality enters the fantastic world. Advertising communication passing from the reality of Gutenberg's Galaxy to Zuckerberg's Metaverse retains elements of advertising (recognized online advertising formats such as banners, advertising spots in video production, advertising on social networks). At the same time, however, a huge number of non-standard elements enter the environment, which have no counterpart. First, the manipulative power of algorithms that are set up technocratically with the aim of pushing information that artificial intelligence decides we need to know. Thus, we become influenced not by the intention of the advertiser, but by the calculation result of an impersonal algorithm.

At the same time, there is a lot of communication in the online space that originates from word-of-mouth marketing, i.e. recommendations from friends, but in Metaverse it has become recommendations from "friends" whom we don't really know. These friends are called influencers. They use "ordinary" language, they speak to us "privately", they are shared in an environment that we consider personal and not media (social networks).

If we know the rules, movement in the Galaxy is understandable for us, because it has rules. It is therefore a light, soft space. However, if the rules are subordinated not to clearly defined laws, but combine reality, game, virtuality, non-emotional scheme of algorithms and artificial intelligence, we get into a space that is difficult to orient in, we bump into hard walls like in a labyrinth. That's why we call it hard.

Let's apply this to the book's marketing communications. While the real-world marketing rules are subordinated to the fact of the existence of media, society, rules,; in the digital world we become a part of what is governed not only by the valid rules, but also a part of virtuality where everything is possible. Soft marketing tools in books is a typical communication of Gutenberg Galaxy era – for book producers it is advertising in media and at the point of sale (bookstores); public relations and typical tools for literature as reviews, literary criticism, school system, libraries ans.

Hard marketing tools are used in communication within Zuckerberg Metaverse. In this space, the book naturally uses the tools we know from the environment of traditional book advertising: direct advertising (banners, advertising, video advertising), publishing sites containing catalogues. It also uses literary tools such as reviews, recommendations, promotion, interviews with writers on pages produced by media companies. There are new forms such as podcasts, promotion on social networks, formats coming from the

world of word-of-mouth marketing, such as sharing on social networks or (book) influencers. And to this comes a plethora of automated algorithms in the background, which are often beyond the boundaries of ethics, not because it circumvents ethical, admitted advertising, but does not use ethics as a working tool at all. There is no ethical boundary for background algorithms as they work with information - if you as a user-consumer have shown interest, you have shown interest and therefore want similar/same information.

If we focus on the use of online marketing tools in book marketing, we also use tools that are up-to-date, modern, and attractive, but at the same time, we do not know how to adequately moderate all of these tools. Information in the online space acquires the nature of information in an entropic meta-universe, where it multiplies or disappears and our (marketing) power as an advertiser decreases over it. The book, a product of Gutenberg's Galaxy, lives a life of its own in Zuckerberg's Metaverse.

9 Conclusion: The Work of a book Marketer

Looking at the book market today, we can undoubtedly state that we are facing a typical overproduction of the market. When we enter a bookshop, we are faced with dozens of new books and thousands of other titles on the shelves.

A book is a specific commodity from a sales point of view, which has a different life cycle than fast moving consumer goods such as food, even though it sometimes behaves like one. In particular, bestsellers by well-known authors have a life curve set up so that they appear for a short and intense period of time (say, a month) between titles, and then the interest in such a title wane and its sales plummet.

On the other hand, books are not like durable goods like cars or refrigerators. Especially in that it doesn't go through improvements, modifications, model lines the way technical things do. The novel *Don Quixote* has been published regularly since it was first published more than four centuries ago without any improvements on the technical inventions in the text; it is the same book as Miguel Cervantes wrote it.

When producing a book, it is about satisfying several interests. As F. Colbert wrote: "*All cultural enterprises share two characteristics: they reserve an important role for the artist, and they deal with the product of a creative act. It is this creative act that consumers want to buy*" [24].

Marketing a book is not as simple and straightforward to set up as standard product marketing. Even though a book is a product in some respects, factors enter into its sales and life cycle that don't really apply to other products. Thus, the marketer must also take into account features that go beyond the utilitarian dimension of direct selling, offering to the customer, and advertising. In some cases, aggressive marketing can even be rather counterproductive. At the same time, a book is a commodity that often generates cost recovery only in the long run (sometimes not even that), so counting on the benefits of advertising-supported sales is certainly not an option for every title. For instance, if a publishing house publishes two to three hundred books a year (and there are such in Slovakia), it cannot afford to invest the same energy and finances in sales promotion for each title.

Therefore, we can conclude that marketing a product as specific as a book is its own way of selling dreams. Stories, experiences, knowledge, that is to say, to educate

about fate and death. And these are categories where sometimes the technocratic rules of business, sales and the material world may not work.

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