

# COVID-19 and, We Are Not Allowed to Watch, Listen and Read What We Want, Anymore

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Theme: [History](#), [Police State & Civil Rights](#)

*Now, that almost all of us, all over the world, have been forced into staying in what could be easily defined as house arrest, there is suddenly plenty of time to read books, to watch great films, and to listen to splendid music.*

Many of us, for years, have been sadly repeating again and again: “if only we would have time...”

Now there is plenty of it – plenty of time. The world has stopped. Something terrible is happening; something we never wanted to occur. We sense it, we are terrified, but we do not know precisely, what it is. Not now, not yet.

Fiction has become reality. Albert Camus and his *Plague*. Jose Saramago and *Blindness*.

We did not really know that something like this could take place; even those of us who have close to zero trust in the wisdom of Western civilization.

Today, again, I read the same argument that has been sending chills down my spine, each time it is repeated. And repeated it is being, now regularly, at least in Europe. There, Fascism is clearly back. Dr. Luboš Motl, a Czech theoretical physicist, who was an assistant professor at Harvard University from 2004 to 2007:

“And they believe that the structures which allow them to survive – the governments, banks, and so on – are ‘evil’. Some are just financially illiterate. But others know what they are saying, and rejoice in demanding that trillions be sacrificed in order to infinitesimally increase the probability that a 90-year-old will avoid infection and live a little bit longer. They don’t accept their dependence on society and the system at all. They don’t realize that their moral values, their ‘human rights’, are only available if paid for by prosperous societies.”

A doctor... my God! A “prosperous society” means, obviously, a capitalist, Western society. Imperialism, neo-colonialism! To the people like him, clearly, not every human life is equal. ‘Value’ depends on age, and perhaps on race?’

It has always been like this, in the West, but at least it was concealed, somehow. Now it is out in the open. And I am shaking. Not from fear, but from revulsion. I definitely do not want to live in “Motl’s world.”

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But back to the main topic of this essay.

Now we finally have that proverbial time to read, to watch films, and to listen to music. Involuntarily, but time we have, nevertheless. We also have plenty of time to think, think, think.

The great and now diseased Uruguayan writer, an icon of the left, Eduardo Galeano, once told me, at his favorite *Café Brasileiro* in Montevideo:

“In order to be a great writer, one has to be a great listener, first.”

I have to add: And a great reader, observer.

You can only produce great books, films and essays, after you listened to thousands of people speak; people rich and poor, bright and senseless. And after reading hundreds of books, and watching hundreds of excellent films.

It is impossible to change the world for better, after only consuming the cheapest pop and porn.

My Russian/Chinese mother, a painter and architect, has always told me, ever since I was a child:

“Even if you end up being an abstract painter, you cannot cheat the basics: you have to first learn how to draw a face, a human body. You have to know the classics, philosophy... Only then you can let your fantasy to go wild.”

Now, with the repulsive era of the COVID-19, we are all grounded.

Time to catch up on what we have been neglecting, in terms of those intellectual inputs.

We are seated down on our sofas, we open our laptops, ready to download great films and music, and... and... nothing!

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Go to *Netflix* and try to order something very basic, like films belonging to the brilliant Japanese new way cinema. Try to watch the latest, incredible Iranian contemporary film, or some wonderful Czech masterpieces such as “*On the Roof*”, or “*Terrorist Woman*” (“*Teroristka*, in Czech”).

You will not succeed.

Go to *Apple TV*, and you will encounter the same result, “almost nothing”.

Sure, you can still watch some excellent international films if you fly the *Emirates*, or *Air France*, but remember, you are grounded!

In a panic, you rush to *YouTube*, only to discover that if you speak Russian or Czech or Spanish or Chinese, you can watch the best from these countries, mostly for free, but only in their original tongues, no subtitles. But if you want to share them with your friends and

family members, who rely on English, you will only encounter trailers and short excerpts.

How many languages do my readers speak? I understand 8, at most 9. Therefore, I cannot watch films in Vietnamese, Chinese, Farsi. They all have excellent directors.

Countries like Russia and China are making all their classic films available, and for all, right there, online. But the U.S.-U.K. censors and greedy distributors make sure that you will never be able to watch them for free, or even for a fee, in English or with English subtitles.

You are supposed to watch Hollywood crap, and toothless BBC upgraded sitcoms. You don't like it? Tough luck!

At some point, you start frantically searching for different ways of how to get your hands on the important works of art.

Many, after several days of futile attempts and searches, simply give up and begin to watch whatever shit is available.

For years and decades, like a beaver, I have been accumulating DVDs and CDs, from all over the world. At present I have some 800 CDs, between Asia and Latin America, and hundreds of DVDs, even VHSs.

There is a reason for it - and I always knew that there would be. I do not trust the regime.

I have never relied on the electronic formats of films and music, or on storing my stuff in some 'cloud' and on sticks, or hoping that what I want would always be available through *Amazon, YouTube, Netflix, Apple TV* and other brutal businesses.

At this moment, my predictions have come true: you cannot even watch Fellini's *La Dolce Vita* on *Apple TV*! Or, forget about the best films made by Pasolini, early (socialist realism) films by Kurosawa, 1930's Shanghai New Wave, or most of the masterpieces by Tarkovsky.

Yes, I have accumulated a tremendous film and music library, in all formats.

I repeat: I simply don't trust the Western regime.

Especially now, when making the world population dumber and dumber, more and more complacent, is becoming, as it appears to me, the main goal of the Western *apparatchiks*.

Remember when they created those "zones" for DVDs? That was the beginning. Our planet was fragmented, in the name of business, and of copyright protection. But in fact, the reason was absolutely clear: people were not supposed to understand each other. They were not supposed to understand directly how the others saw the world. Only the "hubs" like London, New York or Paris were allowed to decide and pre-chew, how the conquered part of humanity could interact, intellectually, culturally and ideologically.

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The books; oh yes, the books!

They have not started burning books, yet, as they did in Ray Bradbury's novel "*Fahrenheit 451*". I repeat, not yet.

But the system has made sure that books which even slightly challenge the system are hardly made available to the public.

It goes without saying that I made sure to count on two massive personal libraries, in both Asia and in Latin America.

Remember, they told you how 'un-ecological' printing paper books really was? Funny, you were never told how toxic tablets, computers and mobile phones are. What you were also never told is that if you begin to rely fully on electronic books, the tap can be closed, at any moment, and doing what you do, you will be locked out from the information.

In Asia and South America, I accumulated thousands of essential (and not so essential) books. And I am a proud co-publisher of a small, but vigorous publishing house [Badak Merah](#) ('Red Rhino'). And I never agree to publish any of my own, more than [20 books](#) in 35 languages so far, electronically, before they are first printed on paper.

These days, paradoxically, unless you live in London or Paris, New York, but also Moscow, Beijing or Havana, the chances are that you will not get books of your choice in those huge, bookstore chains, at least at the first attempt.

You will get bombarded from the moment you enter the store, with junk, pop, and feel-good stuff, until they distract you from all the serious, essential topics.

Actually, I am not even sure that in the West, these days, it is possible to build a great personal library, from scratch, anymore!

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Yet, it is almost impossible to analyze "emergencies" (both real and 'injected') like the coronavirus, without consulting philosophers and the above-mentioned novelists, like Saramago, Camus and Bradbury.

To understand Chinese and Russian philosophers would be very handy for comprehending, why both countries have so successfully combated the virus, and are now helping dozens of nations all over the world; even those that have been tormenting them for years and decades. To read and understand Cuban revolutionary, internationalist thinkers, would shed some light on the present situation, too.

But the chances are, you will not be allowed to do all that.

Yes, the taps are closing, and Westerners are increasingly resembling zombies, or, more precisely, ISIS.

Mostly, they cannot get their hands on important books that would make them think, analyze and understand. But most of the time, people don't even have any desire to read, watch and listen to things that would help them to comprehend what is taking place around them, anymore.

Instead of listening to the human beings on all the continents, individuals, particularly those living in the West, predominantly hear only about themselves. It is some sort of "selfie-style" interaction with the world. Or a Porn Tube-style one, which relies more on one's hand, than on one's brain.

Individuals who live in this sort of realm, are taught to take simple commands, to react without thinking too much, and above all, to obey.

In the meantime, intellectual collapse is approaching; or it is already here.

Now, people like me, are realizing that they are not allowed to read, watch and listen to what they want, anymore. But at least we have already listened to a lot, before. And we have great ammunition of books, films, music.

We are still writing about what is happening.

But soon, perhaps very soon, the great majority of individuals, will stop to even worry about such topics. They will simply accept: shut up and accept, and read, watch and listen to what is pushed down their throats. Or, to use new terminology - they will self-quarantine, intellectually.

If such a scenario arrives, it will become irrelevant whether COVID-19 or some other epidemic is destroying our human race. Because it would not be a human race, anymore.

That is why, right now, we have to defend each and every human being, each life, whether sick or healthy, even if the person is 90 or 100 years old. And we have to defend great books, films and music, because in them is our knowledge, our humanity, as well as the key to our survival.

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