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A Case Study of Chinese Science Fiction "Remembrance of Earth's Past" and China's Book Publishing Industry

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Abstract

This essay analyzes the economic characteristics and supply chain of China's book publishing industry. Utilizing Michael Porter's five forces model, it examines industry competitiveness, highlighting that the sector has transitioned into a highly competitive buyer's market. Through a case study of Cixin Liu's science fiction trilogy Remembrance of Earth's Past, the discussion illustrates how creative products navigate the "nobody knows" principle and the 'art for art's sake' property. The essay further explores how digitalization and social media have empowered audiences to transform from passive receivers into active producers, facilitating the global dissemination of the series. Ultimately, it evaluates the trilogy's business and cultural value under the "Go Out" policy, concluding that high-quality content and digital strategy are essential for international success.

Keywords

Book Publishing, Creative Industries, Remembrance of Earth's Past, Five Forces Model, Audience Transformation, Supply Chain

Introduction

In contemporary society, creative and cultural industries are playing increasingly significant roles in economic growth and people's everyday life. The unique economic characters and supply chain model of cultural industries make them distinct from any other sectors, no matter in economic development or social value. This essay will focus on the book publishing industry in China and critically analyze its economic characters, audiences and industry status by Michael Porter's five forces model. Also this essay will discuss how a literary work is created, distributed, marketed and finally received successfully in China by studying the science fiction trilogy *Remembrance of Earth's Past*, the first popular literature in China winning the top international award and be widely liked by both Chinese and overseas readers. A quantitative analysis of book publishing market and a qualitative discussion will be presented as well.

Literature Review

According to Caves (2000), there are seven basic economic properties of creative activities, which 'distinguishes them from other sectors of economy, and in some case distinguishes creative activities from one another'. The first one is 'Demand Is Uncertain', which is also known as 'nobody knows' principle. Distinct from most industries that products are usually produced after understanding consumers' demand, 'there is a great uncertainty about how consumers will value a newly produced product in creative industries', as 'creative products fall primarily into the realm of "experience goods" (Caves, 2000), because 'consumer taste and demand can be gauged only after consumption has occurred and all costs have been incurred' (Horner, 2001). Producers' rich experience and professional knowledge of this industry cannot help them to predict if their next works could succeed. Not only is consumers' demand uncertain, but the success of a complete work is uncertain as well. For decreasing the risk, audience's favor is increasingly affecting content makers' creation and distribution, ranging from literary publishing to film industry. According to an Economist's report (2014) in business section, studios now spend ever more on 'lavish prequels, sequels and franchise films', which is 'supposedly as a way to reduce risk by backing proven formulas' (Even now, nobody knows anything, 2014).

The second property of creative activities is 'art for art's sake', which indicates creative workers are willing to settle for lower wages rather than take a banal job, as they concern more about originality, professional skills and promises of creative products (Caves, 2000). This property implies that artists usually spend more time, energy and use more advanced skills than normal workers to create their perfect work, but 'on average earn lower pecuniary incomes than their general ability, skill and education would otherwise warrant' and 'turn out more creative products than if they value only the incomes they receive' (Caves, 2000). This is also one reason of why only 'few artists are able to support themselves just from their art work and many do other jobs to make a living' (Towse, 2010).

The others properties include 'Motley Crew Principle', 'Infinite Variety', 'A-list / B-list', 'Time Flies' and 'Ars Longa', which discuss the distinction of creative products and normal goods in the context of economy and explains why creative goods could have such a huge difference in economic performance from one another. Caves' argument not only works on art market, but on book publishing industry as well. As a sort of creative products, book also has these seven properties, which will be discussed later through the debates on *Remembrance of Earth's Past.*

Besides the economic properties of creative activities, the dissemination of cultural goods should also be mentioned. With the rapid development of digital technology, cultural goods' production, communication and consumption is gradually transforming into digital forms. As Towse (2010) argues, 'traditionally, publishing referred to the printing and distribution of works such as books, newspapers, magazines and other such matter on paper, such as maps. With digitization and the internet, however, publishing has expanded beyond paper to include electronic sources, such as the electronic versions of all these items, and electronically generated content, such as blogs, websites, and so on'. The digitalization enables distributors to promote books, both printed books and e-books, without the limitation of geography and

changes readers' consumption experience. With the cheaper storage, quicker dissemination of digital content and mobile devices' popularity, the traditional business model of culture and the relationships between authors, publishers, distributors and readers have changed. As Tian and Martin (2010) argue, 'digital repositories and community-based pricing models suggest that publishing has already began the reinvention of its traditional purposes of gathering and disseminating information'.

Excepts for the impact on book publishing's supply process, digitalization also changes the relation between audiences and media, making audiences more active and powerful and helping them transform from receivers into users and producers. Traditionally audience is considered to play a receiver role in a valid communication, decoding the information according to their own experience and cultural background (Hall, 1980). Along with highly developed digital technology however, audiences have a tighter relation and more frequent interactions with one another, even though they may still know little about the people they are talking with online. Based on their decoding result, audiences could use available tools, mostly social media platforms, to become senders, coding and delivering their messages decoded from original information to the others, which establishes a network between every audience (Chamber, 2011). Such network gives audiences more power to affect media's information and even become new content maker. For instance, as a special group of audiences, fans usually have their own communities to engage with others, voluntarily promote their favorite works and even create new cultural products based on original work, which is also called as fan labor (Duffett, 2013). In their voluntary communications, fans transform their role from receivers into senders. Their network and effect could promote the cultural products they like in return. The digitalization is not the fundamental reason leading to such change, but it gives a platform to audiences and accelerates this trend and therefore, amplifies audience's effect in creative products' communication.

Caves' economic properties analyze the production of cultural goods in the context of economy. The discussion of digitalization and the relationship between audiences and media focus more on a cultural work's dissemination. Next this essay will discuss the economic properties of the literary work *Remembrance of Earth* and how digitalization and audience's effect help this cultural product be widely spread and accepted.

Remembrance of Earth's Past

Remembrance of Earth's Past is a science fiction trilogy written by the Chinese writer Cixin Liu, which consists of the first novel *The Three-Body Problem*, published in 2008 in China, the continued *The Dark Forest* and the final Death's End, published in 2010 in China (Yang, 2018). This work was originally serialized in fiction magazine *Science Fiction World* in 2006 and gained huge impact, receiving the Chinese Science Fiction Galaxy Award, the top award for fiction novels in China. In 2014 the first novel *The Three-Body Problem* was translated to English by Ken Liu and published by Tor Books in America, creating a sensation in American's science fiction fans first and then being sold to all English-speaking regions (Yang, 2018).

Remembrance of Earth's Past trilogy describes a story of 'how humanity's first contact with

extraterrestrial life divided Earth between those welcoming the superior beings and those fighting the alien invasion' (Donaghey, 2018). With a high evaluation and a massive hit, the first novel of this series *The Three-Body Problem* was awarded the prestigious Hugo award in 2015 for best novel and nominated for the Nebula Award for Best Novel in 2014 (Donaghey, 2018). This book even featured on the reading lists of President Obama and Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg. Obama has particularly sent email to the author Cixin Liu to ask the last plot and said "'the scope of [the book] was immense and interesting' that it made his 'day-to-day problems with Congress seem fairly petty'" (Blair, 2018). *Remembrance of Earth's Past* trilogy has been credited with bringing Chinese science fiction onto the world stage and has sold more than a million copies globally till 2017 (Elbot, 2017).

It is rare that a science fiction novel could gain such a huge success in Chinese literary history, as 'science fiction is very marginal in Chinese literature', said by Cixin Liu, the author of *Remembrance of Earth's Past* (Blair, 2018). Thus, understanding how this literature was created developed distributed and marketed and why it was well received by both Chinese and overseas readers is meaningful for people to research Chinese book publishing industry and market.

The Supply Chain of *Remembrance of Earth's Past*

According to Towse (2010), 'supply to a market involves a chain of production from the creation of the content through the production process, marketing and finally, delivery to consumers', which is the notion of supply chain in cultural and creative industries. A supply chain of a book usually consists of creator, publisher, printer, distributor and retailer (both online and offline) or institutions like libraries, which includes the production and part of communication process of a literature. Before a cultural product is really experienced by consumers, the supply chain could largely determine how audience think of this product and consume it. In the supply chain of a new book, 'literary agents act as intermediaries in contact with editors in publishing houses. Their role is to sift out potentially marketable work by assessing its merit' (Towse, 2010). After authors finishing their works, the publisher will be responsible for editing and printing (or contacting printers) and distributor will be responsible for marketing them. Audiences could finally find these books in bookstores, online retailers and book clubs, but also in some retail outlets or supermarkets or some institutions like libraries (Towse, 2010).

In the supply chain of *Remembrance of Earth's Past,* the novel was first serialized in fiction magazine *Science Fiction World*, which is also the publisher of the Chinese version of the novel (Yang, 2018). After gaining huge success in Chinese book market, CEPIEC (China Educational Publication Import & Export Corporation Ltd.) contacted the author Cixin Liu and the publisher *Science Fiction World*, indicating their interest on the novel and hoping to be the agent to export *Remembrance of Earth's Past* series to English-speaking regions. In 2012 July, CEPIEC officially signed with Cixin Liu and magazine *Science Fiction World,* starting the translation work of the first novel *The Three-Body Problem* and seeking for suitable overseas publishers in America (Zhou 2015). For the author and Chinese readers, CEPIEC plays a role of literary agent, working as an intermediary in contact with translators and publishing houses. For overseas readers, CEPIEC and the translators could be seen as a significant part of content producing

process, as translation could hugely affect the whole quality of English versions of foreign literary works and a good translator is as much important as the author at times. As Cixin Liu said, the translator of *The Three-Body Problem*, Ken Liu, plays a significant role in helping the novel enter American market (Zhou, 2015). According to Coxin Liu's interview, 'it is no exaggeration to say that I shared the Hugo award with Ken Liu. What is commendable is that his translation presents the characteristics of my novel and language. In addition to translation work, Ken also did a lot of promotion work' (Zhou, 2015).

Thanks to CEPIEC's effort and the high quality of Cixin Liu's novel and Ken Liu's translation, Tor Books, one of America's leading science fiction publisher, decided to publish the English version of *The Three-Body Problem* in 2014 (Zhou, 2015). Different from its Chinese version that was first sold in bookstores and moved to book-selling websites in the following years, the English version was first sold on Amazon and distributed to bookshops later (Xu, 2016). One reason is that the Chinese version was first published in 2008, when the Internet and e-commerce in China was not as popular as today. But in 2014, considering Amazon's impact and lower cost on distribution, e-commerce is a better choice. Except for printed books, *The Three-Body Problem* was also published as e-books and audio books that are available to download by Amazon and Chinese online platforms, such as Taobao and Ximalaya FM (Xu, 2016). The other two novels of *Remembrance of Earth's Past* follow the supply chain of *The Three-Body Problem*. Through researching their supply chains, it could be understood how the product is created, developed, published and distributed. But it does not answer the question why it could be spread and liked worldwide.

***Remembrance of Earth's Past*'s Economic properties and Dissemination**

As discussed above, what distinguish cultural products from normal products and one another are their economic properties (Caves, 2000). The first property is 'no body knows' principle: consumer's demand is uncertain, and the likeliness of success of a cultural product is uncertain as well. Actually at the beginning of this science fiction trilogy being published, no one, no matter the author Cixin Liu or the publisher *Science Fiction World*, thought it could be a best-seller. As Liu said in his interview, 'I didn't expect it [the success of his work] at all' (Ding, 2017). And he still hasn't figured out why *Remembrance of Earth's Past* has achieved such an impact (Ding, 2017). With over 40-year experience in reading and creating science fiction literature, Cixin Liu's rich experience and knowledge does not give him an edge in understanding readers' demand and favor. And he insists '*Remembrance of Earth's Past* is good, but its quality doesn't match the impact' (Ding, 2017).

Remembrance of Earth's Past's creation and production also present the second property 'art for art's sake'. In 2016, the first novel of this trilogy started to be serialized in magazine *Science Fiction World,* which is the leading, but also the only one magazine focusing on science fiction literature in China. As mentioned above, 'science fiction is very marginal in Chinese literature' (Blair, 2018). According to the report of Beijing Daily, due to the low profit and the marginal status, China's science fiction magazines were gradually stopping publication and *Science Fiction World* is the last one (Li, 2015). For the editors of *Science Fiction World,* salary is not the reason why they choose this magazine as his career, but their ideal. As a man who once worked for an advertising agency, an editor said that' I am paid 1,800 RMB

per month now, only half of my pervious salary. Everything can be tolerated for the sake of this magazine' (Li, 2015). After noticing Cixin Liu's talent, editors even held workshops specifically for his creation, hoping to help the author get a literary boost again. They consider more about their products instead of low wages, which ensures the high quality of every issue of *Science Fiction World* and *Remembrance of Earth's Past* series.

However, Liu's work and editor's effort is not the reason why *Remembrance of Earth's Past* could gain huge impact in Chinese market. Actually, the fist and second novel of this series was not as popular as today when they are first published. Based on their performances, no one, no matter the author or editors, expect the final one *Death's End*'s could exceed *The Three-Body Problem* and *The Dark Forest*. As Cixin Liu predicted that *Death's End* was expected to reach tens of thousand readers (Xia, 2015). In contrast, *Death's End* has been the key that finally causes a stir among Chinese readers. According to People Daily's report, an important reason is the time *Death's End* was published, 2010, is also the year social media platforms became popular in China (Xia, 2015). *Remembrance of Earth's Past*'s fans gathered and engaged with other readers on Weibo, a Chinese social media platform similar to Twitter, and established their own communities. After *Death's End* was published, a series of fan culture phenomena appeared on Weibo, including original music, MV, fan fiction and many fan groups named after the secret organization ETO in the novel (Xia, 2015). These activities effectively promote *Remembrance of Earth's Past* series to other Chinese Internet users and in this process, their identities transformed from receivers into senders and producers. The popularity of social media and digital technology accelerated this trend, enhanced fans' voice and power, changed the relationship between readers and media platforms, and enabled the novel to be seen by more people without geographic limitation. The high quality of Liu's work is the basis of the novel's success, but digitalization and readers' power play a more significant role in the novel's promotion.

***Remembrance of Earth's Past*'s Business Value and Artistic Value**

It is no doubt that *Remembrance of Earth's Past* trilogy gains huge success in business. Till 2017, it has been sold more than a million copies globally and translated into over 8 languages. Besides, it has been credited with bringing Chinese science fiction onto the world stage (Elbot, 2017). According to Financial Time's report, Amazon will probably drop $1billion on TV adaptation of its first novel The Three-Body Problem (Hooton, 2018). Besides its huge value on business and entertainment, *Remembrance of Earth's Past* series is also evaluated that it 'communicates much about China's emerging role in the global world order and how leaders might act in the face of geopolitical uncertainty' (Elbot, 2017). Facing the threat of alien invasion, the performances and attitudes of characters in the novel tend to be considered as a reflection of Chinese government's political philosophy by many western scholars. As Elbot argues, 'the question that looms throughout *The Three-Body Problem* is the same as that rose by the Five Principles [by President Xi Jinping]: can different civilizations actually work together, or does nature tend towards conflict and destruction?' This trilogy is a good window that helps western readers understands more about Chinese civilization, which is its cultural value.

Moreover, *Remembrance of Earth's Past* gains the attention of physicists and IT entrepreneurs due to its discussion on space and meteoritic society, especially the Dark Forest Theory: 'due to civilizations' urge for constant expansion to capture limited resources, the only universal values are self-preservation and elimination of potential rivals' (Liu, 2014). This theory is believed to be in line with the current business competition model: market is limited, so every company need try to kill their competitors to ensure their own survival. Many entrepreneurs, such as Lei Jun, the founder of Xiaomi Technology, and Ren Zhengfei, the founder of Huawei Technologies Co. Ltd., claim that they are inspired by *Remembrance of Earth's Past* trilogy and applied the novel's ideas to next year's development strategy (Barnett, 2016). Liu's work enables readers to rethink the relationship between life, competition and resources and how to deal with such conflict, which is its artistic value.

However, besides its business and artistic value, there is also obvious weakness in this trilogy. Many characters are created for serving the plot and the world without much description on their own personalities, which makes many characters are too bland. Unlike the famous lines in *The Lord of The Rings,* 'even the smallest person can change the course of the future', In Liu's universe, he 'considers "small' people to be fundamentally unworthy for so grand a canvas' (Frank, 2016). The science fiction world created by Cixin Liu is colorful, but the many characters are bland, which decreases his work's literary value.

Porter's 5-Force Model and Book Publishing Industry in China

Through analyzing *Remembrance of Earth's Past*'s production, communication and artistic value, it could be understood how this trilogy is created, developed, marketed and widely received in China, though science fiction novel is still marginal in Chinese market. In addition, the industry structure is also a significant element that affects literature's communication. Next, this essay will utilize Michael Porter's 5-force model to analyze the book publishing industry structure and competitiveness in contemporary China.

This model was established by Michael Porter in 1979, aiming to effectively analyze a industry's competitiveness by researching the threat of entry, power of suppliers, power of buyers, threat of substitutes and rivalry among existing competitors (Porter, 2008). The more these 5 forces intense are, the higher competitive the industry is, and thus, it is harder to earn high profits for companies. For the threat of new entry, new entrants usually bring new capacity and advanced technology with a desire to gain market share, which brings pressure on existing companies and products (Porter, 2008). In recent years, the number of privately owned book publishers has increased a lot. Those new entrants are usually more flexible in operation with stronger sense of planning and market research, which enables them to have a better performance on market than traditional publishers (The statistics portal, 2017).

For the power of suppliers, suppliers include author, literary agents and printers in book publishing industry and author is usually the most powerful supplier and the core competitiveness of a publisher (Lin & Zhang, 2005). The royalty of top authors in China could even reach 13%, which is a heavy burden for some publishing houses with limited budget and publishing ability (Lin & Zhang, 2005). Thus, the

second force is also intense in Chinese book publishing industry. For power of buyers, according to Macho (2018), Chinese book market 'has already become a buyer's market' and entered the stage of oversupply, which leads the bargaining power of an individual reader has been greatly enhanced by competition among publishers. In order to attract more consumers, price reduction becomes the most common way that publishing houses use to enhance their competitiveness. If the publishing houses do not have enough budget or strong publishing ability or unique high quality content, it will be hard for them to survive.

For the threat of substitutes, with the rapid development of Internet and digital technology, e-book and e-commerce is playing an increasingly important role in people's everyday life. Instead of printed media like newspaper and book, Internet and social media is becoming the main information resource of many people. According to the Fifteenth National Reading Survey in 2017, digital reading rate reaches 73.0%, exceeding book's reading rate of 59.1% (Sun, 2018), which indicates the digital reading is a substitutes of high threat to traditional paper-based publishing. However, e-book and printed book are not opposites. With advantages of cheaper price and quicker dissemination, e-book's target audience could be the group cares more about price and convenience. And printed book's target audience could be those focuses more on reading experience or have collection demands. If publishers develop digital and paper-based publishing together, e-books could also be supplements to printed books.

Finally for rivalry among existing competitors, according to Porter (2008), the rivalry will be intense when competitors are roughly equal in size and power, which will easily lead to poaching business. Due to political and history reasons, in China basically every province has its own publishing group with very similar structures, resulting in a serious homogenization of book varieties and content (National Radio and Television Administration, 2017). In such situation, price reduction becomes the primary choice used by most publishing houses to increase their own competitiveness. To prevent poaching business, the government issues *The Fair Trade Principles* to regulate book-publishing industry, but the price war between every publisher is still fierce (Li, 2011).

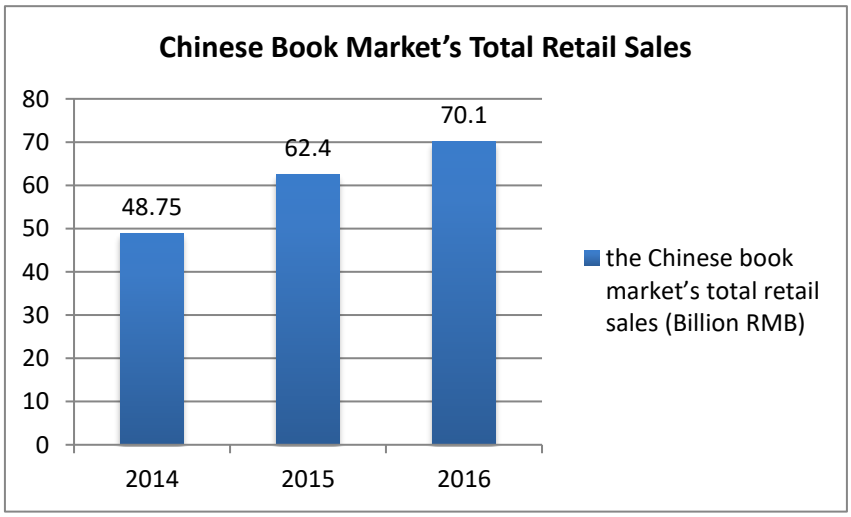
According to the analysis based on Porter's 5 forces model, except for the force of threat of substitutes, the others four forces are all intense, which indicates China's book publishing industry is very competitive and it is hard for publishing houses to earn high profits. However, Porter's 5-force model also has weakness. According to Speed (2013), Porter's model is static and cannot give timely response to various industry changes, such as technology development, globalization or other demand trend. And facing various industry changes, competitors could choose to fight for market share individually or cooperate with each other for a win-win result. Such possibility is ignored in Porter's discussion.

However, although there are weaknesses in Porter's 5-force model, the analysis based on these five forces is still helpful for scholars to understand current book publishing industry's structure and publishers' ability to gain high profit in China. China's book publishing industry is a high competitive industry and it is hard for companies to earn high profit in contemporary China. The essential elements that affect a publisher's competitiveness and profit include products' price, the content, e-book market's development

and a good sense of planning and market research. From the discussion of power of suppliers and buyers, Chinese book publishing industry has already become buyer's market and therefore, high-quality content and authors are the core competitiveness of publishing houses, which enables them to be distinct from other publishers with similar scales and structures. The success of *Remembrance of Earth's Past* trilogy is mainly due to its high quality content and social media's promotion, which is relevant to supplier power, strong ability of market research and digital development strategy. From this view, understanding the book publishing industry's status is also helpful for promoting particular cultural product.

The Market of Book Publishing Industry in China

With almost 1.4 billion people, China is the biggest market in the world, and almost all people could be potential consumers in book publishing industry, except for babies and reading disabilities. Considering the rapid development of digital technology and audio reading, even seniors and blind people could the fun of reading by audio books. So the market size of book publishing industry is very big in China.



Data source: Publishing Perspective (2018)

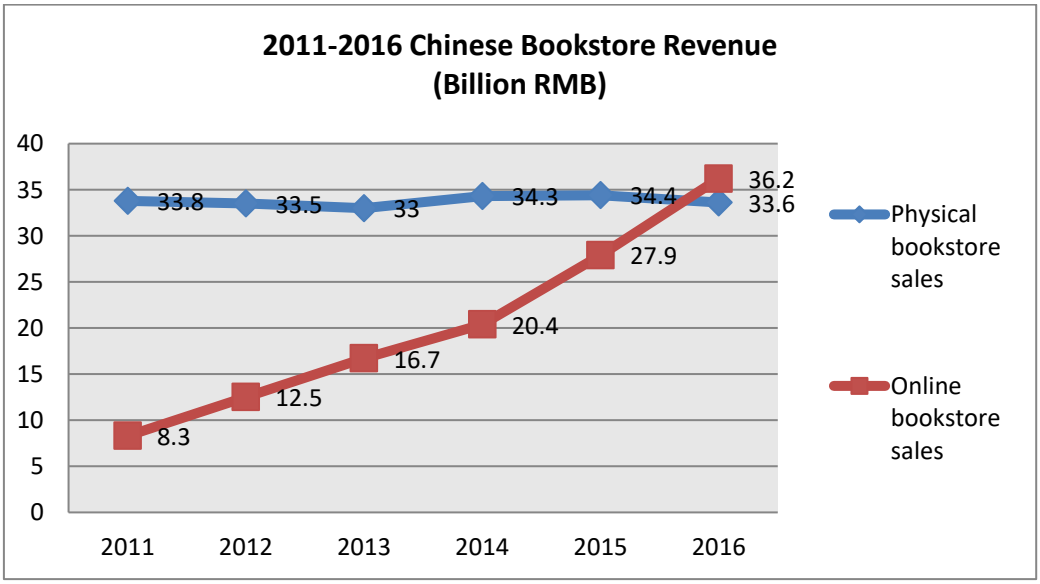
As presented above, the Chinese book market's total retail sales reached 62.4 billion in 2015 with an increase of 12.8% over the last year, and rose by 12.3% to 70.1 billion in 2016 (Anderson, 2018). According to Amazon China's 2017 China reading report, over 8 million people read more than 10 books every year (Yi, 2017). They are the main consumers of China's book publishing industry. Another interesting finding from this survey is 'women tend to read more for pleasure, while men read more for knowledge acquisition or career planning' (Yi, 2017). Except for gender, people of different age groups also present different reading favors.

Reading favors of different age groups' people	
Age Group	**Reading favor**
Generation Z	Fiction and study-related books
Millennial	Baby-care and finances
People born between the 60s and 80s	Social science and philosophy

Data source: Amazon China's 2017 Reading Report

It could be observed from the table above that people born after the 90s and 00s prefer fiction and study-related books. Baby-care and financial books are the favorite of those born after the 80s. They seem more practical and tend to learn essential skills they need in work and daily life by reading. The main consumer of philosophy and social science books is senior group. According to OpenBook's report, 'Children's books are again the main driver of market growth, and the children's book sector accounts for more than a third of the overall growth in China's market in 2017' (Anderson, 2018), which indicates Millennial is becoming the main consumer group in Chinese book market.

In addition, entering the IT era, increasingly people access to e-books and e-book's market has huge development potential in the future. According to Amazon's report, over 65% of people born after 80s prefer e-books. They are the group most liking electronic reading, followed by generation Z with 64% of them liking e-books. The most popular genre is also different in online and brick-and-mortar sale. According to Chinese book market data 2016 (Frankfurter Buchmesse, 2016), textbook is the most popular genre in bookstores but social science books takes more advantages in online sales. Fiction book ranks the fourth both online (13.4%) and offline (12%). Among these fiction books, only little part is science fiction novel. As Liu (2014) said, science fiction is very marginal in Chinese market.



Data source: OpenBook

With e-book's rapid development, online bookstore sales has experienced a sharp growth and risen over 4 times in six years, raising from 8.3 billion to 36.3 billion yuan and firstly exceeding physical store sales in 2016 (Openbook, 2017). It is reasonable to predict that e-book probably could have half, or even more than half, share of Chinese book market in the future. Besides, according to the Statistics Portal (2017), 'Till 2016, the amount of China's netizen has reached at 731 million, with 53.2% Internet penetration, which was over the global average of 50.1% in that year'. China is supposed to be the largest digital market in the world by 2018 (Statistics Portal, 2017). Thus, e-book and e-commerce will play an increasingly significant role in following years and cultural products' digital communication will probably be the focus of every publishing house.

Except for digital communication, another focus for Chinese creative workers is how to export native literature to overseas market. Guided by Chinese government's Go Out Policy, cultural product is considered as an effective tool to establish national image and develop China's cultural competence (Yu & Qi, 2013). The success of *Remembrance of Earth's Past* trilogy is considered as a good beginning and the milestone work bring Chinese literature to world's stage by many critics. However, for Zhang Jichen, the manager of China Book Import and Export Co., 'the success of this series sets a good example for the following cultural works, but it is far from enough' (Zhang, 2017). China lacks high-quality literatures that could lead the world's cultural trends and arouse overseas readers. Thus, the emphasis on Go Out movement must shift from simple scale growth to the development of cultural products' content (Zhang, 2017). Moreover, 'we should seize the opportunity of the rapid development of digital publishing', said by Jiang Xiaoyuan (2018), president of the academy of science history and culture. The development of digital technology greatly breaks the limitations of time, space and cost. It is reasonable to predict that in the future more high-quality Chinese literatures like *Remembrance of Earth's Past* trilogy will be exported to non-Mandarin-speaking markets and digital technology will play an important role in this process.

Conclusion

Remembrance of Earth's Past trilogy could be seen as a typical cultural product as it follows Caves' economic property discussion and literature's supply chain model. This series is also a special cultural product as its success is occasional and non-copyable, affected by its artistic value, social media's popularity and audiences' power. Understanding how it is created, developed, marked and received by readers worldwide could help people be aware of how cultural product's economic properties and supply chain work, how digitalization changes the relationship between media and audiences and how audiences are transformed from receivers into producers and affect media in return. *Remembrance of Earth's Past*'s dissemination is a successful combination of digital technology and creative workers' insistence on content. Under the guide of Chinese government's Go Out policy, *Remembrance of Earth's Past* trilogy sets a good example for following Chinese cultural products, reminding them the responsibility to build national image and providing high-quality original content. It has already become a sign of Chinese literature.

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