

Haskett and the Origins of Bonobo Press

As society becomes increasingly online and screen orientated what can be the future for the publisher and how can we expect its role to change?

MY PROJECT is to establish the beginnings of a publishing company with its main aim being the revival and continuation of the physical paperback book as a precious, well designed object that can communicate ideas and thoughts with a level of clarity that no other medium can claim. While the internet may be a vast resource for information and discussion it can never offer the same intimacy and solitude that is readily found within a fine book. This quality of the book is seen through its paper, printing, typography, margins and other fine details that, while not consciously appreciated by many readers, are most important when retaining a level of articulation and comfort that tires neither the eye nor the mind.

The books I will begin publishing are old and lost classics that I believe still hold much relevance and importance today. While a writer from 100 years ago may not have been as forward thinking with regards to gender, does this mean we can disregard his or her thoughts and ideas? I believe there are many great writers whose work was dismissed without re-publication due to a number of reasons and it is to their work which I hope to give new life. It has been a relative minority within society whose power has defined and elected its geniuses according to what has encouraged and supported progress in certain directions that offer no real challenge to their established structures. How many great minds have existed whose ideas and beliefs were misunderstood and subsequently lost on an emotionally immature society that was simply not ready? Although the physical and technological qualities of society appear to change faster than ever before it must surely be argued that the basic questions of man in both his moral and spiritual dilemmas have not made substantial developments that can happily condone a definite end to old literature. The only qualities in a book which will encourage its prompt demise are poor form and lack of conviction.

Why do many tire when reading and struggle to concentrate on the subject matter? I can suggest and stand by three distinct problems seen in literature today. The first is that which I have previously mentioned, the physical quality of the book, that ranges from its poorly designed cover to a poor relationship between margins, leading and size of type. The second is a weak subject matter which can be saved by very little for when the reader shows no interest he will soon become frustrated and so find distractions in anything he cares briefly for. The final, and perhaps most overlooked, is the form and style with which ideas, thoughts and story are put to the reader. A well considered form will readily articulate our convictions and beliefs in a manner that can persuade even the most dubious of readers. This same form acts also as an important educator to future writers whose challenge it is to excite and encourage society of the great ideas they believe to obtain. As Montaigne reminds us 'This world is but a school of enquiry. The question is not who will spear the ring but who will make the best charges at it. The man who says what is true can act as foolishly as the one who says what is untrue: we are talking about the way you say it not what you say.'