

Preface

With regard to the field of book studies, the present work addresses two topics which have previously not often been discussed. For instance, it applies the transnational approach to book studies; an approach that is frequently used in the context of economics. The present work attempted to dissolve the established national perspectives, that are often the basis for studying the book, and to follow the example of recent studies, such as *Reading Beyond the Book*¹, which focused on the UK, USA and Canada. Secondly, the combination of theoretical and statistical analyses is new to books studies: statistical methods to understand and to analyse book culture have never been applied before, especially since there has been no common concept of book culture.

Since the completion of this work in the February of 2013, two major developments have taken place, which would have had an impact on the results of the analyses. The special status awarded to books within the European Unions member states has recently been illustrated by developments in France. As its second largest book store chain Chapitre had to declare bankruptcy, the French government decided to augment the already comprehensive programs for the promotion of books and the book industry: Within 2014, it has announced to additionally reduce the value added tax on books and to endow the program offering loans to book stores with more funds.

Furthermore, in 2013, Croatia has joined the European Union as a full member. In consequence, any future analyses of European book cultures will have to include the new member state. Other developments could only be explored on the surface due to the limited scope of this work, for example the consequences of the financial crises, especially in the Southern European states, and their impact on the programs for book promotion as well as on the book industry in general. However, these points serve to stress the importance of a continued monitoring of the development of the different factors of book culture.

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1 Danielle Fuller and DeNel Rehberg Sedo (2013): *Reading Beyond the Book. The Social Practices of Contemporary Literary Culture*. Routledge Chapman & Hall.

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