

THE BOOK AS ENTITY AND PHENOMENON IN LIBRARY PHILOSOPHY AND RESEARCH

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During the all long way of development of our civilization's history of culture the most important role belongs to book: mental heritage of all generations, all that had been created and reached by mankind, all were and are kept in books. Therefore we may define the book as phenomenon, reflecting the subjective content of our consciousness, as phenomenon of culture and social environment, which keeps the essential point of the matter. Authors goal is not to analyse, reveal or describe external view of book, but to try to explain that point, which determine books consciousness and significance. Book in the wide meaning (independently from material form – printed, electronic or another form) – is accumulative form of human beings actions and can be characterized as social phenomenon, as sign and symbol and one of forms of social memory – i.e. informational memory. For understanding the idea of book important role plays aspects of gnozeological and axiological thinking (philosophical point of view, philosophical thinking), characterizing the place of book in reference (or learning) process, in social information keeping procedures, communicative value of book, manifested in communication processes.

Phenomenon in philosophy – rare, unusual thing, existing only in consciousness, subjective content of our consciousness. Book as phenomenon in library philosophy could be described as phenomenon of culture and social environment, keeping its existence in itself, discover and express itself by itself without trying to describe book outward, but explain book and find essential point determinating the significance of book essence. Real existence of book and/versus book as phenomenon – have we reached the end of the book?

Phenomenons are existing in the deepest layers of consciousness, discovering beings, realities, ideas, not material forms. Person can comprehend, experience, understand books internal being, make value from book as phenomenon, not book as piece of material culture. Communication with book – the highest form of man's intellectual development. This highest form we can examine from various points of view.

Gnozeological aspect – the place of the book in persons knowledge assimilation processes, information dissemination and heritage for next generations, reference or learning tool. Book can be investigate as information memory of human beings, storage of experience.

Axiological aspect – book as phenomenon includes culture, social and communicative values.

Hermeneytical aspect – helps us via books to understand and interpret mankind knowledge and accumulated gained experience.

Semiotical aspect – symbol is interpreted as highest of signs, therefore we can study the book as phenomenon in culture context as symbol and metaphor. For understanding book as phenomenon is semiotical aspect, we should stress the communication idea: semiotics as culture science investigates the world of notions, all aspects of culture we can see as the content of communication. Book we see as the basic component of culture, therefore we see book as sign and phenomenon (including many other signs), the semiotical system of culture.

Nowadays, when book as phenomenon of culture and communication tool in its physical manifestation is under the threat of retreat in remote plan of activities of civilization, i.e. in the condition of crisis, is under the threat of perishing, change of status or transformation, we need to formulate the point of the matter.

Book is the mirror of those, who look in this mirror (and who create this mirror too), and its idea can be found in the human being brain. Therefore book is very closely connected with man and society as human intersubjective action tool. With this tool are realized various purposes of personalities and groups of personalities. Exactly this physical form was suitable for realizing definite goals before five thousand years and during centuries transformed from grafitis, clay plates, papyruses till electronic virtual books. Therefore if we take personality or society as the accounting point, the book is the indirect communication tool of mankind members, tool for transmitting messages. At the same time appear the message author and the message user. All three appear simultaneously, and we cannot say, who from the system “author-book-user” is the very first.

Another aspect – book as the tool, communicative tool, self-created as the result of man’s mental activities (as the same tools as spade or axe, only with different goals) for specific goal – social communication (including religion, philosophy, fiction, thinking a.o.) and historical memory. If we take for granted, that only live in society and taking part in communication processes make human being as human being ($I + Others = I$ as personality), then we can take for granted, that book is one of the most important tools in this system. The possibility and ability to read book is the joint unit of skills of social communication, taken in the highest degree and giving the new skills to change social and cultural environment. Book as the communicative element (separated from such tool as spade, that digs soil) digs the consciousness of user/reader, and created by man, transforms this same man.

Is it possible, that this same changed man will favour the death of the book? Author opinion is, that it could happen, but only in the matter of form, not in essential. The end of the book, the printed text and of old-style reading is a real possibility, not an academic joke or a post-structuralist conceit. After the paperless office, the paperless house has arrived, along with the virtual library, the electronically collated document resource, the screen-networked business memorandum. On its way is the electronic book, transcultural internet. The battle for mastery between page and screen is over and it seems clear who

has won. But it does not mean, that the book as the tool of social communication is over, it only changes its physical appearance.

How the book will look in nearest future, would it be possible to call it “book”, do the changes of historical form will change the name “book” and its point of the matter, we will see very soon. Authors opinion is, that the changes of material form cannot change the philosophical and social existence of book and point of the matter. We needed, need and will need tool of social communication, mankind memory storage, information heritage, and all this is combined in The Book, and it does not matter, in which form it appears and how we will call it. The essential features will be the same – to serve every human being with all needed experience and knowledge. Only one problem can appear already in nearest future, and library science has obligation to investigate, explain and mark possible ways to solve this problem - the problem of reading. It may not seem possible that our interest in books is dwindling. But the number of books is not the point. What should concern us as librarians and library researchers is not the risk-taking impulses of publishers, nor the question of whether the desk terminal will replace the shelving unit as the repository of texts. What concerns us is the business of reading at all. There is no doubt that the act of reading is in decline. According to various surveys, most young people have better things to do today than read books. Destruction of reading habits, language, processes of thought and sensibility as much as of a library is the research-worthy direction for library researchers.

We should create the unite system from book phenomenon (in every form), library and library research with fundamentals of library philosophy for basing on the future of book and future of reading.

Book as the informational memory of mankind discover ideas, truth, consciousness, not superficial facts or things. We comprehend the book as the material of internal experience of our consciousness. Phenomenology as philosophical branch formulates the book as phenomenon which depends on personality perception, experience, understanding, system of values. In research the space of book in the society we should take into consideration the dynamic intercommunication between book, personality and society. Communication with book – the highest form of intellectual development of personality. We all realize ourselves in communication with books – we not only read and keep them, but use them as our “memory on shelf” (in every material form – from papyri till various electronic forms). It is the way of intercommunication between the world and knowledge surrounded in books and personality internal world.

The history of book is the history of human mental development, reflected personality internal evolution, losses, victories, might and weakness. Book and personality both exist in close intercommunication. Personality creates book, and book creates personality, the authority is mutual. Reader (also library reader or user) becomes the co-author of book. Creative process is double-sided, therefore book as phenomenon is eternal while we accept the statement about human being or personality as eternal phenomenon.

Book as the mankind informational memory exist in the library space (library space as cosmos, library environment, library network) in various material forms: as clay tablets, papyri, printed materials, electronic forms a. o. Therefore it is possible to investigate book as social and cultural; phenomenon, its history, functions, influence sphere, existence notion and forms. It means to investigate four groups of conditions:

- Conditions of origin;
- Conditions of existence;
- Conditions of development;
- Conditions of function.

Those groups determine also the main directions of research in library-book space.

Conditions of origin: *knowledge as impulse of beginning; *guaranty of knowledge use possibilities; *memory function; *cumulative function; *communicative function.

Conditions of existence: *intellect and book as the result of activities of this intellect (both in creating and using and creating additional value during this using process); *amplitude of perception; *social environment, society, personality; *librarians personality and ethics; *rational and irrational (as sphere of normative acts and decisions and irrational destruction as the basis of new creative process).

Conditions of development: *user-friendly and user-orientated information sources (including books) and its distribution and popularizing systems on the basis of arranged system of knowledge, virtual resources and: manuscripts, printed books and another sources, e-documents; *information arrangement → distribution → search → resources; *system “library (books a. o. sources) + museums + archives.

Conditions of function: *memory function; *knowledge arrangement function; *free information function; *information analysis function; *information systematization function.

The new culture-historical paradigm means that we think of or use the book not as material object but as life function. Book as knowledge basis now means that information or information society – knowledge, introduced in integrated library and information systems of communications.

Book phenomenon in changed and changing environment of library and information systems, arranged knowledge systems, user-friendly and user-orientated culture means following research directions (with thought that book is taken in the widest meaning, not only as printed edition in super (or not so super) binding!):

- Historical (library, bibliography, book science, information science) investigations;
- Knowledge management (library collections, classification systems, terminology, information (including books) resources, copyright, information systems, metadata, bibliographic description a. o.);

- Library as social institution (as system together with museums and archives) that is the manager and broker of knowledge system and personality;
- Information literacy (readers, users, theory of reading, measurement of information quality);
- Information resources.

Book not consists of the highest or only truth. Book is the labyrinth which leads to the knowledge and wisdom. The same way as the philosophy, book offers aspects, not answers. The most important feature of book – it serves as the knowledge keeper (“the brain on the shelf”), because the human being – creature, who remembers and is aware of his history, who thinks historically, “because today’s man started not from the fact, that he is human being, but he inherits forms of existence, ideas, life experience of his forefathers” [3] with help of the books, - and it does not matter, in what material form. Book is the essence of consciousness, not peace of paper. Therefore book is eternal. As the life on the Earth.

Information sources

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