



Fear from the Readers

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Z1003-1003.5 Choice of books. Books and reading

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FEAR FROM THE READERS

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ABSTRACT

The reading bear the great cultural responsibility not to allow the mass communication to serve the individual sovereignty contra-adaptive and anti-manipulative under the pressure of the mass and the unifications. The reader cultivates in himself a tendency to counteracting, anarchism, self-confidence, optimism and information superiority. These are vested functions of reading as „dangerous“ mental process. Referring Police Unit for Combating Organized Crime’s operation “blocking the pirate book distribution in Internet through www.chitanka.info”. On the 22th of June 2010 Bulgarian Police Unit for Combating Organized Crime hit the Internet-based network for

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distributing contents chitanka.info. The police was alarmed by multiple sources including The Bulgarian Book Association, The Union of Translators in Bulgaria, and different publishing houses. The action was claimed a success in the fight against Internet piracy.

Keywords: reading studies, altered reader, right to read, copyright, free culture, intellectual freedom, libraries, UNESCO, Bulgaria

INTRODUCTION

Referring Police Unit for Combating Organized Crime's operation "blocking the pirate book distribution in Internet through www.chitanka.info" on June 22, 2010. On the 22th of June 2010 Bulgarian Police Unit for Combating Organized Crime (GDBOP) hit the Internet-based network for distributing contents chitanka.info (in Bulgarian "chitanka" means an alphabet book). The police was alarmed by multiple sources including The Bulgarian Book Association, The Union of Translators in Bulgaria, and different publishing houses. The action was claimed a success in the fight against Internet piracy.

RIGHT AND DUTY TO READ

When we discuss the right of the author of reading's objects – my position is peremptory. I vote for free books and free reading. I vote for total elimination of readers' barriers – as good as of the market, the language, or the psychology. I vote against the juridical monopoly of "rights" holders and mercantile craftsmen. I vote against the market censorship over reading.

It seems too schizophrenic to block the access to texts to be read in time when all burst in tears for the "fading" reading. The most important thing is to read. Whether playing games with the guards of the texts, or passing over the system.

The author's right is an ideal right and therefore impossible to be annulled. Nevertheless, the author is not alone "on the saddle" – he also have been reading, listening, using ideas, copying, imitating, or stealing from others. "Author" is only The First One but who is he, is another topic. As Mark Twain reminds us, only Adam was happy because he knew everything said is said by him first. And a very important thing – the knowledge and

the information are a priori free! We pay for them when the planet is invaded by economy, market, and money. This is the truth about our whole written civilization.

I am the author of several books, over 200 articles, and an immeasurable number of unpublished actual lectures I hand out to all my students. However I am a lobbyist for the Reader! He is the master in the circle of written knowledge and books. He is the client, he is the payer. He is the evaluator and the judge. He is able to put a publisher or a translator, an author or a book on pedestal. He also has the power the destroy them or to throw them in oblivion.

I want to say a thing to those who speculate with the mantra „Copyright Law“ and to all the clappers to the police blockade of the site chitanka.info who jump with cow delight in the eyes and satisfied but thoughtless heads.

CONTENT VS BOOK

Law of Copyright and Connected Rights permits free usage, reproduction of already printed works and their direct or indirect multiplying in any mode and in any form. And this exactly is what the web-based virtual database of written works does. And no more. Therefore every Internet on- and offline site for reading or downloading texts is a library. Not a bargain bookstall.

Naturally, every virtual library distributes **contents, not books**. In its core the content is digital. According to all the major laws of physics, without the hard wrapper it flows, spills, runs into our PCs. This is its job.

The wolfed craftsmen in the book field should try to calculate separately Content and their paper product known as a book. There we'll see whom to pay while reading Files. By films and songs the “downloaded” or perceived with eyes and ears work is identical to both copy and original but the book is a different story. We perceive the content from a paper copy in one way but from the display the way is different. Everyone settles his/her own account which way to chose. Because the file with the content of a paper book is even not a copy of this book.

Of course, every library – physical or digital – functions not as a commercial object but as an organization with ideal goals and exactly to provide the mankind with **reproduced and brought** to everyone of us readings for free usage.

Of course, the libraries are the only warrantor of Intellectual Freedom since the writing and reading exist. This is to be read in all the international manifestos of librarian associations. Who could forget that intellectual freedom is a freedom not only of writing, translating, publishing but most of access to information and reading?

Of course, every library – physical or digital – is an obstacle for publishers’ and distributors’ pockets and authors’ and their heirs’ purses. Since the world turns, the libraries legally multiply reading objects or texts infusing them into readers’ heads. Or allowing people to copy them through hand-writing. Or allowing photocopies. Or giving the readers the freedom to distribute the only copy borrowed for home usage among neighbors and friends so their eyes could “steal” its content too.

There is no a living author who could precisely count his/her readers.

The reader is countless. The reader is Legion. The reader is the one who induces life into the book. Without eyes reading it the book is only a **brick**.

All the segments in the process of producing books exit only because of the reader. Without him all the authors, editors, translators, publishers, distributors, and librarians are only **mummies**.

ALTERED READER

The main motive for police to hit virtual reading-rooms and libraries after being pressed by mercantile sources is transparent and discouraging: an inadmissible for the 21st century ignorance of the *altered reader*.

The altered reader wants free books. He/she has evolved as a product of the “free culture” and still hopes there’ll be someone here to believe in the American experience with the incredible commercial potential of the free book first published in Internet and afterwards on paper and against payment. According to the young readers the consumption of the written words is considered as a free operation but only the depository-type of persons and institutions calculates the reading in their investments (though they don’t mean that exactly). Curious are the thoughts of Jean-François Barbier-Bouvet, an expert in reading, who grasps the “free culture” as a threat for the written words. He admits the dropping away of the “psychological” book price (which we are ready to pay to have it in our possession) though with the virus “free of charge”, Internet

uncontrollably infects the whole culture of deposits based on the printed media. The book appears expensive, grasped not absolutely (the book price objectively evolves slower than life's rise in price) but compared to other information sources more and more depending on the "free culture". The French researcher's anxiety is consequent from the space "loneliness" of the book where we have to pay for equipment not for its usage, for bearers not for the message, for access not for the content. The economic model of the book and printing (although they'll pass over to co-virtuality soon and fully) would hardly be able to make an exception.

The adepts of publishing industry barely continue believing that the book will keep them fed as an "island of the real value" in an empire of entroping prices and free of charge issues. The media industry responded in a hurry to this reader's caprice too – with free newspapers and magazines, gift books put into press packages, and a palette of cross-media magic. The governments of Canada and France wholehearted fund the free books distribution – as PR actions or as a tool for stimulating the reading in general. Even the altered reader gets used to help him-/herself with this caprice – he/she established and multiplies the movement for free reading Bookcrossing. As a product of this actual claim appear also the initiatives for free reading in informal networks Bookboxes, Bookrings, Bookrays. The alternative countercultural Bookcrossing movement calls its participants on "sharing" (an operation in the free culture) their disposable readings with other people. The altered reader is confident that this exactly is the way for the book to fulfill itself as a media, concept, thinking – among more people, independent on their solvency. Not just as an interior element at home, a prestigious decoration in the office, as an archive unite in the library or an object of commodity-monetary relations.

READERS ARE THE MOST DANGEROUS CREATURES

However the deeper motive to block the access to texts is *the fear of the reading and well-read human being*. The executors of such actions don't realize this. But it's not their fault. They carry out their duty in the next cult of justice and blindly sacrifice for the idol of skinflints and mercantilists.

But why would anyone fear of the readers?

First, the reading is an asocial activity – it's committed in loneliness, realized invisibly (in the cranium) and therefore uncontrollably. The reader is almost out of sight for any sociological approach in the circumstance that the profound genuine reading is an auto-communication process. And the comfort environment for auto-communication is the “social isolation”.

Furthermore, the reading represents a loss of social time and intellectual energy of the society thus it is socially ineffective. UNESCO's report on The International Book Year in 1972 states that in the Third world the reading is still considered as a shameful, criminal, and reproachful act. The Afghanistan community bans the act of individual reading; the separating of an individual from the contiguous surrounding group is considered as a suspicious act and perceived as a threat of integrity. The reading alone is almost a sin similar to onanism. Nowadays the most liberal societies experience similar fears, too. So the reading person is lost for the predatory manipulators from the medium outside.

Here follows the third motive for fear and concealed hatred for the readers: the reading is an impeccable filter against rhetorical and audio-visual manipulations. In the act of reading the individual finds time to cultivate his/her critical judgment, to operate information destructively, to dissect opinions, to compare, juxtapose, expose.

Forth, the reading is a sabotage activity. A brain practice sabotaging the stereotypes and the authorities, all the known and unknown totalitarian concepts. The reading individual cultivates his/her inclination for counteraction, anarchism, self-confidence, optimism, and informational superiority.

The man reads not only in order to differ from the others, to be original, to be always on the top. He/she reads in order to overcome the boundaries of the crowds formed in front of the TV screens, to blow up the oneness of the mass, to tear the simultaneousness and transiency of the TV show once and for all left in the past. The reading is also the best method to avoid standardization and vulgarization (both inclined to the crowdism) typical for our high technologized century. The book as well as the reading are highly responsible to the culture not to allow under pressure of massovization and unifications the mass communications to serve the individual sovereignty counter adaptive and anti manipulative. These again are immanent functions of the reading as a “dangerous” brain process.

And fifth, in this planet only the reading man possesses the powers to change – himself, his environment, state, the world. The connoisseurs of neurophysiology of the reading know that the reader develops not really his/her “gray matter” but their cortex, meaning to free him-/herself from animal dependencies and behavior models genetically determined and tamed in a community (herd). As the brain evolves from inside out, so the reader’s personality (after just has finished the last page) develops and changes his/her environment from inside out – absolutely decentralized, unsuspected and invisibly for “the guards from the tower” as well surprisingly – somewhere from the bosom, aside and up, similar to an earthquake’s epicenter. The readers are disliked and dangerous because they change their opinion too (only the cow doesn’t change it for the lack of information). Thus they make a dumping of the official theses and views.

CONCLUSION

If the world should remain like it is now, *the readers are the most dangerous creatures*. Arrest us all. But again you’ll forget the most important player – the book. The book is a *very sly media* – it doesn’t stand hindrances, chains and limitations. It is loaded with the breaking-through power of the light. Especially when it’s wanted.

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