

2 A Concept of ›Book Culture‹

»What role can literature play in European relations? The answer can be summed up in a single sentence: Literature provides an opportunity to explore the many faces of normality that people who speak a different language and who live in a different region experience.«⁸⁶ Literature and book culture serve as a form of identification for European values and enable a formation of national and individual identities. Yet book culture is a difficult concept to grasp. To describe European book culture is to generalize the individual national manifestations of book culture. Such a description must start with a definition of the two components of book culture: culture and the book.

To define ›culture‹ is a task of monumental complexity, a task which has not yet been accomplished. The definition of culture and the way it is constituted vary depending on the branch of science that is asked to define it. One basic concept is most common: fine arts and humanities are often identified as constituting culture. The term ›culture‹ is considered to describe a degree of taste and refers mostly to high culture in contrast to mass culture. Culture may also be used to describe a common set of attitudes, beliefs, and values of a specific group of people or even a company (i.e. corporate culture or business culture). Another basic concept describes culture as a pattern of knowledge, behavior and belief. All three concepts are frequently used and are sometimes intermingled in the public discourse on culture. An extensive discussion on the concepts of culture and their historic origin would require a far deeper analysis than this study is able to offer. Indeed, the concepts of culture are complex and in constant redefinition. Therefore, the following chapters shall only provide a short overview and a systematic presentation. It is to be the basis of a concept of book culture.

2.1 Definitions of ›Culture‹

The usage of the term culture in an abstract context was established by Cicero. He employed the expression *cultura animi* to describe an individual's education in

86 Grill, Andrea (2010): »Like colleagues, at least.« In: Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen et al. (Eds.): *Europe Reads – Literature in Europe*. Stuttgart: ifa [Culture Report Progress Europe, 3], last retrieved October 14th 2011, pp 164–168. Here: p.165.

philosophy.⁸⁷ Not until the 18th and 19th century did the term culture come to describe a collective of individuals. It was then adopted to define human civilization in contrast to nature. With the rise of anthropology in the beginning of the 20th century, culture attained a far more complex meaning. Talcott Parson described culture in his 1949 *Essays in Sociological Theory* as consisting »in those patterns relative to behavior and the products of human action which may be inherited, that is, passed on from generation to generation independently of the biological genes.«⁸⁸ Anthropology started to define culture as a representation of all aspects of the human being which are not determined by genetics; that is objects, symbols, the meaning of these symbols, norms, values and beliefs that constitute social interaction. Language is recognized as the essential carrier of culture.

2.1.1 Different Concepts of Culture

This view is reflected in current academic definitions of culture. Rudi Renger and Michael Giesecke, for example, define culture in a similar way: Renger describes culture as being comprised of tradition, habitus, way of life, and the memory of societies.⁸⁹ Giesecke defines culture as »die Werte, Überzeugungen, das Wissen und die Routinen, die unser Handeln lenken.«⁹⁰ A widely recognized and often repeated definition of culture was given by Alfred Kroeber and Clyde Kluckhohn in *Culture: A critical review of concepts and definitions*:

Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e. historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; culture systems may, on the one hand, be considered as products of action, and on the other as conditioning elements of further action.⁹¹

87 Beer, Bettina (2003): »Ethnos; Ethnie; Kultur.« In: Hans Fischer and Bettina Beer (Eds.) *Ethnologie. Einführung und Überblick*. (5. Vollständig veränderte Neufassung) Berlin: Dietrich Reimer Verlag, pp. 53–72. Here: p. 61.

88 Parsons, Talcott (1964): *Essays in Sociological Theory*. Glencoe: Free Press. Revised edition, original was published in 1949. Here: p. 8.

89 Renger, Rudi (2009): »Kulturtheorien der Medien.« In: Stefan Weber (Ed.): *Theorien der Medien. Von der Kulturkritik bis zum Konstruktivismus*. 2nd edition. Konstanz: UVK Verl.-Ges., pp. 154–179. Here: p. 155.

90 Giesecke: Von den Mythen der Buchkultur, p. 226.

91 Kroeber, Alfred Louis; Kluckhohn, Clyde. (1952). *Culture: A critical review of concepts and definitions*. Harvard University Peabody Museum of American Archeology and Ethnology Papers 47, p. 357.

Current academic definitions, as exemplified by the three quotations above, transcend the simple contrast of nature versus civilization or genetics versus learned abilities and thought patterns. Apart from these academic concepts, there are three additional ways of defining culture, as well as a fourth, slightly different one:

- a. Culture as a common corpus of the arts and humanities (this definition incorporates in great part what is defined as culture in public discourse and cultural politics)
- b. Culture as a set of static and clearly differentiated characteristics that define people with a common heritage (this definition originates from Herder and is no longer used since culture is now seen as being in constant change and development).⁹²
- c. Culture as a social category which defines the way of life of a specific group
- d. Culture as an academic concept, especially in anthropology and ethnology⁹³

The third definition is in accordance with the subject of the so-called culture studies which identifies culture as a shared pattern of behavior and interactions within a social group. This group is formed not only by a common ethnic background but may also be shaped by a common taste in art, music, film, food, sports, clothing or hair style. The concept is used to describe sub-cultures and popular or mass culture.

The fourth concept does not refer to a single academic definition of culture but to a multitude of concepts that differ according to the objective and the subject of the research. Some scholars of anthropology or ethnology even try to eliminate the concept of culture from their studies.

Culture as an academic concept depends on the context and the focus of the study.⁹⁴ Bauer, for example, describes culture as a »kommunikatives Konstrukt, es

92 Johann Gottfried Herder developed, esp. in his work *Ideas on the Philosophy of Mankind*, the concept of individual cultures which is characterized by three elements: social homogenization, ethnic consolidation and intercultural delimitation. Cf. Welsch, Wolfgang (1999): »Transculturality – the Puzzling Form of Cultures Today.« In: *Spaces of Culture: City, Nation, World*. Ed. by Mike Featherstone and Scott Lash. London: Sage, pp. 194213. Available online http://www.westreadseast.info/PDF/Readings/Welsch_Transculturality.pdf, last retrieved May 20th 2012. Here: p. 194.

93 These four basic concepts are described by Beer: *Ethnos; Ethnie; Kultur*, p. 60f and Krotz, Friedrich (2003): »Kommunikationswissenschaft, Kulturwissenschaft. Glückliches Paar oder Messalliance.« In: Matthias Karmasin and Carsten Winter (Ed.): *Kulturwissenschaft als Kommunikationswissenschaft. Projekte, Probleme und Perspektiven*. 1st edition. Wiesbaden: Westdt. Verl., pp. 21–48. Here: p. 23. He cites Chris Jenkins' work *Culture* (1993) Routledge, London.

94 Hammel, Lina (2007): »Der Kulturbegriff im wissenschaftlichen Diskurs und seine Bedeutung für die Musikpädagogik. Versuch eines Literaturberichts.« In: Jürgen Vogt (Ed.). *Zeitschrift für Kritische Musikpädagogik*. Available online <http://home.arcor.de/zfkm/07-hammel1.pdf>, last retrieved January 24th 2012.

bildet und versteht sich im Modell der Kommunikation, es bewahrt (symbolisch) Vereinbarungen zur Realität.«⁹⁵ Saxer, with reference to the theoretical context of functional-systems, defines culture as a functional system, »das für die mentale Strukturierung der Gesellschaftsmitglieder verantwortlich ist, indem es die verhaltenssteuernden Orientierungsmodelle hervorbringt.«⁹⁶ Bauer and Saxer both represent the structuralist approach to defining culture. According to Kroeber and Kluckhohn, there are other types of defining culture in an academic context – enumerative and descriptive. Both focus on the characteristics of a certain culture; the historic, which emphasize the tradition and learning of culture; the normative, with a focus on the internal rules of a certain culture; the psychological, in terms of adapting to a given environment; the structural, such as Bauer and Saxer, with a high degree of abstraction; and the genetic definitions, which focus on the origins of culture.⁹⁷

In summary, while there is no accepted definition of culture that has been agreed upon, there are a number of characteristics of the concept of culture that have been consented upon. They are principally based on the definition by Kluckhohn and Kroeber. Bettina Beer lists these characteristics according to their frequency within academic concepts: culture is learned; it is part of a group and not an individual; it is historically developed and subject to constant change; it is a structured whole of knowledge and habits; it is hardly delimitable, yet heterogenic and an abstract.⁹⁸ In consequence, each culture is structured by a set of values and traditions, which are on the one hand historically developed but on the other hand in change. The individual culture is both kept alive by rituals and habits as well as through institutions that celebrate these actions and values attributed to that given culture.

Two aspects of culture will be important for this study. The first one is the concept of culture as a »set of attitudes, beliefs, customs, values and practices which are commonly shared by a group.«⁹⁹ This concept relates to a description of what constitutes book culture. The description will be based on a set of values, on the rituals, traditions and actions relevant to book culture, and on the institutions upholding, preserving and developing them.

95 Bauer, Thomas A. (2003): »Vom Strukturblick zum Kulturblick. Entwürfe zu einem Blended Theory-Modell.« In: Matthias Karmasin and Carsten Winter (Eds.): *Kulturwissenschaft als Kommunikationswissenschaft. Projekte, Probleme und Perspektiven*. 1st edition. Wiesbaden: Westdt. Verl., pp. 127–167. Here: p. 153.

96 Saxer, Ulrich (2010): »Buchwissenschaft als Medienwissenschaft.« In: Ursula Rautenberg (Ed.): *Buchwissenschaft in Deutschland. Ein Handbuch*. Berlin: de Gruyter [Vol. 1: Theorie und Forschung], pp. 65–104. p. 82.

97 Varieties of definition are related according to Beer: *Ethnos; Ethnie; Kultur*, p. 81–140.

98 Beer: *Ethnos; Ethnie; Kultur*, p. 66f.

99 KEA European Affairs et al.: *The Economy of Culture in Europe*, p. 2.

The cultural sector is the second important aspect. In defining the cultural sector and the market for cultural products, the term culture is employed as an adjective to describe activities that »involve some form of creativity in their production; they are concerned with the generation and communication of symbolic means; their output potentially embodies at least some form of intellectual property.«¹⁰⁰ The European Union defines culture in more pragmatic terms. This working definition agreed upon by the Member states of the European Union is relevant as the basis for a cultural policy and promotion within the European context. The EU definition as well as a selection of national definitions will be presented in the following chapter.

2.1.2 Working Definitions

Alongside the discourse on culture and its abstract definitions, there are several working definitions of those who pursue cultural policy. These definitions are not necessarily philosophic but pragmatic:

Owing to the lack of a robust definition of culture (or to an over-abundance of definitions), the pocketbook [the statistical pocketbook edited by the European Statistical Institute eurostat] relies on the pragmatic definition generally agreed upon during the earlier work by the European Leadership Group (LEG).¹⁰¹

This definition by the Statistical Institute of the European Union encompasses artistic and monumental heritage, archives, libraries, books and press, visual arts, architecture, performing arts and audiovisual/multimedia art. There are other working definitions such as the ones set by the *World Conference on Cultural Policies* (Mexico 1982), the *World Commission on Culture and Development Report* (1995) and the *Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Development* (Stockholm 1998.)

The 1982 World Conference on Cultural Policies agreed on the following definition of culture:

That in its widest sense, culture may now be said to be the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group. It includes not only the arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs. That it is culture that gives man the ability to reflect upon himself. It is culture that makes us specifically human, rational beings endowed with a critical judgment and a sense

100 KEA European Affairs et al.: *The Economy of Culture in Europe*, p. 2.

101 eurostat: Cultural Statistics, p. 5.

of moral commitment. It is through culture that we discern values and make choices. It is through culture that man expresses himself, becomes aware of himself, recognizes his incompleteness, questions his own achievements, seeks untiringly for new meaning and creates work through which he transcends his limitations.¹⁰²

Later conferences did not change this essential definition of culture but focused on the objectives and recommendations for cultural policy.¹⁰³

While at an international level the definition for culture has to be broad to encompass all national characteristics or peculiarities, on a national level there may be differing definitions. Most countries, such as the United Kingdom¹⁰⁴, do not have an official definition of culture: »British culture, with its national, regional and linguistics distinctiveness and multi-cultural diversity, is not regarded as a single entity.«¹⁰⁵ Others employ more than one definition, such as Finland¹⁰⁶, where culture is described, in a broad definition, as the product of all cultural industries irrespective of content, professional education in the arts as well as all museums, scientific libraries and archives. The narrower definition covers

first the arts, which means creative and performing arts, the work of individual artists and related branches of the cultural industries (fiction publishing, feature film production, classical music recordings, and record industry, broadcasting, video and multimedia production) with sufficiently high level of cultural contents.¹⁰⁷

It also includes the main domains of the so-called cultural services such as libraries, heritage and international cultural co-operation. The individual national definitions of culture of the European member states have been collected in the table below.

102 UNESCO (1982): *Mexico City Declaration on Cultural Policies*. World Conference on Cultural Policies Mexico City, 26 July–6 August 1982. Available online: http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/files/35197/11919410061mexico_en.pdf/mexico_en.pdf. Last retrieved January 23th 2012. Here: p.1.

103 The results of the 1998 Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Development are summed up in the final report by the UNESCO (1998): *Final Report*. Intergovernmental Conference on Cultural Policies for Development. Stockholm 30 March – 2 April 1998. Available online <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0011/001139/113935eo.pdf>. Last retrieved January 23th 2012.

104 Information Spreadsheet United Kingdom: Annex, p. A-101.

105 Fisher, Rod; Leyssen, Ledy (2008): *Country Profile United Kingdom*. Ed. by Council of Europe. Brussels [Compendium – Cultural Politics and Trends in Europe]. Available online <http://www.culturalpolicies.net/web/unitedkingdom>, last retrieved July 12th 2011. Here: p. 8.

106 Information Spreadsheet Finland: Annex, p. A-95.

107 Mitchell, Ritva; Heiskanen, Ilkka (2008): *Country Profile Finland*. Ed. by Council of Europe. Brussels [Compendium – Cultural Politics and Trends in Europe]. Available online <http://www.culturalpolicies.net/web/profiles-download.php?pcid=1280>, last retrieved June 23rd 2010. Here: p. 22.

Following the broader concept of culture, the next chapters shall focus on the specific subculture of books and reading. The definition of culture as a concept which encompasses values and traditions as well as a way of life common to a specific group of people which is upheld by certain institutions will serve as the working basis of this study. Book culture, as a subculture, derives from this concept of culture. It is, in a manner of speaking, a subsystem of the cultural concept of the European Nations. According to Jutta Gallenmüller-Roschmann, cultural concepts are social constructs and are communicated subjectively with symbols and representatives.¹⁰⁸ When examining book culture as a concept of constructs, symbols and representatives, this definition is validated.

Table 1: National Definitions of Culture

Country	National Definition of Culture*
Belgium	1971 third constitutional review: culture covers the fields of protection and illustration of language; encouragement of researcher training; fine arts (incl. theater and cinema); cultural heritage, museums and other cultural scientific institutions; libraries; radio and television broadcasting; youth policy; continuing education and cultural animation; physical education, sport and outdoor life; leisure and tourism
Bulgaria	All activity and the results of this activity which are related to the creation, study, dissemination and protection of cultural values
Czech Republic	Culture is defined as supporting intellectual, emotional and moral development. It also integrates an individual into society. First and foremost it creates the individual's identity. → very abstract
Denmark	Four concepts of culture: as humanistic concept of art and enlightenment; as anthropological and sociological concept, as experience economy and as national identity
Germany	»The term ›culture‹ today, thus encompasses contemporary creative and artistic activity (both inside and outside the framework of the traditional cultural institutions) as well as the culture of everyday life.« ¹⁰⁹

108 Gallenmüller-Roschmann, Jutta; Wakenhut, Roland (2001): »Kulturelle Identität: Einführung und sozialwissenschaftliche Beiträge zur Entwicklung kultureller Identitäten in Italien.« In: Jutta Gallenmüller-Roschmann (Ed.): *Kulturelle Identitäten in Italien*. Frankfurt am Main: Lang, pp. 11–56. Here: p. 18.

109 Wagner, Bernd; Blumenreich, Ulrike (2009): *Country Profile Germany*. Ed. by Council of Europe. Brussels. (Compendium – Cultural Politics and Trends in Europe). Available online <http://www.culturalpolicies.net/web/profiles-download.php?pcid=1280>, last retrieved June 23rd 2010. Here: p. 12.

Table 1: National Definitions of Culture (continued)

Estonia	Culture as the Living-Space of Estonian-ness → mostly national identity aspect
Ireland	No official definition of culture, though the arts are defined in the 2003 Arts Act as »any creative or interpretative expression (whether traditional or contemporary) in whatever form, and includes, in particular, visual arts, theatre, literature, music, dance, opera, film, circus and architecture, and includes any medium when used for these purposes.« ¹¹⁰
Greece	No official definition of culture though there are indirect references which include the establishment of freedom of artistic expression
Spain	No national definition of culture
France	No national definition of culture since this would be excluding, elitist and totalitarian
Italy	No national definition of culture
Cyprus	--
Latvia	»Culture may now be said to be the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterise a society or social group. It includes not only the arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs. Despite the all embracing definition, the Ministry of Culture takes responsibility only for the particular art fields, such as copy-right, architecture, libraries, museums, music, fine art, folk art, theatre, literature and books, film arts, cultural education, and the protection of monuments and archives.« ¹¹¹
Lithuania	No national definition, covers traditionally as fields of artistic creation and presentation
Luxembourg	--
Hungary	No national definition of culture
Malta	National definition is oriented along the descriptions offered by UNESCO and Council of Europe
Netherlands	Culture is understood to include the arts (visual arts, design, architecture, film, performing arts, amateur arts and arts education); cultural heritage (museums, historic buildings and sites, archaeology, archives) and the media (broadcasting, printed media) and literature and libraries

110 Fitzgibbon, Marian (2010): *Country Profile Ireland*. Ed. by Council of Europe. Brussels [Compendium – Cultural Politics and Trends in Europe]. Available online www.culturalpolicies.net, last retrieved March 31st 2010. Here: p. 4.

111 Tjarve, Baiba (2009): *Country Profile Latvia*. Ed. by Council of Europe. Brussels [Compendium – Cultural Politics and Trends in Europe]. Available online <http://www.culturalpolicies.net/web/latvia.php>, last retrieved June 23rd 2010. Here: p. 13f.

Table 1: National Definitions of Culture (continued)

Austria	No national definition of culture; various definitions in the individual Bundesländer »usually highlighting the regional specificity of those cultural activities which are to be promoted.« ¹¹²
Poland	Official definition in discussion, unofficially two aspects of culture: social life which helps to create values and artistic creation
Portugal	Culture essential for development of intellectual capabilities and key instrument for critical understanding → this is NOT a definition
Romania	Pluralistic definition which includes culture as a factor in social development and instrument for the accomplishment of economic and social objectives
Slovenia	Defines only cultural activities not culture
Slovakia	No national definition of culture, but an official document defines culture as »involving knowledge, faith, art, law, morals, customs and any and all other abilities and traditions which humanity has acquired during its historic development.« ¹¹³
Finland	No national definition but for the sake of statistics there are a narrow and a broad definition: narrow .s text and broad also s. text.
Sweden	»Culture is viewed as a public benefit uniting society, a central condition for democracy and a basic resource for individual well-being and collective welfare, which should be distributed and enjoyed on equal terms throughout the nation.« ¹¹⁴ → entertains a certain quality expectation and excludes commercial mass culture from state support
United Kingdom	No national definition of culture
Switzerland	Culture is defined as permanent effort to keep the diverse cultural aspects of country alive

*Source: If not otherwise indicated, all definitions are taken from the *Compendium – Cultural Politics and Trends in Europe* Series.

112 Cf. Ratzenböck, Veronika et al. (2010): *Country Profile Austria*. Ed. by Council of Europe, Brussels [Compendium – Cultural Policy and Trends in Europe]. Available online <http://www.culturalpolicies.net/web/austria.php>, last retrieved October 4th 2012. Here: p. 4.

113 Smatlák, Martin (2007): *Country Profile Slovakia*. Ed. by Council of Europe, Brussels [Compendium – Cultural Politics and Trends in Europe]. Available online <http://www.culturalpolicies.net/web/slovakia.php>, last retrieved July 5th 2011. Here: p. 3.

114 Harding, Tobias (2010): *Country Profile Sweden*. Ed. by Council of Europe, Brussels [Compendium – Cultural Politics and Trends in Europe]. Available online http://www.culturalpolicies.net/down/sweden_122010.pdf, last retrieved June 20th 2011. Here: p. 4.

2.2 Describing Book Culture

Similar to cultures and sub-cultures in general, the concept of book culture is complex and in constant development. Moreover, book culture is a blend of individual national cultures and media culture. It is in part trans-national, for there are aspects to book culture which are common to all countries. For example, the values attributed to a book are shared by all European book cultures. At the same time, book cultures are local as they are intertwined with the national culture and identity of any given nation. Therefore, the description and structure of book culture, as it is presented in this chapter, cannot claim to be all-encompassing since national book cultures may feature unique characteristics.

A description of book culture has to start with defining its key medium. However, this is where the first obstacle presents itself. The definition of ›book‹ is under constant discussion. A former consensus, such as the UNESCO definition¹¹⁵, has often been agreed to be outdated and incomprehensive. The varying definitions shall not be put here in detail at this point, but it has to be noted that

Wenn wir heute das Wort Buch verwenden, können verschiedene Formen seiner körperlichen Erscheinung gemeint sein. In jeden Fall reden wir aber über einen Inhalt, den man sich auf unterschiedliche Weise aneignen kann und der in unterschiedlichen Formen vermarktbare ist.¹¹⁶

A book can be much more than its material whole: »Zierliches Objekt der Sammelleidenschaft, quasi-erotischer Fetisch, Wertgegenstand, modisches Accessoire, Bestandteil von juristischen und anderen Ritualen – all das vermag ein Buch oder Schriftstück unabhängig von seinem schriftlichen Inhalt zu sein.«¹¹⁷

Vincent Kaufmann tries to define the book in its complexity with a list of characteristics that are part of its uniqueness. According to this list, the book is unique because it uses one language, one form of writing, one storage medium

115 The UNESCO defines non-periodical publications with more than 49 pages as a book. Cf. UNESCO (1964): Section 6(a). Recommendation concerning the International Standardization of Statistics Relating to Book Production and Periodicals. Available online: http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=13068&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html, last retrieved January 24th 2012.

116 Bluhm, Detlef (2009): Von Autoren, Büchern und Piraten. Kleine Geschichte der Buchkultur. Düsseldorf: Artemis & Winkler, p. 20.

117 Bridges, Margaret (2005): »Mehr als ein Text. Das ungelesene Buch zwischen Symbol und Fetisch.« In: Michael Stolz et al. (Ed.): Buchkultur im Mittelalter. Schrift – Bild – Kommunikation. Berlin: de Gruyter, pp. 104–121. Here: p. 121. Bridges refers to the role of the book in the Middle Ages. How these role attributions are still effective today is emphasized in Ursula Rautenberg's 2005 article »Das Buch in der Alltagskultur«. In: Monika Estermann; Ernst Fischer; Ute Schneider (Eds.): Buch Kulturen. Beiträge zur Geschichte der Literaturvermittlung; Festschrift für Reinhard Wittmann. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, pp. 487–516.

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