



LUND UNIVERSITY

# The Bookshop as an Experiencescape:

*The future of the physical book and bookshop in the digital era*

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**Abstract**

The purpose of this thesis is to position the physical and independent bookshop in the digital era, claiming that they do have a strong place there. The rationale of viewing the bookshop as a space in which an experience can be had, intends to give independent bookshops a guide on how to remain as such. I focused on an English language bookshop in Istanbul, Turkey and conducted fieldwork for 3 months. To evaluate and learn from the findings I used the concept of Experiencescapes and the theories of liminality, fetishism and sign value. The material gathered was all primary and collected by means of interviews, observations and walk-along interviews. The significance of these results is that the shop is to be seen as not only a space in which a book is sold, but also an experience and the values imposed on English language books in Istanbul. These findings will act as a guide for independent bookshops in their battle against digital technologies and alternatives.

Keywords: Bookshop; Books; English language; Liminality; Fetishism; Sign value; Reading; Digital era; Experiencescape; Experience economy; Ebooks.

**Makale özeti**

Tezimin amacı fiziksel kitap ve bağımsız kitapevlerinin dijital dönemdeki konumunu belirlemektir. Tezime göre kitap ve kitapevlerinin gelecekte hala güçlü bir konumu olacaktır. Kitapevini “tecrübe yeri (experiencescape)” olarak görme düşüncesi, dijital dönemde kitapevlerinin ayakta kalmalarına yol gösterebilir. Bu çalışma için, İstanbul’daki bir İngilizce kitapevine odaklanıp 3 ay süreyle antropolojik bir araştırma yaptım. Birincil kaynaklarımı hem görüşme hem gözlem hem de “gezerek görüşme (walk-along interview)” aracılığıyla topladım. Topladığım verilere “tecrübe yeri (experiencescape)” konsepti, fetişizm (fetishism), esiklik (liminality) ve işaret değeri (sign value) kuramlarını uyguladım. Bulgularıma göre, dijital dönemde kitapevi sadece “kitap için bir ev” değildir. İstanbul’da araştırma yaptığım kitapevinde, satılanın kitaplar değil tecrübenin ve İngilizce kitaplara yüklenen değerlerin olduğunu gördüm. Bu bulgular kitapevlerine dijital teknoloji ve seçeneklere karşı ayakta kalma savaşlarında yardım edebilir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Kitapevi; Kitap, İngilizce dili; Esiklik; Fetişizm; İşaret değeri; Okuma; Dijital dönemi; Experiencescape; Deneyim; Ebook.

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## **1.0 Introduction:**

This thesis is a product of a 3 month internship at an English language bookshop in Istanbul. The thesis will analyse what was documented, observed and interviewed during my time there and in doing so serve as an aid to those involved in directing, or having a stake in, the future of the English language bookshop and physical book. We currently live in a digital age, in which electronic devices are playing an increasingly active role in contemporary lives and the exchanging of currency for goods can be done online, without the consumer ever having to leave the house. With this in mind, the thesis aims to guide owners of bricks-and-mortar shops, as well as their loyal customer base, on how to maintain their physical presence in an increasingly digital age. The thesis will do this by showing how the English language bookshop is providing an experiencescape - a space which is selling more than books. This thesis will make its mark on the current literature because as will be shown, such an undertaking and stance has yet to be held.

The thesis will look at the components of the bookshop, those that help transform it into an experiencescape, and it is this way of analysing the shop and the book that will structure the paper. As this thesis views the bookshop as an experiencescape, first, its position amongst the current literature will be presented, highlighting where the thesis stands and from where it departs, before explaining the theories that will be used to understand the shop and the book. After that the methods used to collect the data will be laid out. As I go through the methods it becomes possible to understand the shop a little better, as the space and the settings will be brought forward to contextualise where the data was collected. After the methods come the accounts of the aforementioned components of the bookshop. In order to build my argument for the bookshop as an experiencescape, the elements that I believe constitute it have been chosen based on what I experienced and the information I gathered, and to these, theory will be applied.

It is in the beginning that I wish to inform the reader that the thesis will not produce any empirical data until the literature review, theoretical and methods sections have been presented. I am aware that the reader must wait until the empirical data is presented within the analysis, and therefore ask for your patience; as I build the thesis up from the literature review through to the methods section.

## **2.0 My Position in the Field**

This study aims to culturally analyse the bookshop through an anthropological and theoretical frame to understand bookshop culture and discuss the future of the bookshop and the book in the digital era. The field for this study is the culture of bookselling, book buying and the book trade.

Moving away from business/management as a way to address a bookshop, specifically an independent bookshop, this thesis frames the bookshop's culture, its place and the phenomena of bookselling/buying into a different theoretical realm. What is unique about this cultural analysis of the bookshop is that it is the product of extended fieldwork that took place in Turkey concerning English language books and reading culture in the city of Istanbul, and there are no other filed ethnographic studies like it. This was done by using the method of *la perruque* (de Certeau 1984), which can infer to mean a cover and thus working "under a cover" as a sales assistant and simultaneously as a researcher in the bookshop for the three month period, which the research consisted of. This thesis concludes, that the bookshop should be seen as an experiencescape. The way in which the books are interacted with and the reasoning behind wanting to read, alongside the unique space created in which the books were being sold and the customers were experiencing inspired such a conclusion. I have chosen to draw inspiration from the theory of the Fetish (Ellen 1988), as I see it as if the customer is *desiring* the book, there is also more to that wanting of the book than the physical book itself, as other values lie within a physical English book, something I will develop in detail below. Liminality is another term I use to focus on the space in which the customers enter as it is *unique*, in-between, foreign to them, different from what they may otherwise experience elsewhere, yet safer than the street. I view the bookshop experience as a liminal one. I add these concepts to analyse the findings and build an understanding of the bookshop as an experiencescape. This way of viewing bookshop culture is a unique turn as I will show in my review of current literature below.

In my literature review, I go through current literature related to research on the printed book, the independent bookshop and the future for them in a time when the presence of online book retailers, and ebook technology and dissemination is increasing. I thus want to provide the reader with an overview of the findings and opinions of other researchers and authors in an accessible manner. I introduce recent discussions on bookshops to the reader and also highlight the thesis' position amongst this literature. The literature has been selected by performing title and subject searches for academic articles and selecting relevant sources of work from these articles. Rather than seeing this section of the thesis as an overview of a number of articles whose main scope is the book or bookshop, this section is intended as a discussion of existing knowledge in the field of books, bookselling and bookshops.

### **2.1 The current status of the bookshop and book industry**

In 1999, Walter Powell wrote an article for the Contemporary Sociology journal entitled "The Little

Bookshop around the Corner isn't there anymore". In it, Powell was questioning the disappearance of Sociology sections in bookshops, why sociology work was to be found in other sections and what were the ramifications of such genre blurring? This article gives an understanding of the contrasting opinions towards chain and independent bookshops.

Powell foresees the "consolidation of publishing and selling by chains", who are in turn "dumbing down and censoring cultural products" (1999:136). What Powell is claiming is that chains are removing the Sociology section due its "dry academic" overtones and replacing it with the "oh Culture!" (1999:135) of a Cultural Studies section, if at all, in order to sell more of these books. For him, this is part of the "rationalisation" process of an otherwise "poorly organised haphazard" (1999:136) profession by the chains, whose aim it is to shift stock. A rationalisation likewise noted by Laura Miller by both independents and chains alike, albeit with a great deal more emotionality on the part of the independent shops (2006:12). Powell commends the knowledge inherent within independent bookshops and their less market-driven categories and comments that "remaining small publishers and university presses continue, but they increasingly have to play by the rules of the big fish" (1999:136) (the chains), who are increasingly involved in the publishing. He sees the dispersed nature of Sociology books in chains as showing the public that Sociology is not a distinctive genre. From Powell's article we can see that the chain bookshops have rationalised book selling into a well-oiled machine, yet are void of idiosyncrasies and a devote knowledge, apparently inherent with smaller, independent shops. Thus far, it is in line with this study but Powell does not address the power of the chains and publishing houses, which encourages the rationalisation of book selling and so appears as a purely profit motivated institution. The idea of the chains gaining power and prominence through a well-organised structure yet lacking the emotional passion of the independent bookseller is supported by Andrew Laties (2011).

Laties, an independent book trader, published his story about the independent book trade in "*Rebel booksellers*" in 2005 (Laties 2011). He addresses all issues concerned with the book trade and with running an independent bookshop in a manner akin to the Life story method. His book, though, is very business-management geared. He speaks of the collusion of the chains and publishing houses and how this has a knock-on effect for smaller booksellers, who are unable to meet the buying and selling figures of the chains. Sherman Young views the situation differently or rather presents a different outcome. In "*The book is dead: Long live the book*" (Young 2007) he sees the end of the book due to the book industry's focus on sales and profit margins as opposed to thoughtful work. And if that were not enough he claims that people no longer read books, that

time is still spent reading but on online newspapers and instruction manuals rather than the physical book. Young wrote this predicting an e-reading future and only spoke of the Amazon kindle<sup>1</sup> as something in the pipeline, to be introduced onto the market soon and not in its current position amongst readers. He believes an overhaul of the book publishing system is required and that bookshops must adapt to the changes, as books these days are “books in name only” (Young 2007:6) and do not further us. Conversely Jen Li (2010) presents Sydney based independent booksellers with a more optimistic future.

In her article “Choosing The Right Battles: How independent bookshops in Sydney, Australia compete with chains and online retailers”, in *Australian Geographer*, (2010) Li addresses the decline in numbers of independent bookshops by using Sydney as a case study to show why it is not the case there. She investigates the strategies and environments, which have allowed the Sydney-based independent bookshops to thrive.

Jen Li begins with information on the book as a commodity, the bookshop as the space of consumption, before looking at international trends of independent bookshops. Li then assesses the health of the Sydney based bookshop from the 1970s onward for us to understand the situation today. She picks out 4 elements in particular which success can be attributed to; they are: Location- on the high street not in outer city shopping centres; Design- creating a space in which the customer wants to spend time in; Inventory- the obscure inventory of the independent compared to the “vanilla” offerings of a chain; Service- the knowledge and care is deemed as greater in an independent bookshop (Li 2010:255-260). She celebrates the use of the retail space to create a pleasant experience and the way in which culture is being used to yield profits (Li 2010:260). Though a case study rather than answering any specific questions, her claims of the independent bookshop as having a guardian duty to the book is noteworthy. However, her article does point towards a more digital culture of reading. This thesis intends by an in-depth ethnographic case study of an international bookshop in Istanbul to assess the current culture of book reading, buying and selling in independent shops in the face of a digital culture of reading, something which Li’s article does not address and thereby adding new elements to the fore provided by Li, listed above.

In the same vein as Laties (2011), Miller (2006) presents a sociological history of bookselling in America. The overtones were somewhat of a critique of the current situation that the book trade

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1 Amazon kindle: an ereading device. A portable and digital tablet that a user can buy/download books onto.

finds itself in, but was more objective than Laties' offering. Alongside the chains, Miller criticises the consumption culture that encourages the consumer to search for the product at least expense to them, regardless of the consequences to smaller businesses or the quality of books being published. In her book she reveals that "others scoffed that the superstores were better at promoting coffee drinking than an interest in ideas and the intellect" (Miller 2006:4), highlighting the multifaceted and profit seeking strategies of the chains over selling quality books. Miller continues in her book to stress the current political and social benefits of opting for the independent bookshop over the chain or online retailer.

Though not on selling the printed book but housing it, Robert Walters' article concerning the role of the library adds useful information (Walters 1995). In his article "The library, the bookshop and the literature centre" (1995) Walters, examines the library and focuses on the differing roles it has against the bookshop. Walters believes the library's role has been reduced as affluence has spread, allowing more people to visit the bookshop (Walters 1995:22). To counteract this he believes that the library still has a role to play in society and should be offering more than what the big publishers and names promote and should look towards, the local, local networks, local writing, performances and storytelling (Walter 1995:25). Just as Walters sees the library as a focal point, the independent bookshop too can be a focal point, it too can provide for the community. Independent bookshops tend to be owned by local people, who in turn spend their money in the local community. Being independent and not restricted like chains and branches, such an independent can adjust and cater for the local community, as well as acting as focal point.

## **2.2 Cultural status of book and bookshop**

The *Journal of Consumer Culture* published "Commodifying Respectability: Distinctions at Work in the Bookshop" by David Wright in 2005. In his article, Wright understands the bookshop as an area of retail that not only sells products but also emotions. This is a relevant observation as in my thesis I view the bookshop as a space which sells more than just a book, and emotions are a vital part of this phenomenon. He also continues to look at the cultural capital on hand in the bookshop, which shapes the interactions and sales taking place there. From his paper I conclude that Wright views the bookshop as a space which is driven by respectability, which in turn is based upon the conception that there is a correct performance of emotionality to be played out towards both people and objects (Wright 2005:297). The customer is able to choose their identity in the shop through the books that they symbolically select (Wright 2005:300). The embodied dispositions in the bookshop consist of the objectified state (cultural goods) and the

institutionalised state (education) (Wright 2005:301) and the cultural capital of the reader is to be reflected through the worker as to provide the most customer friendly atmosphere. In addition he states that the need for the sales assistant to be passionate about books and people, plays an important factor for the shop. Furthermore, with the flow of culture taking place, through education and symbolism, the bookshop “obfuscates the processes of commodity exchange and emphasises more apparently noble ideals” (Wright 2005:304), highlighting the cultural and emotional exchange taking place. The cultural and emotional exchange is of relevance here as it serves to show the reader the importance of the book, the environment in which the book is and the interaction with the staff and/or other readers over the financial capital needed to actually purchase the book. Departing from a space of individual culture and identity Signe Jantson and Tiiu Reimo (2006) detail the cultural role the bookshop has to play in society from an Estonian perspective.

In their article entitled “Bookseller as a Cultural Agent: Book trade in Estonia in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century” which was based on Jantson's master's thesis and published in 2006 in the journal *Knygotyra*, Jantson and Reimo deal with the role that the book trade has in society, as the intermediary between the producer and reader, with the bookseller maintaining good relations between the customer and the publisher.

Jantson and Reimo view the book as holding different roles in different societies and meant for community knowledge, so notwithstanding, as a cultural agent communicating knowledge, the book trade is not only an economy but a mediation of intellectual values. The presence of intellect and cultural capital is reiterated by a finding in the report, which found that the majority of the Estonian run book shop owners (69%) failed in their first 10 years due to the majority of them having humble, peasant origins (Jantson and Reimo 2006:190). Social capital to be able to interact with the clientèle and publishers/wholesalers, Cultural capital to know the books being sold, the atmosphere required by the customers in which to search for the book they do not know they want yet, the cultural capital of being in the book business knowing the workings of such an enterprise, are the more obscure forms of currency needed to maintain a successful independent bookshop venture. Here Jantson and Reimo present the bookshop as a place of culture but Miller states that with the inception of the chains, the chains “communicated their rejection of cultural elitism through their outlets' design and placement” (2006:60) suggesting that the independent bookseller still operates the cultural like Jantson and Reimo present.

In her work Miller highlights the importance of the book, or more precisely the printed word, the

physical book. Writing about the “sacred quality of the written word” (Miller 2006:37) and reporting that reading can “enrich the spirit and refine the sensibilities” (Miller 2006:27) Miller highlights the power of the book and therefore its importance. If the book and reading have such qualities they must then hold a lofty position within society and cultural meaning. Travis Decook builds on the idea of the book as an object of importance, as the book's permanence in print gives it an air of cultural authority despite the flux in its authority of knowledge, which can be debunked by another book (Decook 2012:43f). The physical book has authority without having to be read, so the book for Decook is much more than a form of reading, but a vehicle or transmitter, therefore a metaphor and material artefact (Decook 2012:38, 41). This is in contrast to Sherman Young who acknowledges the importance of books and their contributions to society, but by defining the books as a process of thoughts, he writes that it is what books do, not what they are that is the main purpose of the book (Young 2007:19). For Young the cultural meaning of a bookshop is the development of ideas, the creation of thinkers and an investment of time into creating and reading such work (Young 2007).

In her work on books, identity and community formation, Ailsa Craig focuses on chapbooks, which according to UNESCO are not actually books due to their low page count (a book is over 48 pages) (Craig 2011:47f). She finds that these small-scale physical productions of poetry chapbooks (low-tech poetry publications, with small print runs at the poet's expense, few pages, low cost, and with handmade elements from the poet) are extremely important in poetry circles, enabling the “creation and maintenance of identity, community and commitment” (Craig 2011:48). This small-scale physical publication is important in the cultural, social and gift economy of the poetry world, thereby shining significance onto the need of a physical publishing of text.

### **2.3 Future of the printed book**

In 2009 Umberto Eco and Jean-Claude Carrière had their interviews with Jean-Philippe de Tonnac transcribed. These interviews were translated into English and are the book “*This is not the end of the book;*” (2012). The book is a three hundred and thirty six page discussion about the future of the book. Although the pair drift off topic on a regular basis they do address the future of the book, what they enjoy about the book and why they choose to collect books, amongst others.

The pair are positive about the future of the book, despite Li's article hinting toward the contrary, with Umberto Eco quipping “the book is like the spoon, scissors, hammer, the wheel. Once invented it cannot be improved” (2012:4). They believe as an object with a function the book cannot be surpassed. For the pair, reading books is the continuation of history with the present

reading in the same way as the past (2012:113). The two continue along these lines for the majority of the book describing the desire of handling books and safety of a good library (2012:306). In Donald Kerr's piece in *New Zealand Books 2012*, he writes about the digitalisation of his library's collections, and sees an importance of e-exhibitions of those collections (2012:24f), yet sees that alongside digitalisation, physical books and collections will only gather in importance and satisfaction for the individual (2012:25). Miller and Laties are too proponents of books in the future but through their analyses of the book trade expect to see books catered for the best-seller market with less choice in material covered in the books (2008 and 2011). Young however, is not such a proponent. Due to the changes in book publishing leading to the production of numerous anti-books and the general loss of book-books, Young believes the books as an object must be destroyed in order for the book to maintain its place in our culture. Young believes to preserve the book is to by pass the publishers who are controlling the trade. He sees book culture as being "about books themselves; it is about the process of interacting with them" (2007:29) and forecast (as it was in 2007) a shift towards ereading, by passing the restraints of publishing, transporting and selling a physical object. He favours an ebook future to save the "ideas machine" (2007:30) and views his book as coming from the anti-book money makers of today's book trade. Voytek Bialkowski, believes though for ereading to be our new medium of reading the materiality and sociality of text must be found in the reader itself, and our usage and interaction with printed text must be replicable with ebook text (2011:102f). This notion is supported by Penelope Todd who bluntly states: "what's missing at the end of the line is the 300 grams of matter that can be held, sniffed, bent, fondled, stacked, shelved and, for a few hours of its life, actually read" (2012:24), highlighting Bialowski's position that the ebook and reader should mirror the physical book.

In *College and Research Libraries Vol.73:5 and 6* I found two articles, which explicitly deal with ebooks. Though concerned with ebooks in the library, the research undertaken helps to cast light onto the attitudes towards ebooks. In their article Andy Revelle et al (2012) found that there were four types of reader in their University Library: "booklovers, technophiles, pragmatists and printers" (2012:421) who read in myriad ways and had differing attitudes towards the printed book, the ebook and printed articles. The research found that undergraduates and graduates are "less devoted to the concept of the printed book than the faculty, but are still likely to want information printed out for reading" (2012:427). Their research collected the data through Q-methodology and surveys for classification, and presented the data in a quantitative manner, which this study will depart from preferring qualitative. Furthermore, Revelle et al's study of ebooks was carried out in an academic reading environment and not a retail environment, which

can incorporate reading for pleasure as well as learning. Furthermore, Revelle et al quote work by the Joint Information Systems Committee which found a “growing use of ebooks and general acceptance of the format” (2012:421) but does the growing acceptance mean the printed word is on the decline? Revelle et al found 26% of the informants print ebooks (the printer category) (2012:425) informing us that there is still a desire to read the printed word. Laura Anderssen and Beth Russel found a similar rhetoric in their research on their digitally orientated New York University Abu Dhabi Library. The pair found that “early in [their] first academic year (2010-2011) faculty and students began expressing negative comments about library ebooks. [They] found that some students tried to print entire ebooks, while others did not like extended reading on a computer screen and viewed print books as a respite from being plugged in” (2012:323). It seems that despite institutional backing, in this case from New York University Abu Dhabi Library, the user of the ebook is either resisting its introduction, or not yet fully adapted to ereading or as Eco points out above that the book need not be developed any further. Norm Medeiros has similar predictions for the ebook: that books will be obsolete due to ereader's domination over the physical or that publisher-produced print-on-paper will remain the main mode of reading lengthy material (2010:229). It is not only technology which must be addressed but habits, and that the day of the full crossover of scholarly reading is inevitable but we are currently not at all close to that day (Medeiros 2010:229f).

#### **2.4 Consistencies in the literature**

The texts presented shared a number of views. Powell, Li and Laties see that the choice available in chains/internet based operations and independent bookshops differs. They notion to a way of thinking, which suggests that larger/chain outfits are merely in place to support the bestsellers, as these are the books which reap the highest sales figures. In this regard the chains can be said to be more successful if stock moved and cash flow/profit is the marker for success. This is in contrast to the view of the independent shop, which, though carrying less stock, carries a greater choice of varied books/genres/interests. Therefore, due to a less profit-driven motivation a decline in independent bookshops has been noted by the authors in the face of such competition from the chain stores. But Miller adds to this by declaring that the chains do stock a wide selection of books, like the independents, but do not sell/promote these and instead use them as wallpaper/decoration (2006). Miller, Li and Laties also pick up on the pricing wars that are undercutting independent bookshops reifying the problem further. To then continue Wright, and Jantson and Reimu see the bookshop as a symbolic space which requires cultural capital to enter

and also sells the cultural capital in the books it provides for customers. From this there is an understanding that the book has a high societal status insomuch that it signifies the ability to read and to educate oneself. This study adds to this idea of books and reading holding a lofty cultural position by adding the status of the English language to the scene, and by doing so the cultural value of the book, that can serve as a vehicle for the current lingua franca and what that symbolises, is looked at. Li, Laties, Miller, Eco and Walters suggest that the atmosphere for buying books is another important feature of the shop, and from this I apply that the bookshop must not only sell books but an atmosphere or experience. The space occupied by the bookshop then sells the book, culture, symbolic values and also helps to form an identity for the customer, and is supported by Wright, Walters, and Eco and Carriere. In this work I propound the bookshop as an experience and that the independent one can offer a greater possibility to create experiences due to it being a sovereign entity, the experience will provide the consumer with a purchase of culture as well as a book. Young and Todd address the positive aspects of digitalisation with the onset of digitalisation of reading. With Young wishing on the demise of the physical book to bring about a revolution in the quality of publisher-bypassed work by means of online self publishing, he then has a similar position to Todd. Todd sees digital publishing as a way to revitalise physical publishing. The digital texts cater for the masses and the hard copy would be for those who care and desire the book. The popularity of what is published online informs publishers of what is worthy of physical publication, thus cutting out “anti-books” from the bookshop. He goes on to compare the horse and the car to the physical book and the ebook – the horse was once used for transport and was replaced by the car, but people still enjoy horses, caring for them and keeping them (2012:24).

## **2.5 Disagreements in the Literature**

Amongst the literature there are clashes in what has been said. The quality of the independent bookshops has been raised by Powell and Li in their own works. The issues are acknowledging the benefit of the chains and their stock without undermining the more personalised stock of the independent, yet I do intend to question can the experience of being in the bookshop override the smaller nature of the independent? Furthermore, Bialkowski, Li and Young back a more ebook-oriented future of reading which cuts against what Eco and Carriere retort (Decook suggests a development in the way knowledge is presented but not necessarily committing to the ebook), and Kerr and Todd predict a complementary symbiosis for the physical book and ebook. This study will aim to assess through anthropology the roles of the physical book and the independent bookshop and suggest that the attachment to the physical book and experience on offer at independent

bookshops may add to the argument that the physical book and independent have continuing roles to play in reading culture, even with an encroachment of the ebook into physical territory.

I would now like to address what the literature has overlooked and what I will be bringing to the research. What I have noticed in these articles and books is that an anthropological approach has been left out. The articles by David Wright and Jen Li, and Miller's book are the closest to the more anthropological offering that this thesis seeks to provide, though Wright's idea of the individuality of the customer in the bookshop is important for me as it conflicts with the theory I will use, it stands up for itself in my observations. The articles do not produce sufficient information regarding the happenings inside the bookshop from the customers' perspective, which can be vital for an owner to know. In my cultural analysis the theories used will enable greater understanding of the bookshop and will later combine the findings to present buying the book in the bookshop as part of an experiencescape. This as of yet has not been done. Furthermore, I am looking at this project from the perspective that English is a foreign language in the country the research took place, therefore, the English language bookshop has a different position in that society. Furthermore, by taking an anthropological approach, touching on fetishism and liminality, I aim to view the bookshop in regards to connections beyond the superficiality of holding a book and in regards to the space in which customers shop and these in turn represent to the future of the bookshop and book and their positions in the digital age.

Miller contends that due to the mail order system of books in USA readers are happy to purchase books without seeing/touching them (2006:52), yet Kerr, Craig and I would disagree and believe the tangibility of the book is an important part of searching/buying/reading a book, and my work does focus upon the difference in buying online and in shop.

Young believes a cultural shift and an infrastructure to maintain it must be established if we are going to move to the ebook age, yet bypasses the attractions of holding a book rather than a tablet, being seen with a bag from the shop rather than receiving an email confirming a download. He focuses on the ebook to bring back quality reading but overlooks the atmosphere in the bookshop.

This thesis intends to position itself amongst the literature that promotes the continued use of the book and the independent bookshop whilst simultaneously functioning in and with the digital era. The thesis acknowledges though it is not an easy task, and will be justified with the use of anthropological theory and fieldwork providing authority to the material put forth.

### **3.0 Theoretical Section**

To understand the future of the physical book and the bookshop I have employed a number of theories to understand the phenomena I observed and recorded. In the thesis I employ 3 main theories before culminating them into the concept of Experiencescape. This section will be a space in which the theories will be explained, debated and defined, thereby providing the reader with the map to navigate the thesis.

Whilst interning at the bookshop and conducting my research, I began to develop the ideas of the thesis' direction and the theories to be applied. In essence then, I used grounded theory to make sense of my new surroundings, as I had no intention of presuming and applying my assumptions onto the project before I had begun the work required. Working in the shop, serving customers, answering their needs and observing customers whose being in the shop was purely individualistic, without requiring the help of others, I was seeing patterns emerge. Interactions with books and slow movements were common for most customers, be they tourists, locals, first timers or regulars. I watched people's interactions with the books, felt the presence of the customers in this space, which was vastly dissimilar to the street from which they had entered, or spotted the locals who had just left the office 5 minutes previous and could recognise too the tourists who had probably just left a small tourist shop purveying goods of a certain quality, depicting a certain image of the country, the city in which we were now collected. This space we were in together, we were creating, is a unique space in the centre of the city. Not only did I have to work in this space to realise it was poles apart from the busy street's atmosphere but I simply had to come to work in the morning to feel, listen, smell the shop when the customers were not in. And when the customers were entering the shop the diversity in sounds and sights were markedly increased. With my observations and feelings acknowledged by the ethnographer in me, I began asking questions related to the phenomena. With the collection of this data the theory needed to be applied. It is now here that we discuss the theories used, justifying and defining them as we proceed through the thesis.

### **3.1 Liminality**

I intend to employ Liminality in my analysis of the bookshop and physical books. I have chosen to use this theory due its use in rituals and initiations, and its use for defining transition. A liminal experience is one in which we enter, remove ourselves from our previous state, and leave anew and the bookshop in this case would house such an experience. Liminality is the removal of a person from society and being placed back into society anew. Jon. P. Mitchell neatly summarises it

with this quote “an initiate (initiate) is removed from everyday material life and placed in a liminal state in which transition rites are carried out before (re)incorporation into the everyday” (2006:387), Victor. W. Turner's view is more of the same: “The liminal stage in rites of passage is when the initiates are removed and typically secluded from the rest of society – in effect they become invisible” (1964:1). Liminality was first addressed by Arnold van Gennep and I will look at Turner's use of liminality due to his more liminality focused research and writings. As opposed to Van Gennep, whose thinking operated around the 3 stages of ritual: separation, margin and aggregation (Turner 1964:1), Turner refers to the marginal as the liminal and writes on it extensively. It is for this reason I have chosen to focus heavily upon Turner. However, before I further address Turner, Tony Ulliyatt deconstructs “liminality” and demonstrates the word to be of Latin origin and by deconstructing the concept in such a way we can gain a deeper understanding: “threshold, lintel; doorway, entrance; house, hoe; (fig) beginning” (2011:106). From this meaning we enable ourselves to bring about a fuller understanding of liminality by viewing the liminal as an experience that we step into and out of, be it physically or mentally, and leave changed.

Turner states this liminal stage, or rites of passage, taking place with greatest expression in “small scale, relatively stable and cyclical societies where change is bound up with biological and meteorological rhythms and recurrences rather than with technological innovation” (Turner 1964:1) and although there are some aspects in this statement that do not quite fit the bookshop space of 2012 Istanbul it does not render this theory inapplicable to the research and the phenomena of the English language bookshop, as we are focusing on a very localised experience. After venturing into this space housing the experience, the passenger (or initiate) is separated from their society and not yet ready for re-entry. This can be viewed as interstructural and (structurally) unstable for those operating within it, though the initiate becomes stable again once they have left this state (Turner 1964:2). In the liminal the passenger is invisible, not physically but socially, they are a “transitional being”, sharing the same name and symbols with the others in the space, and after this ritual the passenger who has traversed the liminal is now endowed with additional rights and responsibilities (Turner 1964:2). Stephen Bigger quotes Turner as describing liminality as “a fructile chaos, a fertile nothingness, a storehouse of possibilities...a striving after new forms and structure, a gestation process, fetation [*sic*] of modes appropriate to and anticipatory postliminal experience” (Bigger 2010:3). Liminality then is to be removed from the everyday. This is supported by Gabrielle Riches whose study on women and mosh pits found in the shared liminal space of the mosh pit a cohesive unit, or to use Turner's vocabulary a *communitas*, was formed along with expressive shared sentiments in the gestures of the participants (2011:318). Bigger goes on to

define *communitas* as being “marked by individual freedom, ignoring structure and promoting spontaneity” in his use of liminality in education (2010:3). Here the ignorance of structure is the ignorance of the structure of the state left and waiting to re-enter.

Turner develops his theory of the liminal by noting 3 stages/elements of the liminal. Firstly he notes the communication of *Sacra*, which is the showing of symbols which convey meaning; actions of the passengers in the liminal, and; instructions informing, directing the passengers. Secondly, he notes ludic deconstruction and recombination of familiar cultural configurations to encourage the passengers/liminals/neophytes to think deeply about themselves and their surroundings. Thirdly, there is the simplification of the relations of the social structure (Parker et al 2012:150). These elements of the liminal can be witnessed in the bookshop experience I intend to analyse in this thesis. And it is for this reason I chose to include it.

Although Turner sees liminality as part of initiations, I believe that liminality can be applicable to all moments in life as supported by Ulyyat who writes: “we find innumerable other boundaries, exits and entrances” (2011:104) and we are constantly in liminal experiences of varying degrees of safety and danger, whereby liminalities exist within liminalities. The tourist will have travelled to Istanbul but will have areas of safety or comfort such as the hotel. The street, however, may not be a safe space for them and they therefore will seek out the next safe zone, be it a shop or a museum, which may hold more unknown zones for our tourist. This continues until they are back at home with new knowledge, experiences and accomplishments. From this we can see that liminality is not as dichotic as safe and unsafe, known and unknown, before and after. Our everyday movements and trajectories hold different levels of the liminal. With this in mind it would be wrong to assume that the shop is a safe haven for all, it too has the possibility to contain zones of discomfort.

### **3.2 Fetishism**

The next theory I will introduce to help analyse the experience in the bookshop will be fetishism. Once in the bookshop customers would begin looking for books. Some spent a few seconds looking around taking in the atmosphere of the shop, others headed straight for their section. Once fully into the process of hunting for the book, the customers were behaving in similar manners: individual hunting despite coming in with a group, total fixation on the task at hand. It is from these observations that I chose to apply the theory of fetishism to the study. The word *fetish* is of Latin origin (*facticius*), via Portuguese (*feitiço*) with Roy Ellen informing us of the nature of the word, meaning “done” or “a thing made by art” (Pietz 1985:5, 1987:26f, Ellen 1988:214).

William Pietz defines and develops the fetish's origins by attributing the word to the worship of non-Christian gods and the performance of non-Christian (Catholic) rituals in early Christian thought (1987:30). But when fetish was applied by the enlightened Portuguese, the Christian connotations of the word were lacking, with use of the word lying outside of Christian Theology (Pietz 1987:36, 1988:105). *Feitiço* was being applied to objects worn around the body. It embodied power when a number of ritual materials were combined and was a tool to achieve effect (Pietz 1987:36f, Fernandez and Lastovicka 2011:278).

With the fetish itself then being an object rising from problems relating to “the capacity of the material object to embody – simultaneously and sequentially- religious, commercial, aesthetic and sexual values” (Pietz 1985:7), and what is all the more important for the individuals worshipping the fetish is “the object's irreducible materiality” (Pietz 1985:7), the physicality of the object, its physical existence is of worth as it is the objectification of what is worshipped. Pietz furthers his definition of the fetish:

“The heterogeneous components appropriated into an identity by a fetish are not only material elements; desires and beliefs and narrative structures establishing a practice are also fixed (or fixated) by the fetish, whose power is precisely the power to repeat its originating act of forging an identity of articulated relations between certain other heterogeneous things” (Pietz 1985:7f).

What the fetish then represents has the ability to be seen in other objects. The object is not what is fetishised but what it contains and represents, and Pietz demonstrates this through providing observations from colonialists who documented fetishes made out of gold were traded (with colonialists) at prices deemed unbelievably low (Pietz 1985:9). The fetish differs from the conceptualisation of an idol in that the idol was a free standing statue whereas the fetish was an object, non institutionally defined, about person (Pietz 1985:10). With this in mind we should note that “the fetish is, then, first of all, something intensely personal, whose truth is experienced as a substantial movement from 'inside' the self ... into the self-limited morphology of a material object situated in space 'outside'” (Pietz 1985:11f). Therefore, we create the fetishised object, our desires become the object.

Pietz continues to give the stages which are needed for an object to become fetishised, or rather for fetishism to occur, they are; “historical”, an event; “territorialised”, brought into a material space or the “earthly matrix”; “reification”, the thing or shape within the space the historical event took place; “personalised”, this historical reified object within the territory holds deep personal

meanings for the individual (Pietz 1985:12). The fetish is the culmination of the above, unifying them and once worshipped it “[returns] them to their separate spheres” (Pietz 1985:13). In his second essay of 3 on the subject of the Fetish, Pietz develops these 4 points further, he writes of the “untranscended materiality of the fetish”; “the radical historicity of the fetish's origin”; “its enduring capacity to repeat this singular process”; “the dependence of the fetish for its meaning and value on a particular order of social relations”, and “the active relation of the fetish object to the living body of an individual” (1987:23). Here we see that the fetish also helps create social order. The fetish helped to keep the social order through its power over the believers: consume the fetish as a thief and be harmed, consume it as an innocent and you will be unscathed, which are known as “fetish oaths” (Pietz 1987:43). As the book is just one of the components of the bookshop it may not possess all that the more anthropological texts describe, but to summarise what Pietz says: The fetish is the materialisation, personification of material objects which are the vehicles for faith and worship and have a power over the worshippers (Pietz 1988:105).

Roy Ellen (1988), however, combined the Anthropological definition of the fetish (akin to Pietz's definition above), Marx's definition and Freud's definition of the fetish. He did so to find the core of the fetish by addressing the common denominators in the three approaches to fetishism. From this Ellen found 4 cognitive processes at work with the fetish: “concrete existence or concretisation of abstractions”; “the attribution of qualities of living organisms, often (though not exclusively) human”; “conflation of signifier and signified”; “an ambiguous relationship between control of object by people and of people by object” (Ellen 1988:219). Furthermore, Ellen states that “whatever [the fetish] is may co-exist with other different kinds of belief” and from this we can ask with Ellen “of what greater whole is fetishism a part?” (1988:219). To briefly address this the fetish is applied to the book which is in a space housing a liminal experience.

Ellen develops the Anthropological position and understanding of the fetish put forward by Pietz, and in doing so can allow the fetish to be furthered in spaces of monetary exchange, as we find in the consumption of goods in shops. Furthermore, the acknowledgement of the fetish as an object of consumption and monetary exchange can justify our use of the value of the sign, which will be discussed below. Though born out of cross-cultural exchange in West Africa, fetishism also has its place in other cultures, countries and eras. I intend to apply the theory of the fetish to the physical book in the bookshop to address the future of the physical book in the digital era.

### **3.3 Sign Value**

In his essay “The Art Auction: Sign exchange and sumptuary value”, Jean Baudrillard (1981) focuses

on exchange value with that of semiotics to bring us the value of the sign. He writes: "In consumption generally, economic exchange value (money) is converted into sign value (prestige, etc); but this operation is still sustained by the alibi of use value" (1981:112). From this we can comprehend that the object is being bought for a reason other than its use, a reason that adds something to the actor engaging with the commodity, or the consumption of the commodity symbolises and represents the actor's being in some form. The reason this theory appeals to me is the bookshop stocked both Turkish and English books but the customers were buying the English version despite being triple the price. Regarding wealth and money Baudrillard continues: "It is wealth manifested, and a manifest destruction of wealth. It is that value, deployed beyond exchange value and founded upon the latter's destruction, that invests the object purchased, acquired, appropriated, with its differential sign value" (1981:112). The reason I wish to include sign value in my thesis is due to its link to the fetish, the greater power behind the book is the sign, as "behind the purchase (or behind the individual reappropriation of use value) there always remains the moment of expenditure, which even in its banality presupposes something of a competition, a wager, a challenge, a sacrifice and thus a potential community of peers and an aristocratic measure of value...[and this] occasionally turns consumption into a passion" (Baudrillard 1981:112f). The interaction and relation with the book can be explained further by sign value in that both sign and culture are part of a fetishisation of the commodity (Baudrillard 1981:114), so through fetishism we can understand how people interact with the book and what relation they have with it, whilst sign value helps us to explain why they are fetishising the book, as the fetishised book contains the sign value being sought after.

In their article focusing on being present in a museum, Fitchett and Saren, find that the use and exchange potential of an object have become the signified and the signifier (1998:315). The use and exchange value have been replaced by sign value, and that it is now a semiotic system of signifiers which needs links to the functional and productive (Fitchett and Saren 1998:316) values of products and commodities, stressing that "the sign itself (rather than which it once signified) becomes the focus of consumer desire and value" (Fitchett and Saren 1998:316). But whilst researching in the museum and questioning participants about the artefacts in front of them, looking at the value of the objects, they found that being in the presence of these objects, not as images but as physical objects, added extra value to the museum, a value not of economic significance (Fitchett and Saren 1998:325). This they then labelled as the "dasein value...the value of actually experiencing the physical presence of the objects" (Fitchett and Saren 1998:326) which is an important value to address due to the current conflict between online and in-shop book

buying and the concept of the Experiencescape.

#### **4.0 Methods**

In this section of the thesis I intend to help the reader visualise the environment in which I conducted my research. Not wanting to merely provide an “arrival story” (Davies 2008:11) my intention is not to describe what happened but for the reader to be able to visualise the process of data collection and the space within which data was collected. This section will demonstrate the skills and techniques used in acquiring the data used in the thesis and proving that it had been collected fairly and any external influences on the participants have been taken into account when the data they provided is analysed.

#### **4.1 Observation**

My observations were undertaken covertly from a sales assistant's perspective as I performed the role *la perruque* (de Certeau 1984). *La perruque* can be seen as “ways of operating” (de Certeau 1984:30) and it is for us to establish our own ways in a system intended for another purpose, in this case researching whilst working at a bookshop. “By an art of being in between, [I can draw] unexpected results from [the] situation” (de Certeau 1984:30) and I made myself a space within which to research whilst operating as a sales assistant in the same geographical setting. I was consuming their time but producing data. I, as a cultural analyst, was having to make that space productive, thoughtful and meaningful.

I would now like to address the style of observation carried out. What type of observation was it, which category did it fit into, if at all? Working at the bookshop it could be assumed that I was an insider, but I was not observing the working culture there but the consumption culture, the shop itself and what it offered. I read books myself, I enjoy shopping for them, but I was not participating in this with the customers. I was outside of their experience to some degree, but was I not “already part of the native culture” (Davies 2008:80) as I spoke the language of the majority of the shop's stock and had tacit knowledge of the act of book hunting/buying? Did I operate between these two labels of inside and outside? I was overt in that they could see me, but covert in that my role was hidden, or rather I was “quasi-invisible” (de Certeau 1984:31) - a consequence of researching *la perruque*. I did not feel like an insider, I worked at the shop without prior knowledge of the shop's book culture. If the “researcher's place on the insider-outsider continuum is circumscribed by the relationship between the observer and the phenomena being studied” (Labaree 2002:100), then I had a place on the continuum, but was categorically neither an insider nor an outsider. Furthermore, Robert Labaree continues “the boundaries of insiderness are

situational and defined by the perceptions of those being researched” (2002:100), which suggests that my position on the continuum fluctuated depending on my positionality as certain phenomena arose. This equates to me that I was moving along the continuum depending on the situation.

As customers shopped, perused the aisles and flicked through books I would work and take notes as and when I could. In the beginning seemingly obvious observations were being recorded, compiling all activities and behaviours. Looking at books was a behaviour displayed by most people (of course some people came in and left almost immediately), but it was how people looked at their books which really caught my eye. The observations gave me inspiration and posed questions in my mind for my interviews that would come later in the project and facilitated the grounded theory method of theoreticising. Movements can highlight what people know and do, but do not verbally communicate, as they interact with objects (Pink 2011:125) and so I felt justified by observing before interviewing.

My tacit knowledge is a continuous reference, and even if I tried to observe and note naively is it not possible that prior knowledge and assumptions still decided what was (a)typical in the bookshop? How was it possible for me to reduce the impact of my tacit knowledge? Nicholas Wolfinger (2002) promotes the use of salience hierarchy, by noting what is deviant we can eventually ascertain the norm, with the use of Henri Lefebvre (1991) we should observe how the space is lived in the face of its perception and ultimately conception. This concept of the normal-abnormal is further promoted by Aksel Tjora, who differentiates between critical and non-critical incidents (2006:432). In my case I needed to understand the cultural norms in the bookshop. Acknowledging that my tacit knowledge influences my assumptions I employed salience hierarchy to ensure that a more objective view of the Istanbul bookshop’s culture was noted, not my subjective assumption of how the shop should be lived.

As “the construction of ethnographies is primarily a literary activity” (Davies 2008:40), I worked hard on capturing and detailing non-verbal, literary signs, senses, behaviours and soundscapes. My transcripts attempted to record the original sound and feeling of the field and Paddy O’Toole and Patricia Were continue this by adding: “A place is the nexus of things and space within a given boundary [that] has imputed values and interpretations” (2008:618).

As I was working at the shop the customers could see me, but they saw an employee not a researcher, therefore the observation had a covert flavour to it as a lack of transparency was involved. I did not ask for permission to observe them, I did not inform them that I was observing

them. It ensured natural behaviour was being recorded but was it being ethically recorded? And even when I thought I was observing natural behaviour the naturality of it is questioned with this comment from Charlotte Aull Davies: “the researcher's presence, even though they were unacknowledged in that role, was likely to distort their observations” (2008:83). Was this hidden research role fair in its documenting of unwitting informants despite the greater chance of natural behaviour? Was it possible to have told every customer as they entered the shop that they were under observation? And if so would this have caused friction between the ethnographic and the applied nature of the research? I believe the research and the business could have been adversely affected by such a declaration. Davies addresses my concerns with this comment:

“There are forms of research that are also covert but do not always carry the same ethical objections. Research in public places...does not require notification of the presence and intent of the researcher, although some forms of recording these events may require permission from the organisers.” (2008:65).

Though covert and without permission, I feel that the observations were ethical. Names were not recorded or even asked for, therefore, identities are safe and the invasive researcher was absent from disturbing the customers. For customers I was only a sales assistant, a presumed figure to be present in a bookshop allowing for more natural behaviour to prevail.

#### **4.2 Photography**

In the bookshop in Istanbul I wanted to try and capture the relationship people had with books, how they experienced the bookshop and what they thought of it. How could I capture them flicking through their pages, searching for them, smelling them and expressing their emotions towards the books?

Whilst working I would try and capture pictures as and when the opportunity arose. If the shop was busy I would climb half way up the stairs and capture the people filling the aisles, facing the shelves in groups of 2s or 3s with one member of a group telling the other(s) about the book they had just found. I wanted to capture the moments when a person was deep in a book with their belongings stacked upon the new-book section, oblivious to all around them. Taking pictures as and when I could meant that I waited for something noticeable and deviant to come along to spur me on (like shouting or rapid movements), but at other times I would just snap away when nothing of interest was taking place in order to give an even spread of the atmosphere in the bookshop. Whilst photographing I was botanising the bookshop, photographing the shop as an artform, capturing the art of the book, recording life in the shop (Goldstein 2008:123) and combining it with

## Anthropology.

The problem I found with using photography as a method to capture the culture of the bookshop was that when I wanted to capture an action I was only capturing a frozen point-second of the action which was part of a larger experience, supported by Davies who notes the time restraints (2008:133). The advantages the photograph has over the interview is foremost the “apparent immediacy and transparent factuality” (Davies 2008:130) that cannot always be said for interview notes, and the ability of the photographs to support my observations of the customers at the shop and the way in which they described it. How could I then capture the continuous emotions of the informants? To capture static objects, features, crowdedness was manageable, and after all “it seems ridiculous to elucidate visual meaning with words” (Hurdley 2007:362), and so capturing the aesthetics of the shop was a must, but how could I photograph the relationship people have with books and present them? I would photograph at a distance and at close range. But how did I ethically capture informants naturally experiencing the bookshop and interacting with the books?

I first put myself in the shoes of the customers in the shop. From working in an elaborate looking bookshop in the tourist centre of the city, my picture was (unintentionally) being taken every day, and I did not like it, though sometimes it would amuse me to think that my face would be encapsulated in someone’s holiday album for years to come. So for shots of the shop showing how crowded it was, I knew that if these were to be used I would need to bar-out the eyes of the customer to protect their anonymity. I did not wish to ask everyone in a crowded shop if I could take their picture as it could have disrupted business and if I took the photo and then asked for permission to use it could I ensure that everyone in the photograph remained in the shop until I had asked? And what if one subject in the picture had said no and the other nineteen had said yes? I decided that to anonymise them was the best practice to ensure protection of the participant and natural behaviour being captured, though some of the emotion in the eyes would be lost for the reader of this thesis. What is also worth bearing in mind is that many tourists were taking flash photography and that smart phones’ ever increasing presence meant that a photo being taken was not a particularly significant event. Thus camera consciousness was not as big a role as it could have been, and customers at the shop were less likely to alter their behaviour, resulting in more natural depictions of their comportment.

On the shots of couples or individual people I would do one of two things: I would see something happening and take a picture of the action as to ensure its non-performative nature – not set up for the camera. Then approach the subject with my student ID, introduce myself and my research

and present them with the picture and ask if they minded me using it as part of my research, and that their anonymity would be safe guarded. Although I took their picture without permission I hope that by asking for consent of use, credibility is given to this study. Furthermore, would the informants have said no more often if I had presented the picture of them first, without an introduction and context and asked to use it? Does having a research agenda provide more opportunities for an invasion into people's lives than they would otherwise allow?

The second strategy I used to ethically take a subject's photo was by asking first and shooting second. I remember one woman was sitting on the stairs reading, I asked if I could take her picture and she replied "no, but thank you for asking" (though in a sharp voice not a kind one). This actually made me very satisfied that someone had said no, even more so than if she had said yes. I felt that this method was ethical, that I was playing by the rules of the game. By saying no to me I felt that the other people who agreed to have their photos taken were genuine when they allowed me to and had not submitted to a pressure exerted by me. But it is not inconceivable to imagine that I as a native English speaking male may have influenced some people into saying yes to me taking/using their photo.

With the photography as a method I aimed to capture the emotions in the shop, the experience had and the object and sights which were highlighted to me by participants in interviews and by my own auto-ethnography. The photographs will serve to document the research process, act as evidence in what I observed and to help give an understanding of what it was like to be at the bookshop in Istanbul.

### **4.3 Semi-Structured Interview**

At the bookshop one interviewing style was the semi- structured interview. After the observations and with the theme of the project in mind I drew up questions to be answered. This semi-structured interview was used for 2 focus areas: 1st being that of the shop; 2nd being that of digitalisation.

After conducting observations and settling in at the shop I began the interview phase. I had with me 30 preprinted sheets of questions, I saw 20 as a solid number of participants for the `shop data` and 10 participants for the `digitalisation data`, as anomalies and patterns could be seen. I waited to speak with customers whilst simultaneously working. If I were to see customers leaving with books and if it was not too busy for me as a worker, I would invite them to participate in my research, something that Karen O'Reilly views as "opportunistically turning a situation into an interview" (2005:123). They could have been Istanbulites, tourists or expatriates. On my counter at

the shop we had a pull-out shelf, on which I would place the paper for writing and interview the informant. It was not conducted over the counter but rather at 90 degrees from one another at the pull-out shelf. I would say my name, the university's name and what I was doing at the bookshop. I did this to give the participant a piece of me, contextualising this invasion of their post-purchase time in the bookshop, halting their departure from the shop. My English name and Swedish University roused curiosity and so a bit of patter would take place for 20 to 30 seconds prior to some interviews actually commencing, creating friendliness, openness and familiarity.

The questions in the first set of interviews would gain information about the customers: tourist or local, native English, Turkish or other language speaker? Which book was bought and in which language? What did they make of the shop? I wanted my criteria filled but I also desired the participant to speak, without prompts, without interruption. The interviews would last no more than 7 minutes and no less than 3. From them I gained open ended qualitative data and aimed for a comparative data set.

At the end of my 2 week period of interviewing I had collected my 20 interviews. There were 3 that I was not so happy with but as customers of the shop their participation in the research also said something about the shop's clientèle and their participation was as worthy as any other. In the digitalisation interview period I conducted 10 interviews over a week and focused on buying habits and the relation between physical and ebooks.

By having a template of predesignated questions – ran by the management to ensure that they were suitable – which in turn begs the question, if I knew I was having the questions vetted by the shop before I conducted the interviews, did I (un)consciously tone down any potential provocative questions to avoid conflict? – Could predesignated questions stifle free flowing dialogue, was I only symbolically allowing the participant to talk freely when it served my interest as an ethnographer? I feel though that the questions were justified and sound insofar that they produced solid data which allowed participants to answer openly.

How was I selecting my participants? How random was this process of my research or rather how did I try to make my participants reflect all customers at the shop? I always tried to get an even mix of male and female. For the digitalisation questions I somehow got a grossly disproportionate male majority and on the booktour (discussed below) all women. I also tried to get a mix of locals and tourists - Turks who spoke English, expatriates who lived in Istanbul. But one demographic I could never capture was the locals who did not speak English. What would have this demographic have said differently? What could I have learnt from them? I chose other groups because I could see

them and communicate with them. Regardless of the opportunities to speak in English, I felt a chink in my ethnographical armour “thus, not being able to speak [Turkish] is experienced by most of the incomers [me] as a disadvantage, despite the many assurances to the contrary” (Charles and Davies 1997:425), and I maintain that a good ethnographer should be conversant, at the minimum, in the local language, as Nickie Charles and Charlotte Aull Davies continue to praise bilingual interviewing (1997:423). Customers who required my assistance were a good way to recruit participants. Conventional sales assistant and customer interaction lead to a post-purchase interview as they were leaving the shop. When I saw Turkish speakers with large English titles I attempted to interview them as I could speak with the regular clientèle whose opinions I desired due to the frequency in which they returned to the shop and why. Though desiring to interview local customers, I did not let this affect the way I recruited or analysed the data, all opinions were of equal weight.

Selecting people by carrying an English book sounds crude and superficial but when Turks were speaking Turkish there needed to be a marker for me to then enquire if they could participate in the research. The reason I did not approach any Turkish customer whose English knowledge I was not sure of was that I did not speak Turkish, an embarrassment at the best of times and a major flaw in this research. In their research with Latinos in USA, Patricia Sunderland and Rita Denny had worries about finding “the right people” to interview (2007:233), and these worries were easily laid to rest by confronting them. I now regret I did not try and speak with the people who did not speak English, who knows, something could have become of it.

How did the customers feel being interviewed in a shop? The same shop they were being quizzed about? The manager recommended me to interview customers upstairs on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor but to drag a participant back into the bowels of the shop as they were leaving, and to be alone with me, seemed to go against my desire for a relaxed atmosphere. By offering to conduct the interview near the exit I felt that I was not drawing them away from their desired destination – the exit – and not forcing them into a deeper realm of the shop.

#### **4.4 The Walk-along Interview**

Though sounding simple in theory – simply walking along with a participant – this is a unique research method that opens up new realms for ethnography and is determined by Phil Jones et al as “an ideal technique for exploring issues around people’s relationship to space” (2008:2). Though I did a walk-along with my participants, my walk-alongs were a little different to the standard application of the method (Jones et al 2008, Carpiano 2009). Not only did I walk with the

participants and simultaneously interview them, I also wanted them to show me where they like to buy books in Beyoğlu district and not have me select the shops for them, to address any issues of power and movement choice (Jones et al 2008:3), and consequently the walk-along evolved into a bookshop tour. This was done to “generate understandings of both how people constitute urban environments through embodied and imaginative practices and how researchers become attuned to and constitute ethnographic places” (Pink 2008:176) and therefore provide a better understanding of bookshops for these individuals interviewed and their cultural patterns (Maso 2001).

The bookshop tour as a method came to fruition as I desired a comparison to the bookshop in which I was interning/researching. As the customers were already present at the shop it was all too common to only receive positive feedback regarding the layout, appearance, catalogue and atmosphere when asked during interviews. I wanted to see the other bookshops the customers frequented, I wanted to learn what the other bookshops had or had not, as each shop could be said to gather experiences, histories, languages and thoughts (Pink 2008:178) unique to each local, and how these differences between the shops contributed to a differing space and phenomenon, attracting a specific clientèle.

My aim for the walk-along bookshop tour was for the participants to meet me at the top of Istiklal Caddesi in a café. There I would invite them for a tea and explain the day's procedure and also to establish a rapport, something encouraged by Karen Nairn et al (2005:230). By inviting them for a tea I hoped to make sure that my demeanour was of good nature and I appreciated their deference of showing willing in my research. Whilst in the café I presented the participants with a template and a pen. This template was quite basic. It asked for the name of the shop visited, their first impressions, or view from the street, the perceived atmosphere (or multisensory documentation (Pink 2008:180)) and the layout. Furthermore, differing slightly from a qualitative interview and an outing with the participant (Carpiano 2009:264), I wanted the participants to really interact with the



*Illustration 1: A bag of books from another bookshop sat upon the till.*

bookshop and had set 2 small tasks of finding 2 books – 1 in Turkish and 1 in English. Classical interview styles “are insufficient for elucidating our understanding of the numerous ways in which such places matter” (Carpiano 2009:263) for the participant. Therefore, I really desired to capture

the information in the context of the experience. That way I could be sure that the shop was explored and/or interaction with a member of staff could take place.

With the procedure explained and the formalities and conversation flowing we would begin the booktour. The participant lead me and following the interactionist style of interviewing we shared thoughts ranging from literature, to politics, to our studies, somewhat akin to Phillipe Bourgois who walked, relaxed and drank beer with informants outside of their former schools to learn about their experiences of childhood education (1996:254). I felt this interactionist approach helped everyone to relax. It can feel less intimidating for the interviewee if the interviewer shares a little about themselves as well. At the shops visited I waited outside as the participant made their notes in the template and looked around the bookshop. I did this as I did not want to influence the participant in their attitudes towards and experience in the bookshop.

Between shops we would continue speaking about this and that. As these walk-alongs were conducted on my days off and it was the summer (peak tourist season), the streets were heaving with people. It was a relief to pop into the bookshops as generally they were quieter (though not always), cooler and a lot less crowded. 3 million tourists a day were passing through Istiklal Caddesi. We did well to interact and avoid walking into others. The street on which the shops were based is about a mile long, but the number of bookshops visited meant that we were never walking for more than 2 minutes before we departed from the crowds of people.

At the end of the street when all the shops the participants frequented had been visited, I invited them to another tea house for a drink. This was to thank them again for participating and also for me to expand upon and reify their notes. I would read through the notes and then ask the participants to clarify. Not only was I then able to “experience spatial practices in situ whilst assessing their experience” (Kusenbach 2003:462) but by clarifying their notes I was also able to simultaneously experience their interpretations. I did this as the notes taken were brief and needed to be contextualised, for example, “friendly”, but what was it that was friendly? This way the data was contextualised and was more meaningful in knowing the attributes of the shops along Istiklal and my shop in comparison to other competing shops.

The positive aspects of this method for my research were that I was able to interact with the participants outside of the shop I was based at, not talking over a counter but over a glass of tea, along the street, outside of shops. The space in which the interaction was taking place was less rigid than at the bookshop and I believe this relaxed manner of interacting added to the experience for the participant and in turn provided me with a better yield of data. I was able to see how a

bibliophile traversed the street from shop to shop seeing which shops they entered and why, exploring “the constitutive role and the transcendent meaning of the physical environment, or place [or bookshop]” (Kusenbach 2003:458), and why they entered some despite not liking them. The way the bibliophile lived Istiklal is important because it views the street as the more hectic and dangerous and the shop as the safer space, which is what I was noticing with my research. To see what some shops lacked and what others had helped to give an impression of what the bookshop experiencescape requires, for the clientèle at my shop anyway. The participants acted as gatekeepers for me as without them I would not have had the access to these Turkish shops nor their opinions on them. Additionally their opinions on the shops were being given whilst they were there not as memories recollected but a live commentary on my templates.

#### **4.5 Summary of the methods used**

As you have seen a number of methods were used to collect the data needed to produce this thesis. By ranging from the more inconspicuous la perruque of working and observing to the walk-along in which I, the researcher, was lead by the participant through the bookshops of Istanbul, varying types of methods have been used to give a fuller pool of data to analyse.

#### **5.0 An Experiencescape: What is one?**

According to Tom O’Dell experiences are “highly personal, subjectively perceived, intangible, ever fleeting and continuously on-going” and can be found in the minds of the ones experiencing (2010:15). He adds that these experiences, like any other material object, can be commodified and located in settings from cafés to museums, sports arenas to well-known tourist attractions (O’Dell 2010:15). As an experience is fostered in the mind of the one experiencing and the experience itself is “anchored in space” (O’Dell 2010:5), we can also apply such a *-scape* to the bookshop. The experience is played out in the mind of the person and so therefore that experience must be triggered by the space in which they find themselves. By then viewing the English language bookshop in Istanbul as an experiencescape we can help create a space in which more than books are consumed, but along with them an experience.

O’Dell recognises that these *landscapes of experience* are designed, created and used, but also the consumer is searching for the space in which to consume (2010:16), so the space does not equate to instant positive experiencing. With the help of Arjun Appadurai, O’Dell builds on the idea that the experience is imagined (2010:17), subjectively experienced by the consumer, and to facilitate the consumption of the imagined experience, we too must create the appropriate space for this. With the use of Lefebvre, O’Dell sees the experience as a space being imagined by the user, using

creativity and going against what we would perceive to take place there (2010:18). To help better understand this, the English language bookshop does not only sell books, but can also sell a chance to perform *Englishness*, or the opportunity to show your literacy off. The experiencescape is a space which enables the user to imagine something which cannot be handled; experiences are sought and found amongst other commodities.

The reason why an experiencescape is important is that “experiences drive the economy and therefore generate much of the base demand for goods and services” Pine and Gilmore 1999 (O’Dell 2010:20) and this is particularly relevant now as we search for more than the tangible. Scott Lash and Jon Urry, in their work on the postmodern economic environment, find that even objects have become abstract of meaning as their functions have replaced, or rather superseded their symbolism, with sign value remaining as a simulacrum (1994:14). Though I believe that in this bookshop space the objects are full of meaning to the customer and the object is important but it is the intangible that is produced alongside the object that are now valued by the customer base. Therefore, the experiencescape found in an English language bookshop is of worth and must be harnessed in order for the shops to compete with ebooks and online retailers.

How can we then sell an experience if we cannot handle, touch or see it? By deconstructing (not in the Derridian sense) the bookshop to reveal its basic elements we will understand what creates the English language bookshop beyond books and a shop. This understanding of the space will provide us with the information needed to create an experience out of the space and give the physical book and the bookshop a direction in an age favouring the digital.

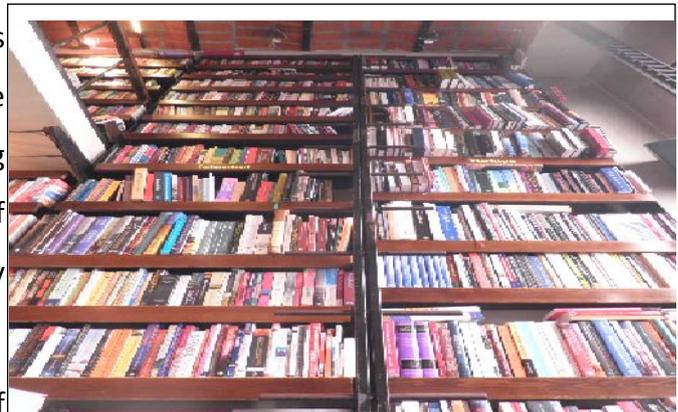
## **6.0 What are the components of the bookshop?**

In this section of the thesis I will document my findings as we pick apart the bookshop. I will begin with observations, followed by research data from participants and end with the application of theory. The elements of the bookshop highlighted will document what is necessary for a bookshop to be an experiencescape, and in turn give us a better position to view the physical book and bookshop from.

### **6.1 Layout**

Walking along Istiklal Caddesi in Beyoğlu is like flowing through a river of people. Over 3 million people would be walking up and down the street shopping, looking for a café, taking pictures, running errands, performing and simply walking. The street is bordered by tall buildings, some of historic value, some not, some buildings were embassies, some were religious. Despite the height

of the buildings the sun can still reach the street and create a very hot and sweaty walk after midday. A pedestrian would have to be on constant lookout, whilst knowing which shops they were passing, as not to bump into anybody. From 10-20m off I can see the bookshop, exposed by its large high glass shop front. The cases and books on show in the window attract passers by to stop, look and enter. Standing on the threshold of the shop, with throngs of people parading behind me, I enter. The bell above the door announces my arrival. I can hear music, chatter too, others try to orientate themselves: "Where to go to? Which section am I in? Which cases should I look at first?". To the left and right the new books pile high- to the left the latest titles in Turkish tower as they are restocked weekly with new publications. To the right the English titles, which come once a month in an enormous delivery. I can choose to follow the varnished-but-worn pathways through the shop or leave but I will continue, the choice is left, right or straight on. Towering above me in this air conditioned shop are shelves reaching up 2 stories. Though a square perimeter, the floor space is divided up to create a number aisles, in which people move through, sit, stop to look at books or even read, facing the shelves. I am moving to the back of the shop and meet the till, the magazines and the stairs which lead the customer to the Turkish level. Let's take the stairs. Here I find more shelves, aisles and books. With such choices of books and avenues to take and all now in Turkish, I am feeling disenchanted, I do not know what could be here for me. I am going back down to the English books. I see the signs on the shelves to help direct my attention and thirst for books. Some books are spine out others are cover out depending on how new they are and where they are located. I walk through aisles closed in by the shelves and customers, though not as claustrophobic as one might think. The pathways available to me can seem intimidating but after all I am in a bookshop and the thrill of knowing the books on the shelves and where my unknown treasures lie pull me through.



*Illustration 2: A wall of books.*

I have tried to describe my experience of entering the shop to visualise the layout and get a feeling of the necessity of a good one. In this next section I will address the comments from the interviewees concerning bookshop layouts.

### **6.1.1 Customers and the layout**

The people who enter the bookshop, turn from being people on the street, tourists or workers and

are now collectively viewed as customers (though in conflict with the concept of *communitas* as not all customers were the same as some names we knew, were friends and regulars, but all seen as customers – adding to Wright’s (2005) more individual approach to the bookshop experience whilst acknowledging the group these individuals make up). In this space of the shop being a customer is part of the liminal experience. Until they leave the shop they will remain customers, part of a collective, yet individually engaging in the space. I watched customers move through the aisles, some would stop to look, others knew where they were heading as they already knew the shop. As part of the liminal experience in the English language bookshop the layout of the shop can complement the space housing a liminal experience. I spoke to the customers regarding the layout of the shop I was working at, as well as other shops along the street.

The need for a bookshop that has a testing layout is required, though it must not be too challenging as to put people off. For first timers the bookshop may be a difficult space to navigate but by accustoming oneself to the space greater knowledge is acquired, as can be seen by these comments:

“Asked the first time, and then knew where to look after that.” Interview 1.14

“Been using this shop since it was established. No assistance needed.” Interview 1.20

Now assistance is no longer required though it was in the beginning. Here there is the balancing act of the new and exciting and the known and old. The next comment highlights though that by trying to make a space new and different can have draw backs:

“I know where to look. The layout doesn't change around here, unlike other shops who want to make it “new” for people.” Interview 1.16

And what is required is a fixed space that also provides opportunities to allow each experience of the shop to follow a different trajectory through it. The customers are allowed to move through here yet have aisles and pathways available to them if other paths are blocked by other customers, allowing slow steady movement in and around the aisles checking for books and engaging with them. The next comment highlights this idea of movement through the shop:

“Here books are easier to find, prefers the interior design here. It doesn't look solely



Illustration 3: Istiklal Caddesi, the street the shop is on

academic → free flowing.” Interview 1.20

In the bookshop tour a competing shop’s layout, which is quintessentially a corridor, was described as “normal” and “the store space is cold (literally and metaphorically)” (Booktour 4), whilst the shop I was interning at was described as “beautiful (aesthetically)” and “the space in [it] is enough to move around which makes it hard for a first timer but after a couple of times you get to know the sections that interest you and you get used to it.” (Booktour 4).

Yet if we are to create such a space where we are creating choices, options and pathways for new and regular customers alike, we should ensure that the shelves creating the pathways and aisles are well labelled, preventing a customer from feeling lost during their experience in the bookshop:



*Illustration 4: Customers searching in the aisles*

“Not well tagged. Confusing labelling, labelling a problem.” Booktour 2

The bookshop is housing and creating an experiencescape which we want to be repeated and the combination of choices and information (labelling) is paramount.

From here I wish to now include Ulliyatt’s work on labyrinths. Though I do not

intend to view the bookshop as a labyrinth but rather as a maze, Ulliyatt’s work is important in understanding this concept and difference. “A labyrinth implies a single path and aspects of ritual, while a maze is a puzzle, with junctions and choices” (Ulliyatt 2011:107), and we can find a number of choices available in the bookshop. Ulliyatt creates a number of defining features for a maze (2010:90). I will not quote the list at length here but will focus upon the more relevant points. “Three dimensional”: the shelves which create the pathways and walls in our bookshop, akin to the hedge or maize, and notwithstanding the building itself as a three dimensional space. “Multicursal: meandering, bewildering”: which it can be for the first timers to the shop, searching for the desired section, walking through the aisles of shelves, turning at the end of the rows. “May have multiple entrances and exits”: though having one entrance/exit- the door - there is no one path which can be followed through the shop, and there are other entrances within the space itself

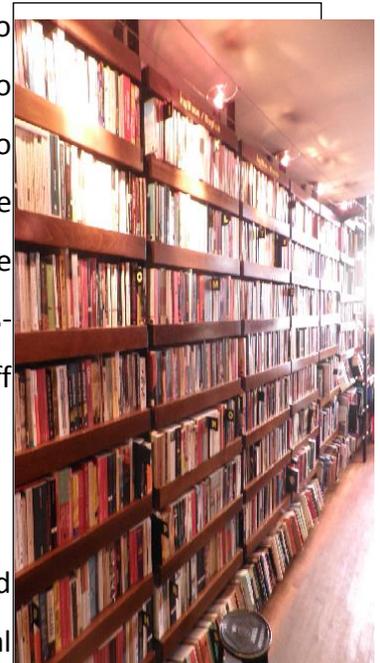
as one can enter the Turkish section up the narrowing spiral staircase, a dead end for some and a perfectly safe space for others. "Arriving at the centre demands problem solving-skills and may be very demanding": suits the book-hunter who does not know which book to buy, which to leave on the shelf, and questioning themselves if the decision will be the right one once they have reached the till? The bookshop is not an easily navigable space, but to move through it one must be in the present, following the signs around them, directing them to the books they are searching for. This idea of a maze can help create an experiencescape in a bookshop regardless of the size of the shop.

## **6.2 Staff**

As has been highlighted by my methods section I was working as a member of staff in the shop. Beyond preparing the shop for the day's festivities and taking deliveries of stock, I interacted plentifully with the customers. The tasks were to help customers with locating books, advising on authors and purchases, and of course to talk with the customers about books and authors in general. I found many of the customers were requesting books by authors that I had never heard of, let alone read. It was easy to feel foolish by not knowing the authors in front of the customer, or having not read the books. But I repeatedly said to myself that there are thousands of books here, how could and why should I read them all? Yet this does not distract from the need to be well read and knowledgeable about literature. Though not always in the know with Turkish authors and poets, I was still able to successfully help the vast majority of people who required such assistance. The swift locating of books and the ability to converse with the customer was paramount to the customer's time in the shop as their questions to me along with my desire to fulfil a high level of customer service had to be, or at least I felt, carried out with maximum enthusiasm. My desire to fulfil the role of the competent sales-assistant is mirrored by the customers' desire to be served by one. In the next section I will provide evidence from the research that states how important a competent sales-assistant is, along with theory which focuses on the importance of staff members in a liminal experience and in this experiencescape.

### **6.2.1 Customers and the staff**

For this experience to be a successful and positive experience, as judged by the customer, the staff too play an important role in the liminal experience created in the bookshop. Though a worker may see their



*Illustration 5: Books ordered alphabetically*

position in the bookshop as a way to make ends meet or fulfilling a passion, the customers are adamant about the cruciality of a strong staff base. A participant from the Booktour provided me with this comment referring to another bookshop along Istiklal:

“Very good classification of the books...but the staff is terrible. They are never nice, they never help out or never give the answers on top of shooting mean looks in your direction....I believe this is too unfortunate considering the amazing store and books they have”

Booktour 4

Despite a great selection of books the staff let this establishment down. This translates to me that the stock alone is not the attraction for the customers. This supported by the next comment:

“The staff is always very nice and very helpful and the best thing is they have knowledge of most of the books I love” Booktour 4

Here we can see the staff really play a crucial role in experiencing the bookshop. Without such helpful and knowledgeable staff this element of the experiencescape is lacking. Though I see the experiencescape as a personal adventure through the shop, others will seek out conversation with

the staff:



*Illustration 6: A worker and customer talking*

“asks seller for discussion sometimes” Interview 2.1

The staff's presence can leave a negative imprint on the experience as can be seen in the next two comments:

“non-disturbing staff, helpful when needed”

Booktour 2

“A bit uncomfortable because of the lady cashier”  
(who seemed impatient and irritated that the book was only looked at, not bought) Booktour 1

Not only are the sales assistants necessary for creating the perfect experience, but they are responsible for negatively

impacting upon it. The staff then are performing a role to help guide and assist the customer, but as and when the customer desires and in a fitting manor as not to affect the experience negatively.

The next paragraph will apply theory to the staff's role in the creation of this experiencescape. We will understand the theoretical importance of having competent staff working in this space, confirming their place as a component of the bookshop.

Within liminal experiences Turner views the individuals as “neophytes” or “initiates” and that amongst them there is complete equality (1964:49). Within this liminal space though there are others defined as the instructors (1964:49f), who in the bookshop are the staff. It must be noted that the distinction between the neophyte and instructor, or customer and staff, is not a legal distinction but a distinction forged through the “authority of tradition” (Turner 1964:50). This puts the customers, who we view as a group, as part of the *communitas*, against the staff who Turner depicts as instructors to the customers (Bigger 2010:3). The instructors are to guide the initiands through the liminal experience helping and assisting, as the staff help the customers. It is therefore, vital, if we view the bookshop as a housing a liminal experience, that the instructors are able to fully support the initiands. By waiting for the customers to approach them the staff are able to allow the customer to make their own way through the shop. This is an important factor as customers did not wish to be disturbed during their stay in the shop yet when help is required the right result is expected.

### **6.3 Soundscape**

After entering the shop the customer will undoubtedly walk around and take notice of the staff present. But an aspect of the bookshop experience that is at times hard to pinpoint is the soundscape created by the bookshop and its impact on the customers. As a customer peels off from the throngs of people flowing along Istiklal, where the constant chatter of the people and sellers is buzzing in harmony with the hum of distant engines and ringtones, they cross the threshold and are hit by a wall of calm. Above the door an air conditioner blows cool air onto the crowns of their heads and after closing the door the peace of music from the shop fills the space. The music ranges from jazz to classical. The contrast of this shop to others is noticeable. Other shops blare loud Turk-pop, hoping the louder the music the greater the shop’s attraction. Here the soft music fits with the cool air and smell of hanging dust. Whilst working in the shop the effects of the music on me were blatant. During periods of lower tempo, softer music I felt more relaxed, yet if the music was faster and fuller I could feel the tempo of the work and customers pick up, even though all that had changed was a song. All the time though, there would be low chatter coming from customers and staff alike. The sounds created by the shop remained low and calm in the main, besides the more rock orientated songs and the occasional raucous customers.

The soundscape I found was particularly pleasant for me. As I will illucidate, the customers of the shop also remarked upon the soundscape and the participants of the booktour were able to also provide feedback on the other shops in the vicinity.

### **6.3.1 Customers and the sounds created by the bookshop they enter**

Though the customers help to add to the soundscape of the experience, by talking, shouting or withholding all sound, the shop does play a greater role in selecting the background music, which then is the base for the shop's acoustic image. The next 3 quotes from the research are directly related to the shop in which I worked.

“Likes the atmosphere and ambience of the shop. Many books, but can't get lost, wood not plastic, not cold.” Interview 1.17.

“Walls covered in books. Likes the music (Allan Pettersson – Swedish composer).” Interview 1.6

“Place of comfort, serenity, peace. It's like a bookstore here, no toys; walkmans; telephones.” Interview 1.7

As you can see the liminal experience had by the customer is also accentuated through its soundscape. The bookshop's essence can be seen through its choice of music, favouring classical music and jazz as opposed to Turk-pop played by other bookshops along the street, which are invariably heard before they are seen. In reference to the shops playing loud pop music, you get the impression that this not what a bookshop should be, or at least a refined English language bookshop should not be:

“cheap and commercial – if a bookshop why other techno items? Looks like they just want to make it money. Travel books of Istanbul and bestsellers first to be seen. Didn't look intellectual, doesn't look like a bookshop. Tacky.” Booktour 2

“You can hear it, and the shop entrance is full of people and cds, books and electronics... busy, noisy. Too many people. But when in the back with the books, feels good, from the overcrowded space of the entrance the back is airy and free.” Booktour 3

The booktour helped me understand what the customers of an English language bookshop wish to have as their soundscape and what they did not. The soundscape should emit a calming effect on the customer and should too be subtle, contrary to what the participants of the booktour found in the other shops. Here not only is the customer searching for books but they too wish to relax, or at least not feel panicked or stressed, as this will undoubtedly happen again when they leave and get caught up in the crowds. On top of this we are dealing with an English language bookshop and not a Turkish based chain and I believe the expectations are altered to fit the subjective experience, insofar that as the individual is searching for English books they expect a soundscape to reflect the

perceptions of what it is to be in a foreign language bookshop.

A carefully selected play list of music should be chosen for the shop, as the soundscape is the audio of the image and activates another sense whilst shopping or experiencing the liminal. In an English language shop frequented by university educated individuals, expatriates and intellectuals, a soundscape must be selected accordingly, like a French language bookshop may choose something to fit that scene.

#### **6.4 Book buying**

In this section to help further an understanding of what the future may hold for the physical book and the bookshop I will not only address the physical book as an element of the bookshop, but the buying process too.

Whilst working I would stand and observe customers looking for books themselves, not asking for help, but seemingly enjoying not having to walk in and out of the shop in under 5 minutes and enjoying browsing, touching, smelling or rather sensually consuming the book, before putting it back and starting the process again with another book. I also remember cleaning the books and shelves in the mornings: getting out the Mr Sheen to clean the shelves, using a paintbrush to dust around the books or dust the larger books as an archaeologist would use a brush to remove the dust from a find. Though treating the books in a different manner I could see both the customers and I enjoyed the books: they wanted and desired the book, whereas, I was caring for this artefact of authority, respect and knowledge. I was beginning to see the book as something more than just a book, and I would watch customers walk in and either gaze around in the doorway or continue deeper into the mazelike aisles of bookcases. The shelves which were home to the new books had the books cover-up and customers did not simply look at the book, the book had to be picked up, brought closer to the eyes even though no difference in legibility would have been made. I watched people flicking through books at a speed that was clearly rendering reading unviable but this sensual groping of the book enforced the importance of the physical book to me. Books chosen would be whittled down prior to purchase or would be replaced when better suitors were found or made themselves beknownst to the customer. One day I heard a customer say to his friend as he left the shop that it is the process of searching that he likes more than the buying of the book. It was then that I started to look for other things. I could see customers coming in with bags from other bookshops, as if they were conducting some kind of bookshop tour. Not only that but I began to remark that the customers upon purchasing a book would not always leave but would hang around looking for more books after an overlooked section had been discovered.

Perusing the shop alone despite coming in with others was common. Maybe they would meet up, for a brief catch up during their stay in the shop, but searching together was not common. Individuals reading books could be found throughout the shop. Some would assert themselves on the staff's step ladder, sitting quite comfortably, whilst they were getting to know the book. Others took to the stairs and sat there in other's way. Even when leaving the shop customers could not leave without the continued touching of the books. Hands would run over the covers of the books as a slow walk brought them closer to the exit of the shop.



*Illustration 7: Man searching for books after*

From my piece you can see there is a strong affinity to handling the physical book and searching for it. I will now present the customers' view points on physical books and buying them, before theory is used.

#### **6.4.1 The customers buying books**

I see the physical book as a fetishised object as discussed in the beginning of the thesis. The customers' comments will help to elaborate on this idea. If I view the fetish as an object which symbolises what is desired and important, I can also acknowledge that it is in physical flux, insomuch as what is desired can be found/seen in other physical objects. This too can be found with the book, as what is wanted by the customer can be found in a number of books.

“I always look. When there is no book in mind I look for interesting things via the blurbs. I enjoy the hunt but it is never over”  
Interview 1.3

This participant suggested to me that once a book is found, what is desired changes as their hunt for the book and what the books provide changes. It changes to another book, another author or genre, and therefore the hunt for this individual is never over, constantly fetishising new material or ideas to be found between the covers of the physical book.

“You can start looking for a certain book and then get another” Interview 1.19

This experiencescape not only requires the layout to be mazelike, supporting the search for the book's location, but the experiencescape also engages with an experience whereby the customer is searching for nontangible desires, which concretise themselves as books. This importance of touching the books and experiencing them can be found in this quote below:

“Browsing amazon etc is good but [the shop] is different, you can touch books. Unexpected titles appear.” Interview 1.4

By being present amongst the books and having a shifting desire, and due to previous desires being found, I noticed that a lot of purchases made in the shop were unplanned.

Interviewee	Intended book bought	Unitended book bought
1	1	
2	1	
3		1
4		1
5	1	1
6		
7	1	1
8		1
9	1	
10	1	
11	1	
12	1	
13	1	1
14	1	1
15	1	
16	1	
17	1	
18	1	1
19		1
20	1	
	<b>Purchases</b>	<b>19</b>
	<b>Planned purchases</b>	<b>15</b>
	<b>Unplanned purchases</b>	<b>9</b>

There is a real importance in touching the books and being present with the books. To continue viewing the bookshop as an experiencescape, where customers are able to remove themselves from their daily lives and immerse themselves into the bookshop's aura, I will turn to address the importance of being in the shop and how the shop is providing features which are absent from downloading books and buying them online. All participants used online retailers and only some used ebooks. Books were generally being bought online due to time and convenience reasons: the book was either preplanned or had already been sought after but not yet found. When asked the difference between the experience of buying a book online and in the shop a strong theme emerged:

“Better feeling in the shop → touch and smell of pages. In a shop it is like buying a present for yourself → go home to then read it. Online book buying is just taking a package. It doesn't have the “pre atmosphere related to the book”. Interview 2.1

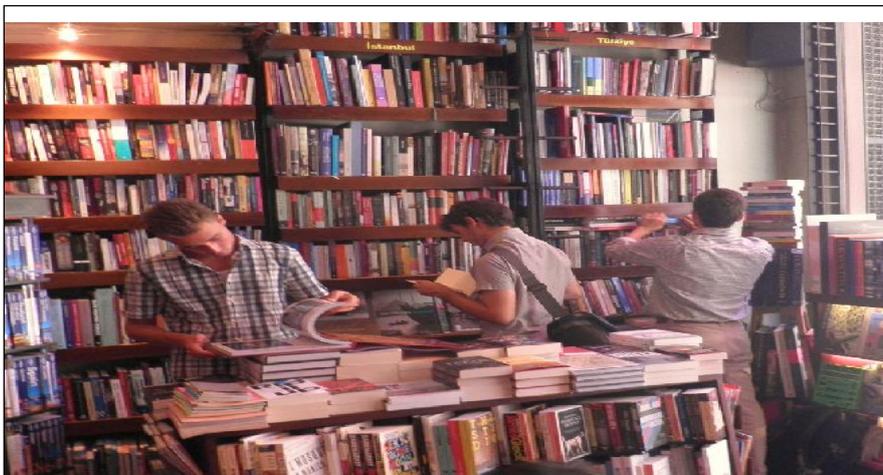
“You're more likely to find OP and obscure finds online, but the pleasure of the shop is that you can buy a book you didn't know you wanted, an unexpected find in a bookshop.” Interview 2.2

“Experience is different → it is the stumbling across something. Rather than knowing what you want. The environment is different. A nice environment is connected to the book, the shop. Nice staff help. No antecedent of the book with online purchases. Memory of buying a book in a shop.” Interview 2.6

“Likes the shop as it is an experience. Online is a search bar and buying process.” Interview 2.7

“There is no experience in buying online. Wants to see the paper, the cover → you can also check other books by chance as they are there.” Interview 2.8

There is greater pleasure linked to the bookshop. It is seen a place to escape to and indulge in. It is an experience and the customers enjoy spending time in there. By seeing the way in which the customers enjoy the in-store experience, stakeholders can understand how to make bookshops



*Illustration 8: 3 individuals searching for books*

(independents predominantly as they have the autonomy to decide) appeal to their clientèle and attract others to buy in-store as opposed to online. Here it can be said that being in the shop is of great importance for these people. The value is in being there, the “dasein value”

(Fitchett and Saren 1998:327). Not only in the shop are the initiates able to experience the “qualitative constituency of the object” that they desire (Fitchett and Saren 1998:315), but are able to experience the non-tangibility of what the bookshop and the books mean for them. Fitchett and Saren found that the greatest value of the museum for their participants was the value of being able to get up close and have access to the objects (1998:325) and this is what I have found in the bookshop. Our initiates enter into the space and are surrounded by objects and exhibitions that they are permitted, encouraged, expected to interact with. In short, the “value of actually experiencing the physical presences of the objects” (Fitchett and Saren 1998:326) which is lacking in online transactions – of course sight is attainable, and a small amount of selected reading

can take place – and these online transactions cannot fulfil the customers and their desires of experiencing the shop and sensually consuming the books on display. Furthermore, whilst experiencing the *dasein* of the shop, initiates do this with other *daseinen* (the customers/*communitas*) who can experience the liminal together. This notion of the *dasein* as a shared value (Fitchett and Saren 1998:328) fits with the previous musings of the *communitas*' "shared" experience as initiates.

Not only are physical books holding an advantage over ebooks in that they can be touched and interacted with, but the physical shop has a similar power. To search and hunt for the book and to sensually consume it through smell, sight and touch the book hunter/buyer must be in the shop. They must also be in the shop to experience the sounds around them, the twists and turns of the aisles. This is why the idea of being in the shop and experiencing it is crucial to the shops' continuation in the digital era. I therefore propose that the physical book and the shop are experienced together.

We can also go back to the unplanned aspect of being in the shop. Some people just popped into the shop as they were passing, as can be seen by these answers given after being asked why they were in the shop today:

"On a whim. Coming down Istiklal, one book in here." Interview 2.2

"His office is close. Just to know about Poetry Magazine to see if it was in." Interview 2.3

So not only is the shop being experienced because they like the space and the experience of it, but it is also convenient for them too:

(When asked why they are in the shop and not on line to day) "More convenient. Knows this place is here. Fast." Interview 2.6

The bookshop offers an experience in that we have a space housing an atmosphere, a sound, in which experienced staff can assist customers to locate what they are desiring, or if the customer is capable they move around the space on a quest for their desires, yet all the time engaging with the physicality of the shop and the stock. This is what is missing in online purchases and ebook downloads.

To be present in the bookshop is to be surrounded by the books and the sounds and to have access to these commodities. To be present in the bookshop opens us up to more books, but not by adverts or recommendations but by creating a space which allows a customer to move through and utilise for their own pleasure and experience. The customer chooses what they wish to look at

and touch, and where they wish to inspect a book. For this reason a bookshop can be a real sensual experience that removes people from the hustle and bustle of daily life and it is this space and experience bibliophiles and users of bookshops should maintain to allow the physical books and independent bookshops to thrive in the digital era.

### **6.5 English language books being read by non English mother tongue speakers**

I was noticing the way in which people preferred the English titles over the Turkish titles when they could have read the Turkish title for cheaper and could have probably understood it better too. Notwithstanding, as someone who has learnt foreign languages, I too prefer reading in a language beside my mother tongue. I was asking the customers in the shop what their relationship was with English and why they were choosing the books in English. From these answers I began to feel that not only were these people in the bookshop to experience it and buy books, but also because the English language represented something for the customers. They were entering a space which was quite different from other spaces, it was calm, cool and full of books. They were moving through the aisles selecting books that were their current desires in the flesh. They were picking up and putting down books, deciding on their own or occasionally discussing with a friend. The English downstairs was crowded yet the Turkish upstairs less so. English books were by far the mainstay of the sales taken. Locals and tourists alike were buying English books that were available in their mother tongues. How were the customers viewing and using the English books?

#### **6.5.1 The customers with their English language books**

Here I intend to look at the language that the book was being bought in and why to unlock the significance behind the purchase of the English language book in a non-English speaking country.

One of Pietz's attributes of the fetish is "the dependence of the fetish for its meaning and value on a particular order of social relations" (1987:23) which for me is tantamount to the fetish shaping the social order in the sense of what it represents, or what Ellen more stylishly states as "the conflation of signifier and signified" (1988:219) and the effects. This then can then be understood as what the book represents impacts upon the social order of the person whilst in possession of such a fetish, whereby the book and what it is associated with become one. To help further understand what the book represents I asked customers at the shop which books were bought, which language were they in and why that language, with a question of what the English language means for them. Here we will see the book as a concretisation of a language which is not a mother tongue for the customers. Therefore, the book can take on another intangible quality. To help us further understand the meaning that a book has for a person we will now develop the fetish's

materialisation of intangibility and see what this materialisation does for the possessor of the object (both in the shop and surrounded by such objects) with the help of Baudrillard's theory of the sign.

I can infer from my observations and research that the book's language was of great worth to the customer, so I wish to put forward that the language is also being fetishised and also that it is the sign of the language a book is written in that further impacts on the purchase as the attributes that the book then holds are higher.

The comments below are from non-native English speakers about their opinion and relations with English:

"Studied at school. He wasn't fluent until moving to Egypt, as there weren't many Spanish, he has no Arabic. For him English acts as lingua franca, language of communication. In Egypt, Thailand, Bulgaria and Turkey he uses English, the international language." Interview 1.13

"I learnt when I was 10, and lived in USA (3 month exchange) and England (1 year in Suffolk). I use English in all sorts of places: reading, meeting foreigners, listening to BBC. I use English in any situation where it's needed. It is the language of communication, but the problem is that English is not the universal language. In certain areas you must learn the local language like outside of: the hotel, university or intellectual circles." Interview 1.14

"(English is the) Language of instruction at Uni. We could go on Erasmus with English." Interview 1.18

"I grew up in the USA. But I write in English in academia but in informal situations I prefer to use Turkish." Interview 1.4

"I am a graduate of English literature. I was interested in English and learnt it at school and at uni. Now I work as a conference interpreter. I speak Turkish with my circle of friends." Interview 1.5

"Has studied English since he was 11. Studied in the USA, and then studied English at the uni here. Prefers to read and write in English – more comfortable → brain structured that way. Thinks in English, he is the silent type." Interview 1.7

From these comments on their relationship with English, we can see a trend. For these individuals English was studied at school, but it did not stop there but became the language of their university studies. To continue with the notion of the fetish, the books bought or the "objectification of

representation(s)" (Ellen 1988:220), can further represent reading alongside education in a foreign language. They have taken the prestige of reading and added another value to the book, or rather the book is physically representing another element and through this we can see "the customer has a role in constructing the object of desire": Belk (Fernandez and Lastovicka 2011:281), as the book is having more intangibilities attributed to it, amassing more qualities between its covers. On top of that some of the Turkish participants stressed the difference between the use of English and Turkish, with English the language of the academic sphere and reading and writing, with Turkish filling the space of socialising.

Not only is there the theme of education in the English language but the idea that English is acting as the current lingua franca. The importance of English for these people is the opportunities such a language can give ranging from the retired gentleman in Interview 1.14 stressing the use of English to meet new people - though disagreeing with some about the universality of English - to the bachelors students in Interview 1.18, who with English are able to study in Europe under the Erasmus programme.

English has important qualities for these people and would seem to open up doors of opportunity. Through reading in English the qualities mentioned in this study can be deemed to be shown off and obtained or at least wished to be obtained as the individual acknowledges their obligation of the liminal zone and attempts to claim control of the fetish by reading it. And "since fetishes are perceived as empowering, consumers can use fetishised possessions to enhance their sense of self" (Fernandez and Lastovicka 2011:281), reading a book in English for these non-native speakers can then be an acknowledgement of their acceptance of the attributes of knowing a foreign language, a lingua franca. Whilst reading the book bought from the shop in English, there is an "ambiguous conceptualisation of power" (Ellen 1988:228). The fetish allows people to control the abstract (Ellen 1988:228) but also the knowledge within it transforms the user, so here is the ambiguous power relation. The reader may have conquered reading the book but the knowledge that the book holds may transform them. This influence is echoed by Fernandez and Lastovicka who see the fetish has having an extraordinary empowerment and influence (2011:278) and the extraordinary influence of the fetish may be that they are not aware of its power over them, for example a book has been studied, learnt, read and not only has the information been taken on board but it has been done so in a foreign language, and this can be seen to affect the social standing of the person as they may be deemed educated in a foreign language. Whilst speaking with non-native speakers about studying in English they sometimes find that many words,

especially interest related jargon or buzzwords, are only known in English and to produce such papers, studies, in their mother tongue is a difficult challenge, therefore increasing the users' dependence upon English to navigate the spaces in which they study.

Beyond the English language book for the non-native English speaker representing and containing the qualities of English as a learnt language, I wish to use Sign value from Baudrillard to further understand this reasoning behind buying the book in English as opposed to Turkish (or another language). I asked the customers of the shop in Istanbul, whose mother tongue was not English, as to why they were buying the book(s) in English. Below are some of the responses:

"Not (available) in Turkish" Interview 1.20

"Writing thesis in English, 2 books bought." Interview 1.19

"Knows English. Foreign language books are more beautiful, as a reference. Also when studying you need English sources as they are helpful. Turkish translations are not good. Many alternatives in English." Interview 1.18

"Prefers to read in English and not Dutch. Most of her books are in English. Easily reads English like Dutch." Interview 1.15

"Murakami. Loves his books. Not all are in Swedish, we have Murakmai stocked at the shop, he's not in Sweden anymore." Interview 1.14

"If author is an English native, prefers it in English. When it's a translation prefers Spanish." Interview 1.13

"Chose the English version as there are more details in the English." Interview 1.11

"The son/brother asked for it. Possibly a better translation in English." Interview 1.10

"Original language, doesn't like translation. Also English books can be less expensive than Turkish despite their higher quality." Interview 1.7

"Translations not always good. Likes reading in English, personal pleasure, ever since a young age." Interview 1.4

Here the qualities of an English book are seen more clearly. The English book is perceived as better, of better quality. An English translation is seen as being of superior quality yet another language's translation is not. Furthermore, some also mention the importance of the original language. If the book is further representing these qualities, what does possessing such a fetishised object do? As the book is held by the customer or is seen reading the book in an open space, or just carrying the

bag of the shop through the streets, we can touch upon Pietz's fourth component of the fetish object as an "active relation ... to the living body of an individual" (1987:23) which takes form in adorning the object, consuming the object or bringing it into yourself, either by wearing it, carrying or embracing it. This adornment of the fetish can also impact upon the social relations as mentioned previously. So how is it so that the fetishised object once adorned impacts the person's position?

Baudillard's approach to fine quality objects purchased by those with the money and the social standing is through sign value. In short the object is not purchased because it is needed but purchased because it justifies their standing. Baudrillard sees economic exchange as the predecessor of sign value, that of prestige, but the object purchased will be justified as having a high use value (1981:112). I have highlighted this in the bookshop by providing comments vis-a-vis English as being a better translation, or that English versions have more detail and are even more useful. Even though the Turkish translation could be of equal quality it is perceived otherwise. Notwithstanding, one individual stated the price difference was favourable to the English titles, but with the import of the books, and with an absolute price (if it costs £5 it costs £5 worth of TL), which is not relative to the country but fixed according to where the book was printed, I can safely say the English books were not financially cheaper than their locally produced Turkish equivalents. Purchasing these books in English despite the price difference can be seen as:

"Wealth manifested, and a manifest destruction of wealth. It is that value, deployed beyond exchange value and founded upon the latter's destruction, that invests the object purchased, acquired, appropriated with its differential sign value" (Baudrillard 1981:112).

This wealth displayed can be in the form also of cultural capital, as a decent education has been obtained and the book is a further mark of their cultural capital as well as economic capital and is supported by Fitchett and Saren who would see the book as having "qualitative constituency of the object" (1998:315) as it is the sign of the item that is sought after rather than the book as a physical object (Fitchett and Saren 1998:316). It is the sign of your wealth and knowledge purchased and desired which "presupposes something of a competition, a wager, a challenge, a sacrifice and thus a potential community of peers and an aristocratic measure of value...[and this] occasionally turns consumption into a passion" (Baudrillard 1981:1f). Here we can see that the fetishised object becomes fetishised due to its use as membership into social groups, affirming or raising your status, as all of the attributes to reading English and being in an exclusive bookshop are within the book purchased, within the book being shown off as one walks down the street or

gives it pride of place on the bookshelf in the living room. The book is what concretises the intangible elements of the fetish and it is the book, or the bag from the shop, which acts as a sign of the all that the fetish entails. Baudrillard states that “signs and culture appear enveloped in a fetish (1981:114) and that “the social principle of exchange supports the fetishised value of the object” (1981:116), meaning that the object is purchased for its value to you as a social being and what it can do for you, what it represents, not because of its use value. The sacrifice of the economic capital on expensive English language books can be seen as the potlach of the English language reading elite in a non English speaking country.

### **7.0 Summary of the bookshop as an experiencescape and how we can apply it**

Through this cultural analysis I have accounted for the elements of the bookshop, applied theory to their presence there and shown how these elements together create an experiencescape. The experiencescape provides the customer with an alternative commodity than the presumed reason for being in the space- not just a book but an experience. This experience can be lacking in other book-purchasing settings like online or in chain stores. What makes this experience unique is that it also throws into the mix the English language and the attributes of the language are then associated with the books and absorbed by the shop, becoming part of the experience. To be associated with these attributes and to be seen in the space housing them, again is part of the experience of entering the shop.

The shop has the layout which helps customers move through the shop. I feel regardless of how big or small the shop owners can still produce an exciting layout to allow the customers to search for their books.

The staff, who are vital in helping the customers, must be well read and able to help the customer, though also aware of the customer's desires for fulfilling their quest by themselves, so waiting until they are needed. A staff member can learn the computer system and the shelves but you cannot learn a love of reading so easily, and the customers tend to want a knowledgeable individual.

The soundscape of the space will not only set the atmosphere but can also reflect the clientèle and the image of the shop. The English language bookshop I worked at was in contrast to other bookshops which were playing pop songs into the street in order to attract attention and customers. This did not go down well with the customers I interviewed. Each shop will have its own clientèle and sound needs.

When customers buy books, the act of buying a book is not as simple as it seems. Hunting for the

books and going through a number of potential purchases is all part of the fun of buying. The purchase made is not always the purchase intended. In order to facilitate the searching and browsing of books the shop must facilitate the behaviour found. Encourage the customers to move around, select, put down and buy books. Allow people to sit to get to know the book in their hands. If the books being bought are not always the intended purchase, stakeholders must work on this as it is something live that cannot be experienced online. The customers are searching, not being recommended to and it is an experience to go on a quest for what you desire, trying to find it in a tangible object. Furthermore, I acknowledge the digital era and aim to work with it to maintain physical books. Therefore, I believe in some form of ebook vending machine to be placed in the shop to allow the unpublishable books (niche and those of small print-runs) to be accessed in the experiencescape and also if the customers wish to have such ebooks in printed form, such a printing process could be facilitated. This allows the ease and worldwide distribution of the ebook, the use and experience in the shop and the physicality of ebooks amongst physical books.

## **8.0 Conclusion**

To conclude the thesis I will return to the thesis' main question, which was "Do the physical book and bookshop have a future in the digital era?". By carrying out this cultural analysis of the bookshop I have shown how it can be understood as an experiencescape, and that it is experiences of this nature - live, sensual and tangible – that are void from digital purchases of books and ebooks. With this in mind a future of physical books and bookshops in the digital era can be envisioned. By housing an experience, as well as the book, other forms of purchases (online for example) are challenged as the customer is engaged with the process of buying the book and not just clicking away online. The experiences being created by the customers in the bookshop are not available online. I therefore believe that by viewing the bookshop as an experiencescape and by creating bookshops as experiencescapes we can maintain the presence of physical books and bookshops in the digital era.

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All interviews, fieldnotes, transcripts and photographs are in the author's possession. All were collected between June and August 2012.

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