

Zero calories or the recipe for a text which is...light

The Reading Spot

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These days, I should be careful. Very careful. I am a bit more prone to accidents than usual. More specifically, the chances to slip in my living room as in a skating rink are ... considerable, given that that a large part of the floor is literally carpeted with glossy waste paper. In other words, I'm sorting out my collection of magazines. This is an opportunity for deep reflection on a topic of great importance.

Topic: What do we read when we read... light?

Development: Extremely hard to say. If we take into account the samples displayed on my carpet, turning over the pages is almost never deprived of a support which feeds our imagination. A self-respecting *glossy* magazine does not rely only on pictorials and pages upon pages upon pages upon...pages about *shopping*, accessories and *lifestyle*, but also on fiction, on interviews, on opinion, on travel, on eclectic blends of books, concerts and theatre halls in which we are sent with the promise of a *trendy*-intellectual experience. All in all, this carries me to an alley contiguous to the reading of a magazine...

Digression from the topic: What is trendy culture?

OR, in other words, who decides what is trendy about a culture and what is not? What director, what singer, what actor and what writer are suitable for



a product made for my mental indulgence? Let me see, this is a really good question ... Every other magazine which is well established on the market has an assigned writer and regularly promotes some event as a sponsor. Sometimes these are worthwhile and other times they're just for show. Who says what's what? Most of the time, I am the one who does; ultimately, I, the reader. And I do it strictly in my self-consciousness.

All in all, in the light waste paper there are also some substantial cultural products. Perhaps they have more makeup, but they still exist. In my laborious selection process I revisit, methodically, the interviews with Sarah Chang and Alexander Bălănescu, I come across some reviews of J.M. Coetzee and Carlos Ruiz Zafón's books and it becomes clear to me how much I should enjoy reading the words "*low fat*" on the label of a fruit yogurt. Unfortunately, the same selection process reveals to me that Hemingway has a niece, called Dree Hemingway (whose name is systematically spelled Hamingway!), Mariel's daughter (unfortunately, she is also a Hamingway). Padma Lakshmi's name, Rushdie's former wife, also oscillates graphically from Lackshmi to Lakshmi with a vertiginous frequency, on a par with some disagreements hidden in the material. This is sad, but ever since I found a mistake even in Vogue (I do not know exactly what it was, I think it was the name of a composer), which was my absolute benchmark, I started showing a little more leniency, which is not always praiseworthy. However, this does not make me immune to the word "tipsuri" (tips). I do not know who invented it, but it is the most pathetic calque in a long time, and, frankly, I cannot stand for it anymore! Why there would be a need for a double mark of the plural, I do not know. Perhaps in order to be democratic to both languages, the source language and the target language. Well, I, for one, would opt for a totalitarian vision. I encourage anyone who is willing to hear me to turn to either *tips* or *tip-uri*. Thank you.

I read Romanian short stories. Or screenplays. They are both good. It is a pity that many are in competition with a collection of truisms and inadvertences that simply fascinates me! Leading, but not by much, is the review of a movie I saw and which, surprise! , in the magazine has a totally different development of the action. There are... various possibilities: either in the meantime another movie has been made with the same title, same cast and same director or ... or. Whatever.

A magazine hits the jackpot because I happen to like the brothers Florian, side-by-side, on two pages. Another magazine does the same because I feel that "I will need" to go back to Sasha Pivovarova's flamenco pictorial in Paris or to I don't know what diet that makes you about sixty-five pounds



thinner in thirty days (this was actually a state secret until a gracious star shared it with the editorial board one evening, after having imported it directly from Tibet). Others...because I would render the collection incomplete if I gave them up - after all, if I have all the issues, wouldn't it be a pity to banish about five of them? Others... with the others there is a problem. When I exhaust my arguments I choose an impartial arbitrator, but one who tolerates my little mania (a storeroom, a balcony and two little tables - alright, I confessed! - this is the space the *glossies* occupy) and I bring up my lucky phrase - "I remember this issue – it is very good." (I must mention that so far, the arbitration was 100% in my favor and I was not asked for any further explanation! (Yes, I give up the copyright to the phrase - use it confidently in similar situations! It is priceless.)).

Conclusion: There is none.

Apart from the fact that in a good magazine, chocolate caviar, Julian Schnabel, Diana Dondoe, Chantilly lace, Orhan Pamuk, the long-necked women in Thailand, Proenza Schouler, the weekends in Morocco and size XXS (it does exist!)...coexist. And maybe that's what we like. Their combination. The summary. The fact that they can be crammed into a beautifully colored pseudo-booklet. One that does not need to be read from cover to cover - we can very well play the skimming game until we get bored and move on to a serious book. The next serious book. What does that say about us? I'm afraid that it says too much for me to try to write another paragraph starting with *bold* letters...

As far as I am concerned, I will not come across the next serious book any time soon. I strongly doubt it, taking into account how much I've been racing from the storeroom to the dining room and from the dining room to the balcony... For now, as I said, I try not to slip and, from time to time, I put down some heavy thoughts in the margins of a page that screams at the top of its lungs that I could climb Mount Everest, win the Nobel Prize for Peace, write for the *Times*, take Bill Gates' place in the Forbes list or reinvent myself spiritually in Nepal – but this is of no importance! What really matters is to eat WITH NO SUGAR.

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